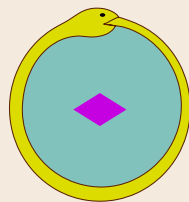
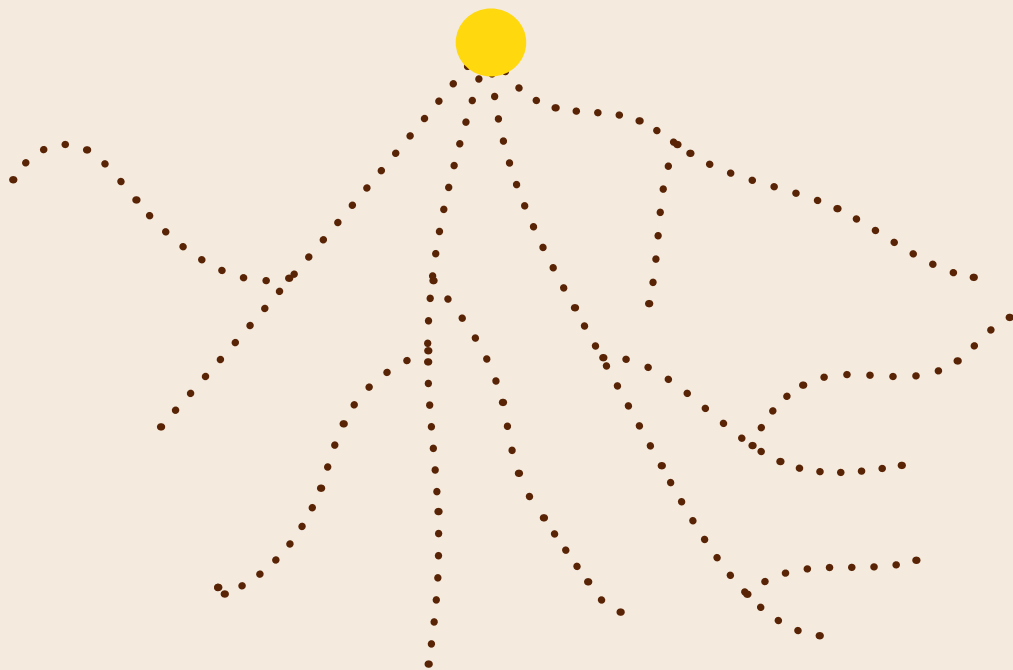
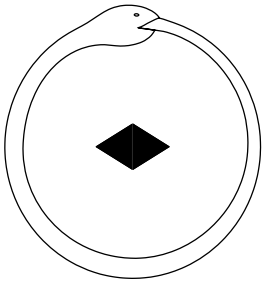




THE LIVING SCHOOLS'
EXPANDED HEART
Ailton Krenak



notebooks
SELVAGEM



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On 2 December 2023, we celebrated the opening of VIVA VIVA ESCOLA VIVA [Long Live the Living School], an exhibition that brought together art and medicine from the five Living Schools supported by Selvagem. The opening took place in a large conversation circle mediated by the project coordinator Cristine Takuá, with the participation of Dua Busë and Netë Huni Kui; Isael Maxakali and Sueli Maxakali; Carlos Papá; João Paulo Tukano, Anacleto Tukano and Carla Wisu; Francisco Fontes Baniwa and Franczy Baniwa, coordinators of these five territories, in addition to Moisés Piyãko and Ailton Krenak. Excerpts from these opening speeches are in the video [VIVA VIVA ESCOLA VIVA](#). There was a more in-depth meeting of the Living Schools coordinators, which became the [Ciclo Aprendizagens](#) [Ways of Knowing Cycle]. This notebook is made up of the transcription of Ailton Krenak's speech at the opening of the exhibition.

Where is the heart of the Living Schools¹? I like to work with, to see this depth, because the heart is a main part of everyone's body. To me, every single body assembled or created by the creator has three very important things: the brain, the heart and the spirit. These are the forces that sum up to what we need for a body. That's why I ask: where is the heart of the Living Schools? Everyone here knows where our hearts are, right? And the heart of the Living Schools, which is being worked on, where is it? I think the heart of the Living Schools is this feeling of each person, who understands what it is that is putting together. This heart is being created, built from several other hearts, from several other feelings. And this heart is gathering that purity, that sweetness that everyone needs, that everyone likes in their life, right?

