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AMÉRICA LATINA

QUE MI CORAZÓN FLOREZCA CUANDO DEJE
DE BOMBEAR TINTA ROJA, QUE LE SALGAN
ESPINAS

QUE MI CORAZÓN FLOREZCA CUANDO DEJE
DE BOMBEAR TINTA ROJA, QUE LE SALGAN
ESPINAS PEQUEÑAS Y FLORES AMARILLAS,
QUE LO PINTEN CON NIJ* Y LE HAGAN
DIBUJOS DE ANIMALES Y PÁJAROS BICÉFALOS.

QUE MI CORAZÓN SE DESHAGA EN LA TIERRA
Y CREZCA EN UN ÁRBOL DE PINO, QUE MIRE
POR LOS OJOS DE UN BÚHO, QUE CAMINE
EN LAS PATAS DE UN COYOTE, QUE HABLE
EN EL LADRIDO DE UN PERRO, QUE SANE EN
EL CUARZO DE LAS CUEVAS, QUE CREZCA EN
LOS CUERNOS DE UN VENADO.

QUE MIS CORAZONES SEAN AMARRADOS CON
UNA SERPIENTE DE COLORES, PARA QUE NO
SE CONFUNDAN DE DUEÑA, PARA PONERLES
UNA SEÑA Y VOLVER A ENCONTRARLOS EN EL
CAMINO DE AQUÍ A OTROS MUNDOS.

CHTUXAN TA B'A RI
NUK'U'X ARE CHI
CHUTANAB'A' UK'AQIK'
KAQA JA', CHEL TA
B'A UK'IXAL

Chtuxan ta b'a ri nuk'u'x are chi chutanab'a' uk'aqik' kaqa ja', chel ta b'a uk'ixal

Chtuxan ta b'a ri nuk'u'x are chi chutanab'a' uk'aqik' kaqa ja', chel ta b'a uk'ixal q'ana usi', chtz'aj ta b'a ruk' nij chb'an ta b'a retz'eb'alil kuk' awajib' tz'ikin kakab' kijolom.

Chja'r ta b'a ri nnk'u'x pa ri ulew chk'iy ta b'a pa jun chaja che', chka'y ta b'a pa uwach jun tukur, chb'in ta chi uwi' raqan jun utiw, chch'aw ta b'a chi upam ujayjatem jim tz'i', chkunataj ta b'a pa ri saqrab'ajil ri jul, chk'iy ta b'a pa ruk'a' jun masat.

Chexim ta b'a ri wanima ruk' jun xolo'pa kumatz are chi man ksach ta ri ajchoqe, kkoj retal, arechi kkariq chi jun mul qib' pa jun chi k'olib'al.

Este poema se publicó originalmente en *Asymptote*, octubre de 2020 / We na'b'alil qas xqalajisax relesaxik pa Asymtote, pa ri lajuj ik' rech ri joq'o juwinaq junab'. / This poem was originally published in *Asymptote*, October 2020.

Xqaxex pa kaxla'an tzij je pa mayab' k'iche' rumal Manuel Raxulew y María Guarchaj Carrillo.

MAY MY HEART BLOOM
WHEN IT STOPS
PUMPING RED INK, MAY
IT BURST INTO SMALL
THORNS

May my heart bloom when it stops pumping red ink, may it burst into small thorns

May my heart bloom when it stops pumping red ink, may it burst into small thorns and yellow flowers, may it be painted with nij* and engraved with animals and two-headed birds.

May my heart dissolve in the earth and grow into a pine, may it see through the eyes of an owl, may it walk on the legs of a coyote, may it speak with the bark of a dog, may it heal in the quartz of caves, may it grow on the antlers of a deer.

May my hearts be bound by a colored serpent, so they won't mistake their owner, so they'll be marked for me to find once more on the path from here to other worlds.

*(K'iche') Tinte natural elaborado a partir de insectos de color naranja (llaveia axin) que llevan el mismo nombre / A natural dye made from orange-colored insects (llaveia axin) bearing the same name.

Translation: Gabriela Ramirez-Chavez

ROSA CHÁVEZ

ECOLOGIES

ECOLOGÍAS

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AMÉRICA LATINA

Contemporary And (C& is a dynamic platform for reflecting and connecting ideas and discourses on contemporary visual arts. C& Magazine publishes weekly features, columns, reviews, and interviews in English and French on contemporaryand.com. C& América Latina Magazine (C&AL) focuses on the connections between Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa (amlatina.contemporaryand.com). Texts on this platform are published in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. The C& Print Issues are published twice a year.

2023 marks a special year for Contemporary And (C&) since the platform is turning ten. That is one decade of building educational formats, working with international critics, artists, and curators around the discourses of contemporary art from Africa and the Global Diaspora. That is one decade of constantly growing the C& network, thinking canons beyond a canon, writing art histories, creating new presents, producing futures in the now. Since 2013 C& is supported by ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.

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PUBLISHED BY:
Contemporary And (C&) and
C& América Latina (C&AL) 2023

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PRINTING

BVZ Berliner Zeitungsdruck GmbH, Berlin

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IMAGE ISSUE

Cover / Back Cover

Ethel Tawe, *Timescapes*, 2023. Archival photograph. Courtesy of the artist. *Nfè' cê ce Càa*. 2023. Ryõnshì nè: Ethel Tawe. Bkù'sì bvi ce vø ese ñwé cê sañ e.

Image 2

Abel Rodríguez, *Centro el terreno que nunca se inunda*, 2022. Ink on paper / Tinta sobre papel, 27x 39 in, 100 X 70 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Instituto de Visión.

Image 3

Left: Carolin Williams by Alejandro Pe. Description: Photograph taken in collaboration with Tiempo

de Zafra at the secondhand clothes market on the street Duarte with Paris in Santo Domingo. Oversized shirt dress made with about 30 men's dress shirts, shirts that might not sell because of simple stains or holes. / Izquierda: Carolin Williams por Alejandro Pe. Descripción: Fotografía tomada en colaboración con Tiempo de Zafra el mercado de ropa de segunda mano de las calles Duarte con Paris en Santo Domingo. Vestido camisero oversized hecho con unas 30 camisas de vestir de hombre, camisas que podrían no venderse por simples manchas o agujeros.

Right: Tokischa Peralta shot by Elissa Salas BTS of *Linda* video. / Derecha: Tokischa Peralta fotografiado por Elissa Salas detrás de escena del video *Linda*.

Image 4

"Indigenous people are the past, the present, and especially the future of this world" by Edgar Kanaykõ, in conversation with Lorena Vicini, page 20. / "Nós, indígenas, somos o passado, o presente e principalmente o futuro deste mundo" por Edgar Kanaykõ, numa conversa com Lorena Vicini, página 20.

Image 5

Edgar Kanaykõ, *The Sky Breathes the Earth, and Everything is Filled with Science - Pajé Xakriabá*, 2015. Courtesy of the artist. / Edgar Kanaykõ, *O céu respira a terra e tudo é movimentado de ciência - Pajé Xakriabá*, 2015. Cortesia do artista.

Image 6

Torkwase Dyson, *Liquid A Place*, 2023. Homme Adams Park 72500 Thrush Road, Palm Desert at Desert X. Photography courtesy of Lance Gerber.

Image 7

Sonia Elizabeth Barrett, *Sky*, 2020. Hair, wire, thread. Installation view at Villa Romana, Florence, Italy. Photo credit: OKIM studios.

Image 8

"Wanting to visually reclaim the sky as a powerful Black space" by Sonia Elizabeth Barrett, page 41.

Image 9

Mae-ling Lokko, *Grounds for Return*, 2021. Photo: Selma Gurbuz. Courtesy of the artist.

Image 10

Imani Jacqueline Brown, *Old Gods*, 2021. Framed and reflected chart of permits for coastal development, including oil and gas wells, flowlines, pipelines, and access canals in Quarantine Bay, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana (1920-2020), mapped against antebellum Public Land Survey System (PLSS) charts (1820s-1860s). The PLSS was the first US system to plat, or divide, territory into parcels of private property. Courtesy of the artist.

Las palabras de Rosa Chávez nos hablan –a los lectores de sus poemas profundos y hermosos– de un profundo reconocimiento de lo que debemos aprender a ver. De nuestras contrapartes locales, globales y mucho más allá de nuestra propia especie. De las interrelaciones entre todos los fenómenos naturales.

Ecologías, esta edición conjunta entre C& y C&AL que tiene en sus manos ahonda en diversas aproximaciones y contextos sobre nuestro clima social y ecológico. Invita a organizaciones, artistas y activistas que trabajan desde perspectivas negras e indígenas a discutir, contextualizar y reflexionar sobre la relación entre las estructuras neocoloniales y la crisis climática en sus contextos locales. Una variedad de reportajes, entrevistas, poemas y ensayos mira más de cerca, escucha y hace preguntas: ¿A quiénes se les permite hablar sobre esta crisis que afecta a todas las vidas en el planeta? ¿Cómo se puede cuidar algo que ha sido dañado hasta el punto en que la restitución o la reparación son imposibles? ¿Cómo pueden los conocimientos ancestrales ayudarnos a reimaginar y transformar el mundo en que vivimos?

Los cuestionamientos sobre ecología planteados aquí no van en línea recta. Van en círculos de ida y vuelta, hacia arriba y hacia abajo. Usamos esta metáfora geométrica porque *Black and Indigenous Ecologies* propone abordajes desde diversos ángulos. **Rosa Chávez** comparte su conexión con la tierra a través de dos poemas contundentes en los que recupera símbolos K'iche' que muestran cómo cuerpo y alma son lo mismo que naturaleza. En *Descentralizando o eu*, **Will Furtado** aclara que las nuevas aproximaciones a la ecología todavía se consideran inviables debido a la influencia predominante de una cultura blanca narcisista. La arquitecta, científica, diseñadora y educadora **Mae-ling Lokko** habla con **Edna Bonhomme** sobre la manera en que las personas pueden adaptar formas de reconfigurar el papel de la ecología en su vida diaria por medio de la renovación de desperdicios, en este caso con materiales fúngicos. En la obra *Timescapes*, la artista **Ethel Tawe** recuerda la poesía y las vidas de los álbumes fotográficos, habiendo elegido uno hecho por su padre. En el texto que introduce su obra, ella escribe que "el cambio y la trascendencia son ilustrados a través de temporalidades y frecuencias del tacto". La entrevista de **Lorena Vicini** a **Edgar Kanaykō** y el ensayo de **Nathalia Lavigne** sobre la práctica de **Abel Rodríguez** muestran que ambos artistas se centran en sus raíces indígenas para explicar que la jerarquización de sus comunidades no puede concebirse sin incluir a árboles, animales y organismos biológicos como parte de su campo geopolítico. En el texto "Flowers on the Expressway", **V for 5** describe su conexión con la vida del bosque Kakamega. A través de una reflexión íntima, la artista recuerda su importancia en la historia de Nairobi y cómo su flora endémica (por ejemplo, el árbol mugumu) representa resistencia y ancestralidad. En una época en que las tensiones sociales y políticas han aumentado, **Kolektif 2 Dimansyon** le muestra a **Serine ahefa Mekoun** cómo la fotografía en Haití puede estar inmersa en acciones colectivas que brindan apoyo a la población vulnerable. **Ama Josephine Budge** hace un llamado contra la internalización del uso puramente estético de cuerpos Negros en campañas climáticas y se muestra a favor de resistir al colonialismo climático a través de una extensa Negritud transtemporal. En el marco de una visita al estudio del colectivo **Tiempo de Zafra**, **Yina Jiménez Suriel** refleja cómo el trabajo con sobrantes y recortes de telas sirve para imaginar espacios que posibilitan subvertir dinámicas capitalistas a la vez que se genera contenido visual. La instalación de **Sonia Elizabeth Barrett** *Sky* (2020) critica la noción de Negritudes en estéticas y terminologías mal utilizadas con fines ecológicos. En la conversación entre **Ann Mbuti** y los artistas **Imani Jacqueline Brown** y **Zayaan Khan**, se plantean preguntas sobre el vivir en una tierra que está moldeada por la violencia racial y los entramados coloniales. ¿Cómo extraer riquezas y conocimientos del suelo sin ser explotador? La manera en que cada uno debate encierra las historias que contamos entre nosotros y que han construido nuestro mundo.

The words of Rosa Chávez talk to us, readers of her strong and beautiful poems, of a deep recognition that we must learn to see. Of our local and our global counterparts and far beyond our own species. Of the interrelationship between all natural phenomena.

"Ecologies": This joint issue between C& and C&AL you are holding delves into diverse approaches and contexts to our social and ecological climate. It invites organizations, artists, and activists from Black and Indigenous perspectives to discuss, contextualize, and reflect on the relationship between neocolonial structures and the climate crisis in their local contexts. A variety of features, interviews, poems, and essays take a closer look, listen, and ask questions: Who is allowed to speak about this crisis that impacts every life on this planet? How can one care for something that has been damaged to the point where repair or reparation are impossible? How may ancestral knowledge help us reimagine and transform the world we live in?

The questions about ecology posed in this issue do not go in straight lines. They go in circles, back and forth, up and down. We use this geometrical metaphor because Black and Indigenous Ecologies need to be approached from a diverse set of angles. **Rosa Chávez** shares her connection with the earth through two strong poems recalling K'iche' symbols that show how the body and soul are the same as nature. In *Decentering the I*, **Will Furtado** remarks that new approaches to ecology are still seen as unfeasible due to the predominant influence of a narcissistic white culture. Architectural scientist, designer, and educator **Mae-ling Lokko** talks to **Edna Bonhomme** about how people can adapt ways to reframe the role of ecology in daily life by renewing waste, in this case using fungi materials. In the artwork *Timescapes* artist **Ethel Tawe** recalls the poetry and lives of photo albums, having chosen one made by her father. In the opening text of her work, she writes that "change and transience are illustrated through the temporalities and frequencies of touch." An interview with **Edgar Kanaykō** by **Lorena Vicini** and an essay about **Abel Rodríguez's** practice by **Nathalia Lavigne** underline how both artists center their Indigenous roots to explain how the hierarchization of their tribes cannot be conceived without counting trees, animals, and biological organisms as part of their geopolitical field. In the text *Flowers on the Expressway*, **V for 5** describes her connection with the life of Kakamega Forest. Through an intimate reflection, the artist remembers its importance to the history of Nairobi and how native flora (such as the mugumu tree) represent resistance and ancestry. At a time in which societal and political tensions have increased in Haiti, **Kolektif 2 Dimansyon** shows **Serine ahefa Mekoun** how photography can be immersed in Haiti in collective actions that support vulnerable populations. **Ama Josephine Budge** argues against internalizing the purely aesthetic use of Black bodies in climate campaigns and for resisting climate colonialism through a capacious, trans-temporal Blackness. In the context of a studio visit with the collective **Tiempo de Zafra**, **Yina Jiménez Suriel** reflects on how their work with excess and textile waste imagines spaces of possibilities that subvert capitalist dynamics while generating visualities. **Sonia Elizabeth Barrett's** work *Sky* (2020) criticizes the notion of Blackness in aesthetics and terminologies misused for ecological purposes. A conversation between **Ann Mbuti** and artists **Imani Jacqueline Brown** and **Zayaan Khan** raises questions about living on land that is shaped by racial violence and colonial entanglements. How to extract from the richness and knowledge of the soil without being exploitive? As they agree, it's the stories we tell that have built our world.

The Editorial Team

DESCENTRALIZANDO O EU: COMO REDEFINIR O HUMANO

DECENTERING THE I: HOW TO REDEFINE THE HUMAN

WILL FURTADO

Entre os poucos aspectos positivos da pandemia em curso, destaca-se a redução drástica das emissões de CO2 como resultado das restrições de viagem. Digo isso com todo o respeito e sem tentar falar em nome do meio ambiente.

Isso vem junto com a notícia de que a população da China já atingiu potencialmente seu ápice, e que as taxas de natalidade globais estão em queda. Ambas as notícias são um tônico para o nosso planeta doente. Há algum tempo, os governos estão alarmados com a perspectiva da extinção da raça (humana?), e alguns vêm introduzindo medidas nesse sentido – mesmo que alguns desses governantes reencenem a dinâmica imortal da opressão que tem governado nosso mundo até agora e coloca em questão novamente a própria necessidade de nossa existência. Por exemplo, a Hungria tem oferecido, no últimos anos, incentivos para que as famílias se reproduzam, mas não sem uma retórica nacionalista anti-imigração. O Irã, enquanto isso, interrompeu a provisão estatal de contraceptivos e vasectomias.

A obsessão pelo despovoamento não tem a ver apenas com as agendas nacionalistas, mas também com a centralização do ser humano em detrimento de todo o resto. No livro *How Forests Think – Towards Antrology Beyond the Human (Como as florestas pensam – rumo a uma antropologia além do humano)*, o professor associado de Antropologia da Universidade McGill, Eduardo Kohn, desafia os fundamentos da antropologia, questionando nossas suposições centrais sobre o que significa ser humano e também a supremacia humana. Com base em sua pesquisa na Amazônia, Kohn explica que “a individualidade não se limita a animais com cérebros. As plantas também são indivíduos. A individualidade tampouco é confinada a um organismo fisicamente limitado. Ou seja, a individualidade pode ser distribuída sobre corpos (um semi-nário, uma multidão ou uma colônia de formigas podem agir como um indivíduo), assim como pode haver muitos indivíduos dentro de um único corpo (células individuais têm uma espécie de individualidade mínima)”.

