

Ministério do Turismo, Governo do Estado de São Paulo, por meio da Secretaria de Cultura e Economia Criativa, e Pinacoteca de São Paulo apresentam

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Yorùbáiano



Osório, 2008. Série "Yorùbáiano". Coleção de cabogás. Foto: Ayrson Heráclito.

Abertura
02 abril, 11h

02 abril a 22 agosto 22

4º andar,
Edifício Pina Estação
Lg. General Osório, 66

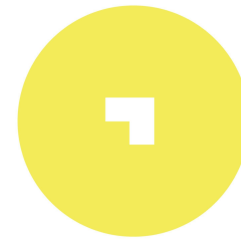
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The Pinacoteca de São Paulo and the Museum of the Secretary of Culture and Creative Economy of the State of São Paulo inaugurate on April 2nd, the exhibition “**Ayrson Heráclito: Yorùbáiano**”, a comprehensive solo exhibition of Portas Vilaseca Galeria represented artist Ayrson Heráclito.

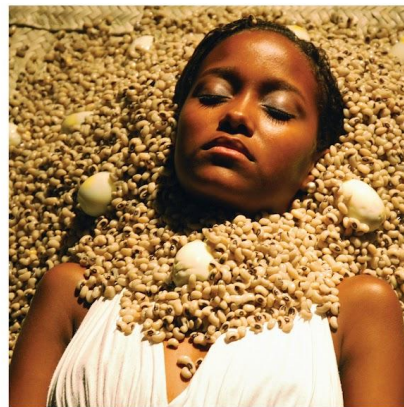
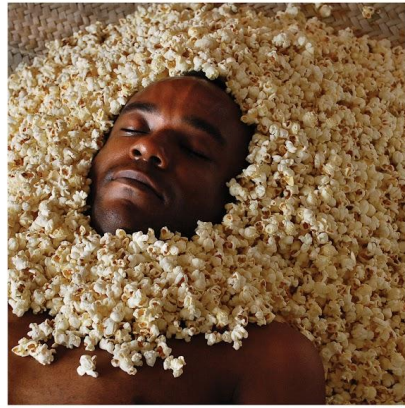
Originally conceived for MAR - Museu de Arte do Rio in 2021, the São Paulo version of the show take place on the fourth floor of the Pinacoteca Estação and is curated by Amanda Bonan, Ana Maria Maia and Marcelo Campos. At the opening, the public will be able to watch the performance “Inner Secrets” (1994-2010).

Ayrson Heráclito represents the great poetic and political reinvention of a Yoruban Brazil. Visual artist, curator, professor and PhD in Communication and Semiotics from PUC-SP, the Bahia-born artist brings to Pina Estação the power of African mythologies that arrived in Brazil during the diaspora.

The works in the space articulate different cultures, ranging from Yoruban, Nagô's and Jejes myths, to a unique cultural amalgam of ancestral knowledge, teachings, tales, rites and different views of the world that are part of the religious and cultural matrices of Candomblé. Split into three rooms, the show connects three organic materials that, according to the artist, compose historically and symbolically the “diasporic cultural body”: sugar, palm oil and jerked beef.

Selection of works





Bori is a series of photographs taken from a ritualistic performance, in which the artist offers sacred food to the heads of 12 performers that represent different orishas/deities.



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Bori, 2008-2011 (polyptych)

12 photographs printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m², mounted on aluminium

Edition: 5/5 + 2 AP

100 x 100 cm (each)









AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Buruburu I, 2013

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

110 x 137 cm | 43.3 x 54 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Buruburu II, 2013

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m2

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

110 x 137 cm | 43.3 x 54 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Flor de Chagas, 2013

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

110 x 137 cm | 43.3 x 54 in

Buruburu means “popcorn” in the Afro-Brazilian dialect. In the religious symbology of Candomblé, popcorn is the flower of Obaluaê, the orisha of diseases and healing. It represents the white flowers that sprouted from the wounds of Obaluaê; that’s why it’s known by the Candomblé practitioners as the “Flower of the Elder” (Flor do Velho). The works in this series evoke an important ritual of healing and cleansing of the physical/spiritual body.



