

ENVISIONING MORE-THAN-HUMAN PLACE-BASED RECIPROCITIES THROUGH THE ART OF DENILSON BANIWA

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Abstract

The essay aims to problematize how the reciprocity between art and life in the artwork of Denilson Baniwa enables the envisioning of more-than-human place-based connections. It draws on creative geographies and a phenomenological approach to interpret his artworks as expressions of Amerindian placeness. The provocations embedded in these art works incite horizons of meaning that fracture anthropocentrism through the geographic experience of perspectivism. They articulate a sense of placeness woven through transformative topologies of becoming-together with diverse modes of being-in-and-of-the Earth, whether human or otherwise. In this light, Baniwa's artworks may be understood as a contribution to the envisioning of polyphonic reciprocities of co-dwelling among more-than-human kin/entities, interwoven within the care-driven fabric of places.

Keywords: Perspectivism; More-than-human Worlds; Contemporary Indigenous Art.

Resumo / Résumé

VISLUMBRAR RECIPROCIDADES DE LUGARES MAIS-QUE-HUMANOS COM A ARTE DE DENILSON BANIWA

Este ensaio almeja problematizar como a reciprocidade arte-vida nas obras de Denilson Baniwa possibilitam o vislumbre de nexos de lugares mais-que-humanos. Para tanto, parte-se das geografias criativas e de um enfoque fenomenológico que entende as obras como expressões da lugaridade ameríndia. As provocações das obras situam horizontes que fraturam o antropocentrismo por meio da experiência geográfica do perspectivismo. Elas expressam uma lugaridade densificada por topologias transformativas do devir-junto com variadas formas de ser-na-e-da-Terra, humanas ou não. Nesse ensejo, entende-se que as obras colaboram para vislumbrar as reciprocidades polifônicas de coabitações entre (par)entes mais-que-humanos que se somam nas tessituras de cuidados dos lugares.

Palavras-chave: Perspectivismo; Mundos Mais-que-humanos; Arte Indígena Contemporânea.

ENVISAGER RÉCIPROCITÉS DES LIEUX PLUS-QU'HUMAINS DANS L'ART DE DENILSON BANIWA

Cet essai vise problématiser comment la réciprocité art-vie dans les œuvres de Denilson Baniwa permet d'entrevoir des liens de lieux plus-qu'humains. A cet effet, il part des géographies créatives et d'une approche phénoménologique qui considère les œuvres comme des expressions du sens de lieu amérindienne. Les provocations des œuvres situent des horizons qui fracturent l'anthropocentrisme à travers l'expérience géographique du perspectivisme. Elles situent une territorialité densifiée par des topologies transformantes du devenir-ensemble avec diverses formes d'être-sur-et-de-la-Terre, humaines ou non. Dans cette perspective, il est entendu que les œuvres contribuent à comprendre les réciprocités polyphoniques des cohabitations entre parents/êtres plus-qu'humains qui se tissent dans les trames de soins des lieux.

Mots-clés: Perspectivisme; Mondes Plus-qu'humains; Art Indigène Contemporain.

INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-2000s, a series of movements has been underway across Brazil and Abya Yala, aimed at valorizing and amplifying Amerindian artistic production. This process has transcended the ethnographic lens that once framed the works of these peoples as mere artifacts, thereby fostering a recognition of autonomous artistic aesthetics situated within the domain of art itself (Lagrou, 2009). In tandem with broader demands of the Brazilian *retomadas* (movements for Indigenous land and cultural reclamation), these efforts have sought to affirm both the contemporaneity of Indigenous artistic production and its convergence with contemporary art (Goldstein, Souza, & Barcelos Neto, 2024). Whether in the form of performances, installations, or paintings, these works function as interventions that have increasingly secured visibility and recognition within (inter)national art circuits, including the 35th São Paulo Biennial (2023) and the 60th Venice Biennale (2024).

