# Lithium Republic XYZ

VIRTUAL TERRITORY

# Concept

Lithium Republic XYZ ————————— Lithium Republic XYZ is a **rehearsal in the metaverse** about the territory known as the lithium triangle (located in the wetlands region between Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina). Through the virtual twin of environments in crisis, the project aims to support **interdisciplinary research** that addresses the current situation in that space, as well as **gather information about** the complex web that forms between the **future of energy, geohumanities, and indigenous critic.**

# Concept

Lithium Republic XYZ

What is it?

———————  A HUB FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

———————  AN EXPERIMENTAL PLATFORM FOR
GATHERING INFORMATION

———————  A SPACE TO REHEARSE OTHER
NARRATIVES

Lithium Republic XYZ

Why?

The lithium region is physically hard-to-reach, and most people are unaware of it. Nevertheless, it has become the focal point of one of the most pressing agenda issues of the moment: the energetic transition. Creating an image of the place, its inhabitants, the diversity of voices, worldviews, and temporalities situated there, is a first step towards forming a stance that allows us to reflect on and take action regarding a seemingly elusive problem.

The potential images of this region are far too intricate and profound to be seen singularly. Its wealth in resources, stories, and culture cannot be fully interpreted all at once. However, the lithium triangle is not an uninhabited desert, as is often depicted.

Lithium Republic XYZ presents itself as a platform enabling the staging of different questions and discourses about this crisis-ridden environment, utilizing resources such as virtuality and simulation.

The project support researchers and individuals interested in this region and related issues, who aims to explore the potential of these language tools for reflection, dissemination, and the rehearsal of alternative narratives, thus constructing potential realities. While its purpose is the appropriation of new media (metaverse, VR, blockchain, AI) for experimental purposes, to de-hierarchize virtual discourses—emanating from hegemonic centers of power—favoring participation and decentralization.

Presenting Lithium Republic XYZ in Barcelona:
Talking + Q&A

Title: **Lithium Republic XYZ - Virtual Territory (Talking)**
Subtitle: **Rehearsing realities on metaverse for change.**

The presentation of this project consists of a **40-minute talk** where we will cover the following:

➔ Context of the addressed region: a brief overview of its historical, socio-political, and geographical aspects;
➔ project fundamentals and roadmap;
➔ applied practices: the first virtual twin (Salar del Hombre Muerto), 'Devorar el Trueno' (virtual exhibition), and research specific to the territory (video essay);
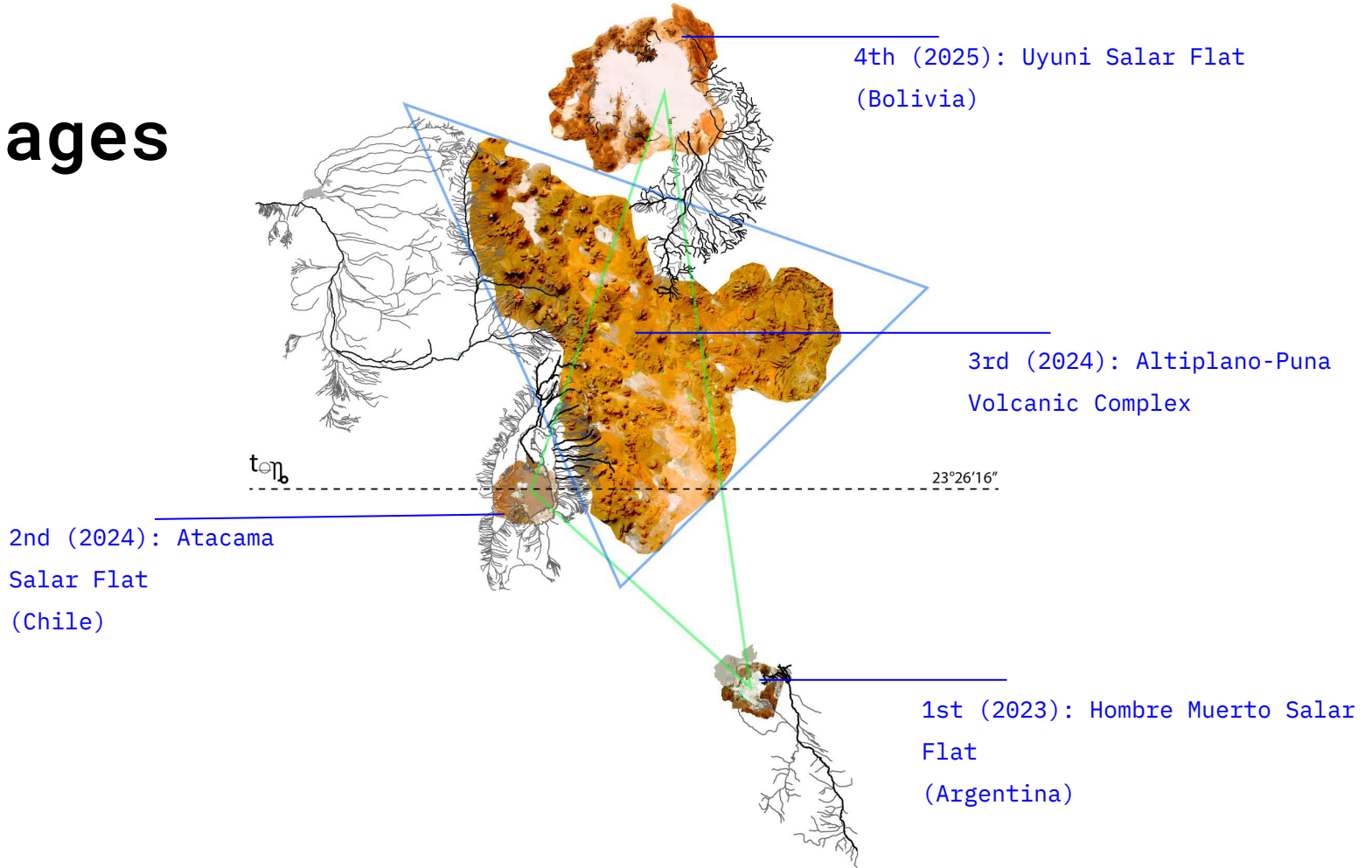➔ next steps.