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

A Flor do Velho, 2013

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

110 x 137 cm | 43.3 x 54 in





*The role of blood in the human body serves as an associative reference for the artist's use of the **palm oil (dendê)** in his production. The ideas of venous circulation, oxygenation, pressure, irrigation, pulsation, pumping and movement are presented as an explicit reference to this atavistic cultural conduct. Exploring the potential of the material.*

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Odé com Ofá (Series "Banhistas"), 2007

Photograph printed with mineral pigments on
Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m2

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

166 x 110 cm | 65.3 x 43.3 in

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Retrato de Epô (Series "Banhistas"), 2007

Photograph printed with mineral pigments sobre

Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m2

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

166 x 110 cm | 65.3 x 43.3 in





*The organic materiality of the **palm oil (dendê)** - strongly associated with the culture in Bahia, Brazil - permits a broad reading of our historical traumas, such as slavery, and the resignifications operated by the society in Bahia when incorporating it as the official symbol of its gastronomy.*

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Yaô (Series "Banhistas"), 2007

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²,

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

166 x 110 cm | 65.3 x 43.3 in





The Afro-Brazilian religions in Bahia use the palm oil as a "vegetable blood", which is offered to deities in their rituals. According to the artist, the palm oil is an element that establishes, through its conductivity, a symbolic and mystical integration of what we can perceive as "Afro-Bahianity", conceived in this image as a body fed by this ancestral blood.

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Barrueco Colar (Series "Sangue Vegetal"), 2005

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m2

Edition: 5/5 + 2 AP

110 x 160 cm | 43.3 x 63 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Sangue, Sêmen e Saliva (triptych), 2005

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 3/5 + 2 AP

75 x 315 cm | 29.5 x 13.77 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Pérola Negra, 2016

Black Tahitian pearl and Polynesian shell in an acrylic box

Edition: 2/5 + 1 AP

20 x 20 x 12 cm | 7.8 x 7.8 x 4.7 in



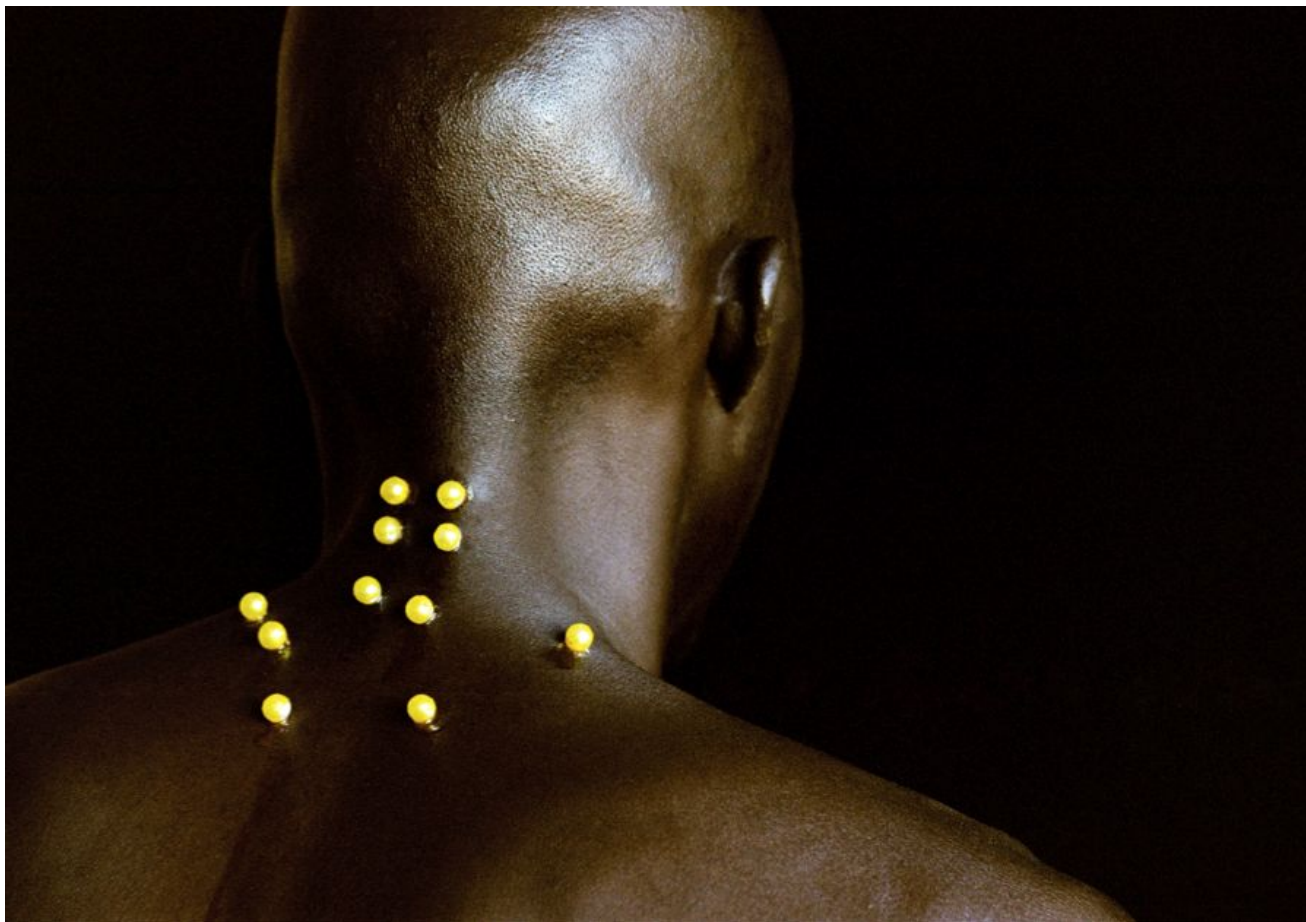
AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Piercing Pérolas (Series "Sangue Vegetal"), 2006

