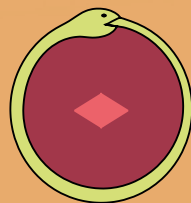


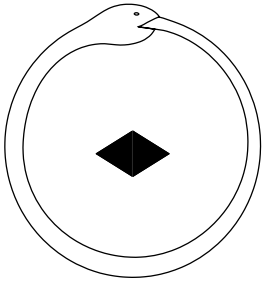
WE ARE THAT GROUND THAT CARRIES
AND TAKES EVERYTHING ALONG

Sandra Benites

Body-Territory 2



notebooks
SELVAGEM



**WE ARE THAT GROUND THAT CARRIES
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BODY-TERRITORY 2

Sandra Benites

“Corpo-território” [body-territory] is a series of Selvagem Notebooks.

The result of an online course offered by the “Papo de Bruxa” [Witch’s chat] platform, which invited curator Sandra Benites Guarani Nhandewa to meet with the women who registered to participate over four Sundays in November 2020.

Each of the notebooks corresponds to one of the meetings, following the order of events. This second notebook is the transcription of class number 2, entitled “Our body is our knowledge”.

First, once again, I thank you, the girls who are organizing [this meeting], who always had a positive energy, even though we went through some difficulties, which we all went through, but we always had the strength of this positivity which is the union of women.

Women’s history is always distorted, but it’s this distortion that we have to be aware of to raise the question. I think that’s what we always do, and my grandmother, because she didn’t know how to read or to speak Portuguese, she had a lot of power and autonomy to say what she was thinking of the narrative; she became empowered through the questioning and I took this wisdom from her and passed it on to other women. My grandmother was a midwife, she took great care of women. At 70 years old, she was an active, very cheerful person and a powerful educator. Our references have always been our grandmothers, our mothers. These mothers, women that we have in our reference, are not always positive, there is sadness, there is joy too, but I think we have to build other paths with these stories that have been told to us.

NHANDERU AND NHANDESY¹:

HOW THE STORY IS TOLD MULTIPLE TIMES

In my understanding the story of *Nhandesy*, as I began to tell, explains to us that *Nhanderu* is the *ywategua*, it is from above, *Nhandesy* is the *ywy pygua*, it is the ground itself. But one complements the other in this matter of knowledge. There is thus, physically, as if it were a man, a masculine figure, and a woman, physically, but symbolically it is a whole. Men have a female body, but women also have a male body, a bit of each other. But there are different moments when we use our abilities from these two bodies that we carry. So these two bodies, I would say, are just different places, different moments. The skin is different, if the moment is different — it's not that we are totally different from each other. That's why men, who have never bled, will not know what it's like for a woman to bleed, nor will we know, for example, how *Nhanderu* came here on earth, planted and then started to disagree with *Nhandesy*, because no one was being understood, due to these questions that each one had, a different moment, perspective and a different place of experience.

Nhanderu is *ywategua*, it is from above, *Nhandesy* is *ywy pygua*, it is the ground itself. When *Nhanderu* came he planted, and said that he had invited *Nhandesy*. The other day, *Nhanderu* called *Nhandesy* to go there and collect the fruits, the things that *Nhanderu* planted. He said that *Nhandesy* had doubted it, and questioned: “but how come you planted it yesterday and everything will be ready today?”. Then *Nhandesy* doubted, and that's why *Nhanderu* kept quiet, he remained in silence, and from that point on *Nhanderu* began to remain silent

1. *Nhanderu* and *Nhandesy* are figures from *Guarani* mythology and cosmogony. In the story told here, both are central elements that work in harmony to create the world. Besides the profound spiritual significance associated with this narrative, which has been transmitted among the *Guarani* people for countless generations, it reflects the interconnectedness and complementarity of aspects of human existence present in the duality between the feminine and masculine. *Nhanderu* represents the transcendent force that rules the universe, coming from the sky, usually related to a male and paternal figure, while *Nhandesy* represents the mediation and connection between human and spiritual worlds, coming from the earth and nature, associated with feminine and maternal aspects (TN).

