

## The plurality of indigenous dress: an intercultural and transdisciplinary proposal

### *Os vestires plurais dos povos originários: uma proposta intercultural e transdisciplinar*

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Awakening to intercultural experiences is a political and also poetic action. This dossier is born from this premise: the need to experience, together, the potential of the narratives and worldviews of the ancestral cultures of the indigenous peoples that resist and endure in Pindorama, Abya Yala, and beyond the seas.

Curiously, the research field on dress histories in Brazil has been slow to make the collective effort to make known the plurality of its fashions, including what the oldest inhabitants of these lands wore. The histories of European fashion and its diffusion are much more numerous and well-known in the colonized countries of the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Oceania than the histories of their ancestral peoples. Our interest is to contribute to the growing visibility that the native cultures have achieved.

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The preliminary data from the census, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2022, informs that in Pindorama (Brazil), there are more than 1 million and 690 thousand indigenous people, which represents 0.83% of the Brazilian population and an increase of more than 88% in this population in the last 12 years<sup>5</sup>. In 2010, 305 ethnicities speaking 274 different languages had already been identified—data that are still being updated and will be released based on the last mentioned census.

Brazilian legislation, similar to what occurs in other countries that underwent European colonization, seeks to redress the social injustices committed against traditional communities, including indigenous peoples. Among decrees and ordinances, one of the most relevant actions aimed at promoting social justice in the country is present in its Constitution. Article 215 of the 1988 Constitution ensures protection for indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, and traditional peoples and communities' cultural manifestations, providing for ethnic and regional valorization in the protection and promotion of cultural assets.

There are challenges in conducting research on indigenous dress. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges is the transposition of modern Western culture onto ancestral indigenous cultures in the practice of scientific work. We are talking about intercultural relationships and the realization of cooperative and collaborative work between indigenous and non-indigenous people, for example. Researching with and not researching about is a challenging paradigm shift for most of us, accustomed as we are to modern Western standards of methodological conduct.

The very proposal of this dossier, which was submitted to the *dObras* journal at the invitation of the editor-in-chief, Dr. Maria Claudia Bonadio, represents this challenge. As a journal classified as Qualis A3 by Capes, the editorial policy stipulates that authors must have a master's degree and contributors must have a doctoral degree. For the inclusion of indigenous colleagues who participated in the stages of organization, selection, submissions, and blind peer review, it was important to adapt the policies to the reality of social injustices, since postgraduate education still serves few indigenous, black, and mixed-race individuals. At the Federal University of Goiás, for example, the first indigenous person to graduate as a Doctor in Art and Visual Culture was the artist Mirna kambéba Omágua-Yetê Anaquiri in 2022, more than ten years after the start of the doctoral program.

There is no doubt that the affirmative action policies reiterated in Federal Law No. 12.711 (BRAZIL, 2012), such as those applied to universities in the form of racial quotas, were essential in changing the scenario of predominance of students from private schools in public universities. However, there are still barriers to be faced by public teaching and research institutions to ensure the retention of indigenous, quilombola, and many other low-income students throughout the long period of undergraduate to postgraduate education.

Students from indigenous ethnicities, who are settled in territories far from cities with university campuses, need much more than the right to access higher education: they need guaranteed housing, transportation, and food. This Brazilian reality is similar, to a large extent, to the reality of other countries with indigenous populations.

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<sup>5</sup> See: <https://censo2022.ibge.gov.br/sobre/questionarios.html>. Accessed on: February 12, 2024.

In addition to the challenges of conducting research related to the topic, it is also worth noting their absence in the curricula of fashion courses at the higher education level in the country. The field still relies, especially, on theoretical approaches that had references from the Global North as legitimizing, making actions that seek to overcome this hegemony still recent when compared to other fields of knowledge (Slade and Jansen, 2020).

Thus, it is worth mentioning, as part of these actions, the creation of the Research Group Indumenta: dress and textiles studies in Brazil (UFG/CNPq)<sup>6</sup>, which is dedicated to research on the plurality, diversity, and inclusivity of dress modes. Some productions of the group preceded and laid the groundwork for the elaboration of the scope of this dossier. Since 2017, we have been participating in the Research Project Presença Karajá: material culture, plots, and colonial transits (PPK), led by colleague Manuelina Maria Cândido Duarte (Université de Liège, Belgium)<sup>7</sup>, contributing with research on the ritxoko dolls and the Iny Karajá women's dress (Andrade, 2017; Di Calaça and Andrade, 2021; Andrade and Duarte Cândido, 2023; Di Calaça, 2024). Based on this experience and participating in the actions and activities of the Presença Karajá Project, the Indumenta Group elaborated and executed two extension projects: the digital exhibition Ixitkydkỹ: a look at the traditional dress of Iny Karajá women, still on display<sup>8</sup>; and the series "Tramas e Coisas de Museus" for the Podcast Outras Costuras, including interviews with some of the project participants<sup>9</sup>.

