

Amazonia

Berta Sichel,
Curator

Patricia Capa,
Assistant Curator

Pratt
Manhattan
Gallery

Pratt Exhibitions

Amazonia

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144 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011
212.647.7778

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Introduction

Amazonia explores some of the key themes of the twenty-first century. It encompasses more than the usual ecological art-based project, mainly focused on climate change and the fate of the earth and its inhabitants; both leitmotifs are subtexts for this project, but not its primary emphasis. *Amazonia* builds on the premise that environmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as scientific terms, because a contemporary outcome of this kind of investigation requires both: ecological knowledge and its cultural articulation.¹ As *The Guardian* reports, “we are facing extermination;” The Amazon Rainforest territory is losing a generation of native leaders due to agricultural invasion, lack of health care, and fires programmed to expropriate the land.

Much of the conceptual and theoretical framework of this project comes from Greg Garrard’s book *Ecocriticism*,² a critical survey of divergent “positions” within current thinking about the natural environment.³ A senior lecturer in English Literature at Bath Spa University in the UK, Garrard examines several key analogies governing ecocritical practice, such as the wilderness, animals, native forest-dwellers, and the apocalypse: the Earth and its future(s). These are crucial subjects for the ample field of cultural studies. Brazilian artist Simone Michelin’s works in the exhibition—*Amália na chuva*, *Mikamaka spin* and *BUUUUUU_2*—explore these themes from the field of video art. The state of Roraima, in Brazil, connects Michelin’s three pieces of video art, in which she introduces to us a native woman of the *Canauani* ethnic group named Amalia. Through the figure of Amalia, Michelin brings us closer to the handicraft traditions of this ethnic group, such as the weaving of baskets and similar objects made with palm straw from the region and their technique of working with cotton thread, practices that today are in danger of extinction due to the lack of interest from the younger generation.

As in Garrard’s book, this exhibition touches on several themes, but all of the works included are centered on the Amazonian rainforest, its native societies and ecologies. This variety of approaches within the conceptual framework makes for a vibrant exhibition, rich with a plurality

of artistic languages among works created from the 70s to the present. *Amazonia* assembles a lively group of creative people and nearly 50 years of artwork into a narrative. In doing so, the exhibition attempts to offer a new discourse addressing “wild geography”—a term used by Garrard—to discuss climate changes in a highly technological society.

Considering the dangers that threaten the world’s largest rainforest, the main theme of this project is the Amazon basin, in which the Brazilian right-wing government⁴ has planned several projects. The dream of building bridges over the Amazon River or a hydroelectric dam on the Trombetas River is one such example. Fortunately, these projects have been stopped, because the political landscape has changed completely as a result of the elections of October 2022. The arrival of liberal politicians to power has caused great interest in the Brazilian population and international ecological groups about the destiny of the flora and fauna of the Amazon rainforest in the hands of the new government. *Margaret Mee and the Moonflower*, a documentary directed by Malu De Martino and included in this exhibition, is a fetching example of the richness of the forest. Beginning as early as 1956, Margaret Mee organized and carried out 15 expeditions to the Amazon rainforest, leaving an important and rare iconographic and artistic legacy. Her botanical illustrations remain valuable in the art world and are difficult to find.

Another important issue that this exhibition addresses is the danger that threatens tribes and wildlife in the Western Hemisphere. In 2019, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon increased by 51% compared to the same period last year, according to preliminary satellite data from the Space Research Agency INPE. Because of its low rainfall forecast, the forest clearance of the area creates ideal conditions for rampant forest fires, according to the Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM). *Paradise Burning*, the realistic work of Argentinean artist Sergio Vega, brings us anxiously closer to this reality.

This exhibition brings together the work of six women artists whose works address in different

ways the “wild geography” that Garrad writes about as well as climate change in contemporary society. Claudia Andujar, who is now 91 years old, Swiss-born Barbara Brändli (1932 – 2011), and the English Margaret Mee (1909 – 1988) belong to the first generation of travelers somewhat resembling the English women of the nineteenth century, who left their countries to travel through the African jungle. Most of their works are unpublished.

I started to research this exhibition in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Amazonas was already a frequent subject in the media, mostly because of climate changes and the collapse of the ecosystem. The carnage of the native world and the appropriation of its lands began to become current as a media issue, following the failure of the former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro to preserve the region. One subject of his last electoral campaign was to open the Amazon for development projects because of its wealth of minerals and hardwoods, which he insisted should be transformed into assets for the country. He would not accept that all this rich land belonged to what he referred to as “a lazy” group of indigenous people.

A recent topic

If, from the outset this exhibition wanted to address the native population, the work of internationally renowned Brazilian photographer Claudia Andujar was one of the first I thought of including. Born in Switzerland, she grew up between Romania and Hungary, later returning to Switzerland with her mother to escape the Holocaust in Europe. Her paternal family was exterminated in the concentration camps, a fact that would mark her life and would be reflected in her work. After resettling briefly in New York City and attending Hunter College, Andujar arrived in Brazil at the age of 24. Her life was turned upside down when she came into contact with the Yanomami tribe, and she grew a special connection with them and their land. The images by Andujar that we can see in the exhibition reflect the almost familial relationship that unites her with the Yanomami tribe, becoming known as “the mother of the Yanomami.” She was the best ally in the defense of their rights, their lands, and their health.

Andujar is accompanied in this exhibition by her contemporary, Barbara Brändli. During the 1960s both Andujar and Brändli began their expeditions through the Amazon jungle, sometimes portraying the same native groups, such as the Yanomami. According to Galeria Vermelho, Andujar’s agent, she

and Brändli never met and their works have different points of view: Andujar is more documentarian and Brändli more poetic.

These are just a couple of examples that show the fascination that these populations exert on the art world. This list of artists would not be complete without the mention of the German Lothar Baumgarten and the Chilean Juan Downey.⁵ There are also examples of the interest garnered by native Amazonian populations in the world of cinema: filmmaker Alex Pritz’s documentary *The Territory*, which was awarded in the World Cinema Documentary competition at Sundance in 2022, and *Segredos do Putomayo* by the Brazilian Aurélio Michiles are two recent examples.

