

Alien Star Dust meditation for vulnerable communities in South America

I believe that human-machine symbiosis may establish better communications between machines and human beings. The aesthetic, poetic and functional states of the resultant artworks created within this context consider different manners in which man and machines perceive, and these perceptions must be considered accordingly.

Therefore, my virtual reality artworks could be characterized as poetic simulations which creates a unity with all communicative processes that constitute them. It is an argument that, as per its propositional function, provides a statement open to interaction.

To encourage the search of development of new relationships between humans and machines – taking into account the tensions and different characteristics of human systems and machine-like systems – one may pursue advantageous fields of research both for science and art. The involvement of humans with artifacts effects the interplay between the artificial and the biological systems. It follows that, on the whole, by triggering actions into one another, they create processes of *feedback* loops producing constant changes and transformations. In such a set up, I look for creating sensory experiments with signs, building communication systems with data that flow between humans and artificial life forms.

The 1997 expedition to the native tribe of the Kuihueros I organized and participated could better exemplify how this kind of immersible field of research functions. This tribe is located in North of the State of MatoGrosso, in the National Park on the Xingu river. This expedition was carried out with artists Diana Domingues, Gilbertto Prado, Maria Luiza (Malu) Fragoso, Roy Ascott, and Virginia Haeser.

By way of illustration, here I share some glimpses of my personal notes (1997) taken during this expedition may enlighten and better explain the interplay of the many elements of many of my artworks. These notes state:

From the plane flying above the region we could see lost trails apparently going nowhere; nowhere to us, viewed from so far. Under the hallucinatory sun, over that green immensity, the *cerrado* (a specific kind of savannah), the woods, the rivers, the lakes and the forest were all laid out for anyone to see. The landscape looked like a huge green blanket covering the Earth. Speckles of naked land sometimes appeared. Land maybe unconsciously raped by greedy farmers to transform it into pastures: cattle and soy beans to feed the world. Our minds wandering, full of expectations and chimerical possibilities.... and then we arrived at the Kuikuros' tribe in the midst of joy and partying.

The first impressions were that there were no corners, everything was round: the lake, the *oca* (the natives' dwellings), the *taba* (the natives' hamlet), the sky-dome.... It was like living inside a three-dimensional space-time mandala; every day I swam in a fractal limpid warm lake, being burned by the harsh sun and pleasantly protected by the *oca's* dusk where we slept in a forgotten darkness, tucked in by the hammocks' swings, and by the sounds of

Jacuy (bamboo flute). The sensations were indescribable. We were immersed in a world of new concepts and we learned a lot of new words: *aufi* – a dry strange flower; *Kaguto*, *Jacuy*, *Ooó*, *Setilanhovô* – four distinct kinds of bamboo flutes; *aruba* – the lizard; *Tauí* and *Auleikuma* – twin gods; *atotoi* – thank you; *moitara* – feast among women to exchange things.

When dawn arrived, on our first morning, painting the sky with bright oranges, violent pinks, and covering the grass with shiny, glittering, dew, we opened up our souls to fill ourselves with the unpredictable. *Jacuiés* were flutes women must not see. Their sounds were so sublime, that I fought to overcome my feelings of being segregated and, as if in revenge, I became impregnated with their hypnotic sound. The natives painted our bodies with fragrant black resin and reddish oil transforming us into the *Surucucú*, the serpent. We lost the notion of time we had up to a few days before, and we began to discern another time, multidimensional, non-linear and very complex, swinging smoothly as if it were flowing around the variations of a strange attractor. The palpable feeling of ubiquity bewildered me; the paradoxes I loved dearly became meaningless. I felt lost inside a stunning dream. Undaunted, I dove into the deepness of my visionary mind, feeling aware and empty; flying out with the hawk, following the drafts, there in the blue sky; meandering with the serpent, the *Sucury-Lua*, a beautiful anaconda that taught women how to draw, giving them the ability to design, and sacrificing herself as a shamanistic power: a gift to humankind. After hours and hours alone in the lake I no longer felt frightened of anything. My body, floating quietly on the water, was turned into the nuptial bed of dragon-flies. Shoals of small *tucunarés* (a kind of fish) cleaned my skin. The flickering reflections of light, touching the water, sketched unfathomable patterns over the sand at the lake's bottom, sending ciphered messages to Roy, while flocks of toucans amazingly flew over in the blue sky.

