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black tongue, 2019, 35mm photo

TADASKÍA
Most Holy, RJ, 1993

Tadáskia Willà O. Morais, also known as max willà morais, was trained by the evangelical church in theater, singing, dance and theology from 12 to 19 years old. From the age of 18, she entered Visual Arts at UERJ and began to draw with line in egg shells, create arrangements with branches and fabrics and to photograph. Today, she expresses through images, objects, colors, masses, traces and apparitions. Her works mobilize histories, geographies and material and immaterial relations with the world. She also investigates the visible and invisible experiences of the black diaspora, when referring to strange and familiar encounters. Currently she is represented by Sé Gallery.

interview by Igor Furtado, published on 24/09/2020



black tongue, 2019, graphite on paper



Are you a bicho a bicha, 2019, 35mm photo



untitled, 2019, face limner and graphite on paper

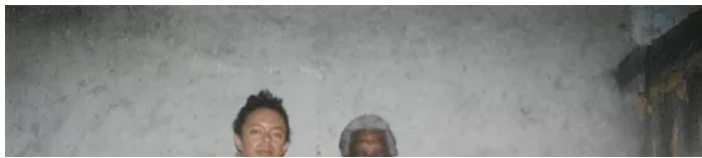
When did you start imagining and creating other possible worlds?

I started creating love poems in fourth grade, when I participated in a contest at the municipal school. Then I published some stories in Recanto das Letras, which I wrote randomly. Making public what I felt was my obsession until I was 16 years old. But I have no record of what I wrote, just memories. Since then, a lot has passed through me, and the memories bring many sensations as an impulse of displacement: to detach myself towards the unknown, to live without being too attached, and to go on, without being sad because I am no longer in the places and times gone by. In the street where I lived, I was alone, I spent more time with friends from school or imaginary. When my family went to the beach, for example, it took a long time for us to go again, because of the lack of money or because of the distance. So, in a dream, I came back every night, and everything changed to a different color; I saw myself looking at the sky, which soon changed the texture; I rode the bus, even a little further from home, and found myself flying. For you to have an idea, it was only when I entered college that I learned what the South Zone of Rio was physically. In this commuting process, believing in God also changed my imagination. I remember the first time my mother told me that someone took care of us. I kept asking myself "how does something get close to me, take care of me and I never saw it?". The notion of this invisible care, which could be everywhere, was a surprise. I also remember when I saw a work by Jota Mombaça that said "what has no space is everywhere". And even if it has another orientation, when I first read this, it made me rethink about the ways to be careful. Thus, because of these stories, I take with me some thoughts on the many peculiar ways in which each person begins to imagine and transform invisibility.

How did this relationship with God make spirituality relevant to you?

When I heard about this deity I was small, so I wanted to orient myself and hold on to its invisible wonder. I believed in what I didn't see well before I knew about a Jesus represented as white and a God understood as cruel. At 12, I remember having to practice in the church more often and with more obligations: singing and choir classes, Sunday school, youth worship, cleaning the temple, etc. As a teenager, I noticed a selective and violent group based on Christianity, as well as their techniques to Christianize and find out who could be my enemy. These situations were the ones that most hurt me, because instead of imagining God, I started to make enemies. Still, I became attached to God, more for his image and difference, than for his likeness. I knew that he could present himself and differ constantly, such as doe, lion, chicken, eagle, woman, widow, stone spouting water, animal, fag, bread, fish, sea, etc. And for me, the masculinity destined for your divinity was just one of those fleeting attributions. Now, to love in the church, because I am a gender-diverse person, was to be connected to hell, and a problem, because of my dreams and desires. The stories of guilt and sin in my 17 years started to become unbearable, and made me question the purpose of pastors in directing my feeling of hatred to my divine transformation. Therefore, today I believe that my spirituality is more a belief in the family than a specific community, identifiable and to be saved, understand? It is difficult, because we have been at war for a long time, but I believe that there is, in this earthly passage, something that can connect us beyond fear, enmity, hatred and obligation, something beyond race and gender. I disagree with universalism and single-language strategies. And the clash usually has its importance, when enmities are declared. However, if I am going to talk about spirituality, I will also express myself for what I perceive to exist minimally outside of loved ones. What needs a careful exercise. I prefer to go in the direction of group things, of strange languages, in the same dissonance that permeates and unites people, things and the world. Even if this feeling may not have space here. Even if it isn't in the imagination of many people or is difficult to understand, and only in the dream, it happens moving and gradually becoming real. Matheusa Passarelli said that "If there has to be a dichotomy between love and hate, I choose love." For me, this is the most relevant of spirituality.





