

Seeing Into the Heart of Things: Earth and Equality Within Indigenous and Ancestral Knowledges

Master Symposium

3 – 5 November 2021

Institute Art Gender Nature HGK FHNW in Basel in collaboration with
CULTURESCAPES 2021 Amazonia

As part of the symposium series Womxn in the Arts and Leadership

With Annette Amberg and Vídeo nas Aldeias, Vandria Borari, Kateryna Botanova, Felipe Castelblanco in conversation with Taita Hernando Chindoy and Ayenan Quinchoa, Pauliina Feodoroff, Katya García-Antón, Biung Ismahasan, knowbotiq with Ana Garzón Sabogal, Timimie Märak, Jeremy Narby, Ashfika Rahman, and Pamela Rosenkranz.

Keynote Lecture by Davi Kopenawa

Moderated by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer

Research associate: Marion Ritzmann, Karin Borer; Communication: Sarina Scheidegger

Technical team: Colin Barth, Janusha Kenganathan, Marco Mastrogiacomo, Milena

Mihajlovic, Kristina Pavlovic, Konrad Sigl

The symposium will be held at the Aula (D1.04) of the Academy of Art and Design in Basel or is accessible via live stream under the following links:

→ [Online Link 3. November 2021](#)

→ [Online Link 4. November 2021](#)

→ [Online Link 5. November 2021](#)

→ More information: <https://dertank.ch/en/we-explore/gender/>

The symposium is open to the public. Please note that from October 18, 2021, a valid Covid-19 certificate is necessary to enter the FHNW Academy of Art and Design in Basel. Admission and control are accessible 15 minutes before the start of each event. Please wear a protective mask for mouth and nose.

Seeing Into the Heart of Things: Earth and Equality Within Indigenous and Ancestral Knowledges

Since the long sixteenth century, the organization of the world has found its hegemonic form in hierarchies of power and possession, between those who exploit and expropriate and those who are exploited and whose lives and lands and resources are expropriated. This is not the past, nor a function of ideology only. If the projected supremacy of one form of life over all others is only made possible by manifold forms of violence, one of these forms remains the invention (and constant reinvention) of nature by colonial cultures. This invention rests on an idea of progress in which nature is construed as what one emerges

from. Indigenous ancestral epistemologies hold a different understanding of the real, though. «The land owns us,» Aboriginal Australians might say. Or, as Ailton Krenak, the Brazilian Indigenous writer, thinker, and Krenak leader notes: «It is only possible to imagine nature if you are outside of it. How could a baby that is inside its mother's uterus imagine the mother? How could a seed imagine the fruit? It is from outside that one imagines the inside.»

How, then, to resist this binary and the violence with which it is enforced? How to repair what it wounds? Held in conjunction with CULTURESCAPES 2021 Amazonia, the Swiss interdisciplinary cultural festival, the autumn Master symposium of the Institute Art Gender Nature will be dedicated to ideas and forms of Indigenous thought and allied artistic practices that imagine and propose disparate forms of co-existence. Over the course of three days at the Institute Art Gender Nature, from November 3 to 5, 2021, artists, elders, writers, curators, and allies will come together in Basel to discuss Indigenous thought, decolonial feminisms, and the political possibilities of the mythic imagination. Certain questions will preoccupy us: How do Indigenous cosmologies create forms for resistance? How does the Western imaginary of the Amazon, from its roots in racial capitalism to its corporate-tech, paternalistic present, cloud our understanding of how its peoples and nonhuman spirits narrate themselves? How, in particular, do ecological and decolonial practices find their form in the visual and oral matrices of Indigenous narratives across the world?

The first two days of the symposium, titled *Seeing Into the Heart of Things: Earth and Equality Within Indigenous and Ancestral Knowledges*, will be devoted to presentations, conversations, talks, and performances that will speak to such questions as well as field possible answers. Also included will be a book launch and presentation of the CULTURESCAPES 2021 reader, *Amazonia: Anthology as Cosmology* (Sternberg Press, 2021), with its editors Kateryna Botanova and Quinn Latimer. The gathering's third and final day will feature a keynote lecture by Davi Kopenawa, the shaman and spokesperson for the Yanomami people. For more than three decades he has led the campaign to secure Yanomami land rights in the Brazilian states of Roraima and Amazonas; he is also the author of the acclaimed book *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*, written with Bruce Albert. In it, Davi Kopenawa notes: «When your eyes follow the tracks of my words, you will know that we are still alive, for *Omama's* image protects us. Then you will be able to think: 'These are beautiful words.'» Language testifies to co-existence, to shared life itself.

We hope that you will join us in Basel.

This symposium is dedicated to the memory of artist, curator, and researcher Virginia Perez Raton, founder of Teorética, Costa Rica.