A centralidade do ser humano também é encontrada nas artes com ideologias não menos nefastas que na política. Tomemos como exemplo terra0, um projeto dos artistas Paul Seiler e Paul Kolling, lançado em 2016. A ideia por trás do terra0 é criar uma área autossustentável da floresta alemã, para cuja exploração madeireira o software da floresta venderia de forma autônoma licenças de exploração em blockchain, monitorando seus recursos sem qualquer intervenção humana. O objetivo é criar a primeira entidade não humana de propriedade própria do mundo, em que a floresta eventualmente compra suas terras de volta dos projetistas do sistema.

O uso da tecnologia blockchain para cuidar do meio ambiente não é apenas um oxímoro (dado o alto custo energético das transações), como a aplicação em uma floresta de práticas regulatórias inspiradas em humanos erra o ponto da ecologia. Em maio, até o duvidoso Tesla anunciou que não aceitaria mais pagamentos em bitcoins devido ao impacto da mineração da moeda virtual. “Para imaginar uma antropologia que vá além do ser humano e que não projete simplesmente qualidades humanas em todos os lugares, devemos situar a moralidade ontologicamente”, diz Eduardo

Kohn sobre a maneira como os humanos devem se relacionar com a natureza, se quisermos descentralizar o ser humano. Ele também elucida que os mundos possíveis que imaginamos com outros seres devem apresentar uma prática ética de esclarecimento sobre que tipo de florescimento queremos incentivar e a que custo.

Recentralizar a flora e a fauna na epistemologia também significa abraçar as limitações do ser humano e desconstruir o mito do salvador masculino branco e de seu capitalismo tecnopatriarcal, como teorizado por Paul B. Preciado em *Testo Junkie* (2008). De acordo com a cultura indígena na América Central, muitas das soluções que os humanos buscam sempre estiveram lá, como o respeito maior pela natureza, a interconexão do planeta e do universo, e a falta de hierarquias entre natureza, animais e seres humanos. Kohn também explica que, quando voltamos nossa atenção etnográfica para a forma como nos relacionamos com outros tipos de seres, nossas ferramentas antropológicas (que têm o efeito de nos divorciar do resto do mundo) se desligam. Nesse sentido, é o conhecimento indígena que pode funcionar como ferramenta de reposição para reconfigurar a maneira como a vida pode existir e prosperar na Terra. Como aponta Frank B. Wilderson III: a capacidade total da vida só pode ser conhecida através de sua outra.

Na instalação de vídeo e performance de Grada Kilomba *Ilusões vol.I, Narciso e Eco*, 2017, a artista conta uma história sobre como, assim como ocorre com Narciso, a cultura branca é obcecada por si mesma. Também como Narciso, animais pensantes são obcecados por si mesmos. Mas no (como diz Bell Hooks) patriarcaldo capitalista branco classista, essa obsessão em centralizar o ser humano não apenas vem às custas da natureza, mas também às custas dessas sociedades que ainda são tratadas como menos do que humanas – qualquer um que cai da matriz cis masculina branca e rica. Isso explica como foram necessários protestos globais para que George Floyd pudesse ter o mínimo de justiça, quando seu assassino foi condenado – justiça que não foi concedida a Breonna Taylor; ou por que protestos pacíficos pró-Palestina foram recebidos com violência policial em Paris e Berlim; ou por que trabalhadores sexuais trans HIV positivos na Colômbia são excluídos da atenção médica; ou por que ainda não temos uma pílula anticoncepcional masculina.

Com isso, para realmente descentralizarmos o humano e assim salvarmos o que resta do nosso planeta, a sociedade como um todo também precisa reavaliar e redefinir o ser humano e sua animalidade genocida em relação a uma natureza não menos inferior, na teoria e, acima de tudo, na prática.

Will Furtado é artista, escritor e editor adjunto da *Contemporary And América Latina (C&AL)*.

Tradução: Cláudio Andrade

Among the very few silver linings of COVID-19, an indisputable one was the temporary but drastic reduction of CO2 emissions as a result of travel restrictions early on in the pandemic. I write this with all due respect and not attempting to talk on behalf of the environment.

The year 2021 brought news of falling global birth rates, which have may have advantages for our ailing planet. For a while now, governments have been alarmed at the prospect of the extinction of the (human?) race and some have introduced fertility policies which reenact the deathless dynamics of oppression that have ruled our world thus far and put into question, again, the very need for our existence. In 2020, for instance, Hungary started offering incentives for families to reproduce within a framework of nationalist anti-immigration rhetoric, while Iran halted state provision of contraceptives and vasectomies.

Obsessing over depopulation is not only about nationalist agendas but also about centering the human to the detriment of all else. In the book *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (2013), Eduardo Kohn calls into question our central assumptions about what it means to be human and about human supremacy. Based on his research in the Amazon, Kohn writes that "selfhood is not limited just to animals with brains. Plants are also selves. Nor is it coterminous with a physically bounded organism. That is, selfhood can be distributed over bodies (a seminar, a crowd, or an ant colony can act as a self), or it can be one of many other selves within a body (individual cells have a kind of minimal selfhood)."

The centrality of the human is also to be found in the arts, underpinned by no less nefarious ideologies than those found in politics. Take for example *terra0*, a project by the artists Paul Seiler and Paul Kolling launched in 2016. Their idea is to create a self-sustaining area of German forest in which the forest's software autonomously sells logging licenses on blockchain and monitors its resources without any human intervention. The goal being to create the world's first self-owned non-human entity, when the forest eventually purchases its land back from its designers.

Not only is using blockchain technology to care for the environment an oxymoron given the high energy cost of transactions, but applying human-inspired regulatory practices to a forest misses the point of ecology. In 2021, even the dubious company Tesla announced that it would no longer accept bitcoin payments because of the impact of bitcoin mining. Kohn writes: "to imagine an anthropology beyond the human that does not simply project hu-

man qualities everywhere we must situate morality ontologically." He also argues that the possible worlds that we imagine engendering with other beings must feature an ethical practice of clarifying what kind of flourishing to encourage and at whose expense.

Recentering flora and fauna in epistemology also means embracing the limitations of the human, and with that deconstructing the myth of the white male savior and techno-patriarchal capitalism, as theorized by Paul B. Preciado in *Testo Junkie* (2008). According to various Indigenous cultures in central America, many of the solutions humans have sought recently were always already there, such as having utmost respect for nature, seeing the planet and universe as interconnected, and cultivating a less hierarchical relationship between nature, animals, and humans. Kohn suggests that when we turn our ethnographic attention to how we relate to other kinds of beings, our anthropological tools (which have the effect of divorcing us from the rest of the world) break down. We need Indigenous knowledge as a replacement tool for reconfiguring life to exist and thrive on Earth. As Frank B. Wilderson III points out: the full capacity of life can only be known through its other.

In Grada Kilomba's video and performance installation *Illusions Vol. I, Narcissus and Echo* (2017), the artist tells a tale of how white culture is obsessed with itself. Like Narcissus, thinking animals are obsessed with themselves. But in what bell hooks calls a white supremacist capitalist classist patriarchy, this obsession with centering the human comes at the expense of nature but also at the expense of those people whom society still treats as less than human – anyone who falls off the cis-het able-bodied wealthy white male matrix. This explains how it took global protests to grant George Floyd the bare minimum of justice through the conviction of his murderer, why peaceful pro-Palestine protests were met with police violence in Paris and Berlin in recent years, why HIV-positive trans sex workers in Colombia have been refused medical attention, and why we still don't have a male contraceptive pill.

For us to truly decenter the human, and thus save what's left of our planet, society as a whole needs to reassess and redefine the human and its inherent genocidal animality toward nature, in theory and above all in practice.

Will Furtado is an artist, writer, and the deputy editor of *Contemporary And América Latina (C&AL)*.



Foto / Photo: Eduardo Kohn.

RECENTERING FLORA AND FAUNA IN EPISTEMOLOGY ALSO MEANS EMBRACING THE LIMITATIONS OF THE HUMAN.

RECENTRALIZAR A FLORA E A FAUNA NA
EPISTEMOLOGIA TAMBÉM SIGNIFICA ABRAÇAR AS
LIMITAÇÕES DO SER HUMANO

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES ON “WASTE”

**A CONVERSATION BETWEEN
EDNA BONHOMME AND
MAE-LING LOKKO**

Mae-ling Lokko is an architectural scientist, designer, and educator. She creates new worlds with organisms we often forget. "My reverence for natural materials can be traced back to this one moment in Maa, observing the invisible choreography of the *nipa*," she wrote in a 2018 edition of *Frieze* magazine. It was a reflection on her architectural inspirations and how the Filipino *nipa*, the type of home her mother grew up in, had shaped her practice. For Lokko, the hut is more than a vernacular structure providing refuge in Filipino society. It is an acutely designed building which models nature into a stable form. Its bamboo and natural fibers symbolized "a bottomless feeling of softness" for Lokko, a feeling that she pursued while conducting research in regions of Southeast Asia and West Africa that relate to her cultural identities. In this interview Lokko speaks about agrowaste, fungi, and her evolution as an artist.

Edna Bonhomme: Your work is deeply embedded in the world of architectural technology. You occupy many spaces, the arts as well as academia. How does academic training inform your art practice, and how does your art practice inform your academic work?

M-IL: I think my process of research on the historical, technological, or cultural fronts is often one and the same whether I am working towards an academic publication or an art piece. But I tend to use academic methodologies – iterative research, development, and testing – to inform my material practice. Because iteration is important for improving material prototypes for architectural applications. I also tend to use architectural-scale elements in my art – be it modules, walls, or ceiling surfaces.

EB: In recent years you have worked with agrowaste and biobased materials in your design practice to build a new material vocabulary and expand the possibilities of architecture. In your work *Agrocologies* (2019) you explored upcycling by showing how agrowaste processing might be integrated in the domestic sphere. Why did you focus on agrowaste?

M-IL: Agrowaste is a material group powerfully linked to the history of plant extraction from the tropics to other parts of the world: often the "fruit," the most valued part of the plant, makes its way to global markets, and the "agrowaste" is what is left behind. The question of accessibility, of where one can get it and from whom, is very important to me. If agrowaste is already in the hands of those who are the most economically vulnerable within a global material system, how can one expand and transform its role? Secondly, the diversity and range of agrowaste offers incredibly sophisticated material potentials for applications in buildings and the broader ecology. And lastly, because of how their volume and production are closely tied to human population growth, agrowaste represents a renewable, locally specific resource.

EB: In your installation *Hack the Root* (2018) you worked with fungi's vegetative state and addressed underground fungal networks as nature's glue that binds everything. Can you explain how their biological shapes have an aesthetic quality and to what extent fungi lifecycles can be seen as an organic artistic contribution to nature?

M-IL: Maybe a more useful way to see it is that, like us, fungi have various capacities to digest specific types of food. Some prefer lignocellulosic materials, which a large percentage of our plant kingdom is made of, and some like plastic or heavy metals. So there are infinite possibilities in terms of aesthetics and material properties (color, smell, texture), depending on the mycelium strain and substrate. However, I think that when speaking about an "artistic

contribution" it is more a collaboration between artist and fungi. I'm interested in how we understand and design the environment within which fungi can grow – in which they are capable of growing to micro-scale patterns, capable of growing from coarse to velvety textures, or generating specific smells.

EB: Your work *Myco Tunnel* (2021) was a bio-architectural pathway. The wall was neutral in color, interspersed with serial textured ridges. What was the logic behind these choices?

M-IL: The color is merely a result of the mycelium strain that was used. It is great at digesting components in our substrates and yields a whitish-brown color. I personally don't like "make-up" on building materials – I am very cautious about coating myco-based materials for the purposes of giving it color, as this stops its ability to breathe. When we do this to natural materials, we interfere with their ability to dry and expand, which leads to other types of material failures. The form of the panel itself was very elemental. It was about giving direction to circulation within a tunnel space in terms of light, about how touch could be encouraged along the surface of the panel.

EB: You move through various social contexts – integrating African and Southeast Asian cultures – which relate to your personal identity and to your work as an architect. You also look at how food production and labor can be parsed out and valued.

M-IL: In the case of agro-based materials particularly, I think that we can't activate, normalize, or afford new material practices unless we are able to shift our cultures around food production and distribution. It's too expensive to produce and scale biogenic building materials using the inherited systems of food production and material manufacturing we have today. From current perspectives variable agrowaste feedstocks are seen as a problem, while consumers are regarded as passive, receiving subjects rather than participating actors in a second cycle of production. So for me producing art that focuses on new roles, engagement with new material systems, or new rituals of material production is part of the larger project.

EB: So much of your work involves redesigning nature to prioritize non-sentient organisms. At the same time, generating a sustainable future seems essential – in your production and in your attempt to honor the Earth we have inherited. Given the climate crisis, what is your vision of a viable human and non-human aesthetic relationship for future artists?

M-IL: My approach is to "personify" plant or fungi life kingdoms. I apply it to air, land, and water. The act of personifying air or plants allows me to understand and learn about them like I would get to know a person. Where is it from, what does it like to eat, what does it need in order to grow, what things contribute to shaping its quality of life? This leads me towards thoughts beyond "waste" – because once you know something or someone better it is impossible to think of anything that occupies our planet as "waste." A more productive way of framing these connections is through empathy, which allows us to see the world through another's eyes. If I put myself in the place of an air parcel or a fungal mycelium organism, I suddenly see a wealth of organizational and systemic possibilities that benefit and celebrate the material throughout its life and death. For an artist or designer, this opens up a new realm of creative possibility and ultimately generates propositions about the role of the human within a broader material ecology.

IF I PUT MYSELF IN THE PLACE OF AN AIR PARCEL OR A FUNGAL MYCELIUM ORGANISM, I SUDDENLY SEE A WEALTH OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND SYSTEMIC POSSIBILITIES THAT BENEFIT AND CELEBRATE THE MATERIAL THROUGHOUT ITS LIFE AND DEATH.

Mae-ling Lokko is an Assistant Professor at Yale University's School of Architecture (YSoA). She is an architectural scientist, designer and educator from Ghana and the Philippines who works with agrowaste and renewable biobased materials. Through her work, Lokko explores themes of "generative justice" through the development of new models of distributed production and collaboration. In her artistic and design practice, her work deconstructs historical narratives and practices of extraction through the design of new material vocabularies and the prototyping of participatory models of production.

Edna Bonhomme is a historian of science and writer based in Berlin, Germany. Edna's essays critically engage with how people navigate the unsavory and unwieldy states of illness and health – especially how people contend with contagious outbreaks, medical experiments, reproductive assistance, and illness narratives. Her work has appeared in *Al Jazeera*, *the Atlantic*, *the Guardian*, *the London Review of Books*, and elsewhere.

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Mae-ling Lokko, *MycoTunnel* for Z33. Courtesy of the artist.

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Mae-ling Lokko, *CASE Upcycling Pavillion*, Ghana Studio, 2016, Photo: Sarah Reynolds. Courtesy of the artist.







NFÈ' CÊ CE CÀA

TIMESCAPES



ETHEL TAWWE

Nwě embe Kamàrun cê ke còo mnlèṅshi ker ce saṅ mṅghàghar Ethel Tawe à fye' mnlèṅshi ce zhii tâa à m̀ nòṅsi. Njep zhii ṅwà' ce e ce saṅ ene Nfè' cê ce Càa, e suṅ àmbò yàp mbùundap ker tɛɛ tatap ka' àmbò ncòo ene bèe à da'see e, buu à beengèr, ba m̄ bu' nfè' cê duṅshi àmbò dī' ce e ke cu, zhi nòṅ e.

Sèe ka' k̄ti ambùu ṅwà mnlèṅshi ce a fàdi e k̄' ε, a rôo a ka' koni, Nfè' cê ce Càa ba yuu ce àde' zhi gee sèe kwa'shi ker kuushi buu sèe ce ye ker ba yuu ce ke cu tàtà ka'. Nfè' ce àde' sèe ye àmbò e nòṅ e, ce zhi yu àmbò yuu ce a nòṅsi mbe ndùu mnlèṅshi zhi ce yeti àmbò buu cê nòṅ à nshe a b̄tee a ka' bep, a feesee àmbò rliisèe rla', dī' ce sèe ce cu, ba yuu ce zhi conì sèe àmbò bèengòṅ. Àmbò a m̀ lòr yàa tâa à nfè' ce e ce j̄shi à bto' magòr bce bvi yu àgee rla' ka', mnlèṅshi anà bvi yu àmbò ncòo rjèr. À baashi a ker kupshi a nòṅsi bvi njep komputà, bjàprijapri buu ce sèe lò ma'ri à ndàp lesee, a buu anà ce mè ghèter a baashi àmbò ṅgòṅ e ntini zhi ce kupsee nfèsip. Ariella Azoulay à làa zhii ene: " buu ce bvi koni mbe ndùu mnlèṅshi bvi ke m̀ ka'. Àde' a ku t̄r t̄r e, ker k̄ti ambùumo à nfè' mò' ce bvi be gèe t̄e a kuushi yuu ce zhi m̀ càa: bu' anà zhi fa n̄jì nè ṅwè ce e t̄e enje j̄e e laa yuu ce zhi yeti rara sè geenewa'a, yuu ce zhi b̄u embe ndùu mnlèṅshi anà t̄e bèe a ka' k̄r suṅ buu w̄e w̄e ka' nè bvi ce bèemo' a kwà'shi ane bvi bii mbe ndùu mnlèṅshi anà ba bvi ce bvi tarshi mnyor."

