

Ministério do Turismo, Secretaria Municipal de Cultura e Pivô apresentam:

A
NATURAL
HISTORY
OF
RUINS

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Candice Lin
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Daniel Steegmann
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Elvira Espejo Ayca
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Janaina Wagner
Lina Mazonett e
David Quiroga
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max willà morais
Minia Biabiany
Paloma Bosquê
Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe

curadoria
Catalina Lozano

A NATURAL HISTORY OF RUINS is a group exhibition that explores different forms of resistance to the ways in which the hegemonic modern colonial imagery has captured our imagination. Drawing from diverse artistic practices, this exhibition seeks to offer opportunities to think about healing in what author Anna Tsing calls a “precarious survival”. It also attempts to address the implications of representation outside of language in order to explore other-than-human technologies and forms of intelligence.

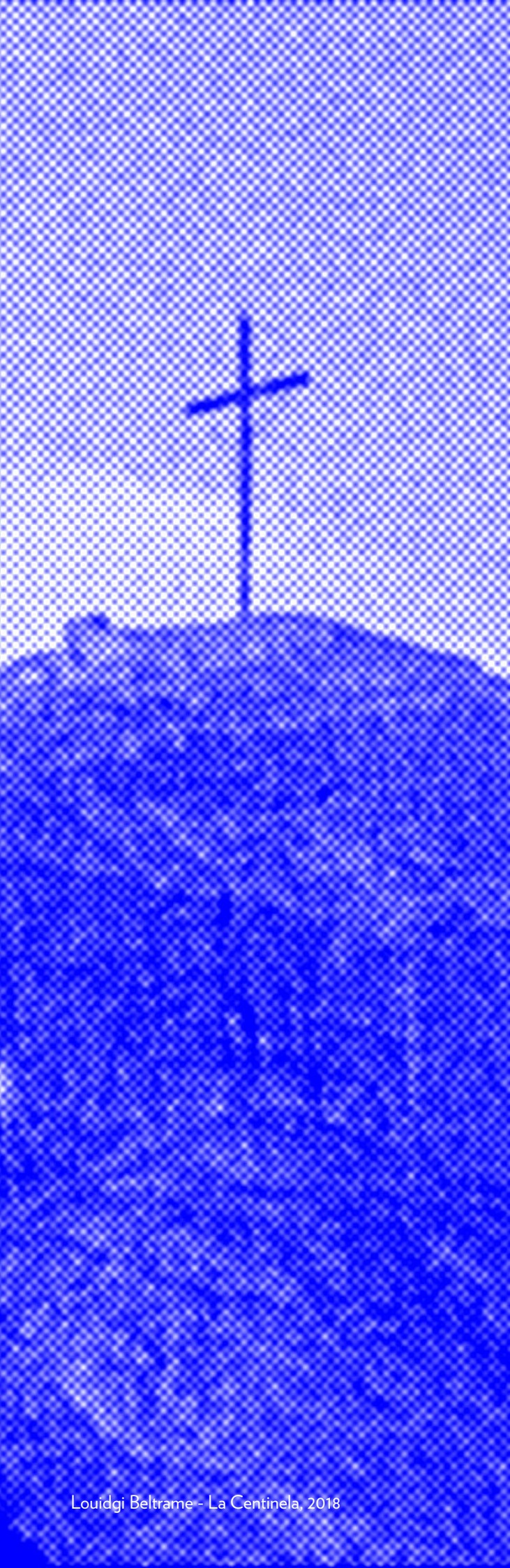
At the core of the exhibition there is a critique to the modern divide between nature and culture and its ontological implications. Through a series of historical processes, some humans separated themselves from nature and therefore fabricated it as a category¹. Colonial regimes spread this notion through education and exploitation, normalizing nature as a ‘resource’ at humans’ disposal. As ethnographer Marisol de la Cadena points out “rather than the denial of humanity, colonization might have required in the first place the imposition of humanity to the colonized – and this entailed specific ways of being person²” For instance naming can be an act of colonial violence as pointed by Davi Kopenawa when he describes how white people arrived in the forest and distributed names to the Yanomami, imposing a (colonial, univocal) way of being person. In his book *How Forests Think*, Eduardo Kohn proposes to “neither to do away with the human nor to reinscribe it but to open it³.” It is perhaps through this opening of categories how we can speculate on how non-human persons might participate in disturbing anthropocentric interpretations of extinction.