and no longer communicate to *Nhandesy* what he was going to do or what he had done. *Nhandesy* was upset about this too and said: “Why don’t you talk to me anymore, have you walked away?”. It is said that, at that moment, *Nhandesy* was pregnant. *Nhanderu* told *Nhandesy* that he was going back to the *amba*, and what is the *amba*? His origin, which would be *yvate*, which would be from above, on above, which is *yvate-gua*. *Nhandesy* didn’t accept it, but even so *Nhanderu* said he was going to come back, that he needed it, the *amba* needed him, and *Nhandesy* couldn’t go, because *Nhandesy* is the *amba* too, the ground itself, the earth itself. And that’s where there was this friction, *Nhanderu* left, and *Nhandesy* became very sad and started walking. My grandmother used to tell that she got very sad, pregnant, and the children started talking. They were saying that they could guide their mother after *Nhanderu*. I have already talked about this story at some point, but I want to explain better what I think about it. It is said that the children started talking, saying: “you have to obey our desires, all our wishes and we will guide you to go after *Nhanderu*”. *Nhandesy* agreed, and there were lots of good things on the road, fruits and flowers, that sort of thing. And all the kids wanted everything they saw on the road.

Nhandesy was already exhausted, tired, and started to fight, telling off the children: “you’re not even born yet and you’ve already started asking for several things, everything you see, you want, I can’t, I’m tired!”. The children, in a strop, began to become quiet, silent, and the mother was lost, because, in fact, they were the ones leading the mother, showing which path she had to follow. It is said that she arrived at the crossroads — which we call *japia* — where there was *tape* [road, passage] — one in front of her and another one on the right and left side. As the children were no longer talking, *Nhandesy* no longer knew which way to go, she was already lost, exhausted, scared. She began to take the path she thought she should follow. So where did she get to? To the jaguar’s *tawa*, as if it was the jaguar’s village, because in truth, for us, *Guarani*, the jaguars and all the animals that exist today were people like us. She went to the land of jaguars, where she was devoured; it’s a very sad tragedy, what happened.

SOME INSIGHTS ABOUT THE NARRATIVE

When we're pregnant, when the woman is pregnant, everyone in the family has to be very attentive to this woman. I even wrote some things about her, because my grandmother said that when a woman is pregnant it's as if she were between life and death, as if she were half buried, and half out. And that's why all these cares, this way of dealing with a pregnant woman, have to be followed, because to us, *Guarani*, when a woman is pregnant, she has to have the people she trusts by her side — for example, the child's father. The father of the child, who got the woman pregnant, must stay there, hold back the pain. The point is the safety of the woman herself, and for her to have more spiritual strength, the strength of not feeling alone, abandoned like a pregnant woman who gave birth to a child alone. For example: I gave birth in the hospital and felt completely abandoned. My grandmother used to say that this way it is easier for a woman to die, for example, giving birth to a baby alone, in an unknown place, with unknown people. It's easier for a woman to die, actually. Sometimes it is the spirit itself that can go away. And then I remember that — back to the hospital — they don't allow these questions. So we often feel very lonely.

There was once a case — it wasn't in my grandmother's hands — on a few rare occasions that happened, in which a woman died in childbirth, and the community, that is the *Guarani* people, felt unable to save anyone. A woman, if this happens, when a woman dies, at least everyone made an effort to save her, so she wouldn't feel alone, her spirit wouldn't feel alone. So, that's why we have this idea. Of course, today it is more fragile, because of these issues, several times young girls go to the hospital, and of course there is also lack of midwives in the village, and many times they are not valued in the village; that's why the girls end up going to the doctor. So, in this matter, they say that the woman can also die, in fact, because as we are already between life and death... Because pregnancy, in our custom, is not a romanticized thing, it is a serious thing. That's why we always talk about pregnancy, what it is like, we're guided, from the moment we get pregnant or when we get married, we start thinking about family, having children, that sort of thing.