1. Editorial note: Here there is a beautiful confluence of meanings, as Living Schools were named by the shaman Dua Busë, who lives in the village Coração da Floresta [Heart of the Forest].

I am very happy to be here today, listening to everyone who is part of this heart that is so beautiful, so lovely, so strong. I see that this heart is the planet we drink from, talking about this beautiful nature that Pawa² gave us. And we are responsible for taking care of this nature. Therefore, our people have been working, taking care of nature, as part of our body. Because we can live without this green, without this nature, but it is very difficult. I usually say that my Ashaninka people will live, they will fight until the last tree standing, the last drop of water that is here for everyone to share and drink, to quench the thirst. The Ashaninka will be there because our fight is to defend all of this. And knowing that, by defending this, I am defending the lives of everyone who is part of this planet, who depends on these trees, who depends on this drop of water to survive.

BY MOISÉS PIYĀKO

Some of these experiences being reported here are unique. The only chance to listen to them is now. They are being recorded, they may be transcribed and turned into notebooks. But this emission of the word is spirit, isn't it? There is a spirit speaking. And paper and video cannot have the same effect.

It's such a rare experience, like an essential oil lab. It is an experience that many have heard: about the path that the essences have been taking to the creation of four laboratories in the Huni Kuĩ territory. This is the continuation of work dreamt of by our dear Agostinho³, our late Agostinho, a wonderful person who made the forest his entire life. One

2. Pawa, to the Ashaninka people, is the divinity who created the universe.

3. The shaman Agostinho Manduca Mateus Ika Muru was an important leader of the Huni Kuĩ people. He participated in the demarcation of his people's territory and in the struggles for the liberation from the extractive model of rubber production, which bolstered the enrichment of bosses and prohibited Indigenous cultural activities. Agostinho's trajectory gave him experience to establish himself as a visionary. He said: "Culture is the greatest protection. I dream of the *Livro vivo* [Living book], the *Livro da cura* [Book of healing] and the Indigenous laboratories."

day, Anna worked on a book called *Livro da cura*⁴. *Livro da cura* and also *Livro vivo* are the expression of expertise, of research over a long, long, long time in the forest. The essences come from these much earlier journeys. And they are increasingly establishing themselves as one of the Huni Kuĩ people's ways of offering the world, in addition to the idea of healing, the wonderful possibility of the forest continuing to be the place producing living life.

It is important that this story can be opened on its different chapters. More recently, we have started this *Selvagem* cycle of studies, which brings us together and which sometimes happens in person, like the one that is happening here, but on other occasions it happens in other environments, with other possibilities. What is interesting is that *Selvagem* has grown, with its own capacity for expression. By bringing people together around Living Schools here, showing these arts, this artwork, what is actually expressed is the continuity of work that has been done for a long time. One of the expressions is the one you see displayed in works of art and in demonstrations of working with essences.

It is very interesting to consider this scale of time and also processes, the work that people dedicated themselves to. Some are alive and others are no longer here. So, this work has, as Moisés said, an expanded heart. Moisés said: the heart is in the universe, in the earth, in the forest. The heart is also in something that has already been mentioned here: the memories. It's a way of materialising memories. If this expertise does not materialise in objects like the ones expressed here, in chants that are capable of making these images of birds and animals transcend the image of birds and animals and become spirit, if we cannot do this, we will be facing this world roasting at 50° C [122° F], 60° C [140° F]. We are living what is called the climate crisis. In some places, people are no longer able to stay where they used to live, they are having to migrate, look for other places to live.

It may be interesting to consider that some of these words that were donated here today are a reward for the support of those who believed

4. [Una Isi Kayawa – Livro da cura do povo Huni Kuĩ do rio Jordão](#) [*Una Isi Kayawa* - The Huni Kuĩ from the Jordão River's book of healing] (Dantes Publishing House and Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro) is a pioneering book that brings together traditional knowledge and science through the in-depth Huni Kuĩ people's knowledge of the plants and medicinal practices. Its conception and idealisation are part of a long collaborative process, guided by shaman Agostinho Ika Muru, which included research, meetings, conversations, ceremonies and reports.

they could be together, making this work possible over all these years. And of those who are directly supporting the five Indigenous territories where the work is taking place. You know that, for this work to happen, people travel, work locally where they live, promote activities in the territory and that is why you are invited to support the Living Schools initiative. But it is very important that you may share the understanding of what this experience is, and how this experience can be appropriated by each person who is in contact with it. It is not an idea limited to someone's education. It is not a school to hand out diplomas.