Amazon River

Everything that has been mentioned so far exists and only makes sense thanks to the Amazon River. In the shape of a snake, its basin crosses six Latin American countries, Brazil being the main protagonist.

The Amazon River was portrayed by the Brazilian photographer João Musa between May, June, and July of 1975, including 20 photographs taken during the bloody period of torture in the course of the Brazilian military dictatorship. According to Musa, these photographs bring us closer to the Brazil of fifty years ago, then a country “with an almost pristine nature, whose mighty river flows freely, nourishing the planet; its monumental scale demands and imposes respect for its vital energy.” Musa traveled through several cities in the states of Amazonas and Para, learning about the region and taking a series of 35mm black-and-white photographs. In a typical Amazonian atmosphere—dense, humid air, sweltering heat, all under a blue sky—João Musa photographed not only people and landscapes, but also customs and ways of survival.

In the city of Manaus, the river functions as a way of life and, fifty years ago, could offer us a poetic vision as in Musa’s photographs. Today the Amazon River is the route by which the illegal trades of wood and other riches that are plundered from the jungle are transported. The Spanish photographer Javier Andrada, who since the 1980s has shown his interest in the American jungles, takes us on a trip to the chaotic Manaus, where street trading has spread—thanks to the *camelôs*⁶—and makes it possible for the lower classes to buy products at low prices. As early as 1987, Andrada visited the Darien jungle (or the Darien Gap), a dense and humid forest in Central America with a variety of ecosystems, to help produce a series of

advertisements for the National Parks of Panama. The Darien Gap is one of the most remote places on Earth. Since the end of the Spanish conquest, there have been numerous failed expeditions to cross the Darien Gap from Panama to Colombia and vice versa. Ten years later, Andrada traveled more than 500 kilometers in traditional boats through other jungles.

According to a 2018 study by the University of Leeds, the frequency of floods in the world's largest river has increased fivefold.⁷ Emphasizing the necessity of cartography to foresee climate change as well as drought, the Spanish artist Federico Guzmán has organized the workshop “Methods of plant propagation on the banks of the Amazon.” In collaboration with different native communities—*Andoques, Bora, Makuna, Siona*, among others—Guzmán created the work *Riverside of the Amazon*. Despite its small size, its cartographic value helps us to understand the representation and visual identity of the territory.

Offering a positive vision of the Amazon, both of its cultural richness and the power of its nature, is the work of Colombian artist Susana Mejía, *Color Amazonia*, which testifies to the experience of the various communities in which color is a pretext to exalt the immense value of a jungle that is disappearing.⁸ Her work consists of thirty-two cotton papers of 26.37 x 39.37 inches dyed with organic pigments. According to Mejía, the work “is a sensory journey through the Colombian Amazon, and a search for color as a way to vindicate the ancestral relationship between man and plants.” While Mejía proposes a sensorial encounter through the colors and organic pigments of the Amazon rainforest, the Spanish artist pablo sanz, in his sound installation *entangled*, immerses us in the richness of sounds created by mammals, birds, insects, vegetation, and even the weather of the jungle.

Finally, the Japanese artist KIMIKA (Kimiko Nonomura), although concentrating her work on the Western part of the Sahara, discovered a surprising connection between the arid desert across the Atlantic Ocean and the Amazon basin: the wind, which transports a dust rich in organic residues and phosphorous, is the same as the one that provides the essential nutrients for the Amazon flora. And as curator Esther Regueira writes, KIMIKA's artworks “are forms that produce highly expressive works, both pictorially and politically.”

Berta Sichel in collaboration with Patricia Capa
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Notes

- ¹ See Ecocritical Readings Rethinking Nature and Environment. By Shivani Jha. Partridge Publishing, India, 2015.
- ² (Routledge, London, 2012).
- ³ i.e. cornucopian, environmentalist, deep ecological, ecofeminist, social ecological, eco-Marxist and Heideggerian
- ⁴ Presidency of Jair Bolsonaro (January 2019 - January 2023)
- ⁵ After Claudia Andujar, artists such as the Chilean Juan Downey, among others, also became interested in the singular character of this previously unknown native people. Downey is the author of the work *Video Trans Americas*, a journey that he undertakes from New York to different locations in the American continent, making a record of the native populations. The Yanomami tribe was one of those that most captivated him. Although his work is not included in the exhibition, it can be understood within the context of Andujar's work for his fight in favor of the rights of native peoples.
- ⁶ [According to Javier Andrada] In Brazil, street vendors are called *camelôs*. It seems that this term derives from the French *camelot*, probably a modification of the Arabic *khmalat* which means rustic and plush fabric made with camel hair. In 12th century in Paris, the sellers of this fabric took the name from the cloth they sold, which were often imitations made with goat hair. Thus, these sellers became associated with counterfeit and low quality products. At the beginning of the 20th century the word arrived in Brazil, maintaining its derogatory meaning.
- ⁷ J. Barichivich, E. Gloor, P. Peylin, R.J.W. Brien, J. Schöngart, J.C. Espinoza, K.C. Pattinayak. Recent intensification of Amazon flooding extremes driven by strengthened Walker circulation. *Science Advances*. Vol. 4 No. 9. (2018)
- ⁸ Extracted from the exhibition poster of the *Amazonia* exhibition at Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (CAAC) Seville, Spain May-October 2021

Javier Andrada

Born in Barcelona, 1949;
lives and works in Seville, Spain.

In the words of Pedro A. Cantero, “the ties that Javier Andrada has to the landscape have been forged not only by his scientific training, closely related to nature, but also by the evocative forces and expressive potential he sensed that it contained, which are beyond basic sensations.”

Andrada’s photography focuses on landscapes, architecture, and visual anthropology in regions in Spain, Latin America, and Africa. Several of his editorial projects were commissioned by the Government of Ecuador, with topics including the culture of corn, the economy of the village of Salinas de Guaranda, and the Galapagos Islands. Andrada also oversaw a photo documentary concerning the phenomenon of border crossings, in particular the perilous passage of African migrants through the Strait of Gibraltar and that of Cuban rafters crossing the Strait of Florida.