Finally, we will **open the floor to the audience**, allowing for questions.

Additionally, it is possible to **showcase the experience** of the first virtual twin, either within the same presentation or through VR headsets.
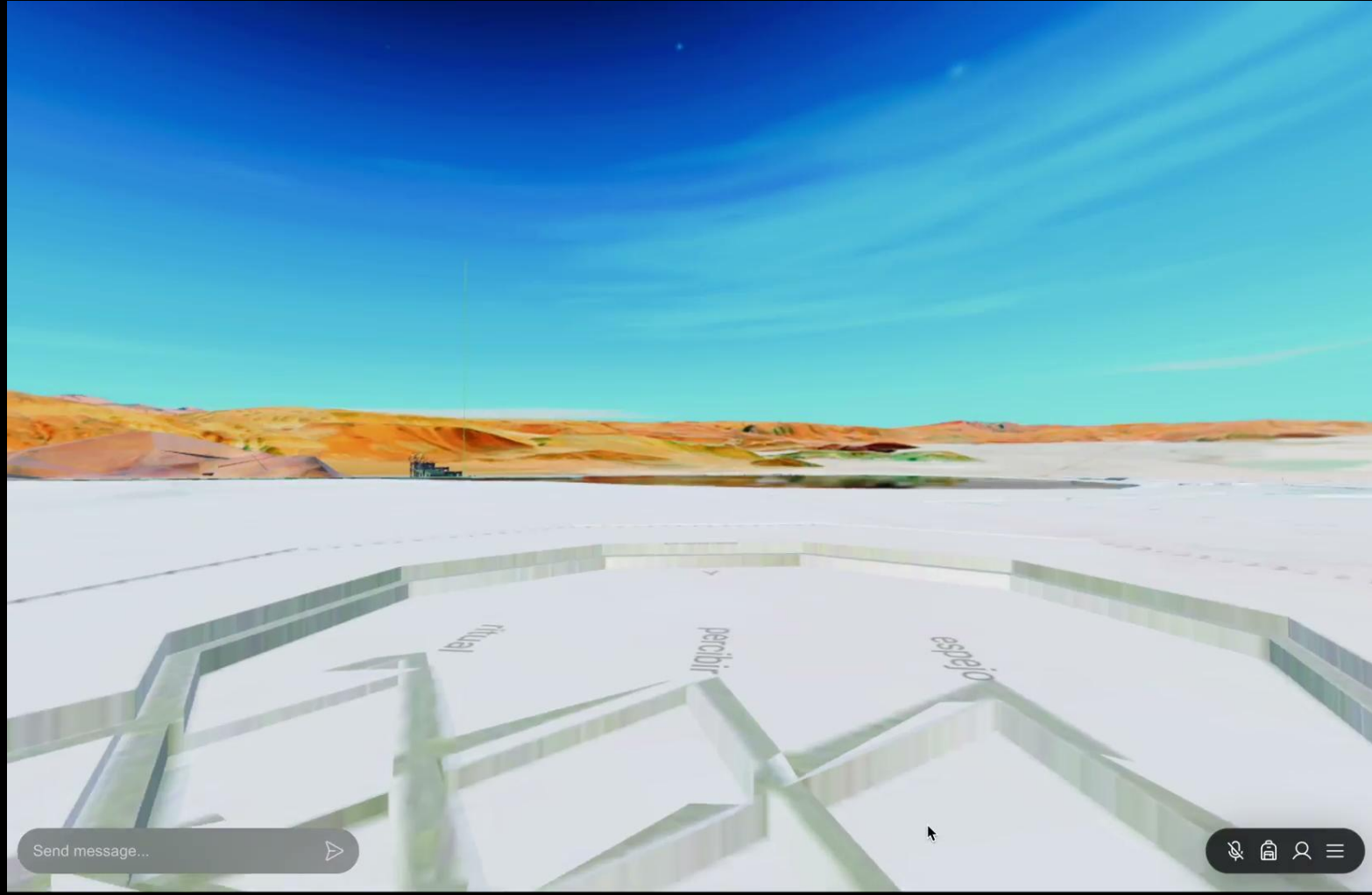
