

Living Things : Diable and Ayrson Heráclito

Nigerian sociologist Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí coined the term “cosmoperception” to challenge the European tradition of “worldview”, which prioritizes vision as a means to apprehend reality and a tool for organizing the world¹. “Cosmoperception”, on the other hand, defines a way of relating to nature through integrating the senses and providing attention to all forms of life, human and nonhuman. It is essentially a call to abandon the categories of thought that have led us to believe that objectivity and reason—at the origin of the principles behind the colonial offensive—authorize the domination and functional deployment of nature. Privileging sensory knowledge, detached from the productivist logic of capital, is therefore not possible without a full and unrestricted reclaiming of the senses, without the restoration of subjectivity, and without paying heed to the unique intelligence of those who have learned to perceive the signals that nature transmits. Relearning to interpret these signs: this is where Diable's artistic projects intersect with Ayrson Heráclito's. Their works, appearing in this exhibit, operate within a framework that critiques the symbolic economy of colonialism and proposes an alternative approach to the treatment of living things, based on care and healing.

In the series of photo-performances titled “*Devolta*”, carried out in 2020, Diable creates a circle of fire around diverse public monuments in Rio de Janeiro which extol icons of Brazil's colonial and imperial history and hence promote a distorted image of the “victory of civilization and progress” over barbarism. Some twenty years earlier, Ayrson Heráclito conceived the performance “*Transmutação da Carne*” [Transmutation of the Flesh] in which people were invited to put on clothing made of dried meat, over which a hot iron with the symbol of a colonial Bahian plantation branded them - a way of expunging the memory of the violence committed against enslaved Black people in Brazil. The fire that appears in both “*Devolta*” and “*Transmutação da Carne*” is an element without which neither the “burning” of trauma nor the revitalization of the Afro-diasporic body can occur. This reclaimed vitality appears blatantly in the video installation *Ogum*, a reference to the brave *orixá* of iron, of forge and of heat, but also of technology and agriculture: with

¹ OYẸWÙMÍ, Oyèrónkẹ. “Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects”. In: COETZEE, Peter H.; ROUX, Abraham P.J. (eds). *The African Philosophy Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 391-415.

his *aggadá* (a swordlike tool), Oshun transforms the imminence of danger into a safe and open path.

In their respective works, both Djambe and Ayrson Heráclito have also found therapeutic ways to address the historically ailing Afro-diasporic body. In *Bori*, one of his most celebrated performances, Heráclito desacralizes and reenacts the ritual of nourishing the head (*orí*), aimed at rebalancing the mind and strengthening the body. The artist surrounds the heads of twelve participants with the votive foods of twelve orishas, meant to combine the energy of these vegetables with the heat of the *atabaques* activated by the *ogãs* (responsible for the music of the *terreiros*). Djambe, in turn, sees vegetables as bodies full of life, capable of establishing a relationship of direct and horizontal fluid exchange with their environment. The minute routine of insects, which is at once both fragile and potentially fatal in the transport of infectious diseases, also interests Djambe, as a manifestation of a nearly invisible life.

A final aspect that unites the works of Djambe and Heráclito, cogently situated within this exhibit, concerns attention to nature as a living body, often personified. Oshun, the deity of rivers and waterfalls, is the strong torrent of fresh water itself, just as the roots painted by Djambe are not peaceful, but endowed with an almost animal force. Nature, for both artists, is not an object, but a subject of actions in the world, much as the Black body was, and continues to be, “*the nocturnal seed of rhythm/the bitter consciousness of pain/flowered by the heralding touches/of the perennial nature of living things.*”²

Renato Menezes, historian and art curator

² Abdias do Nascimento. *O Agadá da transformação*, 1982.

MUSEU PARANAENSE

We inaugurate the 2025 France-Brazil Season at the Museu Paranaense with a multidisciplinary event that intertwines dialogue, harmony, and different perspectives. Inspired by the season's guiding themes, we highlight the multiplicity of Brazil- France relations, while also drawing attention to our profound historical ties with the African continent. Such connections, although born of force and marked by colonial violence, have also spawned cultural expressions that are now deeply rooted in both Brazil and France.

The desire to reclaim these roots has forged a partnership and a novel program. In one of our key events, environmental and artistic narratives join to explore relationships between ecology and socio-racial structures. The ensuing conversation brings artists with multiple perspectives together: Maya Mihindou, a French-Gabonese artist and journalist whose career path spans visual arts and activism, Blick Bassy, a Cameroonian musician, with his politically-engaged artistic practice, and Djambe, a non-binary artist, who also takes part in a temporary exhibit alongside Ayrson Heráclito, a central figure in contemporary Brazilian art. Mediated by Renato Menezes, curator of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, this conversation revolves around the intersection of histories, languages, and cosmologies.

Djambe and Ayrson connect through research and poetics that traverse diverse territories, temporalities, and cosmologies, with an emphasis on the Afro-diasporic perspectives that can challenge dominant Western paradigms. Interconnecting ancestry, activism, and transatlantic sounds, the program also highlights a musical performance by Blick Bassy. Singing in Bàsàa, his native language, Bassy reasserts the power of expressions that resist erasure.

Bringing artistic practices and activism around anti-racist and emancipatory dimensions into the spotlight, this encounter invites audiences to imagine new alliances and solidarities based on the arts, memory, and listening. It is from the dynamism and organicity of *living things* that the event - organized by the MUPA, in partnership with *Agir pour le vivant*, *Institut Français*, Aliança Francesa, with the support of Galeria Simões de Assis - comes into being.

AGIR POUR LE VIVANT

Held annually in the city of Arles, France, and in countries such as Colombia, Cameroon, and Japan, the international festival *Agir pour le Vivant* was created in 2020 with the aim of fostering encounters and promoting critical reflection on new ways of building a society in harmony with all living beings, through an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach.

In its first edition in Brazil, the event brings together thinkers, scientists, activists, artists, and communities of practices from various fields for immersive experiences, artistic interventions, discussion circles, and debates grounded in ecological thinking committed to environmental and social justice, the dignity of all bodies and living beings, and collective resistance. Topics covered include the right to land and the city, memory and ancestral knowledge as ways of understanding the ecological crisis, solidarity-based internationalism, liberation of bodies and territories, ecofeminism, and community agriculture.

France-Brazil Season 2025

Inaugurated by Emmanuel Macron and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the 2025 France-Brazil Season marks 200 years of bilateral relations and aims to strengthen ties between the two countries. It is organized around three major themes: Climate and Ecological Transition, Societal Diversity and Dialogue with Africa, and Democracy and Rule of Law. In addition to these themes, the Season, running from April to September 2025 in France and from August to December 2025 in Brazil, fosters cooperation in areas such as culture, economics, research, education, and sports, with a special focus on youth and on professional exchange.

In Brazil, the season is organized and operated by the Guimarães Rosa Institute, under the supervision of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Brazilian Embassy in France, and the Brazilian Commission, headed by Emilio Kalil; in France, coordination is carried out by the French Institute

and supported by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the French Embassy in Brazil, and the French Commission, headed by Anne Louyot. The French program in Brazil is funded through a sponsors' committee, chaired by Jean-Pierre Clamadieu, president of ENGIE, with the participation of the following companies and institutions: ENGIE Foundation, LVMH, ADEO, JCDecaux, Sanofi, Airbus, CMA CGM, CNP Assurances, L'Oréal, TotalEnergies Foundation, VINCI, BNP Paribas, Carrefour, Vicat, and Scor.