

Artivism - tensions between life and art: the experience of a performer in the Worecū ritual

Vanessa Benites Bordin

Universidade do Estado do Amazonas
Manaus, AM, Brasil
vbordin@uea.edu.br
orcid.org/0000-0002-4675-0849

Abstract | The experience of a ritual belonging to another culture allows us to think about many issues related to our own culture, from a kind of 'detachment', because when 'looking' the other we end up perceiving aspects of ourselves. For a performer, experiencing a female initiation ritual, in this case, of the Tikuna indigenous people: Worecū, is reflecting on how much the context in which we live influences our artistic making, since life and art are intertwined, thinking from the concept of artivism.

KEYWORDS: Artivism, Performance, Ritual.

Artivismo - tensões entre vida e arte: a experiência de uma performer no ritual Worecū

Resumo | Experienciar um ritual pertencente a outra cultura proporciona pensarmos questões relacionadas à nossa própria cultura, a partir de uma espécie de 'distanciamento', pois ao 'olhar' o outro percebemos aspectos de nós mesmos. Para uma performer, vivenciar um ritual de iniciação feminina, no caso aqui, do povo indígena Tikuna: Worecū, é refletir sobre o quanto o contexto em que vivemos influencia nosso fazer artístico, já que vida e arte estão entrelaçadas, pensando a partir do conceito de artivismo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Artivismo. Performance. Ritual

Artivismo - tensiones entre la vida y el arte: la experiencia de un intérprete en el ritual Worecū

Resumen | Vivir un ritual perteneciente a otra cultura nos permite pensar en temas relacionados con nuestra propia cultura, desde una especie de 'desapego', porque cuando 'miramos' al otro, percibimos aspectos de nosotros mismos. Para una actriz, experimentar un ritual de iniciación femenino, en el caso aquí del pueblo indígena amazónico Tikuna: Worecū, es reflexionar sobre cuánto influye el contexto en el que vivimos en nuestra creación artística, ya que la vida y el arte se entrelazan, pensando desde el concepto. del artivismo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Artivismo. Performance. Ritual.

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The trajectory of the performer and the meeting with the Tikuna

The experience in the female initiation ritual *Worecū*¹ of the Tikuna² Amerindian people was motivated by the desire for self-knowledge, seeking the transformation and reframing of my poetic practice and my ramblings as a human being based on challenges that make me see myself as an artist in this lifetime, leaving my comfort zone. Thus, I recognize an interdisciplinary field between theater, performance, and other arts, and transdisciplinary in the interface with cultural anthropology, education, among other disciplines. Between-places, histories, cultures, and politics also reveal the possible paths for the practice of my creative process as a performer and teacher-performer. Thus, expanding the range of possibilities in the face of contemporary modes of production, peculiar in the intersection of studies, concepts, and ideas and in the hybridity of languages and bodies that constitute, paradoxically, a thought and a kind of organizing unit.

The artistic creation in this environment is understood as a driving force for the perception, construction, and transformation of the world. It is believed that the relations between life and art are not dissociated, consequently thinking about possible strategies for transforming the world takes place in a political context and in the creation of possible spaces for dialogue. The performer produces his art based on his convictions and in this way political thought becomes engaged in artistic practice.

This idea is related to the concept of activism, which comes from my master's research, where I discuss buffoonery as a tool for the activist. As the research supervisor, Elisabeth Silva Lopes, a buffoonery, and performance researcher, it was possible to get to know about performance studies, in which politics played a central role from the Art and Resistance³ course we conducted. Promoted by the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics (HEMI, this course reflects on my work until today. In this case, the universe of political performance focused on the activism⁴, done by activists, artists from different fields whose copyright works protest with actions in scenic spaces and/or public.

From this experience in Mexico, I highlight the meetings with indigenous women from FOMMA⁵ (Fortaleza da Mulher Maya) where we carry out joint poetic practices, rounds of conversations and appreciate their artistic interventions directed by the actress and director Doris Difarnecio of the Centro

¹ *Worecū* – the girl who had her first period..

² The Tikuna, or, *Magüta*, as they call themselves in their language, being those that were caught by their God Yoi in the waters of the sacred river Eware, they are the largest indigenous population in Brazil, they live in the Amazon region of a triple border between Brazil, Peru and Colombia.

³ The course offered by the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics was held in the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, state of Chiapas, Mexico, from July 24 to August 13, 2011. The course was coordinated by Diana Taylor, researcher of studies New York University's performance and founding director of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics.

⁴ Activism: agglutination of the term art and activism, as well as activists: art and activist. Diana Taylor, during a meeting we had at New York University (NYU) in September 2012, as part of my master's research, spoke about the big question that involves the power of activism in effecting concrete social changes. She says that the activist, more than intending to change public policy immediately, he proposes perhaps to transform the way people see a certain situation, communicating something to the public, opening people's eyes so that they are aware of certain situations that must be denounced in our society. (BORDIN, 2013).

⁵ <<https://hemisphericinstitute.org/pt/enc09-performances/item/105-09-fomma-fortaleza-de-la-mujer-maya.html>>

Hemisférico/FOMMA. The memories of this experience reverberate in the relationship I have with the indigenous people today⁶, as the studies and practices carried out during the course raised questions about working with otherness and how to develop poetic experiences based on their reality, revealing the stories of oppression suffered for these women⁷.