The proposal of this dossier "The plurality of indigenous dress" is connected to the scope and activities of the group, of which the organizers are part and seek to develop interpersonal and intercultural, inter and transdisciplinary research relationships. Here we bring together works aligned with these principles: six articles, one interview, one digital exhibition, one exhibition review, and three visual essays. In addition, we invited indigenous artists and photographers who kindly provided selected works for the Gallery section.

In homage to the Iny Karajá people, to which Waxiaki Karajá and Tuinaki Koixaru Karajá belong, the dossier begins with the article "Lindinhas como sempre: as moças Karajá, suas indumentárias e cuidados com o corpo" (Beautiful as always: the Karajá girls, their clothing, and body care), by author Lilian Brandt Calçavara. She presents a study on the *ijadòkòma's* dress, which refers to the Iny Karajá girls who have had their first menstruation, are virgins, and have not yet married. The discussion is based on two main rituals, the first menstruation and the marriage. The research stands out for its methodology, where the girls were protagonists, resulting in the production of two films.

Next, "Some Theoretical Reflections on Indigenous Dress in Colonial Brazil," by Roberta Marx Delson, analyzes indigenous dress during the Brazilian colonial period and reveals

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<sup>6</sup> INDUMENTA - dress and textiles studies in Brazil. Address to access this group in the Directory of Research Groups in Brazil of CNPq: <https://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/espelhogrupo/4061254552034320>. Accessed on: March 3, 2024. Instagram profile: @indumenta.br.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://presencakaraja.tainacan.org/> and on Instagram profile @presenca\_karaja. Accessed on March 3, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://www.vestiresmulheresykaraja.com/>. Accessed on March 3, 2024. Project funded by the ReFarm Cria 2022 grant.

<sup>9</sup> Podcast Outras Costuras - Series Tramas e Coisas de Museus. Available on audio aggregators such as: <https://open.spotify.com/show/40GuoBFX3DjpLYGA22hcND?si=cd430d88572942e8>. Accessed on March 3, 2024.

aspects of the interaction between Portuguese colonizers and native populations, challenging simplistic narratives about the Portuguese perception of Brazil's native inhabitants. By examining how dress was used as part of the Portuguese civilizing mission, we realize that, although it was an inevitable facet of this process, it was not necessarily successful in imposing permanent changes on indigenous culture. The creation of social distinctions and classes through clothing is undeniable, but not necessarily in the way traditionally portrayed by history. This reflection leads us to consider anthropological and sociological theories about adornments and clothing, which played a central role in maintaining social order for Brazilian indigenous peoples. These theories not only explain aspects of Brazilian colonial history but also point to new possibilities for research and interpretation of the real meaning of dress for indigenous peoples who have been subjected, for more than three centuries, to Portuguese rule.

“Moda e seu ensino decolonial como tecnologias de encantamento para preservação das vestimentas indígenas no cotidiano” (*Fashion and its decolonial teaching as enchantment technologies for the preservation of indigenous dress in everyday life*), by Julia Vidal Santos Borges and Julia Muniz Xavante, seeks to discuss the production and representation of dress of the Marajoara and Xavante peoples, from a decolonial perspective. The methodological procedures adopted by the authors in the development of this study stand out for field research in the villages, as well as for the oral accounts during the classes of the Pluricultural Fashion course at the Ewà Poranga School, which has a teaching staff of Afro-descendants, Africans, and Latin American indigenous people.

Furthermore, in “Slow Design in collaborative fashion design practice with Kaingang women artists: tensions from the decolonial perspective” by Miruna Raimundi de Gois and Daniela Novelli, we have an intriguing paper that highlights the scarcity of literature on the subject, emphasizing how the ephemeral and market-driven conception of fashion obscures traditional indigenous elements. The research, centered on the Kaingang ethnicity, reveals tensions such as the lack of knowledge of the mother tongue, the relativization of slow design concepts, and the need to adapt indigenous art to conventional markets. The authors emphasize the importance of deepening the relationships between indigenous practices and the principles of slow design in other communities, highlighting the need for continuous reflection on subject positions in research. This paper significantly contributes to the debate on fashion, identity, and decoloniality, inspiring new approaches in the field of decolonial fashion design.