Wearing stars with my mother Elenice Guarani, my aunt Gracilene Guarani and my grandmother Maria da Graça, 2019, 35mm photo

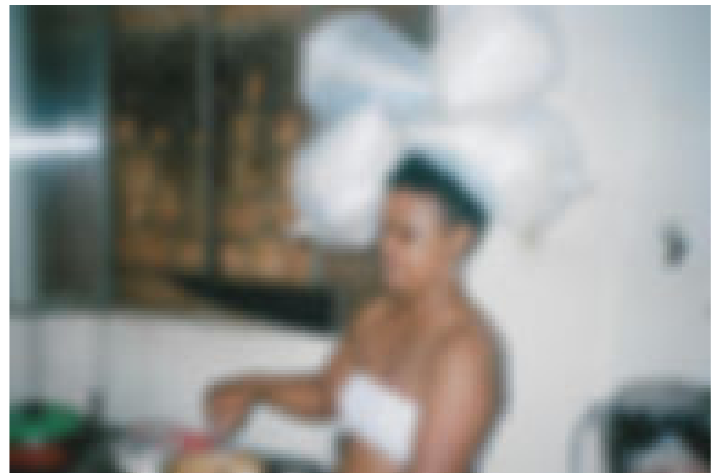


The house is background for much of what you do, actually your mother who photographs you most of the time. How is this interaction and collaboration with the family?

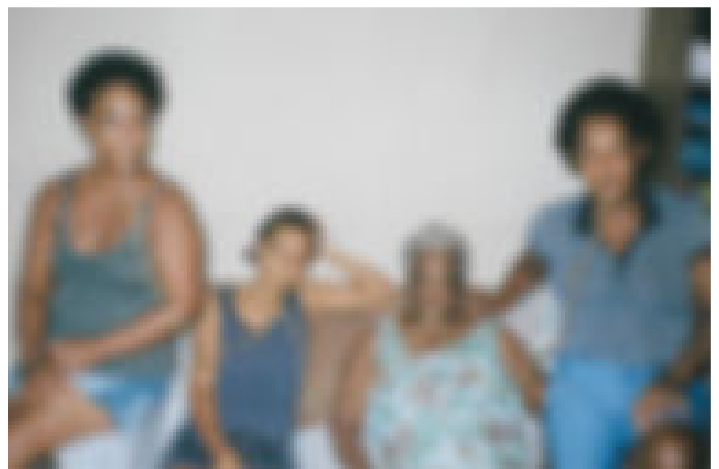
I like being in group and when there's opportunity to do something together it is even better. With my mother Elenice Guarani I have more intimacy, due to the infinite days together at home, before starting work, when my schedule was divided between church and school. When I moved from Santíssimo to go to college, I ended up making some films, videos and actions with Aline Besouro, Julia Nunes, Maria Bogado, Diambe da Silva, Lorrán Dias, Jandir Jr, among others. To have friendships with these artists is still significant for me today - a lot of fuss, so much fable. But when I returned to my mother and father's house, Aguinaldo Morais, I found myself in an exercise of remembering what unites us and I created another closeness, quite different from the one I had in my childhood. I was back without obligation, but with a commitment to improve the living conditions of all of us. It took me a while to realize the house as a safe space where I could express myself. To this day, I am not entirely at ease. But now, five years later I have returned, we are recognizing ourselves little by little. Being in a group is being able to notice beside us the way in which we are becoming different, how we are all being changed by life. It has a strength in conjugating what is transformed, even if it is not perceptible. I did not understand the familiar custom demanded of the younger ones "taking blessing" from older people, who answered "God bless you". My mother said that "blessing is never too much". Today I have found it important to pay attention to this rite, which arises from life and its violence, taking care of death, of what is fleeting, the last moment of time in any meeting. My sister and I would die laughing when we kissed Aunt Neginha's hand, because at lunchtime she came with a smell of lard, made from old oil. We both "took the blessing" by holding the hand and kissing it on the tip of the lip. Aunt Neginha always drooled our hand when she kissed us, in response to the request, in her loving closeness. I miss her, she died and I didn't say goodbye. Anyway, doing something together is important to me, even if at the moment not everything makes sense and the smell is not pleasant.