Another important moment that we shared in Mexico was the meeting with a Zapatista⁸, community where we realized that another way of life is possible, since they build a society with their own laws, in which art is present as a form of resistance through the practice of graffiti, theater and crafts. A way of resisting as a group, which I also strongly perceive in the reality of indigenous peoples, both in the village and in an urban context, I say this from my experience in the village Nossa Senhora de Nazaré⁹, with the Tikuna people and in the indigenous community Parque das Tribos, located in the urban perimeter of Manaus, AM, where I work with the indigenous teachers of the Cultural Centers for Indigenous Education advised by the Management of Indigenous School Education (GEEI / SEMED) within the community.

The experience in Mexico motivated me to want to know the Brazilian indigenous universe. In Manaus, I identified the strong presence of Amerindian culture, and as soon as I arrived¹⁰ I had the opportunity to get to know the interior of Amazonas where this characteristic is evident¹¹. When I realized that I was surrounded by indigenous people, of many ethnicities, in a territory that belongs to them, I felt that I needed, and how it was urgent to get to know them in order to understand the context in which I was inserted, to know that place, those people, their story.

I had no way of exempting myself from this, it was impossible to deny the new reality I was facing. I could not work artistically and pedagogically with those people unaware of their reality. How would I propose creative methodologies without knowing who I was working with? And yet, recognizing that my reality was different. The most important among the differences is our conception of art, unlike any other in the Amerindian world.

This search took place in a theoretical context at first, when I took the discipline of "Art and Shamanism in Anthropology"¹², taught by PHD professor Deise Lucy Montardo, where we were presented with some aspects of the Tikuna indigenous way of life and the main ritual performed by them: Worecü, or, The Party of the Young Girl. What enchanted me in the brief description

⁶ Since 2016 I have lived with indigenous groups, especially the Tikuna, who I will speak to here and the Kokama, the two peoples with whom I live and work together in the Cultural Centers of Indigenous Education in the indigenous community Parque das Tribos, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil. In the community there are families of more than thirty-five indigenous ethnicities, in addition to those mentioned, we have Baré, Witoto, Sataré-Mawé, Karapanã, Mura, Tukano, among others.

⁷ Doris Difarnecio works on the personal stories of indigenous women in a performance model very close to that of Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed - which was even one of the main references of the Art and Resistance Course - to bring up indigenous and feminist issues.

⁸ One of the main struggles of the Zapatistas, when they organized themselves, was to end the marginalization of local indigenous descendants of the Mayans.

⁹ Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas.

¹⁰ Coming from the south of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul and lived in São Paulo for some years.

¹¹ In 2014, when I was a judge of four folk festivals of the Festa do Boi-Bumbá, one in Manaus and three in different cities in the interior of Amazonas.

¹² In the Graduate Program in Anthropology at the Federal University of Amazonas in 2015.

about the ritual, was the female figure placed in the center, as the guardian of perpetuity Tikuna, from the moment she “becomes a woman”¹³ when she has her menarche.

Then, I searched for references and discovered a universe of masks present in the ritual that fascinated me, mainly for its characteristics that at the beginning I related to the universe of buffoons, my previous academic research. When I related Tikuna masks to the buffoon universe, it was not in the sense of making a comparison between buffoons and masked ones, since each culture has its specificity, however, there is the cultural heritage left by primitive rituals with supernatural figures that have a certain relationship with buffoons, or with the world of laughter, in an anthropological perspective, from the reference of figures that have always existed in the most distant cultures and that served to amuse, criticize, offer or even scare off diseases and epidemics, cataclysms, storms, or that is, there is a universal buffoon spirit that is the cradle of theatrical culture¹⁴.

Since then, I started to deepen the study of the Tikuna people. The theory¹⁵ complemented what was fundamental for me: living with the Tikuna in their daily lives¹⁶. Thanks to this interaction, I was invited to participate in the *Worecū* ritual. I received the invitation due to the relationship of trust established during the time I was with the Tikuna people in Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, which made me close to them through daily contact, carrying out daily activities together, since everything happens within the village.

The invitation

Marijane Tikuna who was in the city of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, called me saying that the Owner of the Party (who is usually the father of the girl who had menarche, in this case was the brother-in-law, as the father had already died) asked she would invite me. I received the invitation to The Party of the Young Girl a month earlier, by phone, but most of the invitations are done 'word-of-mouth', due to the lack of electricity in the village there is no telephone and no signal for mobile phones. However, the 'word-of-mouth' invitation is effective, many relatives from other nearby communities attend the Festivals.

Knowing in advance his reality and the aspects of his culture, I was able to pay attention to many actions that I was experiencing, understanding the symbology of some elements present in different moments of the ritual.

¹³ From what the Tikuna themselves say to them, there is no adolescence as for us, she is a child and after menstruating she is a woman, she can now marry and have children, the girls in the village marry at the age of thirteen, fourteen, fifteen.

