

Politecnico di Milano  
Scuola del Design  
Corso di Laurea Magistrale  
Design della comunicazione  
a.a 2021/2023



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

**Carolina Sofia Correa Bull**  
Relatore: Elena Caratti

# CAUDAL

Chilean Independent magazine of bi-annual publication and media, that aims to capture the beauty and value of the country's rivers, inspiring people to explore and preserve them.



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# Contents

06	<b>Abstract</b>
08	<b>Introduction</b>
10	<b>I. Design as a tool for translating the territory</b>
12	The communicative nature of translation
14	Communication of the territory
18	Independent magazines as a communication artifact
22	The field guide: an artifact to explore the territory
26	Slow journalism in the era of speed
28	The power of visual communication
34	The reader-magazine relationship and the sense of community
36	Territory of reference: Santiago de Chile and the Mapocho river
40	Brief history of magazines in Chile
50	<b>II. Case studies</b>
52	Case studies focused on connecting with nature
52	National Geographic (USA)
56	Emergence (USA)
58	Wonderground (Australia)
60	Sirene Journal (Italy)
62	Revista Endémico (Chile)
64	Case studies focused on representing local identities
64	Quilo Journal (Brasil)
66	Kajet Journal (Eastern Europe)
68	Safar Journal (Lebanon)
70	Meantime (Indonesia)
72	<b>III. Design proposal: Caudal Magazine</b>
74	Formulation
76	Target
82	Magazine conceptualization
92	<b>IV. Project development</b>
94	Editorial design process
100	Implementation of a communication system
104	Project feasibility
108	<b>V. Conclusions</b>
110	<b>Bibliography</b>
114	<b>Appendix</b>
200	<b>Caudal: complete magazine</b>

# Abstract

This thesis explores the design and development of an independent magazine -including elements from field guides-, that seeks to capture the beauty and importance of rivers in Chile, to inspire young communities to preserve them. Deepening into the translation paradigm, the communication of the territory, and drawing on theories of visual languages, the study examines the ways in which a media brand system can be used to communicate the value of rivers as natural and cultural resources, while also exploring the challenges and opportunities of producing a printed independent magazine in a context of limited resources and competing media outlets. Through interviews with Chilean experts like a magazine director, a photographer and an environmental activist, as well as an analysis of existing magazines around the world that are focused on representing nature or local communities, the study provides insights into the audiences, content, and distribution strategies for the new magazine, and argues the potential to foster public awareness and appreciation of these important and often neglected ecosystems.

## **Keywords**

Independent magazine, Field Guide, Rivers, Translation Paradigm, Communication of the territory



# Introduction

The chosen theme centers around the territory of the Mapocho River, which traverses Santiago and has long suffered neglect. However, it is now gradually reclaiming its wild character thanks to the efforts of various organizations working to restore its value.

The creation of an independent print magazine emerges as a response to the fast-paced digital culture, embracing slow content and a local perspective. It serves as a manifesto for a comprehensive and ever-evolving communication system, exploring the formation of a reader community and the fusion of languages and hybridizations to enhance audience interaction.

Ultimately, by shedding light on the delicate ecosystems of Chile's numerous rivers, showcasing their significance and beauty, the magazine aims to raise awareness and inspire collective action for the protection and appreciation of these waterways, seeking to drive positive change.

## **Overview of the structure of the thesis**

The initial chapters of this investigation discuss design as a tool for interpreting and communicating the territory, delving into how independent magazines, as complex communication artifacts, occupy an alternative space for awareness and connection with their audiences, and the strategies and codes necessary for this purpose. Furthermore, a timeline is presented illustrating the evolution of magazines in Chile, revealing the country's history, which is reflected in the evolution of media content.

Subsequently, various case studies are analyzed, which have been successful and internationally renowned for how they address the human relationship with nature, how they have managed to capture the attention of their readers through design, and the paths they have taken in building a loyal audience with whom they interact. Additionally, magazines that focus on the voices of local identities, with authentic content told from within, are examined, and how, through experimentation, they have successfully reached international markets.

The following chapters correspond to the development of 'Caudal' Magazine, from its concept, through its development and design decisions and ultimately leading to the thesis's conclusions.

## **Research question**

**“How can an independent magazine captivate an audience to promote river exploration and protection?”**

## **Objectives**

1. Assessing the role of independent magazines, investigating strategies in how they can effectively raise awareness, educate, and engage readers on relevant issues.
2. Analyze successful case studies, examining how some independent magazines are linking people to nature with a local approach, their methodologies, contents, and outreach efforts to understand the key factors contributing to their good results.
3. Evaluating communication strategies of independent magazines, exploring the use of storytelling, visual media, citizen journalism, and other effective broadcasting techniques.
4. Identifying challenges and opportunities, deepening opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, and innovative approaches that can strengthen the impact of independent magazines in this realm.

# **Design as a tool for translating the territory**

# The communicative nature of translation

This research begins with the definition and deepening of the concept of translation, a key aspect that lies within the world and discipline of Communication Design. As Baule exposed in his investigation *Towards Translation Design, A New Paradigm for Design Research*<sup>1</sup>, translation design has a clear communicative nature:

“From a theological point of view, translation is a communication process (Levy, 1967), and just as in a design, from the practical point of view (...) translation is a decision-making process: a series of a certain number of consecutive situations—of moves, like in a game—situations which force the translator to choose between a certain number of alternatives (Levy, 1967), so in this way, the translation dimension seems indivisible from the design process: the act of designing and the act of translating can be identified under a shared performance principle”.

In the same investigation, the author continues with the definition of the term explaining translation as a “transformative design activity [...] which implies a shared and intersubjective dimension (Zingale, 2012) aimed at reformulating, translating or, more often, transmuting contents from one text to another. The goal is to generate new expressive interpretations, contaminations, simplifications or expansions of the source text within an inter/multi/transcultural dimension”.

Through this process, it is possible to open new windows of knowledge that were previously hidden, making the invisible visible, transforming the complex into something simpler to understand, exhibiting things in different ways that makes us think differently, or adding value to a specific audience, among other objectives. In this sense, the translator –or communication designer– requires a deep understanding of the target audience, their needs, preferences, and cultural context, valuable information that needs to be coherent with finding the right language for shaping the content (Baule, Quaggiotto, 2012)<sup>2</sup>, design decisions such as the medium or platform through which the communication will occur, the desired tone or emotion, the hierarchy of information, and the overall visual aesthetics.

In this way, Baule (2016) sees the translator as a skilled mediator who navigates the division between their own way of life and perspective –their “culture”– and the diverse ways of life and worldviews of others, encompassing an immense variety of “other cultures”, so the communication designer’s role goes beyond just enhancing the visual appeal and presentation of products.

Considering the above, what are the types of translations that can occur? In the context of this research, the design process of an independent magazine includes several types of translations, as described by the academics Caratti, Menichelli and Scagliarini in *Multiple Translations for Disseminating Social Issues: Mag Design Experimentations* (2021)<sup>3</sup>:

“The overall picture includes mental translation (in other words the process of translation as a cognitive act, from the conceptualization to the writing and reading processes); interlinguistic translation (translation between two systems of natural languages); intralinguistic translation (translation as reformulation); intersemiotic translation (translation as the relation between different semiotic systems, for example the process of deverbalization—from the verbal to the visual); intertextual translation (translation as an expansion of the text with other texts or media); metatextual translation (we refer to all texts that are external to the main text; they accompany the text by highlighting aspects of it, in order to facilitate its decoding); and finally cultural translation (translation as cultural mediation and transfer)”.

Therefore, to understand the significance of a territory intersected by a river and effectively convey it through an independent magazine, it is imperative to explore how to communicate it through the lens of design.

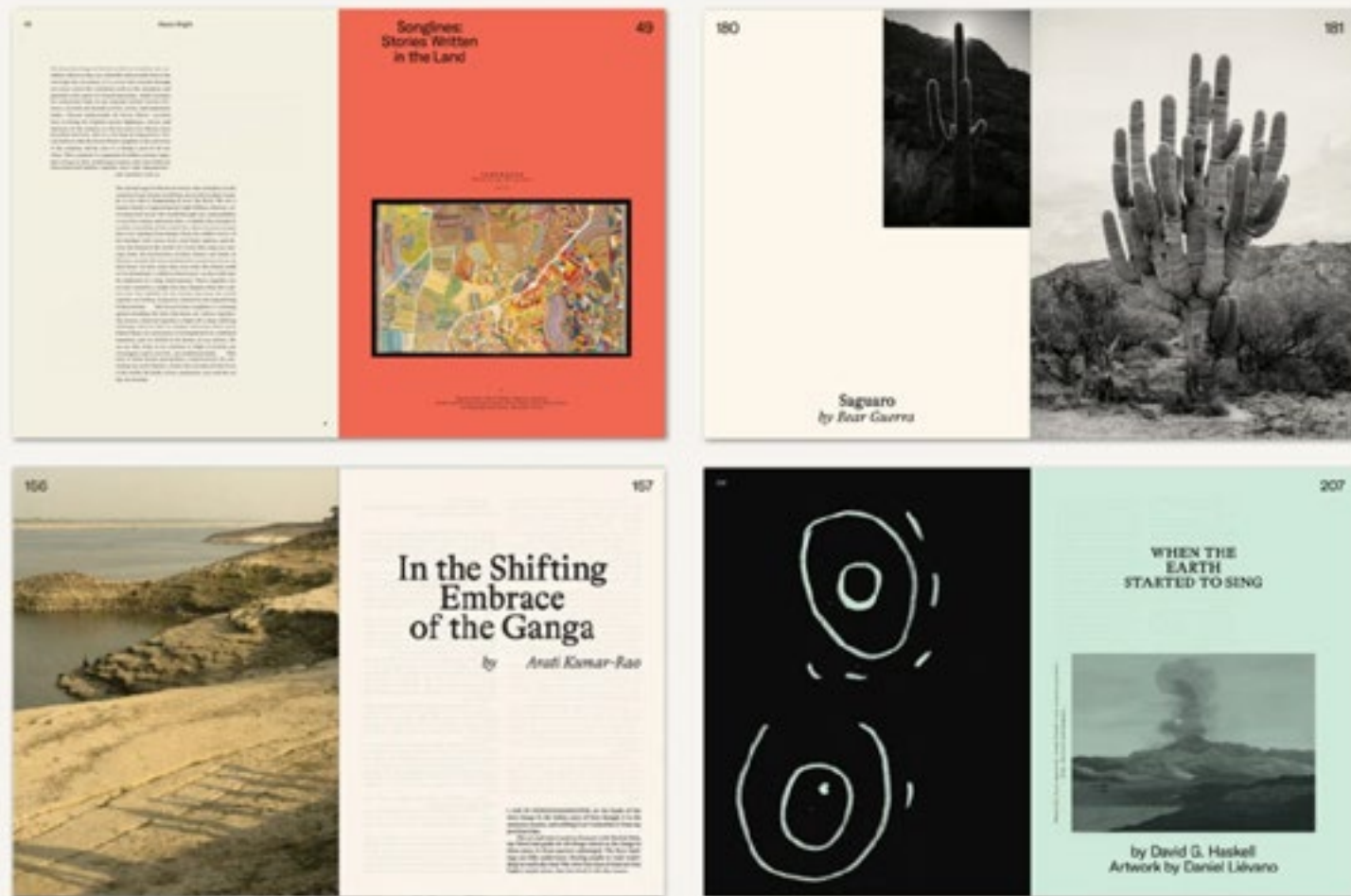
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1. Baule, G. (2016) *Towards Translation Design A New Paradigm for Design Research*, in Lloyd, P. and Bohemia, E. (eds.), *Future Focused Thinking - DRS International Conference 2016*, 27 - 30 June, Brighton, United Kingdom.

2. Baule, G; Quaggiotto, M. (2012). *Cartografie del sapere : interfacce per l'accesso agli spazi della conoscenza / Marco Quaggiotto ; con un saggio di Giovanni Baule*. Milano, Franco Angeli

3. Caratti, E., Menichelli, S., Scagliarini, F. (2021). *Multiple Translations for Disseminating Social Issues: Mag Design Experimentations*, *The International Journal of Visual Design*, Volume 15.

# Communication of the territory



↑ Fig. 1.  
Emergence Magazine, Vol. 4.  
Shifting Landscapes  
[www.emergencemagazine.org](http://www.emergencemagazine.org)

Considering the scope of this research, rivers follow defined courses and trajectories through a given territory, so it is essential to address the context in which they are located and how to communicate it to the surrounding communities through design. It is needed a strategically approach towards the visual, functional and experiential aspects of what we want to highlight of a place to build a particular message or identity about the territory's history, culture, values or aspirations, aiming to engage or resonate with a community and visitors, according to the research conducted by Baule, Calabi, Scuri entitled *Narrare il Territorio: Dispositivi e Strategie d'Innovazione per gli Spazi Percepiti*<sup>4</sup>.

The authors also comment that to do this, design can propose a communication artifact to explore the place itself, in this case an independent magazine, allowing people to interact directly with the environment (physically or digitally) so the user can experience the real space in a new way with an added value:

“The communication design approach to the territory refers to a sensitive knowledge, not just a logical one; a knowledge that reflects on bodily presence and immersive practice in the territory, which takes seriously the task of understanding the reality of what is shown, taking the feeling in the body as a parameter, in order to elevate knowledge”.

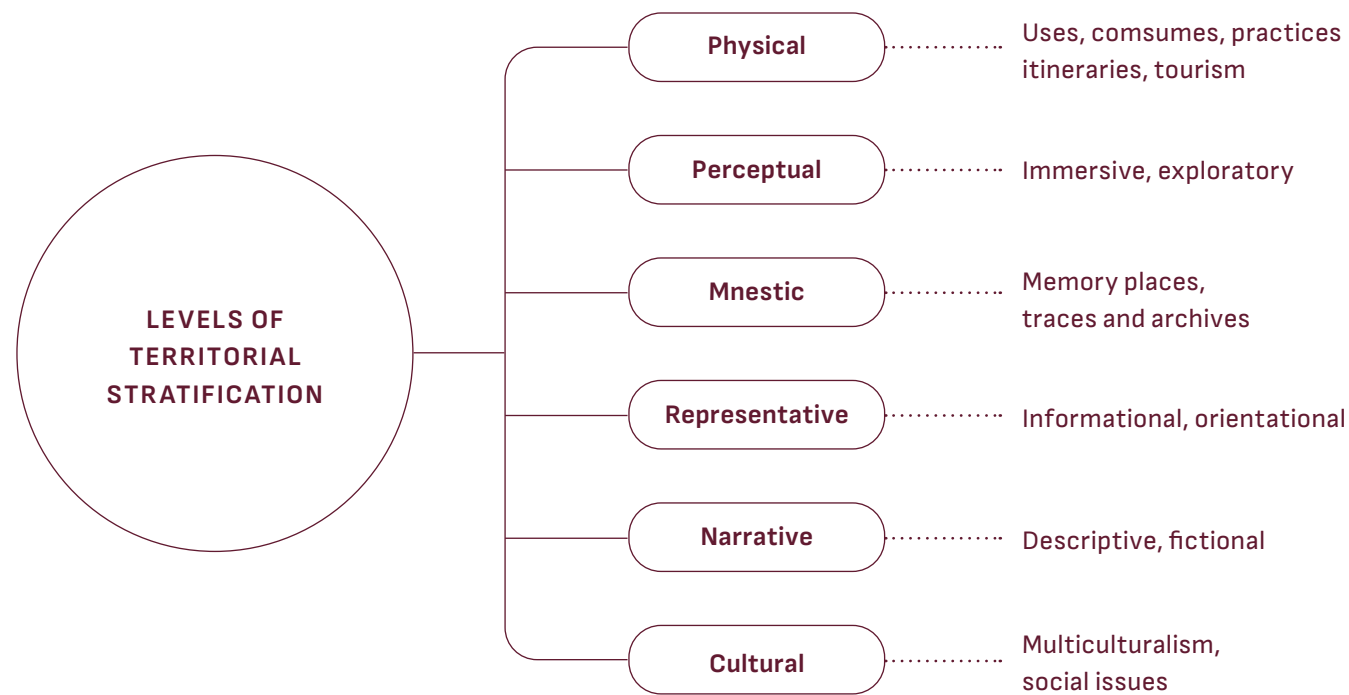
A territory has a living and an ever-changing dimension, and because of this it's always evolving, as explained by the authors Calabi, Chiodo and Scuri in their paper *Experience, Immersion and Perception: Communication Design for Urban and Natural Environment*<sup>5</sup>, where they affirm that because of this, a territory's identity is also in permanent transformation. Rather than a singular identity, there are multiple ones that have influenced and shaped the entire environment—be it urban or natural—throughout history. These past identities coexist in the present, intertwining to reveal the shared roots of memory among the local community, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

4. Baule, G; Calabi, D; Scuri, S. (2014). *Narrare il Territorio: Dispositivi e Strategie d'Innovazione per gli Spazi Percepiti*. Conference: 5th STS Italia Conference A Matter of Design. Making Society through Science and Technology.

5. Calabi, D; Chiodo, E; Scuri, S. (2015). *Experience, Immersion and Perception: Communication Design for Urban and Natural Environments*. Conference: XIII International Forum Le Vie dei Mercanti. HERITAGE and TECHNOLOGY. Mind, Knowledge, Experience.

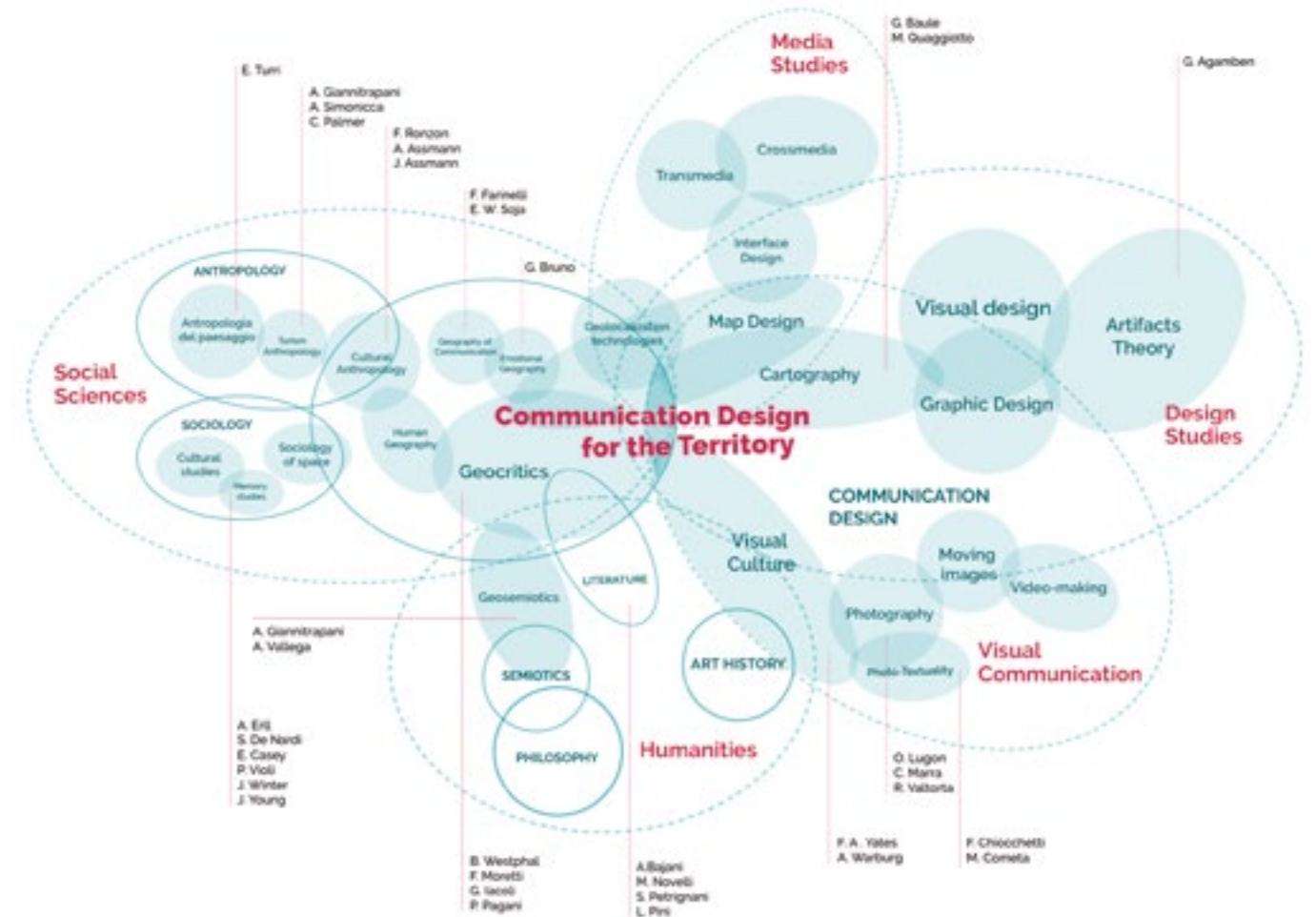
In this sense, it is the communication designer's task to get involved in the history and the current context in which the territory to be analyzed is located, gathering relevant information about aspects that may have an impact on the perception and identity of that place, taking into consideration three dimensions: the physical or material space, the mental or immaterial space, and the real/imagined space, meaning that all types of content (data, information, documents) are also fundamental to truly represent a territory (Baule, Quaggiotto, 2016)<sup>6</sup>.

Baule and Quaggiotto also refer to the territory as a complex entity in the sense of a multi-layered structure composed of flows, perceptions, discussions, and historical documents. We can see it as a "stratigraphy" in archaeological terms, with overlapping layers representing different moments, practices, and stories that describe the space over time.



↓ Fig. 2.  
Stratification diagram made from the lectures of "Comunicazione del territorio", second semester 2022, Politecnico di Milano, Scuola del Design.

This amalgamation of elements from various disciplines like geography, literature, ethnography, and anthropology creates a blend of tangible and intangible knowledge. Through design, these diverse perspectives are interpreted and communicated, making the territory comprehensible, recognizable, and relatable to others; in this opportunity, through an independent magazine, which is also an artifact with its complexity developed by professionals from diverse disciplines such as journalism, design, science, among others.



↑ Fig. 3.  
Diagram from the lectures of "Comunicazione del territorio", second semester 2022, Politecnico di Milano, Scuola del Design. It shows the multidisciplinary system of Communication Design and the academic experts in each area.

6. Baule, G; Quaggiotto, M. (2016). Cartographic Interfaces for Hybrid Spaces: Communication Design in the Spatial turn. SMT, Vol. 15, Communication Design: Material Artefact, Immaterial Influence.



# Independent magazines as communication artifacts

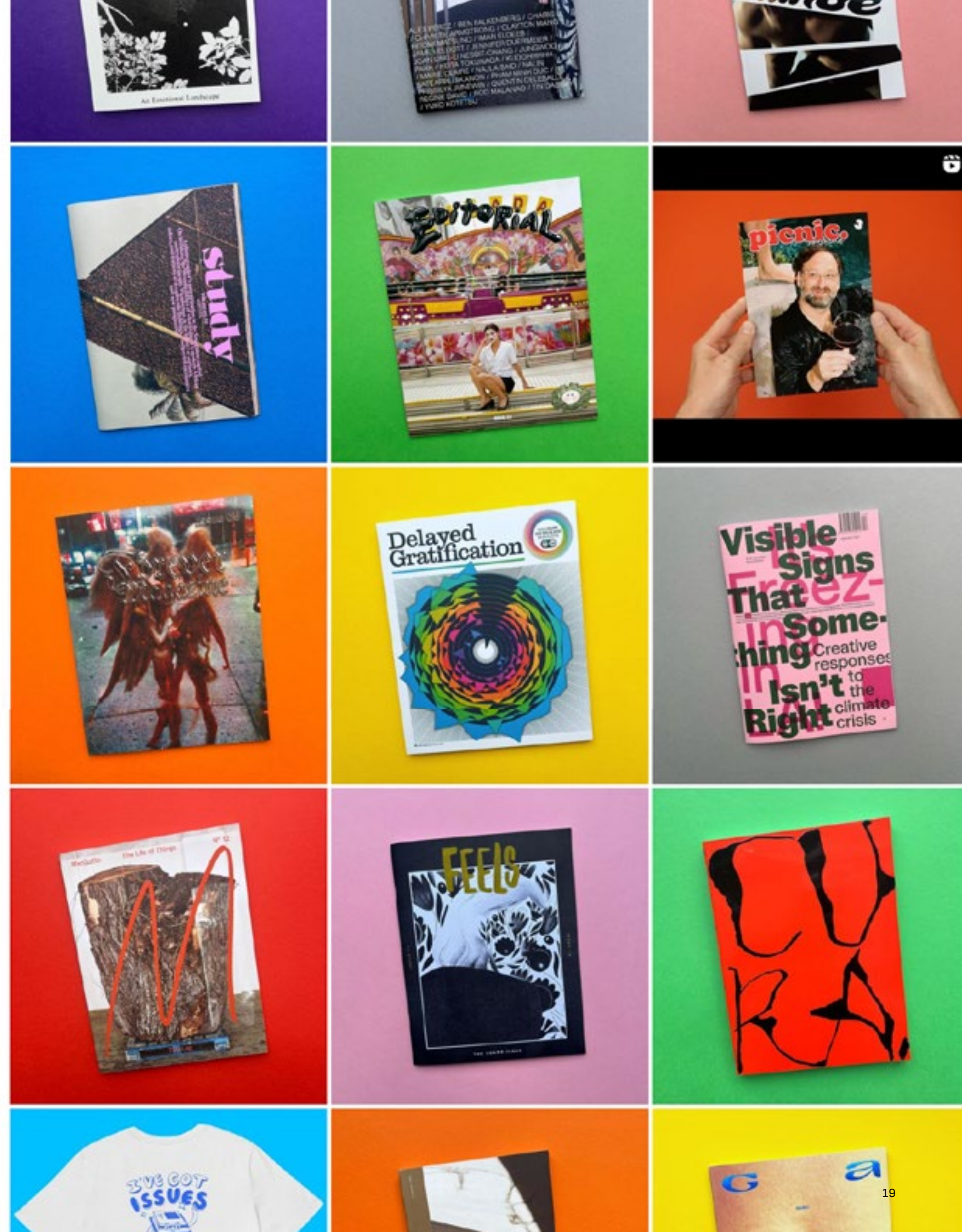
## What is an independent magazine?

Design plays a vital role in creating a communication artifact. Through its thoughtful design process, an independent magazine can present the contents in diverse and engaging ways, while also captivating a specific audience by showcasing the uniqueness of the territory it represents.

The authors Caratti, Menichelli and Scagliarini (2021), explains that the word “magazine” comes from the Arabic term “makhzan,” which refers to a place for storing various goods (Leslie, 2013). This analogy helps us view our subject of study and design as an “independent container of social contents”, covering topics like education, welfare, environment, rights, and health, and the magazine is meant for diverse readers of different ages, cultures, and locations. In essence, these independent magazines are intricate communication tools, containing a variety of information and translation processes that cater to a wide range of audiences.

According to Baule and Caratti (2021)<sup>7</sup>, an independent magazine is a unique and niche publication that stands out for its design and visual appeal, setting it apart from other mainstream periodicals. It’s crafted by small editorial teams of professionals, aiming to be not just read, but also experienced—felt, flipped through, and shared. Unlike traditional magazines published by big publishing houses, these magazines follow alternative distribution channels. Their content revolves around sociocultural issues, often drawing from the personal experiences of the authors rather than following the latest trends. This makes them far from conventional and more experimental in their approach, with an emphasis on high-quality content and aesthetics. These characteristics make them powerful “cultural attractors and activators”, born with the purpose of fostering critical perspectives on the present and inspiring opportunities for change.

Fig. 4. →  
Stack Magazines  
instagram feed.  
@stackmagazines



7. Baule, G; Caratti, E. (2021). “The design of social independent magazines. Multiple translations for a new design sensitivity”. In M. Botta, & S. Junginger, (Eds.), Design as Common Good / Framing Design through pluralism and social values. Proceedings from Swiss Design Network Symposium 2021, Conference Proceedings, 724 – 744.



Following these ideas, Zanetti (2021)<sup>8</sup> affirms that buying and reading a print independent magazine is a bit of a revolutionary act. In our age of information overload, choosing to spend time with an independent magazine reflects a conscious decision aligned with our interests. These magazines are crafted with care, released once or twice a year, and embody months of work by a passionate team dedicated to design. Unlike standardized publications, independent magazines don't adhere to rigid forms or imposed design standards. You'll notice the unique touch of handcrafted papers, varying inks depending on the page color, and a continuous spirit of experimentation.

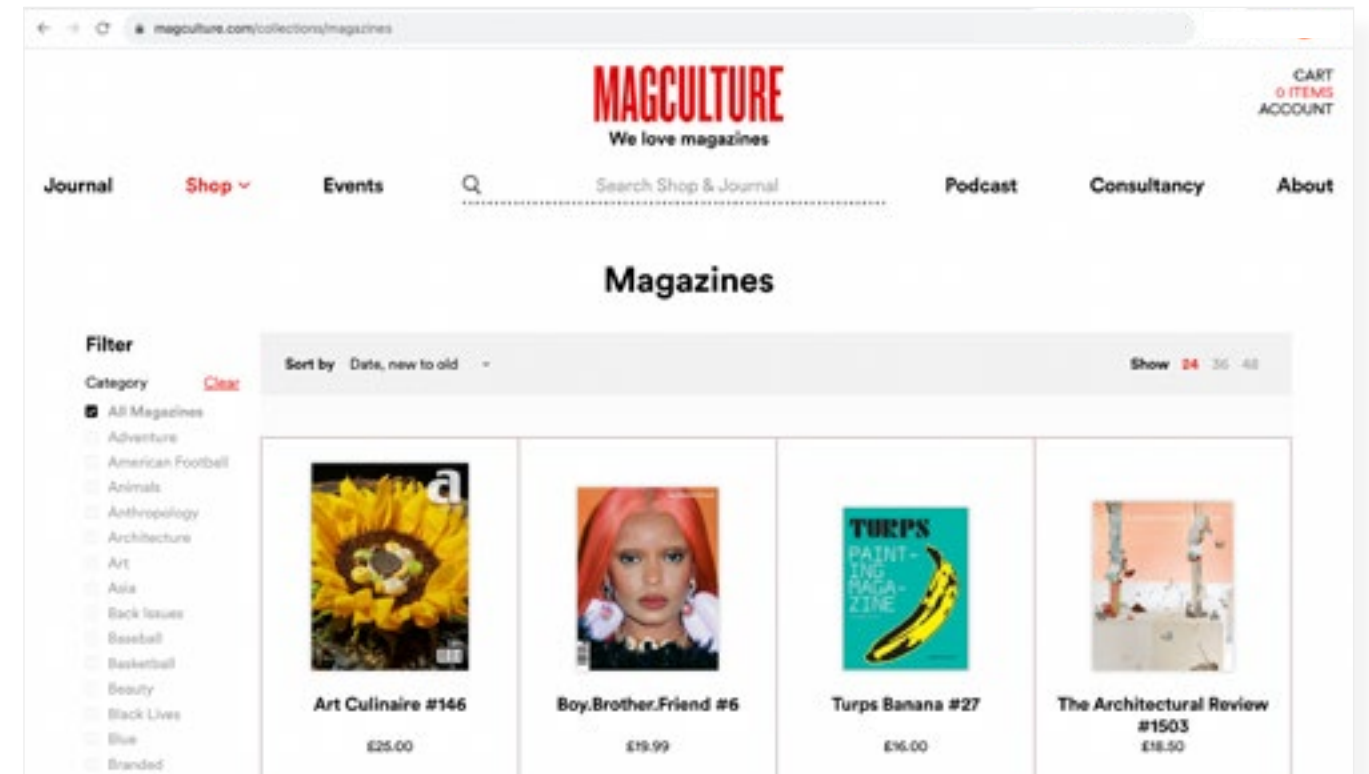
Baule, Caratti and De Kerckhove (2021) delve deeper into this perspective, explaining that a magazine can be seen as a "polyalphabetic and polymorphic text" in the context of Semiotics and Translation Studies. It's a communicative artifact uniting various content, including language, with a diverse array of expressive elements like visuals, sounds, and tactile experiences.