“Researching indigenous fashion in Abya Yala: learnings from studies of Native American art” by Laura Beltran-Rubio presents an updated discussion based on recent literature regarding fashion theorization and alternatives to the canon of Western modernity. It advocates for the need to think of methodologies that allow for the development of studies based on Shaw Wilson's (2008) concept of “relational accountability,” and reinforces the importance of Visual and Material Culture approaches for studies involving indigenous peoples. The text discusses the need to “decolonize” the arts, especially in fashion, highlighting the academic efforts and challenges in this process. The author emphasizes how the term “decolonization” has become popular in fashion studies, but its improper use can be detrimental to the decolonial cause, especially in Latin America. She also highlights, through

academic reviews, how the term is used superficially, without real commitment to decolonization. The article proposes a new paradigm in the research of indigenous fashion in Abya Yala, involving a process of unlearning and restructuring academic practices to give voice to indigenous peoples. It also offers some methodological guidelines to advance in the theorization and writing of narratives about indigenous fashion, recognizing cultural diversity and the need for specific contextualization. It represents a valuable contribution to the reflection and action around the decolonization of fashion and its study in Latin America.

“Yawanawá: the encounter with fashion design and globalization” by Mariana dos Santos Couto and Fernanda de Abreu Cardoso presents modernity as the link between current challenges and discussions regarding the treatment modes and intercultural relations involving indigenous peoples. For the authors, in the field of Fashion Design, “Brazilianness” not only has symbolic value but also economic value, often being used as a resource in marketing logic. When a fashion brand associates with an indigenous people, for example, it goes beyond simply using visual references or labor for the artisanal production of clothing. This can involve creating an articulated discourse that sustains various aspects, from the valorization of national cultural capital to arguments of sustainability. In this context, rescuing traditional values can be a resource for distinction in a globalized market that tends towards homogeneity. Ancient entities also move towards modernity, dialoguing with global practices, seeking to maintain their traditions and prevent their disappearance. These relationships, however, bring with them inherent contradictions of modernity, which serve as a basis for investigating and questioning its positive or negative impact for a traditional group.

In addition to the articles specially selected for this dossier, we present an exclusive interview with Glicélia, also known as Célia or Glicéria Tupinambá. She plays a crucial role in the fight for the return to Brazil of the Tupinambá Mantle, currently at the National Museum of Copenhagen, Denmark. For these people, the mantle is a living ancestor, an Enchanted one that carries their history and identity. The quest for its return is not just about repatriating an object, but about recognizing and respecting Tupinambá culture and spirituality. Célia has been an active voice in this cause, sensitizing authorities and institutions about the cultural and symbolic importance of the *Assojaba* Tupinambá (Tupinambá Mantle). The interview, originally recorded in audiovisual format, will be presented on the Podcast *Outras Costuras* - available on major audio aggregators - as soon as this issue of the *dObra[s]* is published.

Next, we present the virtual exhibition “Manto em Movimento” with Glicélia Tupinambá. The artist’s research is part of the quest for the recovery of the *Assojaba* Tupinambá (Tupinambá Mantle) and its associated crafting practices and rituals. Since 2005, Glicélia has been working on this project, which involves reconnecting with the territory, the Enchanted ones, and Tupinambá cosmology. Based on a photograph of the Mantle that returned to Brazil, she produced a new Mantle in 2006, to present to the Enchanted ones at a festival. Since then, she has continued to make two more Mantles, thus rediscovering part of the tradition that was taken to Europe. Her research goes beyond material recovery, also seeking the right to memory and ancestry, access to collections, and the possibility of learning again and mending a fragmented tradition. For Glicélia, it is not just about copying the appearance of the Mantles, but about remembering and reinventing their way of making and the rituals

they represent. She seeks guidance from the Enchanted ones, who guide her in these reunification journeys, listening to their call and the messages conveyed in dreams. The artist also draws on the memory of the local community, iconographic and documentary research, to remember the Tupinambá ways of connecting the material and immaterial worlds.

The review entitled “Ixitkydkỹ: a look at the traditional dress of Iny Karajá women” refers to a digital exhibition inaugurated on September 19, 2022, during the Museum Spring, promoted by the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM), and remains open for public visitation through its website. The review presents the collaborative, transdisciplinary, intercultural, and challenging work involving a team of 19 people, including indigenous and non-indigenous individuals, dedicated to the traditional dress of Iny Karajá women selected from the collection of the Professor Zoroastro Artiaga Goiano Museum, located in Goiânia/GO. The work is one of the examples of research in the field that has developed from decolonial methodological procedures, which ensured indigenous participants’ protagonism throughout the process.