¹⁴ We can learn more about this from the study by Elisabeth Silva Lopes that addresses the possible remote origins of the buffoon in different cultures: LOPES, Elisabeth Silva. It's still time for buffoons. Doctoral thesis presented to the Postgraduate Program in Performing Arts at the School of Communication and Arts at the University of São Paulo, 2001.

¹⁵ From some ethnographic works about the Tikuna: ANGARITA (2010; 2013); COSTA (2015); GOULARD (2009); MATAREZIO FILHO (2015); NIMUENDAJÚ (1952); SOARES (1999).

¹⁶ When I was in the village of Tikuna Nossa Senhora de Nazaré located near the municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas and with the Tikuna of Parque das Tribos, an indigenous community in the urban territory of Manaus, AM, with whom I have a more effective coexistence today.

However, the aesthetic experience already has a potency in itself for having performative elements and transporting us to the festive and ritualistic character from which the theater was born, as we studied from the Western model coming from Greece. Foi como se eu fosse transportada para outro tempo, outra vida, outro mundo. It was like I was transported to another time, another life, another world. The sensations caused by the music, sounds, songs, smells, flavors, images, dances, and actions so characteristic of that event change the perception of reality, it is like entering a state of trance, of lucid dreaming¹⁷.

The ritual experience is sensory, provoking reflections and when we are not familiar with otherness, these reflections occur only from our point of view, without trying to understand the other. It is evident that in the process of trying to get to know the other, the reflections raised are based on our point of view, and are intertwined, as it is not possible to leave aside our luggage. As an artist in process, who seeks these experiences from the body, from feeling, I set out to be present at that moment, I wanted to let myself be led by events in an organic way, and it is evident that thinking focused on research enters this process, but I did not want to that it was a concern, that the analytical gaze was superimposed on a disinterested delivery.

My thoughts rescued different references both in the field of anthropology and in the scenic arts that fed the course of the study, I reflected on the ideas of Antonin Artaud, a French theater man to whom the idea of theater and ritual is associated, mainly because of his interest in Balinese theater and the tradition of the Mexican indigenous Tarahumara, with whom he experienced his rituals while in Mexico.

The rescue of magic, present in the rituals of traditional peoples, for Artaudian ideas is in the sense of thinking about a renewal in theatrical art that appears as a possibility to make the limits between art and life be crossed. Cassiano Sydow Quilici (2004), tells us that this is the way in which Artaud expresses his engagement, thinking of an art that does not simply have a marketing aspect of a theater as a show that aims only at leisure, but as something that provokes social changes.

The rituals of native peoples do not happen as isolated facts but are performed as indispensable practices linked to the other collective tasks in traditional societies, those that did not incorporate the transformations of the industrial revolution, and still regulate the relationships that involve the subjects of certain societies based on collective beliefs that guarantee the maintenance of community life in different areas. This perception made Artaud

¹⁷ During the graduation in performing arts, I had the teacher, Paulo Márcio, who worked from exercises with lucid dreams in his training methodology for the actor. His studies were based on the theories of anthropologist and novelist Carlos Castaneda, who brought from an experience alongside Mexican indigenous peoples. When I did regression therapy, I had the same feeling as the lucid dream, since that 'story' was built in my mind like a dream, but I was conscious, unlike a sleeping dream, that we were unable to consciously interrupt. A different food from the one I am used to: lots of fish and river animals (alligator, tracajá), game animals, Uarini flour (which is that of wild cassava), various banana species and various dishes made with bananas, juices from typical fruits of the Amazon (far from my reality: cubiu, cupuaçu, taperebá, genipapo

think of the place of the theater as a place of transformation for the one who does it: the actor, who represents the “channel” of communication that will stimulate the opening of a space for exchange that will transform human beings.

Some of my references are artists like Jerzy Grotowski, who is perpetuated with the Workcenter, Regina Polo Müller, Maria Julia Pascali, Richard Schechner, who are inspired by the ritualistic spirit from which the theater is born. However, what I see is that throughout history, most of the theatrical production we experience, stemming from Western European influence, seems to distance itself from these rituals. When we encounter cultures that keep rituals similar to those related to natural phenomena alive, with a festive character in relation to the abundance that comes from the land, we realize that these rituals of traditional cultures have more proximity to the event that gave rise to Western theater. than much of the theater that is done today.

The experience in the Worecū ritual, or, The Party of the Young Girl, allows me to reflect on some of these issues in practice, which makes me realize the importance of the theory experienced in practice and the perception that life and art permeate and give meaning the poetic creation of/the artist.

The ritual *Worecū*

To be in a *Worecū* ritual, The Party of the Young Girl, you need to be Tikuna, because only in this context does it make sense. It is the Tikuna who perform this female initiation ritual, so much so that it is at this event that they paint themselves with genipap to declare which nation they belong to and identify themselves at the Festival. In addition, you need to be invited by the Party Owner, who is the patriarch of the Worecū family, as I said earlier.

As it is not Tikuna, the experience in the village was of paramount importance so that I could observe and experience some of the traditional forms of knowledge production that take place in moments of sharing collective actions, generating communion and exchange between children, young and old.