Nfè' cê ce Càa yu ba ṅwà' ce a ce nfè'ni yuu ce zhi mbe tar buu ce à ṅgòṅ ker ba buu ce a kupshikupshi – t̄e sèe bo r̄iṅ yuu bònboṅ am̄ b̄f̄r. Zhi byemi ṅwè ce e v̄t̄ embe n̄jì a ker kupshi a t̄r ṅwè cê coo mnlèṅshi àmbò ṅwè rye'ni embe ndàp ce à nfè' w̄e w̄e, ce e ce dù àmbùu ndèe to' Afrikà ce ke bèengèr ce byè' mṅghàghar ce dù àgho kùntombi. Mnlèṅshi mi yu buu ce a baashì, e fàdi ce a m̀nòṅsi bce bvi dùṅshi bvin̄e bdi' ce a kupshi a nòṅsi àgho bvi ba ye'ni ka'. Bdi' bce a lòr àfo bvi ce dùṅshi àmbò ncòo ce yuu zhi m̀ bepsi i, geenewa's àmbò ṅgòṅ ce zhi b̄'ger e k̄e buu ce komputà à l̄'si i.

Rkupsèe ba buu ce bvi càa bvi ce yeti a ce dùṅshi buu ce àde' bvi cu gòr ka' ker ba nfè' ce a jòoshi cê nòṅ mbe ndùu ṅwà' mnlèṅshi anà. Njèe n̄jì mnlèṅshi anà mi ce k̄' e, àmbò a m̀ booshi ṅwà' mnlèṅshi ba buu ce bvi b̄eti kùntombi ce bèe a r̄iṅ ka'. Njèe n̄jì yap ṅgòṅ ba map mndip mi nòṅ e, buu ce a kwàshikwà'shi, njep mbè ba rjèr, bvi yu àmbò bvi ce lùusi ndùu mnlèṅshi à kuushi bèe ene ṅgòṅ zhi ce t̄u, gha'magòr ene zhi ce jòo kùpnyor Bèe bsii.

Ethel Tawe yu ṅwè ncòo mnlèṅshi, ce ke saṅ mṅghàghar, ker ba nwè ce ke j̄r àmbò nfè' ce cu à mṅgòṅ j̄e j̄e j̄e. E yu ṅwè ce ke saṅ mṅwà' àmbò buu magòr, ṅwè rdùṅshi buu ker ba ṅwè ce ke saṅ àmbò buu ce bvi càa ba buu a nòṅsi à ṅgòṅ Afrikà ba njep mbè.

Nwè cê bèesi ṅwà' ca, zhi à Libàrà' à Limbùm a Francis Wepngong Ndi.

Fù ṅwà' ce a ba caasi / Previous page

Nfè' cê ce Càa. 2023. Ryòṅshì nè: Ethel Tawe. Bkù'si bvi ce v̄t̄ ese ṅwè cê saṅ e. / Timescapes, 2023. Archival Photograph. Ethel Tawe. Courtesy of the artist.

Cameroonian image-maker and storyteller Ethel Tawe explores photographs from her father's archive. In her artwork *TIMESCAPES*, she negotiates their fragility as symbols of dis/placement, change, and transience alluding to the layered state of her surroundings.

Returning to the family photo album as a point of retrieval and recovery, *TIMESCAPES* meditates on memory, materiality, and temporality. A visible layer of time as an ingredient inscribed upon physical photographic images in the form of topographical decay and damage alludes to the state of our social, environmental, and human condition. Taken by my Cameroonian father on his travels far away from home, the photographs are symbols of dis/placement. Recapturing and digitizing them, derelict objects often buried away within our home spaces, is an act of haptic *re/collection* in the ever-changing present. According to Ariella Azoulay, "the event of photography is never over. It can only be suspended, caught in anticipation of the next encounter that will allow for its actualisation: an encounter that might allow a certain spectator to remark on the excess or lack inscribed in the photograph so as to re-articulate every detail including those that some believe to be fixed in place by the glossy emulsion of the photograph."

TIMESCAPES is a comparative study of the interplay between the natural and mechanic – and a quest for a more symbiotic relationship. It embraces the second-hand, reframing the image-maker as custodian and inheritor of all time, following African cyclical traditions of carrying histories forward. The photographs are found objects, assembled within their original archival sleeves that have failed to withstand time, exposing the fragility of technologies that attempt to preserve. Their acquired textural qualities may be mistaken for light leaks, fractal land formations, or digital alterations.

Change and transience are illustrated through the temporalities and frequencies of touch embedded in the album. The making of the images, the assemblage of the album, and the unknown moving forward. Their land and seascapes, abstractions of Diaspora and migration, seemingly reanimate the photographs' surfaces as a call to action against environmental degradation, which continues to disproportionately affect Black bodies.

Ethel Tawe is an image-maker, storyteller, and time-traveler based between continents. She is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, and writer exploring memory and archives across Africa and the Diaspora.



Nfè ' cé ce Caa. 2023. Ryòngshì nè: Ethel Tawe. Bkù'sì bvi ce vɛ ese njwè cè saŋ e. / Timescapes, 2023. Archival Photograph. Ethel Tawe. Courtesy of the artist.

FOTOGRAFIA COMO RETOMADA

PHOTOGRAPHY AS RECLAIMING

UMA CONVERSAÇÃO ENTRE LORENA VICINI E EDGAR KANAYKÕ

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN LORENA VICINI AND EDGAR KANAYKÕ

Edgar Kanaykō, artista indígena Xakriabá, movimenta-se entre a cultura de seu povo e a dos brancos, mas os pés seguem aterrados em seu território. Para ele, fotografia é ferramenta de luta e de resistência. “O que fazemos no campo da arte contemporânea é retomar o fazer artístico para garantir a nossa existência”.

Lorena Vicini: A sua dissertação de mestrado tem o título *Etnovisão: olhar indígena que atravessa a lente*. Quería que você contasse um pouco sobre o que entende como etnovisão e como ela pode atravessar a lente.

Edgar Kanaykō: Quando entrei no mestrado, me perguntavam se eu fotografava porque estava fazendo antropologia. Na verdade é o contrário, eu já vinha nesse movimento do audiovisual nas aldeias, e quando entrei no mestrado foi justamente para entender como a antropologia poderia contribuir para o meu trabalho. E o método principal da antropologia é a etnografia. Etnovisão, neste sentido, entra como o olhar do povo, enquanto indígena Xakriabá, exercitando o olhar crítico sobre as visões de mundo dentro do campo acadêmico. O olhar que atravessa a lente é justamente a relação que criamos com a comunidade, com a aldeia. E isso para mim é o que faz uma imagem ser boa ou ruim. Não é simplesmente uma questão estética, mas, sim, uma questão ética e étnica.

LV: Os Xakriabás ocupam o Cerrado, um bioma brasileiro muito complexo que está ameaçado. Como essa produção de imagens consegue mobilizar uma ideia de humanidade integrada à natureza?

EK: Voltando à antropologia, muitas vezes o que move as questões é essa diferenciação entre o que é natureza e o que é cultura. Para nós, indígenas, a natureza e a cultura não estão divididas. Isso influencia o nosso olhar. Quando eu fotografo uma “paisagem” não é só uma paisagem, é a nossa morada, o que chamamos de Rowaste mba tō ĩnrōwa. O pajé Vicente Xakriabá fala que tudo tem canto e espírito. É outra visão de mundo que temos.

LV: Pelo que ouvi de você até agora, parece que existe uma lacuna de entendimento entre os povos indígenas e os brancos, essa compreensão de tudo como relação. Você acha que a fotografia produzida por indígenas pode funcionar como um movimento de tradução de mundos?

EK: Como diz aquele ditado na antropologia, toda tradução é uma traição (risos). Ao traduzir, corremos esse risco. Mas quando falamos de “relação” já dá uma ideia de compreensão. É muito importante ter cada vez mais presente as várias visões dos povos indígenas através da imagem. Viemos da oralidade, que também é imagem, há muito tempo já escrevemos, embora não seja a escrita do papel. Escrevemos com outros tipos de símbolos. A pintura corporal é um símbolo, as vestimentas são símbolos, muitas coisas estão sendo ditas. Quando você está fotografando um ritual, tem muita coisa ali acontecendo, e a visão de um parente indígena para isso é outra.

A construção de identidade é constante. Estamos sempre resistindo para manter aquilo que somos enquanto povos.

LV: O antropólogo brasileiro Viveiro de Castro diz que a indigenidade é um projeto de futuro, não uma memória do

passado. Como você entende a representação de futuro no seu trabalho?

EK: Acho que se eu fosse resumir, usaria a palavra “resistência”. Assim como o Cerrado, passa fogo, passa trator, tentando matar, mas o Cerrado tem raízes muito profundas. Nós, como povos indígenas, somos resistentes também. O tempo não é linear, é circular, movido pelo tempo da natureza, das águas, das secas, o tempo da flor de pequi. A construção de identidade é constante. Estamos sempre resistindo para manter aquilo que somos enquanto povos. Talvez para os brancos isso não faça sentido, porque estar no mundo não é fazer um esforço para ser aquilo que você é, e nós estamos o tempo todo sendo questionados se somos povos de verdade. No Brasil, somos mais de 300 povos, mais de 150 línguas. Quando você está no movimento indígena, percebe essa diversidade. As matas são assim, o Cerrado é assim, diverso. Tem planta alta, tem planta baixa, tem planta torta, vários tipos de flores. E é isso que mantém a diversidade de vida. Nós, indígenas, somos o passado, o presente e principalmente o futuro deste mundo. Agora que estão acordando, que, como diz o Davi Kopenawa, o escritor, xamã e líder político Yanomami, nós, os povos indígenas, estamos segurando o céu para que ele não caia sobre as nossas cabeças. Enquanto houver povos indígenas, pajés e xamãs, estaremos sustentando o céu.

LV: Por fim, gostaria de ouvir um pouco de você sobre o episódio do MASP, em que o núcleo Retomadas, ao qual integram duas imagens suas – foi excluído e depois convidado a reintegrar a mostra coletiva *Histórias Brasileiras*.

EK: Quando eu recebi a notícia de que o núcleo “Retomadas” – com fotografias do MST e minhas – havia sido cancelado, eu fiquei, na verdade, bem tranquilo, porque pensei: “Quem está perdendo são eles” (risos). Daí veio a mobilização nacional e internacional, e nosso núcleo voltou a conversar sobre o que fazer. A Sandra Benites, que era a primeira curadora indígena, pediu demissão. Houve uma série de negociações, e depois voltou, mas a partir das nossas exigências. A gente sabe que o núcleo Retomadas fala sobre movimento social, algo sobre o qual esses ambientes muitas vezes não querem falar. Havia esse boicote de fundo, com a alegação de algumas burocracias. O núcleo se chama Retomadas, e, de fato, retomou mesmo, retomou esse espaço. É o que o Ailton Krenak fala, que além de lutarmos por território, temos que lutar por demarcar outros territórios, que são a tela, as artes etc. Isso foi uma luta por território também.

Edgar Kanaykō é um artista indígena Xakriabá, que atua na área de Etnofotografia.

Lorena Vicini é uma pesquisadora de São Paulo (Brasil), atualmente baseada em Belo Horizonte (Brasil). Atualmente, é Gerente de Comunicação do Instituto Inhotim (Brasil). De 2016 a 2018, coordenou o projeto “Episódios do Sul” no Goethe-Institut São Paulo. Vicini é coautora do livro “Inspirador: diretrizes internacionais para a gestão cultural sustentável” (Goethe-Institut).

Edgar Kanaykō, a Xakriabá Indigenous artist, moves between the culture of his people and white culture, but his feet remain grounded in his territory. For him, photography is a tool of struggle and resistance: "What we do in the field of contemporary art is reclaiming art-making to ensure our existence."

Lorena Vicini: The title of your master's thesis is *Ethno-vision: The Indigenous Gaze Through the Lens*. How do you understand "ethno-vision" and how can it be transmitted through the camera?

Edgar Kanaykō: When I first started my master's, people asked me if I started doing photography because I was studying anthropology. But actually it was the opposite: I was already involved in the audiovisual movement in Indigenous communities, and I started the master's program to be able to understand how anthropology might contribute to my work. The primary method of anthropology is ethnography. Ethno-vision, in the title of my thesis, is the gaze of a people, as an Indigenous person of the Xakriabá people exercises a critical eye on worldviews within academia. The gaze that comes through the lens is precisely the relationship we create with our community, with the reservation. And to me, that's what makes a picture good or bad. It's not just a matter of aesthetics, but an ethical and ethnic issue.

LV: The Xakriabás occupy the Cerrado, a very complex Brazilian ecosystem that is under threat. How does the production of these images encourage the idea of humanity integrated into nature?

EK: Often what drives these issues [of environmental threat] is this differentiation between nature and culture. For us, Indigenous people, nature, and culture are not divided. That influences the way we see the world. When I photograph a "landscape" it's not just a landscape, it's our home, what we call Rowaste mba só ĩnrōwa. The shaman Vicente Xakriabá says that everything has a song and spirit. It's another worldview we have.

LV: From what I've heard from you so far, it seems like there's a gap in understanding between Indigenous peoples and whites. Do you think the photography produced by Indigenous peoples can act as a movement for translating worlds?

EK: As the saying goes in anthropology, every translation is a betrayal [laughs]. We run that risk when we translate. But when we talk about "relationships," this implies some indication of understanding. It's very important to make sure that the various views of Indigenous peoples are increasingly present through images. We come from an oral tradition, which is also imagery, and we've been writing for a long time, even though it's not on paper. We write with other types of symbols. Body painting is a symbol, clothes are symbols. Many things are being said. When you're photographing a ritual, there's a lot going on there, and the view of an Indigenous kinsperson is different.

LV: The Brazilian anthropologist Viveiro de Castro says that Indigeneity is a project for the future, not a memory of the past. How do you understand the representation of the future in your work?

EK: I think if I were to sum it up, I'd use the word "resistance." Just like the Cerrado – they try to burn it, plow it, kill it, but the Cerrado has very deep roots. We, as Indigenous people, are resistant too. Time isn't linear, it's circular, powered by the time of nature, water, drought, the time of the pequi flower. The construction of identity is constant. We are always resisting, in order to hold onto what we are as peoples. Maybe this doesn't make sense to white people, because [for them] being in the world isn't about making an effort to be what you are, while we are constantly being questioned about whether we are real people. In Brazil, there are over 300 ethnic groups and over 150 languages. When you're inside the Indigenous movement, you notice this diversity. The rainforests are like that, the Cerrado is like that – diverse. There are tall plants, there are low plants, there are crooked plants, various types of flowers. And that's what supports the diversity of life. Indigenous people are the past, the present, and especially the future of this world. Now we're waking up. As Davi Kopenawa, the Yanomami writer, shaman, and political leader, says: Indigenous peoples are holding up the sky so it won't fall on our heads. As long as there are Indigenous people, pajés, and shamans, we are holding up the sky.

LV: Lastly, I'd like to hear about the episode at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP) last year, in which the section called Retomadas – which included two of your photos – was excluded from and later invited to rejoin the group show *Histórias Brasileiras*.

EK: When I first heard that the Retomadas section of the exhibition – with photographs by members of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) and myself – had been cut, I was quite calm about it, because I thought: "They're the ones missing out" [laughs]. Then came the national and international outcry, and our group resumed talks about what to do. Sandra Benites, who was the first Indigenous curator at MASP, resigned. There was a series of negotiations, and then the section was put back, but with our demands. We know that Retomadas talks about social movements, something these kinds of spaces often don't want to talk about. There was a boycott, with allegations from some bureaucracies. "Retomadas" means "reclaim," and the group did in fact reclaim that space. That's what Ailton Krenak says, that in addition to fighting for our territory, we have to fight to demarcate other territories – the canvas, the arts, etc. That was a fight for territory, too.

Edgar Kanaykō is a Xakriabá Indigenous artist who works in the field of ethno-photography.

Lorena Vicini Lorena Vicini is a researcher from São Paulo (Brazil), currently based in Belo Horizonte (Brazil). At the moment she is Communication Manager at Instituto Inhotim. From 2016 to 2018 she coordinated the project "Episodes of the South" at Goethe-Institut São Paulo. Vicini is co-author of "Inspirador: international guidelines for sustainable cultural management", (Goethe-Institut).

Translation: Zoë Perry



Edgar Kanaykō, A luta pelo território é mãe de todas as lutas, 2017. Cortesia do artista /
Edgar Kanaykō, *The Struggle for Territory is the Mother of All Struggles*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE
THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND
ESPECIALLY THE FUTURE OF THIS
WORLD.**

NÓS, INDÍGENAS, SOMOS O PASSADO, O PRESENTE E
PRINCIPALMENTE O FUTURO DESTE MUNDO.

FLOWERS ON THE EXPRESSWAY

A CONTEMPLATION ON THE
MULTICOLLECTIVE LIVES OF PLANTS



V FOR 5

Writer and sound artist V for 5 sees worlds where humans and forests are deeply entangled. In this tale she speaks of the territorial behavior of the Mugumo tree – a plant that claims recognition on behalf of all sacred woods. She reminds us that to save the forests is to save ourselves.