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 3/5 + 2 AP

73.5 x 105 cm | 29 x 41.3 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Sangue e Pérolas (Series "Sangue Vegetal"), 2006

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 2/5 + 2 AP

73.5 x 105 cm | 29 x 41.3 in



*Represented here is the relationship between sexuality and the sacred. This work also participated in the exhibition "Stories of Sexuality", at MASP, in 2017/2018. The naked torso represents the orisha **Ossain**, lord of the forests and leaves, with which he performs cures and miracles. Religiosity and sexuality, based on interdiction and incitement, are part of a recurrent structure in our society, which presents itself in multiple forms in works of art.*

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Gaye com Folhas Gu, 2015

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 3/5 + 2 AP

195 x 110 cm | 76.7 x 43.3 in



In this Series of photographs, “shaking” performative actions exorcise two historic buildings from their colonial and slavery past, both situated on opposite sides of the Atlantic: Casa da Torre, in Bahia, Brazil; and the Maison des Esclaves (House of Slaves) on the island of Gorée, Senegal. Coming from African-based religions, the practice of “shaking”, a ritual of spiritual cleansing through bouquets of leaves, aims to remove “eguns” from the domestic environment - the dead that remain among the living and cause all sorts of inconveniences and misfortunes. The performances reflect on the borderline point of humanity’s loss and the historical legacy of these violences that still exist. They were held in 2015 as a result of Videobrasil residency award at Raw Material Company in Dakar, Senegal and exhibited at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017.



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Sacudimento da Maison des Esclave em Gorée: Díptico II, 2015

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 1/3 + 2 AP

130 x 460 cm | 51.1 x 181.1 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Sacudimento da Maison des Esclave em Gorée: Fachada II, 2015

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 2/3 + 2 AP

130 x 230 cm | 51.1 x 90.5 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Sacudimento da Maison des Esclave em Gorée: Díptico II - Sacerdotes, 2015

Photograph printed with mineral pigments

on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 2/3 + 2 AP

195 x 220 cm | 76.7 x 86.6 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Sacudimento da Casa da Torre: Díptico I - Sacerdotes, 2015

Photograph printed with mineral pigments

on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 1/3 + 2 AP

195 x 220 cm | 76.7 x 86.6 in



Agbê is a Vodun God worshiped mainly in the Benin region, in Africa. It is commonly represented by a serpent and celebrates the alliance between man and the sea.

AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Vodun Agbê I, 2010

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 3/5 + 2 AP

166 x 110 cm | 65.3 x 43.3 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Vodun Agbê II, 2010

Photograph printed with mineral pigments
on Canson Rag Photographique 310g/m²

Edition: 3/5 + 2 AP

166 x 110 cm | 65.3 x 43.3 in

INSTALACAO - MAR - 1954

SEGREDOS INTERNOS

Myron H. ...

MAQUINA MERCANTIL



ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...

110 m.

ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...

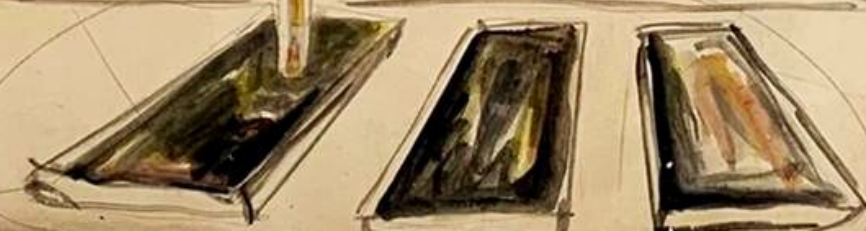
ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...

