

With colectivo amasijo (Mexico), Mujeres Creando (Bolivia), and Grupo Nzinga (Brazil), and undertaken as part of the Research Grant for Latin American Curators provided to Catarina Duncan by the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Research Institute for the Study of Art from Latin America at MoMA.



Territorial Reconnections

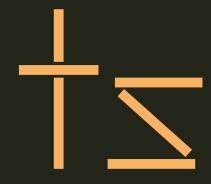
by Catarina Duncan

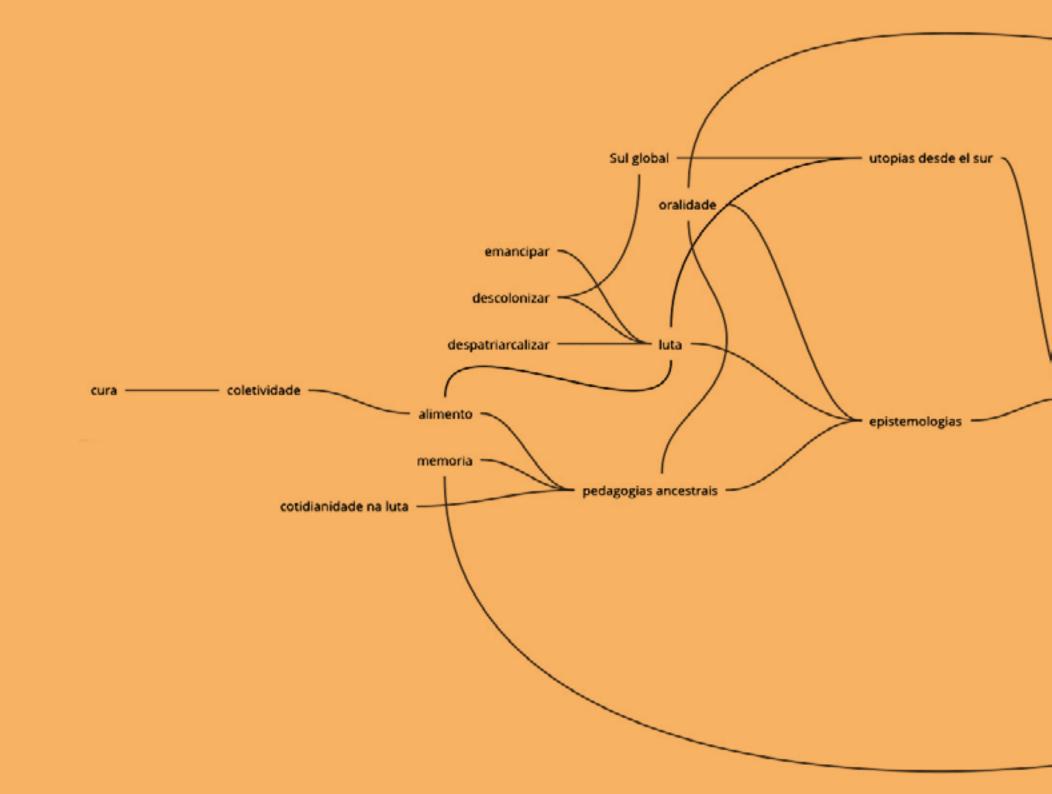


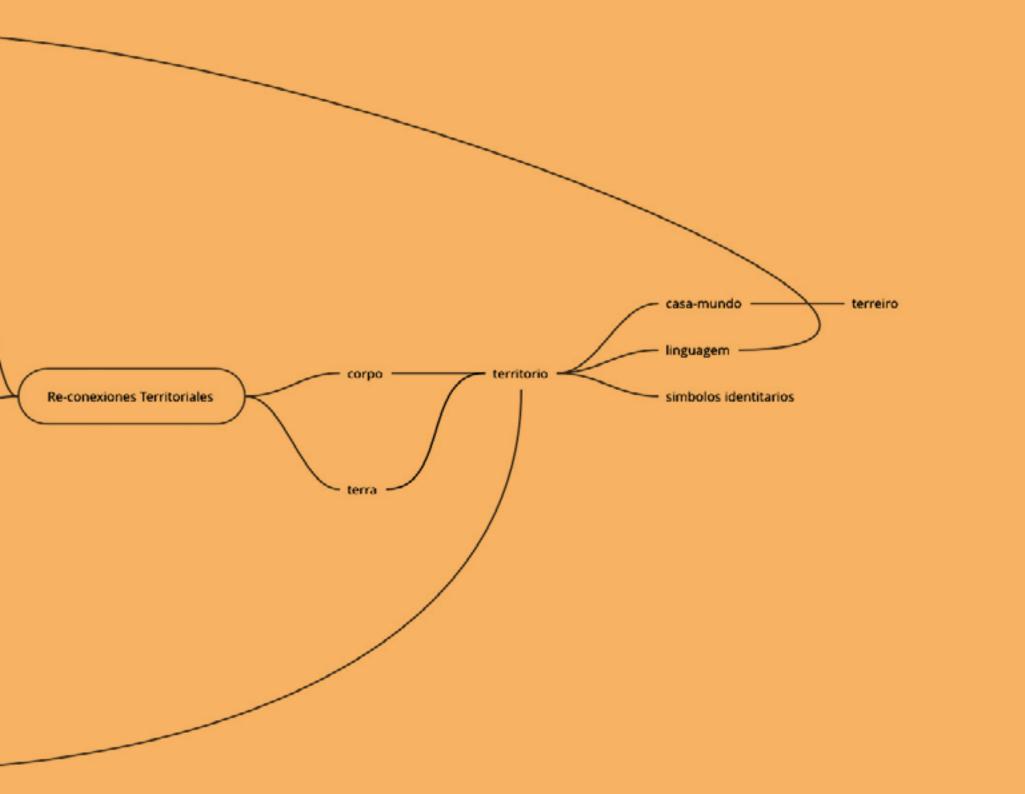












TP _ -RI TORIAL **PP** -CONNEC-TIONS

Catarina Duncan

Territorial Reconnections is an extended, ongoing encounter between artists and community leaders who are members of collectives led by women from different Latin American territories. Proposed in the context of a research grant for Latin American curators from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Research Institute for the Study of Art from Latin America at The Museum of Modern Art, the project brought together three collectives: colectivo amasijo, from Mexico; Mujeres Creando, from

Bolivia; and Grupo Nzinga, from Brazil. Participants did not know one another prior to the development of this project; our meetings, which took place between April and September 2021, were mostly held online because of the pandemic. Together, through these encounters, we built a safe space for exchange, recognition, and mutual support in which to reflect on the artistic and cultural production of women in non-hegemonic territories.

Apart from being activists and in art collectives, the participants in "Territorial Reconnections" are also members of communities. The mutual support these relationships engender clearly reflects how art and resistance are everyday practices. These collectives are made up of women of different social classes, with broad trajectories of struggle, who have dedicated their lives to a common practice—whether it be teaching

or participating in the ethic of community or the fight for the rights of autonomy and management of informal spaces for education, reception, and sharing. Women such as Emiliana Quispe from Mujeres Creando, Mama Elena from colectivo amasijo, and Mestra Zulene Galdino from Grupo Nzinga are important figures in the development of feminist actions and the construction of our dialogue.