It is not overnight that we have to think and talk about this. And that's something I wanted to talk about, this tragedy in *Nhandesy's* history. This was a lesson for us. How are we going to reverse this, stop letting girls get lost, scared and die along the way, alone, abandoned? So this is told to men from a young age, this process during the ritual, they will learn about this story. That's why it's important to talk about this story to boys. This isn't just for us, this is spoken to boys too.

RITE OF PASSAGE

The boys, during the ritual process, generally when their voices begin to break, they will learn to plant, hunt and talk to the spirit of nature. All things, for us, have spirit. For example, the river. When they go to bathe in the river, during this period, in a group of boys almost the same age, they go together. Generally, there is a house called "bachelor's house". In *Rymba* and *Espírito Santo* there are still some. Now it seems like it no longer exists, but there was, until very recently, a "bachelor's house" for girls and another for boys. That was where the boys were. Generally, the boys stay more isolated among themselves, with a person of guidance — an older person, who will guide them to go hunting, learn how to swim, build the house, to farm, to date, all these things that they will practice. They stay more close to each other.

The boys will learn, during this time, to dialogue, to talk to the beings of the earth, they will ask the *ijara* — I like to talk about the *ijara* of the forest, the *ijara* of the trees, the *ijara* of the plants, or sometimes the *ijara* of the night, it also exists. So, all things have their *ijara*, their spirits, you need to learn how to talk, or sing, or know how to deal with it. How are you going to get to the river, how are you going to get out, how are you going to collect a plant? During this time the boys will learn to search for the medicines that are important for women's blood. For example, the flow: women who have a lot of blood flow, the brothers have to know that. So, that's why the family has to know about the blood, the moment and the cycle when the girls menstruate. And then those who go to get the plants, the medicine, are the men. Because

girls during this period cannot walk, they cannot go out, go through the woods, because we can be smelled by animals, there are several other things that we are restricted from. During this period, they will build this body of dance, which is through dance, through movement. There are several ways in which boys move. One of the things is the warrior dance, which is the *ywyráija*, which is a very strong dance. And I came to understand that men's dance is like a political cosmos. I don't quite understand this; the men's dance transforms for each situation. The same dance, the same chant, is transformed for each situation. Sometimes it's sacred, sometimes it's fun, sometimes it's also political and sometimes it's also war. It is something very important that I realise today, the dance of men².

Girls generally stay more with the family; when the first menstruation comes, there are rest days to be on safeguarding. Speaking of dance, women also have their own dance, but for *Guarani* women, their dance is more aesthetic, it's more like showing off, as a woman, as beauty, all that body that we carry, that we exhibit. And it's very important for us to show off our bodies, because it gives us a sense of autonomy and confidence. That's why we also have our dance, so we can have autonomy, that is, this strength. Generally, during the menstrual period it is the time to listen to our own body, they say it is the time of solitude, to enjoy your body, listen to your body, move away from people, because at that moment you are also in a period of conflict, anguish sometimes, so that's why this moment is very important for us — it's called the moment of solitude, of enjoying the solitude. Your own body, your spirit, your own breath. It's a dangerous moment

2. This wisdom requires a lot of time. For men, it generally lasts two years. According to the *juruá* [*Guarani* word for non-indigenous person], this ritual would be a rule. The rule is strict. For example, it's not that the rule is rigid, but if you give a rule, you have to add something else that attracts it. It's not something you take away or lock away behind walls. It seems that today — I'm realising this — men's dancing is very important, always in a group and then it's time for them to rest. Food is also very important, because their dancing time is very rigid, very tense. So they have a specific diet during this ritual, as if it were a treatment for their own body. As they dance a lot during this period of time, they use their bodies a lot, they spend a lot of energy moving the body. And this would be the moment for them to listen to their own body, dance would perhaps be something that moves the body.

for our blood to go down and then we take care of ourselves, strengthening ourselves. This is very important.

Although men don't bleed, they are said to be warm-blooded, just like us. They also menstruate, they also have warm blood, which runs through their veins all the time. But in their case it is every day. Every day they bleed. They say they are hot-blooded, *tuguyraku*, which means all the time. And that's why they say the hot blood of men is very dangerous if they don't have control over their own blood. Then, in order to have control over their own blood, it is important for men to make their bodies patient. All the time mistreating their own body means that they need to have movement: they have to go out and plant, hunt, learn to swim and get up early and have all this daily activity control over what they are doing, exactly to control this hot blood, because they are in crisis during this time when their voices begin to break.