ALUNA DE ...



This is the original drawing of the installation **"Inner Secrets"**, a seminal work that synthesizes Heráclito's first researches on the Brazilian colonial enterprise (mainly in Bahia), initially founded on the monoculture of sugar. The title refers to a homonymous text written by historian Stuart B. Schwartz and also to the famous Joseph Beuys' quote: "make secrets productive". In this work, Heráclito proposes the union between historical reading and the creation of a purely visual expression - an artistic attitude facing our cultural issues and historical wounds. "Inner Secrets" evokes Gregório de Matos' poem "To Bahia", with an emphasis on the passage from the "Old Regime to the Merchant Machine". These two opposing structures project themselves allegorically in a connection full of tension and symbologies.



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Inner Secrets, 1994

Drawing

Edition: unique

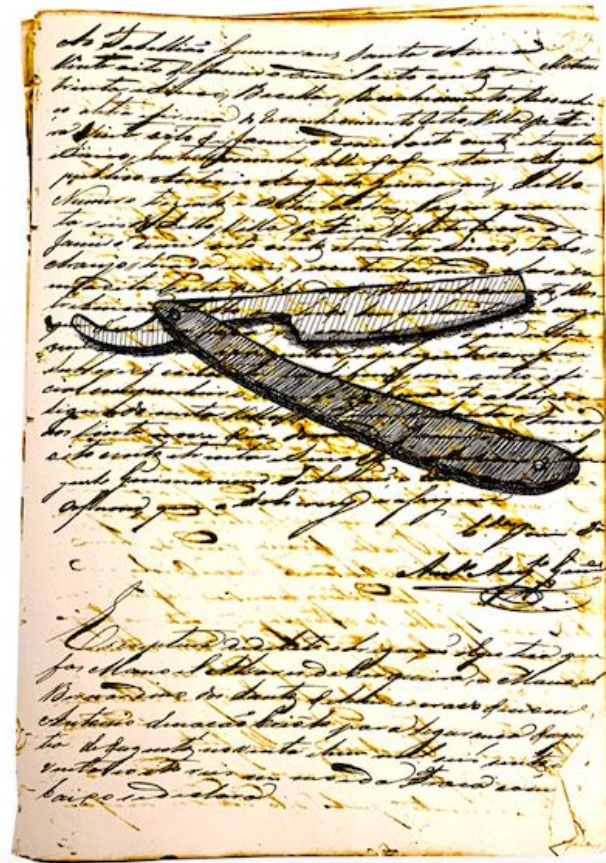
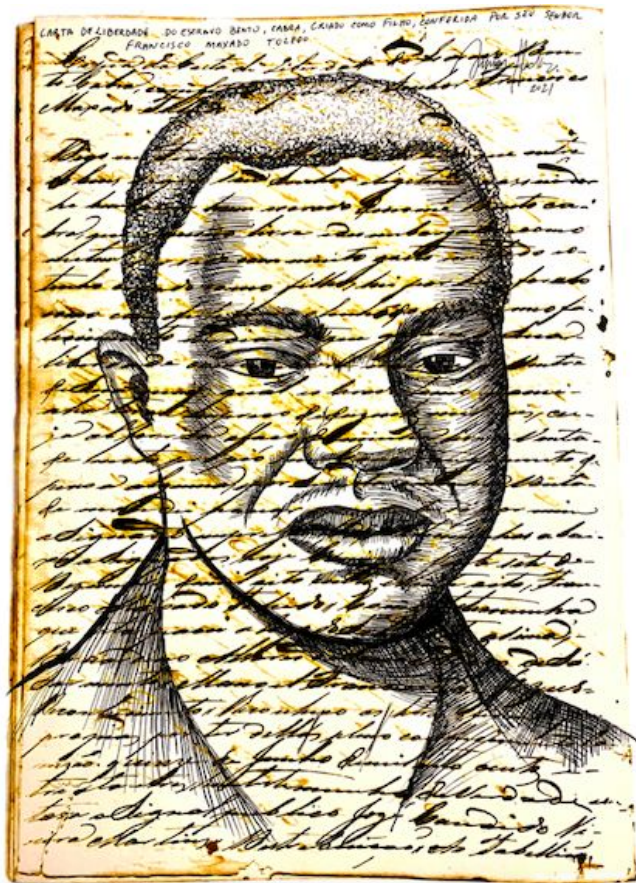
76.5 x 106.5 cm | 29.9 x 41.7 in