But have blogs, websites, forums and social networks overshadowed the production and success of independent magazines? Despite the internet's arrival and the rise of digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram, independent magazines haven't disappeared; they've simply evolved. According to Cath Caldwell in *Introduction to Editorial Design*<sup>9</sup>, the debate between print and digital is over, and we're now in a new "golden age" where both coexist harmoniously. In fact, magazines are considered "the most successful media format ever to have existed" (Holmes & Nice, 2012), as their enduring popularity is rooted in their ability to adapt to changing times, due to the fact that they are dynamic cultural artifacts not only due to technological changes but also in response to the sociocultural context they exist in.

They play a significant role in shaping and reflecting our reality, delivering diverse content through various analog and digital media, where they definitely survive. As part of the media system, magazines have undergone profound transformations, challenging their definition, languages, reader engagement and business models (Baule, Caratti, De Kerckhove, 2021). The authors also explain that in 2006, David Renard pointed out a new wave of independent, high-end magazines emerging with remarkable force. Fast forward fifteen years, and this phenomenon is still thriving.

8. Zanetti, S. (2021). La Dimensione Collaborativa Nelle Riviste Indipendenti. Analisi e sistematizzazione di casi esemplari. Tesi di Laurea Magistrale in Design della Comunicazione. Politecnico di Milano, Scuola del Design. Relatrice: Professoressa Elena Caratti.

9. Caldwell, C., Zappaterra, Y. (2014). Editorial design. Digital and print, Laurence King Publishing, London.



↑ Fig. 5.

MagCulture's website has a huge amount of magazines, categorized for easy searching. They also communicate events, recommendations, podcasts, among others.

[www.magculture.com](http://www.magculture.com)

The evidence lies in the increasing number of titles available on online platforms like magCulture, Frab's, Stack Magazines, and others, which aren't the typical mainstream magazines; they belong to a more cultured category of editorial artifacts where they embrace experimentation and innovation in content, writing style, format, layout, and visual elements like images and typography.

In this sense, magazines are exciting grounds for experimentation, offering various options for their edition. Caratti, Menichelli and Scagliarini (2021) explain that magazines can be traditionally printed, fully digital, or a blend of both—a hybrid, and additionally, they can embrace other content dissemination methods, like digital radio stations, event spaces, special campaigns, and more. The authors talk about how Magazines use various codes to communicate with readers. These codes include the iconic code, which involves using images like illustrations and photos to represent actions and situations. Then, there's the verbal code, which works alongside the iconic one to complement the message. The graphic code pertains to the page layout, format, and orientation, while the typographic code involves paper choice, materials, binding, and print quality.

Additionally, there's the reading method code, which refers to how readers engage with the content—whether they read sequentially or jump around. Lastly, the relationship code deals with how the magazine establishes a connection with its readers, employing various methods to draw them in. By understanding and combining these different communication codes, we can appreciate the transformative power of "translation practices" within a dynamic and ever-evolving editorial system.

# The field guide: an artifact to explore the territory

Another communicational artifact worth analyzing after talking about independent magazines and communication of the territory is certainly the field guide, which is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary like “a book for the identification of animals, birds, flowers, or other things in their natural environment”. It is an informative book to help people recognize and learn about different elements of the natural world, which generally include detailed descriptions, illustrations, photographs or diagrams to aid in identification, and are usually used by scientists, naturalists, birdwatchers, hikers and other nature enthusiasts to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.

Because they are intended for outdoor use, the design is suited to that function. Printed books are usually conveniently sized to carry either in a backpack or pants pocket, or with color-coded pages to make it easier to find a category, but there are also various digital platforms or apps that act as easy-to-access field guides through cell phones.

Some field guides may include maps that provide information on the geographic distribution of the species mentioned, showing migratory routes, preferred habitats or even locations of usual sightings. From a communication design point of view, the very nature of maps, according to Baule and Quaggiotto (2016), is that they are powerful tools that reshape our understanding of the world by representing objects and places in various ways, creating a recognizable image and helping us orient ourselves. Geographic maps, in particular, serve as orientation systems and have both descriptive and regulatory functions.

The authors keep explaining that when we interact with maps, they influence our perception of reality and provide a simplified depiction of spaces, emphasizing the relationships between different components, while also incorporating elements from anthropological and human realms. By bringing together diverse elements, maps enable connections, comparisons, and relationships between them, so in the end, they are active components of interpretation (Harley, 2001) that reorients our sense of the material dimension of the geographic space.



↑ Fig. 6.

Chile / Some of the pages of the field guide “Flora and Fauna of Chile” by Sharon Chester, showing maps and illustrations of species for field identification.

[www.travelbooks.cl](http://www.travelbooks.cl)



← Fig. 7.

Germany / The Neighborhood Map by Cee Cee Creative. A folding guide to the best shops, bars, restaurants, and galleries in specific Berlin neighborhoods.

[www.ceeceecreative.com](http://www.ceeceecreative.com)

↓ Fig. 8.

Germany / Munich City Guide from Makers Bible. Pocket book format that shows 123 traditional Maker & Crafter hosts in the neighborhoods.

[www.makersbible.com](http://www.makersbible.com)





These maps can be used to explore the territory directly. To strengthen the bond between people and the nature that surrounds them, it is essential to have vivid experiences and interact with the elements that surround a river, the water, its sound, the animals and plants that inhabit it. However, to achieve this, it is necessary for people to know how and where to access these environments. It is in this context that an independent magazine can play an important role by including features of a field guide, becoming a hybrid communication tool that conveys the values of these territories, being both informative and an educational resource that can motivate their readers to go out and explore.

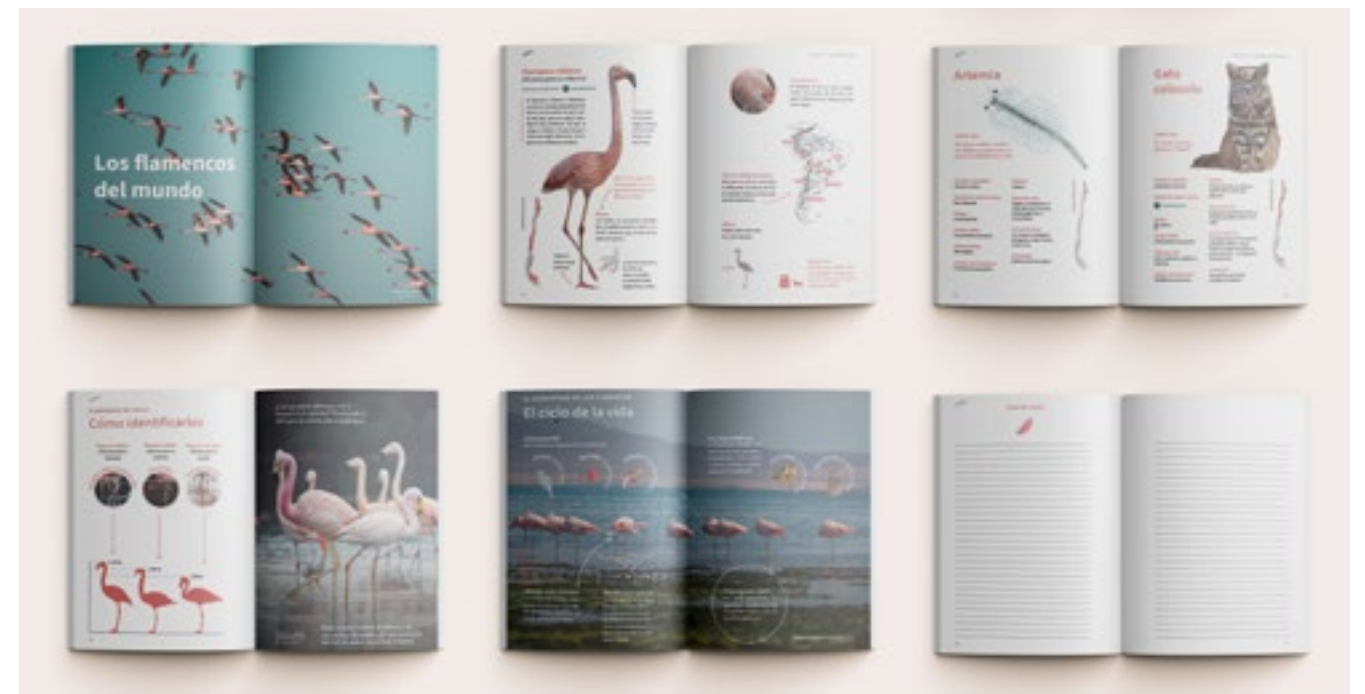
In the case of Chile, field guides to identify birds and other species have gained popularity in recent years. Gonzalo Gonzáles, one of the authors of the illustrated guide *Birds of Chile, field guide and brief natural history*, indicates this, which seeks to captivate bird enthusiasts:

“It is undeniable that among Chileans, there is a greater interest in getting to know the fauna in general, where birds are the easiest to observe and learn about. [...] There are two positive phenomena that contextualize the issue; the first one is a trend of bird photography in the country, with clear results in terms of knowledge about the fauna and its consequent conservation and protection. On the other hand, among children and young people, there is a noticeable greater respect for animal life and the spaces they inhabit. The protection sequence is very simple and logical. We protect what we love. To love it, we must get to know the subject of our affection. Therefore, any initiative that increases knowledge of our fauna makes us love it, feel it as ours, and take care of its conservation.”<sup>10</sup>

10. Ladera Sur. (2017, december, 26). Una nueva guía de campo imprescindible para aficionados a las aves. Ladera Sur. <https://laderasur.com/libro/una-nueva-guia-de-campo-imprescindible-para-aficionados-a-las-aves/>

↓ Fig. 9.

Chile / Birds of Chile, field guide and brief natural history, by Daniel Martínez P. and Gonzalo González.



↑ Fig. 10.

Chile / Flamingo Field guide, designed by Carolina Correa (myself) in 2021 for MERI Foundation. Project for their conservation in the north of the country.

# Slow journalism in the era of speed

In the ever-accelerating world we live in, it's apparent that the pace of life keeps increasing day by day. Technological advancements and the constant changes in society have contributed to this fast-paced environment, providing us with numerous conveniences and opportunities, but also subjecting us to elevated stress levels and information overload. According to Carl Honoré, a Canadian journalist and prominent advocate of the "Slow Movement", which advocates for the value of slow, local, and carefully crafted approaches, say that we have become addicted to speed, constantly trying to fit more and more into every minute of our day. Every moment feels like a race against the clock, a perpetual dash towards a finish line that always seems just out of reach<sup>11</sup>.

In response to this, there arises a pressing need for more thoughtful, in-depth, and empathetic journalism. Slow journalism, in particular, stands as a critique of the mechanisms of globalization (Le Masurier, 2015) and strives to establish sustainable and fair relations with producers throughout the entire supply chain, from production to consumption. As Le Masurier suggests, slow journalism involves adopting an alternative journalistic approach that sidesteps competitive pressures, invests time and resources in comprehensive investigations of focused topics, and utilizes long-form, narrative-driven storytelling techniques<sup>12</sup>. By embracing these principles, an independent magazine can embody the art of in-depth exploration, generating content that is not only meaningful but also holds substantial value in relation to this subject matter, crafting content that resonates deeply and provides insightful perspectives and fostering a genuine connection between the readers.

As Geoffrey Craig (2016) mentioned in his article *Reclaiming Slowness in Journalism*:

"We need a journalism that is able to engage with: global economic uncertainty and the influence of neoliberal thought; necessary political and social structural changes in response to climate change; the growth of technological change and online culture; and increased global flows of people and political struggles over identity and lifestyle. The disjuncture between the state of the journalism industry and this political and social complexity only highlights the importance and value of time and slowness in journalism."<sup>13</sup>

→ Fig. 11. (left)

Linseed Journal.

UK, Biannual. Theme: a single organic material. Volume one: the apple.

[www.magculture.com](http://www.magculture.com)

→ Fig. 12. (right)

It's Freezing in LA!

UK, Biannual. Theme: environmentalism. Sections: Community, Consumption and the relationship between design and ecology.

[www.magculture.com](http://www.magculture.com)



As Zanetti (2021) points out, this commitment to sustainability of this topic goes beyond the content aspect, especially in the realm of independent magazines. Their limited print runs ensure that articles are not wasted, and unsold copies remain on sale until they are sold out and reprinted. Additionally, environmental sustainability has become a central concern for many publishers. Consequently, some are increasingly opting for printers that use paper certified by sustainability labels or choosing recycled paper for their magazine production.

The depth pursued by slow journalism aligns seamlessly with the purpose of independent social magazines. Caratti, Menichelli, and Scagliarini (2021) emphasize that these magazines are primarily devoted to cultivating positive change within smaller communities of attentive and socially conscious readers. They act as catalysts for societal transformation, promoting dialogue and inspiring collective action. Moreover, these magazines advocate for change and raise awareness about specific values, encouraging critical reflection on the urgent challenges of our time. Additionally, they facilitate the creation of new relationships and foster interaction and hybridization among individuals.

11. Norman, M. (2017, february, 20). What Is 'Slow Journalism?'. National Geographic. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/out-of-eden-walk/blogs/lab-talk/2017-02-what-slow-journalism/>

12. Le Masurier, M. (2015). What is slow journalism? *Journalism Practice*, 9(2), 138-152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2014.916471>

13. Craig, G. (2016). Reclaiming Slowness in Journalism, *Journalism Practice*, Volume 10 Issue 4, 461-475. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2015.1100521>



# The power of visual communication



← Fig. 13.  
Interior pages of Slanted Magazine #41, issue about Amsterdam. Released on April 2023, 224 pages.  
[www.slanted.de](http://www.slanted.de)



← Fig. 14.  
Interior pages of Slanted Magazine #41, showing how bold colors and shapes can offer an interesting visual impact.  
[www.slanted.de](http://www.slanted.de)

The team behind an independent magazine typically consists of several key roles, including at least one editor, a production manager/web director, a picture editor, an art director, and a designer (Caldwell, Zappaterra, 2014). Among these roles, the art director and designer play a crucial role in providing meticulous attention and thoughtfulness to the magazine's content, taking care of the visual presentation and graphic design, a significant aspect that enhances the overall appeal and impact of the publication. As Paul Cleveland (2005) highlights in his article *How much visual power can a magazine take?*, the visual language of a magazine evolves gradually through the interplay between the target audience, the cultural context in which it exists, and the magazine publishers themselves. The layout of magazines goes beyond being a mere design endeavor; it is a well-established business practice that transforms editorial material into effective visual communication.

Regarding the editorial and design decisions to be made, the author comments:

"The page boundary, magazine dimensions, contents and layout all interact to produce various aspects of the grammar. Elements such as photographic compositions are made up of various signs that are then coded by the choice of subject, gestures, framing, lighting and subject color choices. The interplay of these elements builds up meanings within different cultures. The same image can often produce different meanings within different cultures. [...] The ability of the designer to create layouts that are easily interpreted by large audiences is therefore of great importance in the marketing of magazines."<sup>14</sup>

Cleveland also refers to the concept of "visual power" inherent in independent magazines, which means the level of impact emanating from their design. This notion, initially introduced by Baird (1993), highlights that the higher the stimulus, the greater the attention-grabbing potential. The stimulus may manifest in the form of impactful layouts, unconventional use of design elements, or innovative approaches to the overall visual presentation.

The primary objective of page layout design is to facilitate the organization of visual and textual elements, enhancing the absorption, transmission, and interpretation of information, allowing readers to engage with the content linearly or access specific sections by non-linearly flipping through the pages.

14. Cleveland, P. (2005). How much visual power can a magazine take?, *Design Studies*, Volume 26 Issue 3, 271-317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2004.05.007>

This flexibility enables the user to navigate and consume the magazine's content according to their own preferences.

The graphics and visual identity crafted within the magazine extend their influence on the various media channels comprising its communication ecosystem, to unify the brand's presence across diverse channels. This includes websites, social media platforms, newsletters, and more, aiming to maintain a consistent and harmonized visual experience across different platforms, establishing a seamless identity that resonates with readers regardless of the medium they engage with.

Among the graphic references of this research, the design and visual communication of Slanted Publishers, an independent German publishing house founded in 2014 by Lars Harmsen and Julia Kahl, is something to dig into. Dedicated to publishing content on typography, contemporary art, illustration, design, photography, among others, each magazine is highly collectible due to their attractiveness. One of its most acclaimed issues is the recent publication number 41, which investigates the relationship between Amsterdam and the design that surrounds it:

"The Slanted team went to Amsterdam to check out the design scene and fell for the charm of the city's century-old "bruine kroegen" (brown cafes). Seeking refuge after bike rides to design studios, they were quickly won over by the cozy ambiance, dark wood, old-fashioned decor, and the aroma of fried croquettes."<sup>15</sup>

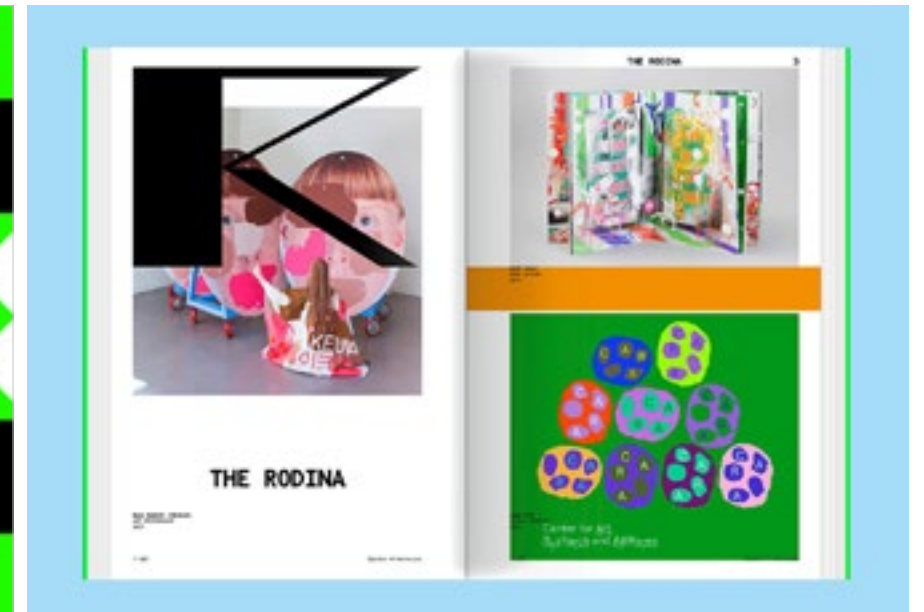
They also explain that Amsterdam's design is all about color and form, serving the masses and being egalitarian: It's everywhere in the city, from bike paths to police cars and even the city crest. The canals and neighborhoods are characterized by muted tones, dominated by black cobblestones and dark brick. Design in this city is bold and radical, and based on this, the visual elements of this issue is capable to showcase Amsterdam in a powerful way through illustrations, graphics, interviews, essays and other features.



↑ Fig. 15.

Cover of Slanted Magazine #41. The magazine has won multiple design awards in several issues, which is published twice a year.

[www.slanted.de](http://www.slanted.de)



↑ Fig. 16.

Interior pages of Slanted Magazine #41. Through color and composition, it represents Amsterdam's design scene.

[www.slanted.de](http://www.slanted.de)

### The visual power of photography

One of the important aspects to consider when thinking about the design of a printed magazine is the type of images to be used. Here, the iconic code of photography can be employed to evoke emotions and convey messages beyond words, freezing moments in time, allowing people to relive experiences and sensations when looking at an image.

For this research, the renowned photographer Guy Wenborne (Chile, 1966) was interviewed. He is dedicated to capturing the natural and cultural geography of the Chilean territory, primarily from the air. Through his work, he has brought to light the most hidden corners of the planet, some of which are inaccessible unless by helicopter. He is the author of more than 45 visual journey books that depict the country's nature, such as 'Chile from the Sky,' 'National Parks of Chile,' 'Chile, Land of Volcanoes,' among others.

15. Slanted Publishers. (2023). Slanted Magazine #41—Amsterdam. <https://www.slanted.de/product/slanted-magazine-41-amsterdam/>



In the interview, Wenborne states:

"I believe that my photography captivates people not only because of the projects I engage in but also because I aim to preach positivity. All the editorial projects for nature photography books for which I sought financing had to do with a positive vision of the natural heritage that we Chileans possess, and they were intended for Chileans, who are called upon to make decisions to preserve our territory. So, if I can 'infect' fellow Chileans with the beauty of the heritage that surrounds us, that is one of my objectives. Presenting beautiful images of remote or distant places allows me to create that connection through emotion, the excitement of seeing and observing a beautiful and new landscape.

My photography has two aspects. The first is to see ourselves from where we don't normally see, from up above, entering that aerial dimension that allows you to appreciate a place from its broad geographical perspective, connecting different geomorphological phenomena to understand a territory from the air, because when we are on the ground, our perception is quite limited; from the air, another dimension opens up to us.

Moreover, rather than seeking an artistic image, what I aim for is to convey a story through an image that has something beautiful to tell us. In my opinion, this is how you manage to convey more than just a simple image." (Wenborne, G. July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023).

Also, the following question was made to him: From your experience and your career as a nature photographer, do you believe there have been changes in people regarding increased environmental awareness?

"Absolutely. I've been dedicated to this for 34 years, and there have been extraordinary changes in society's awareness. What is achieved through books and nature photography goes hand in hand with social media, and adapting to new formats of communicating photographic material is important. For me, photography has to be printed on a physical substrate, although all the digital peripherals that can surround photographic work are the most entertaining. I come from the analog world where having something sensitive to touch, smell, temperature, something graphical, with volume, is a much more complete experience than just the digital, where you lose the aforementioned. The experience of something physical is much more complete. Combining these two is what makes it accessible to a wider audience." (Wenborne, G. July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023).

In this way, the selection of photographs is crucial for creating a visual and emotional impact on readers, those that manage to surprise and inspire, motivate and foster new perspectives on the world, becoming a communication tool that achieves a profound effect on individuals and society.

↓ Fig. 17.

Nature photographs from different territories of Chile, taken by photographer Guy Wenborne. [www.guy.cl/fotografias](http://www.guy.cl/fotografias)





# The reader-magazine relationship and the sense of community

Another of the spheres of translation design that relates to communication design skills is translation for participating and sharing experiences (Baule, 2016):

“Participatory design attempts to involve those who will become the ‘users’ throughout the design development process to the extent that this is possible. Participatory design starts from the assumption that everyone is creative and that everyone can play an active role in the design of solutions aimed at changing society”

Tanja Aitamurto<sup>16</sup> (2013) discusses the adoption of participatory methods, such as co-creation, within magazines, explaining that co-creation involves an online process in which both experts (journalists) and amateurs (the audience) collaborate to generate new products or enhance existing ones, utilizing online forums, blogs, and social media for communication and interaction. This approach, known as open journalism, challenges the traditional “we write, you read” paradigm by fostering a reconfiguration of roles by embracing participatory mechanisms, allowing magazines to cater to the growing demand for personalized experiences among consumers and take a step towards customization to better meet their needs. This approach holds the potential to engage audiences on a deeper level and create a sense of ownership and co-authorship in the content creation process (finding a story topic, angle, interviewees, among others) where the journalists then write based on the users’ choices and wishes, which ultimately have a significant outcome in the reader-magazine relationship.

This participatory outlook is closely linked to the concept of “decolonizing” design, as it fosters the decentralization of dialogues, perspectives, and knowledge, allowing magazines to include and promote a diverse range of ideas and voices that can coexist in a democratic exchange of viewpoints, challenging the dominance of singular narratives and promoting a broader representation of perspectives, as it is said in the statement of the website [decolonisingdesign.com](http://decolonisingdesign.com). In essence, the participatory approach can create a space for marginalized voices, fostering a more inclusive and equitable discourse. It is for this reason that seeking a local focus and an authentic look is important on the way to resonate and create a relationship with a specific audience that has its own history, identity, symbolism and codes, in contrast to the tendency to unify discourses due to globalization.



As part of the research, an interview<sup>17</sup> was carried out to Nicole Ellena, Founder and Director of the Chilean magazine “Endémico”, which is printed twice a year and focuses on environmental and cultural issues. Nicole comments on the importance of social networks to maintain and increase the link they have with their readers:

“When we launch an edition, for example now that we are about to publish number 11, we focus a lot on social networks and that they contribute to the content, but after the launch of the printed magazines that interaction with the audience begins to decrease, and the whole focus of the magazine decreases and we focus a lot on the web, so social networks are kept alive not only by the printed magazine (which actually occupies a fairly small space on this platform) but by the other digital content that nourish it, in addition to projects that activate them. As we launch the magazine only 2 times a year, and lately only 1 due to high printing costs, the challenge is to get creative on Instagram to remind the audience that the magazine exists.” (Ellena, N. July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023).

In their latest magazine issue titled “Urban Nature,” they invited people to contribute to a special Instagram project. They asked for visual content and stories about the unused and neglected spaces in the city. The goal was to explore how cities can adopt eco-friendly solutions inspired by nature and encourage us to live in a more mindful and collaborative manner. In their Instagram post (@revistaendemico) made in early February 2023, they comment as follows:

“Send us a summary of your proposed article, photo essay, essay, poetry, short fiction story, interview or column to [contacto@endemico.org](mailto:contacto@endemico.org). Consider a length of 3 paragraphs, a tentative bibliography and a small portfolio of your previous works. We will contact you if you are selected. The works submitted must be unpublished and we will evaluate thematic relevance, narrative quality and depth of the argument. The deadline for submissions is March 14.”

← Fig. 18.

Poster of the call for participation in the magazine number 11, disseminated through their social networks a couple of months before its launching.

Instagram @revistaendemico.

16. Aitamurto, T. (2013). Balancing Between Open and Closed. Co-creation in magazine journalism. *Digital Journalism*, Vol. 1, Issue 2. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21670811.2012.750150>

17. Ellena, N. July 19th, 2023. Complete interview in the appendix.



# Territory of reference: Santiago de Chile and the Mapocho river

## Rivers: endangered ecosystems that sustain our lives

Rivers are essential for life on Earth, as they provide a vital source of fresh water to lakes and oceans, supporting diverse ecosystems filled with fish, amphibians, birds, and plants. Nature's well-being relies on the health of rivers, and our survival is closely connected to them too. In 2022, according to the World Wildlife Fund, around 2 billion people worldwide directly depend on rivers for drinking water, and they also play a crucial role in our economic growth through activities like fishing and agriculture, supporting 60 million livelihoods, with 55% of them being women. Moreover, rivers offer recreational opportunities, like water sports and camping, benefiting local communities economically, and additionally, for many indigenous people rivers hold a sacred value, serving as spiritual sites where the flow of free water is deeply appreciated.<sup>18</sup>

The UN Environmental Programme describes that for years, rivers and their delicate ecosystems have been under threat from various factors, endangering both our survival and life on Earth. Around one-third of rivers in Latin America, Africa, and Asia suffer from severe pollution, caused by untreated wastewater, agricultural pesticides, and industrial waste. Additionally, plastic and microplastic pollution continue to rise, harming ecosystems and the food chain, as these pollutants ultimately reach the sea, while the global population keeps growing with an extractive economic model which jeopardize free-flowing rivers, with only a few remaining in their natural, untamed state. The demand for hydropower, irrigation, and inland navigation leads to the rapid expansion of dam construction and other river infrastructure, causing disruptions and fragmentation.

Considering all, plus the global context of Climate Change, it is crucial to pay special attention to preserving, protecting, and appreciating rivers. Without them there would be no water, and without water, life as we know it would cease to exist. Therefore, safeguarding our rivers is of utmost importance for the continuity of life on Earth.

18. UN Environment Programme. Four reasons to protect rivers. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/four-reasons-protect-rivers>

## Mapocho river: a natural heritage under restoration

Chile, situated in the southernmost part of the world, boasts over 1.250 rivers (Ministerio de Obras Públicas, 2016). The aim of this project is to connect people with the beauty of rivers as a natural heritage, achieved through an independent magazine, which its first edition will focus on the Mapocho River, an iconic feature of Santiago, which for many, the mental image of the city is shaped by the majestic Andes Mountains in the backdrop and this river flowing from east to west, representing a unique intersection of space and time, forming the essence of the city's landscape.

→ Fig. 19.

The Mapocho River in the Providencia district, seen towards the east of the city. Photograph by Hernán Hettich (2022).







↑ Fig. 20.

The Mapocho River seen from above, Santiago. In this area, the river is boxed in by the concrete walls that contain its waters.

Hernán Hettich, H. (2022).

The shape of Santiago is deeply influenced by its geographical environment, as rivers and watercourses have eroded the mountains, forming the Valley. The Mapocho river, a significant watercourse descending from the Andes Mountains, powerfully flows through the city, carrying sediments and eventually reaching the Pacific Ocean (Mingo, 2019), and its basin contains two Nature Sanctuaries, along with glaciers, wetlands, eternal snow, and diverse flora and fauna, making it a vast and important area of biodiversity.

According to Reid (2009) the Mapocho River, spanning 110 km with a basin of 4,230 km<sup>2</sup>, flows torrentially down from an altitude of 1,159 meters above sea level, flowing into the Maipo River, facing several challenges:

“The great transformation of the Mapocho riverbed that occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and its gradual incorporation into the city’s sewage system led for years to the deterioration of the activity of delicate ecosystems associated with it. The disappearance of much of the aquatic life and the lack of water for recreation, with or without direct contact, make this one of the greatest difficulties in recovering the closeness that the city enjoyed in its origins. Not only has water pollution meant a distancing of the relationship with the river: the discharge of debris and waste on its banks, transferred to the periphery of the city, has contributed to a constant contamination by percolation of liquids and decomposing elements, contributing to a continuous contamination over time”.<sup>19</sup>

19. Andrade, M; Reid, P; Katz, C. (2009). Tres visiones sobre el río Mapocho. ARQ, n. 72. Santiago, Chile.



↑ Fig. 21.