I highlight the meetings in the late afternoon when the villagers gathered in Ye'egune, or in the space where the old school of indigenous education is located, to remember the stories of their ancestors, of their mythical heroes, the songs that are since immemorial times present at The Party of the Young Girl, they talked about making musical instruments, reproduced some dances, games and traditional games. In addition, the transmission and production of knowledge took place on other more familiar occasions, for example, when they manufactured utensils and artifacts for domestic use, hunting or fishing, with fathers, mothers and/or grandparents, together with their children and grandchildren.

The preparations for the Worecū ritual begin when the girl Tikuna has her menarche, from that moment she is confined in a room in her house, where she will remain for a few months wrapping a tucum fiber and cannot be seen by anyone, except for her. mother who will bring you food in the room, help you bathe

and do your necessities, everything in the room (nowadays it is like that, in the past she used to be in the corral¹⁸ and could stay there for up to a year).

Worecū cannot leave her prison room or see anyone, because she risks being caught by the 'wild animal', the '*yereu*', as the Tikuna say, who can kill her, as happened with the first *Worecū*: To'oena, who according to Tikuna mythology was killed for breaking the rules.

The moment of reclusion corresponds to what Victor Turner (1974) calls the first phase of the ritual process, the phase of separation, when the individual is symbolically removed from the group to which he belongs. In the case of neophytes in the Tikuna ritual, they are prohibited from leaving the house, seeing and talking to other people.

The second moment of the ritual process characterizes the state of 'liminality', of margin, which would be the most lasting stage for rites of passage, when the neophyte occupies a place of invisibility, it is the place of the middle. "Neophytes are merely entities in transition, having no place or position yet." (TURNER, 1974, p. 126). This indeterminate characteristic is expressed in societies that ritualize cultural and social transitions through a wide range of symbols, such as those present in the *Worecū* ritual. "Thus, liminality is often compared to death, being in the womb, invisibility, darkness, bisexuality, wilderness and an eclipse of the sun or moon." (TURNER, 1974, p. 117).

People in the preliminary state are going through a period of transition and need to endure tests that make them have knowledge and maturity to occupy the place of relevance to which they are destined. During the Tikuna women's initiation rite, counseling songs are sung by older women who talk about how *Worecū* should behave, in addition to the ordeals they go through from their seclusion to the end of the Festival. These supplements, which according to Turner (1974), are characteristic of the rites of passage, where the figures of the neophytes must have a humble and passive behavior, remaining submissive and silent, obeying the advisers, and accepting the punishments without complaining as way to qualify for the new stage of life.

The state of liminality represents a passage through experiences, in this way, the torments allowed to break with the old status for the establishment of the new. During this period, *Worecū* will listen to the advice of the elderly, drink *payuaru*¹⁹, be threatened by the presence of the masked beings that will appear at the Festival, will have her body painted with genipap and her hair pulled out²⁰. Then, you will receive a prayer from the shaman who uses his cigarette smoke to 'smoke it' and bring it closer to invisible beings. Finally, it will be sent to the stream to be washed, ending the rite.

The roll of tucum rope that *Worecū* rolls up during his seclusion is given as a gift to the *ūaūcū* (cupbearer), he is responsible for taking care of the preparations

¹⁸ Wooden space made spatially for that moment in the girl's life located at Party House.

¹⁹ Fermented drink made from wild cassava.

²⁰ Yes, they are uprooted, in the ritual I witnessed they were uprooted, including the Tikuna of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré said that the communities that cut instead of uprooting are not doing 'the real ritual'.

for The Party of The Young Girl, fetch and store fish and game *moqueados*²¹- The Owner of the Party - and *payuaru*.

During the ritual, the *üaücü* takes care that the *payuaru* does not run out, serving it to the guests, he is also the one who distributes the *moqueado* to the masked ones when they appear and to any eventual guest who requests it. Anyway, take care that everything goes well during the ritual. The fish and *moqueado* game symbolize the abundance, the more you have at the party, the more abundance for the Tikuna people, so the Owner of the Party spends months hunting and fishing.



FIGURE 1 - Fish and game being ground. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/03/2016.

According to some Tikuna, when Worecü is in seclusion it is 'gaining body', putting on weight, 'becoming a woman', which will take place after passing through all phases of the ritual, soon, she will be ready to marry and bear children. According to Turner, this would be the final phase of the ritual process, the 'reincorporation or reincorporation' phase (1974, p. 117), when the passage is consummated, and the neophyte acquires a stable position within the group to which he belongs with obligations and rights before others. Thus, it is expected that it behaves according to certain rules and ethical standards referring to its social position. In the case of the Worecü ritual, this behavior refers to her place as a woman within the village, carrying out the tasks that are incumbent on her, including marriage and design, in addition to working in the fields and producing domestic utensils and artifacts.

When I arrived in the village, all the residents were involved with the preparations for the ritual. The corral where Worecü would stay during the ritual

²¹ The fish and game are in the smoke of the fire, almost extinguished, some wrapped in banana leaf, as if smoking, so that they last for a long time for consumption, not needing a refrigerator.

days was ready, made of wood, painted with some Tikuna drawings and graphics, adorned with plumes, river shells and a headdress that represents the sun. Inside, the corral is wrapped in fabrics and there is everything Worecū needs to prepare itself when it is time to enter the ritual: water, food, payauaru, its ritual clothing, a place to make your needs, etc. There is a bowl placed as a horizontal beam inside the corral that Worecū holds facing the wall, so that it does not look at anyone who enters the corral while waiting, as women and close relatives will enter to advise it.



