

## MANUARA - exhibition of photos, sculptures and video

Living for a few months in a preserved Indian village and communicating through gestures with a tribe in which only three individuals spoke a few words of Portuguese was an unforgettable experience for me. For 39 years, I have kept records of this visit, waiting for an opportunity to display them in proper manner. Far from an intellectual experience about which I could write extensively, that was a sensory immersion. I had the opportunity to meet a group of people who actually knew what harmony was, who really knew what respect was about, who really knew how to listen, observe, wait for their turn to speak up, and be concerned with making themselves understood.

Now I am showing these images publicly so people can see what those native men, women and children looked like, and how their everyday life in the village was. I also want to show their facial expressions, the equilibrium of their body muscles, and their harmonious movements that I captured on camera. This is all the product of their existence, their everyday life, their way of living. Unfortunately, I regret to say, this all belongs in the past, it dwells only in memory, because I have no doubt that the children and grandchildren of these native Indians no longer retain the same physical strength, self-confidence, personal dignity and preservation of their culture. At this point, a couple of questions come to mind: Who are we to judge or assess their civilization? In view of all our social issue, do we know any better than them? Are we superior to them in any way? I honestly have never experienced anything so profound. They were so sensitive, gentle, perceptive, considerate, friendly and generous! I am saying this after 39 years, practically a lifetime. Thus I have named the exhibition Manuara, which means "remembrance" in the Tupi-Guarani language.

In 1975, I began to study the body language of the native peoples of Brazil. I was a dancer and researcher of human movement who, notwithstanding my young age, had a sound knowledge basis in this field. Body work is something we start very early in life. Having started my studies at age seven, by the time I turned eleven I was already dancing. As regards my repertoire, I thought I had to incorporate into it a deeper understanding of the body language of the Brazilian Indian. To this end, I worked on a project to record a native ritual that lasts approximately two months: the Kwarup ritual. I submitted the project design to the anthropologist Lux Vidal at the University of São Paulo and obtained her approval. Then, thanks to the Brazilian Air Force, I managed to reach the remote Kamaiurá tribe in the Upper Xingu River region. I invited a friend, Silvio Mendes Zancheti, to accompany me in this mission, from which we returned with plenty of photographs and super-8 footage. At the time, I sent the University of São Paulo an analytical report on my observations and on the body language of this tribe, together with an edited film. That is how far as I went with the subject; my life then turned to another direction as video artist, computer dance researcher, and designer of human movement notation software. I took a path toward understanding the significance of technology in today's society. This is how this material ended up stored for many years, until I decided to show it this year.

To this end, I re-edited the footage and restored the photos, not knowing which of us took which picture. I have turned this into a personal project that involves manipulating these images, printing them on tree trunks and dried leaves, using natural materials from Brazil such

as iron, sand, earth of different colors, stone, water, tree bark, seeds, wasp hives and live plants. In the composition of these pieces, I used my hands as work tool. I also used shards of mirrors that so fascinated the Kamaiurá in our first encounter. I have used shards because they convey a symbolic meaning of what our civilization has done with the culture of Brazilian natives. It is cruel to these peoples to ignore their contribution that, more even than a historical contribution, is a human contribution, and to disregard the knowledge they detained until recent times. This is really a crime, an absurdity.

For me, this exhibition is an act of pure and true love that by far transcends the aesthetic experiment.

Analívia Cordeiro, May 2014