

María Korol
Tierra adentro (Hinterland)

Institute 193

February 28 – April 12, 2025

“... behind the tale one caught glimpses of a savage and uncouth life: tents of horsehide, fires fueled by dung, celebrations in which the people feasted on meat singed over the fire or on raw viscera, stealthy marches at dawn, the raid on the corrals, the alarm sounded, the plunder, the battle, the thundering roundup of the stock by naked horsemen, polygamy, stench, and magic.”

-Jorge Luis Borges, *Story of the Warrior and the Captive Maiden*

“The total humanization of the animal coincides with a total animalization of man.”

-Giorgio Agamben, *The Open*

In *Tierra adentro (Hinterland)*, María Korol takes stock of the transformative powers coursing through the windswept plains of the interior. Working across oil paintings, ink drawings, and hand-worked ceramics, Korol renders visible geographic spaces far from ports of entry, in the middle or in between, mysterious zones that mirror the obscure interiority of living creatures.

Much like the Pampas of Korol's native Argentina, the inland regions of the American South are a space in which an imported European culture on the coasts gave way to something stranger, darker, and wilder; a landscape populated by pirates, soldiers, inscrutable natives, castaways and maroons, cowboys and horses. These are places where the construction of its inhabitants' selves arose through processes as akin to the weathering of stone and the formation of rivers as the construction of buildings – processes that overlaid the violence, joy, and chaos of the landscape upon the creatures that came to call it home, and called into question demarcations between human and non-human, western and indigenous, educated and savage. The world Korol depicts in these works should feel recognizable here in Kentucky, a place which has long served as a tenuous nexus between the expanding power centers of American culture and its fertile, mysterious interior.

Inspired equally by the labyrinthine stories of Jorge Luis Borges, which probed sudden reversals lurking at the edges of our subjectivities, and the tales of pre-hispanic American cultures, where animal spirits intermingle with the dreams and fortunes of the humans living amongst them, these works remind us to never forget that one could easily come to incarnate that which is supposedly opposite.

Small oil portraits explode the faces of their subjects, blowing up experiences of defiance, courage, confusion, and guilt to mythic proportions even as the thick brushstrokes blend their edges into the surrounding planes. Other works depict small figures wandering in expansive lands, or charged, unresolved interactions between humans, animals, and other bodies somewhere in between. Korol renders these scenes with joyful, evocative brushwork that combines the elegance and emotional sensitivity of late-period impressionists like Mary Cassat and Henri Matisse with the freedom and deceptive simplicity of mid-century American autodidacts such as Nellie Mae Rowe and Bill Traylor.

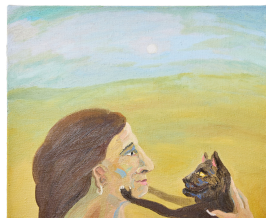
Alongside these depictions, Korol includes a number of ceramic figurines, further populating the world of *Tierra Adentro*. These totemic figures provide something of a counterpoint to the jittery, fluid figures in the paintings and drawings, paying homage to beings that have shaped Korol's practice and life by pointing a way forward through the reversals, metamorphoses, and encounters she illustrates. Crafted from the very earth itself, the current solidity of these figurines' soft self-confidence has emerged from their fundamental pliability and openness to being shaped by the world. From the dark underbrush and dense interior of the Americas, Korol's work attempts to uncover a form of life which welcomes transformation without being destroyed by it, which celebrates difference without petrifying it, and which confronts the fundamental unknowability of the interior with love, rather than fear.

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María Korol
Encuentro: espejo (Encounter: Mirror)
2025
Oil on linen
12 x 14 ½ inches



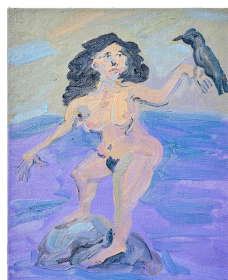
María Korol
La cautiva (The Captive)
2024
Oil on linen
13 x 9 ¼ inches



María Korol
Pampa
2025
Oil on linen
24 x 30 inches



María Korol
El guerrero (The Warrior)
2025
Oil on linen
13 ¼ x 9 inches



María Korol
Compañía (Company)
2025
Oil on linen
13 x 10 ½ inches



María Korol
Invitados (Guests)
2025
Ink on Stonehenge paper
22 x 30 inches (framed)



María Korol
Familia (Family)
2025
Ink on Arches paper
30 x 44 inches



María Korol
Carnales, íntimo (Intimacy)
2025
Ink on Stonehenge paper
22 x 30 inches (framed)



María Korol
Tertulia afuera (Tertulia outside)
2025
Oil on linen
18 x 24 inches



María Korol
El zahir
2024
Oil on linen
8 x 13 inches

Works are available for purchase, price list available upon request.