FIGURE 2 - Corral seen from the front, from the outside. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/03/2016

The *payauaru* was being prepared by the women and men of the village, which is served in bowls in two ways: as a very thick broth, almost a mass made from manioc and as a finer broth that is filtered several times in the sieve. While preparing, they took the opportunity to drink the finest broth. The Party was already underway, continuing into the night of Friday, there were people who didn't even sleep from Friday to Saturday, when it officially started for the guests. In Ye'egune (Party House) there is a space for guests to put their hammocks to rest when they feel necessary since the ritual lasts three days.



FIGURE 3 – Thick fermented Payauaru broth. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

Payauaru is a drink that must have a lot at the party, we make it from manioc milk. Grated Macaxeira, we leave a day or two to toast this manioc mass just like flour. Then, when we arrive at the party that we are going to do, wet this payauaru flour with warm water in a bowl, we take the banana leaf out and put it on the floor, put maniçoba on top and then close with maniba leaf, with a banana leaf, spend a day and on the second day we take it out, raise it up, call it *igaçaba* or *tapi*, spend it for well over two months to be fermented, to have stronger broth, for people to get excited, when he's a little tipsy he likes to sing, he likes to play, he likes to have fun, so it was the preparation of the party. (Ondino Tikuna talking about preparing payauaru. November 2016).

On Saturday morning, the community wakes up excited (who slept), it is the moment when the relatives of other communities begin to arrive, the *üaücü* (butler) goes together with those who are at *Ye'egune*, take the *tori*, a musical instrument made with the hull of the *tracajá*, the chelonian of the Amazon, a species of turtle that lives in the waters of the Rio Negro and continues singing and dancing throughout the community, like a procession that goes from house to house calling people.

To dance the *tracajá* dance it is necessary to follow the rhythm of the *tori* beat, if you want you can firmly grasp the arm of the relative at the side and follow along with the *üaücü*. Everyone and everyone singing *toritchiga* (*tracajá* music) and dancing - the steps must be strong, treading the earth back and forth, turning in the same place, turning and moving forward - playing the flutes, drums and *tori*.

The *tori* is played by at least two men, who each hold the instrument on one side, which is supported in the middle of a wooden stick, hitting it with another smaller wooden stick. We left *Ye'egune* and went to the owner of the ritual to pick up the *moqueado*, arriving there the *üaücü* typed in the Owner of the Party who

was giving him the fish and as game while distributing it to everyone.

The music of the *tracajá*, as Ondino Tikuna (July 2016) told me, talks about a fact that occurred on the mountain *De'cüãpu*: "a mountain that the old people smoked to kill the *huri huri*, animals that were eating people before they smoke the mountain. Then, this very old grandpa appeared, *o'i o'i*, who lived inside the mountain. *Tchürüne* was his name, it was an *ü'üne* (enchanted) and he left there with the *tori* and started calling people who were smoking the mountain to accompany him to play the hull of the *tracajá*, dancing and singing, he went there that people learned this song and after they returned from the mountain they already knew how to sing when they touched the *tracajá* hull that they learned from the old man."

According to Matarezio Filho (2015) the word "*ü'üne*" can be translated as "enchanted" or immortal, but he adds that the word "*üne*" refers to body, thus, "*ü'üne* can be interpreted as 'that that there are no more evils in the body'." (p. 157). That is, those who are immortal. Angarita (2013), adds that: "The *ü'üne* are also ne, they are also imagination, ideas, thought, knowledge; everything that is intangible and immaterial such as social and cultural constructions, for example, rites, speech, healing, work, among other daily activities." (p.118).

Therefore, Grandpa *Tchürüne*, is an enchanted, immortal, *ü'üne*, he is the old man who brings the knowledge, he is the very spirit, the very knowledge that comes present in the form of this grandpa. In several Tikuna songs and myths we find the figure of grandma or grandpa giving advice and showing how things should be done.

Then, dancing and singing, we took the *moqueado* to *Ye'egune*, the *üaũcü* climbs on top of a platform hanging from the ceiling in front of the corral, where *Worecü* is kept and begins to organize the *moqueado* that everyone will deliver, leaving everything ready for the ritual to begin.



FIGURE 4 – Milled fish being kept on top of the corral. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

The *tracajá* dance is danced before the ritual to gather people from the surroundings, going to their homes to help collect the fish and game hunts in the house of the Owner of the Party. During The Party of the Yong Girl we also danced the *tracajá* dance, especially after drinking the *payauaru*, that's when the dance gets more intense, you have to hold on tight to whoever is on your side, because otherwise you could fall to the floor. Entering the dawn we felt the climax of the Party, with women singing, men playing and many people dancing together.