Faced with the need to establish less vertical modes of articulation for curatorial investigations, we created our own research methodologies. Overcoming distance as well as cultural and linguistic barriers, we strove to better understand how we might invent ways of being together, sharing knowledge, and reconnecting with the earth through art, sustainability, dance, rituals, cooking, and healing processes. In

this sense, we adopted an investigative dynamic, with each collective organizing an encounter that would provide a moment of approximation in which it would be possible for participants to get to know each other better. After a few meetings, we arrived at a

format that enabled us to cook and eat with one another, share perspectives on our contexts, and exchange

tools for collective practices—as well as to recognize these actions within an artistic, intellectu-

al, and academic field.

In this publication, we present our investigation in sections. Each section begins and ends with a chant from members of the collective community, without following specific chronologies or drawing conclusions. Here, we offer a series of keys for accessing our encounters and for sharing quotations, references, recipes, images, and the complete record of research that occurred through orality, affection, and mutual care. The thoughts, gestures, flavors, and knowledge gathered here evoke the power of celebration, of doing something together, of paying tribute to our ancestors and those vet to come.

Each collective and territory has its own particularities. The colectivo amasijo is principally present in rural areas; Mujeres Creando is responsible for an urban experiment; and Grupo Nzinga is located in the Cariri, the hinterland of the state of Ceará, in northeastern Brazil. One path is

completely different from another, as are the territories we inhabit, which is why we not only seek resemblances, but also to know our differences.

We belong to the earth and to the cultural territories we inhabit. Nevertheless. how can we speak from the spaces in which we live? In this case, territories must be understood as totalities, not as units. The political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental problems that permeate our experiences are in constant conflict and negotiation. We find commonality in the lack of structural support, in the precariousness of artistic practice, in the ongoing ecocide, in the need to fulfill social functions far beyond our scope. Each territory is built upon the interactions created within it. How can we connect to our territories? How can we create a feminist research methodology? How can care surpass our artistic practices and interests? These are a few of the questions that emerged during our research process.

We seek to follow trajectories, personal experience, and collective practices—spaces of memory and culture. We have access to a rich field of investigation, knowledge, and fruition of women of various generations. By means of this process, as we met, we came to know ourselves better. Given a common history of colonial violence and patriarchal oppression, we and the women who came before us have resisted, bent hegemonic structures, and shared practices from generation to generation, from enchanted beings to incarnated ancestors.

SPACE = ◇F MEMORY

We conceived our research as a tool for exercising the collectivity necessary to build worlds from the rescue of memory—for engaging in a practice of liveliness, connection, and sharing. We understand that after centuries of being demeaned by science, disregarded by erudite art, and excluded from power systems, the knowledge of healers, of the people from the land, and sorority are very much alive. Valuing this ancestral knowledge with recognition, financial sup-

> one of the purposes of this project, as is the lifetime dedication to feminist resistance practiced by each participant.

In her text "'Universal Education' in Art and Its Painful Divisions." Bolivian artist and curator Elvira Espejo Ayca speaks of a struc-

ture that separates everyday and ancestral knowledge from modern or erudite practices. For Ayca, this structure manifests itself in a "handicraft and art, the latter being considered a refined, static, and intellectualised pleasure in exclusive

terms, according to the model of subjective contemplation.... These aesthetics, grounded in distance and disinterest, separate contemplation from the action of doing or praxis; positioning legitimated high art in opposition to popular handicrafts, undermining plurality by failing to understand the communitarian logics of our peoples in Latin America. These dynamics of separation or hierarchisation have been replicated and applied to all artistic formations in Latin American countries, advancing a universal history of culture through a pyramidal, unified and whitened."1

Contrary to these dynamics, colectivo amasijo, Mujeres Creando, and Grupo Nzinga -all led by women who have dedicated their lives to collective identity—work side by side with members of their communities and territories. Based between Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Mexico City, colectivo amasijo is made up of seven women who meet to tamalear (make tamales) and cook together. Aware of the origin of their food and the knowledge of women close to the land, they gather to prepare meals, and in so doing, take care of themselves, their relationships, and the territory of everyday life. This practice thus affirms the need to de-hierarchize knowledge and values doings as ways of learning.

Mujeres Creando has been active since the 1990s in La Paz and Santa Cruz de la Sierra. where the collective is engaged in thinking

about everyday issues in activism as a way of accessing other strategies of struggle and in ensuring sustainable approaches to their practices. In their work, they deal with related questions: How can we feed memory spaces in asymmetric conditions? How can we interrupt the logics of scarcity and abundance that are continually replicated in our structures? To do so, they think collaboratively and within a network—a practice inseparable from their contexts and subjects-making their research an exercise in joint learning that leads to the understanding that we are not isolated subjects and that memories resist through their collectivity.

Finally, in working with memory,
Grupo Nzinga articulates spaces for
meeting and researching collective memories, popular traditions, and the production
of contemporary visual arts by Afro-Indigenous women. The collective is located at
the Universidade Regional do Cariri (URCA).
Though there are many historical, political,
and colonial influences that propagate the
imagery of this region as a place of aridity,
Nzinga evidences that what is most often
found there is, in fact, the opposite: fertility,
technologies of resistance, abundance.

It is common in the Cariri region for people to refer to the houses of masters (elder men and women dedicated to teaching and sharing their knowledge of dance, artifacts, and healing) as "organic museums" and to the masters themselves as "living libraries" or "living treasures." Personal objects, photographs, clothes, instruments, and everything that marks the elders' daily lives and composes the traditional manifesta-

tions of their culture are presented in their homes. These designations complement their memories and lifelong dedication to their communities. Such spaces, which do not receive public funding for their maintenance, are taken here as models for reflection on living memory, provoking us to rethink ideas of conservation and displacement rooted in the museology of the West.



II -F□∠D⇔ IN TIME

"Territorial Reconnections" arises from a desire to work collectively with Latin American women and from the possibilities of connecting to the land through artistic practices. After several months, I understood that engaging in such a project meant going against all the predictions of a historical and hegemonic perspective on what art is. We needed to forge territories in which we exist as protagonists and to narrate from our nonlinear perspectives, which have not always been recognized. To collectivize ourselves, therefore, is to overturn those patriar-chal rules that propose a unique way

of telling the history of art, to feed a continuous process of resistance that begins with the way we experience time, memory, and movement.

For centuries,
Western men
equated "territories" with "property"
and "power." In this
quest to control and
extract the maximum
from nature, ancestral

memories have been inter-

rupted, rights kidnapped, and the knowledge of the land hidden, subordinating the environment to the logic of capital. What this arrogant epistemology misunderstood is that the act of devastating the earth, of devastating diversity, is also devastating the chances of life, including humankind's own possibilities for survival.

