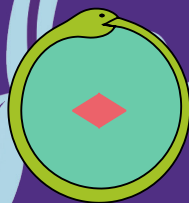
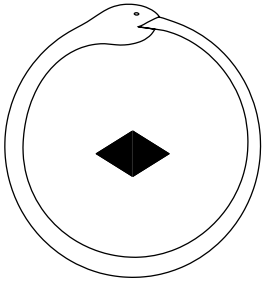


IN STATE OF DANCE
Mariana Rotili



notebooks
SELVAGEM



IN STATE OF DANCE

Mariana Rotili

*This text is the extended version of the one presented by Mariana Rotili at the **IMPACT22 – LOCAL FABRICS On Practices of Emergency**, a symposium of arts held in Essen, Germany, between November 9 and 13, 2022, which had Selvagem - Cycle of Studies as one of the invited projects.*

Hello, good morning.

My name is Mariana Rotili. I am a multi-artist and body researcher. I am from Brazil. I live in the forest¹. I am passionate about plants and I have an intimate relationship with them. For a long time, this connection was like an imaginary friendship, a silent communion, and I saw myself as someone who was hiding a shared secret with the forest.

By the fate of mysterious movements of life, I met Selvagem online in 2020, during the pandemic. I was deeply enthralled and involved. Since then, this has been the main source of my creations in different arts fields. For me, Selvagem is a kind of force that approaches and pollinates the flowers of the chakras with knowledge and activations. A dream school that has changed my way of studying and understanding life.

It is always a challenge to say what Selvagem is, since it is something very alive, such as an organism: it breathes, expands, contracts, metamorphoses, and moves. Designed by Anna Dantes, led by Ailton Krenak, produced by Madeleine Deschamps and held by a collective which involves partners, supporters, participants and the public, it is born from the desire to circulate a plurality of narratives about life. To this end, it activates opportunities for exchange and coexistence of knowledge from different sources, especially Indigenous and popular ones, together with scientists, artists, and other species. The studies – notebooks, conversations, reading cycles, audio-visual productions – are offered free of charge.

1. In what has come to be called the 'urban forest,' as if what was inside the city were the forest, and not the other way around.

I approached them slowly, and this year I became part of the Selvagem Community and started working as a volunteer. Today I dedicate much of my time and energy to the collective construction of this collaborative networking experience, something that I visualize as an energetic web that connects a constellation of hearts willing to protect the memory of the origin and continuity of life.

I feel that what I have done most in the Selvagem, until then, has been listening. Currently, in addition to carrying out my creations, I have been working on the research, recording and dissemination of artistic creations made spontaneously by people who accompany the Cycle's spins. I also collaborate with audio-visual productions, work in communication, and help with the organization of the Ailton's library.

Selvagem offers portals of contact with the deep and subtle sensitivity present in the world perceptions of forest peoples. For me, these connections, in addition to making me contemplate and give thanks, catalyze a state-of-dancing with life. It is something magical. What circulates there has a high potential for fertility and convokes me to create, guided by the feeling that this force passes through me and materializes itself in dances, songs, photographs, ceramics... much of this is experienced where I live, in a forest area in southern Brazil, In the *Mata Atlântica* [Atlantic Forest] biome, or *Nhe'ẽry*.

Nhe'ẽry is how the *Guarani* people, native to the region, refer to the *Mata Atlântica*. Carlos Papá, filmmaker and leader of the *Guarani Mbya* people and one of the mentors of Selvagem, says *Nhe'ẽry* is a very sacred place, and its name means "where souls bathe." I feel that this is deep and true, and I think it is important to bring images of this place to you all, so that you receive in your eyes a bit of the strength which is in it and so that you get closer to their rhythm.



My creations are born there, and it was from there that I met Selvagem and I started to feel that there was a poetics emerging. This poetics comes from an openness and subtle exchange with other forms of life that inhabit this territory. Plants, fungi, insects, stones, trees, flowers, water, lichens, sun. Plants, in particular, are generous teachers. Living with them is an experiment of being in daily interaction with masters who open us to the perception of the cosmic dimension of life.