In her text here⁵, Cristine Takuá talks about the non-living school. It was the first time I came across a text that names this limited experience of schools, which is mistaken for the building. In this limited experience, one could say that buildings like these are schools. In our general culture, school is a building: you give the address of a school. How interesting: there is a school experience that uses this word, that uses the expression school, but in fact, it is expressed in art, in expertise. It is as if this school were headed against the idea of education. This school is going against the flow. What is going against the flow? It is what many people call another epistemology, another perspective and another understanding of what knowledge is, what knowing is.

I know someone might be thinking: so why do you call it a school, if historically *school* is something brought here by the colonisers? If it is a Jesuit equipment model for colonial control, how are we going to decolonise the intrinsic meaning of the word *school*?

I also know that there are other applications of the term school that are not as limited as that Jesuit education stuff. But I say that the Living School goes against the flow because it produces expertise. The Living School doesn't wait for someone to offer expertise or education. Schools in the West are places where people go to learn, and the Living Schools aim to be places that express ancestral expertise. If they express ancestral expertise, it makes perfect sense to imagine a heart of the Earth expressing itself in all of us, in the world.

We know that intercultural contact and the crossing of cultures in Brazil have led to the possibility of providing Indigenous school educa-

5. In the text "The Living Schools and the four times of transformation", by Cristine Takuá, on page 9 of the [VIVA VIVA ESCOLA VIVA exhibition catalogue](#).

tion. I myself have engaged in debates on this front for 20 or 30 years. But what we are doing here is the opposite of that. Nobody here is talking about school education. For those who see it from afar, they might understand that we are developing a pedagogical project, an education plan for our communities or for non-Indigenous people. But it's nothing like that.

This is an experience of supporting masters of ancestral expertise, all those who live the exercise of practising. Our support is to enable them to continue transmitting their expertise.

In this cycle of studies we are beneficiaries of this. The presence of these people, these territories here, is a performance of this expertise for this environment which brings us together around the Selvagem cycle of studies. All the cycles, notebooks, meetings and conversations that have taken place in the last six years, since the first conversation circle, come from this place. All of this comes from this heart of which Moisés asked where it was. It comes from the place where this expertise is stored as if it were people's life itself. The historical continuity, the continuity of memory that flows into these events, which are a moment for us to share. This inner circle here reminds us that we are immersed in an experience that is new to all of us. This is not an offer of a pedagogical project, but an invitation to dialogue and support.

Gratitude to all of you. I thank Cristine, who is leading the Living Schools, together with her colleagues who are in the territories, Papá, Sueli and Isael, Mr Francisco and Francy, master Dua Busë and our dear doctor João Paulo Tukano. I thought it was very good that he highlighted that, in addition to the heritage of his ancestors, he also sought the degree he has at universities. He qualified to maintain a clinic, to attend people, to provide care, healing and the service of Bahserikowi Medicine Centre which he maintains in Manaus. He created the Bahserikowi Medicine Centre together with his masters and the Centre is alive. And our dear and courageous Isaká Huni Kuï, who continues the work of his father, his grandfather, his great-grandfather and everyone else.

Haux haux.

AILTON KRENAK

Thinker, environmentalist and one of the main voices of Indigenous knowledge. Together with Dantes Editora, he created *Selvagem* – cycle of studies about life. He lives in the Krenak village, on the banks of the Doce River in Minas Gerais. He is the author of the books *Ideas to postpone the end of the world* (Anansi International, 2020), *O amanhã não está à venda* [Tomorrow is not for sale] (Companhia das Letras, 2020), *Life is not useful* (Polity Press, 2023), *Ancestral future* (Polity Press, 2024) and *Um rio um pássaro* [One river one bird] (Dantes Editora, 2023). In 2023 he was elected as a permanent member to the prestigious Academia Brasileira de Letras [Brazilian Society of Literature].

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More information at selvagemciclo.com.br

All Selvagem activities and materials are shared free of charge. For those who wish to give something back, we invite you to financially support the Living Schools, a network of five educational centres for the transmission of Indigenous culture and knowledge.

Find out more at selvagemciclo.com.br/colabore

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