I visit trees when I'm sleeping. Huge, ancient creatures with memory. I was never taught to pray to trees, yet I've found myself moving towards them in that old religion of Eden. Comfort is a tree we've named after the feeling she brought to us. I visit her when there is need. In her silence, I hear her speak. I find myself in peace. A place among oily black nyamnahas* flying and lizards crawling on hot stony ground. Mugumo** haunts my conversations and dreams. I often think of its power to grow upon any tree and engulf it. A sacred tree, a shrine, a god; Mugumo's aerial roots reach down, slither, and wrap around the tree it is killing. It grows until it swallows its victim. Mugumo seeds travel by wind and nestle themselves on unsuspecting trees and cracks in walls. Mugumo is a predator, swallowing that which is new and replacing it with the ancient. In my dream Mugumo is the tree of life, and on its heavy branches I see the reflection of our living. Through silent dispersion and resilient conquering, Mugumo claims nationality and revenge for the sacred wood that was chopped in the name of another great cosmic being. Ancient shrines lost, but new ones emerging. In this repopulation are chances to pray and give offerings to those of old.

Did the old ones ever leave, or did we just turn our hearts from them? Magic became rationality, and with no one chanting its name it lived a peaceful life in the green and re-emerged after a heavy weeping. Too much loss. Bark and bee and river believed it was the end. And kept on believing each time, as extinction rose and homes were lost and poison entered systems. Monkey is my neighbor, who lives on a mango tree down my road. It is always a pleasure to be visited by monkey and to observe them walking on telephone wires to enter people's homes through open windows. Displaced by brick-like trees and ground which is not grass or soil, generations of monkeys have grown beside me. For those young, the canopies of old are just a tale and the suburb is rich with loquat, groceries, and humans who give bananas. The complexities of city life are rooted in the wild. Humans are just other creatures they have learnt to outsmart and even if there are no rivers, they can bathe and play in open water tanks.

We are the forest. In us are physic soils and rivers. We decompose within and grow our wild grass tall to face our sun. To save the forests is to save ourselves from the perversions of capitalism. We save by remembering that we are not separate from more-than-humans. We remember that we are one in this complex ecosystem called Earth. We are part of a shared planetary consciousness; we are Earth's bodies and Earth's minds. In a beginning, there was a tree. From that tree came a fruit we tasted and whose influence we've been under ever since. Like new trees collapsing under the weight of a Mugumo. I wonder why. I observe the forest in my neighborhood grow and as I watch these trees, I start to un-

derstand what a forest is and where my human place in it is located. The trees watch me grow too. We watch each other unravel. Noticing new tendrils and the decay that we gather as we transform. Certain bark beings know me, or know us. Suburban dwellers who want to feel more in touch with the earth. They know us, who leave tiled floors to sit on their ground with the soil. They hold space for us to explore that connection. In some cases they hold secrets for us and know our great intimacies. In the nighttime, the shadow of their great leaves provides cover for us to hide or gives us pockets of privacy that high-rise apartments take away. Nature here is not static. Branches and trees are chopped if they lean too close to houses and roads. Through time the stumps sprout new tender leaves and continue to grow in new ways. Species of trees, both non-native and indigenous, intermingle in unprecedented ways. Like the bougainvillea leaves I saw creeping onto a Mugumo.

Nairobi loves looking green. Wangari Mathai's legacy. Canopies form above the roads and there are flowers on the expressway. A great deal of trees have been cut down to make room for development and in different places young forests are growing. Sometimes they're in backyard gardens or in the small corners the land developers haven't touched. Sometimes there's nothing at all, and homes are built on great graveyards of deforestation. The growth of new forests is unevenly distributed and nature is sold to us, as if we aren't already in it. Kakamega Forest is the last remaining rainforest in Kenya. How old is its soil? If I could count the years, I'd go back to a time when there was nothing else but forest. A time when ancestors walked on two legs and four. The ancient ecosystem now being conserved is dramatically smaller than it used to be. The lives of the rainforest, inaccessible to the vultures who make their homes on young acacia trees in CBD.

The precolonial is a past that is both fictional and true. The last rainforest is a place that is past and present. In its lush green opulence it is both myth and science. Earth has been changing, her waters are shifting. With no trees to cover her ground, some parts of her are bare. She looks different. We are part of her ancientness and her birth. As part of Earth's bodies and minds, we embody and execute her transitions. Earth's endings are also beginnings, so let it end. Let us use our voices to end what is already ending in her and let's use our hearts to bear the newness that has already begun.

* *nyamnaha* – the Luo name for the glossy ibis

** *mugumo* – the Kikuyu name for the *Ficus natalensis*

V for 5 is a writer and sound artist from Nairobi. Her work is rooted in ecology. She imagines worlds where humans never left the forest.

ANT IJANS POU YO TANDE NOU AK POU NOU GADE TÈT NOU

POISED BETWEEN THE URGENT NEED TO BE HEARD AND TO EXAMINE ONESELF

YON CHITA PALE ANT SERINE AHEFA MEKOUN AK KOLEKTIF 2 DIMANSYON (K2D)

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN SERINE AHEFA MEKOUN AND KOLEKTIF 2 DIMANSYON (K2D)





Paj anvan an / Previous page

Forêt des Pins (Pine Forests), Revue Fotopakle II.
Photo: Valérie Baeriswyl.

Enstalsyon foto ekspozisyon *KAZAL la - Rakonte Memwa Ayisyen yo* (2022) nan Framer Framed Amstèdam. Foto: Maarten Nauw/ Framer Framed. / Installation photo from the exhibition *KAZAL - Narrating Haitian Memories* (2022) at Framer Framed, Amsterdam. Photo: Maarten Nauw / Framer Framed.

Urgence(s)-Ijans se dezyèm nimewo peryodik *Fotopaklè* ki sòti nan lanne 2022. Se yon revyi repòtaj foto ki fèt nan de (2) lang franse / kreyòl, kolektif Ayisyen ki rele *Kolektif 2 Dimansyon* an. Revyi sa konsantre li sou ijans anviwònman yo ki montre a klè, anvan tout bagay, jan li difisil pou sòti nan derègleman sistèmik peyi anfouraye ladann lan depi plizyè deseni. Serine ahefa chita pale ak youn nan manb kolektif la pou C & America Latina, ki se fotograf Réginald Louissaint, sou enpòtans fotografi sosyal pou kreye yon lyen epi kenbe memwa yo vivan.

Serine ahèfa Mekoun: Eske ou ka esplike nou kòman pwojè a te kòmanse epi poukisa nou konsakre dezyèm nimewo Fotopaklè a, "Urgence(s)-ljans", a kestyon anviwònman yo?

Kolektif 2 Dimansyon: Nou se yon kolektif ki pran nesans an 2014 e ki regwoupe nan mitan li nouvo jenerasyon fotojournalis, reyalizatè, fotograf ak redaktè Ayiti yo. Kolektif la te obsève kijan repòtaj yo te fèt apre goudougoudou 2010 la e se apati de sa yo te deside pou yo pote pwòp pèspektif, rega ak etik yo pou yon "pèspektif Ayisyen" ki pi entim e ki atache a sa peyi a reprezante pou nou pa rapò ak pwoblèm ki anviwònman nou yo. Nou te vle rakonte istwa nou yo ak foto epi mwens tèks. E kòm pa te gen okenn platfòm pou pibliye travay repòtaj nou yo, se te vin ba nou lide pou kreye magazin Fotopaklè a. Se la lide pou kreye magazin Fotopaklè a vini. Nou vin rann nou kont, nou te konn pale de anviwònman nan medya lè te gen ouragan ak tranbleman tè men apre sa yo pa t pale de sa ankò. Depi jou sa, nou kòmanse travay. *Urgences-ljans* se yon travay sou anviwònman men kote moun nan mitan travay la. Nou pa te sèlman entereze nan fè foto peyizaj men anvan nou te kòmanse nan pran foto moun paske n ap pale de yo. Nou vle konnen kòman yo aji sou anviwònman an epi tou, sa yo sibi pa rapò ak pwoblèm sa yo. Nan repòtaj foto nou yo, kote atistik la prezan anpil epi gen yon lòt yon bò ki ap denonse. Pou prezante figi moun yo nan kontèks pwoblèm anviwònman yo, kit se sechrès, eksplwatasyon sab, eksplwatasyon min elt nou pase 4 lanne. Nou te vle kreye zouti pou demare diskisyon sou sijè a, men tou, pou kreye yon achiv ki ka rete pou kapab di moun yo: "men kijan sa ye, si nou pa fè anyen kounye a, sa ap pi grav". Nou enskri travay nou yo nan yon demach achiv ak dokimantasyon paske bliye vin tounen yon idantite e menm yon vèti lakay nou. Tè a pa janm sispann tranble anba pye nou, anviwònman an ba nou tout siyal pou nou aji, se pou sa nou rele nimewo sa ijans, tankou yon kout rèl fas a otorite yo ak sosyete sivil la ki fèmen zòrèy yo.

SaM: Gen yon diskou mondyal ki soti sitou nan peyi Oksidantal yo sou kestyon anviwònmantral yo ak solisyon ki ta dwe bay men ki fèmen je yo sou reyalite peyi ki plis afekte yo. Ki jan ou ta ka defini kestyon anviwònman atravè travay sa ak pèspektiv Ayisyen sa?

K2D: Ann Ayiti se yon katastwòf ki kouvri yon lòt katastwòf. Se yon peyi kote èd entènasyonal, dèt ak katastwòf natirèl yo detwi. Nou gen yon leta kowonpi ki depann de èd entènasyonal yo e ki paka bay popilasyon an menm bezwen primè li yo. Kriz la sòti tou nan eleman solisyon Oksidan an ba nou yo. Sa a tou se li ki kriz la nan peyi nou. Yo pote ba nou yon seri resèt ki tou fèt, e ki pa adapte a jan nou viv, a kizin nou, a jan nou manje, a jan nou kolabore. Resèt sa yo chita sou de itopi oksidantal de yon swadizan modènizasyon men ki pa pran an kont bezwen de baz yo.

Leta pa tande popilasyon an, li mete tèt li a dispozisyon enperyalis lan. Li pwojete de seri modèl ki a yon moman ou yon lòt, popilasyon an ap voye jete paske li pa wè tèt li nan nouvo prensip sa yo. Difilikite nou te fè fas a li a, se mete yon diskou sou travay sa. Ki jan nou ka di sa? Paske n ap pale ak responsab yo, an menm tan tou, n ap pale ak sitwayen yo, menm si se yon pwosede diferan. E se sa tou mwen rele pèspektif Ayisyen an, entimite sa nou genyen an. Kòm fotograf ki konn kijan popilasyon an ekspri li, si nou pral andeyò, diskou a p ap menm ak si nou ale Pòtoprens. Pa rapò ak pwoblèm sechrès la pa egzanp, moun lòt bò a (nan pwovens lan) wè pwoblèm lan tou nan nivo kwayans pa yo. Pa egzanp, pou sèten moun nou rankontre, rezon ki fè pa gen lapli apre plizyè mwa se a kòz yon madichon, a kòz lanmò yon gran mèt mistik tout moun

te konnen nan kanton an. Kidonk si ou vini ak diskou pa w la sou chanjman klimatik la, li p ap twò pase paske se de tèm ki pou yon lòt diskou... Fòk ou koute epi tande tout moun epi tou pataje altènativ ki egziste pou yo san yo pa bezwen konte sou pwomès politik ki pa janm reyalize.

SaM: Poukisa li enpòtan pou nou, pou nou travay sou konsyans anviwònmantral la lè nou konnen peyi a ap fè fas a katastwòf natirèl depi plizyè deseni epi devlope yon konsyans ki byen presi sou jan pou yo viv ansanm ak anviwònman sa?

K2D: Nan peyi nou, pa vreman gen yon koneksyon ant moun nan Nò ak moun nan Sid. Enfòmasyon yo pa sikile. Pwoblèm ki gen pou wè ak anviwònman, se pa yon sijè nou vreman pale de yo. Si gen yon katastwòf, nou pale de sa pandan kèk jou epi sa kanpe la. Moun yo pa vreman okouran de sa ki ap pase apre katastwòf la. Kidonk travay nou an sete kolekte fè yo yon kote epi pou nou ekspoze yo yon lòt kote pou konsyans sa kapab pi prezan a travè imaj yo. Paske lè moun yo wè imaj yo, yo pi vit pran konsyans pa rapò ak konsekans katastwòf ki pase deja yo. Apa sa, li toujou difisil pou nou ale pale ak moun ki viktim dirèk yo paske sityasyon an konplike. Gen yon kote nan tèt yo gen yon bagay ki pi ijan pase sa. Pa egzanp, moun ki ap viv bò lanmè a e ki konstwi ti kay an bwa li a, yo oblije al pran sab pou yo al revann yo pou yo ka fè yon ti lajan. Li pi enpòtan pou yo fè kòb pou yo ka manje pandan yon semenn, olye yo konnen si yo kontinye pran sab sou bò lanmè a, nivo lanmè a pral monte epi anvayi yo. Nan konvèsasyon nou te gen ak yo, yo di nou wi yo wè lanmè a vanse men yo plis wè l tankou yon reyalite olye yon danje.

SaM: Poukisa foto se pi bon zouti pou nou?

K2D: Sa fè de (2) lanne depi bandi sènen nou nan kapital la. Nou bloke tout kote. Sèl jan pou travèse epi ale nan sid peyi a se ak avyon e biyè yo chè anpil. Objektif la se vreman pote travay la bay lòt moun yo. Nou kontinye a travè rezo sosyal yo menm si pi fò moun nou te vle pote travay la pou yo a pa sou rezo sosyal non plis. Lakay nou, gen anpil moun ki pa konn li, kidonk ou paka pwodui tèks sèlman. Lè gen yon òganizasyon ki vin travay sou anviwònman, an jeneral yo ekri yon pil dokiman, men pou ki moun? Se ak entèlekyèl yo y ap pale. Se sa ki esplike enpòtans chwa fotografi a kòm mwayen transmision paske ekri mande yon sèten enstriksyon e sa ka vit tounen yon seri bagay abstrè. Nou pa fè fotografi pou fè fotografi men pou soutni yon kòz.

Serine ahèfa Mekoun se yon jounalis miltimedya, ekriven, pwodiktè ki ap travay ant Brisèl ak nan pati Lwès kontinan Afrik la. Li fèt ant jenerasyon Y ak Z la, li enterese a tout espas kote diferan avni ka jème. Li ekri an patikilye sou kominote ki ap kreye yo ak sou jan yo aktive chanjman sosyal nan kontèks pòs kolonyal.

Kolektif 2 Dimansyon se yon gwoupman ki gen ladann jounalis, fotograf ak sineyas Ayisyen ki mete sou pye nan mwa oktòb 2014 e ki espesyalize nan repòtaj sosyal.

Se Anne-Doris Lapommeray ki fè tradiksyon Franse a Kreyòl Ayisyen an.

Published in 2022, *Urgence(s)-ljans* is the second issue of *Fotopaklè*, a bilingual French/Creole journal of photo essays put out by the Haitian collective Kolektif 2 Dimansyon. It focuses on the environmental crises that demonstrate first and foremost the impossibility of emerging from the malfunctioning system the country has been embroiled in for decades. For C& América Latina, Serine ahefa sits down with one of the members of the collective and photographer Réginald Louissaint to discuss the importance of social photography in creating relationship and keeping memories alive.

Serine ahefa Mekoun: Can you explain how the project started and why you devoted *Fotopaklè's* second issue, *Urgence(s)-ljans* to environmental issues?

Kolektif 2 Dimansyon: We're a collective that brings together the next generation of Haitian photojournalists, filmmakers, photographers, and writers and editors. The idea for the collective, which we started in 2014, gained strength after the 2010 earthquake, centered on a desire to support a "Haitian viewpoint" that would be more intimate and more connected to what the country embodies for us in relation to the problems we're surrounded by. We wanted to tell our stories with photos and reduce the amount of text. This is where we got the idea for the *Fotopaklè* magazine. We realized that people in the media would talk about the environment when hurricanes and earthquakes happened, but afterwards you'd hear nothing more about it. Taking that as our starting point, we set to work. *Urgence(s)-ljans* centers on the environment but the focus is on people. It's not just about taking pictures of landscapes; our primary interest is in people because they're who we talk to. We want to know what effect they have on the environment and how they are affected by these problems. Our photos have an artistic aspect but there's another side that's about whistleblowing, exposing the faces of the people involved in the environmental problems, be it drought, sand extraction, or mining ... It took us four years. We wanted to create tools for possible topics for discussion to focus on but also a kind of archive that might continue as a means to tell people, "This is the way things are. If we don't do something now, the situation's going to get more serious." Our work is part of this process of archiving and documenting, because we've built an identity around forgetting and we've even made it into a virtue. We had another earthquake last week. The environment is giving us these portents, telling us it's time to act. That's why we called this issue *Urgence(s)* (Emergencies): it's like a warning cry, blasted out to the authorities, who are still turning a deaf ear to it.

SaM: There's a global discourse, mostly originating in Western countries, focused on environmental issues and the solutions that can be brought to bear, while remaining blind to the realities of the countries that are being hit the hardest. How would you define environmental issues on the basis of this work and this Haitian viewpoint?