When I am asked what kind of dance I do, I no longer answer that it is something close to contemporary dance, a flirtation with Butoh, in order to situate my interlocutor, but I speak of a formless dance, a cosmic dance. The name came to me through the words of Ailton Krenak, one of Selvagem's masters and mentors. A dance that is accompanied by all those who came before and all those who will come. A dance in which the dead and the living meet in a magical instant. A dance that creates atmospheres, gives life, makes friendship with other kingdoms, and accesses different intelligences.

In the sinuous force of the serpent, a very special encounter takes place, since through Selvagem I was presented to other narratives of subtle and sensitive experiences that have given me and give me tools to deepen the connections I experience. Through the speech of Indigenous thinkers, artists, *benzedadeiras*, *rezadeiras*, *curandeiras*², popular and academic scientists, I was able to know that I was not alone and not delirious, but rather open to flows of precious communications, connected to the invisible dimensions of life, trusting in the cosmic dance and experiencing it as a daily practice, not related to the production of shows, but as a way of life.

Walking in the forest, for instance, is something that brings me a lot of inspiration and expands the listening, musicality, spontaneity. Many of the words I am sharing with you now have emerged from this place. These are feelings and thoughts that crossed my mind as I walked through the forest alone or with my dog Ludo.

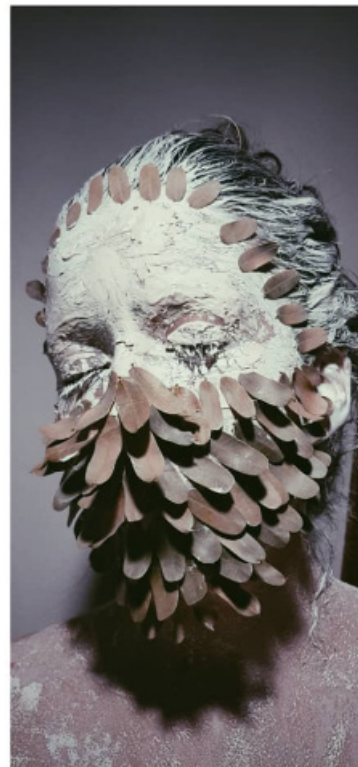
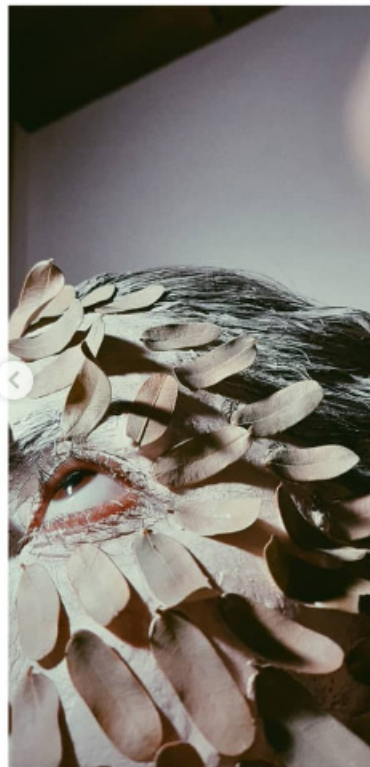
I feel it is important to talk about resonance when talking about my connection with Selvagem. It is beautiful to perceive this mixture

2. *benzedadeiras*, *rezadeiras*, *curandeiras*: healers, generally women spiritually endowed – faith healers, chanters, praying women, they accomplish the acts of blessings, healing prayers and activate the popular religious knowledge such as pleas and prayers, aiming at restoring the material, physical as well as the spiritual balance of people who seek their help. (TN)

between my research and artistic practice and the content activated by the cycle.