The Macuxi activist Jaider Esbell (2018) proposed that this process of empowering Indigenous aesthetics and cosmologies be understood as contemporary Indigenous art. This concept underscores that these are aesthetic arrangements that engage directly with the institutional art world. As a counterpoint to the historical position in which their images were appropriated by non-Indigenous actors, Indigenous artists now claim forms of self-expression grounded in the inseparability of art and life (Lagrou & Velthem, 2009). Silva and Bastos (2023) explain that contemporary Indigenous art weaves aesthetics together with traditions, ways of life, and place-based meanings across diverse Indigenous peoples. Their creative processes intertwine sensory correspondences that link human and non-human worlds, activism and poetics, as well as the contemporary and the ancestral, thereby giving rise to expressions that are rich in affects and imbued with the meanings of modes of being-in-the-world. Hailing from the Dari community in Amazonas, Denilson Baniwa is a prominent figure within this movement. Through works imbued with satire, transformation, and the inversion of figurative codes, he has constructed an artistic corpus that places Baniwa ethnic imageries into tension with Western imageries. As Santos and Hernandez (2022) have observed, the activist strategically appropriates non-Indigenous institutions and images, transforming contemporary art into a dialogical force capable of moving between worlds.

Rooted in the meanings of Amerindian places, Baniwa crafts artworks that are intentionally unsettling to the eye, thereby compelling viewers to reposition themselves in relation to the world. Through the geographic experience that flows from his expressions, it becomes possible to glimpse diverse *grafias da Terra*—inscriptions of the Earth—woven through the entanglements of (in)visible entities engaged in reciprocities that encompass and transcend the human.

This text, therefore, offers an invitation to problematize how the reciprocity between art and life in Denilson Baniwa's work enables the envisioning of relational nexuses within more-than-human places, with a particular focus on the reversibilities embodied in the interrelations among non-human animal worlds. This trajectory is mediated through a close engagement with three of his artworks—*Tudo é Gente* [Everything is Personhood] (2020), *Sukuryu-Tapuya* (2020), and *Pirá-Tapuya* (2020)—approaching them as pathways for challenging the concept of place.

To this end, I have drawn on the frameworks of creative geographies disseminated by Hawkins (2014), which conceptualize the intertwining of art and geography as a relational horizon that encompasses the unfolding processes and affects involved in the geographic experience of the arts. This perspective resonates with phenomenology in viewing artworks as modes of thinking, or matrices of ideas, as affirmed by Merleau-Ponty (2012). Within this geographic-phenomenological framework, I set out to interpret the works of Denilson Baniwa as expressions of Amerindian thought that provoke reflection on the topological nature of placeness, as well as on the more-than-human intentionalities that permeate and traverse places.

“THIS, MY SON, IS YOUR UNCLE!”: LOCATING PLACES BEYOND THE HUMAN

Places are geographic experiences inherently tied to the ways in which the being-in-the-world inhabits and is inhabited by the Earth. Permeated by definitions, meanings, perceptions, relationalities,

and intersubjectivities (Tuan, 2012), each place emerges from the existential fabric of those involved in it. To become a being is to be enveloped within the gravitational pull of places, while simultaneously recognizing that places are reciprocally entangled with the beings that constitute them (Casey, 2001).

The ontological imperative of place, as a primordial geography and an essential part of life (Karjalainen, 2012), underpins an understanding that the world is experienced through its placeness. As an experiential phenomenon, place is the means by which the world acquires texture, and manifests as concreteness, as observed by Schmidt (2020). Thus, being-in-the-world entails an ongoing interweaving of emergent, intercorporeal, and dynamic places.

Seamon (2018) revealed that places are phenomena that gather, intertwine, and sustain existential connections among beings, experiences, meanings, events, and possibilities of becoming-a-being. Amidst this relational web, places enable us to glimpse geographic intertwinings of diverse forms of being-in-and-of-the-Earth, insofar as we consider their experiential potentialities.

In the cosmologies and modes of coexistence of Abya Yala, placeness occupies a central role due to the grounded nature of its ways of thinking. As highlighted by Vedovatto, Lima-Payayá, and Marandola Jr. (2024), Amerindian practices are rendered more complex through narratives, stories, and thought structures that emerge from the telluric nexuses of their lifeworld.

The grounded horizon of placeness emerges as an active participant in the webs of meaning that unfold through its artistic expressions. Unlike in Western society, the artist is conceived as a being-in-the-world who “captures and transmits like a transistor radio” (Lagrou, 2009, p. 22. Author’s translation). Each artwork becomes a crystallization of the human and non-human existences of place, materialized as creative potential. It embodies a dialogical confluence of receiving, translating, and transmitting the worlds that orbit the gravitational pull of their places.

In contemporary Indigenous art, the force of grounded thought is conjured by activists to generate compositions that are densely woven with geographic experiences. Through the expressions they evoke, the artworks bring forth placeness as a co-creator, summoning the voices of the multiple (in)visible entities that inhabit and constitute the intersubjective entanglements of place.