This part of the river is located in Peñaflor district, where nature flourishes thanks to the maintenance of its course.

Vial, D. (2022).

Muñoz (2005) also talks about how this natural thread of life, the river, has been abandoned by the inhabitants of the city for many years:

“From the first information gathered, we can infer the vision of Mapocho as a place where evils, the forbidden, a witness of bad living and a place for those expelled from the city. [...] A place of garbage dumps, of “vice, crime and pestilence” where animals sleep and drink, and where the waters of the riverbed are in charge of carrying and cleaning what the city throws away”.<sup>20</sup>

Based on the above, professor and architect Carolina Katz (2009) states:

“We cannot appreciate it because we do not know how to see it; instead, we would like to see a navigable river similar to other waterways of large, developed capitals, but the Mapocho is not like that. [...] The Mapocho River and its landscape form a unique and valuable ecosystem for our inhabitants, city and culture: the understanding and care of its water logic, flora, fauna and the diversity of its landscape are essential when preserving the ecological balance of the Santiago basin.”

But the fate of the Mapocho is improving thanks to various public policies, institutions and NGOs that have dedicated their work to raising awareness of the value of its waters, cleaning the riverbed, creating accesses so that people can go down to the river and be closer to it or developing bicycle paths, among other initiatives that seek to bring the value of this natural heritage back to Chileans, which supports 60% of the drinking water of the entire metropolitan region, so the understanding, appreciation and exploration of this territory is what the project seeks to facilitate.

20. Muñoz, C. (2005). Memoria y fronteras urbanas: El caso del río Mapocho. Revista Electrónica DU&P. Diseño Urbano y Paisaje Volumen II N°6. Centro de Estudios Arquitectónicos, Urbanísticos y del Paisaje. Universidad Central de Chile. Santiago, Chile.



# Brief history of magazines in Chile

The following analysis is based on the book *A History of Chilean Magazines*, which details the evolution of magazines in Chile from their beginnings in the 19th century to the present. Throughout the book, it examines how they have reflected the social, political and cultural changes in Chile over time.

“In any reconstruction of the period [...] these publications will be an unavoidable voice to look at. They are, in postmodern words, the color of time. An unbeatable record of our way of inhabiting it” (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 16).

## Magazines of the 20th century:

They were mainly literary and political. Their role in the formation of Chilean national identity and in the promotion of education and culture is highlighted. In the first decades, they were influenced by European modernism, which was reflected in innovative and avant-garde graphic designs, while later, in the 1950s, the arrival of the American graphic style and its focus on simplicity had its impact on the visual style of Chilean magazines.

“We must not forget that reading rates in the country were very low. At the end of the 19th century, 68% of the population was illiterate [...] That explains why in many cases the image was key as a message” (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 22).

The first magazines of the early 1900s gave prominence to the image. It was time for the illustrated weekly magazines, published on Sundays, which also made use of photography, several of them making public calls for photographers to compete to show their captures in the magazine, also giving some prizes as art objects for the winners.

In that period, few subjects have attracted as much attention as the new ways of life of the elite, their Parisian luxuries, their palaces and balls, their theaters, salons, clubs and parks. This contrasted with the horror of that poverty that moved away from the historic center and from power in its own “paddock of death,” says Sol Serrano, a Chilean historian. In this sense, it is the newspaper and printing businessmen who pushed the appearance and maintenance of the magazines of the time.

↓ Fig. 22.

“Sucesos” was born in 1902 in Valparaíso and was a great influence for the magazines that came after (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 21)



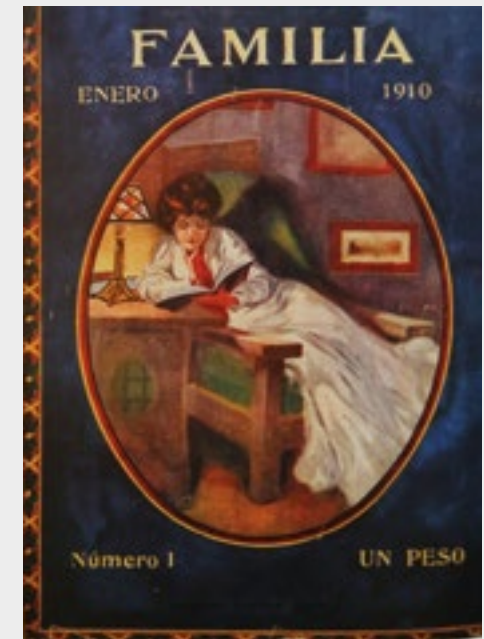
↓ Fig. 23.

Chile ilustrado, an independent magazine published in 1902 by “Barcelona” printing house, aimed at renewing the incipient Chilean magazine industry (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 23).



↑ Fig. 24.

Zig-Zag magazine, 1905. Founded by the director of one of the most prestigious newspaper in the country. With it also began the foundation of the publishing house of the same name, by far the most powerful at the time (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 25).



↑ Fig. 25.

Familia magazine, 1910. Created by the Zig-Zag publishing house, its motto was that it was dedicated exclusively to the home (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 66).



↓ Fig. 26.

El Derby magazine, 1914-1921. One of the magazines dedicated exclusively to horse racing, with a mostly male audience. (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 98).



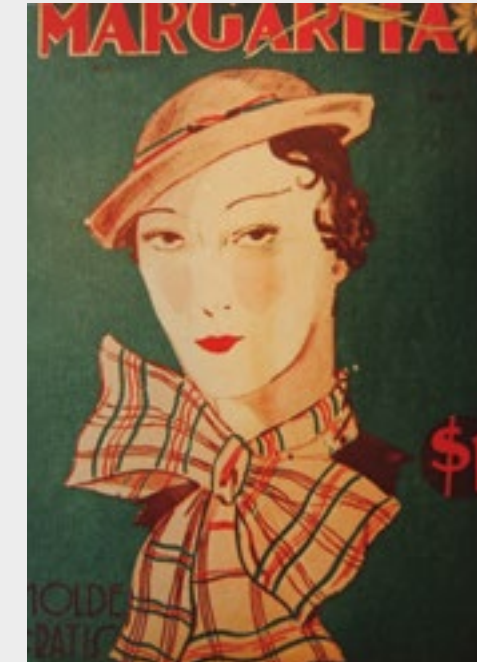
↓ Fig. 27.

Pacífico Magazine, published between 1913 and 1921 by Zig-Zag publishing house (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 33).



↓ Fig. 30.

Margarita magazine, 1934. It included novels by well-known authors, the traditional home economics sections, beauty advice, articles about outstanding women or weddings, among others (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 69).



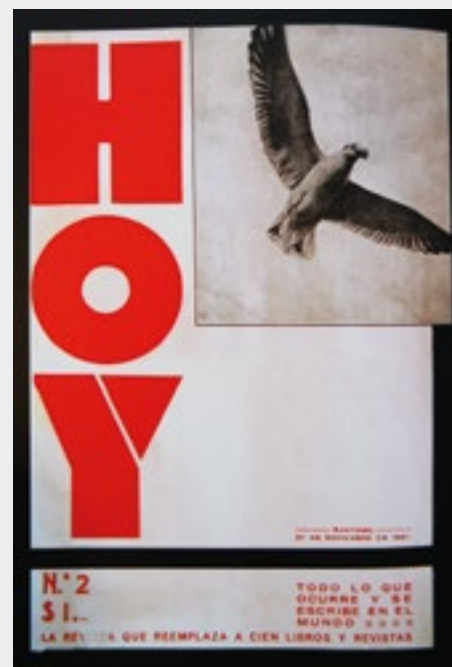
↓ Fig. 31.

Eva magazine, 1942. Created by the Zig-Zag publishing house, it was the most important magazine for decades. Aimed at a female audience, it included articles on cooking, fashion, beauty and services (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 62).



↑ Fig. 28.

Los Sports magazine, 1923, Zig-Zag publishing house. It provided a professionalization of the trajectory of this type of sports magazines. Once again, photography played a leading role in its design (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 89).



↑ Fig. 29.

Hoy magazine, 1931. It followed the footsteps of the American magazine "Times" and its motto was a "weekly magazine for enlightened people", with the intention of creating a public opinion about diverse subjects (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 100).



↑ Fig. 32.

Ritmo Magazine, 1965. It was one of the major musical platforms of the Chilean "new wave" movement (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 55).



↑ Fig. 33.

Ercilla Magazine, 1967. It was born in 1932, and it was the most influential weekly current affairs magazine for decades for its reports and graphics (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 103).



For example, the magazine *Sucesos* (Fig. 22), released weekly for 30 years, was born as a magazine destined to record in album form the chronicle of the main events. "Something new had to be done in the country for publications of this genre, so we tried to contribute all the elements that modern printing and the art of photoengraving could provide," said the magazine's directors.

Years later, given the context of the world financial crisis at the end of 1929, the magazine industry in Chile was affected, as well as the country's economy and the political situation at that time. For example, *Sucesos* magazine closed in 1932, but after the bad moment, Zig-Zag publishing house continued to launch magazines: *Vea*, *Eva* (Fig. 31.), *Rosita*, *Okey* and *Confidencias*, among others, which are mostly feminine magazines. This is the golden age for the publishing house, which is a national platform for talented photographers, journalists, drawing and the arts.

Then, in the 1960s, a phenomenon began that would become very characteristic of the national press over the years, as magazines were incorporated into the editions of newspapers, as in the case of the magazine *Del Domingo* (Fig. 34.), a supplement of the newspaper *El Mercurio*, a magazine that continues to be published to this day. The project consisted of a magazine of general interest, with miscellaneous current affairs, trends and characters, being also an agent of change in the main national publications for its design, with a communicative language, which made it coincide with the irruption of the so-called "New Journalism" in Chile, playing an important role in denouncing various abuses of society, openness to new ways of life and culture.

After the military coup in 1973, many magazines were closed and several of their journalists were persecuted, arrested or exiled. Part of the infrastructure of the former Zig-Zag publishing house was used to create the Gabriela Mistral one, whose first publication was the women's magazine *Contigo*, and then the same team launched the magazine *Cosas* (Fig. 36.), which was a combination of European glamour, Chilean social life and political interviews, which to this day is one of the best-selling and most commercially successful magazines on newsstands.

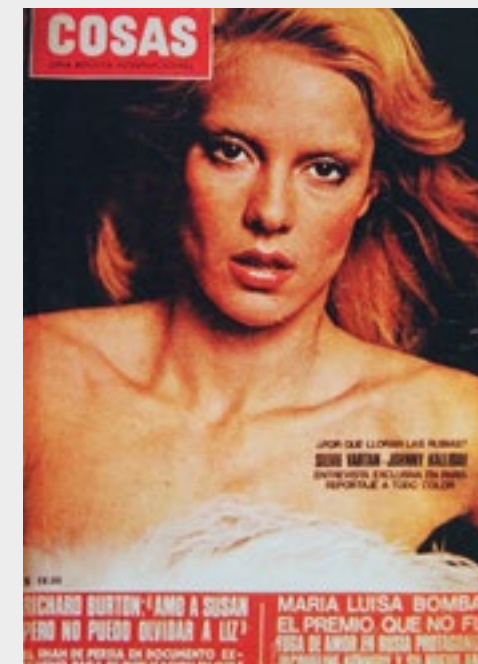
↓ Fig. 34.

Cover of *Del Domingo* magazine in 1967.



↓ Fig. 35.

Cover of *Del Domingo* magazine in 2018. [www.simplepatagonia.cl](http://www.simplepatagonia.cl)



↑ Fig. 36.

Cover of *Cosas* magazine during the 1970s (García, Escobar, 2012, p. 42).



↑ Fig. 37.

*Cosas* Magazine, 2018. The cover features Chilean singer Mon Laferte. [www.fmdos.cl](http://www.fmdos.cl)

### Military dictatorship in Chile (1973–1990):

Magazines played an important role in the resistance against the regime of dictator Augusto Pinochet, spreading news, where many adopted a more austere and sober graphic style, as a form of resistance to the repression of the military regime.

During the years of censorship, magazine teams were acutely aware of the restrictions imposed on them. Any edition that deviated from the established guidelines ran the risk of being confiscated due to its opposition to the prevailing regime. Consequently, many magazines had to make significant changes or even halt circulation altogether, while new publications emerged.

For instance, the *Ercilla* magazine (Fig. 33.) altered its editorial approach and ceased its opposition to the military regime. This strategic move allowed them to secure the necessary funds to sustain their publications. Additionally, they benefited from sponsorship by a Chilean television channel, which granted them substantial exposure.

Following the most oppressive years of repression, a notable emergence of opposition magazines took place, featuring high-impact investigative journalism. These publications faced the daunting task of navigating through stringent censorship reviews, as all content was subject to control before reaching the public domain.

### Post dictatorship:

With the restoration of democracy, Chilean magazines have experienced continuous evolution, giving rise to a diverse array of publications, including cultural, fashion, beauty, and business magazines, among others.

The current affairs magazines, except for a few, disappeared one by one in the first years of the return to democracy, and no new political publications appeared, but rather some current affairs magazines oriented to business, reflecting a sign of the times: the Chilean business and economic boom, the faces and the referents of those successes. For example, *América Economía* magazine (Fig. 39) –a pioneer in the genre– was founded in 1986. It has a rich history of featuring contributions from journalists across Latin America and the United States, emphasizing its international focus from the beginning. By 2012, the magazine's circulation had reached 80,000 editions across Latin America, with 12,000 subscribers in Chile.

Thus, several magazines wanted to give a face to the business world, giving an importance to people many times over the item of money, financed precisely by big businessmen.

On the other hand, as a countercurrent to this trend, magazines such as *Crítica Cultural* (Fig. 40), produced between 1990 and 2007 were born, a biannual publication that focused on cultural studies, literature, art, philosophy, social sciences, feminism, politics, among other topics of interest, to analyze and discuss them together with great figures of Latin American cultural thought, but without being aimed at an expert readership. In addition, these magazines based their contents on what was advisable at the time, which was to include a quota of show business, some scandal and lightness that allows to reach readers in a more cheerful and friendly way.

↓ Fig. 38.

Apsi Magazine issue #245, 1988. It was the first opposition magazine during the dictatorship (1976 – 1995), characterized by its humor and irreverence. On this cover, a caricature of the imminent defeat of dictator Augusto Pinochet in the national referendum. [www.memoriachilena.gob.cl](http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl)



↓ Fig. 39.

América Economía Magazine issue #379, 2009. The cover refers to the obstacles that former President Obama has to face with Latin America. [www.issuu.com/americaeconomia](http://www.issuu.com/americaeconomia)



↓ Fig. 40.

Crítica Cultural Magazine, issue #2, 1990. Cover graphic with illustration representing one of the articles: "a philosophical survey on the historical difference between the sexes." [www.americlee.cedinci.org](http://www.americlee.cedinci.org)





## Environmental magazines in Chile

The previous book ends its analysis in 2012, just at the time when independent magazines dedicated to the environment began to appear in Chile, according to Nicole Ellena, director of *Endemico* magazine, in the interview for this research:

“Nine years ago, I wanted to make an environmental magazine for a personal interests, and that was also linked to design to get out of the narrative that existed at that time, where everything was not very innovative and very much from a scientific perspective with an apocalyptic look, and I wanted to generate a different narrative to empower people and inspire them from the arts and humanities. We started as a blog, and after 1 year we launched the first printed version, which was a political act of leaving the digital. This magazine in Spanish is a contribution because in English there is already a lot of content on these issues. When we started with *Endémico*, there was no magazine of this type in English either, a year later a lot started to appear, but it seems to me that we are still the pioneers in Chile with a printed magazine like this, with a Latin American perspective with topics that are not addressed elsewhere, such as the loss of our biodiversity, environmental justice, indigenous rights, among other issues.” (Ellena, N. July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023).

Other printed environmental magazines are *Revista de Derecho Ambiental*, edited and published by the Environmental Law Center of Universidad de Chile, aimed at academics and professionals interested in the study of legal norms dealing with the environment, or the recent digital and printed magazine *Cuencas* (Fig. 41), which aims to promote the interdependent relationships between art, biodiversity and culture, with its first (and only) issue being on the culture of water. In the editorial section it says:

“From the crossroads of arts, sciences, territories and poetry, we seek to answer what is the alternative that can lead us to recover our territory, its languages and images to find ourselves again in the identity of all living things? Does the acute environmental crisis and the entry into civilizational change have any destiny if we continue to attack nature without reviewing the sense of the economy determined by intensive extractivism? What is the ethical imperative? How to resist?”.<sup>21</sup>



↑ Fig. 41.

Cover and inside pages of *Revista Cuenca*, issue #01, 2021.

[www.revistacuencas.cl](http://www.revistacuencas.cl)

But the main media in Chile about nature and environment is undoubtedly *Ladera Sur*, which is defined as a “community and platform about landscape, nature, outdoor, travel, environment and more, with useful and entertaining content: reports, articles, columns, interviews, photographs and more, all generated by a team and a network of expert collaborators. We seek to bring people closer to nature by providing the necessary tools so that a transversal public can issue opinions and make decisions on the mentioned topics and thus contribute to the care of our planet”.<sup>22</sup>

Although it is not a printed magazine, it is definitely an example of how, through an articulated communication system, it is possible to create a movement in favor of nature, through a sensitive and at the same time powerful way, managing to show the fascinating side of what surrounds us, giving a platform to influential voices that love what they do and seek to inspire others.

21. *Revista Cuencas*. (2021). Centro de Estudios del Agua. Vol. 1, Santiago, Chile.

22. *Ladera Sur*. <https://laderasur.com/>

# Case studies of independent magazines

# Case studies focused on connecting with nature

Within the wide spectrum of independent magazines studied and reviewed, the following are some of the most interesting examples in terms of their visual approach, techniques and communication strategy, aimed at promoting people's connection with nature and highlighting its beauty.

## National Geographic (founded in 1888, USA):

This analysis begins with National Geographic magazine, which has positioned itself as a reference for many people, media and other magazines thanks to its success and popularity, opening doors to diverse cultures, places and landscapes, significantly shaping the perception of the world and its diversity. Thanks to a powerful narrative and captivating images taken by great photography professionals, it has left a mark on how to communicate about nature, society, travel, and the planet. But not everything seems to be so perfect with how National Geographic represents the world.

In the book *Reading National Geographic*<sup>23</sup> by Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins, the authors argue that this medium presents a constructed image of the "Other," reinforcing stereotypes and promoting a Western-centric view of the world, uncovering the underlying messages embedded in the magazine's articles, photographs, and editorial choices, revealing how it constructs a narrative that positions Western societies as superior, exoticizes non-Western cultures, and perpetuates a hierarchy of power and privilege.

In addition, the authors delve into the role of photography in generating such imaginaries, examining the selection of images or the manipulation of visual codes that ultimately reduce complex cultures into simplistic or stereotypical modes of view, as well as displaying women with preconstructed gender narratives that perpetuate prejudices and gender gaps.

23. Lutz, C. A., & Collins, J. L. (1993). *Reading National Geographic*. University of Chicago Press.



→ Fig. 42.

"I buy bread from her every day," Haitian photographer Smith Neuvieme said of fellow islander Manuela Clermont. He made her the center of this image, published in 2015. (Goldberg, 2018)

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)



→ Fig. 43.

Photographer Frank Schreider shows men from Timor island his camera in a 1962 issue. The magazine often ran photos of "uncivilized" native people seemingly fascinated by "civilized" Westerners' technology. (Goldberg, 2018)

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)





↑ Fig. 44.

In a full-issue article on Australia that ran in 1916, Aboriginal Australians were called "savages" who "rank lowest in intelligence of all human beings." (Goldberg, 2018)

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

In the postcolonial society that emerged after World War II, even the magazine's longstanding credo has been to show "the world and all that is in it," it has in fact peddled a very narrow—highly optimistic view of the world. Non-Western people are selectively chosen and edited shown to present a view that basically confirms readers' preferred perceptions about themselves and the outside world, with the majority of illustrations, with their attractive settings, aesthetic formats, and blazing color, have deliberately portrayed a kindly, orderly, idealized world of contented folks, with a tendency toward exotic costumes, rituals, and pagentry when they aren't engaged in useful and productive labor: "a seductive representations of the third world". Poverty, hunger, and violence, though not totally absent in National Geographic photographic coverage, have definitely been downplayed. Photographs that emphasized conflict and difference—such as indigenous rituals, wartime violence, mass social upheaval, and poverty were less popular.

During the Vietnam War, the authors learned the power of photography not just to please, but to shock, educate, and motivate political change. The rise of printed images, they argue, was one of two crucial cultural shifts that affected National Geographic in the postwar period, transforming how history was recorded, producing the genre of photojournalism that the magazine mastered so well.

This new power of the visual, coupled with the publication's enormous circulation figures, gave it exceptional influence over the American perception of the world, and actually, the subscription base is over 90 percent white, though figures for actual readership are much more difficult to estimate.

This perspective on one of the oldest and most recognized magazines on science and environmental education in the world is important because it highlights the concept of decolonization that must be taken when approaching a project that attempts to represent cultures other than those of the editorial team, and the care that must be taken not to fall into the clichés that are communicated both visually and in the speeches. Therefore, the participation, vision, voice, perspective or vision of the communities being addressed are crucial to disseminate their real essence, and this must be done from their own perspective and not from the interpretation of a third party. Examples of this are shown in further case studies.



### Emergence (published in 2018, USA)

"It has always been a radical act to share stories during dark times. They are regenerative spaces of creation and renewal. As we experience a loss of sacred connection to the earth, we share stories that explore the timeless connections between ecology, culture, and spirituality."<sup>24</sup>

As stated on their website, *Emergence* releases a yearly print edition that showcases a diverse range of content, including essays, interviews, poems, adapted multimedia stories, and photo essays. Each volume, spanning numerous color-filled pages and incorporating a variety of paper textures, offers a tactile and intimate reading experience. Encouraging a slower pace, these print editions invite readers to savor and fully immerse themselves in the stories presented. Additionally, *Emergence* publishes smaller collections of work, such as practice booklets and fiction, complementing the main print edition. Notably, the third volume includes a limited-edition vinyl LP featuring a companion soundtrack, providing a multisensory experience for readers.

In addition to its print magazine, *Emergence* extends beyond being a simple editorial product by offering enriching experiences such as gatherings, workshops, retreats, exhibitions, events and programs both online and in person, initiatives that aim to create interactive spaces that foster the exploration of the connection between ecology, culture and spirituality in collaboration with its community. These activities allow for a more intimate and participatory approach, providing opportunities for the exchange of ideas, learning and collective inspiration. On the other hand, once a week –on Tuesdays– they launch a new chapter of their podcast where they interview authors of essays, fiction, multipart series, and more, available on their website. This is why on Instagram alone they have a community of followers of more than 45,000 people who interact with their content.

The attention given to both the aesthetic beauty of their design and the profoundness of their content has earned them prestigious recognition. As testament to their excellence, they have been honored as winners of multiple Webby Awards, which celebrate the finest websites worldwide on an international scale. Additionally, they have been named two-time finalists for the National Magazine Award, an achievement that highlights their exceptional contributions to the field of magazine publishing. Visually, its way of showing the beauty of nature is through an artistic and poetic look, using resources such as photography, illustration and painting.

24. Emergence Magazine. <https://emergencemagazine.org/>

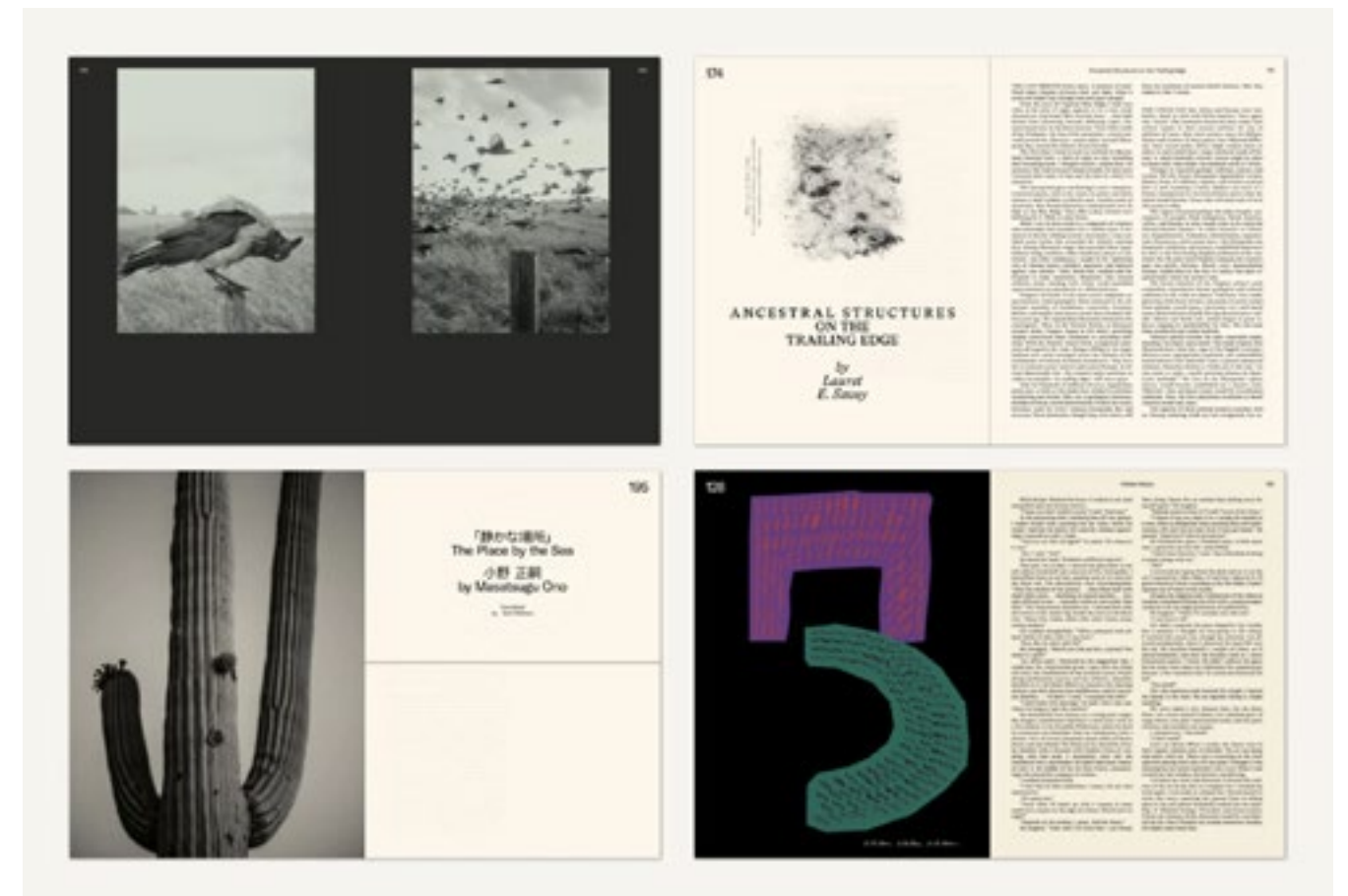
→ Fig. 45.

Cover of Emergence Magazine issue #04, Shifting Landscapes, 2023. "Just as the Earth's ancient patterns and pathways are undergoing seismic shifts, so too are our cultural landscapes".  
[www.emergencemagazine.org](http://www.emergencemagazine.org)



↓ Fig. 46.

Inside pages of "Shifting Landscapes", with the use of black and white photographs in contrast with colorful shapes.  
[www.emergencemagazine.org](http://www.emergencemagazine.org)



### Wonderground (published in 2020, Australia)

"It is said that the first vessels were created not to hold objects, but to hold stories. The vessel – made of earth, shaped by hand, fired with coals that were once trees – was revered and sacred, passed down from one generation to the next. Not for what it was, but for what it held. Wonderground is a vessel for stories that grow from the soil. Stories about who and where we are, where we want to go, and how we might get there." (www.wonderground.press)

Born in 2020, *Wonderground* is a bi-annual print magazine that also publishes content weekly through its digital platforms: its website and Instagram account. As an editorial line, they state that their primary focus lies in exploring the often-intimate connections between humans and the non-human world within the framework of wider ecological and cultural challenges. As writers their goal is not simply to generate content but to curate and present narratives that are both meaningful and meticulously crafted. Georgina Reid, the editor of the magazine, says in an interview with MagCulture:

"I wanted to make a publication that could be held and felt and pondered. You need to yell to get people's attention online, and I don't like yelling. I am not interested in publishing stories like 'Top 10 Plant trends in 2022'. I am interested in meaning, regeneration, transformation. Big—but often quiet—ideas worthy of contemplation."<sup>25</sup>

The magazine offers a collection of essays, memoirs, long-form interviews, poetry, and profiles penned by talented local and international emerging writers, big thinkers, and unexpected experts for curious minds. Its good reception by its audience, is probably due to the fact that the whole project is driven by unwavering values, a profound sense of purpose, and a sincere dedication to creating content that truly matters, and in each issue, Wonderground partners with a not-for-profit organisation to help tell their story and raise awareness of their work.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the magazine's design, each of its four editions is distinguished by a unique color that appears on the cover, accompanied by a selected photograph that encapsulates the central theme of that issue. By harmonizing the color palette with the featured photograph, the magazine achieves an appealing visual which is also characterized for being simple and minimal. Last but not least, they embrace their commitment to sustainability and presents its pages on 100% recycled paper.

↓ Fig. 47.

The four covers of each Wonderground magazine: Issue #01: arise and shine, #02: lost, #03: desire lines, #04: family/tree.

www.wonderground.press



↑ Fig. 48.

Interiors of the issue #02 'Lost', which explores notions of loss and discovery. "I go to the trees to lose myself" says Georgina Reid in an interview with magCulture.

www.wonderground.press

25. Leslie, J. (March 21st, 2022). At work with Georgina Reid, Wonderground. MagCulture. <https://magculture.com/blogs/journal/georgina-reid-wonderground>

26. The Magazine Club. Wonderground No. 2. <https://www.themagazineclub.madrid/shop/wonderground-journal-2>



### Sirene Journal (published in 2015, Italy)

Sirene is an international bi-annual publication, tailored for those people who feel close to the sea even when they are far away from it. The Magazine encompasses a diverse range of topics that appeal to sea enthusiasts, offering a glimpse into hidden islands, whale shark routes, experiences of surfing or free diving, undiscovered beaches, traditions of beach culture and much more, while also covering a cultural and scientific dimension. What sets Sirene apart from other media outlets focusing on sea sports and activities is its unique approach, which prioritizes emotional connection over technical aspects.

To represent the concept of the ocean through this printed product, materiality and design form an essential part of the communication and the experience of leafing through the magazine:

“Large recycled paper pages, rough and porous as only salt water stains can be, large white spaces, pure as a sea horizon, and page-turner stories that will put you on the same wave-length with a surging community looking at the oceans as the intersection of the planet’s destinies. Our paper is made from algae, to make use of excess algal blooms from lagoons at risk. For every half kilo of fresh algae, a kilo of wood is saved. The entire productive process has been scrupulously thought out to attain minimal environmental impact.”<sup>27</sup>

A review from Lorem Not Ipsum<sup>28</sup> refers to its visual codes, its new aesthetics and layout, which ultimately encourages better care of the oceans, while also its design makes it a highly collectable product, which conferred them nominations and awards like the Graphite Pencil at the 2016 D&AD Awards in London.