*The installation “**Inner Secrets**” proposes the dramatic union of two opposing structures. In one of them, the idea of crisis is merged and crystallized. The bow of a ship (the merchant machine) as a sugar refining table in colonial models (the Old Regime). In this work, Heráclito presents the fall, the tragic break, the imbalance promoted by these two adverse orders. Photo: Marcio Lima (Modern Art Museum - Bahia, 2010)*



*In this new series ("**Drawings of Freedom**") - based on historical sources from the slavery period and also from the black populations in the cities of Feira de Santana, Santo Amaro and Cachoeira, in Bahia, Brazil (1830-1885), Ayrson Heráclito creates poetic interventions through portraits and drawings using ink markers on documents that attest to the process of liberation. The desired freedom letters, through artistic action, gain complex layers of meanings that make us reflect on this disastrous period of dehumanization of the enslaved African population.*



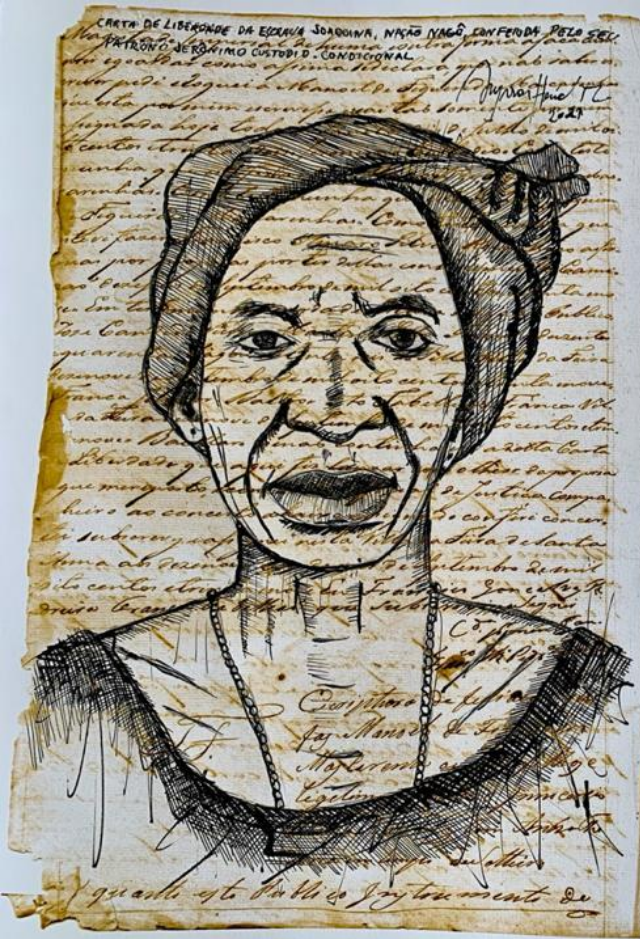
AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Series "Drawings of freedom" - freedom letter from the slave Bento, Cabra, raised as a son, conferred by his master Francisco Machado Toledo, 2021

Ink marker on certificate of freedom

Edition: unique

50 x 72 cm | 19.6 x 28.3 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Series "Drawings of freedom" - letter of freedom of the slave Joaquina, Nagô nation, conferred by her patron Jerônimo Custodio, 2021