From amid the artistic practice of Denilson Baniwa, it becomes evident how the multidimensional fabric of place emerges as a vital experience in his creative process. Through his erasures, illustrations, satires, and performances, he channels grounded thought in a way that redirects the eye and provokes discomfort. This is precisely what he enacts when superimposing colonial imagery onto Indigenous bodies in the work *Tudo é gente* [Everything is Personhood] (2020) — Figure 1.

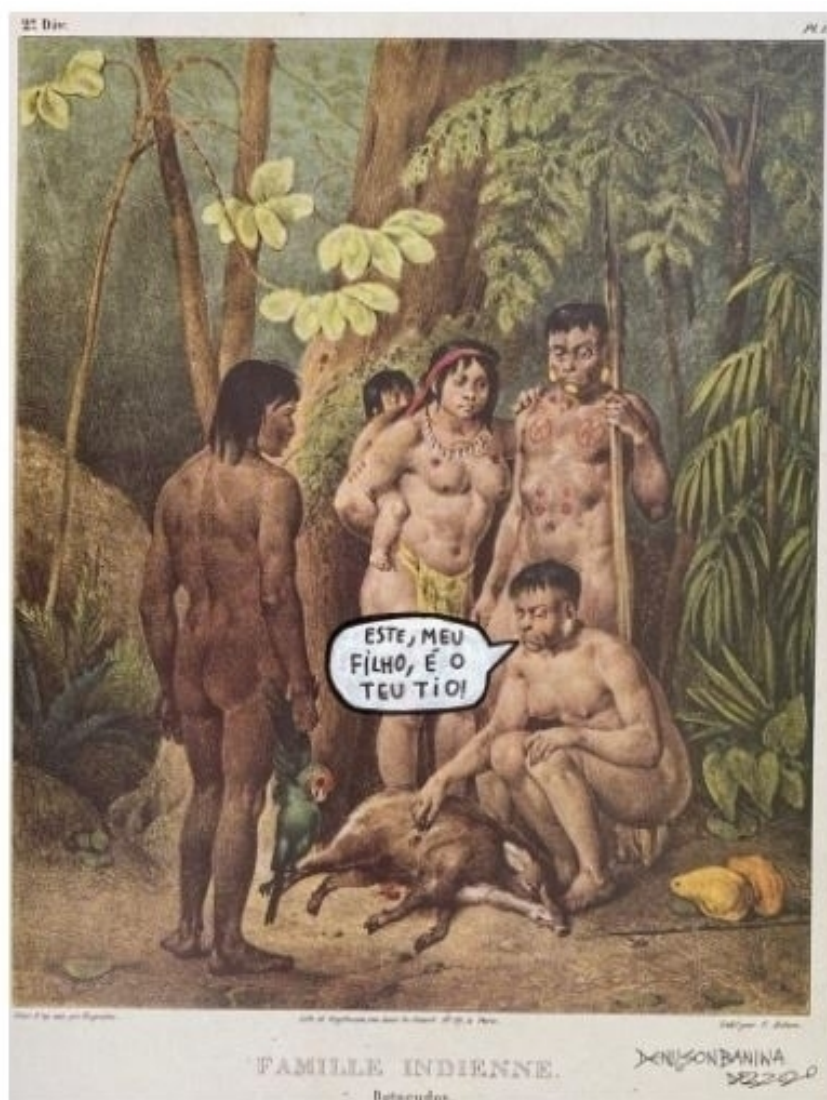


Figure 1 – Denilson Baniwa. Tudo é gente [Everything is Personhood] (2020). Acrylic on photographic print, 32 × 24 cm. Source: Baniwa, D.; 2021.

The playful intervention, “This, my son, is your uncle!”, is embedded within the relational webs of multiple entities that compose the ancestral placeness of Amerindian worlds. In contrast to the exoticism of *Famille Indienne*, it evokes the forces of kinship that encompass and stretch beyond human beings, unsettling those who engage with the work through the convergence of powers and agencies that transcend colonialist modes of illustration. In this act of reinvention, the everyday scene is reformulated to express the non-anthropocentric character that permeates these places.

Scratched over the image, the intervention generates estrangement by attributing intentionality, kinship, and sentience to the prey killed in the hunt. This assertion highlights the more-than-human dimension that animates placeness in its vivacity, fostering multiple modes becoming that sustain kinship networks capable of challenging modern Western speciesism.