And ending this research, today we are faced with several things. Many villages no longer have forests, they have nothing else to do, and often they don't even have a river. And then, when they start to feel anguished, without having a reference, without having a relationship with things, it can become dangerous. And it becomes dangerous. Today I realise that many young people fall into drinking, they go looking for something else that is not so important to us. And that's where they are vulnerable and where they lose control. They become unbalanced. So, in many villages, I see that the elders complain a lot, they say that today's young people are not obedient, but it turns out that they don't understand either, the elders don't understand why. Like, for example, I had this experience, this knowledge, I went through it, but my children no longer had the same thing, it depends on the environment and how we have been creating our bodies. It is our relationship with the surrounding society, that is, if there is a river, a place for us to step on the ground, that is, you will have this knowledge, our own body, which is our knowledge, and it will depend on the context in which you were created.

All knowledge of men and women is balanced between bodies, relationships and places where we are. I wanted to talk a little about this and also about the dispute over our being. From the moment we start studying at school, we develop a curricular proposal that respects this

belief, this way of living, this system. The Indigenous school, today, for better or for worse, has its right to create a differentiated school, that is bilingual, that is specific to each community. Of course that the school, the teachers, the school staff and I started to discuss respect for girls. *Guarani* girls, for example, when menstruating, stayed at home in rest; we didn't force girls to go to school. When there is a newborn brother in the *Guarani* family, the closest family does not eat red meat. So, when there is a child at school who has a newborn sibling, we tell them to cook something different, it couldn't be meat. And then I remember that we did all this, but I, *Guarani*, as a teacher, hired by the city hall system, couldn't be absent, even when I was menstruating, I had to disrespect my body, because I was hired, and there is no substitute for a hired person. And that's why I've always fought for people to talk about it. How are we going to deny this? How is it that everywhere we deny it? It seems like we don't exist. And I always have this reaction to my own body, of not being respected, and I had to talk about it, that's why I also created this conversation between us, so we can always talk about our own bodies.

This cycle of ours is our blood, the first menstruation has to be respected and from the moment we start menstruating we have this relationship with our body, that this is wisdom, our blood is wisdom, our movement is our wisdom. So, all the steps we take, in fact, are our feminine wisdom. How are you perceived by others as a woman? So you have to question that too. And from that, you also have to put it in your own body and say: "why am I seen this way?". I have to question, we have to question and do not accept how it is imposed on us to live. Of course others also think, they also form and organize things, we are not all the same, but it's possible for us to question our bodies. This body of ours, in fact, is the movement, our trajectory, our steps and our understanding of what we carry.

There is a time for us to be children, *kryngue*. *Kryngue* has no gender, it is a very important moment, which many times is not valued. We are subjected to several questions and we do not have our own being, to produce what we are, how we are or what we desire as a child. And then comes this adult phase, which is also another issue. And then there is the phase as a woman. We have to live questioning this, because it

is a moment of autonomy, but we only have autonomy when we stop menstruating: but that, for me, is a moment of wisdom that we carry. So this wisdom that we carry is very important to share. That's why we, indigenous people, in general, listen a lot to older people. And I see that, in *Juruá* society, older people are completely discarded, it seems like they don't have the time to share things. And it's very important for more experienced people to have a relationship with young people, I think this is super important. And listening, because these narratives from older people have many things that we learn and question too.

THE URBAN ISSUE

I don't know exactly how to translate this wisdom into urban culture... For me, it's all still very new, the urban issue. So, this issue of dancing, this issue of moving, using this body as an art, of enjoying your body; but the boys' moment is also very conflicting. And this conflict can make them vulnerable, if we are not careful with them during this time. I think that this issue of the movement that moves the body would be very important in the urban context. It makes them very tense, so to speak, with this energy. They should also receive the care of their own family, with food, receive affection indeed, and acknowledge the importance of this movement during this moment of conflict. I think this is very important for boys.