Ink marker on certificate of freedom

Edition: unique

55 x 80 cm | 21.6 x 31.4 in



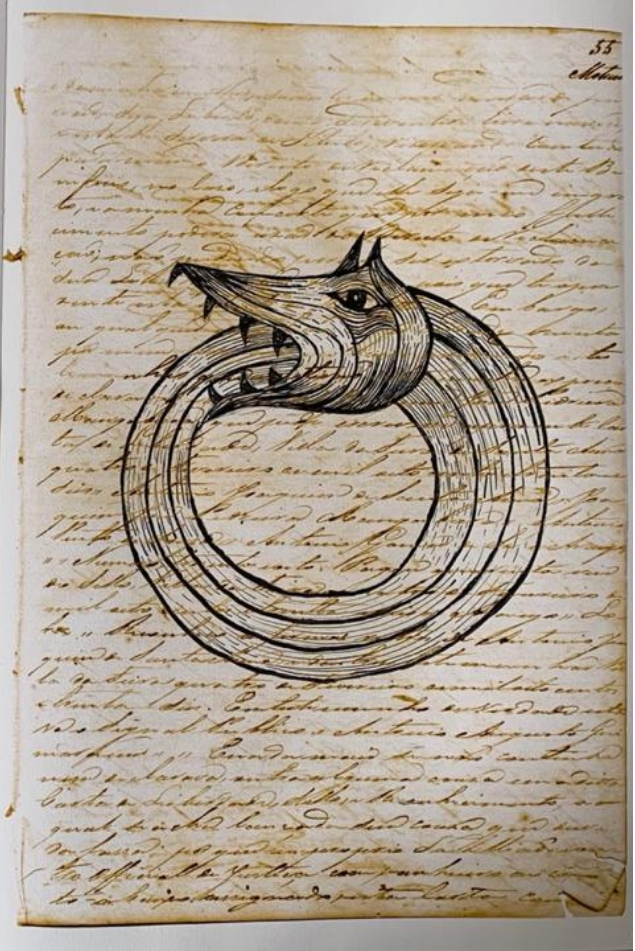
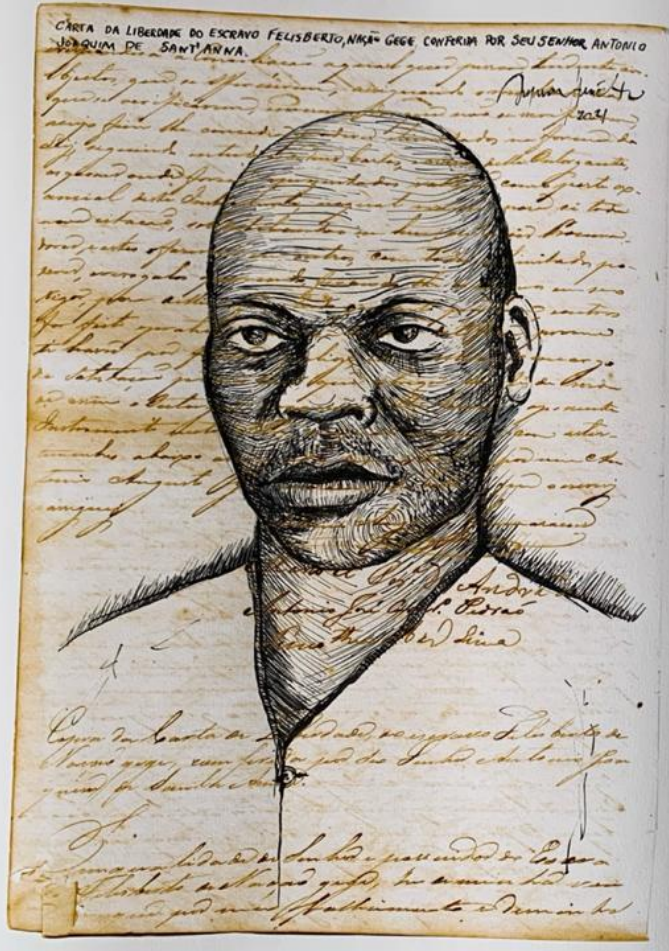
AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Series "Drawings of freedom" - Letter of freedom from Izidoria, daughter of the slave Josefa, conferred by her patron Miguel Ângelo de Souza Brandão. 1824, Vila de Feira de Santa Anna, 2021

Ink marker on certificate of freedom

Edition: unique

55 x 80 cm | 21.6 x 31.4 in



AYRSON HERÁCLITO

Series "Drawings of freedom" - Letter of freedom from the slave Filisberto, Jeje Nation, conferred by his master Antonio Joaquim de Sant'Anna, 2021

Ink marker on certificate of freedom

Edition: unique

55 x 80 cm | 21.6 x 31.4 in

HEALING

The Yoruba culture was one of the last to be disseminated in Brazil as a result of the diaspora, kidnapping, and bondage of African peoples. A country that annihilated, exploited, and marked the flesh of this people.

Arriving only in the 19th century, the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, were made up of kings and queens, spiritual and political leaders who remained as sources of ancestral knowledge, holders of various technologies. With this, the network of exchanges and teachings, rites, and worldviews made up the vitality and heritage of the Afro-descendant population spreading across the country.

Knowledge juxtaposed. Jeje myths were coupled with those from the Nagos, generating hybrid traditions under the Jeje-Nago umbrella. Such mythologies widely impacted the Brazilian history. A mythology full of colors, elements of nature, and drama that allures both elders and children. It is all about an alluring worldview that gave rise to the candomblés, which are, even nowadays, relentlessly threatened and persecuted. The various legends and *itàn* introduced us to the African gods, the orishas.