Moreover, continuous epistemic genocide has suppressed traditional medicine, connection to lunar cycles, family crops, rituals, and self-sustaining communities. But this interrupted knowledge has been safeguarded and practiced for centuries by women blazing trails with technologies of memory, of reinvention, and of oral traditions. These technologies, in turn, operate a temporality different from that produced by the modern Western conception of linear time. It is a temporality defined in spirals—an exercise of imagination that breaks with sequential

forms of thought typical of modernity,

> as formulated by Brazilian theorist and poet Leda Maria Martins.

In the book
Performances
do tempo espiralar, poéticas
do corpo-tela
(Performances of
Spiral Time, BodyScreen Poetics),
Martins explains that

"ancestry is the basic prin-

ciple and the greatest foundation that structures the entire circulation of vital energy . . . in narrative and poetic textures, in dance, in music, in sculpture and in the art of masks, in body games, in the dances of Maracatu, Jongo, Samba, Capoeira, religious systems, models of social organization, modes of relationship between subjects and between the human and the cosmos and, in particular, in the spiraling concept of time."²

With this in mind, each group has been responsible for conducting one of the encounters we had together. We organized seminars, meetings, and conversations, but we also created, as a group, a series of rituals in which new temporalities were established. To this end, Mujeres Creando proposed conversations on artistic interventions, food sovereignty, and collective sustainability. Grupo Nzinga, beginning with the concept of terreiro (backyard, but also ritual space) as a house for another world, organized meetings with masters of popular culture, artists, representatives of the Black movement, spiritual healers, and specialists in herbs—women who practice ecology, feminism, and community service as living practices. And colectivo amasijo organized a fandango, a community practice in rural regions of Mexico and other Latin American countries, in the Tuxtlas of Veracruz that includes dance, music, and a party. The women of the collective prepared several typical harvest dishes and, at the end, made an offering to the women of the land, in a celebration in which the local community also participated.

In these meetings, we exercised presence and honored the time of the land, of the backyards and patios—a time in which haste is not invited. From the subjectivities, from the hands folding the leaves of tamales, from the sharing of a life trajectory or a blessing, we approached political understandings about time and the strength of our hands, which move the world.

We also learned from Mexican researcher and feminist thinker Gloria Anzaldúa, who wrote: "I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. Soy un amasamiento, I am an act of kneading, of uniting, and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings."

At the same time, visual artist and Grupo Nzinga member Maria Macêdo, told me that those who cultivate the land know the secret of time, which is a reminder that we cannot relate to environmental issues if we do not take into account the countless people, plants, and other beings that have resisted and still resist extermination and colonial oppression. In other words, we need to be able to imagine other ways of relating to the land and time. Only in this way will time be on our side, leaning toward ancestry and transformation.

Women are constantly invited to perform historically in certain ways, to respond to external demands, to account for structures that suppress our subjectivities. Resisting the time of capital is being far from linearities. undertaking a spiral flow of time, understanding that nothing must be given as certain. In this sense. "Territorial Reconnections" has been a space for the questioning and practice of this other value system, and to connect with this project, it is fundamental to turn our backs to the future of progress and to return to the time of the earth.

III MOVEMENT A\$\rightarrow \text{PRINCIPLE}

Spirituality is a process for recognizing the entanglements that compose our relationships in the world. When I mention that we are not alone, I am not only thinking of being together as collectivities or as Latin American women, I am also considering that everything that unites us to produce this research is likewise alive as memory, as movement. We are speaking of territories in dispute, of a struggle for physical, subjective, spiritual, and political territories. When we guarantee our lands, our yards, our homes, we are demarcating spaces for territorial reconnections. These are spaces in which we can exercise our time and our memories, and be in motion with one another. These are spaces where children are heard and women are in command, where chickens and cats share food. where we can imagine and be other worlds.

The idea of "Territorial Reconnections" bestows meaning upon these collectives and spaces. When we speak of our territories, we speak of the spaces we defend beyond borders, states, countries, or any colonial demarcation. We are more than Latin American; we are more than women. Creativity is also a territory in dispute. Who could imagine it? Who is being forced into displacement? Who possesses their own movements?

Throughout the process, we moved together. From Mestra Zulene, we learned the Maniero Pau dance steps and songs, in which one of the verses repeats political statements including, "When Brazil knows us, Brazil will change"; from Rosi, we learned fandango steps, with each song and rhythm dedicated to a local animal, proof of the people's anthropomorphic relationship to the earth. These examples evoke movement as a principle of deceleration, which might seem contradictory, but it is crucial that we move in a circle, or toward one another, and not in a linear path on an endless road. When we dance together in a circle, we are changing time, we are remembering how to be a parrot or a snake, we are singing for our rights.

The artistic practices in question here are not present in museological spaces; they do not fit in galleries because they

are not objectified. They are ways of living artistically, and such practices are not separate from life. If we want to find ourselves, to exist in a more ecological projection, we must unlearn, return, and find spaces in which to create resistance and to avoid structures that make us sick.

There is a deep-rooted cultural formation in the lives of Latin American communities that may be identified by means of movement, possibly the most important principle for cultural identity in these contexts. To resume it, we must relearn how to be nature, how to connect with others—not just humans—and to move continuously toward ancestry. Leda Maria Martins writes, "Among several other forms of expression, the ritual performances, in all their apparatus, offer us a rich field of investigation and knowledge, turning visible the processes of displacement and surrogation which, acting as supplements, seek to make up for the lacks and gaps of the cultures and of the subjects that reinvented themselves in new territories, dramatizing the pendular relation between memory and oblivion, origin and loss."⁴

We move toward ancestralities in a continuous act of movement, no place to begin, no place to end, synchronized to an ever-present temporality. After months of sharing, digesting, co-creating, and active listening, I am certain that we are circulating other possibilities of being together, of learning from the heart, of allowing ourselves to feel. In our encounters, Mujeres Creando stresses that "todo está por hacer" (everything is yet to be done).

Creditz

Photographs on pages 6 to 13 provided by the three collectives.

Notes

- 1. Elvira Espejo Ayca, "'Universal Education' in Art and Its Painful Divisions," Afterall Artschool (website), https://www.afterallartschool.org/essays/elvira-espejo-ayca/.
- 2. Leda Maria Martins, Performances do tempo espiralar, poéticas do corpo-tela (São Paulo: Cobogó, 2021), 62. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.
- 3. Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Consciencia de la Mestiza/ Towards a New Consciousness," in Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 102–3.
- 4. Leda Martins, "Performances of Spiral Time," in Performing Religion in the Americas: Media, Politics and Devotional Practices of the Twenty-First Century, ed. Alyshia Gálvez (London: Seagull Books, 2007), 64. Seagull Books, 2007, p.4.