In the “Costuras” section, we present three works by guest authors. “Navura - Drinking Indigenous Fashion: From the Sands of Fortaleza Beach to the Heart of Cariri” is a visual essay where readers can appreciate some items from this fashion collection, created by indigenous designer Rodrigo Tremembé, whose settled people are on the coast of the State of Ceará. Navura is the name of a ritualistic practice of the Tremembé people that exalts, through design elements, traditional culture, ancestry, and responsibility with the land.

The essay “Opening the Capanga de Aruanda: cosmographies of the encounter with the Tupinambá live schools and the Terra Vista Settlement,” by Cacá Fonseca and Laura Castro, presents a dive into the live schools of the Tupinambá Serra do Padeiro Indigenous Land and the Terra Vista Settlement, from the perspective of the “Capanga de Aruanda.” Inspired by the capoeira chant that evokes the arrival of Aruanda and its mysterious content, the text explores the association of the “Capanga de Aruanda” with the fictional bag proposed by Ursula Le Guin. This symbolic evocation transcends the physical object, becoming a powerful metaphor for the claim of territorial meanings and for the collection of resistance and life invention strategies. This approach, called Graffiti Schools, aims to strengthen intergenerational and cultural interaction processes, as well as to support the professionalization and training of youth in the artistic field.

The exhibition “LUÁ - the eyes of kaionã,” the first individual exhibition of the artist Rita Pataxó, is presented here by the artist herself and her daughter Talita Tamykuã Pataxó with a selection of works that reflect her handmade and authorial technique, characterized by indigenous colors and graphics. A master of the Pataxó people, Rita creates her prints using stamps made with reused materials, such as wood scraps, EVA rubber, and glue. Her work is an expression of everyday poetics, incorporating elements of design and textile art. The exhibition, funded by the State of Bahia and curated by her daughter, Tamykuã Pataxó, featured the work “The Eyes of Kaionã,” inspired by a bird that whispered the word “kaionã,” translated as “admirer” in Patxohã, the language of the Pataxó people. Rita and her daughters’ works, gathered under the name LUÁ Pataxó, reflect the strength of indigenous women and seek not only to promote the sale of their works but also to recognize and disseminate the stories and meanings behind each piece.

We also have selected a special set of images for dObra[s] Gallery produced by indigenous women. The works include pieces by artists Wanessa Ribeiro Ferreira, Kathellen Timoteo Matos (Kath Xapi Puri), and photographers Hawalari Sandoval Coxini and Rafaella Sandoval Coxini Karajá. In common, these women and their works present visions of the feminine and their struggles, cooperation, and the invisible line that connects the ancestral generations of their peoples.

Finally, we want to express our joy in organizing this edition by four women who have known each other for several years and who respect each other in their singularity, their diligence, and contingencies. We are all professors and researchers. Each of us worked from her geographical and existential territory. Waxiaki was at home, in Aldeia Hawalò (Santa Isabel do Morro), municipality of Lagoa da Confusão, TO. Tuinaki, in Aldeia Krehawã (São Domingos), municipality of Luciara, MT. Indyanelle lives in Goiânia where she defended her doctoral thesis in February of this year in the PPG Arte e Cultura Visual da UFG. Rita spent the last year in São Paulo, at EFLCH/Unifesp working as a Technical Collaborator in the Department of Art History. It was digital technology that allowed us to maintain a permanent and continuous dialogue from the conception of this dossier to its completion.

We would like to thank the team at dObra[s] for welcoming us promptly, embracing the challenges of intercultural work in the context of scientific publications in Brazil. The editorial and publishing process to bring together these works is complex and involves many people, institutions, and interests. We had the impeccable support of the chief editor, Maria Claudia Bonadio, the executive editor, Valéria Faria dos Santos Tessari, and the editorial assistant, Felipe Goebel.

To those who contributed their work to this edition, including reviewers, our deepest thanks for sharing your time and expertise with us so that the dossier could be published in this multimedia format.

To you, dObra[s] readers, our invitation is to read, listen, and watch the works of the dossier calmly. There are developments from the texts published here that can be accessed in different audio, video, and text media. Our expectation is that this dossier is just the beginning of others that increasingly recognize the plurality of the many ways in which indigenous peoples dress.

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