Since, as Merleau-Ponty (1973, p. 56) asserted, artwork is “a mode of communication which does not pass through objective evidence”, inaugurating meaning that (re)kindles the power of expression by provoking alternative ways of thinking. Thus, the provocation in *Tudo é gente* (2020) opens a pathway to understanding worlds beyond anthropocentric speciesism. By challenging the perspective that splinters human from nature, the artist’s gesture of a scratched-over intervention creates a zone of tension born from the place-based, embodied experience of being-in-and-of-the-Earth.

As Lima (2019, p. 184) observed, when Amerindians regard non-human animals, rivers, or other beings as kin, “it sounds anachronistic to the stranger who listens; and even when they try to conceal it, the astringency provoked by such expressions still lingers on their lips” (Author’s translation). This (dis)encounter, which converges in *Tudo é gente* (2020), enacts a reversal of the Western perceptual framework that confines intentionality to the human world. The groundedness expressed in the artwork reveals the multiplicity of sentiences beyond the human, crystallized in the emergence of place.

The unsettling act of scratching over the image evokes a more-than-human placeness—one that both includes and exceeds human intentionalities—establishing shared cohabitational bonds is rooted in being-in-and-of-the-Earth. To challenge human exceptionalism is to confront the Western hubris that reduces the rest of the planet to inert matter, as mere resource, or passive backdrop (Singh, 2022). It is an invitation to recognize that other living beings are entangled in the definitions and meanings that flourish within places, as Lorimer (2006) also contends.

To declare “This, my son, is your uncle!” is to burst forth into cohabitational porosities alongside the other intentionalities and sentiences that constitute the place. This purportedly astringent anachronism reveals a placeness grounded thought that stands in stark contrast to anthropocentrism. This localized meaning expresses the conjunction of ancestral coexistential multiplicities, which are ways of being-in-the-world shaped by geographical experiences intertwined with non-human subjectivities.

Relational arrangements emerge from a living Earth that pulses amidst the intercorporealities and more-than-human intentionalities. Among Amazonian peoples, as portrayed in the work of Denilson Baniwa, ethnographic accounts frequently describe letting-go-of-being as taking on the form of a posthumous non-human body—one that may, at times, even become prey (Castro, 2018). This is possible because souls are not conceived through vertical distinctions; rather, their division is merely horizontal and ephemeral.

Castro (2018) clarifies that Amerindian ethnography frequently describes the existence of villages inhabited by jaguars, macaws, or other non-human beings. Each entity—whether mineral, vegetal, animal, meteorological, inert, or spiritual—is recognized as possessing agency, perceptual disposition, or sentience, insofar as it harbors a soul analogous to that of humans (Castro, 2018).

Faced with the plethora of cohabitations between societies and more-than-human worlds that permeate Amerindian earthbound thought, perspectivism highlights the inexistence of an ontological divide between nature and culture for these peoples (Castro, 2018). Indeed, what exists is a multinaturalism in which distinct entities come closer to one another based on their reflexive conditions (Maciel, 2019). As Danowski and Castro (2017, p. 98) argue,

Amerindians think there are far more societies (and therefore humans) between the sky and the earth than our anthropologies and philosophies dream of. What we call the ‘environment’ is for them a society of societies, an international arena, a cosmopoliteia. Therefore, there is no absolute difference in status between society and environment, as if the former were the ‘subject’ and the latter the ‘object’. Every object is always another subject, and always one more. (Author’s translation. Emphasis in the original).

Within this experiential horizon, pluralities of reciprocal, dynamic, transitional, and unstable sentiences unfold, in which the human occupies but one position among many possible positions within the cycles and webs of cohabitation of places. Problematizing the notion that *Tudo é gente* (2020), thus entails fracturing the nature-culture dichotomy and advancing multinaturalist perspectivism as a foundational condition of geographical experience. In the verses accompanying his work, Denilson Baniwa (2021, n.p.) suggests:

Before I, you, or any other Homo sapien came to dominate the planet,

Everything was personhood: forest, humans, and non-humans alike were of personhood. There were jaguar-persons, parrot-persons, tree-persons, stone-persons; and human-persons. We all spoke the same language. We understood one another.

From the perspectivist position that animates this cosmopoliteia, pulsing within the place, mutual understanding of the past becomes possible through the convergence of human and non-human animals as coexisting persons (Castro, 2018). For Amerindian pluriverses, culture functions as a shared backdrop among the multiple natures that manifest in bodies temporarily estranged from human self-perception (Maciel, 2019)—in other words, everything was persons.