For girls, for us, the affection is very important during this menstrual period, the care, to demonstrate this kindness and this body care. I think this is very welcoming for us. Because it is a vulnerable moment too, this sensitivity that we have in our bodies, and when we are in this moment it is very important to be welcomed by the wisest people. Sages are more experienced people, I think this is very important, because I remember I once went to give a lecture at PUC [Pontifical Catholic University] and there were some girls who said they felt very bad, they cried a lot, some of them said that at home no one ever talked about menstruation. And then I kept thinking about many things, how anguished these girls were about this.

It is very important for us to know how to deal with our own spirit, because this is also the spirit. I usually say it's our spirit. What is the spirit? What is ancestral knowledge? They were saying that our spirit, in fact, is vulnerable at times and sometimes not. So it is a process that seems constant, it is also a transformation. Our spirit is very related to the moment we are in. Sometimes, we face a lot out of fear, like *Nhandesy*. *Nhandesy* was scared, she was afraid, feeling lonely, terrified and got lost along the way. It is important we always sing, even if we feel something anguishing, sing. It's funny that my grandmother used to say that the voice belongs to the woman, that's why the chant is our thing. The movement, which would be the dance, would belong to men, but one thing is related to the other, as if both were and had the same body, as if both, chant and dance, also unite the female and the male body. So it's not that men can't sing, but it seems like the chant, the voice, belongs to the women; they say that we have our chant. And when, for example, you go out to the beach, it's good to always sing your chant to yourself, so you can go back and forth, because the chant is ours, we can dream about our chant, regardless of which chant we dream of, this is our chant. I have my chant. Indeed, once I went to a lecture and they asked me to sing. And I felt like singing, but then I realized it wasn't the right moment and I felt very fragile. Then I said: "What happened to me?". And then I sang to myself. Our chant, many times, is not for others, it is for ourselves. And then I started singing to myself, to sleep, then to wake up. This chant lives with me. Wherever you are feeling bad, fragile, vulnerable, sad or happy, regardless of the moment you are living in, it is important to have your own chant and sing to yourself. This is very important. And it is said that the voice, the chant, is ours, belongs to women.

Of course, men can sing too, but I'm talking specifically about women. Like my grandma used to say. And then the same thing, as if the loud sound of the voice belonged to us, women, that's why it is related to the chant. The chant, in fact, for us is not really a chant, it's more like a scream. They say we have high-pitched voices, that we have this ability

to tune our voice. The more you scream and really feel your own body, your emotions, they say the singing gets louder, travels further, that's what she used to tell us. So, I just wanted to share this wisdom among us women, women who sing, we can sing and feel embraced, that's why it's important too. In times of solitude, it's important to dream of our chant. And how do we process our journey? And then I remember, we shouldn't feel tired, in fact. Not that you cannot, you can. Of course, we get tired. When we're tired, it's good to admit that tiredness. When we're sad, admit that sadness. **Nhandesy** taught us that sometimes we want to do something that's just not within our physical reach anymore. This applies to everyone, regardless of gender, right? I think it applies to everyone. Our body, it needs to be sensitive, to feel what it is feeling, to feel the moment, to smell. And also to be smelled, right?

We also have our smell. When we are smelled, it is a little dangerous for us. And sometimes we have no idea, we lose the notion that we are tired, that we are sad. So, it's important, sometimes, to step back and admit what happens, but never forget the chant, your own chant. This chant, each one has its own. As my grandmother used to say, she said that every woman has its own chant. And so, it's not like we cannot move either. As I said, there is singing and there is also dancing. It's just like the chant belonged to women and the dance belonged to men, but we combine the two. Both men and women also combine these two movements, these wisdoms. This is also why it is important for us to feel this moment, of how we are, how we are feeling, what is happening to us in this pandemic. I think there's a lot going on, it's very exhausting, a lot of things, and we can't get upset about it, right? Because when we are also affected by something, our body also becomes vulnerable, it becomes fragile, right? In fact, because our spirit becomes fragile, it's not that we are fragile, that this fragility is part of our spirit... It's not that we are like that. It is important to consider others and what is around us. And reflect, look at what is happening, so we can understand, including with our own family, with our partner, or whoever is by our side. It's very important.