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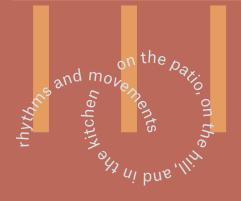
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My mother was a spark and my father a rruel ray who thundered like the one that rumbled in the stars When he sees the Prettiest flowers That will bloom again in May

Daughter of spark and lightning
Tell me who it could be





z hared CHCOUMTER

ancestral pedagogies

the moon

renewals

Oge Fyipantia and on Dona Guilhermina's Patio

We shall hold a fandango in the Tuxtlas in Veracruz.



Leti told us that the fandangos should be offerings to the earth, that promises are made to it, that fandangos are offered to bring our petitions to the earth. The fandango will be our offering for the wishes we have; we will ask for a fandango, and we will offer a fandango, a fandango that will reconnect us to the territory. A celebration of the earth's abundance that resists a system that teaches us accumulation, that resists with all our resources intent on celebration. We shall connect to cooking with our bodies; let us emulate the dances of the animal world, and let us sing of life that reemerges with the rains that fall around us. With the desire to reconquer the autonomy of our celebrations, leaving behind the model that controls and benefits from our leisure. Celebrations to generate and distribute abundance—the abundance of the earth.

for pictures of the encounters --->

https://youtu.be/HUw ysZWvtk

https://youtu.be/ug5esKakVrA

moment one

Introducing the pantry and the dishes

Time:

10 a.m., Tuxtla region time

Duration:

30 minutes

What we are going to do:

What had to happen in order for these foods to be on your table today?

The collective arranges the raw materials for their work in the form of an altar, so that in presenting what they are going to cook, they may honor all the systems that generate the ingredients that will be part of their cooking, as a way of paying tribute and recognizing all those involved in the process.

moment two

Cooking collectively and presenting our projects

Time:

10:30 a.m., Tuxtla region time

Duration:

30 minutes

What we are going to do:

How do we do what we do?

The collective kitchen generates a space of full presence that enables deep listening—listening that is anchored in the body as it cuts, plucks leaves, fries, or wraps, may be of use to integrate what is said by the others. In our practice, the tamaleo is a process that attunes participants to one frequency, a space for healing and transmitting important knowledge or family histories that result in food that celebrates the transition of all. As we cook in our bodily spaces, we hear ourselves, know ourselves, and are part of one another's projects.

moment three

Learning to dance, learning to sing

Time: 5:30 p.m., Tuxtla region time

Duration: 30 minutos

What we are going to do: How do we transform in coexistence? How do we articulate a common language?

Three colectivo amasijo members will teach the fandango's dance forms to the children of the community and of the other collectives. The musicians will tell us about how we articulated the verses and the forms of reading the environment in which we are.

moment four

Fandangoing

Time: 7 p.m., Tuxtla region time

Duration: 2 hours

What we are going to do: Which world do we wish to celebrate and create together?

Food is set up, guests are welcomed. Listening, dancing, singing, eating, and celebrating the life around us.

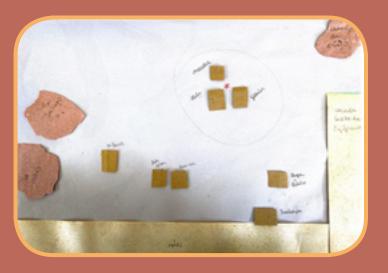








ReciPes. doings. and the conversations that took Place during the collective celebration







In the meeting proposed by colectivo amasijo, the patios are a place of great importance, given that the relationships with the land and the collective memories of the community are established there. The elaborate cartography, both in the huapango and in the producers' patios, presents the organization of spaces and actions so that the cooking process takes place collectively and is also a place of listening and celebration.

As amasijo points out, the kitchen is not just the kitchen.



As a child, Dona Rosa, Patricia's mother-in-law, watched her mother prepare the atole de pinole; she tells us that since then, she has learned to make it herself. Nowadays, Dona Rosa makes atole de pinole and alfajores for folk festivals. She herself goes to the mountains to pick the patololote leaves needed for the preparation.

Atole de Pinole

Ingredients

3 kg criolo corn ¼ kg cacao 30 pesos cinnamon 10 patololote leaves Honey

Preparation

Toast the corn, cacao, and cinnamon in an oven and then grind them together using a hand mill.

Plunge the milled ingredients in water and mix together with your hands.

Strain the mixture using a muslin cloth, and reserve the liquid.

Regrind whatever is left in the muslin cloth. Add water and mix. Strain the mixture and reserve the liquid.

Combine the reserved liquids in a clay pot and cook over low heat. Bring to a boil, then add the patololote leaves and honey to taste.

Conversing and coordinating the cooking

It was Dona Rosa who succeeded in distinguishing the seeds we had gathered from the river. She told us that when she was a girl, she very much liked gathering Pepetaca seeds and toasting them in the charcoal.

Protocol for serving atole de pinole at a fandango

The atole de pinole is served after guests have made themselves comfortable and drunk water. We serve it in clay jars, instead of in the plastic cups more commonly used now.

Patio of Hilaria Contreras

Dedicated to housework and to cultivating different types of plants and trees, Hilaria is an elderly woman who supports her family by selling what she collects and gathers in her yard: platanillo leaf, chilpaya pepper, soursop, and mango. The platanillo leaf is used for wrapping sweet tamales.

Patio of the Málaga Family

From a very early age, Don Pablo planted corn, and now, he and his family are local corn producers. His wife, Felipa, and their children help with sowing and harvesting; they plant three types of corn: white, red, and yellow. It is the first time the colectivo amasijo has bought their corn.

Purple Tamales

Ingredients

10 kg red corn

4 pineapples

4 coconuts

½ kg raisins

Honey to sweeten

Butter

Salt

30 platanillo leaves, cleaned with stems removed

300 platanillo leaves

Salt

Preparation

At least one day ahead, separate the purple corncobs from the white, and nixtamalize the corn.

The next day, grind the corn.

Mix together the fruit, honey, and butter. Add salt to taste.

Wrap the mixture in the platanillo leaves and steam for 1 1/2 hours.

Conversing and coordinating the cooking

It was decided to make three kinds of tamales: very sweet, semisweet, and savory. Huapangos are usually celebrated to thank the Virgin for something, as we do now, in celebration of women; many women of another religion were able to come and to help us.

Protocol

The tamales are put in paper bags and given to the guests to take home.



After the shared encounter and presentation of the fandango as an offering to the earth and to reconnections, the collective gathered to reflect upon what had taken place—including the strengthening, but also the gender violence that occurred during the exchanges. Choreography is a collective conversation about what can be imagined for another world.

Pablo: What do you want me to tape?

Sara: Everything.

Martina: A postapocalyptic world in which women are generating conditions for the emergence of life.

Sara: criando um novo ambiente para convivermos. não há comando, são todas.

Leti: It is the moment to cook, which is the way we express ourselves among all the others.

Alejandro: Tape what happened previously.

Carmen: A new anti-colonial world, the religion of the earth.

Sara: Living among women, the image of the Virgin represents us.

Carmen: One way of honoring women is to see the Virgin as a woman. The Virgin of Guadalupe is Mother Earth.

Martina: It's a fiction we invent for living together.