In 2008, Andrada was invited to travel to Manaus to make a series of visual reports on the Amazon river and the surrounding jungle. Walking through the streets of Manaus, Andrada discovered and began to document popular street vendors called *camelôs*.

The origins of the *camelôs* can be traced back to Brazil’s colonial period, when the pop-up market style of commerce was established in the country by former black slaves. Eventually, these vendors came to be known as *camelôs*, a term possibly derived from the French *camelot*, which itself might have been appropriated from the Arabic word *khmalat*: a rustic and plush fabric made from camel hair. But the term carried derogatory connotations, as vendors claiming to sell the camel hair fabric often peddled imitations made from goat hair. *Camelôs* thus became associated with counterfeit and low quality products, and when the term arrived in Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century, it initially maintained its pejorative connotations.

Nowadays, *camelôs* provide a necessary service for lower-class customers by making available a wide range of products at affordable prices, and have become widespread throughout the Amazon region. In 2008, in Manaus alone, 2,600 vendors were registered around the historic city square of Praça da Matriz and its surroundings.

Setting up shop on public roads around the city center, vendors display their wares in small stalls that are “folded” down in the evening, wrapped in plastic, and tied, like hay bales, to be left in the open on the public road until the following morning when they are reformed.

It is through this ritual of “folding” down that the stalls of the *camelôs* acquire their expressive value. The act becomes a functional performance wherein what are commercial stands by day become large sculptures scattered along public thoroughfares at night.

Alongside its utilitarian purpose, the folding of the stalls reveals a unifying aesthetic shared by the *camelô* community. Without artistic pretensions, these foldings become playful assemblies of tarpaulins, plastic, products, and the disparate “moorings” that anchor the folded stalls in place. The results are unique creations of material arranged according to the sensibility and criteria of their owners.

Traditionally *camelôs* have been left to occupy sidewalks and roadways without much jurisdiction, but in recent years the city has passed regulations to move their markets from the center of Manaus to *camelódromos*, specially designated arcades far from the city center. Moving the stalls to these regulated areas has generated conflicts between public officials and vendors, who resist being displaced from the commercial heart of the city.

Translated by Michael Barron



Javier Andrada
Camelões em Manaus, Brasil [detail], 2008
 Digital prints
 34 photographs, 15 ¾ x 10 ¾ inches each
 Courtesy of the artist

Claudia Andujar (Claudine Hass)

Born in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, 1931;
lives in Brazil.

“My relationship with the Yanomami, the guiding force of both my career as a photographer and my life, is essentially one of fondness. This sentiment, over time, has led me to divide my time as a photographer with activities in defense of the Yanomami peoples’ rights to territory and survival. It is a demanding task and one that requires great perseverance.

Despite this, my photographic work continues. In the seventies and eighties, I spent a great deal of time among the Yanomami. I developed an intimate work about their day-to-day life. Now, after two decades of almost exclusive endeavor in defense of their rights, I feel the need to distill my thoughts and to synthesize this photographic work that I experienced so intensely. I seek to present the feeling of commitment and loyalty that pervades the totality of my relationship to them. I have photographed the Yanomami for more than twenty years. I have a collection of several thousand negatives, which I consider a mine replete with images on which to construct a memory that I continue to update.

Now and then I allow myself to suspend time and, in the contemplation of the images, find a new expression, a new visual meaning, and I also incorporate new images from recent trips (no longer stays but short visits), making it possible for me to unite past and present, which is now almost the future of their lives. The life of the Yanomami isn’t limited anymore to long stays and journeys in the forest, nights filled with conversation and discussions in the communal house, under the moon and thousands of stars. Today they incorporate into their lives the bilingual school, indigenous assemblies, the immense problems caused by the invasion of prospectors, and their consequences, disease. In the evening dialogues, in the rethinking of life values, they are opening themselves to a new vision of the world.

My work has still not found its definitive form, which I believe does not exist. Like myths, it adapts, incorporates new images, and assumes new forms, passing through decoding (of images) in order to modernize, in an infinite virtual bricolage.”

—Claudia Andujar, excerpt from *“The Yanomami in My Life,”* translated by Clifford E. Landers

Claudia Andujar was born in Neuchâtel (Switzerland), in 1931. After World War II, she immigrated to the USA, and in 1955 immigrated to Brazil. Since then, the artist has been living and working in São Paulo.

During the 1970s, Andujar received scholarships from John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and Fundação de Apoio a Pesquisa [FAPESP] to photograph and study the Yanomami culture.

From 1978 to 2000, Andujar worked for CPY [Commission Pro-Yanomami], and coordinated the campaign for the demarcation of Yanomami territory in the Amazon that was established in 1993.

In 2000, she received the Annual Cultural Freedom Award [Photography] as Human Rights Defender from Lannan Foundation, New Mexico (USA). In 2003, she received the Severo Gomes Award from the Teotônio Vilela Commission on Human Rights, São Paulo (Brazil), and in 2005, the Award for Best Photography Exhibition from APCA [Associação Paulista dos críticos de arte], for her solo show “Vulnerabilidade do Ser” [The Vulnerability of Being], held at Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo.

Barbara Brändli

Born in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, 1932;
died in Caracas, Venezuela, 2011.

Barbara Brändli first studied in Basadingen and Diesenhofen and later began classical ballet studies in Geneva. She continued dancing in Paris until 1951.

In the early fifties, Brändli started modeling for Parisian haute couture houses. She was drawn to the forms and movements of the human body, manifested in the practice of ballet and modeling. As a result, she developed an interest in handheld photography and was taught its fundamentals by her friends, the photographers Ata Kandó and Ed van der Elsen.

In 1959, Brändli married Venezuelan architect Augusto Tobito and settled in Caracas where she dedicated herself fully to photography. She made her first visual documentation of the Yekwana and Sanemá people, focusing on their relationship to the environment and their ancestral traditions, during a trip with Ata Kandó to Venezuela's Guyana region in 1962.

