

Cosmographies: the writing of indigenous research¹

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ABSTRACT

This text seeks to raise problematic issues surrounding processes of expressive creation, or even the “writing” in indigenous academics’ research, which are constructed simultaneously with their own practices of knowledge. The method followed here articulates an ethnography of the expressive processes of Itsairu Huni Kuin, an Indigenous Licentiate researcher from the Federal University of Acre (UFAC) – Campus Floresta, with a literature that includes three authors who discuss his own visionary thought. The result is a way of writing specific to the research approach of Huni Kuin academics, who, instead of simply accounting, are putting their own way of knowing into practice. In the end, this way of writing implies another conception of language, based on the relational ontology of the peoples of Amazonia, in which political and social relations do not know the boundaries between nature and culture.

KEYWORDS: Indigenous research. Indigenous writing. Contemporary indigenous art. Huni Kuin. Indigenous Cosmographies.

Cosmografias: a escrita da pesquisa indígena

RESUMO

O presente texto busca problematizar os processos de criação expressiva, ou ainda, a “escrita” das pesquisas de acadêmicos indígenas que são construídas em relação de coplanaridade com suas práticas próprias de conhecimento. O método adotado articula a etnografia dos processos

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expressivos de Itsairu Huni Kuin, pesquisador da Licenciatura indígena da UFAC - Floresta, com a abordagem bibliográfica de três autores que discutem o seu pensamento visionário. O resultado é a apresentação de uma escrita própria à pesquisa acadêmica huni kuin que, em lugar de registrar, faz atualizar as práticas de conhecimento huni kuin. Conclui-se que essa escrita pressupõe uma outra concepção de linguagem, baseada na ontologia relacional dos povos amazônicos, em que as relações políticas e sociais não conhecem os limites entre natureza e cultura.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Pesquisa indígena. Escrita indígena. Arte indígena contemporânea. Huni Kuin. Cosmografias indígenas.

Cosmografías: La escritura de la investigación indígena

RESUMEN

Este texto busca problematizar los procesos de creación expresiva, o mejor dicho, la “escritura” de investigaciones de académicos indígenas, que se construyen en una relación coplanar con sus propias prácticas de conocimiento. El método adoptado articula la etnografía de los procesos expresivos de Itsairu Huni Kuin, investigador del Programa de Licenciatura para Pueblos Indígenas de la UFAC-Floresta, con el enfoque bibliográfico de tres autores que discuten su pensamiento visionario. El resultado es la presentación de una escritura específica de la investigación académica Huni Kuin que, en lugar de registrar, actualiza sus prácticas de conocimiento. Se concluye que esta escritura presupone otra concepción del lenguaje, basada en la ontología relacional de los pueblos amazónicos, en la que las relaciones políticas y sociales no reconocen los límites entre naturaleza y cultura.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Investigación indígena. Escritura indígena. Arte indígena contemporáneo. Huni Kuin. Cosmografías indígenas.

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Introduction

This contribution to the debate of the call *A Natureza em Nós (Nature in Us)* is based on my experience of about 20 years in the Indigenous Course at the Federal University of Acre – Campus Floresta, a course in which I have

been working since 2008, in the area of Languages and Arts. This experience is developed in the form of a doctoral thesis in Anthropology, recently presented (Mattos, 2024) to the PPGSA at UFRJ, the result of a path that also gave rise to a series of publications, articulated with works by indigenous academics (Mattos, 2021; Mattos and Huni Kuin, 2017).

Taking the notion of post-Malinowski fieldwork by Albert (2014) and an ethnographic approach to institutions (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972) as references, the thesis intends to describe and analyze research processes of indigenous academics with their communities, focusing on the expressive resources of these works, which I called writing. The academic writing of these researchers in a specific undergraduate course, focused on the problems of indigenous communities and their knowledge practices, is thought of from the concept of *coplanarity* (Viveiros de Castro, 2015), when academic research can serve to update the knowledge practices of these peoples instead of replacing, extinguishing, or even “registering” them.

In this process of practicing indigenous research (academic and non-academic) and reflecting on its specificities, we come across the problem of the intrinsic relationship between language and land. Whether in indigenous cosmologies or in modern thought, there is a deep link between land and language (Lévi-Strauss, 1996 [1955]). In the last decade, we have been reflecting on the cosmographic dimension of the research of indigenous academics, based on the notion of the speech of the land, a concept developed by these academics that describes the specific link between writing and cosmos from their knowledge practices (Mattos, 2024).