Is creating an exercise of representation or of developing possible symbols for what is not available in the visible plane?

I don't think I'm representative. I think I'm going more along the way of reference, from the point of view, you know? I give recognizable names for people to relate to from their private memory. The sensations that arise can bring an imagination beyond my will, and so I see the surprise, in the always different disposition between name and form can be perceived. For example, I got a horse tattoo on my belly, but when I show it to some people they say it could be a crab, a claw, any living animal, and it's true. Things have as much life as we do. Today I saw in the post by artist Rafael RG a quote from Schopenhauer, which said "there is the same Will in a lion, in a person or in a stone". Rafael adds that there is "a desire for a future full of life and not for the representation of life". So I believe I am guided by changing situations and the possibility of proposing to people another desire to imagine. It is as if we can see a name and a thing in motion; walking, running, flying. For me it has more to do with life than with its representation, and that is why we are not always able to perceive the way that a will can arise, or why someone stays alive despite the imposed death, the persecutions, the racism, the transphobia. The notion of visible and invisible plan can be a good reading key for the apparitions I make, even because the photograph already adds in itself an image that may or may not be revealed. Therefore, I try to meet the sensitivity of this action: photography by impressing a moving disposition, with and in the world, presenting itself in pose, light, texture, place, angle, framing. At the same time, my plans are following a sequence that proves that something has changed. Sometimes a little bit of magic, sometimes cinematography, a little bit of both. And I feel contemplated for not traditionally clinging to either.



Breath with my mother Elenice Guarani and my father Aguinaldo Morais, 2019, photo 35mm



Golden Rope Series. In the highlighted photo my mother Elenice Guarani, my aunt Marilúcia Moraes, my grandmother Maria da Graça and my aunt Gracilene Guarani, 2020, 35mm photo

Can you talk a little about your intentions to unfold the possibilities of adornment in *Arrangement*?

This work started in 2012 and then later again in 2019. Much of what I create comes from what I find at home or on the street, in places where I pass. I started making <https://en.identidadesmarginais.com/tadaskia-willa-morais>

This work started in 2012 and then later again in 2019. Much of what I create comes from what I find at home or on the street, in places where I pass. I started making drawings on the egg shells, using delicate stitching and sculptures with cardboard and branches that I harvested at university. I already had contact with fabric, sewing and this notion of "getting ready for something", because I was part of the church's dance group, Raised to Worship. Later, in college, I didn't do the choreographies anymore, nor was I sure if some branches and fabric together had to last a long time. For me, the arrangement deals with growing and being pruned, to have more vitality, to multiply in configurations and exuberance. It came about without a very definite purpose, but every time I do it, the ornaments go back to earth. I have none of these formations with me, they have all been rearranged. Maybe one day I can start gathering them at home, but for the time being the photographic appearance contemplates me more.

How was the experience of the degree in arts and master in education and how do you see the academic environment in these areas?

It has been very challenging and stressful now in the master's degree, more because of the pandemic, studying at home looking at a computer. For some years now, my experience revolves around the ways of conducting a study contrary to the production of identifiable and representative knowledge, preferring to get involved in the processes from an unlikely perspective, in the emergence of a creation of intersecting knowledge. I have been interested in Palmistry, because it is a very old knowledge with many origins. We can see the time in the lines of the hands from the Vedas to the Egyptians, to the Gypsies until today. It is impossible to say what is the correct way to read the body, even though there are techniques and formalized routes. I see knowledge, bachelor's and master's degrees in the same way, as well as the lines in the hands: they can change, many are erased, others are born in the "hills", marking the planets in the palm, even though in an improbable way. My trajectory has involved taking a stand against colonialism, the notion of identity rooted in a unique and essential origin. That is why I launch myself into the mystery, where the actions of life are generated, shared in a mix and in a desire to know beyond reduction. The imagination since a mangrove swamp is so strong, it has a lot of life in there and nobody knows it completely. I am studying instead of existential annulment, which persists in the preaching of racist and colonial modern projects, intensifying itself in violent missions around the world (police, church, tanks, helicopter, territorial war, farmers, etc.).