Brändli's research on the movement of the human body achieved new heights when she photographed the Fundación de Danza Contemporánea, founded by the Venezuelan dancers Grishka Holguín and Sonia Sanoja. The results were collected and published in her first book *Visual Durations* (1963). The following year, she was hired by the Latin American Center at UCLA to travel into the basins of the high Caura and the high Orinoco to further document the Sanemá, Yanomami, and Yekwana people.

After years of work and numerous difficulties, Brändli finally published her second book *Children of the Moon* (1974), a collection of photographs of the Sanemá ethnic group with text by the missionary and anthropologist Daniel de Barandiarán.

Brändli further explored the relationship between human beings and their environment in the urban-themed photo book *Nervous System* (1975), a collaboration with the Venezuelan graphic designer John Lange that portrayed Caracas with all of its contradictions and chaos.

Her next book, *Thus, With the Hands* (1979), was the result of fieldwork undertaken throughout Venezuela to document the country's artisan traditions and included, along with images, oral testimonies given by the artisans themselves.

The ancient traditions of the inhabitants of the Venezuelan Andes—and the threat of their disap-

pearance—were the subject of her book *The Isolated Moors* (1981). In it, images of the austere life of the Andean people alternate with their own stories, recorded and transcribed by Brändli.

In 1994, Brändli received Venezuela's National Photography Award.

For the rest of her career, Brändli remained interested in the Venezuelan Andes. Among her final projects was a documentation of textiles from the mountainous region of Mucuchíes, in the state of Mérida.

Brändli left several projects unfinished when she passed away in Caracas in 2011.

Translated by Michael Barron

Top:
Barbara Brändli
Untitled (Yanomami community of Mavaca, Upper Orinoco region, Amazonas State, Venezuela), 1965
Digital print
10 ¾ x 15 ¾ inches
© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Bottom left:
Barbara Brändli
Untitled (Yekwana woman, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964
Digital print
11 13/16 x 11 13/16 inches
© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Bottom right:
Barbara Brändli
Untitled (Young Yanomami people, Mavaca, Upper Orinoco region, Amazonas state, Venezuela), 1965
Digital print
14 ¾ x 11 13/16 inches
© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE



Federico Guzmán

Born in Seville, Spain, 1964;
lives and works in Seville, Spain.

Riverside of the Amazon is a collective work between the Colombian artist Andrés Corredor and Spanish artist Federico Guzmán in collaboration with representatives of various indigenous Amazonian tribes. Created for the workshop “Methods of Vegetative Propagation in the Amazon Riverbanks” held at the Centro Cultural del Banco de la República in the Amazonian city of Leticia in Colombia in 2000, the exercise sought to investigate territorial identity through visual representation. Using a map of the Amazon, participants used symbols of their own invention to indicate different types of vegetation and topography.

The map was conceived of as a silhouette, an outline that grouped together disparate elements, whatever they may be. To map is to include and to exclude, to make visible what is usually hidden. It is also an expression of a community’s knowledge and experiences in relation to its land. This map sought to bring about alternative methods by which to consider this territory, reflecting on the challenges of sharing it and proposing actions towards fair and inclusive practices that would benefit all of its inhabitants.

In recent times, the social value of mapping has become increasingly important. This is evident, for example, whenever there is a humanitarian crisis caused by natural events (earthquakes, cyclones/ hurricanes, floods, fires, volcanic eruptions, etc.) now exacerbated by climate change and often occurring in areas in which there has been very little or very poor mapping. Cartographic accuracy is key for humanitarian aid to reach the maximum number of people when such crises occur.

On this occasion, people with little or no experience in cartography were invited to generate and contribute geospatial information on a voluntary basis through a collaborative platform conceived of by the artists. Each of the participants were given photocopies of the results, along with supplemental resources and activities to develop managerial techniques for land usage and documentation. About fifty people participated in the workshop, representing various ethnic communities, including the *Andokes*, *Bora*, *Coreguage*, *Inga*, *Kamentsá*, *Karijona*, *Kofán*, *Makuna*, *Miraña*, *Siona*, *Tikuna*, *Tucano* and *Huitoto*.

Since the mid-nineties, Federico Guzmán has been working on artistic representations of nature. He lived in Colombia for three years, where he studied shamanic traditions; the shamans he met there are distinguished by their eloquence, humility, and wisdom. Since that time, he has dedicated himself to what he calls his “plant career.”

—*Federico Guzmán, translated by Michael Barron*



Federico Guzmán and Andrés Corredor
Riverside of the Amazon, 2000
 Collective cartography
 16 ½ x 23 ¾ inches
 Courtesy of Federico Guzmán



KIMIKA (Kimiko Nonomura)

Born in Japan, 1979;
lives and works in Seville, Spain.

“The use of textile materials and procedures in contemporary artistic practices has proven to be a resource with infinite expressive and textural capacities. KIMIKA, a Japanese artist living in Seville, uses them to explore the discursive potential of nature and bodies in works “painted” with a needle and thread.

The artist has lived in the refugee camps in Western Sahara, spending long periods with the Sahrawi women and witnessing their tireless struggle for a referendum on self-determination in order to return to their land. There in the camps, KIMIKA started working with fragments torn from the women’s *mel-hfas*, the four-meter pieces of cloth that are used for cultural reasons and to protect women’s body and hair from the harsh desert conditions. These scraps of cloth contain the memories of the women who wore them and who generously gave them to the artist in moments of sharing wisdom, experiences, and love. KIMIKA received them gratefully and used them to make a series of textile collages. The works are poetic, political and symbolic, with forms that suggest seeds, leaves, petals, fire, and vulvas that activate a debate about body, territory, and nature as spaces of ideological production. The forms speak about the connection between arid desert and forest vegetation—about the winds that blow from Western Sahara across the Atlantic to the Amazon basin, transporting dust rich in organic remains and phosphorus, providing crucial nutrients for the Amazon flora. Ultimately, they are forms that produce highly expressive works, both pictorially and politically.

XX Chromosome features two large flowers that clearly allude to the female chromosome but also to flowering, seeds, and the necessary regeneration of the nature that the artist loves and respects. As a work that invites a strangely calm form of reflection, it contains the potential to produce a tremendously stimulating aesthetic experience as well as an admirable intellectual one, because the critiques in her works are made in the spirit of dialogue and negotiation and from what I believe to be a necessary position.”