Explicit in the provocations of *Tudo é gente* (2020), place emerges as a transitional encounter composed of multinaturalist configurations of more-than-human intersubjectivities. Predator and prey alike participate in the same cohabitation web, underscoring the plurality of coexistences in which geographical experience is shared by physically distinct bodies that nevertheless converge in the dynamics of being-in-and-of-the-Earth. Through perspectivism, a sentience of place is revealed—one born from the ancestral reciprocity that defines this society of more-than-human societies.

Similarly to what Brewer II and Johnson (2023) problematize based on the Kiowa worldview, indigenous knowledge holds that non-human kin—rivers, sun, plants, other animals—possess cultures, rules, and teachings regarding living and surviving on the planet that precede humanity. Consequently, the first humans are understood to have learned through exchange, observation, and dialogue with these entities, who “were essentially taught by their older siblings/relatives how to live and adapt in this world” (Brewer II & Johnson, 2023, p. 324).

As De La Cadena (2015) observed through ethnographic work among the Quechua, this vital intertwining of earthly kinships centers on the conception that persons—human or otherwise—do not merely belong to a place; they themselves are the places. Irreducible to spatial extent alone, the relational nexuses of more-than-human beings render placeness into geographical experiences of co-emergence, cohabitation, and intercorporeal conviviality. Tree-persons, stone-persons, and jaguar-persons cannot be reduced to mere elements or imageries of place, for they enact place through their own intentionalities that transcend the human.

Given that place is a lived, experiential whole whose totality exceeds the sum of its parts (Seamon, 2018), the entanglement among earthly beings becomes evident, arising from their shared subjection to planetary gravitation (Abram, 2010). Beyond mere spatial extensiveness, place is composed of the topological, cohabitational, and intersubjective bonds among entities that extend beyond the human.

Thus, Amerindian placeness, understood as an ontological potency, is imbued with the conviviality of entities sharing the sentience of being-in-and-of-the-Earth. Aligned with this nexus, *Tudo é gente* (2020) situates itself within an experiential horizon that acknowledges cohabitants through the more-than-human reciprocity coursing through Amerindian places. More than *res extensa*, placeness converges forms of becoming that (re)signify space beyond the dichotomies of the (in)visible and the (im)material, returning to a topological dimension that precedes mere extensiveness.

In line with evidence from among the Quechua (De La Cadena, 2015), the Ngurlu (Rose, 2014), the Payayá (Lima, 2019), the Kiowa (Brewer II & Johnson, 2023), and others, Denilson Baniwa’s work demonstrates a perspectivist and multinaturalist framework for situating the relational webs of being-in-and-of-the-Earth in their emergence as place. As opposed to a place conceived by and for humans, and defined by extensiveness, a topological bond is conjured—one that expands to encompass the gathering of human and non-human entities, acknowledging their agencies and intersubjectivities.

ECHOES OF MORE-THAN-HUMAN RECIPROCITIES IN/OF/THROUGH PLACE

Places are continually affected, transformed, and modified by the plethora of intentionalities that permeate them. Isochronically, they also affect the entities that partake in their placeness. If geographical experience is fundamentally a relationship of reciprocity (Schmidt, 2020), then the affective forces of place are both felt and echoed within that which emerges from the shared sentience present in the more-than-human webs of the lifeworlds that compose them.

This manifests in the arts both through the senses of place, embedded in the artistic creation, and in the ways artworks circulate in the world, as echoes of the placeness in which they participate

(Hawkins, 2014). In this process, the arts prompt those who engage with them to (re)see the world and, consequently, the places in which they are situated. Indeed, as Merleau-Ponty (1973, p. 90) affirmed, each artwork “teaches us to see and makes us think as no analytic work can”.

Through the conceptual matrices of ideas of art, it becomes possible to engage with the multiple echoes that emerge from geographical experiences, opening pathways that elevate toward other potentials of place. In the case of contemporary Indigenous art, the inseparability of art and life that pulses through these works points to a topological and existential horizon whose center shifts beyond human placeness.

In line with this understanding, Lagrou and Velthem (2018) argue that in Amerindian arts, aesthetics resonate with the ontological transformative potency of unstable forms that underpin their cosmologies. This convergence of art-life-place expresses how “people live the becoming-bird, the becoming-multiple, the becoming-anaconda, and a multiplicity of other ways of becoming in everyday life and ritual” (Lagrou & Velthem, 2018, p. 136. Author’s translation.).