K2D: Haiti is one catastrophe drowned out by another. It's a country that's been destroyed too by international aid, by debt, and by natural disasters. We have a corrupt state that depends on international aid and can't provide food for its people. The crisis also comes out of the solutions contributed by the West. That's also part of the crisis for us. People bring us oven-ready recipes that are not suited to our way of life, our way of cooking, of eating, of collaborating; they're based on Western utopias of so-called modernization, but they don't take our basic needs into account.

K2D: The state isn't tuned into the population - it's serving imperialism. It sets out models that will be rejected by the people

sooner or later because they don't see themselves in these new principles. It was also difficult for us to discuss the work. How are we meant to express this? Because, actually, what we say is intended just as much for the people in charge as it is for ordinary citizens, but in a very different way. And this is also what I call the Haitian viewpoint, this intimacy that we have. As photographers who know the way people express themselves, if we go out in the country, what people say won't be the same as what we'd find in Port-au-Prince. With regard to the drought problems, for instance, the people there also see it through the prism of their beliefs. For some of the people we met, the reason there wasn't any rain for several months was tied in with a curse, following the murder of a well-known spiritual grand master in the area. So if you come in with your spiel about climate change, it's not going to cut through, since these are words that belong to a different discursive register ... You need to listen to everyone and hear what they have to say, while also sharing alternatives that are within their range without having to count on political promises that never get off the ground.

SaM: Why was it important for you to work on people's environmental awareness when we know that the country has been exposed to natural disasters for decades and has developed a very precise appreciation of how to coexist with this environment?

K2D: In Haiti, there's really no connection between the people of the North and the people of the South. Information doesn't get around. Environmental problems are not really something we talk about. If there's a disaster, people talk about it for a few days but that's about it. They're not really aware of what's happening. So our job was to take events in a particular place and show them somewhere else. The idea was for the images to make this awareness much more present, because when people see them, they become more aware of the consequences of the disasters that have already occurred. It's always difficult to talk afterwards to the people directly affected because they're in a complicated situation. The fact is there's something more urgent going on in some part of their minds. For example, the people who live on the coast and have built their little wooden shack there are obliged to mine sand and go and sell it to earn a bit of money. It's much more important for them to make money so they have something to eat for a week than to know that if they continue to mine sand on the coast, the sea level will rise and engulf them. When we talk to them, they say that yes, they see that the sea has advanced, but it is seen more as a *fait accompli* than as a threat.

SaM: Why are photos the best tool for you?

K2D: We've been surrounded by gangs in the capital for two years now. We're blocked in from both sides. The only way to get through and travel to the south of the country is by plane and that's seriously expensive. The goal is really to take this work to other people. We've carried it on via social media even if most of the people we wanted to get the work to aren't even on these networks. In Haiti, there are a lot of people who don't know how to read - they don't have this culture of reading, so you can't just produce texts for them. When an organization comes that wants to do work on the environment, they usually produce texts, but who are they for? They're intended for intellectuals. Hence the importance of choosing photography as a channel, because writing requires a certain level of education, and it can quickly head off into abstractions. We don't take photographs just for their own sake, but to support a cause that is bigger than we are.



Zouti travay yon machann payèt lò nan Lakwèv ki tou pre vil Montòganize nan departman Nòdès. Sou yon ti tab gen: yon telefòn, yon leman pou ekstrè payèt lò yo, kèk payèt lò epi yon balans. Foto: Jean Marc Hervé Abélard. / The work tools of a gold collector in Lakwèv, not far from the town of Mont-Organisé in the North-East department. On a small table are placed: a telephone, a magnet to extract the flakes from the gangue, some gold flakes and a scale. Photo: Jean Marc Hervé Abélard.

Kolektif 2 Dimansyon (K2D) is a group of Haitian journalists, photographers, and filmmakers created in October 2014, specializing in social reporting.

Serine ahefa Mekoun is a multimedia journalist, writer, and producer working between Brussels and West Africa. Born at the cusp of generations Y and Z, she is interested in all the spaces where different futures can germinate. She writes about creative communities and how they activate social change in postcolonial contexts.

French to English translation by Simon Cowper.

LOCATING BLACKNESS IN *INTIMATE ECOLOGIES*



AMA JOSEPHINE BUDGE

"For colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity." (Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961, translated by Constance Farrington)

In order to think through a cartography of Black ecologies, it is necessary to remember that the relationship between Black subjectivity and the more-than-human remains contested. It is fraught with histories of colonial violence, with increasingly harsh climates, and with the haunting of dispossessed lands, lives, and lifeways; the rituals through which we lived, loved, killed, ate, decomposed, and dreamed together.

So much has been lost.
Yet so much remains.
Contested ground.

The artists who walk this blistering landscape rarely pass through unburnt and never emerge unchanged. We hold up our hands in blackening fields of women's tongue trees and contemplate surrender. As multidisciplinary artist Alberta Whittle puts it in her film dealing with ecological, political, and racial turbulence, *RESET* (2020):

"I am trying to learn how to heal."

In Michaela Coel's award-winning television series *I May Destroy You*, at a birthday party in a London council flat filled to bursting with Afro-diasporic people in their mid-twenties, a conversation is sparked by the announcement that Arabella (played by Coel), a young recently successful writer in between inspirations, has taken on a temp job advocating for a vegan brand called Happy Animals. Her friends, half laughing, half appalled, make fun of her as she discards fried chicken from her plate as off-brand yet insists the gig is just for the money. One friend, casually wearing a green t-shirt reading "Monkey in the Jungle," sets off on a rant about "climateers" – read: white middle/upper-class vegan climate-change crusaders – harassing him to swap out his Mercedes for an electric car. He proclaims passionately: "Why must the white man chop at the neck, when the African's only now beginning to swallow?"

There is no doubt that the proliferation of white, Western climate campaigners and supercilious vegan-conversionists, who apply little intersectional or decolonial discourse to their thinking about climate and responsibility, actively keep Black people out of the conversation. By refusing to acknowledge the entanglement between racial capitalism and global extractivism, while binding the "green lifestyle" up with classism, gentrification, and the ongoing "civilizing project," they consistently make clear to us that the role of the Black body in climate campaigns is largely confined to aesthetics. Silent Black bodies as poster-children of drought and famine, of healthy eating campaigns in urban food-deserts, or as the subjects of large-format, high-resolution, anthropocentric docu-style photography.

Yet the reproduction of this argument *within* Black communities – that climate change has nothing to do with us, that essentially we already have enough to deal with – reinforces a damaging position. It binarizes ecocide and anti-Blackness, as though the two were not ontologically, epistemologically, and cosmologically intertwined, both historically and in the present. "The emergence of the concept of ecology in American life is potentially of momentous relevance to the ultimate liberation of black people,"

wrote Nathan Hare in a 1970 issue of the *Black Scholar*. "Yet blacks and their environmental interests have been so blatantly omitted that blacks and the ecology movement currently stand in contradiction to each other." I urge us to ask ourselves the necessary question: Who profits from continued investment in extractive capitalism and disassociation from climate justice discourses? Who benefits from our silence, and who is doing the silencing? What is it that we are only now beginning to swallow?

What I want to draw particular attention to are the embodied ramifications of severing Black people from the more-than-human-world, of insisting that our relationships to the environments around us can only be produced through the violence of prison-industrial complexes, inner-city pollution, and food scarcity. Through the dehumanization of the Black body as labor-turned-capital within settler-colonial and postcolonial plantation economies. As if we weren't a part of an ecology at all. What happens when we consider ourselves wholly unmoored, as aliens within an alien landscape?

There are many ways in which, and reasons why, intellectual and political climate change movements and conversations have been monopolized by white-universalism, especially in "the West." It is not that Black people who aren't engaged or don't feel welcome in climate justice movements simply don't care. It is that oppressed human and more-than-human ecologies have been systematically pitted against one another, sold the scarce scraps of a dream in which we can only benefit at others' expense, a cis-heteronormative dream that denies the queer ecologies proliferating human and more-than-human socialities, a dream enabled by fossil fuels which "require sacrificial people and places," as Naomi Klein has pointed out in the *London Review of Books* (2016). Tiffany Lethabo King writes in her book *The Black Shoals* (2019) on the oft-silenced convergences of Black and Indigenous histories and lives in settler-colonial America: "I do not believe that genocide and slavery can be contained. Neither has edges, yet each is distinct."

And yet, from Lake Victoria to the Ganga River, from Heathrow Terminal 5 to Jamaican bauxite mines and Alberta's tar sands, BIPOC-led environmental justice movements continue in earnest – whether or not they are recorded, publicized, platformed, funded, or invited to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and equivalent bodies. Across these trans-oceanic frontlines, Black, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific-Islander communities navigate and resist the extreme ramifications of Western-made climate change, aka climate colonialism. As J.T. Roane and Justin Hosbey, writing on the waterways of the US South for *Southern Cultures* (2021), explain: "These spaces share a linked ecological and social history – and fate. They refract through the prism of coastal seas, highlighting the nature of anti-Black ecological violence, which began [here] with the domestic saltwater slave trade and endures in contemporary modes of oil-based extraction."

In the fifty-three years since Nathan Hare's astute observations, much has changed in some quarters while others seem to regress and retract. New coal mines, oil rigs, and pipelines in direct conflict with Black survival are being approved and opened, yet other activist sites succeed in achieving both policy reforms and landmark cultural moments that have the power to change how Black people relate to ecologies altogether. In 2021 Allison Janae Hamilton took over New York City's Time Square with her multichannel installation *Wacissa*, immersing shoppers,

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Manthia Diawara, *A Letter from Yene* (still), 2022. Film. Commissioned by Serpentine, MUBI and PCAI Polygreen Culture & Art Initiative, as part of Serpentine's Back to Earth project. Courtesy of the artist and Maumaus / Lumiar Cité, Lisbon.



Allison Janae Hamilton, *Wacissa*, 2019. Multi-Channel Installation in Times Square, New York, NY, April 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen.
© Allison Janae Hamilton. Photo credit: Tatyana Tenenbaum.

**THEY CRADLE SPACES FOR A
CAPACIOUS, TRANS-TEMPORAL
BLACKNESS IN INTIMATE
RELATION WITH A MULTITUDE
OF ECOLOGIES. WE ARE ALL
TRYING TO HEAL. REFUSING TO
FIGURE BLACK SUBJECTIVITY
IN ISOLATION.**

tourists, and workers in the rivers of North Florida, linked through the Wacissa Slave Canal. Hamilton pit those haunted landscapes against the heart of capitalism, insisting that the ecologies and economies of a settler-colonial America are inextricable from ecologies and economies of Black death and colonial violence – or, in the words of Christina Sharpe in *In The Wake* (2016): “antiblackness as total climate.”

It is within this slippery landscape of intermittent estrangement that my interdisciplinary exploration of sensual and erotic relations between Black people and the more-than-human seeks to (re)find a language for mutual implication, entanglement, kinship, queer multi-species relations, and liberated interspecies futures. I trace what I have termed “intimate ecologies” through a gathered archive of aesthetics, poetics, and speculations that speak the impossibility of Black bodies in pleasurable, grief-full, and humbling exchange. The concept of intimate ecologies is an invitation to an embodied conversation in a room where isolation has for so long been the status quo. A conversation acknowledging the complex and sometimes dissonant ways we negotiate climate and Blackness in our search for a liberatory Otherwise.

Torkwase Dyson’s large-scale, abstract painting and sculptural work expands our understandings of a capacious Blackness, engaging poetic and often fraught landscapes to “question what type of climates are born out of world building,” as described by her gallery, PACE. For me, Dyson’s brings to mind Chelsea M. Frazier’s text “Black Feminist Ecological Thought: A Manifesto” (2020), which suggests that “Black women’s ecological inclinations [are] rooted in a[n] ecological world-sense completely alternative to what readily comes to mind when we think about the environment.”

“It’s the fault of man,” says Senegalese Lebou fisherman Aliou Diouf against a backdrop of semi-solid-plastic-filled Atlantic Ocean waves in Manthia Diawara’s film *A Letter From Yene* (2022). In an unexpected moment of introspection, Diawara’s voiceover reflects: “I am also participating in the land erosion. I came to buy a house in a place [where] people usually do not buy houses, but I

come with my European mentality: I want to be by the ocean, I want to create a vacation place. And by doing this I also have lost respect for the land, because I just want the land for my use. I’m not giving anything back to the land or the ocean [...] this is why this film needs to change not only the people I’m making the film on, but me too.”

Intimate ecologies is a praxis, a way of reading, a methodology for those haunted and heavy with the weight of ancestors, a point of departure from which to speculate. The concept arose out of my need to keep thinking with and working in resistance to climate colonialism, when the threat of despair, of overwhelming and crushing melancholia dragged me under. I needed to queer colonial presentations of human-to-more-than-human relations. I needed to keep thinking and speaking about pleasure, possibility, intimacy, and spirit, the speculative and the still-to-be-imagined futures in which Blackness and the more-than-human are becoming, utilizing what photographer and activist Rotimi Fani-Kayode, in his 1988 text for *TEN.8*, called “a technique of ecstasy.”

Concepts such as climate colonialism and intimate ecologies cultivate ethical frameworks for reckoning with violent colonial pasts and presents. They cradle spaces for a capacious, trans-temporal Blackness in intimate relation with a multitude of ecologies. We are all trying to heal. Refusing to figure Black subjectivity in isolation. Aestheticizing futures in which Black ecologies are no longer contested ground. Remaking rituals with which to live, love, kill, eat, decompose, and dream together.

Ama Josephine Budge is an artist, curator, speculative writer, and pleasure activist whose projects navigate the intimate interrelations between art, ecology, and Blackness. For this C& edition she discusses her take on ecological perspectives that have too long excluded Black experience, expertise, and ecstasy.

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Alberta Whittle, *RESET*, 2020 (Film still). Video (Original shooting format: 4K, 2K and HD), 32 minutes. Edition of 3 plus 2 artist’s proofs. Co-produced and co-commissioned by Frieze and Forma for the Frieze Artist Award 2020. Courtesy of the artist and The Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd., Glasgow.





MI CORAZÓN ERRANTE TE CARGARÁ EN SU
ESPALDA PARA QUE DUERMAS

MI CORAZÓN ERRANTE TE LLEVARÁ EN SU
MORRAL PARA QUE NO TE PIERDAS

MI CORAZÓN ERRANTE TE ESCRIBIRÁ UN
SUEÑO PARA QUE NO DESPIERTES

MI CORAZÓN ERRANTE ESCONDERÁ TU
NOMBRE PARA QUE NO TE VAYAS

MI CORAZÓN ERRANTE CLAVARÁ LA ESTACA
DEL MISTERIO PARA QUE NUESTROS PIES
DESCANSEN JUSTO EN EL CENTRO

MI CORAZÓN ERRANTE, MI CORAZÓN
NÓMADA, MI CORAZÓN SOLITARIO,

ANIDARÁ EN EL TERRITORIO QUE LE FUE
DESPOJADO

*Rosa Chávez es una poeta maya k'iche'-kaqchikel, artista y activista,
coordinadora del programa en Guatemala de la organización feminista
internacional Just Associates (JASS).*

RI B'INIKOTEL NUK'U'X KAT REQAJ B'IK ARE CHI KATWARIK

Ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x kat reqaj b'ik are chi katwarik
ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x katuk'am b'i pa ri uchim are
chi man katsach taj
ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x kutz'ib'aj jun awaram are chi
man katk'astaj taj
ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x krowaj ri ab'i' are chi
katanimaj ta b'ik
ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x kuch'ik ri uche'al sachilal are
chi ku'xlan ri qaqaan pa unik'ajal
ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x kuyuq' taq ri ab'aqilal ruk'
uchub' ri keb' nuchi' kuq'ipij ukowil ri itzelal
ri b'inikotel nuk'u'x, ri maj uk'olib'al nuk'u'x, ri xaq
utukel nuk'u'x,
kub'an na usok pa ri rulewal
xelesax che

Rosa Chávez are mayab' ajtz'ib' rech na'balil pa k'iche' tz'ij xuquje' pa kakchikel, tz'ib'anel, ajb'ix xuquje' ajoyol no', k'amalb'e rech ri wokaj ktob'an chech uya'il kichoq'ab' ri ixoqib' rech Paxil Kayala' xuquje' pa ri uwachulew Just Associates (JASS).

Xqaxex pa kaxla'an tzij je pa mayab' k'iche' rumal Manuel Raxulew y María Guarchaj Carrillo.

MY WANDERING HEART WILL CARRY YOU ON HER BACK SO YOU CAN SLEEP

My wandering heart will carry you on her back
so you can sleep

My wandering heart will take you in her
backpack so you don't get lost

My wandering heart will write you a dream so
you don't wake up

My wandering heart will hide your name so you
don't leave

My wandering heart will bury the stake of
mystery so our feet can rest right at the center

My wandering heart, my nomadic heart, my
solitary heart,

will make a home on the land that was stolen
from her

Rosa Chávez is a K'iche'-kaqchikel Mayan poet, artist and activist, coordinator of the Guatemala program of the international feminist organization Just Associates (JASS).

Translation: Gabriela Ramirez-Chavez

ROSA CHÁVEZ

SKY



SONIA ELIZABETH BARRETT

Everywhere that the sky has been violently reimagined as a white celestial place is on fire right now – the continent of Africa, in Brazil, in Australia. Wanting to visually reclaim the sky as a powerful Black space. Afro-textured hair is the vessel to do it.