A Natural History of Ruins wants to think about the representation of “nature” as much as it needs to rethink the nature of representation. Donna Haraway appropriately has sought to answer “what gets to count as nature, for whom and when, and how much it costs to produce nature at a particular moment in history for a particular group of people.” She thus recognizes the historically situated processes and semiotic operations needed to, not only normalize nature as a co-

1 In this sense, we acknowledge ‘nature’ as a cultural category.

2 Marisol de la Cadena, “Earth-beings: Andean indigenous religion, but not only,” in Keiichi Omura, Grant Jun Otsuki, Shiho Satsuka, Atsuro Morita (Eds.), *The World Multiple: The Quotidian Politics of Knowing and Generating Entangled Worlds* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2019), p. 30.

3 Eduardo Kohn. *How Forests Think: Towards an Anthropology beyond the Human* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2013), p. 6.



lonial, imperial category, but also to produce and reproduce the category of the “universal man⁴” as a dominant one. The notion of nature originally derived from the verb “to be born”, that is to say, from the generation and experience of life, unlike the modern definition of it as “all things inhuman”, which implies an almost antagonistic relation based on a Christian binary division of soul and body that would be later secularized in European modernity as reason and body. By recognizing the genealogy of the word, we can perhaps imagine and perform something other than an anthropocentric, humanist morality. Furthermore is largely through the knowledge and ecological practices of Indigenous peoples that these functioning colonial categories have been productively challenged.

The transformation of “natural history” museums into “natural science” ones seems to suggest a rhetorical shift “history” as a narrative exercise to “science” as disinterested, objective observation that achieves the full separation of subjects (humans) from objects (non-human, other-than-human, but also human persons subjected to scientific research). In the process, history is politically neutralized, Western science devoid of the racism at the core of its foundation. By opening up

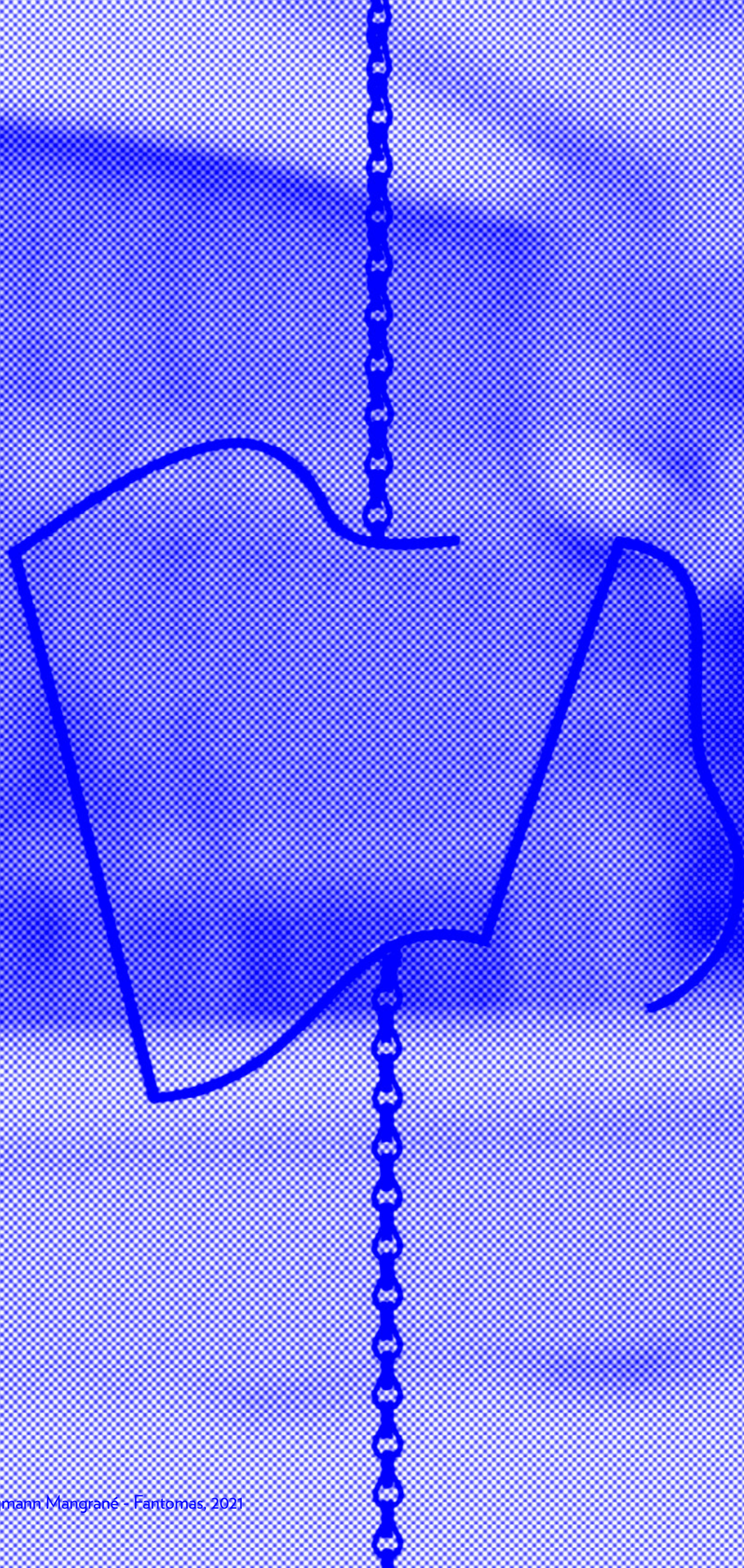
4 Donna Haraway Reads ‘The National Geographic’ on Primates (Paper Tiger TV, 1987). Available at <https://vimeo.com/123872208>