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María Korol

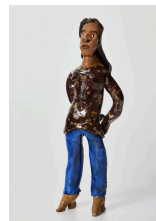
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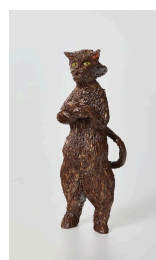
María Korol
El conquistador (The Conqueror)
2025
Oil on linen
13 ½ x 9 inches



María Korol
Cecilia
2025
Glazed stoneware
4 x 2 ½ x 14 ½ inches



María Korol
El soñador (The Dreamer)
2025
Oil on linen
13 x 9 inches



María Korol
Mutando
2025
Glazed stoneware
3 x 2 x 10 inches



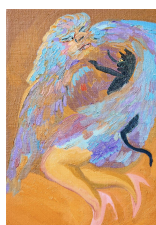
María Korol
Tierra adentro (Hinterland)
2025
Oil on linen
24 x 30 inches



María Korol
Magda
2025
Glazed stoneware
4 x 3 ½ x 13 ½ inches



María Korol
Nellie
2025
Glazed stoneware
5 x 3 x 13 ½ inches



María Korol
Adoptar (To adopt)
2025
Oil on linen
13 x 9 inches



María Korol
Titi
2025
Glazed stoneware
2 ½ x 7 ½ x 7 ¼ inches



María Korol
*Historia del guerrero y la cautiva
(Story of the Warrior and the
Captive Maiden)*
2025
Ink on Arches paper
30 x 44 inches (framed)

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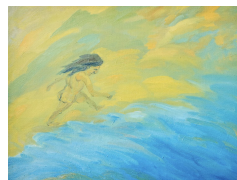
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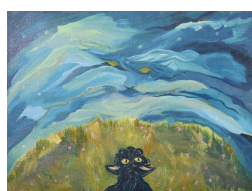
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María Korol
Alfonsina
2025
Oil on linen
13 ½ x 9 inches



María Korol
Sombra (Shadow)
2025
Oil on linen
18 x 25 inches



María Korol
El poeta (The Poet)
2025
Oil on linen
18 x 25 inches



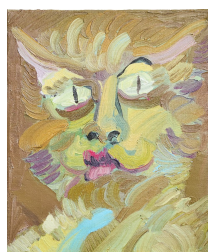
María Korol
Averroes
2025
Glazed stoneware
6 x 15 x 14 inches



María Korol
Amado-rrr
2025
Oil on linen
13 x 9 inches



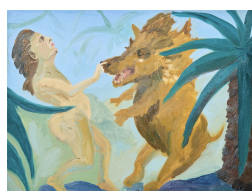
María Korol
Beatriz Viterbo
2025
Glazed stoneware
7 x 15 ½ x 9 inches



María Korol
La coqueta (The Coquette)
2024
Oil on linen
11 ½ x 9 ½ inches



María Korol
Emma Zunz
2025
Glazed stoneware
6 ½ x 9 x 13 ½ inches



María Korol
Encuentro: lo paralizó con un dedo
(Encounter: Paralyzed with One Finger)
2025
Oil on linen
18 x 25 inches



María Korol
Teodelina
2025
Glazed stoneware
7 x 8 x 15 inches

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María Korol

María Korol's artistic practice is rooted in drawing and painting. She is interested in storytelling, literature in conversation with history, memory, and transformation. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1980, in the middle of a military dictatorship, she was exiled to Brazil for five years and later returned to grow up in her home country. She moved to the United States in 2004. Korol has shown her artwork nationally and internationally in places such as March Gallery and The Painting Center in New York City, September Gallery in Kinderhook, NY, Marcia Wood Gallery in Atlanta, and the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, among other places. Her artwork is in numerous collections. She is a distinguished fellow of the Junge Akademie der Künste, the Hambidge Center, and the Women's Art Institute. In recent years she was a finalist for the Atlanta Artadia Award and the recipient of the Edge Award with the Forward Arts Foundation. Her work has been mentioned in The New York Times, ARTFORUM, ART PAPERS, Burnaway, and ArtsATL. Her studio is based in Atlanta, where she is an assistant professor of art at Morehouse College.