I said I wanted to build a house, I'm looking for it, even if it's a small piece of land, to have a ground to make a fire and tell stories. Each one

tells their own story around the campfire, this is my dream. On the days when we are all there and each one has their own hammock to sleep in, we talk, we really welcome each other, because I think that this is missing nowadays, when we are running a lot, running, running, running all the time, and sometimes now, unfortunately, we have to respect that — unfortunately no, I think fortunately, we really have to respect this, because we can't put people's lives in this. But when this passes, I know it won't pass anytime soon, I think it's important for us to create other paths based on this experience of distance, of us not being able to meet, but at some point we can, like in this special place, create another form of meeting, and not academically.. It's because I also talked a little about this the other day, from my own experience. I was going to travel, give lectures with a lot of people, but it was the only way. There was no other way for us to actually listen to each other, to welcome each other, to actually have this meeting.

When I say “meeting” I'm talking about perceiving the other, about feeling the other. And then I'm going to talk a little about those who draw. You should draw, paint your own trajectory, your own body, your shape... Because everyone has abilities, I call it ability. Who writes, who wants to sing... Many times we follow the same path, different paths, but we always find ourselves on the way. I think this is very important, this is interesting. And whoever wants to paint, for example, I've always liked painting landscapes. Then, after this meeting we were having, I felt a strong feeling about wanting to paint landscapes, the landscape of my career, create landscapes. I think it's important for each one to create their own landscape, their shape, their walk, their steps. I think this would be very good for us, our creativity based on our own experience... I wouldn't say our experience, I would say, our knowledge, because experience is also knowledge. I think that the body itself, our body is our knowledge, it is our place of knowing, it is our ground, our space of making, our space of creativity.

This whole issue comes from the walk of *Nhandesy*. She got lost, things happened and, as she left here, there would be no hunger, there would be no death. So, women are death and life too. We, women, are life, so blood has to do with life and death too. We're the ones who carry the blood. It's just funny that we, women, are more able to deal with our blood. One moment we experience that issue, but then... And when it comes to men, it seems that they have less control, I mean, if they don't know how to control their own body, their own blood, I think it's more dangerous. And we also have to know how to deal with them. I think I'm not afraid to talk about my blood and men's own blood, because they have, although they don't bleed, but because they don't bleed every month, so to speak, they bleed daily. So, every day it is also very painful for them, I said this, how I used this metaphor to tell this, and how this dance movement has to do with the feeling that can guide all of us, regardless of the woman or man, for guidance and for us to overcome our anguish, our anger. It seems it has to do with our actual feelings.

The feeling, for us, is associated with the stomach. And then, every time we are emotionally hurt for some reason, we carry it, right? Sometimes it feels like it's in the chest... It is said that we carry a lot of anguish here. That's why the older people used to say we shouldn't keep it. And it is through the chant, which would be through the scream, that we have to sing. That's why men sing too. Not that men can't sing, they can sing. But this anguish, our sadness, our anger... I think this has a lot to do with the issue of us creating other paths. So that we don't follow the same path, as *Nhandesy* walked alone. Alone and sad, she had no one to talk to... She walked a lot alone, she walked in exhaustion, she felt abandoned. So, it's not that she actually died, but she gave herself up. My grandmother used to say that she gave the body, she gave the body herself, it's not that the jaguars devoured her, no... It's because she gave herself up to be devoured. So, that's why this idea of each one having to use — as my grandmother used to say — their voice. So, sometimes the chant is not just joy, it is not just chant. The chant is also scream, that's why chant is scream. The chant can be a scream of joy, scream of sadness, a cry for help, scream of several feelings, that's why the chant goes beyond all this issue that we feel. And I think that the *toré* has to be the

moment of overcoming too. Each one has to take this into their life, the moment of being. This depends a lot on the moment each person is in, so it's not possible to generalize so much, it depends on each person's moment. That's why I say, there are things that are collective and things that are individual. But it is important for us to identify the moment and the reason why we are there. A lot of times this can help us, because it's impossible for us to live, walk in one single pace, so to speak, spaces, taking everyone to the same place. Each one has their own experience.