Needs:
- projector with HDMI output
- table for computer and mic.
- 2 mics and sound system with mini plug output.
- seats for aprox. 30 people.
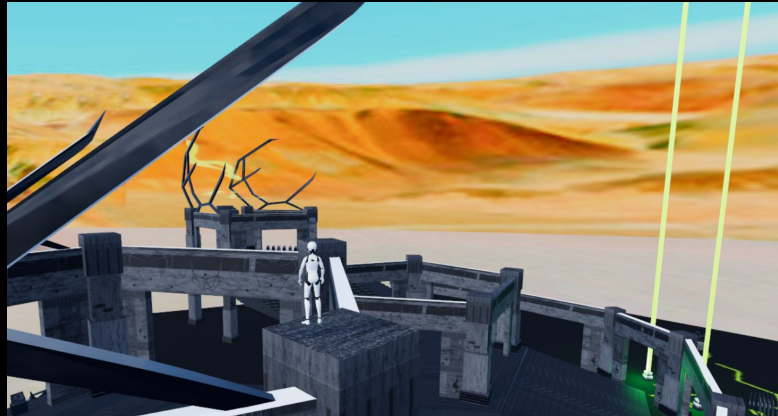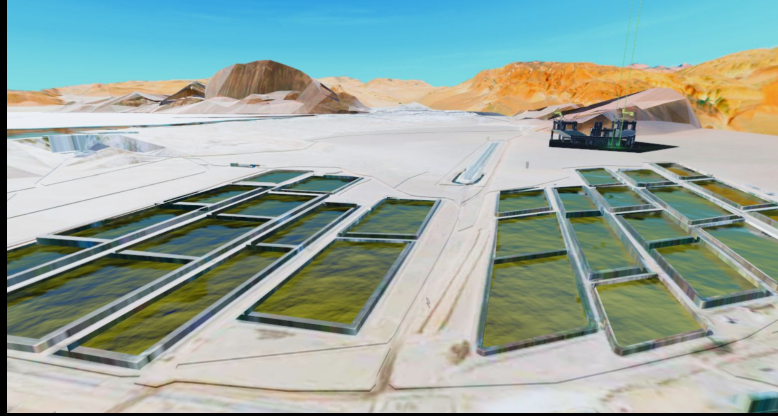- optional: VR headsets and computer.