The founders, Alberto Coretti and Floriana Cavallo, were interviewed<sup>29</sup> by Stack Magazines a year after the first issue was released, to talk about this beautiful, inspirational project which is “a love letter to the sea”. They explain that their editorial approach is split into three main areas: water as emotion (passion and recreational activities), water as culture (art, religion and traditions linked to the ocean) and water as genesis (science, ecology and oceanography).

The founders also refer to the decisions of the visual language chosen, where illustrations and photographs play a leading role in complementing the sophisticated, elegant, and warm aesthetics. They also give a lot of importance to white space to reflect the purity and the clear horizon of the ocean. Regarding typography, it is also directly inspired by the sea: “the masthead font has got tiny, round corners making it look almost liquid.”

→ Fig. 49. (left)

View of the spines from issue #01 to #15. “Fifteen issues, 32 x 23.8 x 10.5 cm, 5.400 gr, 1.524 algae paper pages, 225 stories, 242.327 words, thousands of strokes, countless islands, seven seas, ‘one of the more unique and timeless magazines around’ for @magculture, [...] an amazing community of free spirits with the sea inside and out. Thank you.

Instagram @sirenejournal

→ Fig. 50. (right)

Cover of Sirene Journal, issue #16, 2023. Picture taken in the Mediterranean Sea.

Instagram @sirenejournal



→ Fig. 51.

Spread from Sirene #10: The Ocean in a Pool. “Diving and swimming in the salt water of the ocean pools is a kind of ritual for Australians, strengthening their bond with the land”.

Instagram @sirenejournal

27. Sirene Journal. <https://sirenejournal.com/#waterandpaper-1>

28. Lorem Not Ipsum. Sirene Journal. <https://loremnotipsum.com/product-brands/sirene-journal/>

29. Fantoft, F. (February, 2016). Behind the scenes: Sirene magazine. Stack Magazines. <https://www.stackmagazines.com/everything/behind-scenes-sirene-magazine/>



**Revista Endémico (published in 2017, Chile)**

“We are a print magazine and digital platform that explores the relationships between art, science and ecology, spinning stories that connect us to our sense of belonging to the Earth.”<sup>30</sup>

According to the interview conducted for this research, the magazine’s director, Nicole Ellena, explains the spirit of this project. Endémico is a biannual print magazine produced, designed, print and distributed in Chile, which highlights the multiplicity of environmental movements that coexist in Latin America and the world, presenting an oasis of inspiration to face the ecological, cultural and spiritual challenges of this era.

As a communicator by profession, she was always interested in written communication and everything related to design, so a magazine focused on environmental issues and art meant bringing together her passions. She wanted to make something collectible and more entertaining than what was available at the time, and *Endémico* began first as a blog –the cheapest and quickest way to start the project– and after a year and a half they launched the first printed edition, where Nicole comments on how nice it is to do something printed that is read at a slower pace and that awakens the sensory.

This photographic and illustrated visual journey with 120 pages, is an invitation to reflect on the relationship of our species with the more-than-human world, and doing so, through the years they have created a community with whom they interact through their website, Instagram account, workshops, exhibitions, events and more.

“My audience is people between 22 and 45 years old, with university studies in different disciplines, with a certain level of education and interest in these topics, but not necessarily specialized. They are interested in the arts, science, humanities, and are mainly Chileans from cities like Santiago, Concepción or Valparaíso. In addition, we have digital audiences from other Latin American countries such as Colombia, Mexico or Spain.” (Ellena, N. July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023).

This audience, she says, seeks out and buys the magazine both because of their interest in environmental issues and because of its design, as *Endémico* becomes one of those books that people display on their coffee tables. Regarding the visual codes of the magazine, which has been highly celebrated over the years for its graphic line, illustration and photography predominate in the layout. The director explains that it has been a spontaneous process, where each edition has its particular aesthetics.

30. Endémico. <https://endemico.org/>

→ Fig. 52. (left)

Cover of Endémico, issue #06: Global change, urban ecology. Articles on ecofeminist philosophy, the role of women in the arts and science; the craft of herbalism and medicinal uses of plants; the concept of good living based on mutual support and reciprocity; the complexity of cities and their biodiversity, among others.

[www.endemico.org](http://www.endemico.org)

→ Fig. 53. (right)

Cover of Endémico, issue #10: Life/Death. Includes articles about a Yagana matriarch (indigenous people of Chile) told through the voice of her granddaughter; rites of passage of living and dying in the ancient world; ecological mourning from the perspective of a Colombian environmental activist; among many others.

[www.endemico.org](http://www.endemico.org)



→ Fig. 54.

Interior pages of Endémico #10. Article titled “the cleaners of heaven and earth”referring to the natural processes that occur in nature once a body ceases to live.

[www.endemico.org](http://www.endemico.org)



# Case studies focused on representing local identities

The following case studies have been selected for how, through an independent editorial proposal, they manage to disseminate their ideals and identity and local visions, either to the rest of the world or to their own society, transmitting and making their culture visible from their own diversity of voices.

## Quilo Journal (published in 2022, Brazil)

“In a time of growing extremism and intolerance in Brazil, *Quilo* and the stories featured in it are intended as a counter-reaction to the current parochial system, like a sanctuary in the form of a magazine.”<sup>31</sup>

According to *Quilo's* website, it stands as a unique edition, a 300-page bookish magazine showcasing the incredible works of 38 contemporary photographers and 6 writers from Brazil, with a mix of international contributors including an American, Austrian, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese photographer. Edited and created by photographer and creative director Mico Toledo (Brazilian who works in London) and brought to life by Porto Rocha (a studio based in New York, run by two Brazilian designers), *Quilo* is an extraordinary publication that proudly presents the finest documentary photography and short story writing in Brazil's vibrant creative landscape. It is strategically print in English with the intention to amplify voices and talent from South America to the world:

“A lot of people in Brazil don't know about all these stories but I felt the need to expand and explore them with a bigger audience.”<sup>32</sup>

The magazine is divided into the regions of Brazil, so turning the pages is like being on a road trip to hidden places that would otherwise be inaccessible to us from the north, to the deepest south of the country. The photographic records show us how different eyes have captured the

31. Quilo Journal. <https://jornalquilo.com/>

32. Merrion, L. (December 6th, 2022). Photos that document the forgotten communities of Brazil. Dazed. <https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/57698/1/magazine-quilo-forgotten-communities-of-brazil-bolsonaro-lula>

33. Porto Rocha. Quilo. <https://portorocha.com/QUILO>



↑ Fig. 55.

Images of the printed magazine, showing the cover and some inside pages. Each chapter shows a map of the respective region, followed by photographs and stories. [www.portorocha.com](http://www.portorocha.com)

perspectives and stories of Brazilians in towns, cities, jungles, beaches, among other places in this enormous territory, which serve as a flag against discourses of discrimination that have emerged in recent times thanks to conservative ideologies that have emerged from the hand of former president Jair Bolsonaro, having a negative impact on Brazil's cultural environment.

Porto Rocha<sup>33</sup> states that this is precisely why the appearance of *Quilo* is so important: documenting the numerous and divergent communities, some of them marginalized, is a rebellion against extremism and seeks to be a testament of love to diversity. Visually, readers get a glimpse into the folklore of each region which is introduced by local writers, followed by photographs with grainy texture, muted tones and words that evoke emotion to guide the reader to the heart of the narrative. The layouts, they explain, which are inspired by Brazilian Modernist design vernacular, are raw and bold. While the cover shows a neutral and approachable kraft paper that speaks to a more rustic side of the country. Regarding the typography, it combines a classic serif and a condensed neo-grotesque with expressive details, creating a feeling that is both contemporary and timeless. In general, the interplay between tension and fluidity is created by the juxtaposition of free-flowing visuals punctuated with text.

### Kajet Journal (published in 2017, Eastern Europe)

"A textual & visual collection of thoughts, an assemblage of neglected narratives, a self-expanding string of reflections & perspectives, a perpetual work in progress of a history that keeps re-writing itself; essentially, a journal of Eastern European encounters."<sup>34</sup>

*Kajet Journal* is a beautiful, poetic and activist magazine of bi-annual publication, that aims to decolonize Eastern European thought and imagination, which is developed, designed and printed in Bucharest, Romania.

Showing Eastern Europe from within becomes an urgent topical issue for the Kajet team, making an active representation from this independent edition, which hopes to end stereotypes "of a stale and stagnant eastern Europe" (Davies, K; 2018) providing a platform for academics to coexist with artists and thus generating an alternative space in which encounters with Eastern Europe come to the fore for culturally inquisitive readers, combining poems, photo essays, collages, travel diaries, interviews and much more, aspiring to provide its audience with timeless pieces with an enhanced print value, as they affirm in their website.

In an article from *New East Digital Archive*<sup>35</sup>, the journal's co-founders, Petrica Mogos and Laura Naum, it is explained that the magazine was born based to their own experiences:

"As eastern Europeans who have decided to come back home after (varied) experiences in the West, we started this project as an attempt to dismantle the region's aura of irrationality. [...] Anything originating in the East is mocked, ignored, or rejected at best, and marketed and appropriated at worst."

Because of this, *Kajet* is published in English to reach a larger audience, stimulate social change and the perception of the international world: we not only had to appeal to Western readers, but we also had to —literally— speak their language" Mogos and Naum say, aiming to create a viable bridge between Eastern and Western Europe.

→ Fig. 56. and 57.

Images of Kajet Journal issue #04. "The Bucharest-based journal has a bold design and even bolder intentions. It is a clarion call for everyone to 'bother about Eastern Europe'."

[www.elephant.art](http://www.elephant.art)



→ Fig. 58. and 59.

Cover and interior pages of Kajet Journal #02: Utopias.

[loremnotipsum.com](http://loremnotipsum.com)



→ Fig. 60. and 61.

Cover of Kajet Journal #01: Communities. On the right, some interior pages with an illustrated article titled 'Speaking Scars', about ethnic groups in Europe.

[static.dezeen.com](http://static.dezeen.com)

[artsbites.com](http://artsbites.com)



The language might be english, but the magazine has a strong grounding in Eastern influence through its design. The intentional layout challenges readers with densely packed text and slanted columns, aiming to capture the essence of eastern European life. According to Mogos and Naum, the resulting uncertain and sometimes precarious rhythm mirrors the dynamic nature of life in this region. Embracing instability becomes an opportunity for fruitful experimentation:

"We like to think that the magazine tells a broader story that transcends the East of Europe. It is often rough, but so is life".<sup>36</sup>

34. Kajet Journal. <https://kajetjournal.com/about/>

35. Davies, K. (January 12, 2018). Introducing Kajet: the Romanian journal fighting western xenophobia through art. *New East Digital Archive*. <https://www.new-east-archive.org/articles/show/9481/introducing-kajet-romanian-journal-fighting-western-xenophobia>

36. Elephant. (December 31st, 2020). Kajet Journal Platforms Eastern Europe's Neglected Narratives. <https://elephant.art/kajet-journal-platforms-eastern-europes-neglected-narratives/>



### Safar Journal (published in 2014, Lebanon)

Safar is an independent design and visual culture magazine based in Beirut, Lebanon. It's released twice a year in both Arabic and English, featuring a diverse array of contributions from designers, thinkers, and artists, all centered around a chosen theme. The name "Safar" signifies "travel" in Arabic, representing its mission of fostering communication and breaking cultural barriers, as it is explained in the medium Stack Magazine where an interview<sup>37</sup> of the co-founders Maya Moumné and Hatem Imam was carried out.

Studio Safar, a graphic design studio in Beirut, is behind the publication. Their creative process prioritizes sustainability, aiming to create beautiful designs that endure the test of time and remain cherished by people, so each issue of the magazine seeks to be a desirable object that reflects an authentic aesthetic.

Bilingualism is a significant aspect of the magazine, as readers will experience a unique perspective, with Arabic content read from right to left and English from left to right. This duality serves as both a conceptual and political framework, as Safar's publication in Arabic holds great importance: very few publications exist in the Arab speaking world, making it an innovative and significant addition.

Following this aspect, in a 2020 article by Van Schneider<sup>38</sup>, the founders expressed their commitment to shifting the design narrative's focus away from the global north. This shift enables them to explore Lebanon's history from an introspective standpoint, without succumbing to nostalgic or nationalistic tendencies. They recognize the impact of American and European design history on Lebanon's cultural production, emphasizing the need for a more authentic and inclusive approach:

"American and European design history and thinking have definitely shaped our understanding of the field in Lebanon; you can see this vividly in academia. I think a more accurate term for it is colonialism rather than globalization. It starts with language and extends to all fields of cultural production, from fashion to architecture and of course design."

On the other hand, they have a growing community, with Instagram being a useful channel for disseminating the magazine's content digitally and interacting with readers through a direct channel. In this way, Safar's diverse content appeals to a wide audience formed by graphic designers, architects, photographers, artists, writers, researchers, indie magazine enthusiasts, and anyone interested in the history of design and the art and culture of Western Asia and North Africa (Okcuoglu, 2020).

→ Fig. 62.

Safar Journal, issue #07, 2022: Networks. Articles about community building practices and spaces of print collectives from New York to Spain; symbols and short-term safe spaces in Palestine; the film distribution and production in Lebanon; among many others.

[www.journalsafar.com/store](http://www.journalsafar.com/store)

"All these articles—and the many others in the issue—are well researched and written, as well as being well illustrated. This is always one of the joys of Safar; while the editors make their arguments strongly in words, they also relish the visuals" (Leslie, 2022).<sup>39</sup>



37. Okcuoglu, H. (June, 2020). Safar issue 5. Stack Magazines. <https://www.stackmagazines.com/magazine/safar-issue-5/>

38. Van Schneider, T. (September 22, 2020). Design in Lebanon, featuring Studio Safar. Van Schneider. <https://vanschneider.com/blog/design-in/design-in-lebanon-featuring-studio-safar/>

39. Leslie, J. (September 14th, 2022). Magazine of the Month: Safar Journal #7. MagCulture. <https://magculture.com/blogs/journal/safar-journal-7>

### Meantime (Indonesia)

"Meantime is an independent magazine documenting Singapore stories lost to time. Published annually, each issue uncovers our past through personal stories."<sup>40</sup>

In a 2023 article<sup>41</sup> from The Straits Times, a well-known Singaporean media, they talk about the great reception *Meantime Magazine* have had among young readers, a printed publication created by Mr. Pang Xueqiang and his course mates from Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information back in 2019. Despite starting as a student project, *Meantime* has now released four editions and sells 800 copies an issue, where half of which are distributed overseas: it has found its way to cities like London, New York, and even Mexico, capturing the attention of a niche yet curious global audience, intrigued by the untold stories of a country they might have never had the chance to visit. Mr Pang says of *Meantime's* popularity:

"It's baffling, to be honest. We don't overexplain. We get e-mail saying that the shape appeals to them, that it's a rare Singapore publication and that it's a very nice way to explore a country."

The magazine's shape, as referred to by the creator, along with other aspects, has pushed the physical boundaries of the medium. Interestingly, these innovations align thematically with each issue they publish, and every release so far has featured truly unique design quirks and going beyond the conventional norms, and as a result, the series of issues stands out for their originality, as it is analyzed by an article<sup>42</sup> from the medium *It's Nice That* (2023), where they explain the concept of each issue.

In their first issue (2019) centered around love stories, the magazine featured a cover with torn pages. For their second issue (2020), focused on ghost stories, they introduced a color-changing cover that reacts to the heat of the reader's hand. The third issue (2021), exploring funny stories, had a playful twist with a big bite taken out of its cover. As for their fourth issue, released in March 2023 and delving into sinful stories, the magazine's bottom right-hand corner has been sliced off. Pang says:

"We thought we would not be able to find new ways of playing with the format, but we surprise ourselves each time".

40. Meantime Magazine. <https://meantime.sg/about>

41. Yong, C. (July 5th, 2023). Print zines make a comeback with creative designs and niche storytelling. The Straits Times. <https://www.straitstimes.com/life/arts/print-zines-make-a-comeback-with-creative-designs-and-niche-storytelling>

42. Milroy, D. (June 15, 2023). Meantime magazine explores the seven deadly sins in rebellious form. *It's Nice That*. <https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/pang-xue-qiang-meantime-issue-4-publication-150623>



↑ Fig. 63.

Images from Meantime Magazine's instagram, with the print magazine issue four, 'Bad Stories'.

[www.instagram.com/meantime.zine/](http://www.instagram.com/meantime.zine/)

As the article explains, Issue four ('Bad Stories') creatively explores its theme through various layers of meaning. The magazine's spine features the phrase "Let that sin in," cleverly referencing readers consuming content on sin and mischief. Additionally, the idiom "let that sink in" becomes a play on words such as "Let that sin(k) in," giving the impression of the magazine sinking when placed upright. Moreover, the letters "SIN" also represents Singapore's country code, adding another intelligent element.

The core concept of this issue revolves around challenging the reluctance of people, both inside and outside Singapore, to acknowledge the country's negative aspects. The content delves into seven stories related to the seven deadly sins, revealing misdoings through everyday occurrences and traditions. The intention is to provide a counter narrative, offering a unique perspective by looking at Singapore through a "bad" lens despite its reputation as a safe, orderly, clean, and efficient place.



# Design Proposal: Caudal Magazine

# Formulation

## Preliminary conclusions

After this study focused on the translation paradigm as the essence of design practice, visual communication, communication of the territory, the development of an independent magazine and its implications, slow journalism, and the analysis of various case studies, the formulation of a Chilean independent magazine focused on rivers makes sense, which would have the following features:

- **A local perspective** that engages with the communities and the territory to which each issue is directed, promoting a sense of belonging and seeking to involve the readers. Additionally, the magazine will serve as a platform for Chilean writers, journalists, photographers, and artists, promoting local talent.
- **Spatial orientation**: To explore the territory and the river, the artifact will include maps showing relevant locations, access points, trails, among others, allowing readers to have a spatial reference and better plan their activities in nature.
- **Enriched information**: It includes articles related to the river and its history, personal experiences in nature, expert testimonials, practical tips for exploring specific environments, combined with poems, excerpts from stories, profiles of local flora and fauna species, among others.
- **High-quality illustrations and photographs**: Through these resources, the aim is to captivate and emotionally engage the reader, who will be able to visualize and better understand the described river.
- **Educational aspects**: The artifact will serve as an educational tool, providing knowledge about environmental conservation, sustainable practices, the importance of biodiversity, among others.
- **Digital media system**: the printed magazine is part of a communication system that is supported by a website and an instagram profile, aimed at building an audience, maintaining a connection and interaction with them during the period between publications, and facilitate the promotion of the project, seeking to reach more readers.

This thesis has been developed after a couple of years of the Covid-19 pandemic, a period in which many people around the world longed to leave their homes and connect with nature. This need, along with the rise of the digital era, has led more and more young people and adults to choose to return to analog experiences, disconnect from mobile phones and the internet, and enjoy the exploration of the physical world around us in a more authentic manner, allowing a break from the fast-paced and overwhelming rhythm of globalization.

For all these reasons, an independent magazine that includes some characteristics of a field guide, through thoughtful journalism and bold, detailed design, has the potential to inspire Chileans by showing the beauty of rivers and the threats they face in a closer and more direct way, providing an aesthetic experience of its landscape.

## Formulation

### What

*Caudal* – Chilean Independent magazine of bi-annual publication and media, that aims to capture the beauty and value of rivers.

### Why

Chile's rivers are at risk because over 80% of them are privately owned, while pollution, drought, overexploitation and other environmental issues are threatening these waterways, which serve as habitats for native plants and animals, they are crucial sources of drinking water and food for communities and hold sacred value for many of them.

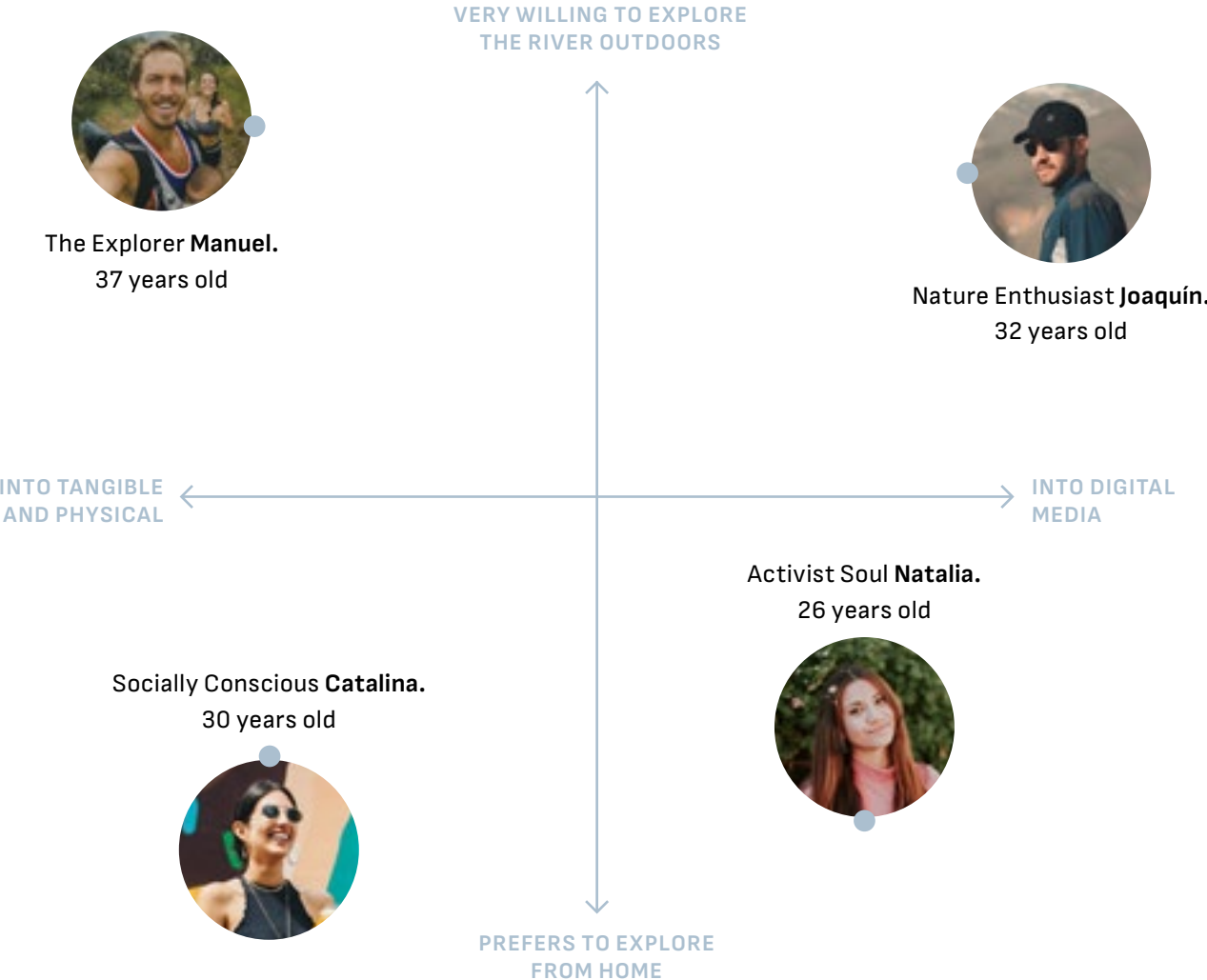
### For what

Inspire people to explore them, raise awareness of their values and encourage action for the protection of these ecosystems.

# Target

Chilean young adults (25–40 years old), with interests in nature, science, art, design and humanities.

Based on this user profile, the following categorizations have been formulated to create the personas: The Y-axis corresponds to how willing they are to explore the river in the field, and the X-axis refers to their preference in the use of technology and digital media.



“

*My passion is the mountains and nature. That's where I feel most free and more connected to myself. If I had a religion, it would be nature itself.*

## Manuel Mingo, 37 The Explorer

**Married:** Yes  
**Kids:** León 5, Florencia 1  
**Education:** University Degree in Agronomy  
**Location:** Puerto Varas (south of Chile)

### BIO

Manuel studied agronomy, but is currently dedicated to mountaineering and the outdoor company he founded, which aims to bring people closer to nature through sport. He grew up in the city of Santiago, but when he got married and became the father of two children, he decided to move to the south of Chile to enjoy a more leisurely pace surrounded by volcanoes and forests. As a good connoisseur of the nature of his country, he understands its tourist and ecosystemic value.

### GOALS

- Through his work as a mountaineer and outdoor activity planner, he wishes to connect people with nature.
- To be a reference in the world of outdoor activities, to spread its expertise and its voice.
- Visit the most remote places in Chile.

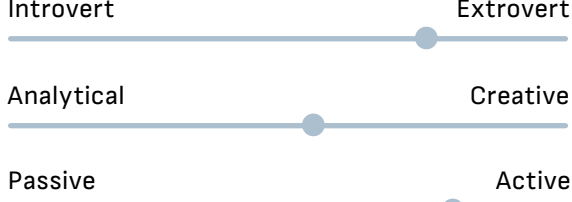
### FRUSTRATIONS

- Witnessing the degradation of nature made by men and industries.
- Not being able to explore new places due to a busy schedule.
- The low socio-environmental awareness of many people.

### MOTIVATIONS

- Enjoy experiences with his family and friends
- Learn what is happening in the outdoor world from the point of view of locals and experts.
- Plan excursions to unfamiliar places, and even better if they involve a physical challenge.
- Support communities by purchasing supplies from the first source.
- Meet and surround himself with new people who share his same passion for nature

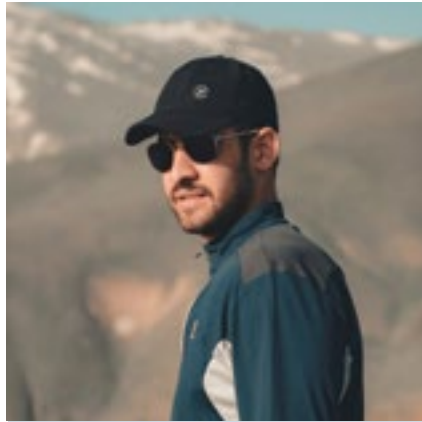
### PERSONALITY



### CHANNELS







“

*We are animals too, we just forget it. It is enough for a person to spend a season in a forest to become a conservationist.*

**Joaquín Valdivia, 32**  
Nature Enthusiast

**Married:** No  
**Kids:** No  
**Education:** University Degree in Arts  
**Location:** Santiago

**BIO**

Joaquín is a muralist by profession. He grew up in Santiago near a hill, so he has always felt a special connection with nature, and one of his biggest hobbies besides painting is bird watching. He is very interested in conservation and has taught himself about biology, a passion he tries to spread. He doesn't like to stay still for long, that's why he doesn't have an office: he works on demand, moving around the city by walking or cycling.

**GOALS**

- Democratizing nature and making it more accessible to people.
- Combine his work as a muralist with his interest in nature conservation, in order to find a way to contribute to its protection.

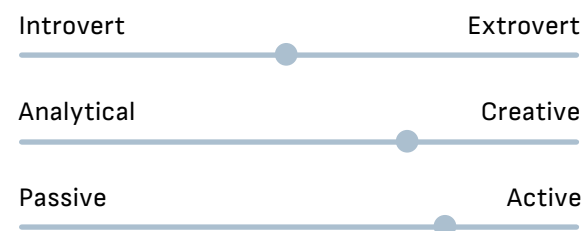
**FRUSTRATIONS**

- Chilean society's appreciation for what is foreign over what exists in its own country.
- That public policies or municipalities do not prioritize the restoration of degraded ecosystems in Santiago.

**MOTIVATIONS**

- Sustainable practices and is actively involved in environmental initiatives.
- He actively seeks out media that educates and inspires him around environmental subjects.
- Share his experiences and knowledge on social media platforms to raise awareness among his friends and followers.
- He appreciates stunning visuals and well-manufactured and handmade products.

**PERSONALITY**



**CHANNELS**



“

*We must seek better ways to inhabit this planet and distribute the resources available to us in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.*

**Catalina Vargas, 30**  
Socially Conscious

**Married:** No  
**Kids:** No  
**Education:** University Degree in Law  
**Location:** Concepción (center-south of Chile)

**BIO**

Catalina is an environmental lawyer who has focused her career working with different foundations for the protection of people and nature. Since college she started to get involved in green and social justice movements, and in her free time, in addition to rowing in one of the lakes in her city and reading 2 books at the same time, she collaborates as a volunteer supporting various causes from her knowledge in law.

**GOALS**

- Have a meaningful life by improving public policies, strengthening citizen participation, environmental justice and the protection of nature.

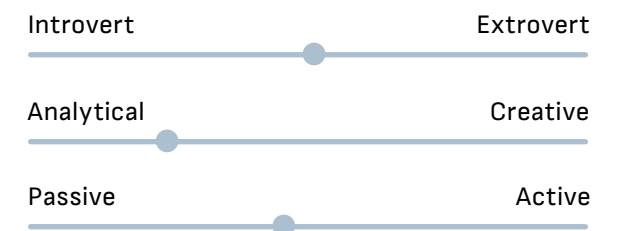
**FRUSTRATIONS**

- Negative impacts on people's lives due to the toxicity and pollution they suffer from living near industries.
- The intense extractivism of nature under the guise of economic development.

**MOTIVATIONS**

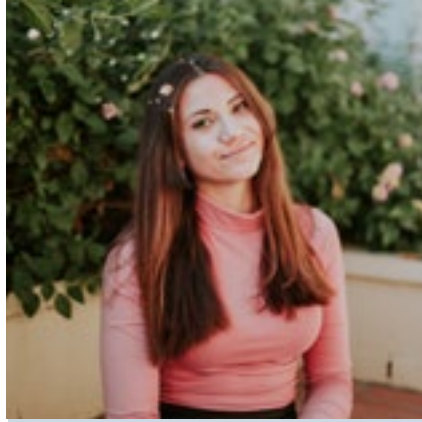
- She advocates for the preservation of natural resources
- She supports initiatives that bring attention to the importance of nature
- She supports local businesses that align with her values
- Raise awareness about environmental issues
- Be well-informed about current socio-environmental challenges

**PERSONALITY**



**CHANNELS**





“

*Some people feel superior to animals or other living beings, but we are equal. We have so much to learn from nature, even the smallest creature has something to teach us.*

**Natalia Pinto, 26**  
**Activist Soul**

**Married:** No  
**Kids:** Sebastián, 2  
**Education:** University Degree in Design  
**Location:** Valparaíso (port city close to Santiago)

**BIO**

Natalia grew up by the sea and pursued her passion for graphic design, which led her to work in an advertising agency. Her love for print media began in childhood when she started collecting books and magazines. Nowadays, she is well-versed in all the bookstores and fairs in Valparaíso, where she discovers unique zines and other independent publications. Also, she enjoys activities like picnics and camping, so she often escapes to nature with her friends during weekends. She has a liberal outlook on life and a strong commitment to environmental activism, engages in campaigns or events, both online and offline.