Those are stories lived in the present, in the streets of our cities, in novels, books, samba theme songs, and, above all, in oral tradition. From the legends we learned of a sinless world where the nature of beings and animals is complementary. Consanguinity, a restrictive concept, was challenged by constitutions of other types of kinship pertaining to saint-families. Otherwise, the constitution of the self is related to characteristics inherited from the gods who crown us as prodigious sons and daughters. This same mythology presents us with paths (*odus*) replete with love and betrayal, revolts and enchantments, in addition to the multiple possibilities of victory in the face of any and all adversity. Logically, this powerful plot did not go unnoticed by the Brazilian arts.

Ayrson Heráclito represents the great poetic and political reinvention of this Yoruban Brazil, coming from a Nago Bahia that incorporated in its daily life *óúnjẹ*, foods, spices, *iyò*, salt, and, above all, *epo*, palm oil, which, according to the artist, composes our impossible mixture in the Atlantic, where oil (*epo*) and salt water (*omi iyò*) are separated. palm oil then liquefies into bodily components, such as saliva, semen, and blood. And, even today, the Yoruban gods and goddesses are recurrently seasoned in *maruim* rites.

It is based on *this* Brazil that Heráclito revives memory with a view to healing historical wounds from the colonial era, inflicted by the exploitation of bodies in the pursuit of riches in the sugarcane cultivation. In his artwork history is recalled in the sense of purging, offering. Wounds add to the sentiment of paying homage to certain biographies, unheard-of, imagined faces. Works oft engage in a performance, sacred walk in combat, in ecstasy, in revolt. The people of Nago origin, since the very negative original name “*anagonu*,” needed to reverse the stigma of subalternity.

The representation of orishas in Heráclito’s pieces reaches the intricacy and pride required in the observation of bodies, altars, dances, *ijo*, gestures, and the phenotypic condition which wind up in legendary scenes and dramatic performances where each body presents itself, triggering matching games in a mysterious dialogue with beauty, *ewá*.

In different ways, Ayrson Heráclito crosses the history of art, incorporates the impact of the work of Joseph Beuys, and exercises an updated understanding of the spiritual condition of art in contact with ancestral forces, in connection with the invisible. Therefore, when “returning to the painting” of Bahia, he imagines the city of Salvador dyed with palm oil, an ointment-spice, an amulet-oil.

Ayrson Heráclito increasingly becomes one of the most significant artists in Brazil while conjuring healing rites, keeping a singular work that reviews our relationships with a nefarious past, constantly shaken and ritualistically eliminated in herbal baths (*wì orí*) with fresh water (*omi odò tó ñ san*) or in the constant food for the heads (*borí*) to maintain the balance between body and spirit.

Marcelo Campos
Curator





AYRSON HERÁCLITO was born in Macaúbas, Bahia, in 1968. A visual artist, curator, PhD in Communication and Semiotics from PUC-SP and professor at the University of Recôncavo da Bahia, in the city of Cachoeira, he lives and works between Cachoeira and Salvador (Bahia, Brazil). He also acts as Ogã Sojatin (master in the Jeje nation) of a HumAPme from Jeje Mahi (a temple that worships the Voduns of Jeje Mahi candomblé) in the city of Salvador.

His artistic practice focuses on elements of Afro-Brazilian culture and its connections between Africa and the diaspora in America. His works take the form of installations, performances, photography and video.

Among his most recent solo exhibitions, we highlight “Yorùbáino” (2021-2022), at the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) in Rio de Janeiro, curated by Marcelo Campos and Amanda Bonan; “Senhor dos Caminhos” (2018), at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC) in Niterói, curated by Pablo León de la Barra and Raphael Fonseca. He has also participated in relevant group exhibitions in recent years, among which we highlight: “Ekstase”, at the Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart, Germany (2018); 57th Venice Biennale (2017); “Afro-Brazilian Contemporary Art, Europalia.Brasil”, Brussels, Belgium (2012); Luanda Triennial, Angola (2010); and “MIP 2”, International Performance Manifestation, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil (2009).

He was one of the curators of the award-winning exhibition “Afro-Atlantic Histories”, on display in 2018 at MASP and Instituto Tomie Ohtake, in São APulo. In 2012, he received an award to participate in an artist residency programme in Dakar from Sesc-Videobrasil and from Raw Material Company, Senegal.