I do not always create or turn into an artistic dimension something that I have seen or heard from Selvagem. But I see how we are connected to the same source. Often I am at home, doing my own things, then a feeling traverses me. I feel something, I collect a little stone, a leaf, a mushroom and start playing with it, creating images, music, dancing to the energies of that encounter and on the same day or the next one I come into contact with something from Selvagem and see a resonance between my process, among what I am accessing within the forest and what I see Selvagem sharing through cycles, books, conversations.

It comes, it just happens. And it is not always to be shown, disclosed. There are ephemeral things, secrets of the leaves, mysteries of the stones. I deeply trust in it. And I understand this connection as a dance by itself that sometimes materializes in some shareable creation.



EVERY PLANT HAS AN ENTITY. THOSE WHO LOOK THROUGH COARSE GLASSES, DO NOT SEE IT, BUT FOR THOSE WHO MAKE A SENSITIVE CONTACT, THE PLANT SHOWS ITS IMAGE. IT IS WONDERFUL BECAUSE THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES TO WHOMEVER THEY WANT.

Ailton Krenak

More than a space of knowledge transmission, Selvagem opens up our vision. It takes us from the microscopic to the cosmic. And the body is a channel for conducting and incorporating this whole activation. Their sharings have watered in me the seed of humility and reverence towards nature. The awareness that we are collective, that our bodies are walking galaxies made up of an infinite number of beings. That there are luminescent double serpents dancing in the waters of every cell of each living being, traveling within our bodies. When I come into contact with ideas like these, my body vibrates and needs to dance, to embody. And joy gives me the sign. Joy is subtle evidence, a fit, a deep bond with life.



Experiencing the marvelous also reinforces respect. In the forest, you must rely on your intuition and ask permission to take the next step. To walk. Ask permission not only to the animals and plants who live there, but also to the energy and the enchanted forces. Everything has a mother. Everything is alive and if you ask permission you feel the response in the body. I feel in my body when I can proceed and when I cannot. When the field is open and when it is closed. When I must move forward or backward. And it is better not to force it, not to insist. Because the forest might say no.

As human beings, we only care about what we can feel and I see art, especially dance and movement, as a channel for cultivating the body's sensitivity. And dancing goes far beyond the field of performance or spectacle, it is an invitation to experience existence.

In cultivating sensitivity, we are often not gardeners, but flowers. How can we presume to be creators rather than creations of a process? What would happen if we allowed ourselves to be cultivated by life, by other species? Willing to receive and care for diverse, originary, abundant seeds, far beyond the monoculture that prevails in western mindsets?



GALANGA

Photo-performance inspired by Luiz Zerbini's illustrations for Emanuele Coccia's book *Metamorfoses* [Metamorphoses] (Dantes, 2020)

Carlos Papá also says that the hands are the body's flowers. And they are often convoked in the cosmic dance. He also says that there is no word for dance in the *Guarani* language. There is *Jeroky*³. And *Jeroky* means to emerge as a new grain, like a plant that goes on dancing, looking for a place to rise from the soil and receive the sunlight. To emerge as a flexible sprout and blossom; to dance like someone who salutes the experience of being alive.

