



PRIVATE WALLS
GALLERY



AKIVI

Mariela Torres Recabarren
Chili (1969)

Type
Sculpture

Medium
Ceramic

Dimensions
35 cm x 28 cm

Year
2023

BIOGRAPHY

Sculptural ceramics with a southern character

In no time, Mariela Torres (°1969, lives and works in Ghent) managed to conquer Belgian hearts with her colourful objects in ceramics. For Private Walls Gallery, she also creates sculptures for the first time. Although there is obviously a strong link between her applied and more visual work. 'My South American roots are the common thread in all collections. Although I have lived in Belgium since I was six, I sometimes miss the sun or cheerful atmosphere of my native Chile. Perhaps my love of colour meets this. Although I have the feeling that Belgians also often yearn for a bit more colour. When I used to work in fashion, the most colourful pieces went over the counter the quickest. My own brand has also grown quickly. Colour simply makes you happy,' Torres says.



Although the ten sculptures for the gallery have no function, Mariela Torres also draws inspiration for these from a southern colour palette and organic form language. 'Although I initially designed my candlestick purely for my own interior, in no time it has become my most iconic piece. For my sculptures, I used the same organically shaped base, which I myself associate with the sea or nature, as a basis. I also link a feeling or meaning to colours each time,' the ceramist explains.

'For the head, I was inspired by South American sculpture. In Europe you hardly hear anything about the civilisations of the Mayas, Incas, Indians and Aztecs, even though they represent a special culture. I can dream away for hours in books about their history, art and traditions. I also have a fondness for the gold decorative jewellery they created. Perhaps this fascination influences my preference for the colour gold. Although the link between gold and status will certainly also contribute to it,' Torres says. 'The titles refer to the Easter Island sculptures. Even with the functional ceramics, I choose South American names each time.'

Outside the lines

What began earlier by chance as a hobby and form of therapy during a difficult period has since grown into an unstoppable passion. 'When I visited my grandparents in the Chilean mountains as a child, I was surrounded by ceramics. They bought handmade pieces from artisans from other mountain villages, and stored wine and bread in them, among other things. At the same time, the material refers to our ancient ancestors, and being able to create with my hands makes me intensely happy. That's why I work according to my feelings as much as possible,' Torres says. 'In addition, I have always had a love for drawing, just like my mother.'

Although she focuses mainly on her own work, she looks up to two fellow ceramists in particular. 'I find the way Belgian Jos Devriendt uses colours fascinating. His formal language, which combines curves with purity, gives me a special feeling. I also admire the way Valentine Schlegel used ceramics for the most unexpected projects: from a washbasin over a bed to a complete fireplace. I myself also like to colour outside the lines. Among other things, I want to experiment with spatial installations. Now that ceramics has put the pieces of the puzzle together, I feel this is only the beginning.'