dominant definitions of technology to include some that are not inherently attached to the Western notion of progress, art can lead towards a world of multiplicities where the centrality of the reality created by colonization can be finally unveiled as a brutal, yet efficacious construction bound towards an ill-fated image of progress. For Isabelle Stengers “ecology is the science of multiplicities, of motley casualties and of non-intentional creations of meaning⁵”, a definition that evokes certain immanence of experience, that is to say, an unprescribed engagement with reality. Ailton Krenak defines it as “being inside the earth, within nature. Ecology is not you adapting nature to your will. It is you being inside the will of nature”⁶. In this way, the environmental ruins produced in the present can be partially considered as the projections of a modernist unconscious.

The artists included in the exhibition tackle the brutality of modern binary categories and practices in order to show in different ways how things are entangled and in the words of artist max willà morais “to dance with the violence of the world.”

5 Isabelle Stengers, *La guerre des sciences* (Paris y Le Plessis-Robinson: La Découverte/Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 1996), p. 61-62. Author’s translation.

6 Ailton Krenak and Maurício Meirelles, “Our Worlds are at War,” (e-flux journal No. 110, June 2020), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/110/335038/our-worlds-are-at-war/>



CANDICE LIN

Candice Lin (Concord, USA, 1979) lives and works in Los Angeles. Lin works with installation, drawing, video, and living materials and processes. She interrogates the ways in which histories of power and marginality are inscribed into bodies and into the natural world, stressing the entanglements that compose them. She often creates sculptural environments that breathe, seep, ferment, and decay, working with an arsenal of sculptural forms that include finely crafted objects, organisms such as plants, insects, bacteria, and natural compounds. She received her MFA in New Genres at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2004 and her double BA in Visual Arts and Art Semiotics at Brown University in 2001.

CRISTIANO LENHARDT

Cristiano Lenhardt (Itaara, Brazil, 1975) lives and works in Recife, Brazil. Lenhardt explores the narratives that intertwine pop culture and mass culture, the construction of myths and legends and a reflection on the ways that human beings, animals and objects relate to one another. His practice does not privilege one medium above another but rather encompasses film, performance, installation, sculpture, photography, drawing and engraving. The artist creates pieces that reference different sources, including folklore, art history, fantastical literature and science fiction, letting his research be guided not by pre-established concept but by a series of exercises in writing, drawing and the manipulation of materials of different origins – found items, both organic and inorganic, discarded elements, raw materials that come from other objects – which are gradually shaped, assembled, folded and brought to life.