3. Carlos Papá talks about *Jeroky*.

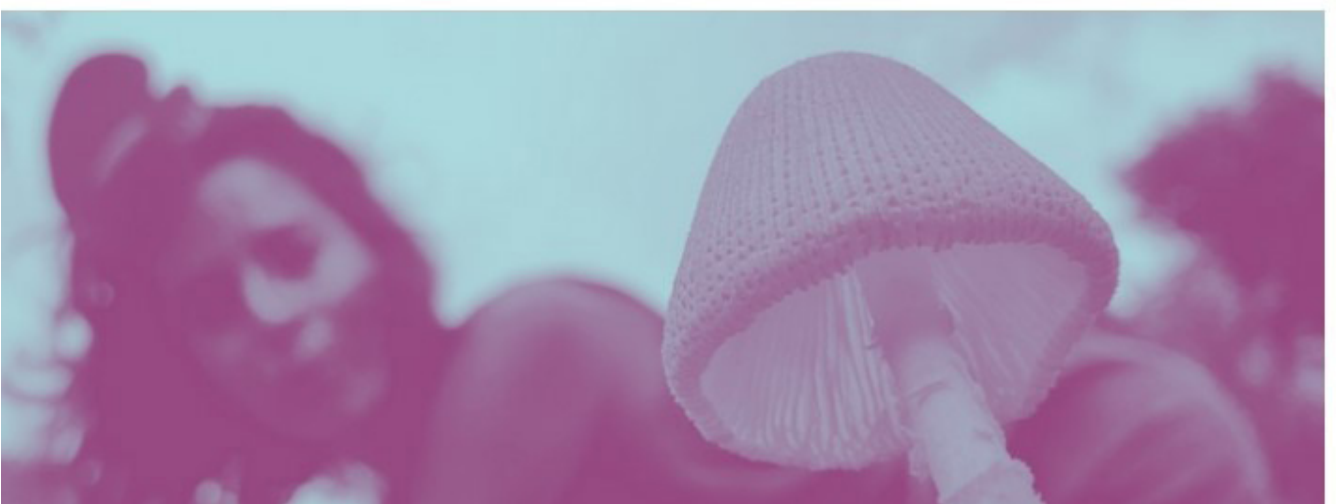
A dance that is a potentially magical event, whose choreography I do not control. A dance that claims the need to feel the sun, to play with lights and shadows. That seeks to evoke other ways of inhabiting the body, improvising with the natural materialities/entities that appear along the way. A dance that seeks to be radical. Radical in the sense of being radically alive.

entangled dances – multispecies choreographies and compositions



Besides plants, fungi also fascinate me. It is different from looking at a mushroom because they are ephemeral; they dissolve. They are meditative par excellence.

When I see a mushroom, it is as if it sees me, and I feel such great joy that it is like being in love! We compose songs, sing, dance... write. We enjoy the fire. And more than just enjoying this passion, it is time to act and use our strengths to awaken other forms of imagination. And activate the vision that we are so small compared to how magnificent life on Earth is. And this is not romantic or fanciful; this is real. And Selvagem creates an atmosphere that connects people who are passionate about nature and who are searching for components that unite this body-nature divide that patriarchal and capitalistic colonialism has torn apart.



Selvagem has been sinuously approaching dance, and, as an artist of the body, I realise the enormous potential of performing arts to incorporate this knowledge and share experiences that dissolve this dichotomy. It may seem something small in the face of the colossal social and ecological disaster we are in, but I feel that these are courageous acts in the face of the paralysis that shapes our bodies and flattens the world.

The body is an obvious path to reinventing life. In order to recognize and enter other levels of consciousness, to share the soul of things, we need to break spells with other spells, transform disenchantment into enchantment. To make space for a new era. Both learning from other species and movement practices are ways of expanding perception and consciousness and of leaping beyond the low-intensity daily routine that affects most people. These are ancestral technologies for de-anaesthetising bodies damaged by the rhythms of high productivity. We need rest, care, time, silence, regeneration. The forest teaches us this.

THE FLOWER OF THE VOICE

Personally, I have been going through a very strong process of channelling songs, and I feel singing as the culmination of this loving disposition towards life. Inspired by the mastery of plants, I receive songs that emerge from learning with the forest. And on this path I see singing as a greater mission. I am elevated to another experience of time, radial time, spiral time, circular time, mythical time, and time of presence. It has become impossible to deviate from the spiritual dimension of art.

And I sing not only for humans, to sound pleasing. I sing for and with plants, stones, the sky, and cells. With the dimensions of prayer, of delirium, of pleasure. Through singing, I attempt to hear what other forms of life desire.

In September of this year, I had the wonderful opportunity to personally share some of these songs in an immersive residency called *Mulheres, Plantas e Cura* [Women, Plants, and Healing], the result of a partnership between Selvagem and *Chã – Coletiva da Terra* [Earth Collective]. It took place in the territory of Maria Silvanete Lermen in the

countryside of the state of Pernambuco, in the northeastern hinterland, in a city called Exu. Exu, in Afro-Brazilian cosmology, is the lord who opens the paths. It was very moving to offer these songs to these women, in this place, under this energy.