—*Esther Reguiera, excerpt from XX Chromosome*
(December 2022)



KIMIKA
XX Chromosome, 2019
 Hand-sewn collage of melhfes
 57 x 115 3/8 inches
 Courtesy of the artist



Margaret Mee / Malu De Martino

Born in Chesham, United Kingdom, 1909;
died Seagrave, United Kingdom, 1988.

"I begin my diary on the trip to the archipelago of Anavilhanas in May of 2011, saying the following: There's something magical about redoing an expedition as well registered and documented as the Moonflower Trip; it is as if you were seeing for the first time something you have already seen, or revisiting a place you have never been to before...

Like some sort of palimpsest, I decided to write about Margaret Mee's diary, published in 1989, by repeating this exact same expedition.

To find a flower that only blooms one season per year, and at night, in the vast expanse of the Amazon rainforest appears to be impossible, but it is precisely this impossible challenge that moved Margaret Mee, and now thrusts me into this cinematographic adventure.

When, in 2009, I was introduced to Mee's story, during the celebration of her 100 years, I immediately envisioned an epic movie adventure, where a very proper English lady penetrates the Amazon, surviving unimaginable dangers—she began her expeditions in 1956—in remote regions, often as yet totally unexplored, to paint and register specimens of our flora.

However, on beginning my research, I realized that this "character" already had encompassed an enormous amount of adventure throughout her own true-to-life trajectory. So I decided to begin my research by looking up those people who had been a part of Margaret Mee's life, those over whom she had exercised a great deal of influence, to begin this sketch, this portrait that the film presents. It is this part of the discovery of the personage, the revealing of the object of our study that we documentarians experience during our research as sheer magic. Being that this character was a real person, and well-known, we must work to compose a portrait with our own paints and tints, adding to that which has been previously drawn by biographers, writers and many others who have passed along her story. Quite a challenge!

Margaret Mee lived for 36 years in Brazil. She made 15 expeditions to the Amazon and, through her paintings, registered much of the flora. That alone would make her a fertile subject for a docu-

mentary. But beyond those accomplishments, she was also a pioneer with regards to the preservation of those species found in the Amazon and the Atlantic Forests.

How could a woman speak of ecology in 1956?

Mee certainly did so, not only with her peers and colleagues, but also with leaders of nations, ruling classes, governors, and all those with whom she came in contact.

A fearless trailblazer, an artist of great sensitivity and skill, now recognized worldwide; Margaret Mee is a person who deserves to be known by many for her pioneering and inspiring performance.

So I present the documentary, *Margaret Mee and the Moonflower*—part portrait, part adventure, and documentary on the trajectory of a larger-than-life woman who, through her art, left an important legacy to be shared by all those who love Nature."

*Excerpt from The Experience
by director Malu De Martino*



Stills and Film Poster from *Margaret Mee and the Moonflower*
(2012), Dir. by Malu De Martino
Film, 78 min
Courtesy EH Filmes, Rio de Janeiro



"To encounter *Color Amazonia* is a real discovery. Not only does it reveal the power and alchemy behind plants; it also uncovers the magic in the most powerful living being on the planet, the rainforest. The jungles of the Amazon are complex beings that manifest this encounter both between cultures and between systems of knowledge. The artist does not discover others, but rather discovers herself, and privileges thereby the significance of collective creation.

Science has taught us 'modes' of investigation based on logic and methodology; however, when we consider perspectives and modes of thought of different world cultures, the scientific methodology falls short. This perhaps is the most interesting aspect of the *Color Amazonia* project: from an ambiguous space between art and science, it succeeds in reaching a creative space where immaterial and mystical ancestral culture work together to emphasize an order of nature. It is a project that emerges from a spillover between the exact sciences and forms of knowledge that are charged with spirituality.

Susana Mejía possesses a chemist's obsession with the transformation of matter; a botanist's discipline in cataloguing nature; and also an alchemist's sensibility. The works illustrated in this exhibition encompass on the one hand the classification of taxonomy, the preparation of imprints, the creation of an herbarium, and on the other—such are the marvels permitted by art—the chaos of the magical. The imprints are full of lines and impulses, and the seemingly arte povera material of the dyed fique fibers finds its expressive value in the way it emphasizes the humble, rough, natural material, so distant from mass industrial processes.

The project emerged from a series of trips made by Mejía and a work team to the Colombian Amazon to explore botanical species and the colors they produce.

Guided by Tomasa and her family, who belong to the Huitoto indigenous group, they studied and treated eleven different plants and presented them as a way to create sustainable processes from a social and environmental perspective. The artist set up a workshop near the town of Leticia, where, taught by the region's indigenous population, she became familiar with the ancient plant-related pro-

cesses used by the Huitoto and Tikuna communities. The beauty of the project is not only visual but also deeply symbolic, since to a large extent it required this academically trained painter to abandon all notion of 'art' in order to give space to the natural materials and the knowledge of them that comes from 'others.'

In this work, the artist erases her 'self' to draw attention to the knowledge held by others. This notion of the other—what is unknown yet evokes admiration for its simple beauty—is revealed by the artist's focus on the craft of the work. Mejía displays the process to extract the material's color, a practice that has been passed from generation to generation and that requires great technical knowledge as well as the fluidity of variation and error.

The arts enhance crossover between disciplines, and Mejía, known for her collaborative creations, works with botanical illustrators, biologists, photographers and indigenous people for whom art is nature itself. Therein lies the magic: in understanding that art, as we have apprehended it, does not exist, but is an artifice; and that what really exists is the act of creating, while the rest is history, document, construction and theory.

The etymology of the word 'magic' comes from the Persian *mag*, which paradoxically meant science and wisdom: science was alchemy and experimentation, but above all—and I believe this is what the present project teaches us—it should once again mean respect for the grandeur of nature. *Color Amazonia* is more relevant than ever today, as it grants to the rainforest a space of expression that deeply touches our spirit."