Sara: Women living together, each with her own collaboration.

Rosi: Record the plant harvest. We work with what the earth gives us. Record everything that is being done. Let it be clear that this is a group effort, from the way to build a fire to the nixtamal.

Sara: What we always say—coexist.

Martina: There is no alienation; everything is done from scratch, everything is part of it.

Leti: Let me tape the workshop.

Sara: The fun and thrill of dancing.

Leti: Nowadays this is being lost; no one wants to learn to dance.

Carmen: The project is called "Territorial Reconnections."

Rosi: That's what's happening; everything is reconnecting, because the sounds from here are the sounds of the earth.

Carmen: There was persecution during globalization—against profane sounds, sounds that sang to the earth. We are interested in the sounds sung by animals; animals are maestros.

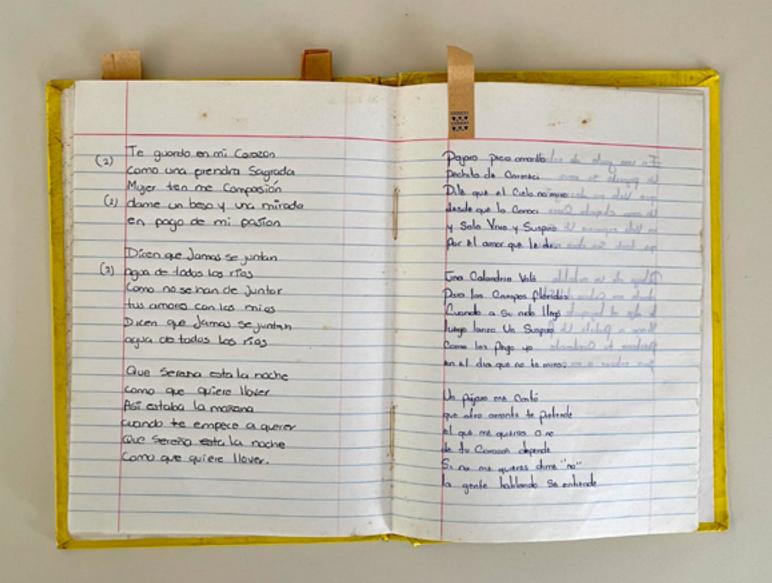
Rosalba: We want to sing loud for the voices that were silenced.

Rosi: We are going to tell another story, what is behind it, what is unseen.

Martina: A circular, spiral story with no beginning and no end, a story about a system in which everything is connected. A kitchen is more than a kitchen.

Carmen: The fandango is the result of a political organization made by women.

Rosalba: It is time to stop feeling alone, to fight collectively.



Images of Leti's notebook from fifteen days ago, notes, and songs with fragments of fandango processes and verses from the earth.

Farewell I say Soodbye I was thrilled to be here Thanks for the tamales With corn husks



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e, to L CHLOUNTER

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Interterritorial connections

I propose a meeting for direct and open dialogue, to be virtual among three members of Mujeres Creando with Grupo Nzinga and colectivo amasijo and the women responsible for the project; activity would begin at 4 p.m. Bolivia time and last between 90 minutes and 2 hours maximum.

I also invited two colleagues from the movement who possess a broad, pertinent, and specialized trajectory of political practice within Mujeres Creando; I thought of them specifically because of topics that we agreed were interesting and pertinent in order to explore more deeply the commonalities between collectives:

> • The everyday quality of the struggle • Supporting the struggle • Politics from the kitchen • Utopias from the South

We plan to meet for the first part of the tour of our home and follow with brief interventions from each member of Mujeres Creando; similarly, after each intervention, there will be an intermediate space in order to provide a dynamic encounter that is highly conducive to dialogue. After the tour and the interventions, we will open a space for deeper group discussion among all parts.

- Tour of Virgem dos Desejos → Intervention Julieta Ojeda
- Intervention Danitza Luna• Intervention Emiliana Quispe
- Space for deeper exploration and general discussion of the encounter

moment two

moment one

The everyday attributes of the struggle

The everyday attributes of the struggle, how to advance from self-affirmation, conviction, and reaction to the elaboration of strategies for keeping up the struggle, for supporting creativity and elaborating thinking and utopias from the South.

"Everyday life allows us to engage in an ongoing examination of our positions, this political practice, this method of relating them by making a vertical movement or a horizontal movement because we are anarchist feminists, and this is an ongoing question for us. This space allows each of us to ask: Am I classist? Am I racist? Am I becoming a bureaucrat? How are we going to bring about change in this society? Why do we do what we do? Am I building a vertical movement or a horizontal one?"

Supporting the struggle

I would like my companion Julieta Ojeda to give her own account of her views and positions on "Supporting the struggle," especially because of her lengthy, profound trajectory within Mujeres Creando. This could also be an opportunity for a brief tour of our home, La Virgen de los Deseos, in order to share a deeper approach to the everyday environment that surrounds and welcomes our struggle and our existence.

"For 15 years we have lived in different modalities. . . . From the outset, the proposition was to establish spaces that involved our companions, that become incorporated within Mujeres Creando because of a public commitment, in which the encounter between public and private is shaped."

Julieta Ojeda

moment three

Politics from the kitchen

Politics from the kitchen and food are subjects that Emiliana Quispe will be better able to speak about from firsthand experience. It would be useful to discuss directly with colectivo amasijo.

"One of the movement's ethical principles is not to establish hierarchies between the one who manages the house and the one who cooks, but rather to relate them horizontally."

Emiliana Quispe

moment four

Utopias from the South

Creativity and dispute within the field of the symbolic: In a very personal way, as Danitza Luna, I would like to make a small contribution to elaborating this question, for in the years I have belonged to Mujeres Creando, my work and academic background have led me to constant reflection about this field of struggle, a subject that would be interesting to share, especially with Grupo Nzinga.

"Feminism is not learned in books. Feminism is the presence of women in different geographical spaces, different historical times, and that is what unites us."

Danitza Luna











ReciPes. doings. and the conversations that took Place during the collective encounter

Chicha Morada

(boiled juice)

Ingredients

5 liters water

1 pound purple corn, dried and shucked

Slice of pineapple

One medium-size cinnamon stick, 30 grams

3 cloves

Sugar (to taste)

Diced green apples (optional)

Preparation

Boil corn, pineapple, cinnamon, cloves, and sugar in water for one hour over low heat until the water is the color of purple corn.

Let cool, and then chill and drink cold. Diced green apples may be added to the drink.

Protocol

Prepared especially during "All Saints," a feast held in November to honor the dead and to give to the hungry souls.

Croquettes. or quinoa torreias

Ingredients

½ kg quinoa

6 cups water

2 eggs

Salt (to taste) Pepper (to taste) Cumin (to taste)

150 grams fresh cheese, grated

1 cup wheat flour

1 cup oil

Garnish

Oca, sautéed potatoes, steamed broccoli, and carrot salad

Preparation

Wash the quinoa and then cook it in 6 cups water, in a pressure cooker, for about 25 minutes; if using a regular pot, cook for at least 1 hour, or until soft.