**GOALS**

- To be part of the change of consciousness of the new generations.
- Be a good example for her son Sebastián and instill his vision of respect and care for the planet.

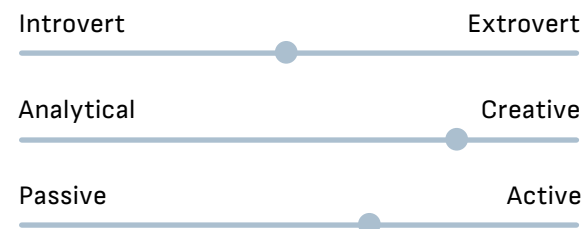
**FRUSTRATIONS**

- Social and environmental injustice
- Animal cruelty and impacts of the food industry
- Ecological anxiety due to the uncertainty of what will happen as a result of global warming

**MOTIVATIONS**

- Do good deeds for the environment, such as picking up litter on walks or not consuming plastic products, while choosing local and environmentally friendly products.
- Be active on social networks by sharing news, events or campaigns that align with her interests to spread the word
- Be part of a community and discussion groups that care about nature conservation and divergences.

**PERSONALITY**



**CHANNELS**



After the creation of these users, Caudal magazine can incorporate aspects that meet the needs of each user. For example:

In the case of **Manuel -The Explorer-**, the fact that the magazine has a map showing where to go directly to the river to explore it and observe flora and fauna, is something attractive, in addition to the testimony of experts in the field of nature and the outdoor world, which would give greater weight and relevance to the articles. He would purchase the print magazine and attend its launching to surround himself with like-minded people and create new contacts and friends.

For **Joaquín -The Nature Enthusiast-**, a well designed magazine that takes care of visual details would be an attraction. Also, as a fan of identifying birds, the magazine could have a list of species you might come across on the river, as well as information about them. He would be someone who would share the digital content on his own networks as he would support such an initiative.

**Catalina -The Socially Conscious-**, would buy the printed magazine, and would love it to have physical details such as postcards, bookmarks, or other cute items that she could collect. In terms of content, she would be interested in the history of the river, the life of the communities around it, and success stories of how the territories have risen up or organized for its protection. If the magazine organized events or talks, she would attend and seek to participate.

**Natalia -The Activist Soul-**, on the other hand, would like to have the magazine in print but would also value an active social media account to spread the magazine's contents. She would appreciate the participation of people representing divergences, indigenous peoples, environmental activists, poets or little known but talented artists. She would feel more identified with the magazine if, when buying it, a percentage of the proceeds were donated to an NGO or foundation dedicated to the conservation of the river or its communities.

# Magazine conceptualization

## IDENTITY AND VISUAL LANGUAGE

### Naming

Caudal, the name of the magazine, refers in Spanish to the flow or quantity of water that passes through a river, canal, or other body of water in a specific period. In a more metaphorical sense, a “caudal” can refer to a current, abundance, or continuous flow of something, such as a “caudal of knowledge” which would represent the constant flow of information or wisdom. Thus, the name Caudal alludes to rivers and their history, the richness of life they carry—the water—and the species that inhabit the surroundings of this flow, which changes in size depending on rainfall, the season, and human activity.

The magazine’s slogan, “Cuando el río suena, vida trae,” translates to “When the river sounds, it brings life” in English. This phrase is derived from a well-known Chilean saying, wherein its original form signifies that if rumors or information are circulating, there’s likely some element of truth to them. In this context, the saying alludes to the vitality that rivers bring due to their diverse ecosystems and the life-giving properties of water.

### Fonts

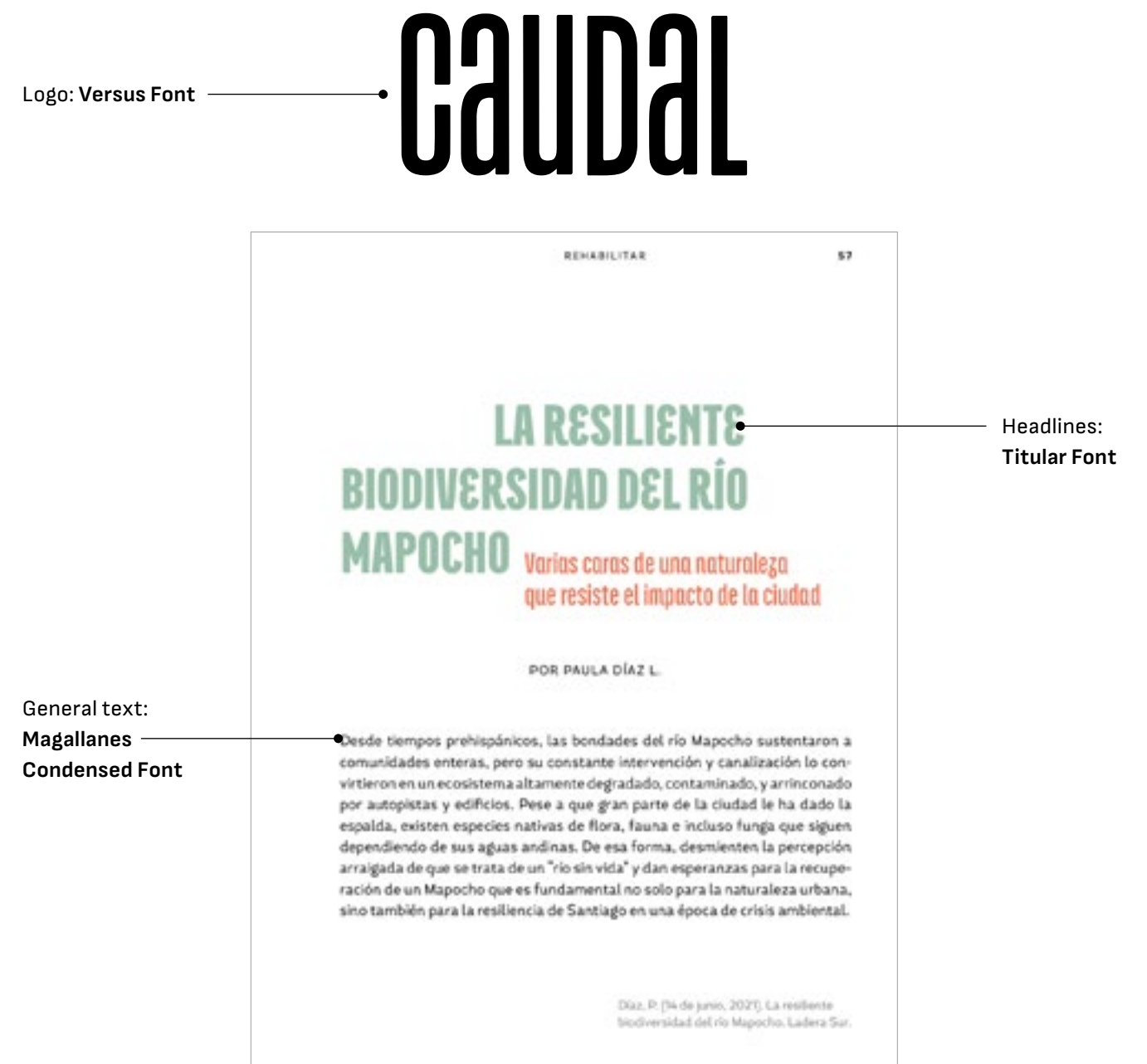
All of the magazine’s typefaces are of Chilean origin, crafted by the renowned Latinotype type foundry, which was established in Chile in 2008:

“Our mission is to forge innovative typefaces by blending a diverse array of influences rooted in our South American heritage, resulting in top-tier products catered to the modern design industry.”<sup>43</sup>

In fact, the collective’s name, “Latinotype,” points their profound connection to their cultural roots. The founders share that they are aware that Latin America lacks a typographic heritage akin to that of Europe or the United States, nevertheless, this absence of a typographic legacy affords them the freedom to create unburdened by historical constraints.

43. My Fonts. About Latinotype. [https://www.myfonts.com/collections/australis-pro-font-latinotype?gclid=Cj0KCQjww4-hBhCtARIsAC9gR3ba7Tnm4qYCH23Vaaa4qRjixADOT7Sfk5IBpRHvAcVlvD9gyiXT1skaAossEALw\\_wcB](https://www.myfonts.com/collections/australis-pro-font-latinotype?gclid=Cj0KCQjww4-hBhCtARIsAC9gR3ba7Tnm4qYCH23Vaaa4qRjixADOT7Sfk5IBpRHvAcVlvD9gyiXT1skaAossEALw_wcB)

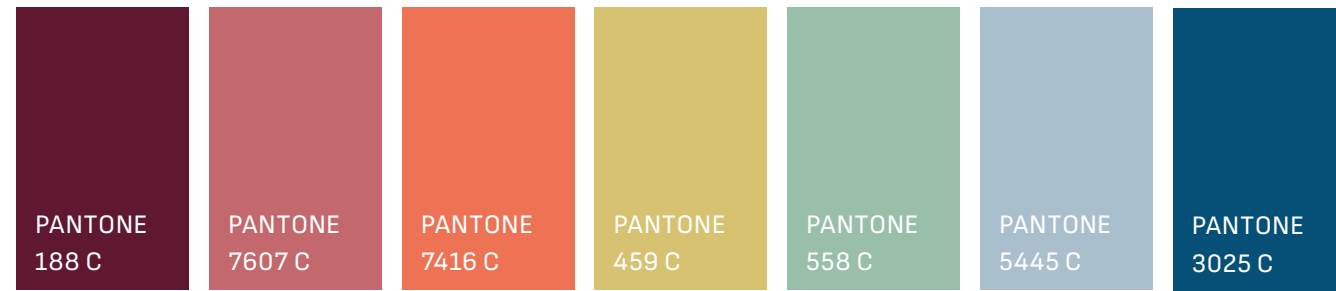
The magazine’s masthead, Caudal, is written in Versus typeface (display, 2019), the headlines in Titular (display, 2015) and the general text employs Magallanes Condensed (san serif, 2013). Here there’s an example:





### Color palette

The chromatic palette is composed of a variety of colors inspired by nature, which have been subtly adjusted to enhance its luminosity. Each edition will have one color as the protagonist on its cover, and the rest of the palette will be applied on the inside pages of the magazine..



### Photography

The contents will be enriched by high quality images with a delicate aesthetic value, creating a photographic narrative that extends throughout the magazine, seeking to excite the reader. In each edition, we will collaborate with Chilean photographers who have captured the rivers in a captivating way, adding an interesting approach.

### Illustrations

The magazine will commission Chilean artists known for their naturalistic style and distinctive strokes, akin to scientific illustration. These illustrations will primarily feature in the 'field guide' section, aiding easy identification of the showcased species."

Examples from Catalina Hildebrandt (illustrator) and Diego Vial (photographer):



### FORMAT

#### Dimensions

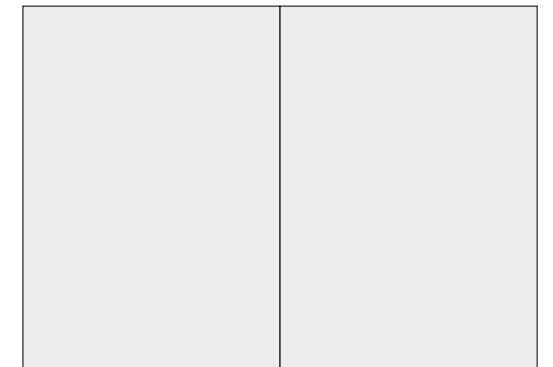
This proposal merges the qualities of an independent magazine with the functionalities of a field guide, so its dimensions should facilitate its transport in backpacks or bags, allowing a comfortable reading, so we propose a "pocket magazine" in A6m format of 10.5 × 14.8 cm when closed, which is equivalent to a quarter of a letter page. This choice maximizes production efficiency, making the most of the printed space available.

Being a small magazine is also intended to be a treasured, collectible product, different from what is usually found in the market, very transportable and comfortable to leaf through.

Closed: 10.5 x 14.8 cm



Extended: 21 x 14.8 cm



#### Binding

In order to prioritize a lower production cost at the printer's, which will then translate into a lower sales value and therefore be more accessible to readers, the type of binding will be hotmelt.

#### Number of pages

The total number of pages of the magazine will be approximately 112, which may vary from issue to issue.

#### Printing

Four-color process on offset press (4/4).

### **Print run**

Taking into account the lessons learned from this research (especially the interview with the director of Revista Endémico), the first year 1.000 copies would be printed. If the success of the magazine grows and there is a greater demand, the following year the print run would be 1.500 for each edition.

### **Materials**

For the cover we decided to use Curious Metallics Ice Gold of 300 grams, a satin paper, smooth and with a metallic finish, which gives it a distinctive and attractive shine, reflecting the light. It was chosen under the concept of simulating the lights and shines of water flowing through a river, and its gray color is related to the color of the stones. At the same time, this paper generates a high contrast with the color photographs that will be found on the inside pages, under the concept of “what the river keeps and we do not see with the naked eye”.

The paper for the inside pages is 70-gram opaque couche paper to ensure that the images are of good quality and that the colors stand out in a vibrant way, providing a soft and smooth feel to the touch. The chosen grammage contributes to the reduced weight of the book, which helps to reduce distribution costs by making the magazine lighter to transport.

## **CONTENT DEFINITION AND ORGANIZATION**

### **Collaborators**

Since Caudal aims to be an independent magazine with the mission of highlighting the importance and beauty of rivers in Chile, it is essential to incorporate a local perspective and diverse viewpoints that contribute varied voices from experts, artists, collectives, indigenous peoples, historians, poets, etc. For each issue, where a specific river will be addressed, foundations or NGOs that are aligned with Caudal's values and vision will be contacted to collaborate, while also promoting their work and call for contributions to their cause.

### **Language and distribution**

As the target audience is a young Chilean readership, the magazine will be distributed in print format in Spanish, only across the country. Additionally, it will be available online in English to reach an international audience and promote the exceptional ecological value of these southern world ecosystems.

### **Tone of voice**

Unity, collaboration, optimistic point of view, “we are part of the solution; we are part of nature”.

### **Structure**

1. The first section of the magazine is dedicated to exploring the history of the river from a sociological perspective.
2. The second section features articles on the river's biodiversity from an ecological approach, highlighting its importance to the ecosystem.
3. The third section consists of a field guide, showcasing the species that can be found in the river. It also includes pages for readers to take their own notes and make observations.

### **Issues**

As a bi-annual publication, the six rivers that will make up the first, second and third years have been projected, with the following focuses as their central theme.

#### **Issue #01: Mapocho River**

On the path to rehabilitation.

#### **Issue #02: Pilmaiquén River**

An indigenous ancestral territory.

#### **Issue #03: Loa River**

Persisting in the Atacama Desert.

#### **Issue #04: Maullín River**

A spectacle of natural richness.

#### **Issue #05: Mataquito River**

Claiming its space through a flood

#### **Issue #06: Diguillín River**

A free flow that wants to remain so.



The first issue focuses on the Mapocho River, as an example of a river that was abandoned and mistreated for years but has managed to regain part of its wild strength thanks to the work of various organizations and public policies aimed at its restoration. The Mapocho exemplifies how, when there is willpower, it is possible to revitalize ecosystems.

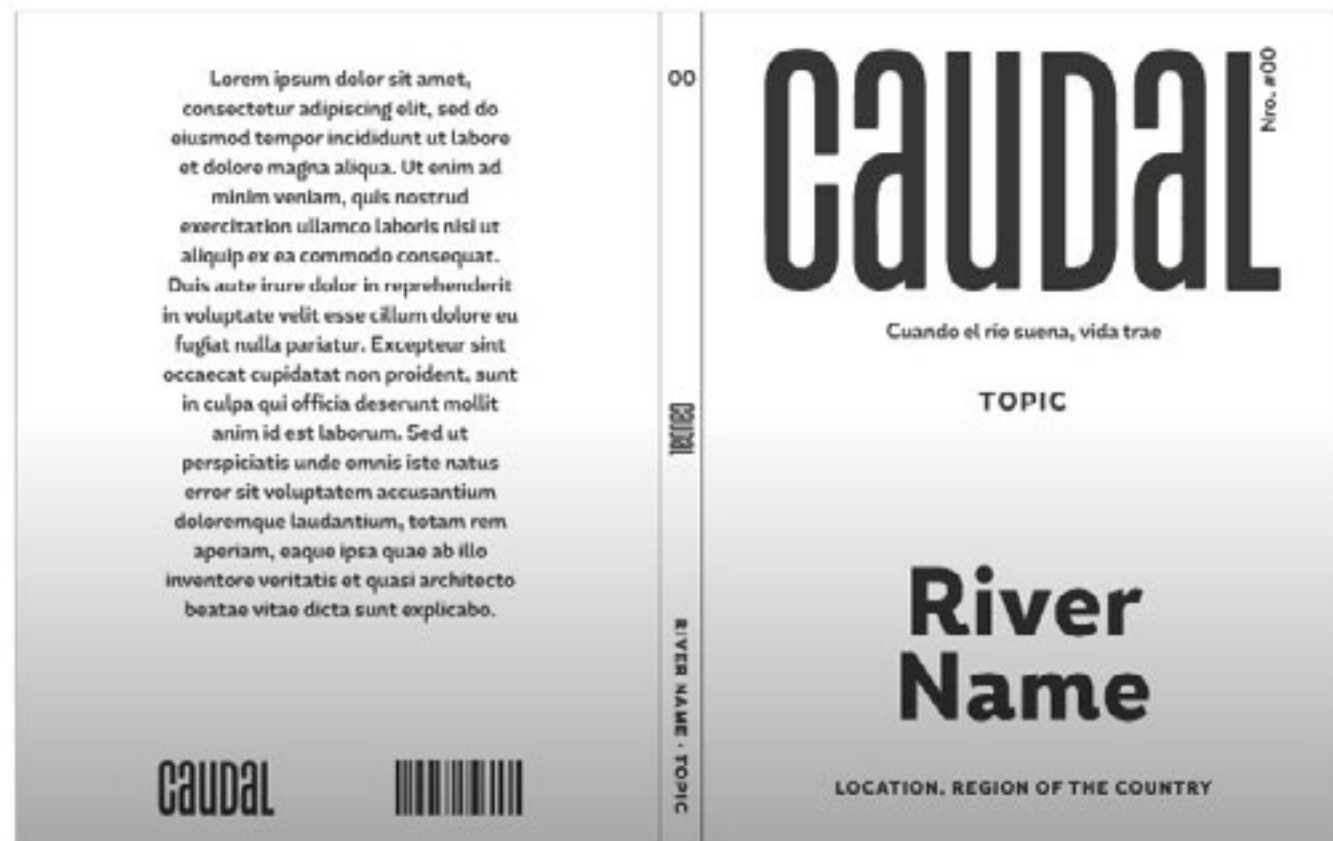
**GRAPHIC LINE**

**Cover**

The same structure was defined for all the covers throughout the collection, so that there would be a unity among the magazines. Being typographic only and with a gradient tone, in combination with the qualities of the Curious Metallics paper described above, results in an abstract cover that leaves the figurative for the inside of the book, with photography and descriptive illustrations.

The back cover has a descriptive text about the central theme of the issue, which is placed at the top center of the cover, also center-justified, to communicate the concept of a river flowing downwards.

Structure:



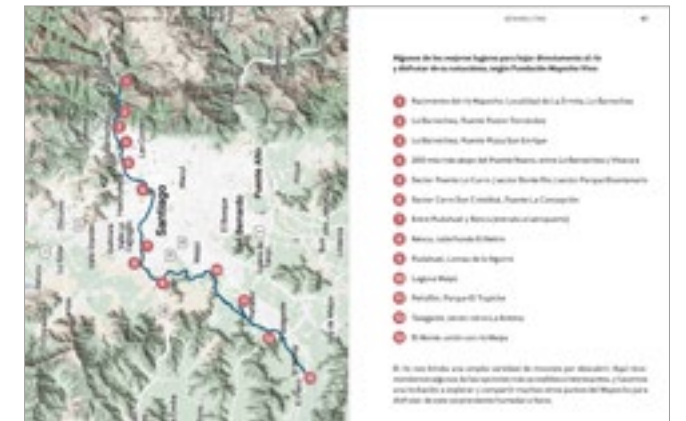
Covers for the following 3 years:



**Visual aspects**

The magazine has certain graphic characteristics that distinguish it:

- Chapters are highlighted with a solid color that distinguishes them: blue refers to the past, to the socio-cultural history of the river; green speaks to its ecological value and biodiversity; and red is a call to action to explore the territory.
- The poems present tonalities in gradient, with the intention of visually giving a smooth and progressive transition between chapters.
- The black and white photographs show the more degraded side of the river, and those in color show its nature in its splendor.
- Use of two Chilean typefaces throughout the magazine.
- Presence of a map showing the location of the river and points of interest along its course.
- Presence of naturalistic illustrations in the last chapter: the field guide.
- Outstanding quotes are shown centered in the middle.
- Spaces for readers to take notes and write their observations in the magazine

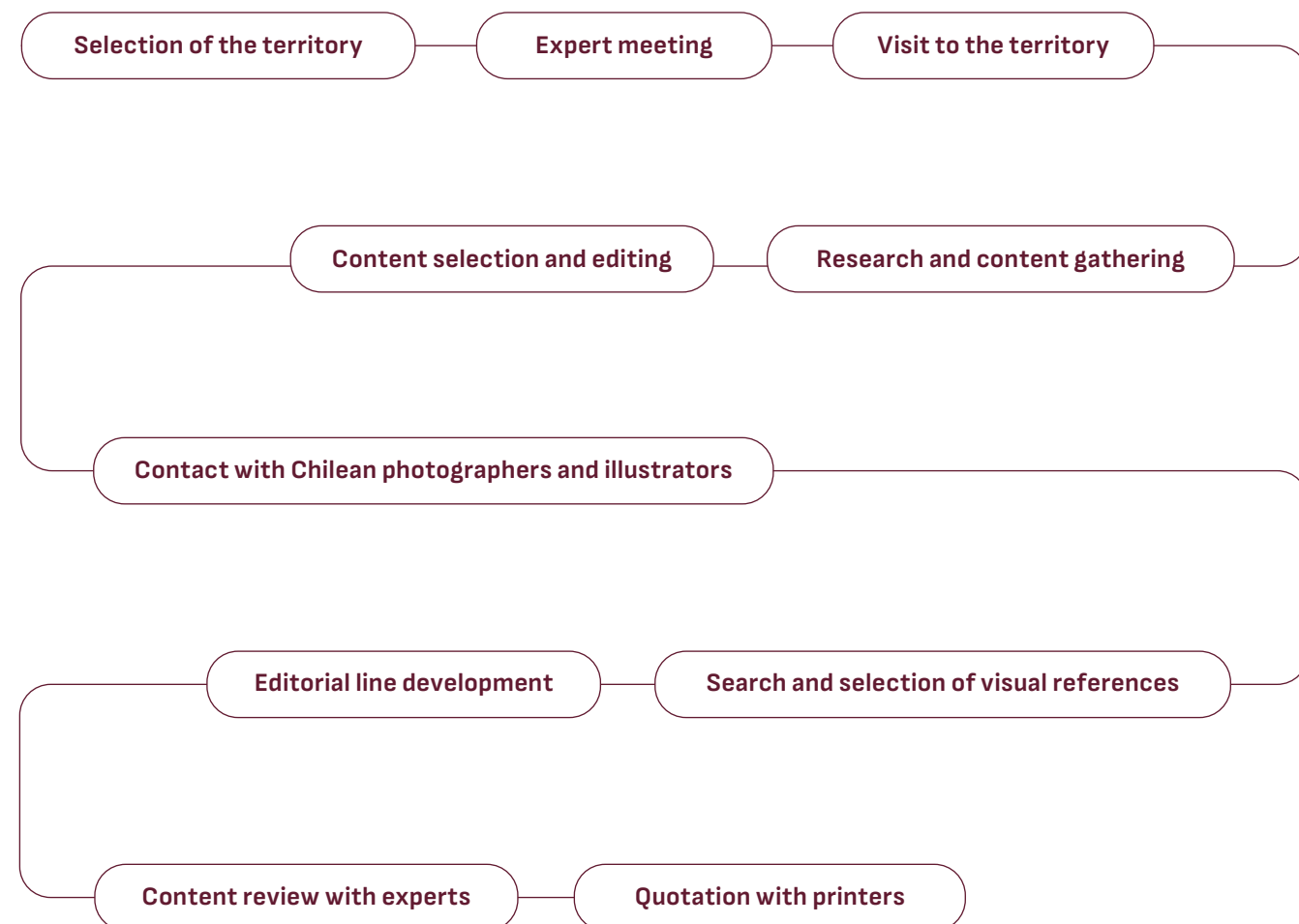




# Project development

# Editorial design process

The development of the Caudal magazine that was carried out for this thesis can be summarized as follows:



## Selection of the territory

As mentioned before, the Mapocho River was chosen due to its symbolic significance for the city of Santiago, its notable biodiversity rehabilitation in recent years, and its proximity and accessibility for the development of this research.

## Expert meeting

To gain a better understanding of the current state of the river and what topics to cover, meetings were organized with Joaquín Moure, the founder of the Mapocho Vivo Foundation, who has spearheaded various initiatives for the appreciation and restoration of the river's natural environment. These in-person meetings involved discussions about his river conservation efforts, the educational mission of the foundation, and how to collaborate on this project. Joaquín showed a keen interest in the actual development of the magazine, as it would be an opportunity to disseminate his own research and work.

"I have been thinking for a long time about how to showcase the work I have been doing in recent years. In fact, in a couple of months, I will be releasing a book of my photographs of the Mapocho, unpublished material. So, a magazine about the river would be a great contribution. I am very interested in participating and seeing how I can assist you" (Moure, J. May 6th, 2023).

Following this, Joaquín has collaborated in the magazine's production by providing information about the species that can be spotted along the river and creating a map highlighting the best points for direct access to observe flora and fauna.

Additionally, meetings were held with the director of Revista Endémico, Nicole Ellena, during which discussions took place regarding her role as director, the challenges of implementing an independent magazine, among other topics (see the complete interview in the annexes)."

## Visit to the territory

I attended one of the educational activities organized by Mapocho Vivo every Saturday mornings, which is primarily focused on families. During this activity, participants access the river to explore it briefly while engaging in an enjoyable talk about its biodiversity. This was an important opportunity to observe how people are pleasantly surprised when learning interesting facts about the river and its surroundings. From this point, thinking about how to incorporate elements that could encourage the on-site identification of species started.



### Compilation, selection, and editing of information

A significant amount of literature about the Mapocho River was reviewed, from which the most interesting articles were selected, primarily focusing on its cultural, historical, and natural value. Additionally, poems and information about selected flora and fauna species were incorporated.

### Contact with Chilean photographers and illustrators

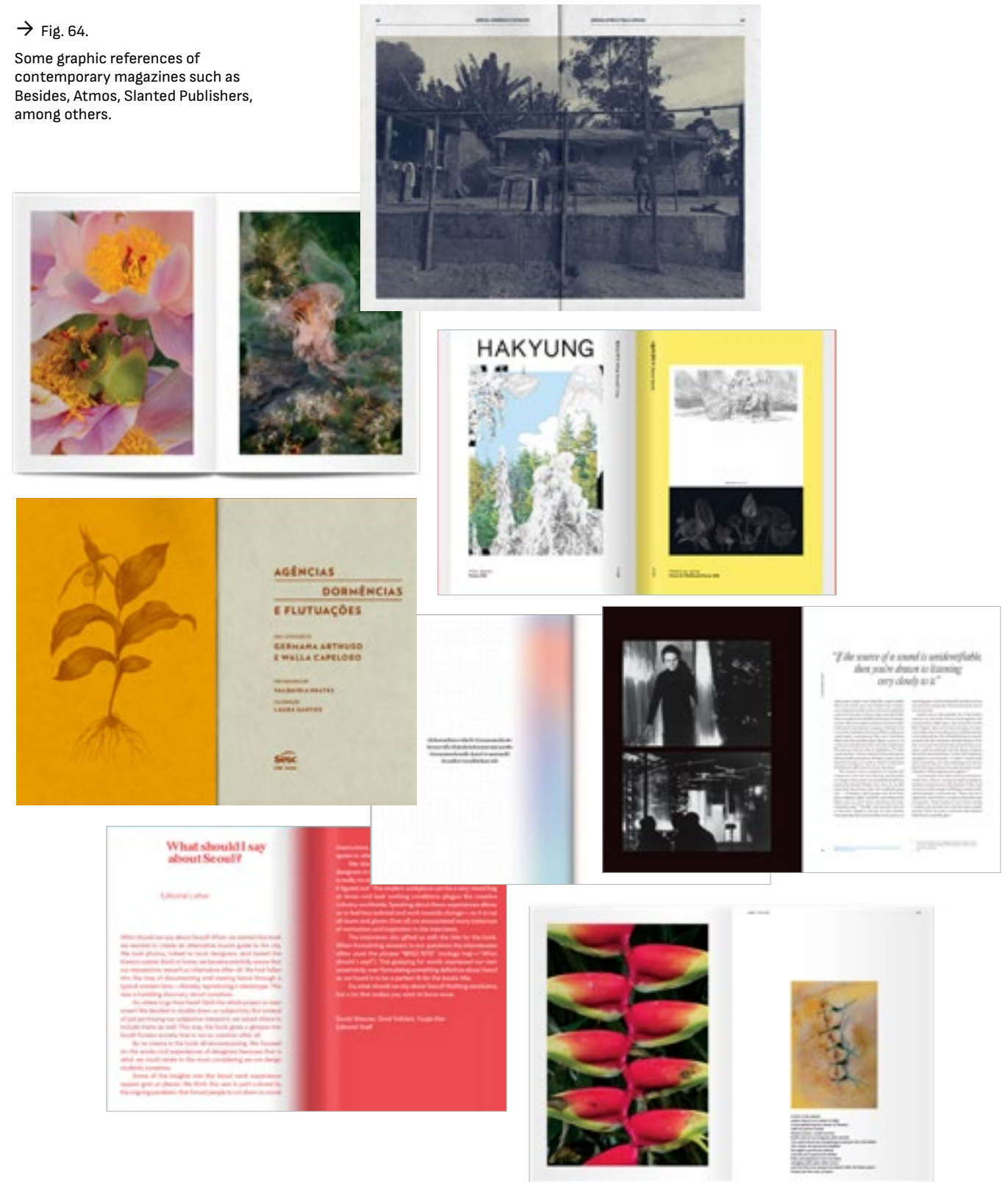
This step was crucial to include authentic records from Chilean photographers and illustrators who agreed to collaborate on the project within the framework of a research thesis. All the photos used in the Caudal magazine have the permission of these artists for academic purposes.

### Search and selection of visual references

An extensive search for visual references was conducted. The major influences were drawn from the analyzed case studies, the graphic work done by Slanted Publishers among other magazines. Based on these sources of inspiration, we searched for our own visual proposal, with the characteristics described in the previous chapter.

→ Fig. 64.