In contemporary Indigenous art, this transformative reciprocity emerges as an earthbound force for creation. Within the Amerindian matrices of ideas, the artist is not an isolated author but is instead entangled with more-than-human arrangements in, of, and through ancestral places and the voices of the Earth, which compose the creative symphonies of each artwork.

As Denilson Baniwa (2022, p. 555) explains, “the owner of art is not the artist who reproduces it on canvas or body. There are various owners of art, the boa constrictor, for example” (Author’s translation). This shared authorship resonates with the multifaceted nature of the becoming-together that is intrinsic to the multinaturalist perspectivism of Indigenous being-in-and-of-the-Earth. The telluric force that brings an artwork into being is reciprocally born from the transformative ontology that composes bodies and places as more-than-human entities. From this virtuality, metamorphic images may arise, such as Sukuryu-tapuya (2020) in Figure 2.



Figure 2 – Denilson Baniwa. Sukuryu-tapuya (2020). Digital engraving, variable size. Source: Baniwa, D.; 2020.

Part of the series *Aquela gente que se transforma em bicho* [Those persons who transform into animals], Sukuryu-tapuya (2020) echoes the human-animal nexuses explored in *Tudo é gente* (2020). It evokes a way of becoming in which the figure of the *sucuri* (anaconda)—a recurring entity in the

decorative motifs of Amazonian peoples (Lagrou, 2009)—intertwines with the lifeworld of humans. This becoming-sucuri signals a mode of being-in-the-world enmeshed with the powers of more-than-human intersubjectivities and intercorporealities.

In this process of becoming, recognizing this non-human other as a holder of place also entails a becoming-with the practice of place-making in shared dynamics. Beyond acknowledging the sucuri as a relative, it involves perceiving it as a potential for relational transformation, a condition of being-in-and-of-the-Earth. More than mere representation, the becoming-sucuri is an affective expression of primal and telluric reciprocity, through which Amerindian place-making acquires definition and meaning.

Sukuryu-tapuya (2020) resonates within the affective zone of perspectivist contact between the places of human-persons and sucuri-persons. Both are enriched by distinct ways of being and of place-making, intertwined with more-than-human intercorporeality, and imply mutual recognition. Within this multinaturalist reciprocity, geographical experience is reflected as a transformative “humanimal” instability, articulated through the inexorable topological kinship between human and non-human place-making.

In line with the ethnography of Amazonian Amerindians analyzed by Fausto (2023), it becomes evident that their visual regime is driven by the paradoxes of humanimal transformations. Instead of an attachment to a fixed identity or stable rootedness in a given place, a more-than-human plurality emerges, which oscillates among multiple referents, where the intentionality of place-making derives from the relational ambiguity of becoming-together in telluric reciprocity.

The concept of Amerindian perspectivism understands sentience in opposition to solipsism. Indeed, as Abram (2010) argued, sentience is conceived as the sharing of a relational flow—an encounter between bodies and the pulsating world that envelops them. In the domain of more-than-human reciprocities of place, each being contributes to the horizons of definition and meaning through its distinct (inter)corporeal ways of being-in-and-of-the-Earth—whether crawling, swimming, flying, spreading roots, hunting, or ruminating.

Becoming-sucuri involves using body painting to embody some of its characteristics and to invoke forces that transcend human corporeality. It also entails sharing humanimal exchanges as composites of more-than-human geographical experiences that multiply the perspectives and possible natures of each place. Against the grain of extensivity, this topological approach challenges anthropocentrism by embracing other ways of becoming, whether animate or inanimate, as inseparable from place.

Wood (2019) suggested that non-human animals invite us to shift away from our familiar ways of inhabiting and contemplating cohabitational networks. Their distinct modes of being-in-place call the imagination toward the transformative power of being-in-and-of-the-Earth. By enabling oneself to become-non-human, corporeal dispositions multiply, emerging as new possibilities for defining and signifying geographical experience.

Immersed in this metamorphic force, Pirá-tapuya (2020)—Figure 3—implies recognizing the transitivity of terrestrial habitats. Becoming-pirá (fish) means being-in-place amid more-than-human reciprocities with the water (relatives) and, simultaneously, acknowledging the shared sentience of place-making, which expands into the depths of rivers and their flows.

The embodied disposition of the work arises from the potency of perspectivism as a multinaturalist convergence of more-than-human lifeworlds. Different bodies—human and pirá—(re)encounter one another as horizons of geographical experience, each originating from distinct habitats, aquatic and terrestrial alike. What matters, however, is not their distinction, but their intercorporeal approximation within more-than-human relational arrangements centered on being-in-and-of-the-Earth.