Quando o Dono da Festa percebe que os parentes estão deixando de dançar no salão, com seu tambor começa a animar A Festa novamente guiando um grupo de homens também com seus tambores ou com flautas recortadas em forma de boca de jacaré, flautas masculinas, assim, eles tocam os instrumentos e dançam em círculo por toda a *Ye'egune*. A Festa da Moça Nova vai se desenrolando no ritmo da dança do tracajá e da dança puxada pelo tambor do Dono da Festa enquanto algumas mulheres estão dentro do curral cantando aconselhamentos para a *Worecū*.

To participate in the *Worecū* ritual, the Tikuna girls suggested (as a symbolic form, with a playful spirit) that I should paint myself with genipap and chose the graphics of the jaguar nation (clan)²² baptizing me as *Weenena* (the jaguar that is licking itself). Everyone does the painting of genipap referring to their nation to participate in the ritual, so they can identify who are the Tikuna with feathers and those without feathers.



FIGURE 5 - Graphics for the female face representing the jaguar nation (clan), made from genipap juice, lasts an average of one week and gradually disappears. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

During the night, while the women continue singing in the corral and a

²² The Tikuna are divided into nations, as they speak, or clans, the most used term in anthropology, which define marriages. The clans are divided into exogamous halves, which represent beings of nature, those with feathers (represented by birds) and those without feathers (represented by mammals, insects and some vegetables). It is the father who defines the clan and marriage can only take place between opposing clans, with feathers they can only marry without feathers and vice versa.

large part of the guests dance the *tracajá* dance, a group of men goes into the woods to build the *to'cü* (aricano), a wind instrument, a species wooden trumpet, prohibited from being seen by women and children. *To'oena*, the first *Worecü*, died from seeing this instrument.

It is at that moment that they organize the space in the center of *Ye'egune* for the preparation of the genipap juice that will be used to paint *Worecü* and the children. A long rectangular mat is placed on the floor and the genipapes that were harvested before the Festival are brought, in addition to the genipapes, on top of the mat, machetes, grater, basins and trunk of *Ubuçu*²³ are spread. The bark of the trunk will turn into *tururi*, which can also be made with the bark of the trunk of other trees.

The *tururi* is removed by hitting the trunk with an iron instrument and is gradually loosened, then it is washed and remains in the texture of a fabric, being used mainly for making the masks. Mepaeruna Tikuna told me that they used to be used as a sheet. The *tururi* removed during the ritual will be used to make bracelets and ties that will be placed on the wrists and ankles of children and *Worecü* as a form of protection against various evils.

Concurrent with the removal of the *tururi*, the genipap is being grated, everyone collaborates while singing the proper song of grating the genipap by hitting the *avaí* stick on the ground. *Avaí* is an instrument like a rattle with several seeds of this plant that they call *avaí*. To grate the genipap we stood and took turns, as many of the guests had the desire to carry out this action.



FIGURE 6 - Detail of the *avaí* stick at the front during the genipap grating. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

Covered by the night, the men returned from the bush with the *to'cü* in hand. In that Party they brought two and they were placed behind the corral of *Worecü* where to develop to play.

²³ Palm species..

The *to'cü* is a large instrument (long and heavy) that is hidden behind the corral supported by wood, as it is difficult to play without support. The Tikuna girls told me that I could not see it, otherwise it would turn yellow, but after the men had already touched me, they took me to see a *to'cü* that remained behind the corral. Nowadays they say that only *Worecü* cannot see it, however, some women avoid it, mainly the older ones, preventing their children from seeing it.



FIGURE 7 - *To'cü*, *aricano*, hidden behind the corral. The player sits in front of the thinnest part, which is where he supports his mouth to perform the blow. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

When the *to'cü* sounded, it was as if there was a moment of suspension during the ritual. After that first initial touch, everything that was already in progress was moving at a different pace, now there was a new sound element: the sound of the *to'cü*, which together with the drums, flutes, *avaís* and songs that were being chanted, they became intoxicating, it was as if we entered a collective trance.

I was standing still, and one of the women took me by the arm and took me out to dance. Everyone was dancing very vigorously, I went on the impulse, I didn't know what to do, I was pushed into that dance, which seemed aggressive, I had to be careful not to be knocked over, I held firmly on the arm of the woman who pulled me to dance and we went dancing all over the space inside *Ye'egune*, sometimes going out and dancing around it. In some moments the center of *Ye'egune* was with many guests dancing, in others, with less. When it was empty, the Party Owner took the drum and started playing with the other men who followed him, so, little by little, the guests were returning to the center.

The feeling of collective trance provoked by the touch of the *to'cü* was not for nothing, since the wind instruments for the Amerindians have a cosmological meaning linked to the possibility of rising to the heavens, like a walk towards immortality. Matarezio Filho (2015) brings us this information about the predominance of wind instruments among South Amerindians, saying that these instruments are linked to breathing, which represents the

breath of life, which is channeled into activities that ensure fertility. The *Worecū* ritual is a celebration of the abundance represented by the fertility of women and the land.