# Stages

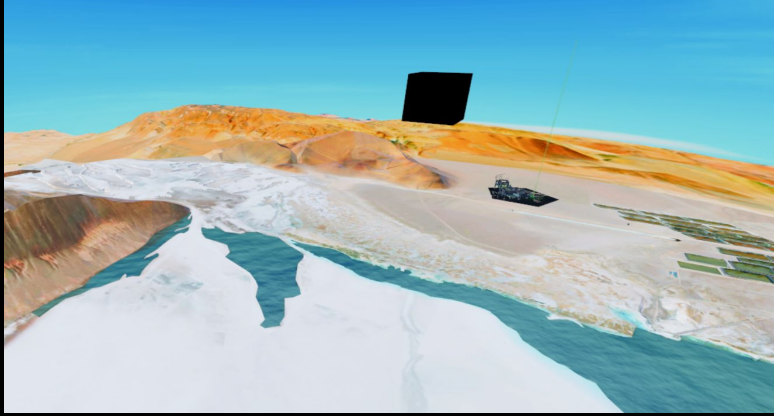4th (2025): Uyuni Salar Flat
(Bolivia)

3rd (2024): Altiplano-Puna
Volcanic Complex

2nd (2024): Atacama
Salar Flat
(Chile)

1st (2023): Hombre Muerto Salar
Flat
(Argentina)

23°26'16"

EXPERIENCE DEMO

REPÚBLICA DE LITIO

IMAGES

REPÚBLICA DEL LITIO

# ABOUT US

## Merlina Rañi

is an art curator specializing in digital media and scientific dissemination. Her research revolves around **virtual environments and their connection to physicality.** In her recent projects, she delves into the impact of technological abstraction on the political and affective aspects of society, exploring themes such as **virtuality, language, complexity, and machine learning.**

As an independent curator, she organized exhibitions in galleries, institutions, and universities in Buenos Aires, as well as internationally in galleries in New York and Berlin. Her work was selected for the Young Curators program by the PROA Foundation in 2014. She has served as a co-curator for the **+CODE electronic art festival** (2016-2018) and as an associate curator at **Espacio Pla** (2015-2022).

Currently, she is a resident at **ARTeCHÓ**, a program driven by **Baltan Laboratories.**

She has conducted talks and workshops at venues such as the Cultural Center of Spain in Buenos Aires, the University of Córdoba in Argentina, ESDi in Barcelona, Spain, the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the Mutek festival. Her texts have been published in platforms such as **Artishock** (Chile), **SuperRare** (USA), **MoCA** (USA), **The Curated** (UK), and featured in prominent books like *Artificially Intelligent* **(V&A, UK)**, *10 años de Espacio Contemporáneo* **(PROA, Argentina)**, and *¿Dónde y cuándo termina un sitio web?* **(Flee Immediately, Argentina).**

# ABOUT US

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## Cristian Espinoza

is an architect dedicated to artistic and architectural practice through research and experimentation in the realms of **territories and human rights**, following the aesthetic exploration of the so-called "DARK ECOLOGIES."

He is the creator of the **Specific Territory Encounter Rostock-Montevideo 2021-22**, which brought together artists from South America and Northern Europe to artistically unfold and activate ports of neo-extractivism and post-industry in the global periphery.

He created the streaming program **"HUMANX" for MUME - the Museum of Memory of Uruguay -** addressing the agenda of South American human rights during the cycle of uprisings and the pandemic.

In the recent past, he held the exhibition "The Water Assembly Montevideo" simultaneously at the **EAC - Contemporary Art Space** and the **Cabildo Historical Museum, both in Montevideo (Uruguay)**. He participated in the exhibition "Altered Fields" at the **MAC-USP - Museum of Contemporary Art of São Paulo (Brazil)**, the exhibition "The End of Maps? Dreamed Territories, Standardized Territories" at **Espace des arts sans frontières in Paris (France)**, and the exhibition "The Invention of Liberty" at **Fundación PROA in Buenos Aires (Argentina)**.

In March 2023, he served as the content coordinator for the international expedition **Terra-Ignota Forum**, which brought together scientists and artists from Chile, Germany, Argentina, Spain, and New Zealand.

# LR XYZ

by CRISTIAN R. ESPINOZA & MERLINA RAÑI

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