PROGRAM

(subject to alterations)

DAY I – 3 November 2021

→ [Online Link 3 November 2021](#)

Part 1

- 10:00 am Welcome and Introduction: **Chus Martínez & Quinn Latimer**
10:15 am Reading: **Quinn Latimer**
10:30 am Talk and Conversation: **Vandria Borari**
11:15 am Lecture and Screening: **Felipe Castelblanco in conversation with Taita Hernando Chindoy & Ayenan Quinchoa**
12:00 pm Lunch break

Part 2

- 2:00 pm Lecture and Conversation: **Jeremy Narby**
2:45 pm Lecture and Screening: **Annette Amberg presents Video nas Aldeias**
3:30 pm Lecture: **Katya García-Antón**
4:00 pm Performance and Conversation: **Pauliina Feodoroff**
4:30 pm Panel discussion with all participants
5:00 pm End of DAY I

DAY II – 4 November 2021

→ [Online Link 4 November 2021](#)

Part 3

- 10:00 am Welcome and Introduction: **Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer**
10:15 am Reading: **Quinn Latimer**
10:30 am Lecture and Conversation: **Biung Ismahasan**
11:00 am Lecture and Conversation: **Ashfika Rahman**
11:30 am Lecture and Conversation: **Pamela Rosenkranz**
12:00 pm Lunch break

Part 4

- 2:00 pm Book launch and presentation of *Amazonia: Anthology as Cosmology*.
Kateryna Botanova and Quinn Latimer
2:45 pm Lecture and Screening: **knowbotiq with Ana Garzón Sabogal**
3:30 pm Sound/Poetry Piece: **Timimie Märak**
4:15 pm Panel discussion with all participants
5:00 pm End of DAY 2

DAY III – 5 November 2021

→ [Online Link 5 November 2021](#)

Part 5

- 3:30 pm Keynote Lecture: **Davi Kopenawa**

BIOGRAPHIES

ANNETTE AMBERG is an artist and curator. She is the director of Coalmine – Raum für Fotografie, in Winterthur, where she recently presented solo projects by Jiajia Zhang, Lena Maria Thüring, and James Bantone. She is curator of the exhibition *Vídeo nas Aldeias: An Audiovisual Movement by and Among Indigenous Peoples in Brazil* which will open at Coalmine in November 2021. Amberg has organized exhibitions and held curatorial positions at Kunsthalle Basel, and at Shedhalle and Strauhof, both in Zurich. Her own artistic works have been shown at the Istituto Svizzero, Rome, Kunsthaus Glarus, and Aargauer Kunsthaus, in Aarau. She has been a guest lecturer at ZHdK, Zurich, HEAD Geneva, and the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst, in Basel.

VANDRIA BORARI (Vandria Garcia Correa) is a Brazilian artist and activist from the Borari people of Baixo Tapajós, in Pará, Brazil. She is currently artist-in-residence at Atelier Mondial, in Basel, in partnership with CULTURESCAPES 2021 Amazonia and LabVerde, in Manaus, Brazil. Borari is also the first lawyer from her region, holding a law degree from the Federal University of Western Pará. In addition to her artist and activist practices, she works as a producer and cultural manager, organizing exhibitions in cultural spaces in the village of Alter do Chão, Pará, such as *Mutak—Mukameẽsawa Tapajowara Kitiwara (Indigenous art Exhibition of the Lower Tapajó)* and the Indigenous Culture Space Wasú.

KATERYNA BOTANOVA is a curator, cultural critic, and writer. She is co-curator of CULTURESCAPES, in Basel, Switzerland. Previously, she was the director of the Foundation Center for Contemporary Art, in Kyiv, Ukraine, and a founder and editor-in-chief of Korydor, an online journal on contemporary culture. She has worked as a trainer and consultant for various programs within EU Eastern Partnership Culture Programme, dealing with cultural policy analysis, cultural industries, and cultural journalism in the region. Botanova is the co-editor of *Amazonia: Anthology as Cosmology* (2021).

FELIPE CASTELBLANCO is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher who works at the intersection of participatory practices, the moving image, and new media art. In his practice, he explores institutional formats and creates platforms for inter-epistemic dialogue. Recent exhibitions include the 2019 Quebec Biennial, *Seasons of Media* at ZKM – Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe, and the project *Water Territories*, currently on view at Helmhaus, Zurich. Felipe is completing a practice-based PhD that examines avenues for biocultural peace-building through participatory art and media in the Colombian Pan-Amazon region.