DANIEL STEEGMANN MANGRANÉ

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané (Barcelona, Spain, 1977) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. His work often examines the hazy area that exists between strictly oppositional notions in Western culture, such as culture and nature, subject and object, reality and reverie, seen and hidden. The artist frequently pairs diverse elements such as the natural with the artificial, or places them in alien environments. In doing so, the artist fabricates situations where predetermined hierarchies bow out and the boundaries of seemingly inverse things dissolve to provide new vistas of middle grounds. His practice encompasses a wide range of media, including film, sculpture, sound, gardens and drawing, focusing on the creation and migration of forms between nature, art and architecture. The artist is particularly interested in biological and morphogenetic processes, which he uses as inspiration for the creation of works that, responding to self-imposed systems of chance and rule-based principles of composition, undermine the boundaries between organic and man-made aesthetics and the traditional separations between objects and subjects.

DAVID BESTUÉ

David Bestué (Barcelona, Spain, 1980) lives and works in Barcelona. Bestué is an artist and writer interested in the relationship between text, sculpture and architecture. His practice experiments with ideas taken from poetry, art history and architecture, testing out how far they can be pushed both literally and conceptually. By making small changes to public and domestic scenarios,

his works create situations that question our conventions of behavior, and seek to establish temporary, fragile links between permanent forms and the presence of transient elements, both human and inanimate in the space.

DENILSON BANIWA

Denilson Baniwa (Barcelos, Brazil, 1984) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. The works of Denilson Baniwa portray his experience as an indigenous Being today, mixing traditional and contemporary indigenous references and appropriating western icons to communicate the thinking and struggle of the native peoples. His practice includes different supports and media such as canvas, installations, digital media and performance. As an activist for the rights of indigenous peoples, since 2015 he has given lectures, workshops and courses in the south and southeast regions of Brazil and also in Bahia. Baniwa often appropriates Western cultural references to decolonise them in his work; he is known for questioning paradigms and opening ways for Indigenous people in national territories to be the protagonists of their own stories.

ELVIRA ESPEJO AYCA

Elvira Espejo Ayca (Ayllu Qaqachaca, Bolivia, 1981) is a visual artist, weaver and narrator of the tradition of her hometown in Avaroa province, Oruro. An Aymara and Quechua speaker, she is the co-author of several publications, including *Hilos sueltos: Los Andes desde el textil* (2007), *Ciencia de las Mujeres* (2010), *Ciencia de Tejer en los Andes: Estructuras y técnicas de faz de urdimbre* (2012) and *El Textil Tridimensional: El Tejido como Objeto y como Sujeto* (2013).



She was the director of the Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore in La Paz, Bolivia between 2013 and 2020, and she was granted the Eduardo Avaroa Award in the Arts, Specialty Native Textiles, in 2013.

ISUMA

Isuma, meaning 'to think,' is a collective of Inuit-owned related companies based since 1990 in Igloolik, Nunavut with a southern office in Montreal. In January 1990 four partners Zacharias Kunuk, Paul Apak, Pauloosie Qulitalik and Norman Cohn incorporated Igloolik Isuma Productions Inc. to produce and distribute independent Inuit-language films and media art from an Inuit point of view, featuring local actors recreating Inuit life in the Igloolik region in the 1930s and 1940s. Over the next ten years Isuma helped establish an Inuit media arts centre, NITV; a youth media and circus group, Artcirq; and a women's video collective, Arnait Video Productions. In 2001, Isuma's first feature-length drama, *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, won the Camera d'or at the Cannes Film Festival; Isuma's second feature, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, opened the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival. In 2004 Isuma incorporated Isuma Distribution International and in 2008 launched IsumaTV www.isuma.tv, the world's first website for Indigenous media art now showing over 7,000 films and videos in 84 languages. Isuma's 30-year media art project represented Canada at the 2019 Venice Biennale with its newest feature, *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk*, which then screened at the Toronto International Film Festival and won Best Canadian Film at the 2019 Vancouver International Film Festival.