I used a multitude of different hair textures in this work.

Clouds cycle through many colors, and the Black cloud is the pregnant fertile life-giving cloud. Sky reclaims the celestial as a Black space. Perhaps if we reimagine a nourished sky as Black, when we look at each other as Black people we will see celestial beings.

The clouds are a mixture of the afro textures used to simulate hair and real hair. The real hair in this work is given to me in trust by fellow artists, friends, and family members.

Everyone who comes to this work has to look up.

The clouds live in a kind of Diaspora beyond any single nation-state, ascending from the soil in one nation and returning to the soil in another.

Now the world is burning and environmental catastrophe is near, it looks like Black peoples on many continents have lost their fight for soil, to own and determine our ancestral lands and our land and property in the lands we have been migrated to and from with or without choice.

It is a visual irony that over/development has always blackened the sky. Without these developments, a dark sky would simply herald the advent of just enough of an essential life-giving force: rain.

Black ways of understanding the soil and the sky have long been looked down upon as undeveloped. Perhaps the opposite will be shown to be true. The white cloud can be seen as the “undeveloped” Black cloud. Development is a matter of perspective.

This work is about a powerful vision of Black collectivity. It is a group of singular clouds. Individuation is not lost entirely, nor is a fixed ideal or imposed upon the collective which always stays loose and fluid: both “me” and “we” are possible. In certain formations, this is more or less apparent – another reason why this is a sculptural work.

The clouds are a Black space that is fluid beyond binaries and fixity. Too often symbols of Black close down meanings rather than opening them up.

This is a work that is created in community. Although that hasn't been documented yet, it would be powerful to expand and travel this work.

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Sonia Elizabeth Barrett, *Sky*, 2020. Hair, wire, thread. Installation view at Villa Romana, Florence, Italy. Photo credit: OKIM studios.

MATERIALIZAR IMAGINACIONES A PARTIR DE REALIDADES CONTEMPORÁNEAS

TIEMPO DE ZAFRA: MATERIALIZING IMAGINATIONS FROM CONTEMPORARY REALITY

YINA JIMÉNEZ SURIEL SOBRE TIEMPO DE ZAFRA

YINA JIMÉNEZ SURIEL ON TIEMPO DE ZAFRA



SI LA CIUDAD ES UNA HERRAMIENTA Y FORMATO QUE GARANTIZA LA REPRODUCCIÓN DE LA ACTUAL IMAGINACIÓN, ¿CÓMO PODEMOS INTERCEPTARLA?

IF THE CITY IS A TOOL AND FORMAT THAT GUARANTEES THE REPRODUCTION OF THE CURRENT IMAGINATION, HOW CAN WE INTERCEPT IT?

Tiempo de Zafra es un colectivo de artistas y un taller de diseño de moda, lanzado en Santo Domingo en 2017. Su práctica reflexiona alrededor del exceso y los residuos textiles y así se crea un colectivo que imagina espacios de posibilidades subvirtiendo dinámicas capitalistas mientras se generan y circulan visualidades.

La tarde del miércoles 23 de marzo visité a Tiempo de Zafra (TDZ) en su casa-taller. Nos sentamos a hablar debajo de la mata de mango en su patio... Nuestra relación comenzó hace menos de dos años pero conocía su trabajo desde antes gracias a otro artista, Ernesto Rivera, quien ha colaborado con el colectivo. En esta ocasión mi visita tenía un propósito específico: hacer un recorrido por la práctica de Tiempo de Zafra desde la perspectiva de las visualidades que han estado generando desde sus inicios y especular en torno a ellas.

Casi como si estuvieran esperando por nosotrxs, tan pronto nos sentamos lxs vecinxs encendieron un radio. Después de mirarnos y reírnos decidimos que íbamos a ir anotando las canciones que pusieran y hacerlas parte de los apuntes resultantes esa tarde.

La primera canción fue *Veó, Veó* de Tego Calderón.

Apunte uno: hay una pregunta alrededor de la cual estoy pensando desde octubre del año pasado y que dio forma a nuestra conversación: ¿cómo generar pensamiento estético que permita a los cuerpos de la especie humana estar más cerca de ser cuerpos anfíbios para habitar, por ejemplo, la imaginación occidental y otra imaginación simultáneamente sin anularse entre ellas?

Apunte dos: así como las imágenes son un resultante también debemos pensarlas como germen, uno capaz de revivir, desarrollarse y expandirse una vez que entra en relación. Crear imaginación no es solo la producción de objetos-imágenes, sino también crear las condiciones para que la recepción y la circulación de dichos objetos-imágenes contribuyan a que sean ciertamente fuente de percepciones complejas capaces de despertar movimiento y afectos. En República Dominicana, la práctica artística del colectivo Tiempo de Zafra está generando objetos-imágenes intermediarias entre lo concreto y lo abstracto. Simultáneamente condensa varias funciones y emplea soluciones intrínsecas a la red de las realidades contemporáneas y a su deseo de materializar imaginaciones. Por ejemplo: el cuerpo como una entidad en relación, sin que esto anule la autonomía; vestir como acto comunicativo; el cuerpo como espacio político para la alianza y la resistencia; la conciencia de que las visualidades contribuyen a poner en tensión las ideas de a quienes consideramos indiferentes o repulsivxs. También la calle como el espacio que sostiene las acciones colectivas que constituyen imaginaciones; subvertir

dinámicas capitalistas y de consumo... ¿cómo se visten los cuerpos que habitan mundos distintos?

Apunte tres: Zafra viene de la palabra árabe *سفرة* que significa "viaje" y en su origen hacía referencia al viaje que realizaban cientos de personas para trabajar en la cosecha de plantaciones azucareras. En la actual República Dominicana, como en otros contextos del continente americano, la zafra es una unidad temporal que aparece en dos momentos del año, cuando se cosecha y corta la caña de azúcar. Edgar Garrido y Stephanie Rodríguez, lxs fundadorxs de TDZ interceptan ese ciclo para hacerlo expansivo, y en su taller, en el centro histórico de Santo Domingo, la cosecha es constante. Tiempo de Zafra es un colectivo de artistas y un taller de diseño de moda, lanzado a finales de 2017. Su práctica reflexiona alrededor del exceso y los residuos textiles. Edgar y Stephanie crearon un colectivo que imagina espacios de posibilidades subvirtiendo dinámicas capitalistas, no solo en el consumo de objetos y materialidades sino también en la generación y circulación de visualidades. En el taller trabajan artistas, diseñadorxs y artesánxs dominicanxs y haitianxs y es a la vez un colectivo y una estrategia que está contribuyendo a ampliar las ideas de lo posible, resonando con la práctica de artistas como Tony Capellán (1955-2017).

Apunte cuatro: los objetos-imágenes del colectivo manifiestan hechos sociales y económicos no solo de la República Dominicana, sino de un continente en el que coexisten dinámicas coloniales, poscoloniales y neocoloniales y en el que se están generando imágenes proféticas de imaginaciones distintas. Me parece oportuno, entonces, recordar que la política es creación, inventar relaciones y espacios para la acción. Y en ese sentido, parafraseando al filósofo francés Gilbert Simondon en su ensayo sobre imaginación e invención, una de las cosas más importantes del lenguaje estético de Tiempo de Zafra es que, al materializarse y objetivarse, se suma a otras manifestaciones estéticas junto con las cuales constituye una carga que tensiona la cultura visual y contribuye parcialmente a un devenir social.

Suena la canción *La hora de volvé* de Rita Indiana & Los Misterios.

Apunte cinco: somos las relaciones que nos constituyen, algo de nuestra propia vida se coarta cuando otras vidas y entornos son aniquilados. Tener esa conciencia entre distintas comunidades que componen una sociedad permitirá construir estructuras de gestión del poder colectivo en interrelación. Las condiciones para que exista el colectivo Tiempo de Zafra en el ecosistema cultural dominicano no son un resultado puntual ni fortuito, sino más bien la continuidad y la evolución de ideas que tienen su ancla a finales de la década del noventa. También de forma más intensa durante los primeros años del 2000, cuando la práctica de arte contemporáneo en República Dominicana empezó a redefinir los roles y ámbitos

de acción del pensamiento estético en contextos como este, de manera particular con los proyectos del Colectivo La Vaina y el Colectivo Shampoo.

Apunte seis: el colectivo La Vaina, conformado en ese entonces por estudiantes de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, hoy la mayoría de ellxs artistas con investigaciones en distintos campos del pensamiento estético: Eddy Núñez, Engel Leonardo, Farah Paredes, Fernando Soriano, Ivory Núñez, Karma-davis, Sayuri Guzmán, Virginia Perdomo y Willian Ramírez. La Vaina se formó en la ciudad de Santo Domingo en el año 2000 con la revista del mismo nombre. La publicación se creó como respuesta a la falta de medios impresos culturales independientes, críticos y experimentales y funcionó como un espacio expositivo en formato editorial con trabajos de artistas, escritors y músicos de la entonces comunidad cultural emergente de la ciudad. Cada edición – siete en total – venía acompañada de happenings, performances e instalaciones, vinculadas a su tema central. Para la última edición de la revista, publicada en el 2005 en el contexto de la VIII Feria Internacional del Libro de Santo Domingo, La Vaina produjo un bestseller: *El Matatain* (un mata-matatiempo). El formato que tiene los más altos récords de venta durante la referida Feria son los matatiempos. A través de *El Matatain* el colectivo hizo aparecer en el espacio público las primeras reflexiones desde el pensamiento estético contemporáneo en relación con los orígenes y vínculos entre los procesos dictatoriales de los anteriores presidentes dominicanos Rafael Trujillo y Joaquín Balaguer y sus implicaciones directas en la actualidad dominicana.

Suena la canción *Una bomba* de Zacarías Ferreira.

Apunte siete: en el 2004, el colectivo Shampoo, conformado por Maurice Sánchez y Ángel Rosario, realizó la obra *D' La mona plaza*, articulada alrededor de la publicación de un anuncio comercial en uno de los principales periódicos de circulación nacional, *Diario Libre*. La noticia: construirán una plaza comercial en el Canal de la Mona, un canal marítimo que vincula a la República Dominicana con Puerto Rico y también uno de los puentes que une al mar Caribe con el océano Atlántico. La Constructora Internáutica del Caribe desarrollará la plaza para las personas que circulen por la zona, *con todas las comodidades que el viajero merece*. Lo curioso: el Canal de la Mona constituye una de las *fronteras marítimas* más complejas en el Caribe, es la ruta a través de la cual se realizan viajes *ilegales* de personas dominicanas –y en años recientes también haitianas– que buscan mejorar sus condiciones socioeconómicas haciendo vida en Puerto Rico. La noticia acaparó la atención nacional durante días, ¿Cómo es posible que se quiera construir un centro comercial para personas que están viajando *ilegalmente*?... Quizás porque esa frontera nunca debió existir, de igual forma que la frontera territorial con Haití, quizás porque el estado-nación dominicano ha sostenido políticas públicas que precarizan la vida y la hacen inviable para la mayoría del colectivo, quizás porque las estructuras fundacionales del estado-nación anulan la diversidad intrínseca de las comunidades a las que gestionan... *D' La mona plaza* participó en la 4^a Trienal Poligráfica de San Juan, Puerto Rico (2004) y formó parte de la exposición *The infinite island* (2007) en el Brooklyn Museum, de Nueva York, Estados Unidos.

Suena la canción *Guatque* campesino de Ibrahim Ferrer.

Apunte ocho: si la ciudad es una herramienta y formato que garantiza la reproducción de la actual imaginación, ¿cómo podemos interceptarla? Responder a esta pregunta puede parecer pesado y ciertamente lo es. Sin embargo, hablando esa tarde, Stephanie, Edgar y yo coincidimos en que hay una idea muy precisa y al mismo tiempo muy porosa que podemos pensar

como primera respuesta: la podemos interceptar apareciendo en el espacio público, apareciendo en la esfera pública de una comunidad determinada. A esa conclusión llegamos luego de hablar sobre la incidencia del dembow dominicano y su estética sonora en la aceleración de los procesos de reivindicación de las otredades en la sociedad dominicana.

Apunte nueve: Tiempo de Zafra tiene una relación muy estrecha con el dembow y su estética visual a través de la artista Tokischa y la casa productora Paulus Music. Para Tokischa han creado distintas piezas, quizás las más conocidas son las utilizadas por la artista en el video de la canción *Tukuntazo*, en el video de la canción *Linda* y en el video de la reciente canción *Sistema de Patio*.

Apunte dos, repetido: así como las imágenes son un resultante también debemos pensarlas como germen, uno capaz de revivir, desarrollarse y expandirse una vez entra en relación. Crear imaginación no es solo la producción de objetos-imágenes, sino también crear las condiciones para que la recepción y la circulación de dichos objetos-imágenes contribuyan a que sean ciertamente fuente de percepciones complejas capaces de despertar movimiento y afectos. En República Dominicana, la práctica artística del colectivo Tiempo de Zafra está generando objetos-imágenes intermediarios entre lo concreto y lo abstracto condensando varias funciones y empleando soluciones intrínsecas a la red de las realidades contemporáneas y su deseo de materializar imaginaciones: el cuerpo como una entidad en relación sin que esto anule la autonomía; vestir como acto comunicativo; el cuerpo como espacio político para la alianza y la resistencia; la conciencia de que las visualidades contribuyen a poner en tensión las ideas de a quiénes consideramos indiferentes o repulsivos; la calle como el espacio que sostiene las acciones colectivas que constituyen imaginaciones; subvertir dinámicas capitalistas y de consumo... ¿cómo se visten los cuerpos que habitan mundos distintos?

Tiempo de Zafra es un colectivo de artistas que imagina espacios de posibilidades a través del exceso y el desperdicio textil en la dinámica capitalista.

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Tokischa en el video de la canción *Sistema del patio* dirigido por Raymi Paulus. Con piezas de TDZ. Fotografía de Richard Cordones. Bondage pants hechos con uniformes militares antiguos y otros materiales sobrantes. Tokischa in the video of the song *Sistema del patio* directed by Raymi Paulus. With pieces by TDZ. Photography by RichardLanyards. Bondage pants made from old military uniforms and other leftover materials.



Tiempo de Zafra is an artists' collective and fashion design workshop launched in Santo Domingo in 2017. Reflecting on excess and textile waste, their practice imagines spaces of possibility for subverting capitalist dynamics while generating visualities.

In the afternoon on Wednesday, March 23, I visited Tiempo de Zafra (TDZ) at their home workshop and we sat down to talk under the mango tree in their backyard. Tiempo de Zafra is an artists' collective and fashion design workshop launched at the end of 2017. Its practice reflects on excess and textile waste. Our relationship began less than two years ago, but I already knew their work thanks to another artist, Ernesto Rivera, who has collaborated them. On this occasion my visit had a specific purpose: to take a journey through Tiempo de Zafra's practice from the perspective of the visualities that they have been generating since its inception and speculate about them. As soon as we sat down, almost as if they had been waiting for us, the neighbors turned on a radio. After looking at each other and laughing, we decided to write down the songs they put on and make them part of the notes about our afternoon.

The first song was *Veó, Veó* by Tego Calderón.

Point 1: A question I have been thinking about since October of last year shaped our conversation: How to generate aesthetic thought that allows bodies of the human species to be closer to amphibious bodies, to inhabit, for instance, the Western imagination and another imagination simultaneously without cancelling each other out?

Point 2: Just as images are products, we also need to think of them as germs, capable of reviving, developing, and expanding once they enter into relation. To create imagination is not only to produce object-images, but also to create conditions so that the reception and circulation of said object-images contribute, unquestioningly, to generating complex perceptions capable of arousing movement and affection. Tiempo de Zafra create intermediary object-images between the concrete and the abstract. Their practice condenses various functions and uses solutions that are intrinsic to the web of contemporary realities to materialize imaginations. For example: imagining the body as an entity in relation, without it cancelling out its autonomy; imagining dressing as a communicative act; imagining the body as a political space for alliance and resistance; imagining how visualities contribute to bringing into play the ideas of those we consider indifferent or repulsive. The street is the space that sustains collective actions that constitute imagination, that subvert consumer capitalist dynamics. How do bodies that inhabit different worlds dress?

Point 3: Zafra comes from the Arabic word سفرة which means "journey," in reference to the journey hundreds of people made to work during harvest time at sugar cane plantations. In the Dominican Republic today, as in other contexts of the American continent, *zafra* is a time unit that appears twice a year, when sugar cane is harvested and when it is cut. Edgar Garrido and Stephanie Rodríguez, the founders of TDZ, intercept this cycle to make it expansive: in their workshop, in the historic center of Santo Domingo, the harvest is constant. Edgar and Stephanie created a collective that imagines spaces of possibilities, subverting capitalist dynamics, not only in the consumption of objects and materiality, but also in the generation and circulation of visualities. Dominican and Haitian artists, designers, and artisans work in the workshop, and it is both a collective and a strategy toward broadening ideas of what is possible, resonating with the practices of artists such as Tony Capellán (1955–2017).