Thus, we flow with the wind, the wind that enters our bodies, that leaves our bodies, the wind that is one of the pollinating agents of the earth, an important element for the process of growth of food, wind that regulates the temperature, among others functions in nature. Flow. Spinning. Flight. This wind that represents the possibility during the *Worecū* ritual of raising *Ye'egune* into the air, as a path to immortality. Interestingly, the meaning of *Ye'egune* (Casa de Festa) is 'moving around like a bird that enters the nest' (Ondino Tikuna, 2016).

When dawn comes, the *üaücü* takes the *tururi* to the river, where it is wet and then twisted so that it is malleable for handling. Then, he returns to *Ye'egune* with the *tururi* in hand and the moorings are cut off and placed on the children (who are between two and four years old).

The children are taken behind the *Worecū* corral, where the *to'cü* were. Then, *Worecū* is removed from the corral, from the back, without showing his face and covering his eyes so as not to see anyone. He stays with his back to the guests all the time, while the relatives who were helping at the ritual start painting *genipap* on the whole body of the children and *Worecū*, at the same time that the shaman makes the blessings and the chief cuts a wad of the children's hair, usually a fringe. After these actions, children and *Worecū* are protected. *Worecū* then returns to the corral as soon as the masked ones will appear at the Party.

Masked beings arrive in the morning. The masks that are not masks, in the same sense as for us, because there is no word mask for the Tikuna, the clothing is called the materials from which it is made, which are the bark of trees (*tururi - nho'é*) or the balsa wood (*puně*). Already materialized - with life - 'the masks' are called the beings that personify: *Toü* (monkey), *Mawü* (Mother of Pixuri - tree), *O'ma* (Mother / Father / owner of the wind).

These beings arrive on Sunday morning, coming from the middle of the forest and are gaining space among the guests at *Ye'egune*, who have different reactions to their presence. After the party night, with a lot of music, dancing, singing, watered at *payauru*, with the dawn of the day, the silence was established for a few moments and when everything was calm, here came the masked ones, causing surprise, reinforcing the atmosphere of dream that permeates the ritual, once again, we were suspended by the air by the magic that these figures evoke. On that day, the first masked men who arrived came accompanied by children, bringing a lightness to the space. However, this was a momentary impression, so they broke with the silence and returned to animate The Party of the Young Girl.

Different groups of masked men came with their *avaí* sticks and a stick that reminds them of a penis that they hit, dance around the space, frighten the women, who run and laugh, play with the guests, threaten to invade the corral of the *Worecū* and in the end win from *üaücü* milled and bottles of *payauru* that serve as rewards.

Finally, they retire to the forest again accompanied by one of the guests. Then, the person who accompanied them comes back with the *tururis* (their clothes) that are gifts for the Owner of the Party, placed on top of the *Worecū* corralü.



FIGURE 8 - *É'é* (eared), *To'ü* (monkey) and *Po'ü* (murucututu - largest tropical owl). Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

The masked ones make a lot of noise around the corral, the Tikuna women said that during their initiation they were afraid of the masked ones, they thought that they would tear down the corral where they were and be seen ahead of time, which would cause something bad for them and for them. the guests. Others were afraid, but later found it funny, because even though it is an event that puts *Worecū* at risk, they inside the corral realize that the guests of the Party are having fun.

After the farewell of the masked beings, the children, who were painted with genipap and had their hair cut, were placed on the central mat of *Ye'egune* where they were adorned. To do so, they mix *dumi* milk (a tree) with annatto to stick together and glue heron feathers all over the children's bodies, in addition to anklets and bracelets made of tururi. These actions serve as a way to protect children against various evils, physical and spiritual.

Next is the opening moment of the corral, *Worecū* leaves with its eyes closed, painted with genipap and adorned with feathers and shells, guided and cared for by its best friend.



FIGURE 9 – Worecū leaving the corral. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

The guests dance around Worecū, sing, do the dances around Ye'egune with the tracajá, while Worecū remains all the time with their hands in their eyes.



FIGURE 10 – Guests dancing around Worecū. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

After that, Worecū sits on the central mat and begins to pull his hair out - yes, the hair is pulled out - whoever is pulling it rolls up small tufts of hair on his fingers and pulls it out, while relatives sing advice songs and hit the avaií

stick. in floor.



FIGURE 11 – Worecū on his back with his hair pulled out. Village of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, Municipality of São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, Brazil. Photo: personal file of the researcher. 11/04/2016.

That moment when *Worecū's* hair was pulled out was described by all the Tikuna women I spoke to who went through the ritual as a time of pain. All Tikuna women (Mepaeruna, Marijane, Clotilde, We'ena, Yra, Júlia, among others) said that they felt a lot of pain when having their hair pulled out. It makes me think of a characteristic of contemporary art performance, which is the place of pain. The pain against oneself caused by the performer, which can appear as a possibility of transformation of oneself.

The question of pain in the face of the suffering of the other can be thought from the reflection of Susan Sontag (2003) who will talk about the trivialization of pain when contemplating the pain of others, especially with the growing mediatization of the pain of others through the means of communication, which increasingly disseminate images of tragedies and mutilated bodies, naturalizing them and making them part of a media show. In this sense, pain in the aesthetic field is contemplated without the desire for its elimination, thus becoming an object of contemporary art. Pain appears in performance art as a possibility of effective communication that draws attention to urgent matters.