JANAINA WAGNER

Janaina Wagner (São Paulo, Brazil, 1989) lives and works between Roubaix and São Paulo. Her research explores how human beings attempt to control their environment, mainly through civilizing processes aimed at the domination of nature, ignoring its own fragility and finitude. Her practice encompasses a wide range of media, including installations, video, photography, drawing, painting and stage design. Many of Wagner's references derive from the procedures through which mankind registers and articulates its progress and legacy. Having studied both Fine Arts and Journalism, she approaches and questions the mechanisms that validate a story as a true one – looking closely at each constellation of tales, facts and images. Wagner develops her plastic work in a “decoupage” process, rearticulating images and texts that are already inserted in media circulation. She is currently pursuing her Phd at Le Fresnoy-Studio National des Arts Contemporains in partnership with Centre d'Étude des Arts Contemporains (Le CEAC) at the Université de Lille.

LINA MAZENETT & DAVID QUIROGA

Lina Mazenett (Bogota, Colombia, 1989) & David Quiroga (Bogota, Colombia, 1985) live and work in Bogota. In their projects, the duo explore the interrelationship between organisms and the misnamed “resources” of the environment, their distribution and resignification through culture. The artists reflect on the temporality, origin, and symbolism of some fundamental elements of the world economy, such as various minerals



and oil products that are very present in our daily lives, connecting humans with remote geological times. Their practice encompasses a wide range of mediums and is inspired by a dialogue between the mythology of Amazonian people and certain fields of western science such as geology, astronomy, and economy. Through their work they try to reconnect ordinary and everyday elements with ancient knowledge and mythical time.

LOUIDGI BELTRAME

Louidgi Beltrame (Marseille, France, 1971) lives and works in Mulhouse, France. His work is based on documenting modes of human organization throughout the history of the 20th century. He often travels to sites defined by a paradigmatic relationship to modernity: Hiroshima, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Chandigarh, Tchernobyl or the mining colony of Gunkanjima, over the sea off Nagasaki. His films – based on the recording of reality and the constitution of an archive – appeal to fiction as a possible way to consider History. More recently, his projects brought him to archeological sites in the Peruvian coastal desert: El Brujo, Moche culture ruins and the Nazca Lines that he connected respectively with the history of French “New Wave” cinema and American Land art of the 70’s. In 2018 he completed Mesa curandera, a collaborative project with José Levis Picón, a Peruvian Shaman whom he met in 2015.

MAX WÍLLÀ MORAIS

max wíllà morais (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1993) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Artist and writer, she studied Visual Arts at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (2016) and is currently a master’s student in Education at the

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (2019-2021). She is a fellow at the School of Visual Arts at Parque Lage studying mediation (2014) and a scholar in the Formation and Deformation Program (2019-2020). His works of drawing, photography, sewing and performance mobilize stories and geographies, as well as the material and immaterial relations with the world and things. The artist also investigates the visible and invisible experiences of the black diaspora taking both familiar and unusual encounters as starting points.

MINIA BIABIANY

Minia Biabiany (Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, 1988) lives and works in Guadeloupe. In her practice, she investigates the perception of space, the paradigms of weaving and the concept of opacity in storytelling and language. She deconstructs narratives through installations, videos and drawings and builds ephemeral poetic forms as a way to dialogue with colonial realities. She founded the artistic and pedagogical collective project Semillero Caribe in 2016 in Mexico City and she continues to explore the deconstruction of narratives with the body and concepts from Caribbean authors with her experimental pedagogical platform, Doukou.