Point 4: The collective's object-images manifest the social and economic realities not only of the Dominican Republic, but of a wider continent where colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial dynamics coexist and where prophetic images of different imaginations are generated. It seems appropriate to remember that politics is creation, inventing relationships and spaces for action. And, to paraphrase French philosopher Gilbert Simondon in his essay on imagination and invention, one of the most important things about Tiempo de Zafra's aesthetic language is that by materializing and objectifying itself, it joins other aesthetic manifestations and with them it constitutes a burden that stresses visual culture and contributes to a social future.

The song *La hora de volvé* by Rita Indiana & Los Misterios plays.

Point 5: We are the relationships that constitute us. Something of our own life is curtailed when other lives and environments are destroyed. Being aware of the different communities that make up a society will allow us to build management structures of collective power in interrelation. The conditions that allow the Tiempo de Zafra collective to exist in the Dominican cultural ecosystem are not exceptional or fortuitous, but rather the result of a continuous evolution of ideas anchored in the late 1990s and more intense during the early 2000s, when contemporary art practice in the Dominican Republic began redefining its roles and fields of action in contexts like this - particularly the La Vaina Collective and Shampoo Collective projects.

Point 6: The La Vaina Collective was made up of students from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. Today most of them are artists researching various fields of aesthetic thought: Eddy Núñez, Engel Leonardo, Farah Paredes, Fernando Soriano, Ivory Núñez, Karmadavis, Sayuri Guzmán, Virginia Per-

domo, and Willian Ramírez. La Vaina was established in the city of Santo Domingo in 2000 along with a magazine of the same name. The publication was created in response to the lack of independent, critical, and experimental cultural print media and functioned as an exhibition space in editorial format with works by artists, writers, and musicians from the city's then emergent cultural community. Each edition—seven in total—was accompanied by events, performances, and installations connected to its central theme. For the last edition, published in 2005 in the context of Santo Domingo's International Book Fair, La Vaina produced a bestseller: *El Matatain* (The Time Killer). It was through *El Matatain* that the collective brought into public space the first reflections on contemporary aesthetic thought in relation to the origins and connections between the dictatorial processes of former Dominican presidents Rafael Trujillo and Joaquín Balaguer, and their direct impact on the Dominican present.

The song *Una bomba* by Zacarías Ferreira plays.

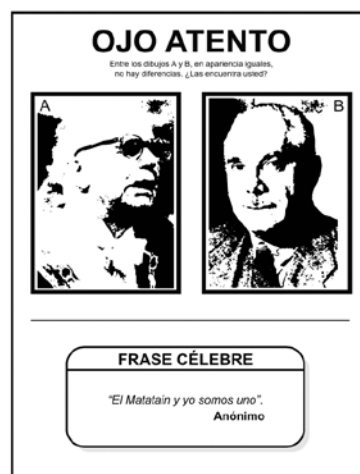
Point 7: In 2004, the Shampoo Collective, formed by Maurice Sánchez and Ángel Rosario, produced the work *D' La mona plaza*, structured around the publication of a commercial advertisement in a major national newspaper, *Diario Libre*. The news: a commercial plaza will be built in the Canal de la Mona, a maritime channel that links the Dominican Republic with Puerto Rico and connects the Caribbean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. It was announced that the Internautical Construction Company of the Caribbean would develop the plaza for people traveling in the area, with all the comforts the traveler deserves. The curious thing about it: the Mona Canal constitutes one of the most complex maritime borders in the Caribbean and is the route through which Dominicans - and in recent years Haitians as well - make undocumented journeys seeking to improve their socioeconomic condition by making a life for themselves in Puerto Rico. The news seized national attention for days: how is it possible that they want to build a shopping mall for people who are traveling illegally? Perhaps because that border never should have existed, just like the territorial border with Haiti. Perhaps because the Dominican nation-state has sustained public policies that have made life precarious and unviable for the majority. Perhaps because the foundational structures of the nation-state nullify the intrinsic diversity of the communities they manage... *D' La mona plaza* was shown in the 4th Polygraphic Triennial San Juan, Puerto Rico (2004) and was part of the exhibition *The Infinite Island* (2007) at the Brooklyn Museum in the United States.

The song *Guateque Campesino* by Ibrahim Ferrer plays.

Point 8: If the city is a tool and format that guarantees the reproduction of the current imagination, how can we intercept it? Answering this question may seem heavy, and it certainly is. However, speaking that afternoon, Stephanie, Edgar, and I agreed that there is a very specific and at the same time very porous idea that we can think of as a first response: we can intercept it by appearing in the public space, appearing in the public sphere of a certain community. We arrived at that conclusion after talking about the role of Dominican dembow and its sound aesthetics in the acceleration of the processes of vindication of otherness in Dominican society.

Point 9: Tiempo de Zafra has a very close relationship with dembow and its visual aesthetics through the artist Tokischa and the production company Paulus Music. They have created various pieces for Tokischa, perhaps the best known being those used by the artist in the videos for the songs *Tukuntazo*, *Linda*, and, most recently, *Sistema de Patio*.

Point 2, repeated: Just as images are products, we also need to think of them as germs, capable of reviving, developing, and expanding once they enter into relation. To create imagination is not only to produce object-images, but also to create conditions so



MIKJARI 4



D' La Mona Plaza
Desde se separan las aguas

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that the reception and circulation of said object-images contribute, unquestioningly, to generating complex perceptions capable of arousing movement and affection. In the Dominican Republic, the artistic practice of the Tiempo de Zafra collective creates intermediary object-images between the concrete and the abstract. Their practice condenses various functions and uses solutions that are intrinsic to the web of contemporary realities to materialize imaginations. For example: imagining the body as an entity in relation, without it cancelling out its autonomy; imagining dressing as a communicative act; imagining the body as a political space for alliance and resistance; imagining how visualities contribute to bringing into play the ideas of those we consider indifferent or repulsive. The street is the space that sustains collective actions that constitute imagination, that subvert consumer capitalist dynamics. How do bodies that inhabit different worlds dress?

Tiempo de Zafra is an artist collective that imagines spaces of possibilities through excess and textile waste in the capitalist dynamics.

Yina Jiménez Suriel is a curator and researcher with a master's degree in visual studies. She is associate editor of Contemporary And América Latina and associate curator of the Caribbean Art Initiative. Yina lives in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Translation: Sara Hanaburgh

Arriba / Above

Página interior del matatiempo del colectivo artístico-crítico *La Vaina*, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana. / Interior page of the crossword of Artistic - Critical Collective: "*La Vaina*" in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

D' La Mona Plaza (2004). Colectivo Shampoo: Ángel Rosario y Maurice Sánchez. / *D' La Mona Plaza* (2004). Colectivo Shampoo: Ángel Rosario and Maurice Sánchez.

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Footage del video dirigido por Raymi Paulus de la canción *Tukuntazo*, con piezas hechas por TDZ en colaboración con Tokischa. Todas las piezas hechas con ropa del mercado de pulgas. Foto tomada en iPhone con lente ojo de pez. / Capture of the video directed by Raymi Paulus of the song *Tukuntazo* with pieces made by TDZ in collaboration with Tokischa. All the pieces are made with clothes from flea markets. Photo taken on iPhone with fisheye lens.

THE LIFE, THAT PERSISTS



**A CONVERSATION BETWEEN
ANN MBUTI, IMANI JACQUELINE
BROWN AND ZAYAAN KHAN**

Ann Mbuti: Focusing on Black ecologies means seeing ecologies anew. That entails telling the story about environmentalism differently, bringing in other narratives. What does storytelling mean for your practices?

Imani Jacqueline Brown: I've been enjoying thinking through origin myths and realizing just how many different origins and myths exist about a single place, a single people, a single culture. The stories we tell ourselves about the world and how we are entangled with and within it. One chooses the elements of the narrative: What do we consider to be important? What do we make bigger, what do we transform? How do we imagine through metaphor, through parable, through different species of plants and animals? I've been noticing the stories that are in the archive. In Louisiana, oil and gas production is paramount. We're very proud of our historical role as one of the top producers of oil and gas in the US. We're well past the peak of oil and gas production, and we're deep into the catastrophic collapse of the Earth as a result of that production. So it's really interesting to see how these stories are told, or not told, or corrupted.

For example, the John James Audubon Aquarium in New Orleans is designed around a multistory tank identified as "The Gulf of Mexico, supported by..." and the logos of BP, Exxon Mobil, Shell Oil Company, and Chevron. The huge tank has a strange structure in the middle of it – what is actually a scale model of an oil rig. Swimming around the oil rig are endangered sea creatures, turtles, stingrays and sharks. Until a few years ago, the wall text read: "In the beginning there was oil." The display was modified after years of complaints from local residents and visitors, but there was an extensive narrative around the significance of oil and gas for Louisiana. Even with the reduction of text, the exhibit remains propaganda for a federal program called Rigs-to-Reef, which allows oil companies to leave their defunct offshore oil rigs standing in the ocean because they've become "artificial reefs." There's so much delusion, carefully crafted ignorance, hubris, and this fusion of the biblical and capitalism woven together in that space. Of course, there's no mention of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which killed untold tens of thousands of sea creatures like those on display in the tank. And this is a place where children go to learn stories about the world around them.

AM: How do you relate that to this moment of ecological upheaval?

IJB: I started thinking about this era of climate change that we're in, raising questions such as how do we live within this era, how do we work, how do we figure out who we are? What is our position? How do we conceive of it? Key experiences in my life – Hurricane Katrina and subsequent perfect storms of gentrification and displacement, the BP oil spill, the recurrent waves of climate crisis – have taught me to shift from an apocalyptic way of thinking. I think about all of the apocalypses that have happened to various peoples over and over again during the last five hundred years of racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and slavery. Every disaster carries a form of ending with it, but then life continues, although it is completely transformed and will never again be the same life or the same place that existed before. Still, there is no such thing as the end of the world.

AM: Entanglement is also crucial for your work, Zayaan, right?

Zayaan Khan: Storytelling for me means using many mediums. I've been harvesting clay from one of the sites of forced removal that my family have experienced around Cape Town. I like to see the herbarium as an archive and use it often as a practice of "death making." My first language in work is plants and I love it, because when you work with plants, immediately you're working with insects, with waters, with soils. I think deeply about fermentation as a practice, which also teaches me so much – it's telling stories through different mediums.

AM: So what's the story you tell about yourself? In terms of your practice, how did you get to the point where you are now?

IJB: My political awakening began when I was around twelve years old, when the US was drumming up to war with Iraq. I started to develop a political consciousness and antiwar sensibility, and I was also involved with our school's Green Society, but the connections between militarism, post-colonial intervention, wars for oil, and local environmental struggles remained fragmented and divided until Hurricane Katrina occurred during my senior year of high school. For so many of us who went through that so-called "natural disaster," Katrina offered a particular lens through which to see the world, because it was so clearly a more-than-meteorological event – it was an *unnatural* disaster. My family was displaced from New Orleans – along with 100,000 other Black folks – and I moved first to DC, then to New York, where I started college in 2006. In 2010, just as I was about to graduate from college, the BP oil spill took place. Here again, just as I was at the cusp of another major life benchmark, was an event that felt apocalyptic. It felt as though the world didn't end after Katrina, but that now it was finally going to come to an end.

AM: That sounds exactly like the counter-disaster narrative you mentioned. What was beyond that apocalypse for you?

IJB: Occupy Wall Street kicked off a year later, which was another rebirth, another major political awakening, but in a very different way: It was an incredible space where people were throwing everything into the vision of creating a mutual aid society in Lower Manhattan. Different forms of social aid and care where the community was providing for the necessities of life – whether it be education, or a library in Zucotti Park, or food that was served three times a day – were infused with political energy and political debate. I was starting to do a lot of political reading of theory, and realized that I already knew the concept of a mutual aid society, that we had that in New Orleans: a social aid and pleasure club, a benevolent society. I've learned over the years more and more about these societies and their connection to West African communities.

AM: Zayaan, your work is centered around seeds, land, and food. How did these foci find their way into your practice?

ZK: I am very governed by the land I was born into, now known as Cape Town, just before apartheid ended. I was ten years

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Imani Jacqueline Brown, still from *What remains at the ends of the earth?*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.

old when democracy landed and Mandela was elected under a promise of a rainbow nation and transformation. Knowing full well the extent of the ugliness of this postcolonial colonialism, I very quickly understood that it didn't really mean anything, even as a young child. There was always a deep need for healing, influenced by those who live there and their connection to different histories and the spatial planning of apartheid. I worked for an organization for land restitution and agrarian reform for a good couple of years and also started food justice organizing. Once I started getting into the food side of things, the justice work really started. This was around 2011, before food justice was a recognized, institutionalized way of working, looking at it from a transdisciplinary disciplinarity. I'm using all these academic words, but it started off being very grounded, actually.

AM: Grounded in both senses of the word, right? You say knowledge comes from the land.

ZK: While I was doing horticulture, I was thinking a lot about green roof systems and about diversifying the city in the most nuanced way that I could think of. This land has such high biodiversity and there's something very powerful about that extreme life that persists as well as the high rates of endemism, of things that have only existed here. That kind of thinking and even the spiritual reality of what that means lead me to looking at the production of urban agriculture as potential spaces for ecological healing. The kinds of knowing that this work entails is often reclaiming and retrieving knowledge made extinct due to colonial intrusion, as part of the colonial project to deny us our connections and relations. This comes through dreaming, through intuitive practice, all heavily reliant on land.

AM: What do you mean by ecological healing?

ZK: The material work that I do is to understand the invisibles and think about these things in deep time – where all our tissues and materials come from evolutionarily. It is a camaraderie in a strange way. The recognition that I am because of inheriting threads, because of broken and damaged threads, no threads and having to weave anew especially. This work comes through me dreaming and from the intuitive space of being connected with land. When we talk about land, it's also about the ocean and all the memory that the water holds. So there's a lot of recognition that the community of practice is not just self, not just human beyond that, but also into those who have existed before me and maybe in all the in-between spaces that I don't even recognize or understand yet. And the magic and the infinite prospect of something like that makes me feel safe and not so scared of the current categories.

AM: Imani, you strive for opening spaces to imagine paths to ecological reparation. How is that connected with environmentalism from a Black perspective?

IJB: I prefer speaking through the word "ecology" rather than "environmentalism" to work against this classical Western separation of the human from everything else that exists, which I think is one of the core factors inhibiting our society's transformation. That term and its etymology are themselves entangled with a history of racial violence. Racial geographies emerge from the era of slavery and colonialism and dictate, for example, where the fossil fuel industry is able to ravage human beings and their wider environments, or which populations live in the most precarious geographies. The impact of that ravaging on Louisiana's coastal wetlands, which serve as natural protective buffers around coastal communities, enable storms like Katrina, and more recently Laura and Ida, to be so devastating.

AM: Everything is entangled with everything else, so how to deal with this overwhelming complexity?

IJB: Storytelling is so much about world building. You're recreating the world in a particular, poetic way.

Imani Jacqueline Brown is an artist, activist, writer, and researcher from New Orleans, based between New Orleans and London. Her work investigates the "continuum of extractivism," which spans from settler-colonial genocide and slavery to fossil fuel production and climate change. Imani combines archival research, ecological philosophy, legal theory, people's history, and counter-cartographic strategies to map the spatial logics that make geographies, unmake communities, and break Earth's geology.

Zayaan Khan works through seed, land, and food from a multidisciplinary perspective, forwarding sociopolitical, ecological, and spiritual-political perspective.

Ann Mbuti is an art writer and cultural publicist based in Zurich, Switzerland. Her work connects the dots in arts and culture that form a larger picture of the contemporary.