Put the cooked quinoa in a bowl, add the eggs, spices, grated cheese, and flour; mix and, if needed, add cold water until you obtain a creamy consistency.

Using a spoon, separate a portion and fry it on both sides in very hot oil.

Serve the torrejas with garnish.



Emiliana on PreParing Quinoa



End and beginning.





I have great Faith in God when I go fishing in the sea I see the tide come in and the little fish sol. Girl of the three girls, all three do I like well one more than the other, another more than anyone I stepped. I stepped. I stepped. I stepped. I stepped. I stepped. I want to see those steps

I spun. I spun. I spun. I spun. I spun.

I want to see it spin

Solilid a community the terreiro as world-home howledge managed Connection and presence Comprehension of knownsequence of knownsequence of keritage and operated by wor Beginning with comprehension as facilitated by the terreiros, effectively felt by feet that tread upon this floor, and based on renewal as acts of meeting, prayer, and shared food, we propose a renewal of the spirit of existence based on an affective exchange with Zulene Galdino, mestra of dances, such as the Lapinha and Quadrilhas, as well as female healer, and with Mestra Edite, creator of Coco da Batateira. Knowledge produced by women is among the driving forces behind Grupo Nzinga, and therefore, with this sharing, we want to bring other communities closer to the living trea-Homes as of the seams sures that fertilize the Cariri soil. Here, these women may sing and tell of their masteries, present their home as an organic museum, stroll together through the terreiro to learn a little about the sacred and the mystery that leads this knowledge to permeate generations while remaining pulsating and pungent. An encounter that has the added interest of promoting exchange between generations of women, based on the exchange with the musical group Cantando Marias, and of weighing the healing processes in which the masters and healers show us the power of curative plants.

the experiences that make up their narratives.

Sharing knowledge with Mestra Zulene Galdino and Mestra Edite to taste the flavors and

moment one

Trajectories will be shared by way of considering the origin of Grupo Nzinga's interests in tackling the narratives of invisibilized women.

Introducing the concept of the Organic Museum (Grupo Nzinga members) and Mediation by Mestra Zulene Galdino's Museu Orgânico, mediated by herself.

"This is the little grotto, and the children's little schoolhouse. Here is the library: People send us books and we organize it all. When I say little schoolhouse, I mean the place where children who can read teach other children."

Mestra Zulene

moment three

June Feast dishes made with organic foods.

"From hereon in, we must think about how we women can learn from these mestras, carry their legacy forward, and disseminate it through music, art, and nourishment. We must take it to other people, to other spheres, so that other women may also have access to the way these mestras have—to this day—kept building, the time they have been active, how long they have interacted with the community, the workings of this pedagogy of teaching [sic] they practice in communities."

Renata Felinto

moment two

Introduction to Mestra Zulene Galdino of the Festa Junina (June Feast) and Mestra Edite from Coco Batateira. Stroll through the mestra's terreiro to familiarize the others with the mestra's creative territory; listen and watch the mestra play her songs and compositions on the tambourine.

"Whenever I behold a mestra, I always see a doctor, a singer, a dance teacher, an educator. When it comes to science and knowledge, mestras are complete beings, for they carry with them universal knowledge of many places: from scientific knowledge to spiritual knowledge and social knowledge.

Fatinha Gomes

moment four

Cantando Marias as interlocution through music; to think of songs that could be sung along with Mestra Zulene and others, in which we can evoke the presence of other mestras.

"Cantando Marias's primary focus is to get to know a bit about the mestras' lives, taking into consideration the vastness of each of their worlds, in terms of knowledge, of trajectory, and of life span, and to translate that into a relationship between all of us, the diverse politics that are inspired by the lives of these mestras, and singing, bringing music as this space for celebration and also this space for militancy."

Maria Macêdo









ReciPes. doings. and the conversations that took place during the collective encounter

Mungunzá

(Leidiane Santos Pereira's recipe)

Ingredients

300 g varied feijoada meats

6 links Italian sausage

500 g tripe and belly

300 g torresmo

500 g corn for yellow mungunzá

500 g green beans

Ground black pepper (to taste)

Paprika (to taste)

Chopped garlic, onions, bell peppers, habanero-type peppers, parsley, scallions, and two

cubes of your favorite broth (to taste)

Preparation

Soak the salted meats overnight in water and salt.

Soak the mungunzá corn overnight.

On the next day, cook the corn until it softens.

In another pot, cook the beans with the meat. Set aside the torresmo.

When the corn and beans are cooked, put them in a larger pot. Add the torresmo, check saltiness, and add black pepper to taste.

Sauté garlic and onions, peppers, parsley, scallions and broth cubes. Add, to taste, to the larger pot.

Serves 20

Master Edite's Cough Syrup

Ingredients

Add in 1 liter of boiling water:

3 small cups of sugar

Pomegranate peel portions

mastic

Rosemary

Eucalyptus

kingdom mallow

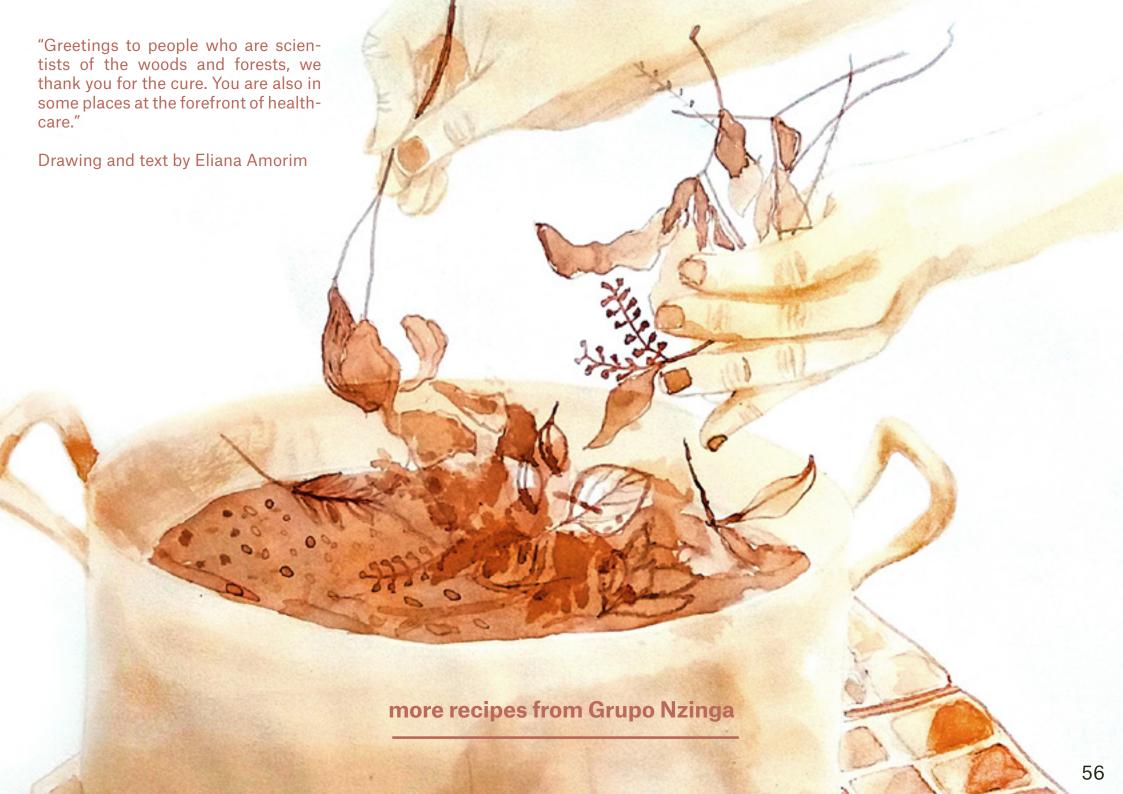
Garlic

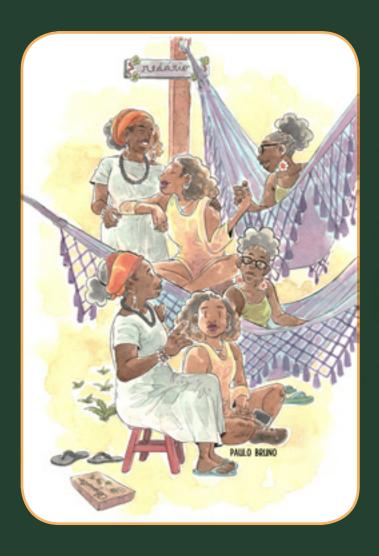
Jatoba natural extract

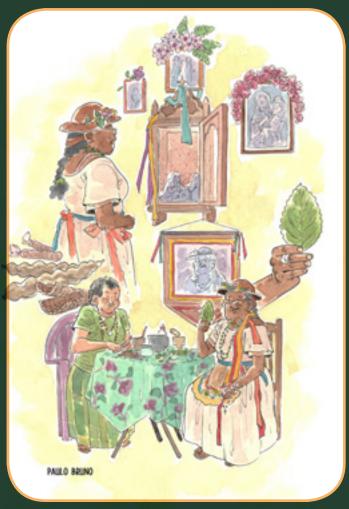
How to use

adult: 1 tablespoon three times a day

child: 1 teaspoon three times a day









Drawings by Paulo Bruno developed from the meetings between the masters, collectives and artists interviewed by the Nzinga Group throughout the Territorial Re-connections project.

Vita da Silva

GRUNEC and Terreiro das Pretas



Brenda was born, and wasn't born in the wrong body, that's not the speech... Because my gender isn't in organs. It's not in vagina, it's not in penis; it's in the heart, it's in the mind, it's in the soul.

"

link to the interview

I don't think of transition as an end, but as a means. I'm not done transitioning; I don't believe this transition has an end; I think it only ends when we die, and when we die, we transmute into something else. So, there is constant transition, a constant crossing.



link to the interview



Being a Black woman is power, it is beautiful. The treatment that is given to us, Black women, now that's sad . . . because we are not recognized in the fullness of what we are, in the being and beauty that is ours.

(Valeria Neves Carvalho, founder, Grupo de Valorização Negra do Cariri—GRUNEC)

link to the interview



Cocomut Hymn

Regin the day flower of the air
I'm going up the mountain.

going to pick passion fruit

Closing song

take me, take me my sweetheart
take me away from that blindness
my sweetheart

RiograPhies

Catarina Duncan (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Works as curator focusing on cultural practices and territorial identities in Latin America. Graduated in Visual Cultures and Art History from Goldsmiths College, University of London (2010 - 2014). She is currently curator at Solar dos Abacaxis (Rio de Janeiro). In 2021, she received a curatorial research grant from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Foundation and MoMa for the project 'Territorial re-connections' developed with colectivo amasijo, Mujeres Creando and Grupo Nzinga. Integrated the curatorial team of the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo, 'INCERTEZA VIVA' (2015 - 2016), the 36th Panorama of Brazilian Art: SERTÃO (2019), 'Pivô Arte e Pesquisa' (2014-2015) and the exhibition 'Terra Communal Marina Abramovic' in Sesc Pompéia (2015). She was curator of the public programming of the work 'Cura Bra Cura Té' by Ernesto Neto at Pinacoteca (2019) and of the 'Plataforma Crítica Oficina Brennand' (2020). Represented the 'Third Paradise' project by Michelangelo Pistoletto in Latin America (2019 - 2021) and COINCIDÊNCIA program of the Swiss foundation Pro Helvetia (2017 - 2020). Participated in the residencies 'Arafura - MX' (2021), 'Pivô Pesquisa' (2021), 'Residents Art Dubai' (2019), 'Lastro Travessias Ocultas' in Bolivia (2016-2017) and 'Lastro Centro América' in Guatemala (2015-2016).

cólectivo amasijo

The colectivo amasijo movement, born in Mexico City in 2016, is made up of women of different ages, professions, and parts of the Republic who understand that collective cooking enables territorial stewardship, relationships, and ourselves. They believe that in celebrating diversity and counting on the cycles of nature, they can rethink the culture of scarcity. To this end, they listen to non-dominant narratives, narratives of people close to the earth who also help to measure the true costs of climate change and point the way to regeneration. They look upon rendering the interdependency of language, culture, and territory visible as an everyday, collective attempt to understand food as a network of interrelationships, rather than as mere commodity. They are interested in de-hierarchizing knowledge and reintegrating the local doings and knowledge that have been erased.

Aureliana Campechano has been a fandango dancer since the age of eight. In the 1990s, she and Sarita and Leticia oversaw the region's fandangueiros and revitalized the huapango. Aureliana's desire is to return to El Salto to found a space with Leti and Sarita.

Carmen Serra is co-founder of the colectivo amasijo; she is a member of the placements committee of the Fundação Tamayo and holds a degree in Latin American literature. She has elaborated several cultural projects in museums and foundations in México, in addition to serving as Mexico's cultural attaché to India and Peru.

Leticia Campechano Paz holds a degree in business administration from the Tecnológico de Monterrey and has been a huapango dancer since she was seven. She studied singing and music and incorporated both in her presentations at the huapangos. Within the collective, she is responsible for mapping food producers and measuring their impact.

Martina Manterola holds degrees in economy and agroforestry systems from the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM). She specializes in analyzing how hierarchies of knowledge translate into losses of doings and knowledge. She investigates non-hegemonic knowledge and, as a member of the amasijo network, maps it according to the "complex systems of everyday life" project.

Rosalía Campechano Paz, co-founder of the colectivo amasijo, is a longtime practitioner of integrating research about the rhythms of her territory into the dishes she prepares. Her cooking practice comes from doings and knowledge transmitted by her grandmother, aunts, and sisters. Rosalía coordinates the collective's celebrations section and establishes connections with the territory of Veracruz.