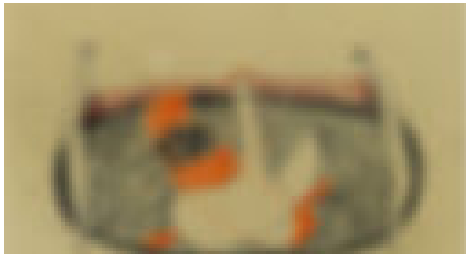
arrangement, second and third formation, cotton and twig, 2019, photo 35mm



distribute the center, 2019, photo 35mm

Do you believe it is possible to subvert the colonial logic of photography and its dimension of capturing and reproducing subjectivities, through the same mechanism?

I often see myself being put to production and living underground, but I do nothing with the priority of subversion. There's a place that Frantz Fanon talks about, in "Black Skin, White Masks", which I will call here a sub-located position, where "there is a zone of non-being, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, a ramp essentially stripped, where a real resurgence can happen". In this way, I would not stick to the essence or the authentic, but in this sub-location. I believe in the possibility that in the devastated areas life may arise unlikely to colonial logic, which is, above all, of possession and dispossession. However, not all subversion is intended for life, dreams and material distribution. So, if on one hand I do nothing with this directive character of subversion, there is in me, ontologically implicated, a growth that arises from subversion, from this zone that can be seen and interpreted as a (version) position from below. Anyway, above and below, I have a commitment to continue in life and not to be captured. I am not interested in betting essentially on the sub-located point of view, but perhaps on the relay and distribution of life, whose nutrition may come from a sub-time and a sub-space. Photography, drawings, painting, for example, can also lead us not to remain in the places and in the lowered times. That is why I return to the belief in imagination as a knowledge that is not entirely at home or totally adrift, on dream trips, forgetting the physical world. Artistic making needs to put its feet in the mud as well as in the linen. All professions and social groups need to vary the soil, the sensation of the walk. It is important to take turns between comfort and discomfort zones, and to continue paying attention to the colonialism that is taking place. Likewise, plunge into the fertility of the imagination, in its unknown composition, now mixed. Sometimes it is necessary to have the wonders spread over the body, which we mean by comfort, and with that, to perceive and distinguish the forms of violence that intensify. The most essential thing is still being alive, you know? Because this will, condition and action is always prior to art; and if we continue to build sensitivities, we can believe that even if they are made from a deprived place, "a resurgence can happen".



swamp, colored pencils and charcoal on paper, 2019



Mineral line, 2020, 35mm photo

Is there any work you are most proud of? In the sense that things worked together differently?