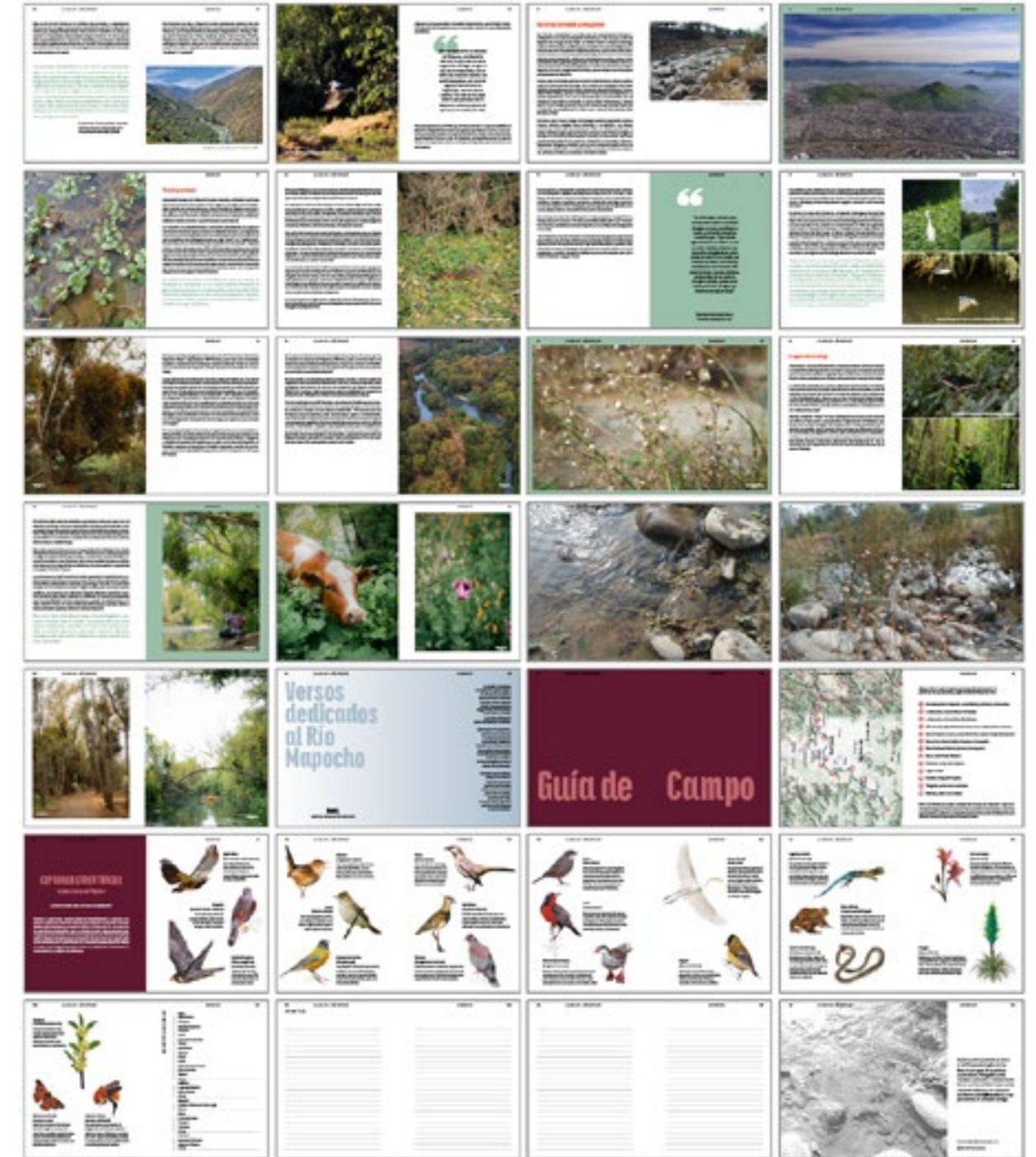
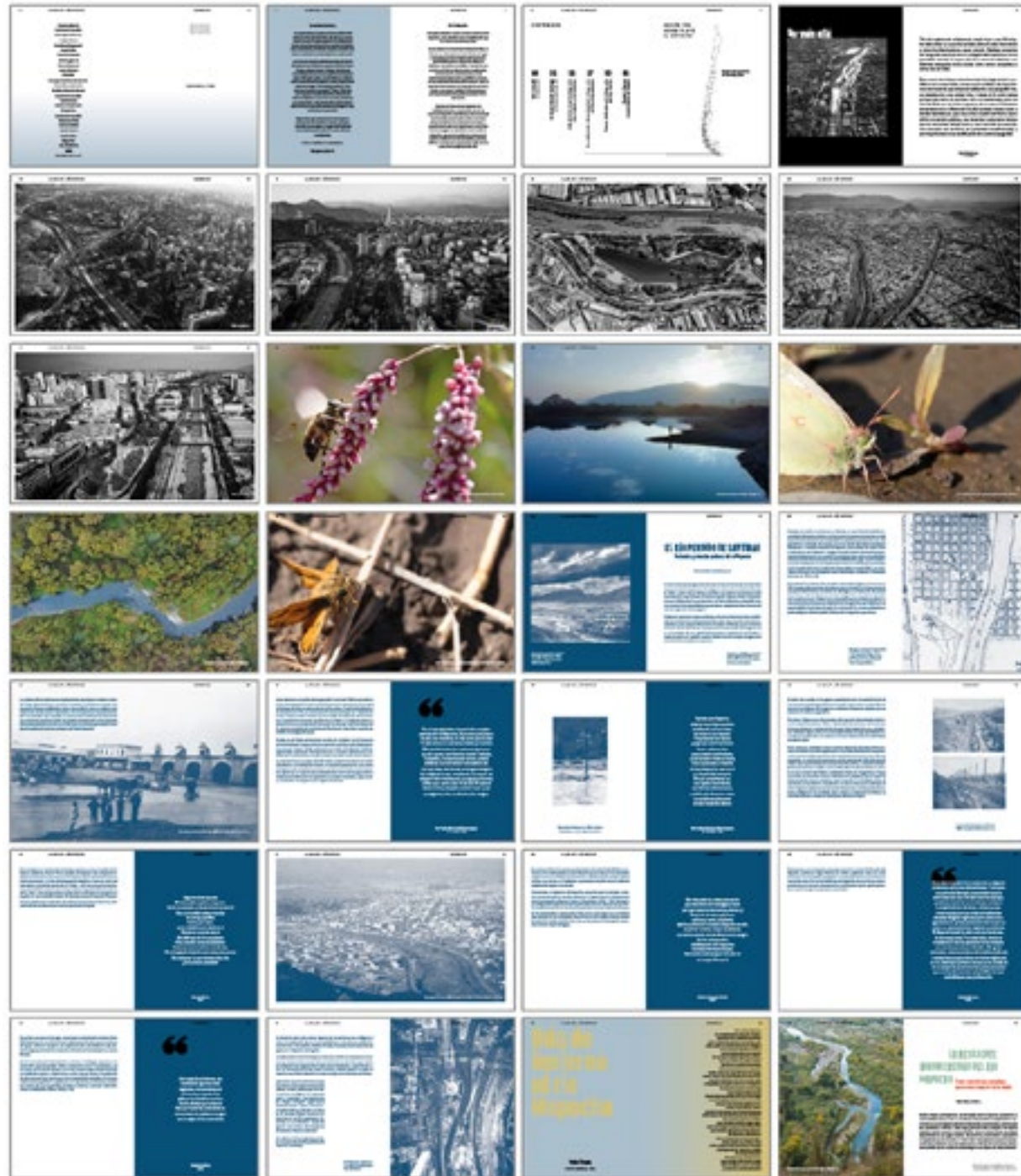
Some graphic references of contemporary magazines such as Besides, Atmos, Slanted Publishers, among others.





### Editorial line development

This stage involved a lot of iteration, trial and error. The identity and the creation of a visually coherent brand evolved throughout this process, reaching the final result after several weeks of reflection regarding the most suitable visual language based on the audience and the content presented:





# Implementation of a communication system

As previously mentioned, the relevance of complementing a print magazine with various digital platforms lies in the creation of a solid community of readers and in the dissemination of the project to reach a wider audience. These digital media provide the opportunity to build an engaged audience that remains receptive to what is shared over time, interacting, giving their opinion and participating. Based on the profile of our users, we have defined the development of a website, an Instagram account and other channels, such as podcasts, to disseminate a wide range of content.

## LANDING WEB STRUCTURE

### 1. Menu

- “Revista” / Magazine: what each issue is about, pictures of the inside pages, “buy” button for each issue, English versions of each issue in digital format.
- “Historias” / Stories: web articles related to each issue
- “Guías de campo” / Field guides: list of species sorted by issue, free downloadable
- “Tienda” / Store: purchase of editions and other merchandising item.
- Agenda / Schedule: announcements of upcoming events, launches, exhibitions, etc.
- “Contacto” / Contact

### 2. Note from the editors: statement or spirit of the project

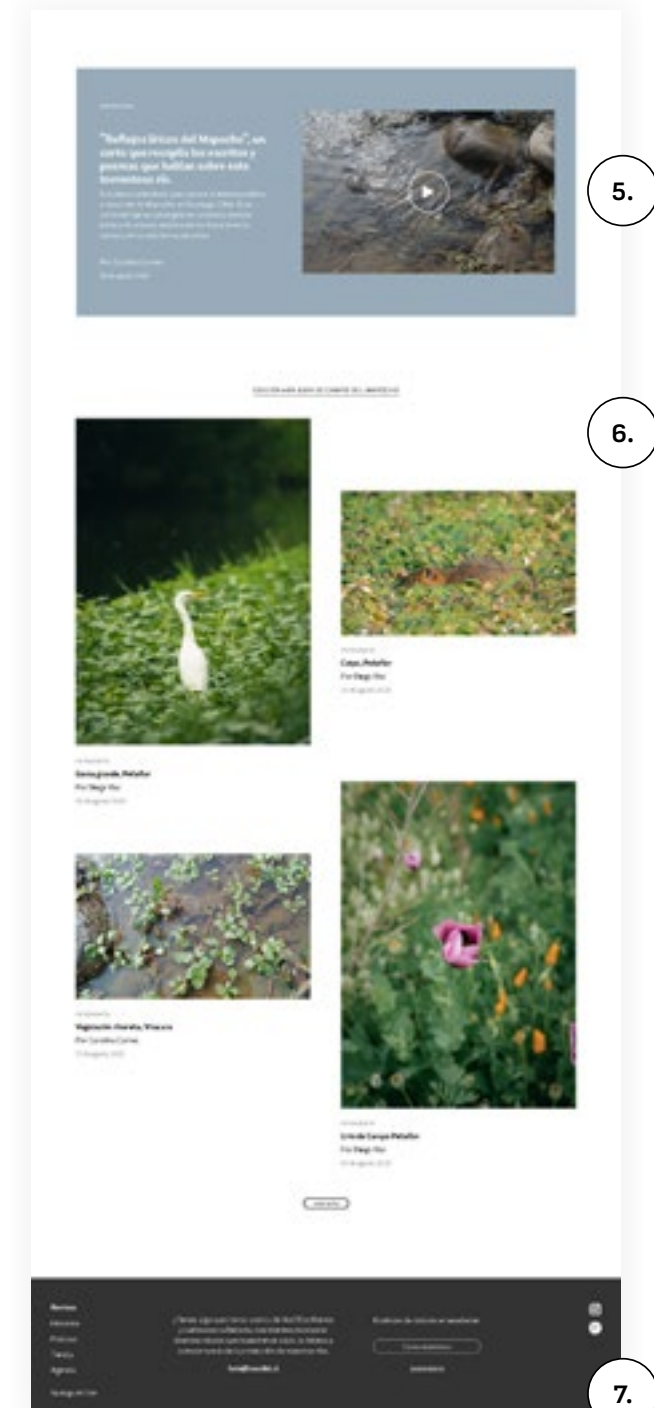
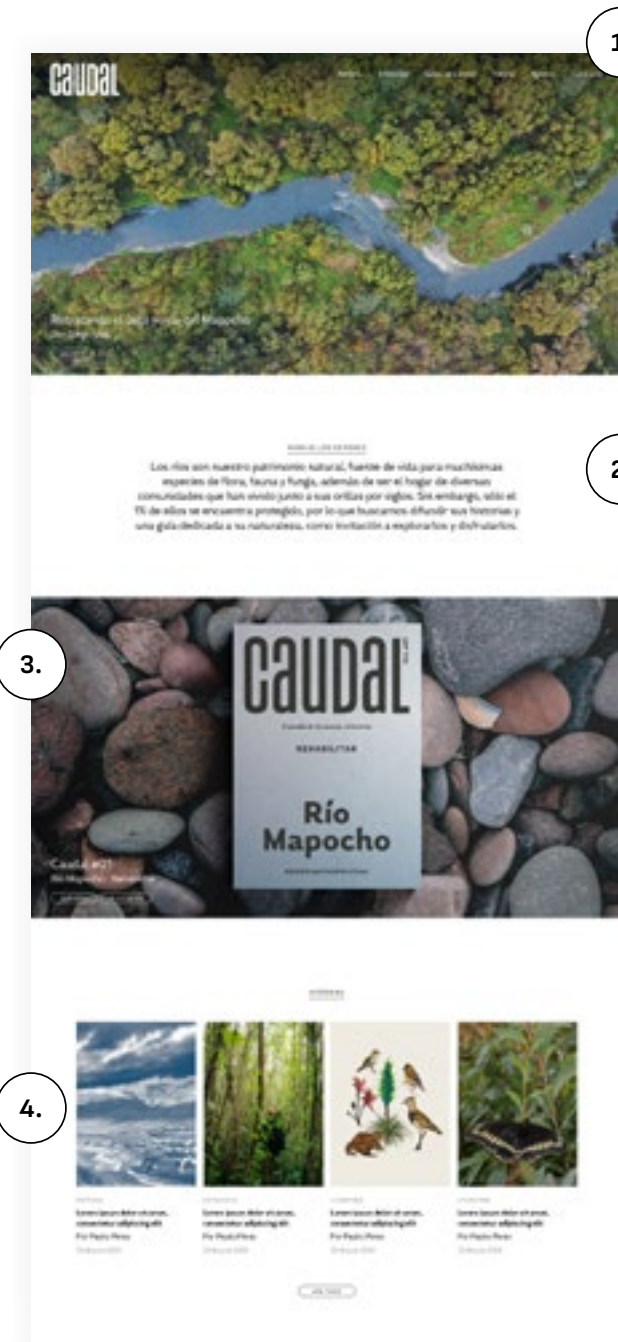
### 3. Inside view of the respective magazine: a brief digital navigation of what the edition looks like.

### 4. Stories: view of some of the stories or web articles related to each issue

### 5. Space to highlight podcasts, upcoming events, launches, audiovisuals, among others.

### 6. Visual Diary of some of the species that can be found along the river bank.

### 7. Footer: Menu, contact, social media links



## INSTAGRAM PROFILE

**Objective:** Promote the beauty and value of Chile's rivers, emphasizing the themes addressed in each edition of the print magazine.

**Publication frequency:** 3 to 4 publications per week, to maintain a constant presence.

### **General content:**

- Scenic photos: breathtaking images of Chilean rivers in their natural state and their biodiversity. Includes descriptions highlighting the beauty and importance of these ecosystems.
- Conservation stories: inspiring stories about river conservation projects in Chile, highlighting the work of local organizations and individuals dedicated to protecting these resources.
- Expert interviews: live or recorded interviews with river experts and local leaders.
- Educational content: flora, fauna and fungus species highlighted through naturalist illustrations. Scientific data from experts and curiosities about each species are shared.

## SPOTIFY PODCAST

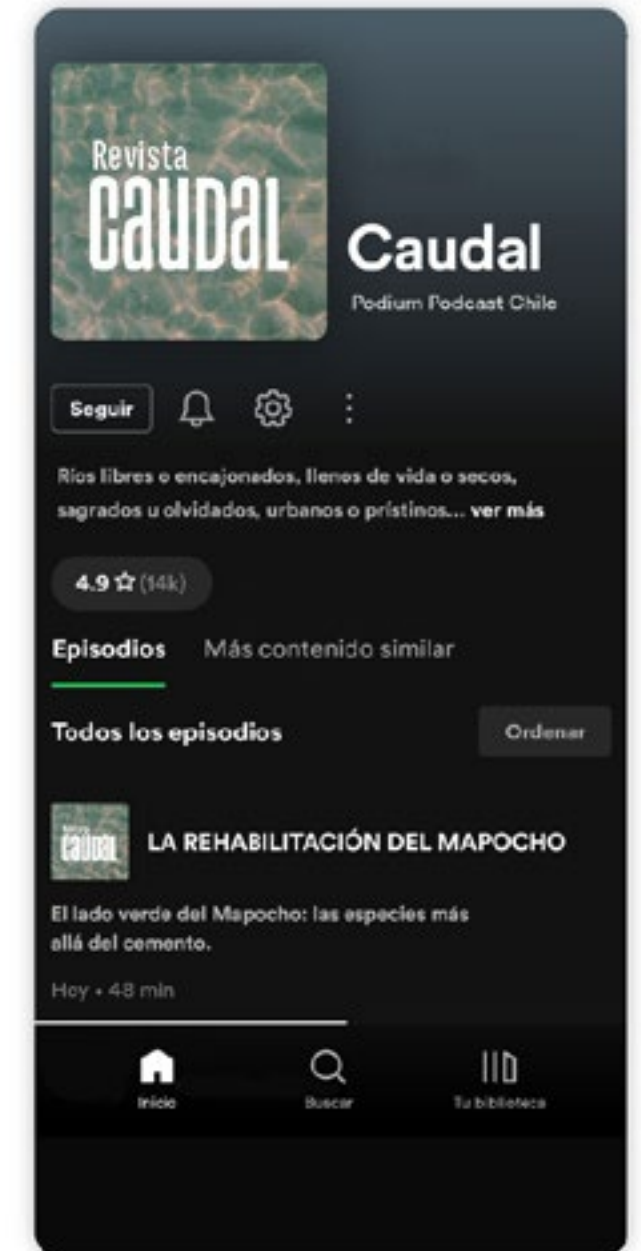
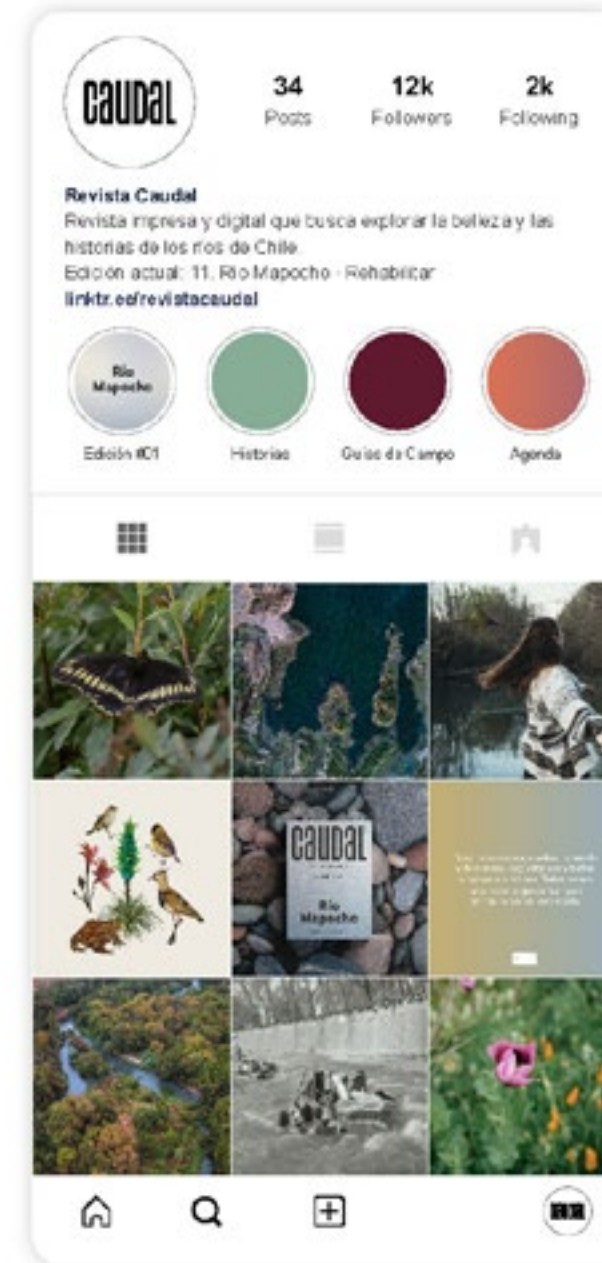
**Objective:** to increase listener participation, while raising awareness about the value of Chile's rivers.

**Publication frequency:** a new episode every two weeks, along with constant promotion through the web and instagram.

### **General content:**

Thematic episodes: together with experts, activists, scientists and local voices, we will talk about both the rivers highlighted in the editions as well as others throughout the country, exploring issues related to their biodiversity, conservation challenges and the stories of local communities, from an up-close and personal perspective.

**Audience participation:** listeners will be invited to send questions, comments, stories or experiences of their own related to Chilean rivers, and a segment of the episode will be dedicated to respond to these contributions.





# Project feasibility

## CONCEPT AND MARKET

### **Market Niche:**

While the market for products related to nature is steadily growing, based on the interview with the director of Endémico Magazine, independent magazines dedicated to environmental topics are not yet oversaturated in the market, so the competition is not very high. In fact, there is currently no magazine in Chile exclusively dedicated to highlighting the beauty of the country's rivers for preservation. Therefore, targeting a young niche with special interests and a "positive" focus (instead of showcasing the most terrible aspects of socio-environmental issues) can make the magazine stand out successfully.

### **Market Research:**

As the national reference is Endémico Magazine, it is necessary to ask what sets Caudal apart, and this corresponds to the fact that the magazine incorporates elements of a field guide, including maps with points of interest and species that readers can identify in the territory. Thus, the magazine targets a segment of people interested in the outdoors and environmental education. In addition, special emphasis would be placed on building an audience that would be involved in the development of the magazine itself, inviting people to collaborate with the contents, photographs, illustrations, among others.

## BUSINESS PLAN

### **1. Financing:**

For the financing of the first edition (1,000 units), applications will be submitted to competitive funds from Chilean government agencies, and crowdfunding with contributions from third parties will be used to gather the total initial investment needed.

### **National or Regional Fondart – Heritage Conservation and Dissemination**

#### **Line. National Council of Culture and the Arts, Government of Chile:**

The National Fund for Cultural Development and the Arts provides full or partial financing for projects related to research, safeguarding, preservation, valorization, and dissemination that contribute to the

management of cultural heritage such as cultural landscapes, rural and artistic areas, among others. It has a maximum amount of around 16,500 euros.

### **Environmental Protection Fund (FPA). Ministry of the Environment:**

This fund finances projects or initiatives focused on environmental protection, sustainable development, nature conservation, or environmental heritage. It has a maximum amount of around 32,600 euros.

### **Seed Capital (CORFO):**

The Production Development Corporation is a government agency in Chile under the Ministry of Economy, Development, and Tourism. It promotes differentiated entrepreneurial ventures in the market. The financing amount can be up to around 27,150 euros.

### **Crowdfunding:**

Crowdfunding is collective financial support provided by third parties for project implementation, usually promoted through social networks. The most internationally known platform is Kickstarter, and in Chile, there is CrowdfundingChile.cl, which allows projects to be published through fundraising campaigns, often offering some form of reward to investors, such as merchandise.

### **2. Sales Points:**

- **Independent bookstores** that have a special focus on environmental or design issues, such as Libro Verde, Contrapunto, Catalonia or GAM Bookstore.
- **Stores** that are aligned with the spirit of the magazine, related to the arts, design and nature such as Kai Kai, Ojo por Ojo or Espacio Forestal.
- **Editorial Fairs** or independent fairs related to sustainability.
- **Caudal Online Store** ([www.revistacaudal.cl](http://www.revistacaudal.cl)).

↓ Fig. 65.

La Moneda Cultural Center Store,  
Santiago, Chile.

[www.cclm.cl/tiendas/tienda](http://www.cclm.cl/tiendas/tienda)



### 3. Selling price

After obtaining quotes from several Chilean printing companies, the budget from 'A Impresores' was chosen, an excellent printing company that offers a good balance between price and quality. The printing cost for 1,000 copies is approximately 5 euros, so the final selling price will be 11,000 Chilean pesos, which is roughly 12 euros. This price is competitive, considering that Revista Endémico is sold for around 15 euros. Therefore, it proves to be an affordable product for the niche described earlier and would manage to cover the printing cost, distribution, launch of the magazine, and other expenses.

### TEAM

To carry out the project, a team composed of editors, writers, graphic designers, photographers, and marketing professionals, among others, is required. Based on discussions with the director of Revista Endémico, one way to generate a monthly income for this team is to operate as a communications agency that provides design services to other clients. This way, the team can secure income while producing high-quality content for the next edition of the magazine.

### DISTRIBUTION

**Printed magazine:** distribution in Spanish throughout Chile and the world, with a primary focus on Latin America.

**Digital magazine:** only available in English, it will be sent as a .pdf once purchased through the website.

### IMPACT

#### Social Impact:

The magazine aims to create an emotional connection between people and the rivers in Chile, consequently raising awareness about the importance of their protection and encouraging small changes that, in the long run, can make a significant contribution to the conservation of these vital and vibrant ecosystems.

#### Cultural Impact:

Caudal seeks to value both the biological and cultural aspects of Chile's rivers, viewing them as part of Chilean heritage and identity.

#### Environmental Impact:

Designed as a collectible magazine, the goal is for it to endure over time, to be reread, shared, and seen as an object of lasting value through the years.

↓ Fig. 66.

Caudal Magazine mockup.





# Conclusions

Throughout this thesis, an attempt was made to answer the research question “how can an independent magazine captivate an audience to promote river exploration and protection?” in the context of the development of a Chilean independent magazine that incorporates a local perspective and design, from its concept to its implementation.

To achieve this, the role and strategies used in independent magazines were evaluated as complex communication tools that sensitize, educate, and seek to engage their readers, in addition to the analysis of various case studies that demonstrate that it is indeed possible to represent communities or cultures in highly interesting ways through design, providing them with a space and a personal voice, and disseminating their own perspectives.

Firstly, the role of the communication designer – or the translator – and their ability to interpret and navigate diverse forms of life, perspectives, and cultures different from their own (Baule, 2016) is highlighted, along with the sensitive knowledge required to address the communication of the territory, given that it has a living identity in a state of constant change (Calabi, Chiodo, Scuri, 2015). Therefore, the designer must engage with and analyze it from three dimensions: physical space, immaterial space, and imaginary space (Baule, Quaggiotto, 2016), finding an appropriate language to transform these complexities into something understandable, opening windows of knowledge to the world, adding value and symbolism for a specific audience, among other objectives.

The above was reflected in the design of the Caudal magazine, a highly iterative process where it is evident that a team is necessary to carry out the total design of an independent magazine, given the various multidisciplinary tasks required. Design decisions regarding communication codes, as explained by Caratti, Menichelli, and Scagliarini (2021) – iconic code, verbal code, graphic code, reading method code, and relationship code – are the result of an extensive search for references, adapted to a Chilean scenario where a language that resonated with the projected audience was sought, incorporating elements from field guides with the intention of encouraging direct exploration of the exposed territory. This should have included a real testing phase to obtain feedback and observe user behavior with the magazine, thus identifying opportunities to improve this aspect and assessing how influential this section of the magazine is in people’s perception of their connection to the river.

Regarding the search for captivating language, an effort was made to create a “visual power” (Cleveland, 2005) with a strong impact and aesthetic appeal through a brand identity, a graphic style, and a format that aims to transform the magazine into a collectible object.

Finally, key individuals were interviewed to understand the feasibility of the project in the Chilean market, demonstrating that the production of an independent magazine is sustainable over time but not without financial challenges. Therefore, external support, such as public contest funds, is necessary.

It is expected that this thesis will provide continuity to the studies on independent magazines that aim to establish a stronger connection with the surrounding nature and how new analog and digital elements of in-situ observation can be incorporated to promote environmental exploration and contribute to direct experiences with it since we can only protect what we love, value, and understand.

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# Appendix

Interview with **Guy Wenborne** (Chile, 1966), renowned nature photographer, specialized in aerial photography. 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 2023.

**How did your career as a photographer and your interest in nature begin?**

The trips I took with my grandfather to accompany him on fishing expeditions to remote places have a lot to do with who I am today.

When I was 15 years old, I already had a camera in school and was doing photography, but it was undoubtedly the trips I could take with him that left a mark on me, allowing me to enjoy and immerse myself in nature and outdoor life. He was a pilot, so airplanes were also a part of my family, just like my dad and me. Therefore, that aerial perspective has always been there. I've been able to apply that aerial perspective to photography and the work I was developing.

**How do you think your photography captivates people?**

I believe that the photography I create captivates people not only because of the projects I'm involved in but also because I strive to convey positivity. All the editorial projects for nature photography books that I sought funding for were related to a positive vision of the natural heritage that Chileans possess, and they were intended for Chileans, who are the ones called upon to make decisions to preserve our territory. So, if I can "infect" Chileans with the beauty of the heritage that surrounds us, that is one of my objectives. Showing beautiful images of remote or distant places allows me to create a connection through the emotion, the excitement of seeing and observing a beautiful and new landscape.

My photography has two aspects. The first is to show us from a perspective we don't normally see, from up above, entering that aerial dimension that allows you to appreciate a place from its vast geographical perspective, connecting different geomorphological phenomena to understand a territory from the air. Because when we're on the ground, our perception is quite limited, but from the air, another dimension opens up to us.

Furthermore, rather than seeking artistic images, I aim to convey a story through an image that has something beautiful to tell us. In my opinion, this is how you manage to convey more than just a simple image.

**What is your vision as a photographer regarding how the Mapocho River crosses the city and how we relate to this nature?**

I have been documenting the Mapocho River for about 30 years, and I have seen how its course has changed, how it has been intervened, and how its natural flow has decreased. Conducting aerial photography projects in the Metropolitan Region has allowed me to portray the river's course and its relationship with various elements of the city, such as hills, highways, and other rivers in Chile.

I believe that this lifeline that runs through Santiago from the coastal mountains to its confluence with the Maipo River somehow reminds us that we inhabit a living geography, a living planet, a living city. Sometimes we don't see the river because it's full of bridges, and it has a low flow, but Chilean rivers are short and quite torrential due to the difference in elevation from their source to their mouth. They cut through our territory, make public investment difficult, remind us from time to time that nature comes first, and that it washes away our bridges. They remind us of a constantly changing territory and are essential in modifying our topography, in addition to embodying the typical and true cliché that the Mapocho River is the most democratic thing there is because it crosses all the city's districts and all social strata.

**What would you say is your legacy as a professional?**

To showcase and promote our natural heritage to Chileans.