His works are part of important collections in Brazil and across the world, such as: Museum der Weltkulturen, Frankfurt, Germany; Raw Material Company, Dakar, Senegal; Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, SP, Brazil; Museum of Modern Art of Bahia, Salvador, BA, Brazil; Museu de Arte do Rio – MAR, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil; Videobrasil Cultural Association, São Paulo, SP, Brazil and Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

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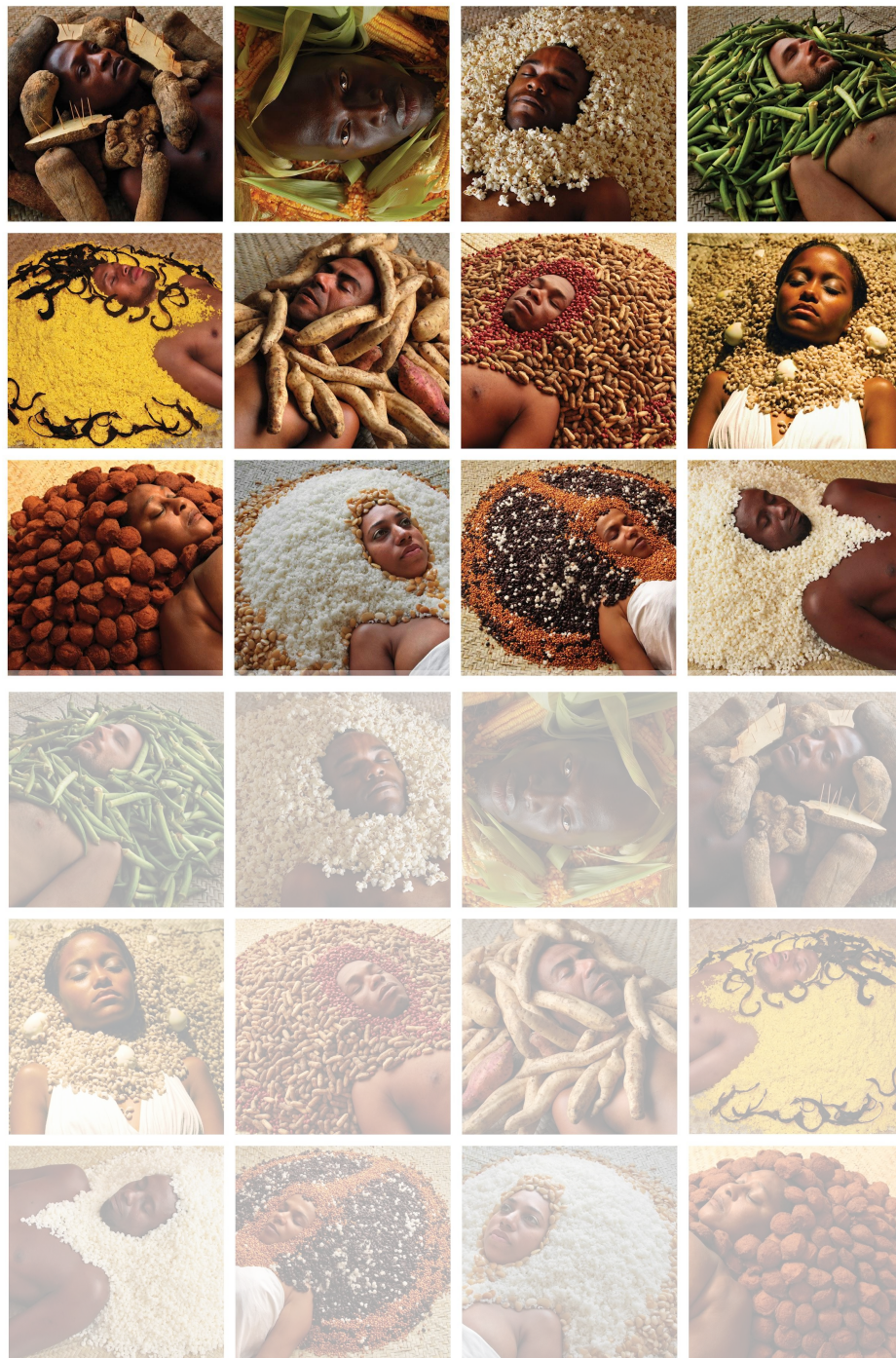
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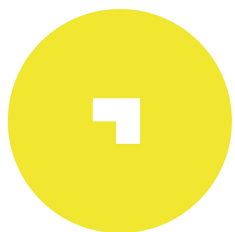
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