As Casey (2001) noted, places and bodies are continuously and relationally rearranged. Perspectivist becomings may therefore also be understood as emergences of more-than-human placeness. Within the intercorporeality that governs transformative ontology, the condition of being-in-and-of-the-Earth imbues the senses of place with the radiant forces of possible connections to the pulsating subjectivities of the soil, water, atmosphere, and multiple non-human relatives.



Figure 3 – Denilson Baniwa. *Pirá-tapuya* (2020). Digital engraving, variable size. Source: Baniwa, D.; 2020.

Similar to what occurs in *Sukuryu-tapuya* (2020), *Pirá-tapuya* (2020) evokes the transcendence of the individual-body—one of the myopias of anthropocentrism (Wood, 2019)—toward the collective body(ies) that compose the core of geographical experience. This topology recalls the fact that, as Abram (2010, p. 46) reports, “we are not pure mind-stuff, but are tangible bodies of thickness and weight, and so have a great deal in common with the palpable things that we encounter”. Through these becomings, the artist evokes the plurality of entities that are co-authors of the art through which these bodies are constituted in transformative kinships in, of, and through places.

What emerges from the matrices of ideas in Denilson Baniwa’s artwork is the perspectivist and multinaturalist unity between kin and the very more-than-human flow of place itself. Just as the place comes to co-inhabit the bodies of those who constitute their lifeworlds there (Casey, 2001), the experiences of being-in-and-of-the-Earth become inscribed through the intercorporeal and intersubjective reciprocity of (mis)encounters among intentionalities. Placeness is understood as the primal and telluric attunement of these multispecies arrangements of entities in kinship with flow.

Lima (2019) has contributed to this rationale by clarifying that the topological identities of Amerindian places are simultaneously openings and closures centered on radical alterities. Humans and non-humans become entangled through forms of becoming-together, in which the “I” or the “Self” is pluralized in the same movement that decenters consciousness as the sole locus of meaning. In other words, placeness is not driven by human intentionality alone, but rather emerges from the shared sentence within the transformative arrangements of more-than-human relatives—whether living or not—that enable the definitions and meanings of place-making.

Thinking at this level of more-than-human reciprocity within geographical experience helps to recognize that empathy extends beyond the human (Lima, 2019). Amid the radical alterity necessary for cohabitational arrangements of place, becoming-sucuri or becoming-pirá are expressions of a convergence of bodies that continuously (re)constitute themselves with one another and with places. “Perhaps the unique places of today’s ‘globalized world’ are not so unique, homogeneous, or ‘full’ after all, if we could lend our ears/listen to the ‘nomads’ (human and non-human)” (Goetttert & Mota, 2020, p. 16. Author’s translation).

Amerindian places express affinities of seeing-feeling-thinking (Despret, 2013) that complicate intercorporeality through attunements with the transformative dynamics of geographical experience.

Bodies topologically entangled with place overlap beyond extensivity, radiating multinaturalist meanings that continuously enact the becomings of (mis)encounters with the more-than-human horizons of being-in-and-of-the-Earth.

In the transformative principle of Amerindian universes, sight and feeling are always disposed toward sudden change (Fausto, 2023). This process arises from the recognition that more-than-human worlds are simultaneously and continuously intertwined, though sometimes imperceptible (Lagrou, 2009). In the aforementioned works, Denilson Baniwa assigns a scopic regime to this place-making power, expressing the neuralgic multivalence of Amerindian radical alterity.

Aquela gente que se transforma em bicho demonstrates how perspectivism also operates as a cohabitational force. Through the radical more-than-human alterity manifested in the work, it summons an irruption that unsettles anthropocentric myopia. Denilson Baniwa begins from the openings of the places that cohabit his body to evoke other possible worlds. As the artist expresses in the verses that accompany *Tudo é gente* (2020):

In these times, while there is no time machine

To hurl us back into the times of the ancestral world

We may return to an understanding that we are part of the planet, and not its rulers

Art, Indigenous or otherwise, may serve as a metaphysical mechanism of translation

Translations of the voices of the forest, the stones, the water, and all living beings

Indigenous art stands as an ally in understanding worlds

For it moves between the ancestral and the plasticity of the modern world (Baniwa, 2021, n.p.)

At the core of the cohabitational nexus of more-than-human place-making, Indigenous art pertains to the polyphony of relatives translated into artworks. Emerging from the transformative ontology of the ancestral world and the geographical experience of reciprocal understanding with non-human societies, perspectivist and multinaturalist openness arises as an expressive force in, of, and through Amerindian places.