**From your experience and your career as a nature photographer, do you believe there have been changes in people regarding increased environmental awareness?**

Without a doubt. I have been dedicated to this for 34 years, and there have been extraordinary changes in societal awareness. What is achieved through books and nature photography goes hand in hand with social media, adapting to new communication formats for photographic material is important. For me, photography must be printed on a physical substrate, although all the digital peripheral aspects that can surround photographic work are the most entertaining. I come from the analog world where having something tangible that is sensitive to touch, smell, and temperature, something graphic with volume, is a much more complete experience than just the digital, where these sensory aspects are lost. Combining these two is what makes it more accessible.



**Interview with Nicole Ellena, director of Revista Endémico, a Chilean media and printed magazine about the creative culture of the socio-environmental movement. 19<sup>th</sup> of July, 2023.**

**How did you come to lead an independent magazine?**

Nine years ago, I wanted to create an environmental magazine, which is one of my personal interests. I also wanted it to be connected to design and break away from the narrative that existed at that time, where everything was very unoriginal and often presented from a scientific or apocalyptic perspective. I wanted to generate a different narrative that empowers and inspires people, and allows learning from a different tone, from the arts and humanities. We started as a blog, and after one year, we launched the first printed version, which was a political act in itself, breaking away from the digital medium.

The beauty of creating something printed lies in developing a more refined editorial project. When you read something in print, you are in a different rhythm and have a different focus. There's a sensory aspect to it. It's been studied that when you read online, you are more distracted and less open. So, the reason for printing was to provide a different reading experience, along with a personal desire to create a printed editorial project. Additionally, I have always had an obsession with magazines and have been collecting them. Printing also helps to reach different audiences. With an attractive magazine, people place it on their coffee tables, which attracts them for aesthetic reasons. They start reading, and from there, they come at it from a different direction. It's a way to expand the audience and opens doors to the world of design and editorials, giving access to events like design fairs and editorial fairs. It connects you to the world of art and culture, something that would not be accessible through digital alone. Without printing, you'd remain within the realms of science or the environment. The idea is to open up to other worlds as well.

**What do you think is the importance of it being a local magazine produced by a Chilean team, covering Chilean topics, as opposed to designing a magazine in English for an international audience?**

This Spanish-language magazine is a valuable contribution because there is already a lot of content in English on these topics. When we started with "endémico," there wasn't a magazine of this type in English either. About a year later, many started to appear, but I believe we continue to be pioneers in Chile with a magazine like this, with a Latin American perspective on topics that are not addressed elsewhere. These include issues like the loss of our biodiversity, environmental justice, indigenous rights, and other topics.

**Regarding the power of illustration in the printed magazine, how does the selection of artists work? How do you develop the art for the magazine?**

In general, it has been quite spontaneous. Each edition has a specific aesthetic, and based on that, we look for illustrators who can follow that style. We try to work with Chilean illustrators primarily, but we also include one or two from other countries if it fits. However, there are many illustrators in Chile, and the idea is to think about how to visually represent the article. We aim for a balance in styles, including lines, watercolors, digital art, and we try to maintain variety. The art director has a clearer understanding of how it works, but it all starts from the articles.

**Who buys the magazine? Who is your audience?**

My audience is people aged 22 to 45, with various university backgrounds, a certain level of education, and an interest in these topics, although not necessarily specialists. They are interested in arts, science, humanities, and are mainly Chileans from cities like Santiago, Concepción, or Valparaíso. In addition, we have a digital audience from other Latin American countries such as Colombia, Mexico, or Spain.

**What is the basis for the decision to publish twice a year?**

Initially, in the first two years, we printed 1,000 copies, and now we print 1,500 copies. The magazine used to be published twice a year, but printing costs doubled due to the pandemic and the economic crisis. Now, we print once a year.

**How do you keep the magazine alive when you publish only once a year?**

**What is the role of social media in keeping the audience engaged and continuing to build that relationship?**

When we launch an edition, for example, now that we're going to publish the 11th issue, we focus a lot on social media. However, after the launch, the interaction with the audience on social media starts to decline, and the focus shifts away from the printed magazine. We begin to focus more on the web, so social media remains active not only because of the printed magazine but also due to other digital content that keeps it vibrant. Additionally, social media projects, such as informative graphic projects, activate the audience. People enjoy this type of content, but in reality, the printed magazine occupies a small space within the broader project of social media. One has to get creative to remind the audience that the magazine exists. What we also do is cross-reference the content from the printed magazine with the web, maintaining editorial consistency in the topics we are working on.

**How is the *Endémico* magazine team structured?**

I lead the project and also work on editing, but less so now. I'm more involved in coordination and the commercial aspect. We also have someone in charge of web and social media, a designer for both social media and the printed magazine's content. This is the core team, and we always have two interns, one for content and another for design, to support graphics. In addition, for the printed magazine, once a year, we bring in a team consisting of two editors, the art director, the designer, a science editor, and a style editor. All the others are rotating contributors.

**How do you launch the magazine?**

The launch involves gathering the editorial team and inviting them to talk about the themes, art, and the thought process behind the design. We also invite one or two authors to discuss the topics they covered. Someone moderates this conversation, which lasts about an hour. Afterward, we have a performance or some music. For example, once we invited a dance collective that was featured in the issue, adding an artistic value to the event. We also sell the magazines there, which helps cover the launch costs.

**What are the different funding avenues you can explore when designing an independent magazine?**

It's quite challenging to secure funding. In the last two years, we've obtained Fondart funding, which has been essential due to the increased printing costs. However, it doesn't cover everything; it's about 50%, and the other 50% comes from other sources. For example, in each edition, we include three ads that contribute a bit more. Of course, there's revenue from selling the magazine, but even then, there are additional financial needs, especially because we have a core team that requires year-round salaries. So, from the beginning, what we've been doing is that I have a communications agency. With the same team we have for the magazine, we provide services throughout the year. We try to align these projects with our mission, such as working with foundations, to maintain the spirit. However, providing design services can be exhausting. While it is used, it's a model that can be very tiring. It's challenging to do it differently, and I don't know how it could be done. The commercial aspect is a challenge, and that's why magazines, in general, have a predetermined lifespan. They are born with the enthusiasm of the person who created them, but after a few years, they often end up ceasing to exist because you are constantly trying to survive and finance them, and it's not sustainable as a way to make a living



# CAUDAL

Nro. #01

Cuando el río suena, vida trae

**REHABILITAR**

# Río Mapocho

REGIÓN METROPOLITANA

**Comité editorial**

Carolina Correa Bull

María Ignacia Soruco

Andrea Poirot

**Coordinación general**

Joaquín Díaz

Francisca Guarda

**Edición general**

Ricardo Eynaudi

Javiera Salazar

**Artículos**

Rodrigo Bobadilla, Revista SIC

Paula Díaz, Ladera Sur

**Diseño y dirección de arte**

Carolina Correa Bull

**Ilustraciones**

Catalina Hildebrandt

**Fotografías**

Carolina Correa Bull

Enterreno Chile

Hernán Hettich

Joaquín Moure

Camilo Soto

Diego Vial

Guy Wenborne

**ISBN**

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caudal

REHABILITAR

### A nuestros lectores,

Les presentamos nuestra primera publicación sobre los ríos de Chile, hilos de vida que cruzan nuestro territorio desde glaciares cordilleranos hacia el mar, donde buscamos resaltar la belleza de su naturaleza y fomentar nuestra conexión con ellos a través de su contemplación y exploración.

Los ríos son nuestro patrimonio natural, fuente de vida para muchísimas especies de flora, fauna y funga, además de ser el hogar de diversas comunidades de norte a sur que han vivido junto a sus orillas por siglos, y cuya historia y cultura están estrechamente ligadas a estos importantes cuerpos de agua. Sin embargo, sólo el 1% de ellos se encuentra protegido (12 de 1.251 ríos), por lo que en Caudal buscamos difundir las historias ligadas a esos ríos y una guía dedicada a su naturaleza, como invitación a explorarlos y disfrutarlos, ya que sólo podemos proteger lo que conocemos y queremos.

Esperamos que este proyecto les inspire a recorrer los ríos revista en mano, escuchar el sonido de sus aguas, y seguir defendiendo sus caudales para preservar estos valiosos ecosistemas.

A leer, a explorar y a empaparse.

**El equipo editorial**

### El río Mapocho

Escogimos dedicar nuestra primera edición al río Mapocho, como símbolo de la rehabilitación que ha vivido en los últimos años.

Es uno de los ríos más importantes de Chile, no sólo por su valor práctico como fuente de agua y energía para toda la Región Metropolitana, sino también por su relevancia cultural e histórica, recreativa y ecológica. A pesar de que el río ha sufrido los efectos de la canalización, contaminación y urbanización, lo cual prácticamente destruyó su equilibrio y natural, se han realizado diversos esfuerzos por traer de vuelta la vida silvestre a lo largo de su territorio, limpiar sus aguas y habilitar infraestructura para que las personas puedan acceder al río y disfrutarlo.

Además de los avances respecto a la rehabilitación de su naturaleza, de vez en cuando el Mapocho manifiesta su fuerza natural incontrolable, recobrando su feroz torrente el que arrastra lo que encuentre a su paso, e inundando el suelo que le pertenece, como bien fuimos testigos en este último invierno: El río Mapocho, que recorre todas las comunas de nuestra ciudad cruzando autopistas, puentes, edificios, vertederos y aeropuertos, sigue siendo un territorio palpitante de vida.



## CONTENIDOS

08

Ver más allá  
INTRODUCCIÓN

31

El río perdido de Santiago  
ARTÍCULO DE REVISTA SIC

55

Oda de invierno al Río Mapocho  
PABLO NERUDA, CANTO GENERAL

57

La resiliente biodiversidad del río Mapocho  
ARTÍCULO DE LADERA SUR

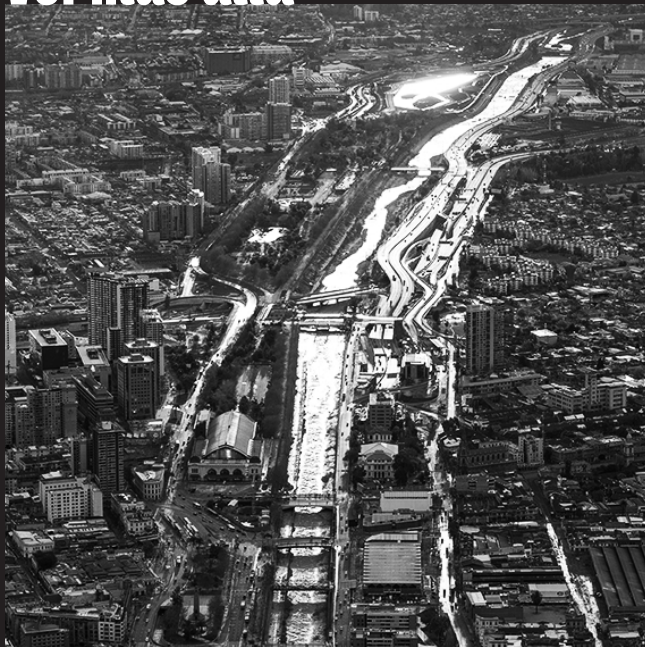
93

Versos dedicados al río Mapocho  
BEATRIZ, POETISA

95

Guía de Campo  
PARA EXPLORAR EN TERRENOREGIÓN POR  
DONDE FLUYE  
EL MAPOCHORegión Metropolitana  
de Santiago (RM)

## Ver más allá



“He ido registrando el Mapocho desde hace unos 30 años, he visto cómo su cauce ha variado, cómo ha sido intervenido y cómo ha disminuido su cauce natural. Realizar proyectos de fotografía desde el aire en la Región Metropolitana me ha permitido retratar el cauce del río y como se relaciona con distintos elementos de la ciudad, como cerros, autopistas u otros ríos de Chile.

Esta arteria de vida que atraviesa todo Santiago desde la cordillera de la costa hasta unirse con el río Maipo, de cierta forma nos recuerda que estamos habitando una geografía viva, un planeta vivo, una ciudad viva. A veces el río no lo vemos porque está lleno de puentes, tiene un caudal bajo, pero los ríos de Chile son de corto trayecto y de un escurrir bastante torrencioso por la diferencial de altura desde donde nacen y donde desembocan, que nos cortan nuestro territorio, hacen difícil la inversión pública, nos recuerdan cada cierto tiempo que la naturaleza está primero y que nos bota los puentes, nos recuerda ese territorio en constante transformación y son importantes en la modificación de nuestra topografía”.









































Panorámica hacia el oriente de Santiago desde el cerro San Cristóbal en 1922. Colección ©Enterreno Chile.

# EL RÍO PERDIDO DE SANTIAGO

Desbordes y avenidas poéticas del río Mapocho

POR RODRIGO BOBADILLA P.

En este artículo propongo una lectura de ciertas escrituras que han abordado la presencia del río Mapocho en el imaginario urbano de la ciudad de Santiago de Chile. A partir de un enfoque ecocrítico que explora las tensiones entre cauce fluvial y orden urbano, se buscará rastrear algunas de las voces poéticas que configurarían lo que denomino «el Texto-Mapocho», entendido como una sumatoria de textualidades que proponen representaciones diversas del mito de origen del río santiaguino.

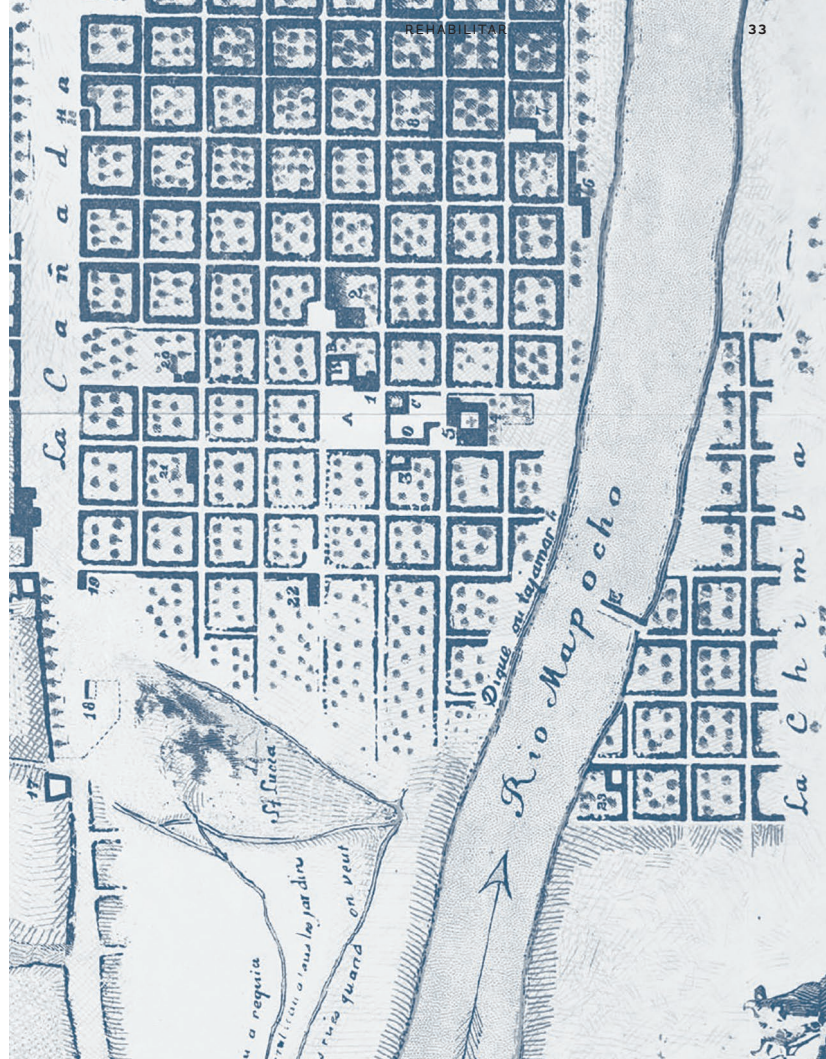
El Mapocho aparece en estas escrituras como una amenaza al orden establecido por los poderes y ordenamientos de la urbe, como cauce de memorias ancestrales y como espacio refractario a la ciudad «civilizada» que se construyó en torno a él. De esta forma, se propone una recuperación del imaginario de un «río perdido» de una capital latinoamericana, explorando una mirada situada que pone en cuestión nuestra relación con los cuerpos de agua en el contexto de las ciudades antropoceno.

Bobadilla, r. (2022). El río perdido de Santiago. Revista SIC. Núm. 32: Literatura y ciencias desde la teoría del antropoceno.

Santiago se fundó y se construyó a orillas de un cauce fluvial inestable, cuyos desbordamientos, salidas y crecidas pusieron permanentemente en crisis los primeros intentos de los conquistadores españoles por levantar una urbe geométrica y ordenada, de acuerdo a la traza regular del sistema de damero dictado por el mandato imperial. El Mapocho y sus salidas han dado forma a buena parte del imaginario inaugural de esta ciudad latinoamericana poniendo desde temprano en cuestión las tensiones entre orden e inestabilidad, entre los constructos humanos y la imprevisibilidad del agua: «Las inundaciones y las crecidas que las acompañan dan forma a un río salvaje e indomable, un río considerado como un elemento imprevisible e incontrolable, una naturaleza divina que los santiaguinos están destinados a obedecer» (Fernández Domingo, E., 2017, p. 56).

El caudal del río se desborda e inunda la naciente Santiago por primera vez en 1574 inaugurando una trama de disputa entre la ciudad y el río que enmarca una parte importante de la historia de Santiago. La construcción del puente Cal y Canto, y de los Tajamares, durante el siglo XVIII, es quizás la expresión más evidente de este conflicto que se extenderá hasta el Chile republicano y terminará en las iniciativas de canalización e «integración» del Mapocho en el espacio público hacia fines del siglo XIX e inicios del XX, un tema estudiado en profundidad por Simón Castillo (2014) en El río Mapocho y sus riberas.

Mapa del barrio La Chimba en Plan de la ville de Santiago, durante el siglo XVIII (año 1712). Antique Books Maps. Autores: François Frezier, Jacques N. Bellin.





La construcción de estructuras arquitectónicas que buscan contener el caudal de las aguas tendrá, en un primer momento, la función de asentar una actuación humana modificadora de las riberas del río como un medio de defensa contra la fuerza de la naturaleza. Pero los tajamares representan también una tentativa más compleja: su construcción testimonia el proyecto de una conciencia que busca realizar la «posible domesticación de la naturaleza divina materializada en el río» (p. 57). Se trata de un tema que moldea la imaginación poética de diversas escrituras del Texto-Mapocho.



Puente Cal y Canto de Santiago, 1880. Colección ©Enterreno Chile.

Es precisamente una salida de las aguas del río en el año 1783 la que inspira el poema titulado Relación de la inundación que hizo el río Mapocho de la ciudad de Santiago de Chile, en el Monasterio de Carmelitas, Titular de San Rafael, el día 16 de julio de 1783, un romance de 516 versos escrito por sor Tadea García de San Joaquín, monja carmelita que fue testigo del desborde del torrente y que lo poetizó barrocamemente a pedido de su confesor. La religiosa redacta un poema en torno a su experiencia de una de las avenidas más recordadas del río, descrita en detalle por José Antonio Pérez García, historiador español que también fue testigo del suceso.

El texto de sor Tadea es fascinante no solo por constituir una de las pocas obras firmadas por mujeres durante el periodo colonial en toda Hispanoamérica, sino por asentar desde temprano una versión del Mapocho indómito, ingobernable y destructor. Enclaustrada en un convento ubicado en las cercanías de la orilla del río, la monja carmelita describe en sus versos la fuerza de un temporal que se yergue sobre Santiago «rompiendo montes» con «altivo movimiento» y «armados huracanes», un vendaval que provoca una crecida del Mapocho que no pudieron contener ni el Cal y Canto ni los recién levantados Tajamares. La irrupción de la embestida destructora de las aguas sobre la ciudad es concebida como la expresión de un poder omnímodo, capaz, incluso, de desafiar los designios de la religión establecida.



En el mes siguiente a la paz hubo una gran avenida del río Mapocho. Fue como precursora de ella una mediana, el 3 de junio, pero la del 16 dejó afuera a cuantas la habían precedido.

Ella derribó todos los costosos tajamares de cal y canto; corrió por la ciudad, Cañada, Cañadilla y haciendas de campo, postró edificios, inundó todo el monasterio del Carmen Bajo, derribando un ángulo obligó a las religiosas a que, rompiendo una pared, se saliesen bien mojadas por un agujero. Gracias a Dios que, como a las 10 del día 17, cesó el viento norte y empezó a correr el sur y, por consiguiente, fue en disminución el agua.

**Sor Tadea García de San Joaquín.**

(Uribe, 1963, p. 159).





Salida del Río Mapocho en 1986. Colección  
Kike Dittborn. Archivo ©Enterreno Chile.

Parecía que Neptuno,  
dejando su antiguo puesto,  
se difundía en las nubes,  
sin mirar en su respeto.  
Y liquidando los mares,  
juzgó que del firmamento  
llover océanos hizo  
para nuestro sentimiento,  
pues de este modo se hacía  
más caudaloso y violento  
el Gran Mapocho, que corre  
a la frente del convento.  
El cual compitiendo ya,  
con rápido movimiento,  
con Ebros y Manzanares,  
y al Nilo aún llevando resto,  
su sonido era aterrante  
al más impávido aliento

**Sor Tadea García de San Joaquín.**  
(Uribe, 1963, p. 190).

El poder de la salida de las aguas es poetizado como la materialización de fuerzas incontrolables, grandiosas en su poder destructivo y comparable a la de otros ríos célebres del imaginario occidental. El Mapocho adquiere así una auténtica faz mítica y legendaria.

Si la de sor Tadea es una clara muestra de lo que se ha denominado el «barroco de catástrofes» (Uribe, 1963, p. 168) del período colonial, citarlo aquí nos sirve para ilustrar la representación de aquel «Gran Mapocho» que, «caudaloso y violento», figura como uno de los responsables de aquel persistente «recuerdo de la catástrofe» que delinea los trazos históricos de la ciudad desde su mismo origen.

El río, entonces, se plantea como el enemigo declarado del orden político, social y económico que se ha erguido junto a sus riberas blandiendo una permanente amenaza de levantamiento ante sus órdenes estrictos y sus prácticas espaciales. La canalización representa aquí la expropiación del orden natural frente a los requerimientos de la modernización urbana, la esclavización definitiva del elemento acuático en los moldes del concreto productivo. Leído a la luz de la actual crisis hídrica y ambiental, frente a la imagen de un río que hoy mismo se nos exhibe como un debilitado hilo de agua al que la ciudad ha dado la espalda casi por completo, estos versos de la Lira Popular cobran el sentido de un recordatorio actualizando uno de los mitos que ha delineado el Texto-Mapocho desde sus inicios: la indocilidad de sus crecidas puede alterar, hasta desfigurarla, la normalidad de la ciudad. La embestida de Medusa se mantiene latente en medio de los órdenes estrictos de Apolo.



Canalización Río Mapocho a fines de 1880' s. Colección ©Enterreno Chile.



En el contexto de un frente de mal tiempo que hace crecer el caudal del río hasta su desborde, Nicanor Parra actualiza el imaginario de un Mapocho indómito y amenazante, esta vez en un momento en que la canalización es ya un hecho consumado. La ironía del lenguaje del antipoeta se hace eco tanto del antecedente colonial del poema de sor Tadea —«No veo para qué tanta alharaca / ¿Han leído el romance de la monja? / Léanlo después hablamos» (Parra, 2014, p. 50)— como del gesto de los poetas de la Lira Popular de otorgarle voz propia al río. En el poema titulado «En defensa propia» el Mapocho vuelve a tomar la palabra para responder a las informaciones de los noticieros que dan cuenta de las inundaciones en diversos puntos de la capital.

Algunos dicen que es  
 El indomable espíritu mapuche  
 Quien se expresa a través de mis actos (...)  
 Soy un humilde estero nomás  
 Un arroyo pacífico  
 Turbio por fuera  
 pero cristalino por dentro (...)  
 De vez en cuando eso sí  
 Me disfrazo de río caudaloso  
 Para asustar a los asustadizos  
 Entonces es el rechinar de dientes  
 En mi sagrado derecho que estoy me parece  
 De reclamar lo que siempre fue mío  
 ¿O no, dicen ustedes?



Santiago Oriente en 1952. Colección Luis Solar. Archivo ©Enterreno Chile.



En el poemario *Úi*, de la poeta mapuche Adriana Paredes Pinda (2005), encontramos otra versión poética de este Mapocho que es visto por la cosmovisión originaria como un símbolo de pertenencia y de plenitud extraviada, «abuelo tocayo» que escruta a la hablante y se presenta ante ella como la evidencia palpable del despojo colonizador.

Ciertamente, el «Mapocho del Mapuche» se escribe aquí no solo para «mostrar una escena idílica, sino para denunciar la injusticia social y ambiental que viven los mapuche urbanos» (Casals y Chiuminatto, 2019, p. 126). Santiago y su configuración espacial son así cuestionados en el eco de esta voz que invoca el advenimiento de una eventual «estirpe guerrera» que redimirá «la sangre de los antepasados» restaurando el libre cauce de las aguas en un territorio que antes de ser una metrópolis imperial fue un valle virgen e intocado donde prevaleció la palabra del Gnen ko, como se denomina en el imaginario mapuche al mítico «dueño del agua».

Me mira este río, este anciano río  
que está lleno de nostalgia y dolor  
por aquí pasaron los huinca, pienso (...)  
Después de estas palabras,  
se fue su canto, el aliento  
del río ya tiene mi corazón, Mapocho me dio  
el primer camino, el que va delante,  
su aliento abuelo, dónde florecerá la sangre  
de los antepasados  
del Mapocho del mapuche  
mañana hermano tocayo,  
florecerá la estirpe guerrera del río  
su sangre florecerá

Encontramos una concepción semejante del río en el texto Profanación del Mapocho, escrito por Miguel Serrano en 2002 y publicado como una carta al director en un periódico santiaguino. La visión de Serrano se remonta a la veneración ante el río de los habitantes prehispánicos de sus riberas, contraponiéndola a la vocación domesticadora y profanadora que la «gente extranjera» traerá consigo en su proyecto colonizador.

“Nace del entrecejo de la cabeza de un gigante prisionero de la roca de los Andes. Y es como su sueño de libertad, proyectado hacia la eternidad del mar. Por ello recorre colinas y praderas, haciendo en un tiempo ya lejano la alegría de los cóndores, de los sauces, reverenciado por los antiguos habitantes de estas frágiles regiones que lo adoraron y agradecieron, jamás pensando interrumpir su curso, su «pensamiento» sagrado y poderoso. El Mapocho bañó la «tierra de los hombres», de los mapuches. Y en este sitio, donde se instalaría un día la capital de Chile, rodearía con sus brazos al cerro Huelén. Allí, gente extranjera, desconocedora del sentido profundo y misterioso que guarda la corriente mágica de un río, desvió por primera vez su curso. Jamás el río lo aceptaría, al extremo de poder pensarse que mucho del carácter catastrófico de este país débese a esa profanación.

Miguel Serrano  
2002



En su libro *Las guerras del agua*, la pensadora ecofeminista Vandana Shiva (2003) plantea que una de las tareas urgentes para fundar nuevas «culturas del agua» radica en recuperar una experiencia de la sacralidad de este elemento, algo que caracterizó a todas las civilizaciones fundadas junto a cauces fluviales.

Revertir la profanación del Mapocho y restaurar el «diálogo respetuoso y la veneración» que los pueblos nativos mantuvieron con él representaría, así las cosas, una forma de regresar a un orden en que el agua es espiritualizada y considerada sagrada, cargada de un «valor» que se opone a la asignación de valía mercantil que reserva para ella la mentalidad capitalista. El torrente rebelde de las aguas del río puede ser, a fin de cuentas, la llave para acceder a la vivencia de «un mundo lleno de mitos e historias, creencias y devoción, cultura y celebración» (Shiva, 2003, p. 143).



A lo largo de la historia, las fuentes de agua han sido sagradas, merecedoras de reverencia y respeto. Los grifos y las botellas nos han hecho olvidar que antes de fluir por tuberías y venderse al consumidor en plástico, el agua es un regalo de la naturaleza

Mi intento ha sido el de rastrear algunas de las escrituras que configuran el mito y la imaginación de un río casi perdido en el seno de una capital latinoamericana; el de explorar desde la literatura la presencia disruptiva de sus aguas en el imaginario santiaguino.

Considerando de nuevo la imagen de más de un millón de ciudadanos en marcha que avanzan junto al curso de una disminuida corriente de agua urbana para disputarle su hegemonía al orden institucionalizado, el ejercicio de releer las representaciones del raudal indómito, rebelde, salvaje y cargado de memoria que el Texto-Mapocho arrastra consigo parece más que pertinente.

¿Qué tienen que enseñarle los ríos que nos rodean a las tentativas de revuelta cultural, social y política que hoy mismo buscan reconfigurar los mapas del poder y responder a las implicancias del colapso ecológico? ¿Qué nuevos desbordamientos esperar del torrente ingobernable que desafía a la fijeza de los actuales diques opresores? ¿Y cómo leer la marcha persistente y silenciosa de un maltrecho cuerpo de agua en este tiempo de ecosistemas devastados y flujos canalizados?

Son algunas de las preguntas que dejan a su paso las avenidas poéticas del Mapocho de Santiago.

Manifestación ciudadana en la antigua Plaza Baquedano.  
©Hernán Hettich.





# Oda de invierno al río Mapocho

Pablo Neruda

CANTO GENERAL, 1950

Oh, sí, nieve imprecisa,  
oh, sí, temblando en plena flor de nieve,  
párpado boreal, pequeño rayo helado  
quién, quién te llamó hacia el ceniciento valle,  
quién, quién te arrastró desde el pico del águila  
hasta donde tus aguas puras tocan  
los terribles harapos de mi patria?  
Río, por qué conduces agua fría y secreta,  
agua que el alba dura de las piedras  
guardó en su catedral inaccesible,  
hasta los pies heridos de mi pueblo?  
Vuelve, vuelve a tu copa de nieve, río amargo,  
vuelve, vuelve a tu copa de espaciosa escarchas,  
sumerge tu plateada raíz en tu secreto origen  
o despéñate y rómpete en otro mar sin lágrimas!  
Río Mapocho cuando la noche llega  
y como negra estatua echada  
duerme bajo tus puentes como un racimo negro  
de cabezas golpeadas por el frío y el hambre  
como por dos inmensas águilas, oh río,  
oh duro río parido por la nieve,  
por qué no te levantas como inmenso fantasma  
o como nueva cruz de estrellas para los olvidados?  
No, tu brusca ceniza corre ahora  
junto al sollozo echado al agua negra,  
junto a la manga rota que el viento endurecido  
hace temblar debajo de las hojas de hierro.  
Río Mapocho, adónde llevas  
plumas de hielo para siempre heridas,  
siempre junto a tu cárdena ribera  
la flor salvaje nacerá mordida por los piojos  
y tu lengua de frío rasgará las mejillas  
de mi patria desnuda?  
Oh, que no sea, oh, que no sea,  
y que una gota de tu espuma negra  
salte del légamo a la flor del fuego  
y precipite la semilla del hombre!



Río Mapocho a la altura de Peñaflor. ©Diego Vial.