Evidently, the pain the neophyte goes through is not the same pain as the performer, who chooses pain to cause something in himself and in the other. As researcher Andressa Cantergiani Fagundes de Oliveira (2008) tells us, there is a difference between feeling pain and thinking about it. Thus, the function of art would be to make sense of feeling:

Metamorphosis would therefore be linked to the traces that pain brings, such as its marks and scars, since pain does not simply pass through the body without leaving a trace. These tracks are responsible for the transformation of the body and the way it communicates with the world. (OLIVEIRA, 2008, p. 9).

Despite feeling pain and fear, as I was told, the Tikuna women said that after the ritual they felt stronger due to the transformation brought about by the sacrifices they went through during the ritual, which guarantees a new stage in life. A stage related to the fertility of the land and the woman that generates abundance and abundance. The possibility of a new cycle in which life manifests itself in the form of subsistence and in the form of strengthening a people that has the chance to perpetuate itself.

After plucking *Worecū's* hair, they place the feather headdress on her head that represents the sun and throw the turtles that they won from the masked ones on top of her. Then she can open her eyes.

With her eyes open, *Worecū* gets up and is led out of the *Ye'egune* accompanied by the guests, while the shaman lights a piece of firewood that she has to hit on the taperebá tree that is just outside the *Ye'egune*. If the girl misses the wood in the taperebazeiro, she denounces that she already had a boyfriend before the party, which she cannot, because it causes harm.

Afterwards, *Worecū* returns to the central mat inside the *Ye'egune* to be blessed by the shaman. After the blessing, all the guests and *Worecū* go to the igarapé for a bath.

Thus ends the *Worecū* ritual, The Party of the Young Girl, with everyone bathing, including *Worecū*, who at that moment seems to be free²⁴. A bath that serves to cleanse and purify the body. The ritual ends happily and lightly. After all that was experienced during those days, the bath was refreshing, the cleansing of the body after so much dancing provokes a feeling of freshness, of relief.

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The actions of each stage of the ritual culminate in closing in a collective bath. All elements of nature are present in this experience - the earth (the woman, abundance, fertility, the *tracajá* dance), the air (the wind instruments, the advice), the fire (the wood, the shaman's blessing), the *payauaru* and the water (the juice of the genipap, the bath) that appear in different moments of the ritual.

I Woman - final thoughts

The experience of living with the Tikuna and participating in their main ritual makes me think a lot about my condition as a woman from different

²⁴ I realized like that, because she has gone through all the torments, left the confinement, was all the time with her eyes covered, serious and when she went to the bath she was laughing and playing with her relatives.

aspects, I will talk briefly about one of the aspects that is the idea of pain. Even though I knew *Worecū's* hair would be pulled out, witnessing the action caused me a feeling of bewilderment, without moral judgments, but because of the feeling that I did not feel, but assumed that pain, as Tikuna women had already reported that they felt. However, the pain becomes something significant within that context, because that pain for Tikuna women represents a moment of renewal, of purification, that is why it is celebrated.

I thought of the pains that we women experience as a result of the context of our culture²⁵, especially the pains imposed by the "myth of beauty" (Wolf, 1992), whether or not we all experience, some more intensely, a pain that is not only physical, but mainly psychological, emotional. The pain of trying to fit into a pattern and performing different aesthetic procedures that include torture (starving, eating certain foods, supplements, medicines, needles, braces, etc.) that range from diets to surgeries that are very painful and require a long time of recovery²⁶. It may seem that going through some of these pains, such as surgery, is a choice, but we must consider that the context in which we live dictates patterns and leads us to these choices 'almost without choice'.

Another moment of pain is the menstrual period, monthly pain for a woman in the years of her fertile life. It is interesting that in the *Worecū* ritual it is re-signified when it is celebrated as the main celebration of the Tikuna people, the moment of menarche, as a moment of meeting and sharing, in which all the people celebrate the fact that the girl has become a woman, everyone knows that girl menstruated. In our society, this moment is full of taboos, it is hidden, we do not tell many people. For me and other friends I talked to it was a difficult moment, I felt ashamed to tell even my mother - who warned me that from then on, I would be a woman: "now you can already have children" - but I hadn't even kissed yet, so, feeling like a woman caused me anguish, shame, fear. And for the Tikuna it is a celebrated party, giving a beautiful meaning to that period, the girls who had not yet gone through the ritual told me that they were looking forward to the moment of their Party, they do not feel the menarche as something shameful.

Anyway, the main thing is to reflect on how important it is to know the Tikuna cosmological context to understand the symbology present in the ritual and how much from that we can think about our creation as artists and about the formation of the spectator. I bring the idea of activism, because it instigates us to think what our convictions and attitudes within society that are reflected in our art, what we want to communicate, for what and to whom to communicate, making the artist's engagement and his search as a human being who intends to be a summation factor in society emerges in a poetic and symbolic language.

²⁵ I speak of the culture in which I live under Western Christian capitalist influence.

²⁶ I underwent surgery on the breasts and the pain in the postoperative period was very great, in addition to the frightening aspect of the breasts that lasted, sore for more than three months and after a year they had no scars healed and I still felt a little discomfort.

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