And then, returning to the story of *Nhandesy*, for us there is no such thing as a perfect person, there are no perfect beings, there are mistaken beings and that's why we need to seek to build or create other paths based on our own mistakes. So, it is possible. That's why our steps, our journey, will always find several obstacles. So, for you to create, to know how to deal with the obstacle, which is unpredictable, which you don't know you will find along the way, you need to build this body to deal with these various obstacles that you will encounter on the way. Along this path you will know how to deal with it. For example, sometimes I feel bad in the city, but I met these wonderful girls, Romina, Dasha and several other wonderful women, and although we are totally different, we find things in common and that's where I look for strength. It is not that I'm telling them to live my way or I'm going to live their way, but it's when we meet and attend as a girl. I think this helped me a lot and this is a liberation for us. When you can live among several conflicts, so to speak, you can overcome that... It's a liberation every day. It is like a mission accomplished for yourself every day. I think it is a life challenge for each one of us. There is no such thing as ready-made, perfect, in other words, it's important this wisdom of knowing how to circulate at any time, in any space. I think it's a matter of liberation. That's why we are very sick as one single culture. Join all cultures, knowledges, respect each other, know how to circulate. We experience this through food, through music... There are several cultures. The only place we meet as people, I think, is in food, in alimentation and art. It's my way of thinking based on my own relationship with diverse people and origins. I can find myself — although in different places — but I can find myself. And then it's an issue of overcoming. I think that's it.

In fact, the things are “us” ourselves. But we are not alone. When we stay by ourselves, whenever we’re sort of separated from the thing, in reality, we are not. Then I started to make this reference, we carry it as if it were a... We ourselves are that ground that carries and takes everything along. That’s right, I see myself like this, we are like this.

SANDRA BENITES

Born in the Porto Lindo Indigenous Land, municipality of Japorã (MS), in 1975, Sandra Benites is a mother, researcher and activist from the *Guarani* people. A descendant of the *Guarani Nhandeva* people, she works as an anthropologist, researcher, art curator and educator. She is also Director of Visual Arts at the National Arts Foundation in Brazil (Funarte), being the first Indigenous person to hold a board position at the Foundation. Sandra stands out for her struggles in defence of the rights of Indigenous peoples, especially the demarcation of territories and *Guarani* education.

BODY-TERRITORY COURSE

Curator and Teacher: Sandra Benites

Creator: Romina Lindemann

Participants: Aline Bernardi, Izabel Goudart, Tatiana Jardim, Tainá Veríssimo, Fernanda Cristall, Camila Durães, Gilsamara Moura, Dalmoni Lydijusse, Dasha Lavrennikova, Karlla Giroto, Carla Gamba, Julia Sá Earp, Livia Barroso de Moura, Jaya Paula Pravaz, Juliana Nardin and Lau Veríssimo.

KARLA GIROTTO

Artist, teacher, researcher and writer. Her artistic practice has been marked by a plurality of actions — performance, text, object, installation, video, photography, and especially by the creation and opening of processes of experimentation and production. She has a Master's degree and a PhD from the Centre for the Study of Subjectivity at PUC/SP in the Clinical Psychology course, and has been awarded CAPES (2013-2015) and CNPq (2019-2022) scholarships.

ALINE BERNARDI

Artist, researcher and teacher of body and performance arts, interested in the paths between dance and writing in the creation process. Artistic Director of Celeiro Moebius. Creator and Proponent of Lab Corpo Palavra. Author of the performance book *Decopulagem*. She has a Master Degree in Dance in the PPGD/UFRJ Programme and Postgraduate from PCA/FAV. Further training in Performance through the F.I.A. Programme at the c.e.m. in Lisbon. Graduated with a Full Licence from FAV. Technical training in Contemporary Dance at Angel Vianna School. Certified in the Introductory and CS1 Modules of CranioSacral Therapy Techniques by Upledger Brasil. Training in the Bertazzo Movement Reeducation Method. Substitute Dance Teacher at Colégio Pedro II – Realengo II Unit [2018- 2019], being founder and member of the team at NACE - Performing Arts Center. Creator of the Contato Improvisação Brasil website. Curator, artist and manager of the program *Entre Serras [Between Mountains]: Artistic and Poetic Residencies of Sustainability*.