The matrices of ideas that flow through these artworks trace back to the potentialities of situating oneself among worlds, bodies, and places that converge in cohabitational arrangements permeating geographical experience beyond modern Western anthropocentrism. The polyphony of more-than-human relatives pluralizes the understanding of reciprocity in the affinities that compose place-making. Inscribed within the artworks, the multinaturalist perspectivism of places becomes a convergence of Amerindian being-in-and-of-the-Earth.

In reciprocity with the cohabitation of these places, it becomes evident, in agreement with Mota and Goetttert (2020, p. 18. Emphasis in the original), that the Earth “inhabits itself in a geography that seems intent on insisting on the inseparability of the human and the non-human”. It consists of a sum of more-than-human peoples who are fulfilled within each other through mutual care in, of, and through place.

Care permeates placeness through intricate webs of interdependence. Echoing Rose’s (2014) ethnographic insights into the Ngurlu, responsibilities among more-than-human kin involve multispecies entanglements that nourish coexistential horizons. Similarly, as observed among the Kiowa (Brewer II & Johnson, 2023), the universe is regarded as alive and must be approached through an ethics of inclusivity rooted in the relationality of becoming-together.

Place is not solipsism but radical more-than-human alterity and empathy, emerging from the inescapable entanglements of care involved in being-in-and-of-the-Earth. If care entails asymmetrical and multilateral obligations between materialities and existences beyond the human, as Bellacasa (2017) argues, insisting on this reciprocity aims at understanding and pluralizing geographical experiences

through flows of affinities.

We are continuously engaged with a shared sentience of the pulsating Earth, where places are the angles through which we potentially insert ourselves into its webs of radical pluralisms (Abram, 2010). This arrangement concerns interdependencies and shared responsibilities among multiple beings endowed with intelligence and creativity, whether human or otherwise (Singh, 2022). Placeness converges toward these arrangements of sentiences that are increasingly complex in the transformative potential of becoming-together.

Caring for place is also being cared for by place, as Seamon (2018) reminds us. It is a continuous process that nurtures placeness through encounters in radical alterities. Whether with the boar-uncle hunted in *Tudo é gente* (2020) or with the becomings of *Sukuryu-tapuya* (2020) and *Pirá-tapuya* (2020), the non-human relative is seen as part of the localized care arrangements in the becoming of Amerindian perspectivism.

To care is to be concerned, to be drawn in, and to allow oneself to be involved in the relationships that arise in the process of becoming-with those we care for and who care for us (Bellacasa, 2017). By being reciprocally inserted into the networks of both animate and inanimate kin, humanity may come to recognize its dependence on the webs of care continually extended by the Earth (Brewer II & Johnson, 2023). Therefore, care is a world-making force, enacted through encounters that reconfigure priorities and disempowers pre-established determinations (Bellacasa, 2017).

Permeated by the ethical-ecological irruption of the more-than-human “We” (Wood, 2019) in the face of the anthropocentric “I,” recognizing the reciprocity of lifeworlds opens possibilities for envisioning networks of transformative, cohabitational geographies. As Denilson Baniwa’s works insists, against the notion of being as a closed, individuated identity, more-than-human placeness embodies the plurality of kinships in mutual caring-being-cared-for.

CONCLUSIONS

Denilson Baniwa’s artworks challenge geography to problematize how becoming-with—as a condition of becoming-together—orbis care as an attractive force that invokes the polyphony of geographical experiences. In contrast to an extensive, anthropocentric perspective of place, his work compels me to see-feel-think placeness as being composed of the reciprocities of shared sentiences that go beyond human boundaries.

Through the intercorporeality and intersubjectivity of becoming-together with multispecies kin, the Amerindian lifeworld articulates the grounded, placed-based experience of being-in-and-of-the-Earth. The perspectivist force transcends speciesist myopias. In this movement, Amerindian thinking-art incites glimpses of placeness as a cared-for-caregiver phenomenon.

In the reciprocity of caring for more-than-human places, *Aquela gente que se transforma em bicho* [Those people who transform into persons] affirms the notion that inseparability from other creatures is fundamental for nurturing geographical experiences with the alterities and empathetic care of, in, and through the Earth. Even if we cannot return to the times when *tudo era gente* [everything was personhood], it remains possible to be affected by the entanglements of the polyphonies of relatives immersed in cohabitational interdependencies, toward the transgression of anthropocentrism.

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