TAITA HERNANDO CHINDOY is the Governor of the Inga Nation and a social leader from Aponte, Nariño, in the Southwest region of Colombia. He is the founder of the initiative Wuasikamas (Guardians of the Earth), which has become one of the most successful cases of voluntary substitution of illicit crops and social entrepreneurship among Indigenous communities affected by violence in South America. In 2015, Taita (chief) Chindoy was awarded the Equator Prize from the United Nations Development Program (UNPD) for his contribution to social, economic, and environmental advancements in the region.

PAULIINA FEODOROFF is a writer and director of film and theater. Her projects include *CO2lonialNATION*, presented at Giron Sámi Teáhter, in 2017, and the film *Non Profit* (2007), for which she was awarded the SARV Critical Incentives Prize, from the Finnish Critics' Association, in 2007. Her family are originally from the Kola Peninsula, and she grew

up in a family of reindeer-herding Skolt Sámi. Feodoroff has fought for water and land rights as well as to preserve the reindeer husbandry in the old forests of Nellim in the east of Sápmi/Northern Finland. She has served as elected President of the Sami Council, a period during which Feodoroff visited many remote Sámi communities in Russia, where she addressed the issue of mining companies occupying the land. She also participated in a multiannual study of land occupation, which resulted in the critically acclaimed publication, *Eastern Sámi Atlas*, edited by Tero Mustonen and Kaisu Mustonen (2011).

KATYA GARCÍA-ANTÓN is Director and Chief Curator of the Office of Contemporary Art Norway, in Oslo. Trained as a biologist, she conducted field research in ecology and behavior in the Amazon and Sierra Leone, and then transitioned into the arts with an MA in 19th and twentieth-century art history from The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Since then, she has worked at The Courtauld Institute of Art, BBC World Service (Latin American Broadcasts), Museo Nacional Reina Sofía Madrid, ICA London, IKON Birmingham, and as the Director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain (CAC), Genève. She was the lead curator of the Nordic Pavilion, at the Venice Biennial 2015, and curated both Spanish Pavilions at the São Paulo Biennial, in 2004, and at the Venice Biennial, in 2011. In 2015 García-Antón launched Critical Writing Ensembles, an ongoing OCA platform stimulating research, and publishing of art histories beyond the Western canon (so far, including South Asia and Indigenous worldviews). She was chief curator of the exhibition *Actions of Art and Solidarity*, Oslo, whose Reader will be published by Valiz in January 2022; and is currently devising a program activating decolonial thinking with colleagues from Afro-Norwegian communities in Norway. García-Antón has placed particular emphasis on advocating for, and implementing decolonial, transformative and indigenising practices and programs, and is a member of the curatorial group working on the historic transformation of the Nordic Pavilion into the Sámi Pavilion for La Biennale Arte 2022.

BIUNG ISMAHASAN is Bunun, one of Taiwan's sixteen Indigenous Nations, and a curator, artist, and researcher. A PhD candidate in Curating, from Centre for Curatorial Studies at the University of Essex, his thesis is titled, *Indigenous Relational Space and Performance: Curating Together Towards Sovereignty in Taiwan and Beyond*. His research relates to contemporary Indigenous curatorial practice and aesthetics, focusing on Taiwanese Indigenous contemporary art. Ismahasan emphasises issues of participation, performativity, and the historiography of Indigenous curation and exhibition design. His curatorial projects include *Dispossessions: An Indigenous Performative Encounter* an international performance art exchange of Indigenous artists from Taiwan (2014 – 2019), and the Rukai Nation artist Eleng Luluan's *Between Dream in Ábadakone | Continuous Fire | Feu continuel* at the National Gallery of Canada, for its series of presentations of contemporary international Indigenous art.

DAVI KOPENAWA was born around 1955 in Marakana, a Yanomami community on the Upper Toototobi river in the Brazilian state of Roraima, northern Amazon. A shaman and spokesman for the Yanomami people, he has led the long-running international campaign to secure Yanomami land rights, for which he gained recognition in Brazil and around the world. In 1985, he began the fight for recognition of the vast area inhabited by the Yanomami in the Brazilian States of Roraima and Amazonas; in 1989, he won a UN Global 500 award in recognition of his battle to preserve the rainforest. In 2009 he received the Bartolome de las Casas Award, in Spain; in 2019, he, along with the Hutukara Yanomami Association (Brazil), was awarded the Right Livelihood Award. He is the author of the acclaimed *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*, written with Bruce Albert (2013).

KNOWBOTIQ (Yvonne Wilhelm and Christian Huebler) is an artist duo living and working between Zurich, Berlin, and Lisbon. They investigate geontological entanglements in neo- and postcolonial contexts. Techno-aesthetic and techno-political aspects shape their somatic and emphatic artistic practices and formats. knowbotiq question and enact molecular, psychotropic, and derivative forces, and are currently focusing on narrations of mercury in the interrelationships between Colombia and Switzerland. Recently, with Nina Bandi, knowbotiq published *Swiss Psychotropic Gold* (2020), which tracks invisible paths of affects and violence inside commodity trading. They hold a professorship in the MFA program at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK).