One of the songs, called *Caminho* [Journey], was received as a kind of synthesis of the visions that Selvagem opened in me. It became a video clip⁴ released on Selvagem's channel. I received this as a gift from life: a window in which my voice was accompanied by images taken on the roads during this trip through deep Brazil.

The Journey is part of the *FLOWER OF THE VOICE*, the main project to which I have dedicated myself since 2019. It arises from a spontaneous coalition with the fungi kingdom and has radiated songs, dances, photos, and video performances, in a movement of looking to the sky and to the ground and weaving together arts, sciences, and healing.

The *FLOWER OF THE VOICE*⁵ is a process that has been unfolding since my encounter with an image. In 2019, I was in Oaxaca, in the south of Mexico, and I spotted, at a news stand in the central square, a poster with a black and white photograph of a very expressive lady. Intrigued by the gestures and the strength that her body emanated – something similar to the corporeality brought by Butoh – I was told that she was Maria Sabina, the sage woman of the mushrooms. My attention was magnetized by Sabina's story and her connection with the fungi kingdom. Sabina performed healing ceremonies in which she channeled chants by ingesting *niños santos*, magic mushrooms of the *Psilocybe cubensis* species. The cosmic connection between fungi and the voice sparked my curiosity, and since then, I have sought to relate to these beings through the means of art, magic, science, and medicine.

In the process of incorporating this knowledge, songs began to emerge through the voice, in a composition channel nourished by the experiences in the forest where I live. This channel branches out into human and non-human partnerships, narrating the tangled and synthesized lifelines by fungi, the Earth's oldest ancestors, and tireless creators of worlds.

4. A [movie](#) by Elisa Mendes

5. [Video](#) of the research and experimentation process.

I have begun sharing the initial stages of this work, building bridges between different groups interested in fungal wisdom. This involves organizing the gathered material into a scenic-musical experiment and the production of my first album as a singer-songwriter.

The mycelium, the communicative network woven by fungi, is an image that drives and deepens my research. This uncontrollable web, which exchanges information within the forest, is a channel, a passage-way. More than conveying the fascination for such an important group as fungi, these creations exist to sensitise and illuminate the regenerative capacity that these connections can establish by cultivating worlds of mutual flourishing. In a counter-movement, a means of resisting the urge to pierce, plunder and pollute the biosphere, which is our common home, the only one we have.

As a Brazilian artist who has survived the last four years of cultural policy destruction in my country, I have also dedicated myself to seeking funds for the production of my first album as a singer and songwriter, as well as for the launch concert of this work. I hope, in a future opportunity, to have the joy of presenting it.

I thank Selvagem for the love, support, and trust, Impact for the invitation, and all of you for being here.

MARIANA ROTILI

Apprentice of the forest. Artist and free researcher. I was born on February 10, 1989, in Rio Grande do Sul. I live in Florianópolis, in the forest on the corner of the lagoon. Through songs, photographs, videos, performances, dances and other writings, I have been composing a body of work fed by invisible and symbiotic forces. Listening to and regenerating the body-nature is the basis of my solo research and it also ferments the collectives I am part of. I collaborate with Selvagem - Cycle of Studies.

TRANSLATION
CARLOS RANGEL

A member of the Selvagem community, helping them to spread their wisdom and knowledge to even more people.

TRANSLATION REVISION
ANA LOUREIRO JUREMA

An everlasting learner, member of the Selvagem community, contributing as a *brincante da língua*, a language craftswoman, a tongue-reveler.

The editorial production work of the Selvagem Notebooks is carried out collectively with the Selvagem community. The editorial direction is by Anna Dantes, and the coordination is by Alice Faria. Layout by Tania Grillo and Érico Peretta. Coordination of English translations by Marina Matheus.

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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