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Above

Zayaan Khan, as part of *Starter Room* at POOL, Johannesburg, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

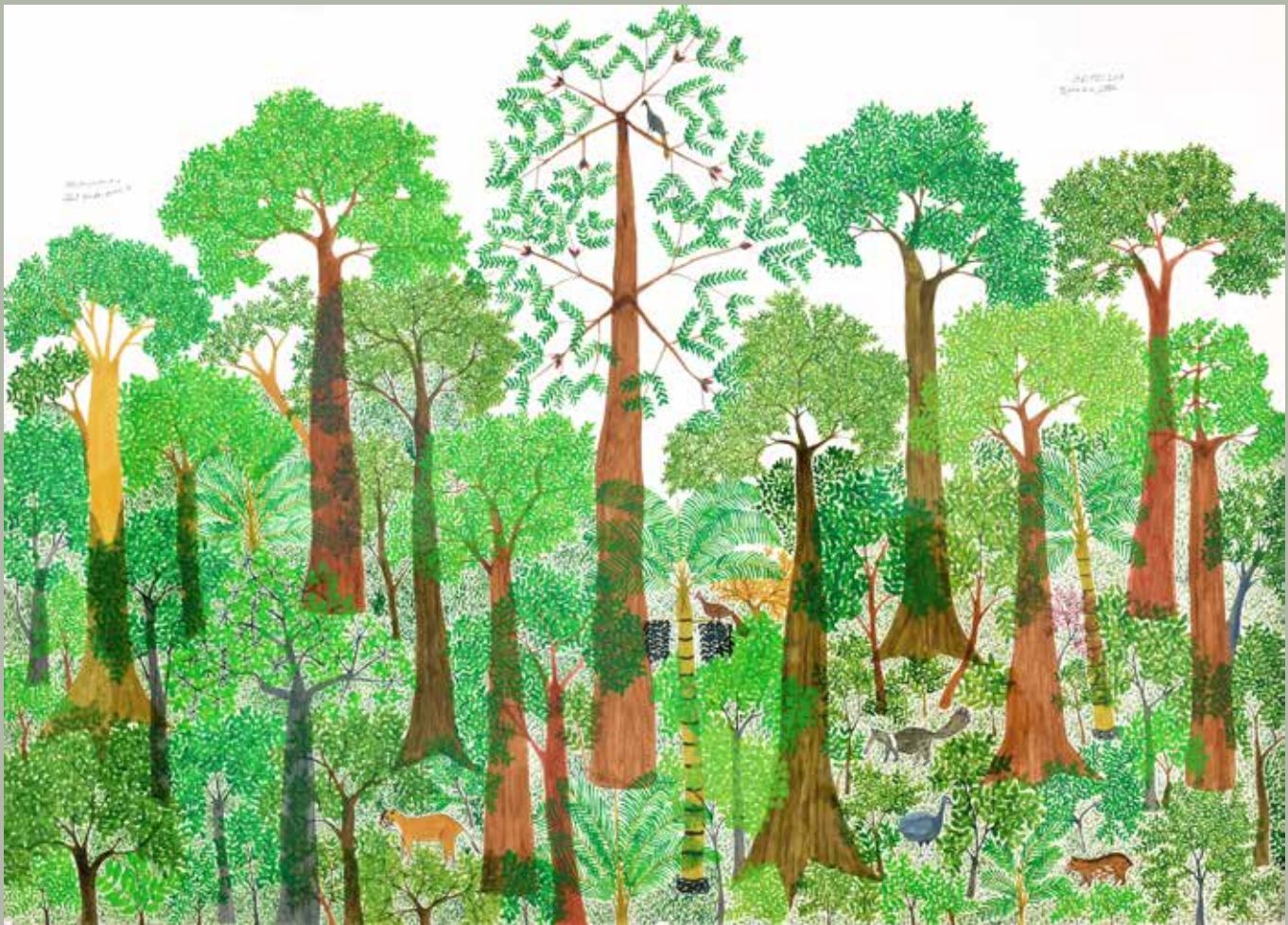
Below

Zayaan Khan, *Reclaiming the Pantry*, 2020. Installation view at PLANT // Woordfees, Stellenbosch, South Africa. Photo: Parusha Naidoo. Courtesy of the artist.



O NOMEADOR DE PLANTAS

THE NAMER OF PLANTS



NATHALIA LAVIGNE SOBRE ABEL RODRÍGUEZ

NATHALIA LAVIGNE ON ABEL RODRÍGUEZ

O colombiano de origem Nonuya ganha notoriedade no mundo da arte ao usar o desenho como forma de preservar a memória sobre a flora amazônica, que corre risco de extinção.

Treinado desde a infância por um familiar para ser um “nomeador de plantas”, o artista utiliza suas obras como uma forma de traduzir subjetividades do ecossistema da Amazônia. Suas ilustrações mostram os processos da vida da floresta e, ao mesmo tempo, os processos da sua morte.

Há muitos caminhos possíveis para falar sobre a prática de Abel Rodríguez, o artista indígena de origem Nonuya nascido na Amazônia colombiana que vem ganhando notabilidade no circuito internacional da arte contemporânea. Pode-se olhar para seus desenhos como uma valiosa fonte para estudos botânicos sobre uma flora que há décadas vem sendo dizimada. Suas ilustrações mostram em detalhes processos sobre as mudanças na vida da floresta após inundações (como em *Ciclo anual del bosque de la veja*, 2009-10) ou mitos sobre a origem do mundo (como em *Árbol de la vida y de la abundancia*, 2012). Muitas vezes, a flora também é retratada em contato com a fauna local, indicando o alimento dos animais daquela região.

Mas também é possível olhar para os desenhos de Rodríguez sob uma perspectiva artística, como tem acontecido. Especialmente após participação na Documenta 14, em 2017, seu trabalho vem ganhando forte presença em exposições de arte. Ele fez parte, também, da 34ª Bienal de São Paulo, em 2021, e da 23ª Bienal de Sydney, em 2022. Rodríguez é representado pela galeria Instituto de Visión, uma das mais importantes da Colômbia.

O ponto de partida que conecta as duas histórias teve início nos anos 1980, em um encontro entre Mogaje Guihu, nome de origem de Abel, e Carlos Rodríguez, biólogo responsável pela filial colombiana da ONG holandesa Trobenpos, que buscava então guias locais para identificar plantas da botânica amazônica. Abel, que desde a infância foi treinado por um tio para ser um “nomeador de plantas”, “um depositário do conhecimento da comunidade sobre as diversas espécies botânicas da floresta, seus usos práticos e sua importância ritual”, como descreve o texto da 34ª Bienal de São Paulo, foi recomendado como a pessoa ideal.

Ali começou uma relação que determinaria também sua inserção no universo artístico. Foi Carlos, de quem Abel adotou o mesmo sobrenome ao definir seu nome ocidental, quem lhe incentivou a desenhar como forma de manter vivas suas memórias. Isso aconteceu especialmente após um traumático processo de diáspora: nos anos 1990, ele precisou deixar sua região de origem para fugir do conflito armado que atingiu o país e foi devastando os recursos naturais daquela área. Desde então, Abel passou a viver com a família em uma região periférica de Bogotá, mas sempre esteve em contato com a floresta.

É difícil encontrar trabalhos equivalentes de outros nomes que consigam, ao mesmo tempo, informar com precisão sobre um determinado ecossistema e sensibilizar um público mais vasto

através de seu valor artístico. Mesmo no caso de alguns exemplos conhecidos no Ocidente, em que há combinação de um valor científico com uma escrita mais literária, há uma grande diferença em relação ao trabalho de Abel, já que são abordagens sob uma perspectiva branca.

Especialmente na botânica, ciência que nasce atrelada ao imaginário colonial, iniciou-se nos últimos anos um debate importante sobre classificações e nomenclaturas científicas ou populares de espécimes do reino vegetal carregadas de preconceitos raciais, patriarcais ou religiosos (judeu errante, costela-de-adão e maria-sem-vergonha são alguns exemplos). Foi esse o ponto de partida da exposição *Botannica Tirannica*, por exemplo, realizada ano passado pela artista e pesquisadora Giselle Beiguelman no Museu Judaico, em São Paulo. Utilizando imagens feitas com inteligência artificial, ela recriou novas possibilidades de combinações que questionam os padrões de nomenclatura, gerando uma espécie de “ecossistema de uma ciência errante, onde florescem seres híbridos”, em suas palavras.

É nesse sentido que o papel de “nomeador de plantas” exercido por Abel Rodríguez ganha uma importância simbólica ao resgatar uma função que foi retirada dos povos originários. Ao mesmo tempo, a própria ideia de finalidade é algo que passa ao largo de sua visão de mundo. Em um documentário dirigido por Fernando Arias em 2014, exibido em uma exposição no BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, na Inglaterra, em 2020, o artista indígena dá a melhor resposta ao ser questionado sobre o que seus desenhos significam para si: “Bem, nada. Apenas mostro uma simples imagem.”

De forma semelhante, o escritor e ativista Ailton Krenak reformula a frase bíblica mais conhecida sobre a origem do mundo em seu livro mais recente, *Futuro Ancestral* (2022), ao afirmar: “De ré, poderíamos dizer que no princípio era a folha. Outras narrativas vão dizer que no princípio era o verbo”.

Se o reino vegetal tem seu vocabulário próprio, melhor seria afirmar que Abel Rodríguez é apenas um tradutor daquilo que as plantas querem dizer. E muitas vezes elas podem não querer dizer nada.

Abel Rodríguez é um artista visual ancião do povo Nonuya e um profundo conhecedor das plantas e dos sistemas ecológicos da Bacia Amazônica. Nasceu em 1944 em Cahuinarí, na Amazônia colombiana, e vive desde os anos 2000 em Bogotá.

Nathalia Lavigne é pesquisadora e curadora, e escreve sobre arte e cultura contemporânea. Vive entre São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro e Berlim.

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Abel Rodríguez, *Terraza Alta II*, 2018. Cortesia do artista e do Instituto de Visión. / Abel Rodríguez, *Terraza Alta II*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and Instituto de Visión.

The Colombian artist of Nonuya origin has gained renown in the art world by using drawing to preserve the memory of Amazonian flora at risk of extinction.

Trained since childhood by a family member to be a “namer of plants,” Abel Rodríguez uses his works as a way of translating subjectivities of the Amazonian ecosystem. His illustrations show the life processes of the forest and, at the same time, the processes of its death.

We can tell the story of the practice of Abel Rodríguez, an Indigenous Nonuya artist born in the Colombian Amazon who has been gaining notoriety on the international contemporary art circuit, in contrasting ways. On the one hand, his drawings are a valuable resource for botanical studies of flora undergoing decimation for decades. His illustrations show detailed processes of change in forest life after flooding (as in *Ciclo anual del bosque de la vega* [The Annual Cycle of La Vega Forest], 2009–10) and myths about the origin of the world (as in *Árbol de la vida y de la abundancia* [Tree of Life and Abundance], 2012). The flora is often portrayed in contact with the local fauna, indicating the food of the region's animals.

On the other hand it is possible to speak of Rodríguez's drawings from an artistic perspective, and this has very much been happening. Especially after his participation in documenta 14, in 2017, his work has gained a strong presence at art exhibitions. He also participated in the 34th São Paulo Biennial in 2001 and in the 23rd Sydney Biennial in 2022. And Rodríguez is represented by the Instituto de Visión Gallery, one of the most important in Colombia.

What connects these two stories began in the 1980s at a meeting between Mogaje Guihu, Abel's original name, and Carlos Rodríguez, a biologist who heads the Colombian branch of the Dutch NGO Trobenpos, which was looking for local guides to identify plants of Amazonian botany. According to the 34th São Paulo Biennial presentation text, Abel Rodríguez, trained since his childhood by an uncle to be a “namer of plants” and “a repository of the community's knowledge about the various botanical species in the forest, their practical uses and their ritual importance,” was recommended as the ideal person.

Thus began a relationship that would also determine his insertion into the art universe. Carlos, whose last name Rodríguez adopted when he chose his Western name, encouraged him to draw to keep his memories alive. This encouragement increased after a traumatic diasporic process: in the 1990s, Rodríguez had to leave his native region to flee the armed conflict that had taken hold of the country and was devastating the region's natural resources. Since then Rodríguez has been living with family in a peripheral region of Bogotá, although he still maintains contact with the forest.

It is difficult to find equivalent works by others that at once accurately convey information about a given ecosystem and bring awareness to a broader audience through their artistic value. Even

in well-known examples in the West which combine scientific value with literary writing, the big difference from Rodríguez's work is that they are clearly approaches from a white perspective.

Especially in botany, a science that was born with a connection to colonial imaginary, an important debate has begun recently about scientific or popular classifications and nomenclatures of species from the plant kingdom that are laden with racial, patriarchal, or religious prejudices (“wandering Jew,” “Adam's rib,” and “shameless Maria” are a few of the popular examples). This debate was the basis for the *Botannica Tirannica* (Tyrannical Botany) exhibition, for example, held last year by artist and researcher Giselle Beiguelman at the Jewish Museum in São Paulo. Using images made with artificial intelligence, she created new possibilities for combinations that question the standards of nomenclature, generating, in her words, a kind of “ecosystem of a wandering science, where hybrid beings flourish.”

It is in this sense that Abel Rodríguez's role as “namer of plants” gains symbolic importance: he reclaim a role that was taken away from Indigenous peoples. At the same time, the very idea of a grand purpose is something that goes beyond his worldview. In a documentary directed by Fernando Arias in 2014, shown at an exhibition at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in the UK in 2020, the Indigenous artist gave the best response when asked about what his drawings mean to him: “Well, nothing. I only show a simple image.”

Similarly, writer and activist Ailton Krenak reformulates the best-known Biblical phrase about the origin of the world in his most recent book, *Futuro Ancestral* (Ancestral Future, 2022), by stating: “In reverse, we could say that in the beginning there was the leaf. Other narratives will say that in the beginning there was the word.”

If the plant kingdom has its own vocabulary, we should say that Abel Rodríguez is merely a translator of what plants mean. And often they may not mean anything.

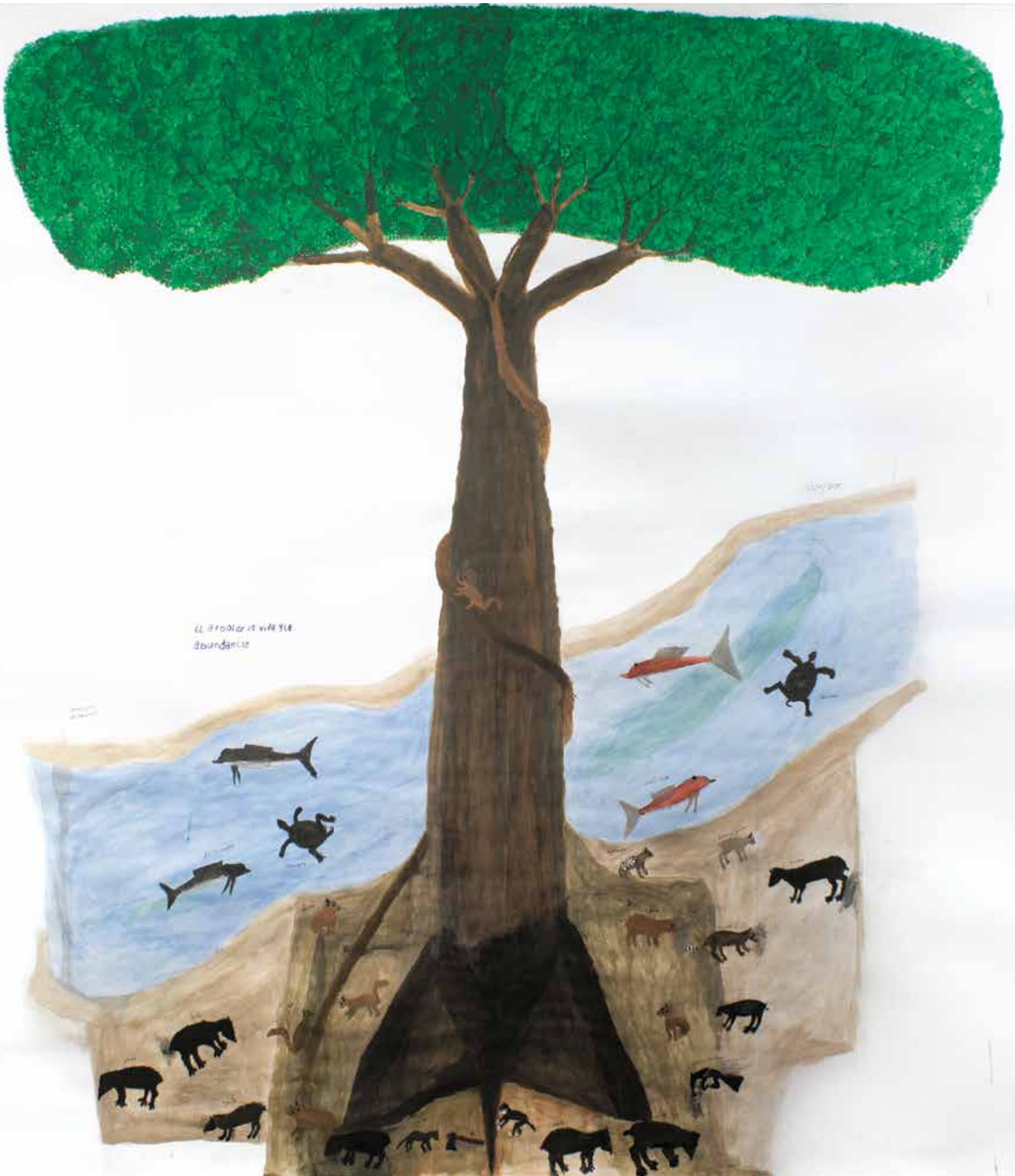
Abel Rodríguez is an elder visual artist of the Nonuya people and a deep connoisseur of plants and ecological systems of the Amazon Basin. He was born in 1944 in Cahuinarí, in the Colombian Amazon, and has been living in Bogotá since the 2000s.

Nathalia Lavigne is a researcher, curator, and writer about contemporary art and culture. She lives between São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Berlin.

Translation: Sara Hanaburgh

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Abel Rodríguez, *El árbol de la vida y la abundancia*, 2022, Tinta sobre papel / Tinta sobre papel, 591/2 x 59 pol., 151 x 150 cm. Cortesía do artista e do Instituto de Visión. / Abel Rodríguez, *El árbol de la vida y la abundancia*, 2022, Ink on paper / Tinta sobre papel, 591/2 x 59 in., 151 x 150 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Instituto de Visión.



22. 2000 yılında
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- 2/38 ROSA CHÁVEZ
6 WILL FURTADO
10 MAE-LING LOKKO AND
EDNA BONHOMME
16 ETHEL TAVE
20 EDGAR KANAYKÕ AND
LORENA VICINI
24 V FOR 5
26 KOLEKTIF 2 DIMANSYON (K2D)
AND SERINE AHEFA MEKOUN
32 AMA JOSEPHINE BUDGE
40 SONIA ELIZABETH BARRETT
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52 ABEL RODRÍGUEZ AND
NATHALIA LAVIGNE

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