ANA GARZÓN SABOGAL is an industrial engineer at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, in Bogotá, working with collaborative learning networks, cultural project management, activism, and free culture across Colombia. In recent years she has participated in projects such as Radio Vallena (2014 winner of the Crea Digital award for transmedia content) and Territorios, a study group and collaborative editorial project of the Arts Collaboratory Network that delves into specific contexts, histories, and autonomous political strengths. For the last nine years she has been part of the Fundación Más Arte Más Acción as Project Coordinator (2013-2016) and as Director (2017-2021). She is currently working on the publication *Chocó as a School* (title in process) for the same organisation.

QUINN LATIMER is a California-born poet, critic, and editor whose work often explores feminist economies of writing, reading, and moving-image production. Her books include *Like a Woman: Essays, Readings, Poems* (2017), *Sarah Lucas: Describe This Distance* (2013), *Film as a Form of Writing: Quinn Latimer Talks to Akram Zaatari* (2013), and *Rumored Animals* (2012). Her writings appear in *Artforum*, *The Paris Review*, *Texte zur Kunst*, and elsewhere. She was editor-in-chief of publications for documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel, for which she co-edited *The documenta 14 Reader* and *South as a State of Mind: The documenta 14 Journal* (2015–17). Most recently, she co-edited *Amazonia: Anthology as Cosmology* (2021). She is a lecturer in the master's program of the Institute Art Gender Nature, at HGK FHNW, in Basel.

CHUS MARTÍNEZ is head of the Institute Art Gender Nature HGK FHNW in Basel. She was the expedition leader of *The Current*, a project initiated by TBA21-Academy (2018–2020) and she is, for 2021–2022, the artistic director of Ocean Space, Venice, a space spearheaded by TBA21-Academy. She recently edited the publication *The Wild Book of Inventions* (2020) and, together with Julieta Aranda and Markus Reymann, *e-Flux Journal #112* (October 2020). She is the author of the collection of stories *Corona Tales: Let Life Happen to You* (2020).

TIMIMIE MÄRAK is Sámi poet, performer, and feminist-queer activist. In their poetic practice, Timimie processes the different facets of their identity, their wishes and frustrations. Through talks and lectures, Timimie details how normative power systems and relations neglect various peoples. Originally from Jokkmokk, they are engaged in environmental issues and have been active in Giron Sámi Teáhter, in Kiruna. Timimie has won many poetry slam competitions, and, in 2015, SVT made a documentary series about Timimie and their sister Maxida, called *Sápmi Sisters*.

JEREMY NARBY is a Switzerland-based writer, activist, and anthropologist. Since 1989 he has worked for the NGO Nouvelle Planète, backing initiatives by and for the Indigenous peoples of Amazonia, including land titling, bilingual education, sustainable resource use, preservation of plant knowledge, and environmental monitoring of petroleum companies. He is the author of several books about shamanic epistemology

and Western knowledge systems, including *Intelligence in Nature* (2006) and *The Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the Origins of Knowledge* (1999), as well as the collection of translated essays, *Shamans Through Time* (co-edited with Francis Huxley, 2001). His most recent book is *Plant Teachers: Ayahuasca, Tobacco, and the Pursuit of Knowledge*, co-authored with Rafael Chanchari Pizuri (2021).

ASHFIKA RAHMAN is an artist from Dhaka, Bangladesh, whose work straddles visual art and documentary practices. She often recontextualizes historical archives using contemporary media, with photography the predominant medium through which she examines systemic social issues. She often works with marginal peoples of Bangladesh, focusing on the violence against tribal or ethnic groups in the remote hills and peripheries. She has degrees in Photography from Pathshala, Dhaka, BD (2016), and from Hochschule Hannover, in Germany (2017). In 2018 she was selected for the Joop Swart Masterclass by World Press Photo Foundation. She has been a finalist for the *Samdani Art Award*, the *IPA Award*, and *Leica Oskar Barnack Award*.

PAMELA ROSENKRANZ is an artist working in Zurich. Her conceptual practice encompasses sculpture, video, installation, and painting, often questioning the subjective element in the apprehension of an artwork, shifting the viewer's focus toward the material, biochemical, and neurological determinants of human behavior. Dubious of a worldview that places human beings at the center of the natural and material universe, she critiques anthropocentrism by exploring consumerist attempts to "domesticate" nature. Recent bodies of work engage with the ecosystems of the Amazon as well as the titular tech corporation. Her exhibition *Healer* is currently on view at Sprüth Magers, London. Rosenkranz represented Switzerland at the 55th Venice Biennale, in 2015.

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