Sarita Paz Campechano is co-founder of the colectivo amasijo and has been dancing the huapango since the age of six. A grand-daughter of Mamaelena, a midwife from Salto de Eyipantla, she preserves the knowledge of medicinal herbs and plants. Sarita is currently creating a space in El Salto for teaching huapango and serving female victims of domestic violence.

Muieres Creando

Mujeres Creando is an autonomous, self-supporting anarcho-feminist movement founded in La Paz, Bolivia, in 1992. Comprising women from different cultural and social backgrounds, it is independent from political parties, NGOs, churches, and religious sects. Its thought-provoking motto "Indians, whores, and lesbians together in revolt and in sister-hood" establishes the foundation upon which it was built and organized. Members regard creativity as an instrument of struggle as evinced in their different political, aesthetic, and creative manifestations, as well as in their own production of feminist thought. They manage two houses in Bolivia, where they create and supervise a series of initiatives for Bolivian society and women, such as an independent radio station and free legal services for female victims of male violence, among other self-governed initiatives.

Danitza Luna is a feminist, illustrator, and graphic designer, and she holds a graduate degree in visual arts from the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. Danitza created the second sculptural version of Mujeres Creando's La Ekeka statuette; she is author and director of Oficinas Gráficas Feministas, and co-author, with Esther Argollo and Maria Galindo, of Milagroso Altar Blasfemo.

Emiliana Quispe is a chola born in the community of Guaqui. A cook and radio broadcaster, she graduated from the Primera Escuela de Hotelaria y Turismo de Bolivia. Within Mujeres Creando, Emiliana is responsible for the Cooperativa de Almoço da Virgem dos Desejos, in addition to hosting and producing the radio program Cozinha que dá sabor à vida (Cooking that gives flavor to life).

Julieta Ojeda is a feminist, an anarchist, and an anti-licentiate. For more than two decades, she has participated in the active and committed struggle for the decriminalization of abortion in Bolivia; she is cohost and producer of the radio program Nem o útero aberto, nem a boca fechada (Neither open uterus, nor mouth closed).

Grupo Nzînga

Grupo de Pesquisa NZINGA—Novos Ziriguiduns (Inter)Nacionais Gerados na Arte (New International and National Ziriguiduns Generated within the Visual Arts)—was named after the Angolan warrior queen Nzinga. It was founded by Renata Felinto at the Universidade Regional do Cariri (URCA) as a space for encounter with and research of collective memories from the Brazilian Northeast, popular traditions, and contemporary visual arts production by Afro-Indigenous women. The collective follows two main principles: relations of equity in the narratives of visual arts history and the research of women protagonists in Black Atlantic memories.

Andréa Sobreira holds a licentiate in visual arts from URCA, where in 2018–19, she served as a substitute teacher of graphic arts. Her work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the CCBNB—Centro Cultural Banco do Nordeste Cariri (2013–14), and she was a guest artist at the III Norte Bienal de Arte (2018) and participant in the Salão de Abril in Fortaleza (2019).

Cícero Darlan holds a licentiate in letters from URCA and is a specialist in Portuguese language and Brazilian literature at Centro Universitário de Juazeiro do Norte (UNIJUAZEIRO). He is currently studying for his MA degree in letters at URCA; he is also a member of the Obará Mejí collective.

Eliana Amorim is a migrant, visual artist, researcher, art educator, and cultural producer. She holds a licentiate in visual arts from URCA and is co-leader of the Grupo de Pesquisa NZINGA—Novos Ziriguiduns (Inter)Nacionais Gerados na Arteresearch group. She is also a member of the Artivistas Karetas com Prekito (Crato-CE) and Nacional Trovoa collectives (Brazil).

Fatinha Gomes is a graduate student in music at the Universidade Federal do Cariri (UFCA), and a singer, composer, and researcher. She is founder of the project "Reinventário de Cantoras: Um olhar para o canto das Guerreiras Cariri" and of Cantando Marias, which pays tribute to the memory of traditional music as preserved by Black and Indigenous singers of the region.

Franklin Lacerda is a visual artist, teacher, researcher, and independent curator. His practice is informed by the subjects of memory and time, and his work is based in the languages of printing, photography, and the audiovisual. He is also a member of Grupo XICRA and director of Avesso Escritório de Arte.

Jaque Rodrigues is a multimedia artist with a licentiate in visual arts from URCA. Rodrigues is also an active member of the Coletivo lamís Kariris, a singer with the Projeto Musical Cantando Marias, an independent photographer, and creator of the @fotografasnegras project.

José Wesley is a student, researcher, and artist/teacher in the making, and a graduate student in the licentiate course in visual arts at URCA. Currently, he is a PRPGP-fecop research grant holder.

Kaline Siqueira is from Crato, Ceará, and a daughter of the Cariri land. She holds degrees in psychology from UNILEÃO—Centro Universitário and in public policies in public health from URCA; she is also a member of Rede Nacional de Feministas Antiproibicionistas (RENFA).

Leidiane Santos Pereira, a Black woman and mother, is studying social sciences at URCA, where she is undertaking research on domestic maids. She is also a member of Cantando Marias, and she supports the rights and lives of Black men and Black women in the Cariri.

Maria Macêdo is a multidisciplinary artist, educator, and researcher. She received her licentiate in visual arts from URCA, and is co-leader of Grupo de Pesquisa NZIN-GA—Novos Ziriguiduns (Inter)Nacionais Gerados na Arte, pesquisadora no projeto YABARTE. Evoking the ancestral and fictional forces of life in the field, her artistic doings are guided by her experience with the earth.

Mestra Edite is a farmer, dancer, founder of Coco da Batateira, and living treasure of Cearense culture. Since 1955, she has performed in the city of Crato's Batateira, in the state of Ceará, where she disseminates the Coco de Roda tradition to groups of women and children.

Mestra Zulene Galdino is a singer-song-writer who, since the 1970s, has continued her father's legacy in the traditions of Lapinha, Maneiro Pau, Bumba-meu-boi, and Quadrilhas Juninas. She currently lives in the city of Crato, in the state of Ceará, where she works with children and adolescents in her community in the Chapada do Araripe foothills.

Paulo Bruno is an artist from the Cariri region of Ceará, and an illustrator and comic book writer. He was a collaborator in the independent comix collections Linha Alternativa no. 2 (2017) and no. 3 (2018) for the Estação 9 collective.

Renata Felinto is a visual artist. She holds MA and PhD degrees in visual arts from the Institute of Arts at UNESP. She is a specialist in curatorship and education in art museums at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea at the Universidade de São Paulo, an adjunct professor at URCA, and a leader of Grupo de Pesquisa NZINGA—Novos Ziriguiduns (Inter)Nacionais Gerados na Arte.

Wandealyson Santos founded the Quebrada Cultural project and the Laboratório de Estudos e CriAção—Bixórdia, which seeks to foster the aesthetic/artistic work of LGBTI+/dissident artists in Ceará's Cariri region. He holds a degree in visual arts from URCA.

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