—*María Wills, excerpt from Color Amazonia translated by Fionn Petch (November 2020)*



Susana Mejía
Color Amazonia, 2021
 Video
 11 min, 35 sec
 Courtesy of the artist

Simone Michelin

Born in Bento Gonçalves, Brazil, 1956;
lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

The videos in this exhibition arise from a situation in which Simone Michelin met an indigenous elderly woman named Amalia in a village of the Canaúni ethnic group near the city of Boa Vista, capital of Roraima, Brazil.

The meeting took place in 2012. Michelin took photos of Amalia and recorded a short video with a cell phone; back then there were not yet the powerful smartphone cameras of today, so the resolution was precarious. At the time, Michelin was visiting Boa Vista to teach a performance workshop, invited by FUNARTE, (Fundação Nacional de Arte, Ministério da Cultura, Brasil) and she took the opportunity to get to know the region a little.

The state of Roraima has the largest concentration of indigenous tribes in Brazil and, consequently, the highest rate of invasions of territory and attacks against their communities, as witnessed by the Yanomami tragedy. Roraima is the northernmost state in Brazil, and its capital is the only one to be located in the northern hemisphere. It borders Venezuela and Guyana and belongs to the Legal Amazon.

Amalia didn't speak Portuguese, only English and the native language of the region, so she and Michelin communicated in English. Amalia began to show off her artisan skills. She displayed her baskets and the props and straws used in their manufacture, extracted from the trees in the region. She demonstrated the traditional method of making cotton threads, from which hammocks and garments were fabricated. Not everything was understandable to the artist; their conversation was populated with gaps. The biggest of the gaps was the word *mikamaka*, of which Michelin never discovered the meaning, but translated as a yarn-making instrument. The artist chose the word as the title to one of her videos precisely because it was incomprehensible to her.

Michelin produced the videos from this material documenting this encounter. According to the artist, Amália's hands and her tranquil way of moving and telling the story of a tradition that was heading towards extinction warranted a memory.

Through image, Amália becomes an object—abstract, guarded, caricatured, exotified, mythified. She runs through the three videos, juxtaposed

against different backgrounds, treated with digital effects in artificially constructed environments. Sometimes her speech is highlighted and repeated like an advertisement or a warning, entangled in a pop universe. At other times, she remains as quiet as a monument, looking up to the sky, holding a round straw sieve and wearing her headdress.

The video *Buuuuuuuu2* incorporates new symbolic elements: the Palace of the National Congress, a territory populated by soldiers, giant female hands that sprout from the earth, and a *Sumaúma*, a sacred tree from the Amazon. According to the wisdom of the forest, at the base of the tree there is a portal—invisible to uninitiated human eyes—that connects reality with the spiritual universe. Mythological beings from the woods enter and leave through this portal. Also known as the "Stairway to Heaven" and the "Tree of Life," they help hold the sky in the view of the Yanomami.

The artist feels her videos as materialization of rhythms, almost painting in movement, as composition of different times and spaces, fragmented and simultaneous, reworked and composed of many layers. In these works, rhythm overrides any possible narrative. The works also reference various movements of Brazilian art, such as modernism, concrete art, and even a baroque spirit, through the excesses of information and formal exaggeration.

—Simone Michelin (2023)



Top:
Simone Michelin
Amália na chuva, 2022
Digital video with sound
1 min, 11 sec
Courtesy of the artist

Bottom:
Simone Michelin
BUUUUUU_2, 2022
HD video
5 min, 57 sec
Courtesy of the artist



June 1975, already on the Amazon River. An immense horizon. Time is stretched, the air denser, more humid, everything moving at a slow pace. In the firmament unknown up until then, the sunny sky, the senses bring the sky dome closer. The ceiling of the blue sky is lower, wider, it reaches down toward the ground, toward the water, the trees, the forest canopy. Because of the horizon's movement, shifting farther and closer, whoever is navigating the river feels, at many moments, as though it were infinite.

Everything becomes misty, according to the volume of vapor accumulated in the air, the world gets slower, sleepy, uniform and stifling, dramatizing the landscape and announcing that the river of vapor cannot support all this water, which then comes pouring down, violently, continuously, in high volume. The rain suddenly stops. Everything is wet and the sun reappears on the other edge of the clear blue; it is sunset.

Time and scale have changed. There is a false impression that the boat is moving slowly, as its motion is steady, and when the imagination takes flight in the apparent monotony of the landscape, the place has already transformed into another.

Traveling on the river is done in so-called cages, full of people. It is the commercial water transport that overloads the only means of travel, evident in this world of waters. On the boats, two classes coexist: the first with berths and the third with hammocks, with nothing in between. In the first class, clean bathrooms; in the third, dirty ones. In the hammocks, a solitary humanity shares in the experience; in first class, a select group dwells in isolated berths. During the mandatory stops, people approach the boat in small canoes asking for help or selling game, fish, or exotic fruits. Most of the help thrown down comes from above, from first class. Little is spared from the part below, the third class.

The distances are measured in days, added to nights. Manaus is six nights and five days away from Belém. One could arrive in Santarém in two days leaving from the capital of Pará. It is July 1975, and the country is in the throes of the military dictatorship. Traveling by boat on the Amazon River is a singular experience. Suddenly the riverbanks

stop existing, the terrestrial curve hides the edges that limit the river. Dozens of kilometers ahead, the muddy water dives into the depths that the narrow rocky stretch forced it to tear open. Tons of earth are torn up by the immense force of the current, changing the landscape. With signs of rain, fear arises: the sky seems ready to burst forth in torrents. The landscape is concealed behind the sheer bulk of the falling water. The sky is completely rent asunder. The houses seem to float attached to thin, fragile stilts; in certain places, no land is left, only water. It is summer on the equator, a human convention to determine the largest circle on which we find the Amazon region, Nature.

Fifty years ago this was a nearly untouched place, pristine and sovereign, a river of waters that soars above all else, runs alone, feeds the planet; on its monumental scale, it beckons and demands respect for its vital energy. In the future that is already in the wings, a burned stretch, followed soon after by another, and another, then a pasture, and optimized, rationalized production, a not so uncertain destiny.