# LA RESILIENTE BIODIVERSIDAD DEL RÍO MAPOCHO

*Varias caras de una naturaleza  
que resiste el impacto de la ciudad*

POR PAULA DÍAZ L.

Desde tiempos prehispánicos, las bondades del río Mapocho sustentaron a comunidades enteras, pero su constante intervención y canalización lo convirtieron en un ecosistema altamente degradado, contaminado, y arrinconado por autopistas y edificios. Pese a que gran parte de la ciudad le ha dado la espalda, existen especies nativas de flora, fauna e incluso funga que siguen dependiendo de sus aguas andinas. De esa forma, desmienten la percepción arraigada de que se trata de un “río sin vida” y dan esperanzas para la recuperación de un Mapocho que es fundamental no solo para la naturaleza urbana, sino también para la resiliencia de Santiago en una época de crisis ambiental.

Díaz, P. (14 de junio, 2021). La resiliente biodiversidad del río Mapocho. Ladera Sur.



Nace en el Cerro El Plomo, en la cordillera de Los Andes, y serpentea por 16 comunas de la región más populosa del país. Se trata del río Mapocho, el mismo que protagonizó importantes hitos como la fundación de urbes, que sustentó a comunidades enteras desde tiempos remotos y el mismo que ha sido responsabilizado por “desastres”. También es el ecosistema degradado que ha sido considerado por años como la “cara fea” de la ciudad, y que aun así continúa beneficiando no solo a los santiaguinos, sino también a la naturaleza que aún persiste en la capital.

“La principal característica de los ríos es que transportan agua, por lo que constituyen un eje fundamental para el desarrollo económico y social de las comunidades. Sin embargo, los ríos no solo son agua corriente, son biodiversidad, regulación de temperatura, proveen alimento, tienen significado cultural e incluso religioso, todos estos servicios explican por qué los humanos construimos pueblos y ciudades en torno a ellos. Estos servicios ecosistémicos son claves para el desarrollo sustentable de una ciudad, y deben ser considerados para la toma de decisiones en torno a su explotación, manejo y preservación”

Dr. Mauricio J. Carter, profesor asociado del Departamento de Ecología de la Universidad Andrés Bello (UNAB).

Para hacerse una idea, el Mapocho arrastra sedimentos desde lo más alto de los Andes, desde donde baja hacia la ciudad, atravesando Lo Barnechea, Vitacura, Las Condes, Providencia, Recoleta, Independencia, Santiago, Renca, Quinta Normal, Cerro Navia, Pudahuel, Maipú, Padre Hurtado, Peñaflores, Talagante y El Monte, hasta unirse al río Maipo en esta última comuna. Sin embargo, el Mapocho sabe poco de consideraciones, pues gran parte de la ciudad le ha dado la espalda, convirtiendo a este río salvaje en sinónimo de “problema” y “suciedad”.



Río Mapocho. Leandro Neumann Ciuffo / Flickr, 2014.



Pato Real en el Río Mapocho, Peñaflor. ©Joaquín Moure.

Algo así era lo que pensaba el muralista Joaquín Moure, quien fundó la iniciativa Mapocho Vivo luego de tener un encuentro directo con este vilipendiado ecosistema.

“

Una vez bajé al río en el tramo de Vitacura, y me llamó la atención la abundancia de la vegetación. Al llegar al agua vi que era transparente, que se veían las rocas de colores, me quité los zapatos, y al recorrer algunos metros salieron bagrecitos, que son peces nativos. Con eso se me cayó todo lo que pensaba del río Mapocho, todo el prejuicio de que es un río sucio y sin vida.

Fue esa experiencia en 2019 la que lo llevó a abrazar la causa de visibilizar al Mapocho, fotografiando a todas las especies que observa en el río, y que suelen pasar desapercibidas en medio de la bulliciosa capital. Así ha demostrado que el Mapocho hierve en vida. No obstante, es imposible conocer a este río andino sin comprender primero el vínculo de larga data que ha tenido con el ser humano.

## Una historia de bondades y canalizaciones

Los ríos han constituido un eje clave para los asentamientos humanos, y el Mapocho no ha sido la excepción. Conocido es el hito de que el valle del Mapocho fue el lugar donde Pedro de Valdivia fundó la ciudad de Santiago de Nueva Extremadura en 1541 (que se convirtió en la actual capital), pero lo cierto es que este río sustentó a distintas culturas, mucho antes de la colonización europea. En efecto, los pueblos prehispánicos formaron comunidades agrícolas junto al Mapocho, cultivando principalmente porotos, papas y maíz, y domesticando auquénidos (guanacos). Para ello, los moradores crearon un extenso sistema de canales de regadío que cruzaba los valles del Aconcagua y Mapocho, tal como recoge Memoria Chilena, que se tradujeron en 26 acequias principales para el Mapocho.

Incluso, este río formaba parte de un centro administrativo, urbano y político antes de la fundación de Santiago. Así lo reveló una investigación de Rubén Stehberg (Museo Nacional de Historia Natural) y Gonzalo Sotomayor (Universidad Andrés Bello), quienes constataron la importancia del Mapocho en el período Agroalfarero e Inca, por su abundante agua y suelos fértiles. Fue allí donde los incas habrían construido un centro urbano Tawantinsuyu, ubicado entre el cerro Huelén (conocido hoy como Santa Lucía), los dos cauces del río Mapocho que pasaban por el norte y sur, y cerca de las actuales calles Bandera y Brasil.

De hecho, bajo el casco antiguo de Santiago quedaron sepultados caminos incaicos, diversos vestigios como cerámicas, y -en definitiva- una infraestructura que habría sido aprovechada por Pedro de Valdivia para fundar la ciudad. Además, según algunas fuentes, caciques como Vitacura dirigían en esa época la construcción de acequias y canales, sin librarse del “caprichoso comportamiento del río”. En ocasiones, el Mapocho no alcanzaba a regar profusamente a Talagante y Peñaflo, pero en otros momentos podía crecer a tal nivel, que se desbordaba con impetuosidad, arrasando con puentes, tajamares, animales, árboles y, en resumen, con toda la ciudad.



Río Mapocho, Vitacura. ©Carolina Correa.







## Naturaleza resiliente

Avanzado el tiempo, el río Mapocho ha sido contenido, confinado y canalizado de forma constante. De acuerdo con los registros, sus aguas se han desbordado más de una veintena de veces, como si intentaran regresar a su recorrido original. De paso, se han desatado daños en infraestructura, tragedias y paralizaciones en la ciudad, la misma que hoy lo tiene rodeado de autopistas, edificios y mucho concreto. La acción humana no termina allí.

La remoción de su biodiversidad, la extracción desmedida de sus aguas, el vertimiento directo de aguas servidas y el depósito de basura, son algunos de los factores que han degradado de forma despiadada a este río salvaje, siendo así concebido por los santiaguinos como un lugar “sucio” y de “malos olores”. En esa línea, uno de los avances más recientes vino del proyecto ‘Mapocho Urbano Limpio’, ejecutado entre 2007 y 2010 por Aguas Andinas, que incluyó la construcción de un túnel colector que hasta hoy intercepta 21 descargas de aguas servidas que antiguamente eran vertidas directamente al río, generando los nauseabundos olores que azotaban a varias comunas. De esa forma, se mejoró el cuidado del río, aunque éste sigue siendo contaminado e impactado de otras maneras. Como sea, el Mapocho está lejos de ser una mera guarida de guarenes como siguen creyendo muchos.

No olvidemos que tanto el río Mapocho como la cuenca de Santiago se encuentran en un punto caliente (hotspot) de gran importancia para la conservación a nivel mundial. Chile central se destaca por su alto nivel de endemismo, es decir, por especies de flora y fauna que solo habitan en el país, en ningún otro lugar del planeta.



Es muy probable que nunca conoceremos la biodiversidad del Mapocho como era antaño, debido a la histórica y profunda intervención humana, pero la vida sigue expresándose y adaptándose de diferentes maneras.

Por ejemplo, un informe elaborado por el Centro de Ecología Aplicada, luego de un monitoreo en primavera de 2019, registró a algunos de los organismos asociados al río, entre ellos 44 especies de plantas vasculares que forman parte de la vegetación ribereña; cuatro especies de peces, siendo el bagrecito (*Trichomycterus areolatus*) la única nativa; dos especies de reptiles (lagartos *Liolaemus chilensis* y *Liolaemus tenuis*); y 28 especies de aves.

Aun así, la información varía entre las fuentes, y todo apunta a que su riqueza sería mayor. Carter destaca la biodiversidad de macroinvertebrados bentónicos (que habitan el fondo de este ecosistema acuático), como los insectos efemerópteros, plecópteros, tricópteros y odonatos, así como caracoles acuáticos (*Physa acuta*). Son estos pequeños animales –que Carter se ha dedicado a estudiar– los que constituyen el alimento de peces como el ya mencionado bagrecito y la pochá (*Cheirodon pisciculus*, endémica de Chile), ambas especies clasificadas en estado “vulnerable”.

La coordinadora del Proyecto GEF Montaña Marianne Katunarić, agrega que algunos sectores del río Mapocho son “hábitat de especies emblemáticas y en categoría de conservación, como la rana chilena (*Calyptocephalella gayi*) y el coipo (*Myocastor coypus*), y permite el desplazamiento de aves migratorias como la garza cuca (*Ardea cocoi*), ya que el río conecta la cordillera con el mar; con funciones muy valiosas como espacios para la anidación de aves nativas como el siete colores (*Tachuris rubrigastra*).

Por su parte, Moure asegura haber registrado más de 120 especies, a las cuales ha identificado con la ayuda de investigadores para luego publicarlas en el Instagram de Mapocho Vivo.





De esa manera, la divulgación ciudadana ha sido fundamental para robustecer la información, despejar percepciones erradas de un río “sin vida”, y visibilizar a las diversas criaturas asociadas al Mapocho, como la estrellita de la cordillera, el espino, el quillay, la serpiente o culebra de cola larga, la pancora de río, aves rapaces como el tucúquere, patos jergones, gárgas (grande, chica y cuca), abejas nativas, moscas florícolas, entre muchos más.

Sin embargo, la naturaleza del Mapocho no logra prosperar de igual forma a lo largo de sus 16 comunas. Por ello es inevitable hablar del río por “tramos”. Para muchos, las distintas caras del Mapocho son un reflejo de la desigualdad en la ciudad.

“El río Mapocho (y sus servicios) son tremendamente desiguales dependiendo de la comuna que atraviese. Mientras en Las Condes, Vitacura o lo Barnechea la presencia de rivera permite apreciar algo de biodiversidad, la presión urbanística de Providencia, Santiago y Recoleta lo han transformado en un canal encajonado, y el pobre manejo de residuos es una seria amenaza para Cerro Navia y Pudahuel”, asegura Carter.



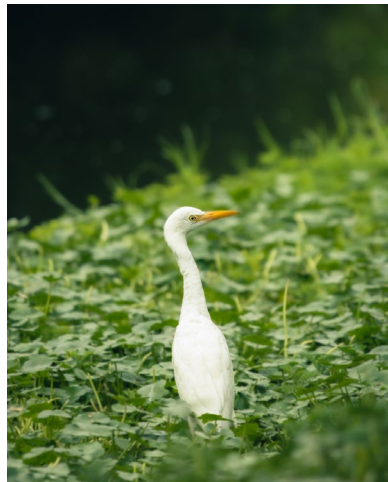
“En el Arrayán, donde nace, es impresionante la cantidad de agua, es muy caudaloso a veces, y de hecho complica cruzarlo a pie. Trae mucha agua desde la cordillera, es de un color celeste y blanco que recuerda a los glaciares, pero antes de entrar a la ciudad, se habilita la mayor cantidad de caudal para uso humano. Ahí está el primer cambio drástico, porque deja de ser este río con gran caudal, y pasa a ser el pequeño hilo de agua que solemos ver aguas abajo”

Descripción de Joaquín Moure  
Fundador de Mapocho Vivo.

El académico de la UNAB precisa que “el agua del río es relativamente transparente a la altura del Puente Lo Curro (Vitacura) donde aún hay flora y fauna, en contraste con la alta turbidez que vemos en el Puente Pío Nono (en Providencia y Santiago) donde toda presencia vegetal y animal ha sido removida del cauce”.

En efecto, a la altura de Providencia, el Mapocho recibe aguas del canal San Carlos, construcción artificial que le comparte una porción del caudal del río Maipo. Pero es en esa comuna y en otras como Santiago, donde la infraestructura gris amuralla al río, sumado a la contaminación y la falta de vegetación, rocas, arena y sustratos que permitan el establecimiento y afloramiento de distintas formas de vida. Luego, en Renca y Quinta Normal (donde se emplaça el Parque de la Familia o el “Mapocho Navegable”) recupera una mayor cuota de naturaleza, similar a Vitacura y Las Condes, pero en comunas como Pudahuel y Cerro Navia, los vertederos ilegales se apoderan del paisaje. Sin ir más lejos, televisores, refrigeradores, neumáticos y hasta el cadáver entero de un burro, son algunos de los hallazgos de Moure en el lecho del río.

Alejándose de las zonas más pobladas, el Mapocho vuelve a recuperar su biodiversidad. De hecho, según un diagnóstico elaborado por el proyecto GEF Montaña, el “río Mapocho en su tramo de las comunas de Peñaflo, Talagante, El Monte y su confluencia con el río Maipo en la comuna de Isla de Maipo, es una franja de alta relevancia para mantener y restaurar la conectividad del paisaje circundante, correspondiendo a un corredor biológico, en la región más poblada de nuestro país, que cumple importantes funciones ambientales y provee diversos servicios ecosistémicos”, detalla Katunarić.



Garza Grande y golondrinas en el río Mapocho, sector Peñaflo. ©Diego Vial.





El objetivo de dicho diagnóstico fue la ejecución del “Plan Maestro Borde Ríos Mapocho y Maipo”, impulsado por GEF Montaña, junto a los cuatro municipios aludidos y organizaciones locales que mostraron elevado interés en avanzar en la conservación del Mapocho a través de soluciones basadas en la naturaleza.

Luego de ejecutar la iniciativa por dos años, Katunarić explica que “uno de los principales resultados es haber consensado criterios comunes, buenas prácticas para la gestión del borde río, intentando avanzar al sueño colectivo de pasar de un ‘río de nadie’, en que la ciudad le da la espalda, a un ‘río de todos’, en que nos comprometemos a su recuperación. Otro resultado relevante es la zonificación, que permite un ordenamiento de la zona ripariana acorde al valor ambiental de esta área; posibilitando una planificación del uso del suelo realmente sustentable y con vocación de protección de la biodiversidad, asimismo, es una forma concreta de dar uso a los resultados de la Planificación Ecológica Local, haciéndola conversar con los instrumentos existentes, como es el Plan Regulador Metropolitano de Santiago que regula los usos de suelo en la región”.

Por otro lado, después de la entrada en vigencia de la Ley de Humedales Urbanos (21.202), se inició en febrero de este año el proceso para declarar al río Mapocho como humedal urbano en las comunas de El Monte y Talagante, y también al humedal El Trapiche que se ubica en la ribera del Mapocho, en Peñaflor. Asimismo, el Municipio de Peñaflor impulsó la creación de una Reserva Natural Municipal (RENAMU) que abarcará al río Mapocho en el Parque El Trapiche.

En cuanto a la declaratoria como humedal urbano, Katunarić cuenta que “en el caso de las comunas de Talagante y El Monte, están en la fase final en la Seremi de Medio Ambiente Metropolitana, al igual que el tramo de Peñaflores en humedal de El Trapiche, e Isla de Maipo está recogiendo los antecedentes para enviarlo a la autoridad ambiental”.

En ese sentido, los humedales urbanos pueden acceder a ciertos grados de resguardo al ser declarados oficialmente como tal, siendo por ejemplo áreas protegidas para efectos del Servicio de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental (SEIA). Por lo mismo, cabe preguntarse sobre la posibilidad de aumentar la protección del río Mapocho a través de la ley de humedales urbanos.

Para la coordinadora de GEF Montaña, es totalmente factible que las comunas más pobladas avancen en declarar sus cuerpos de agua como humedales urbanos si cumplen con los criterios establecidos. “En muchos casos los bordes de estos ecosistemas están abandonados; sujetos a contaminación, sobreexplotación e ingreso de especies exóticas invasoras como perros, gatos u otras especies vegetales; si las municipalidades se suman a esta ley, podrán decretar ordenanzas y recuperar esos espacios tanto para la recuperación y/o protección de la biodiversidad presente, como para sus comunidades, generando soluciones basadas en la naturaleza, apoyando la generación de empleos locales y permitir el cohabitar de la comunidad con el río, es decir, abrirse al desarrollo sustentable a escala local”, señala.









## El regreso del río salvaje

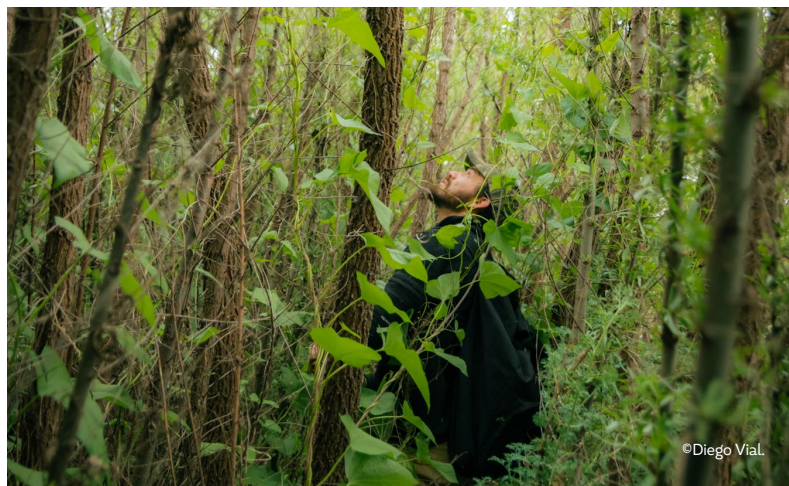
Actualmente, la escasa fiscalización y el desconocimiento del funcionamiento ecosistémico del Mapocho han derivado en que sus principales amenazas sean la extracción indebida e ilegal del agua en diferentes tramos, y la modificación de su ecosistema con fines de encauzamiento o manejo de crecidas.

Lo primero ha generado que el cauce disminuya hasta hacerlo casi desaparecer cuando atraviesa la ciudad, especialmente en las zonas altas, antes del empalme con el canal San Carlos. El creador de Mapocho Vivo sostiene que “no hay fiscalización de la basura que se tira o la extracción ilegal de agua, hemos visto mallas plásticas que desvían el río, y crean diques que lo cortan. En cada crecida o lluvia, el caudal se lleva estos plásticos, se dispersan por el río y nadie se hace cargo”.

Además, la idea de “limpiar” el cauce del Mapocho se traduce en la remoción de su flora y fauna nativa, aumentando la fragmentación de hábitats y perdiendo este corredor biológico. El académico de la UNAB puntualiza que “si además se considera que la mayoría de los parques que flanquean el río están constituidos de vegetación exótica (esto recientemente ha empezado a cambiar), no permite que las especies [nativas] que habitan zonas con menos intervención humana recolonizen estas áreas intervenidas del río”. Eso sin mencionar el alto requerimiento hídrico de muchas plantas exóticas que se usan en Santiago.



Mariposa *Battus polydamas archidamas* o *Batus*. ©Diego Vial.



©Diego Vial.

Por ello han sido varias las iniciativas que buscan darle una nueva cara al Mapocho o promover el acceso responsable a su ribera, posicionándolo como un espacio natural de elevado potencial para actividades educativas y recreativas. Pese a ello, es relevante destacar que no solo es un cuerpo de agua, sino que también es un ecosistema complejo del cual dependen diversas especies de flora, fauna y también funga.

Esto cobra especial relevancia en un contexto global de múltiples crisis, donde el Mapocho incluso tiene potencial como “infraestructura verde” que ayudaría a mitigar el impacto del cambio climático a través de un efecto enfriador, rutas para transporte como bicicletas (para reducir emisión de gases de efecto invernadero), y la mitigación de inundaciones, tal como señala un estudio del investigador Alexis E. Vásquez.

La coordinadora de GEF Montaña coincide y apuesta por la planificación y ordenamiento territorial, para recuperar estas áreas valiosas de biodiversidad y los beneficios ambientales y culturales que entrega. Para ella, los municipios cumplen un rol crucial en esa senda. “Seguir canalizando o secando nuestros acuíferos, son acciones en la dirección opuesta; debemos naturalizar nuestros territorios para poder potenciar la resiliencia de nuestros ecosistemas ante la crisis climática. Invertir esfuerzos en rescatar la biodiversidad es la mejor solución frente a la crisis ambiental. ¡Más bosques y plantas nativas y menos cementos y plantas exóticas!”, subraya Katunarić.

**Pero, por sobre todo, Moure llama a los santiaguinos a conocer y rescatar este río andino. “La ciudad tiene que darle espacio al Mapocho, y también creo que todos tenemos que dejar de quitarle agua al río, más que lo necesario. Mientras más agua, más vida tendrá el Mapocho y más provecho le va a dar a la ciudad”.**



















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# Versos dedicados al Río Mapocho

**Beatriz**

POETISA POPULAR DE SANTIAGO

La pasión y la tristeza  
encrespan tus aguas negras,  
de nidos te llevas hebras  
que se volvieron malezas;  
cautivos, tienen riquezas  
ceñido a mi pensamiento  
llegas hasta el firmamento  
tenaz, altivo, atrevido;  
y guardas sol fugitivo  
preso entre piedra y cemento.

Libertad por fin encuentra,  
sobre la tierra amorosa,  
la yerba buena olorosa  
de su letargo despierta;  
después de tu lucha cruenta  
hoy vas derramando lento  
tu caudal que en momento  
te diera la cordillera  
te has entregado a la tierra  
estoico sin un lamento.

Corriente azul cristalina,  
espejo de atardecer,  
lucero de amanecer  
te mira tras la colina;  
el albo azahar se inclina  
para mirar tu raudal,  
el aroma del rosal,  
el verdor de los vegetales  
y el color de los claveles  
te salen a saludar.

# Guía de Campo





**Algunos de los mejores lugares para bajar directamente al río y disfrutar de su naturaleza, según Fundación Mapocho Vivo:**

- 1 Nacimiento del río Mapocho. Localidad de La Ermita, Lo Barnechea
- 2 Lo Barnechea, Puente Pastor Fernández
- 3 Lo Barnechea, Puente Plaza San Enríque
- 4 200 mts más abajo del Puente Nuevo, entre Lo Barnechea y Vitacura
- 5 Sector Puente Lo Curro / sector Borde Río / sector Parque Bicentenario
- 6 Sector Cerro San Cristóbal, Puente La Concepción
- 7 Entre Pudahuel y Renca (entrada al aeropuerto)
- 8 Renca, calle Fundo El Retiro
- 9 Pudahuel, Lomas de lo Aguirre
- 10 Laguna Maipú
- 11 Peñafior, Parque El Trapiche
- 12 Talagante, sector cerro La Antena
- 13 El Monte, unión con río Maipo

El río nos brinda una amplia variedad de rincones por descubrir. Aquí recomendamos algunas de las opciones más accesibles e interesantes, y hacemos una invitación a explorar y compartir muchos otros puntos del Mapocho para disfrutar de este sorprendente humedal urbano.

# EXPLORAR & IDENTIFICAR

## La vida silvestre del Mapocho

ILUSTRACIONES POR CATALINA HILDEBRANDT

Caminar a paso lento, respirar, observar detenidamente y escuchar con atención. Estos son los únicos requisitos para descubrir a los seres vivos que habitan silenciosamente en nuestra ciudad a lo largo del río. Las aves son las más fáciles de identificar, pero no olvides levantar algunas piedras bajo el agua para encontrarte con los microorganismos que habitan allí. ¿Sabes cómo se llaman las plantas que encuentras? ¿De qué color es el agua? ¿Qué otros elementos que no pertenecen a la naturaleza puedes observar? Estas y muchas otras preguntas pueden orientar tu exploración. Te animamos a sorprenderte y a registrar tus hallazgos.



### Águila Mora

(*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*)

Ave rapaz grande con alas anchas y cola corta, de carácter esquivo y desconfiado, por lo que verla se hace más difícil.



### Peuquito

(*Accipiter bicolor chilensis*)

Ave rapaz pequeña, de cuerpo esbelto, alas cortas y cola alargada. De patas largas y color amarillo.



### Halcón Peregrino

(*Falco peregrinus*)

Es de las aves más rápidas del mundo, alcanzando unos 320 km/h al descender en picada para cazar.





### Chercán

(*Trogodytes aedon*)

Ave muy pequeña, hiperactiva y fácil de identificar, con su cola en alto y su canto fuerte. Especialista en cazar insectos.

### Fiófío

(*Elaenia albiceps*)

Ave muy pequeña y activa, de carácter confiado y muy astuta. Ágil cazadora que al vuelo captura insectos.



### Cometocino de Gay

(*Phrygilus gayi*)

Ave pequeña. El macho es amarillo oliváceo, con un capuchón gris azulado, mientras que la hembra es de coloración similar, pero con tonos más pálidos.



### Tenca

(*Mimus thenca*)

Con casi 30 cm. de largo, tiene un cuerpo liviano de tonos pardos. Se la puede encontrar en la rama más alta de los arbustos para observar a su alrededor.



### Queltehue

(*Vanellus chilensis*)

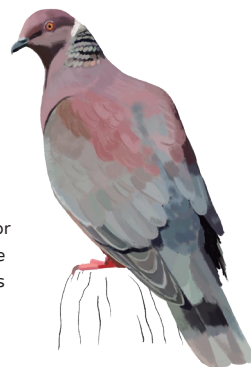
De fácil identificación gracias a su reconocible y vibrante vocalización. Posee espolones en las alas para defender a sus polluelos de amenazas.



### Torcaza

(*Patagioenas araucana*)

Paloma silvestre nativa de cuerpo color vinoso castaño, excepto por el lomo de tonos grisáceos. Se alimenta desde las copas de los árboles hasta el suelo.





### **Diuca**

(*Diuca diuca*)

Alcanza hasta 17 cm de longitud. Su coloración general es gris con una gran mancha blanca en la garganta y las hembras son más pardas. En invierno se junta en pequeños grupos familiares.



### **Loica**

(*Leistes loyca*)

Se reconoce por su mancha roja en el pecho y cara. El resto del cuerpo es negruzco. Frecuenta terrenos húmedos buscando alimento como semillas, frutas y crustáceos.



### **Pato Cortacorrientes**

(*Merganetta armata*)

Bucea y nada en ríos corrientosos en zonas montañosas. En el macho predomina el color blanco y en la hembra el color más protagonista en su cuerpo es el canela-rojizo.



### **lilguero**

(*Spinus barbatus*)

De cuerpo amarillento, esta pequeña y activa ave se alimenta de las semillas de árboles, e insectos como larvas y polillas.



### **Garza Grande**

(*Ardea alba*)

De plumaje blanco, grande y esbelta, que puede alcanzar el metro de altura. Vuela con su largo cuello retraído, pero suele caminar con él estirado. Tiene el pico amarillo y las patas negras con dedos negros.





**Lagartija esbelta***(Liolaemus tenuis)*

Su cuerpo puede medir hasta 14 cm (la cola puede llegar hasta 8 cm). El macho, que es muy territorial, tiene colores que van del amarillo al calipso, mientras que las hembras son grisáceas.

**Rana chilena***(Calyptocephalella gayi)*

Endémica de la zona centro-sur de Chile, siendo el anfibio más grande del país (puede llegar hasta 20 cm). Su estado de conservación es vulnerable (UICN).

**Culebra de cola larga***(Philodryas chamissonis)*

Endémica de Chile. Mide 140 cm de largo (máximo 220 cm) y su cola mide 1/3 de la longitud total. Aunque es terrícola, también puede verse trepando árboles o nadando.

**Lirio de campo***(Alstroemeria)*

Presente desde el desierto florido hasta la Patagonia. Se encuentra en estado crítico de conservación (UICN) y el 80% de las que están en Chile son endémicas (es decir, no existen en otras partes del mundo).

**Chagual***(Puya chilensis)*

Endémica de Chile. Crece lentamente, y puede florecer luego de veinte años o más. Tiene espigas que apuntan hacia todos los ángulos. Tolera la sequía, pero que necesita abundante riego.

**Tralhuén***(Trevoa quinquenervia)*

Arbusto endémico. Sus ramas tienen numerosas espinas. Sus flores blanquecinas florecen entre invierno y primavera.

**Mariposa colorada***(Vanessa carye)*

Mide 5,5 cm aprox. Faz dorsal de color negro y naranja con manchas variadas, mientras que su faz ventral tiene diseños en colores beige, café y naranja, con detalles azulosos.

**Abejorro chileno***(Bombus dahlbomii)*

De coloración anaranjada. En peligro de extinción por especies exóticas como el abejorro europeo (de color negro y amarillo). Cumple un importante rol en la polinización de muchas plantas nativas.

## IDENTIFICACIONES

**Aves**

- Águila Mora
- Peuquito
- Halcón Peregrino
- Chercán
- Fíofío
- Cometocino De Gay
- Tenca
- Queltehue
- Torcaza
- Diuca
- Loica
- Pato Cortacorrientes
- Garza Grande
- Iligüero
- Otros \_\_\_\_\_

**Anfibios**

- Lagartija Esbelta
- Rana Chilena
- Otros \_\_\_\_\_

**Reptiles**

- Culebra Chilena de Cola Larga
- Otros \_\_\_\_\_

**Flora**

- Lirio de Campo
- Chagual
- Tralhuén
- Otros \_\_\_\_\_

**Insectos**

- Mariposa Colorada
- Abejorro Chileno
- Otros \_\_\_\_\_









Nuestra próxima edición es sobre el río Pilmaiquén (región de Los Ríos y Los Lagos). Si te dedicas al periodismo, fotografía, artes visuales, ilustración, o simplemente tienes una buena historia que contar y quieres colaborar con nosotros, escríbenos a [hola@caudal.cl](mailto:hola@caudal.cl), y nos pondremos en contacto contigo.

[WWW.REVISTACAUDAL.CL](http://WWW.REVISTACAUDAL.CL)

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Desde tiempos prehispanicos, las bondades del río Mapocho sustentaron a comunidades enteras, pero su constante intervención y canalización lo convirtieron en un ecosistema altamente degradado, contaminado, y arrinconado por autopistas y edificios. Pese a que gran parte de la ciudad le ha dado la espalda, existen especies nativas de flora, fauna e incluso funga que siguen dependiendo de sus aguas andinas. De esa forma, desmienten la percepción arraigada de que se trata de un “río sin vida” y dan esperanzas para la recuperación de un Mapocho que es fundamental no solo para la naturaleza urbana, sino también para la resiliencia de Santiago en una época de crisis ambiental.

caudal



Politecnico di Milano  
Scuola del Design  
Corso di Laurea Magistrale  
Design della comunicazione  
a.a 2021/2023

**Carolina Sofia Correa Bull**  
Relatore: Elena Caratti



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863