TATIANA JARDIM

Researcher and artistic and cultural producer. Master in Visual Anthropology at Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Nova FCSH), she researches decolonial feminism, memory and heritage, focusing on visual and shared anthropology methodologies. She has a degree in Social Communication, with a qualification in Advertising, at ESPM-SP. Born in Santos (São Paulo, Brazil), lived for four years in Lisbon (Portugal), where she worked in the management of cultural projects focused on audiovisual. In São Paulo, she works with event production and artist management.

TAINÁ VERÍSSIMO

Member of the Totem Group since 2004, collectively developing a scenic language that starts from performance and rituality, in which she works as an actress-performer, producer and art educator. She teaches, along with the group members, the *Corpo Ritual Workshop*; She has also been a researcher at the RecorDança Collection since 2010, covering the safeguarding, dissemination and production of knowledge about Pernambuco dances. She investigates the dialogue between art, healing and spirituality in the performing arts and audiovisual in terms of the body. She is a Postgraduate in Educational Dance – CENSUPEG, a Yoga Instructor – ANYI, and has a degree in Artistic Education/Performing Arts – UFPE.

IZABEL GOUDART

Alchemist, artist, curator and researcher of collaborative network learning processes and methodologies, as well as affective and poetic textures. Graduated in Chemistry at UERJ (1989), she has been composing a multidisciplinary score in the mix and hybridization of natural sciences, arts and contemporary and ancestral technologies. The intimacy and conflicts of a lesbian dissident body integrate her poetics from the autobiography of her own body and relationships. The geometric and fractal patterns of nature and the connection with ancestry and spirituality dialogue with the poetics and delicacy of life and other existences. The power of the collective is present in collaborative art propositions. She combines various techniques and practices such as photography, video, installations, sound art, objects and performance to give materiality to the shape of her work. She is the curator and manager of the Somas residence. Master in Education (UERJ), PhD in Communication and Semiotics (PUC/SP) with a post-doctorate in Interactive Media (UFG) and, currently, a graduate student in Visual Arts (UERJ).

DALMONI LYDIJUSSE

From Minas Gerais, she has a licentiate degree in Fine Arts at FAAP, a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at UFMG and a specialization in Integrative Art at Universidade Anhembi Morumbi. She has also taken courses in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, New York and Canada. Since 2003,

she has managed and maintained Arte Ziriguidum, teaching classes and courses, promoting various initiatives with other professionals, executing curatorship, offering space for cultural activities, as well as individual and collective exhibitions. As an artist, she participated in solo and group exhibitions.

The editorial production work of the Selvagem Notebooks is carried out collectively with the Selvagem community. The editorial direction is by Anna Dantes, and the coordination is by Alice Alberti Faria. The design is by Tania Grillo. In this series of notebooks by Sandra Benites, we had the special collaboration of Karlla Giroto, Aline Bernardi, Tatiana Jardim, Tainá Veríssimo and Izabel Goudart in organising, transcribing and revising the speeches from the Body-Territory course, which gave rise to the materials. We would also like to thank Dalmoni Lydijusse for the illustration and Daniel Grimoni for the final revision of the notebook in Portuguese. The coordinator of English translations is Marina Matheus.

More information at selvagemciclo.com.br/en/

All Selvagem activities and materials are shared free of charge. For those who wish to give something back, we invite you to financially support the Living Schools, a network of 5 educational centers for the transmission of Indigenous culture and knowledge.

Find out more at selvagemciclo.com.br/en/apoie/

TRANSLATION
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SELVAGEM Notebooks
digital publication by
Dantes Editora
Biosfera, 2023
English translation, 2024