Hidden in the forest, some of the native peoples can help to understand how to coexist, to live and to be in the forest, to bear understanding, to bear knowledge. But whoever arrives, even if humbly, will be subject to a greater law, that which determines that the aim is to compete, to eliminate; to destroy the forest and anyone who stands in the way.

—João Musa



João Musa
Amazônia 1975 [detail], 1975/2023
 Inkjet print on cotton paper from digitized 35mm black and white analogue negatives
 20 photographs, 16 ½ x 23 ¾ inches each
 Courtesy of the artist and Luciana Brito Galeria, São Paulo



“To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence.”

—Karen Barad

entangled explores the more-than-human worlds of the Amazon rainforest, focusing on the fascinating complexity of the continuous sonic flow created by insects, birds, amphibians, mammals, reptiles, fish, plant species, soil, water, and the weather.

The project is an ongoing series presenting immersive ambisonic installations and listening events in the dark. The listener-participants encounter a durational sonic-spatial composition created from several hundred hours of environmental sound materials recorded in terra firme and flooded forest ecosystems within the territories of the Amanã and Mamirauá reserves in the central Brazilian Amazon. The fieldwork was conducted over almost two months in the dry season of 2015 in collaboration with local inhabitants.

Mamirauá (11,240 km²) and Amanã (23,500 km²) are located approximately 600 km west of Manaus, almost exactly in the center of the Amazon rainforest. Tefé (pop. 62,662), the largest urban center of the middle Solimões region, is located less than 30 km from the south-eastern tip of Mamirauá and serves as the main entry point for both reserves. Since the late 1990s, Mamirauá and Amanã have been Sustainable Development Reserves (RDS), a pioneering management model implemented here for the first time. The people living in communities scattered along the river banks are known as ribeirinhos (river people). These communities are often remote and relatively isolated from Tefé and other small municipalities.

The original sonic materials featured in *entangled* were created with small omnidirectional microphone rigs set up and left unattended for long periods simultaneously in chosen sites. This strategy was undertaken iteratively on field trips in different regions within these territories over several weeks. This “distributed listening” approach created a large body of interconnected durational recordings

spread through space and time, opening a realm of possibilities central to the project. In the studio, the entire body of audio recordings (conceived as a kind of multidimensional “sound hyperobject”) is explored compositionally, editing and combining audio streams from different provenances while following the circadian cycle as a general structuring principle throughout the composition. The project uses higher-order Ambisonics, audio-spatial techniques that enable the creation of a 360° sound field and facilitate adaptation to different multichannel setups and specific exhibition spaces.

The ecological ethos of this project goes beyond conventional “green” frameworks and idealized notions of Nature that conceive the environment as something “exterior” to the human and culture—a backdrop, a mentally constructed “elsewhere.” In this sense, the work resonates with contemporary ecological thought seeking to erode the prevailing human exceptionalism and overcome human-nature and nature-culture dualisms.

entangled facilitates a profound, active, and sustained listening experience, cultivating intimate sensory encounters favoring affectivity over signification and representation. This listening practice investigates the vitality of more-than-human entities and realities, aiming to promote less anthropocentric forms of awareness, care, and coexistence. Furthermore, this practice acknowledges the affective power and agency of sounds themselves. *entangled* embraces listening as a creative act, a form of attention, and a tool to investigate the world. Through the act of listening and giving attention to other-than-human beings and expressions, it is also a poetic invitation to reflect on the ongoing silencing of extinction.

—pablo sanz (2023)



pablo sanz
entangled, 2023
 ambisonics sound installation
 Dimensions variable
 Courtesy of the artist

Credits and acknowledgments

Production support: Mamirauá Institute (Tefé, Amazonas, Brazil), Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC), Queen's University Belfast, Santander Mobility Award, Laboratory of Acoustics and Sonic Arts (LASom), Music Department of the Institute of Arts at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) (São Paulo), T-37 (Madrid), Sound and Music (London), and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI). Fieldwork and production assistance: Silvia Jánošková. Special thanks to all the field specialists, researchers, staff, and everyone who helped in Tefé and the riverine communities of Baré, Boa Esperança, Jarauá, and Horizonte, within the Amanã and Mamirauá territories in Amazônia.



Paradise Burning: the mists of time and Nero's lyre

"Approaching Novo Mundo we encountered a field burning on the side of the road. The flame had come down and was now mostly smoke and dying embers. Neighbors from the farm across the road had brought a water tank and were hosing enormous logs that lay on the ground half consumed. The dense toxicity in the air carried a Dantesque omen of tragedy I could read in their expressions. They knew their chances were slim, but still hoped to prevent the fire from crossing over and spreading onto their coffee plantation. If the wind decided to return there would be flames everywhere.

In the dry season, many of the biologically degraded areas of Amazonia enter the cycle of fire. In the absence of tall canopies that contain moisture, dry air and strong winds disperse fire easily. Once the biomass of a rainforest has burned down, even if vegetation grows again, chances are it will burn periodically until becoming a desert. The social drama of this region is not just the inability of the population to control the propagation of fire when it starts, but the impossibility to control the overall process of desertification; a sign of the transformation that human intervention has perpetrated.

We came upon an area of forest where the fire was out of control. Flames spread rapidly in front of us, burning entire bushes of green luscious leaves in seconds. The unleashed power of fire consuming an entire forest revealed an unexpected spectacle of colorful clouds of smoke. Turner's atmosphere of colors blending in ethereal combinations never felt so tangible. I set up a tripod to capture the landscape when the setting sun suddenly sliced through thick clouds. As foreseen by Tiepolo, Apollo appeared heralded by majestic sun rays, riding his triumphant carriage of golden horses across robust clouds of destruction. The visual spectacle was not followed by angelic trumpets, but pierced by the unsettling sound of snapping branches caught on fire everywhere. Given the proximity of combustion, breathing became increasingly difficult as insects big and small swarmed through us, biting us along the way."

—Sergio Vega, excerpt from *The Storytellers, Narratives in International Contemporary Art*, edited by Selene Wendt (2013)

The spectacle of the forest transubstantiated into heat and smoke acquires an ethereal presence. The volatile dimensions represented imply a kind of disappearance; the image itself evaporates, goes up in smoke.