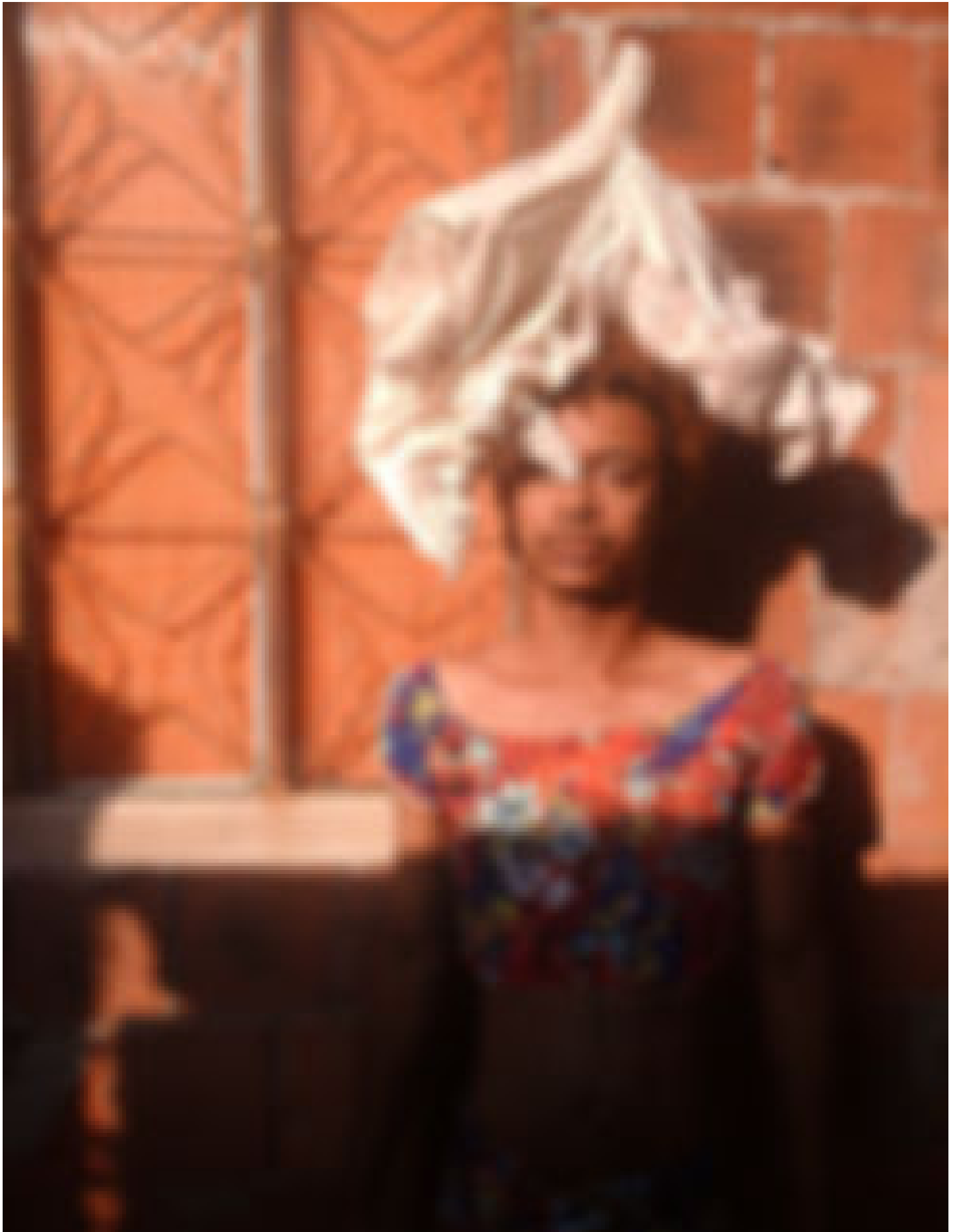
I have read that one of the synonyms for pride is self-love. In that sense, I think of the action *Hálito* and the appearance *Black Juice*, *Golden Meat*. In them, I see something that stretched from "own" (individual) to "multiple" (composition). Multiplying and composing is done involuntarily when we are breathing and eating or when we are sensibly involved and associated with other things such as growing up. These actions are present in the subtle strength we have when kissing someone or when we say hello and goodbye. Breathing and eating are visible imaginations, which are made invisibly. They present us in the subtle strength of their action. Within us, it is inevitable that we are not already being modified by them. It is impossible to escape air and food, unless they continue to reimagine the slave ship in us (and they do so constantly) ... and the plantation... and the police inspections ... The "I can't breathe" movement reminds us of death being multiplied frequently in our bodies. In this way, when I envision sharing this visible-invisible imagination, which is breathing and eating, its multiplication becomes one of the most important conditions of abundance. It becomes a chance to make life simple, in reverse of the excess of death perpetrated and encouraged among us. We rest, in addition to the need to give exact answers, as if we were for a moment in silence and in the involuntary will that resides in us: under the tongue, inside the body, traveling from the mind, in the diaphragms, extending to dreams, transforming us thoroughly. Air and food are inside-outside compositions: they pass from the recognized towards what we cannot control. I think that these two actions have been the ones that I perceive to fit best, coming in the body to tell me inwardly "whew, I'm here, I'm multiplied matter, I'm sharing visibility and invisibility. I am here and there, moving, even though I am seen as inappropriate when I am in a group and we all still live".

What do you still dream of accomplishing and intend to achieve in the future?

I want to travel, get to know other parts of the world. I am a traveling person, even if I haven't had so many opportunities for that yet. I want to live imagining from what I will witness. I hope, in this way, that in the future people will be able to know more distributed, mixed, composed situations and that I will be able to accomplish what has been growing secretly in the world of dreams, sharing sensibly with many groups.



untitled, colored pencils on paper, 2020



arrangement, first formation, cotton and twig, 2012, photo 35mm