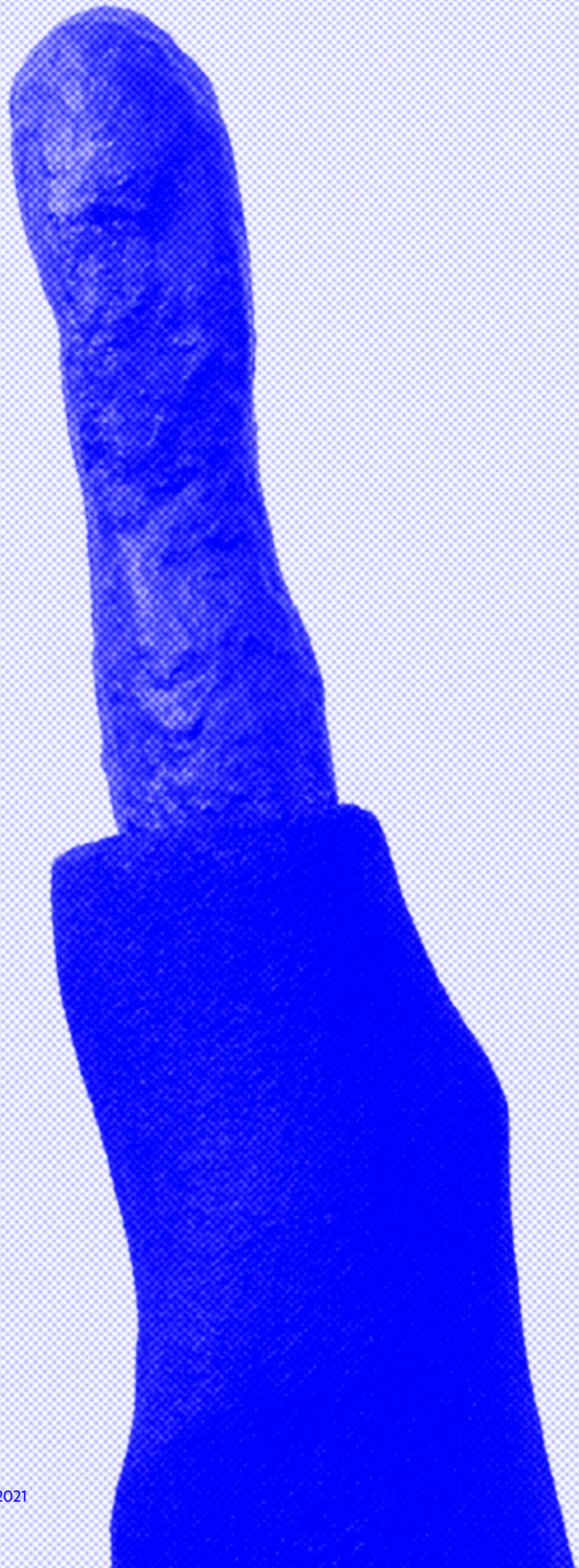
PALOMA BOSQUÊ

Paloma Bosquê (Garça, Brazil, 1982) lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. The research of Bosquê draws largely on her daily practice in the studio where she manipulates and freely associates materials that are not typical of sculpture, creating compositions of varying formats and scales. In a constant search for a possible and consensual balance between her

selected elements, the artist often develops specific methods to combine, juxtapose and merge materials without ever forcing them to a definitive interaction. Brass, felt, bronze, coal, gum rosin, bee's wax, beef casing, craft paper, coffee sieves and wool are used indiscriminately by the artist. She is less concerned with the origins or potential symbolic value of each of the items than with their physical presence. Experimenting with the texture, weight and balance of her materials, Bosquê creates extremely delicate visual landscapes that explore the transience of matter and impermanence. Her works remind us of the fragility of the agreements that hold together everything we consider permanent or definitive.

SHEROANAWÉ HAKIHIIWE

Sheroanawé Hakihiiwe (Sheroana, Venezuela, 1971) lives and works in Pori Pori, Yanomami community in El Alto Orinoco, Venezuela. Since the 90s, Sheroanawé Hakihiiwe has been developing a practice aimed at rescuing the oral memory of his people, their cosmogony and ancestral traditions including the craft of paper making, the edition of books prepared with his community, and more recently drawing as a tool to represent them. His experience in the field of creation began in 1992 when he learnt to make handmade paper with native fibers such as Shiki or Abaca, under the tutelage of Mexican artist Laura Anderson Barbata. Together they would found the Yanomami Owëmamotima community project (The Yanomami art of play paper), a pioneering and self-sustaining initiative from which the first handmade books have been published to date – written and illustrated – from a collective community experience.



EXHIBITION'S TEAM

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Miguel Freitas

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SPECIAL THANKS:

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A NATURAL HISTORY OF RUINS

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