In its disappearance, the image takes a leap into the imaginary, and stands on no other ground than that of its own self erasure. The widening distance from the representational referent ventures across mediums and the video projection performs as a moving painting. The fog of destruction sets the ground for other images to appear: color-feelings, allegories born out of clouds as in Tiepolo's skies. These ghostly apparitions mark the intrusion of the imaginary into the field of perception.

Phantasmagoria is a field of experimentation in representation that explores the illusion of other-worldly entities. The awe created by that situation, the disempowerment of the human facing the creator, and the inevitability of chaos and destruction by natural phenomena indicates a precarious physical condition for the one witnessing the events. But in that precariousness, the spectacle of the forces of nature unleashing their power over the material world can also entail a kind of jouissance; the physical euphoria of feeling alive. If the sublime is ultimately unrepresentable, it still can be unexpectedly experienced.

In the Hollywood super-production *Quo Vadis* (1951), Nero plays the lyre. His volatile emotions shift between joy, horror and guilt; his voice emits dissonant utterances in the form of a song as Rome goes up in flames. Although it is disappearing, the Amazonian forest still exists and has not yet completely faded away. If we as witnesses of its destruction dare to pick up the lyre, we should at least refrain from singing out of key.

—Sergio Vega (2023)



Sergio Vega
Paradise Burning, 2008
 HD video projection on fabric
 6 min, 50 sec
 Courtesy of the artist

Additional artworks exhibited

Claudia Andujar

Vertical 14—the Marcados series, 1981–83

Inkjet print

3 panels, 22 × 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches each

Courtesy Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo

Claudia Andujar

Yanomami, 1974, Paapiu—the Contato series, 1974

Analog photographic enlargement

28 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Courtesy Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo

Claudia Andujar

Transportation of vaccines—the Marcados series [dispatch] 1/11, 1981–83

Inkjet print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Courtesy Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo

Claudia Andujar

Medical examination—the Marcados series [dispatch] 7/11, 1981–83

Inkjet print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Courtesy Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo

Claudia Andujar

Maloca no Marari—the Marcados series [dispatch] 9/11, 1981–83

Inkjet print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Courtesy Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo

Claudia Andujar

Bicho de pé—the Marcados series [dispatch] 10/11, 1981–83

Inkjet print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Courtesy Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Young Sanema people, Kanarakuni, Alto Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Pijiguao dance in the Yanomami community of Mavaca, Upper Orinoco region, Amazonas state, Venezuela), 1965

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 15 inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Young Sanema people, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 14 inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Sanema child, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Sanema child, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

14 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Young Sanema people, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

14 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

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Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Young Sanema, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

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Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Young Yanomami people, Mavaca, Upper Orinoco region, Amazonas state, Venezuela), 1965

Digital print

14 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

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Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Sanema children, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

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Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Sanema child, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

14 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{13}{16}$ inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Yekwana and Sanema children, Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Barbara Brändli

Untitled (Inscriptions on the blackboard of the school in the community of Kanarakuni, Upper Caura region, Bolivar state, Venezuela), 1964

Digital print

7 ¼ × 15 ¾ inches

© Barbara Brändli/Colección C&FE

Susana Mejía

Color Amazonia, 2017–21

Organic pigments on cotton paper

32 panels, 26¾ × 39¾ inches each

Courtesy of the artist

Simone Michelin

Mikamaka spin, 2022

Digital video with sound

2 min, 9 sec

Courtesy of the artist

Curator Biographies and Acknowledgments

Berta Sichel is a contemporary art curator who has worked extensively with international artists and institutions. Her career began in New York, where she curated exhibitions for the São Paulo Biennial and the Venice Biennale, among others, and served as an associate professor in the Media Studies department of the New School for Social Research. In 2000 she moved to Spain to become the Director of the Audiovisual Department of the Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Center (MNCARS), a position she held until 2011.

Since 2011, Sichel has organized and curated numerous projects internationally and was the artistic director of the first International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Cartagena de Indias in Colombia. She also co-founded Bureau Phi Art, a cultural projects agency for the production and organization of curatorial and publishing projects. Bureau Phi's cosmopolitan experience promotes collaboration and the exchange of art and ideas across borders. *Amazonia* is one of the projects organized by Bureau Phi.

Patricia Capa is a photographer and cultural manager. She holds a degree in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage from the Complutense University of Madrid and a Master's degree in Conservation, Archiving and Dissemination of Photographic Heritage from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. During her graduate studies she worked as an assistant in the Department of Exhibition Coordination and Work Registration of the Mapfre Foundation, assisting on exhibitions including *Berenice Abbott: Portraits of Modernity* (2019). In 2019 she began working with curator Berta Sichel at Bureau Phi Arts as a curatorial assistant and exhibition coordinator. Their first project together was the exhibition *Joan Rabascall: Tout va bien at Tabacalera Promoción del Arte* (2020) Madrid.

Capa has been combining her passion for art and cultural management with her practice as a social photographer and content creator since 2017, focusing on the field of sustainability and the dissemination of the work of women photographers.

This exhibition and its successful implementation would not have been possible without the dedication of the Department of Exhibitions staff: Ted Holland, Assistant Director; Shoshi Rosen, Gallery Coordinator; Travis Molkenbur, Installation Manager; and Peter Schenck and Scott Whipkey, Installation Technicians, along with our dedicated student assistants.

Special recognition goes to Berta Sichel, curator, whose vision and ethos for the land and people of the Amazon resulted in this engaging and insightful exhibition. We are also grateful to Patricia Capa for her invaluable contributions as assistant curator, enriching the curatorial process.

I also thank the artists and generous lenders who graciously made work available. We are indebted to the contributions of writers whose texts have enlightened us about the artists.

Sincerely,
Nick Battis
Director of Exhibitions

Design and production

David Frisco, director, Pratt Institute Creative Services
Jana Flynn, assistant creative director
Robert McConnell, senior graphic designer
Chris Keating, print and digital production manager
Brandhi Williamson, senior editorial manager
Stephanie Greenberg, associate director of project management

Javier Andrada
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