Diana and I lost ourselves in the silvery night while we aimlessly wandered, our eyes being filled with shiny stars. The whole Universe wrapped us in its soft silky mantle. And, we dove down within its boundless dark space... a velvety light that kept weaving itself in patterns in front of our eyes, dissolving, entwining, transforming our sleep into delightful dreams, overwhelmed by the sensation of wholeness, emptiness and awareness.

Roundness was around, everywhere. The tribe's Shaman had a life stone which, he said, had fallen from the sky and which would keep him alive until, one day, it would break and then he would depart, passing from this dimension to another. His cigar's smoke blurred our reality, bringing flashes of distinct dimensions to the present. He sang songs that resounded like lost mantras, creating a type of alchemical transformation of everything and everyone.

Smiling children followed us everywhere, filling everything with lively joy. We adapted ourselves in amazing ways. Malu either had a ring of cheerful children around her or reclined lazily inside her hammock. Diana was the most heavenly chef of cuisine that one could find. She managed to cook our food in a skilled fashion, creating courses of lavish meals out of our plain supplies. Gilberto filmed everything and built an oven with me. I sang with the children, washed dishes, and would swim forever and ever... Roy talked about ways to connect distinct realities through wormholes. Virginia nursed sick children and exchanged all her possessions. The whole tribe danced, fought, fished, and enjoyed their own video images that were showed to them in a laptop which the children approached with gentle curiosity.

The crescent moon grew while stories were told: that within the tribe women might be chiefs and have many husbands. I considered that my opinion of their daily life, apparently harsh, maybe was completely wrong, and perhaps it was not so bad to be a woman there, as it is in some other parts of the civilized world. **My eyes and ears**

were full of butterflies, stars and dragonflies; of shoals of fishes jumping around the lake; of the rustle of the *Buriti* leaves (a palm tree), and of the trill of birds whispering and murmuring in my inner ears. My skin, crisped by the sun and the wind, remembered unforgettable caresses.

And finally the day of return arrived. After hundreds of hugs and the shaking of uncountable hands, we said farewell. Malu and I burst into tears, feeling ourselves breaking apart, divided. We were aware that we were floating in a fracture between two worlds and cried because we were sad. We would have liked to connect these two cultures through a bridge but we did not know how. We went back to our 'rational' civilized world where violence and pain irrationally explode without control in mindless conflicts of fanaticism and greediness.

My last impressions, while flying back over the Koluene river (an affluent of Xingu river), was that a few days ago the Koluene river did not mean anything to me. Now it was pregnant with meanings: hundreds of faces, bright black eyes, shy expressions, palm trees reflected on mirror surfaces, colourful birds, shooting stars. Through spacetime emerged unanswered questions, wondrous speculations, unusual conjectures. The deep desire to share a mystic embrace with wholeness arose. The will to dive into the immensity was a mighty, deafening wishful thinking, loudly piercing into my fanciful mind. The paradoxes became dazzling, again, and I was no longer lost inside a stunning

dream.....

If these notes are read carefully, they will show how important these expeditions were to combine aspects pointed out before with the moist aspects of nature and of indigenous cultures, which are so characteristic of the conceptualization and mood of the artworks. How they are applied and their non-linear mode are focused and

organized. The chief interest of investigations of this sort lies in the possibility of entwining different theoretical currents of thoughts and mathematical concepts with a broad set of visceral sensations arising from the feelings and emotions related to experiences lived, which are then transformed and expressed in technoetic syncretic artworks.