Thus, the conception of language that underlies this research and their writings, in which indigenous practices of knowledge are placed in a relationship of coplanarity with academic practices, has the concept of earth speech as a reference. The notion of the speech of the earth poses the problem of the relationship between human persons (culture) and non-human persons (nature and/or supernature), a central issue in the contrast between the cosmologies in tension in this coplanarity of knowledge practices. In the

contemporary context of increasing attention to climate change and the way it puts into perspective the political nature of scientific practices and uses or discourses about Science, there is an urgent discussion on how indigenous academic practices and research (but not only/and derived from or associated with them) not only challenge the dominant or majority views of the relations between human and non-human beings, but also of how they construct alternative language practices to them.

This study proposes to update the ethnography presented in Mattos (2024) based on an excerpt from the journey of Itsairu Huni Kuin, an artist-researcher, and on his Huni Kuin academic research's ethnographic approach.

Complex pictogram

Currently, some students of the Indigenous Course have been developing, with my collaboration and guidance, research recreating songs and myths with drawings and paintings. I will dwell on a Huni Kuin researcher, Itsairu Huni Kuin.

Itsairu is one of the longest-lived image creators of the Huni Kuin people. His works and, above all, his *visionary thinking*, have already attracted attention since the 1990s, when he began teaching as a research professor, and his notebooks or class diaries (1990-1) were analyzed in Monte's master's thesis, published in 1996 under the title *Escolas da floresta, Entre o passado oral e o presente letrado (Forest schools, Between oral past and literate present)*. The images that illustrate the notebook with Itsairu's drawings are widely reproduced by the author.

This is the first example of three encounters between researchers and Itsairu's work and thought. More than what these researchers write about Itsairu's work, what will interest me here are these encounters with his work and how these authors are affected.

Monte dedicates a topic from the analysis of Itsairu's class diaries to its graphic dimension, which he calls "The Drawing" (p. 114). While Monte's

book consists of monochromatic drawings, this section, as well as the appendix, consists of colored drawings. According to the author, drawing is examined in its function as writing, an expression that refers to the work of Derrida (1973, p. 136, *apud* Monte, 1996, p. 162), who sees in Lévi-Strauss's "writing lesson" the assumption that the Nhambikwara, with their "dots" and "zigzags", "would not know how to read".

The author, who seeks to read the teacher's performance in the classroom, also focuses on how Itsairu's appropriation of writing in his class diaries blurs the boundaries of what can be understood strictly as *writing*. By using figures that blend into the texts, Itsairu proposes a kind of pictography that does not go unnoticed by the author's eyes. She relates to *kene*, Huni Kuin's graphic patterns system, this Itsairu writing that flows between letters and figures, highlighting that *kene* is also the name given to letters and alphabetic writing by the Huni Kuin. Analyzing one of the images from Itsairu's diary, the author concludes:

Conceived as writing, *kene* is the traditional indigenous system of writing, from which the school and its post-contact alphabetic writing are instituted. (...) Such a drawing [is] a type of non-alphabetic writing about school and writing itself. We are informed by the author's conception of the act of studying and writing, culturally based on the new Kaxinawá meaning of the word *kene* (Monte, 1996, p. 122-3, our translation)

Monte distinguishes between an *ideographic sign* and a *complex pictogram* when he refers in passing to what would properly be a *writing regime of his own*, thus going beyond the mere analogy between writing and *kene*. However, despite pointing in notes (8 and 9, p. 162) to crucial works on the problem, such as Lagrou, Gow, Reichel-Dolmatoff, and Ribeiro, she does not develop the issue. The author limits herself to trying to understand, in (her own) historical terms, the so-called *passage from the oral to the written*.

Writing has enabled the Kaxinawá people to begin a new cycle of production, diffusion, and transmission of culture, in which the indigenous school becomes an important educational and cultural locus (*Ibid.*, p. 77, our translation)

It is interesting how the author is affected by Itsairu's work. My impression is that, if, on one hand, the *authorship project* conceived by the author could lack a problematization of the indigenous person or Huni Kuin (the author), on the other, it is noteworthy how she avoids the trap of generalizing Itsairu's own visual thinking, diluting it into a cultural phenomenon, of which he would be no more than an example (the problem of Menezes de Souza's approach), and recognizes him halfway between creator and reciter.

Multimodal storytelling

Menezes de Souza (2002) also writes an academic and philosophical essay on Itsairu, this time on the intersemiotic nature of Itsairu's work. Souza calls the undifferentiation of codes of this "writing/drawing" a Lévi-Straussian problem par excellence, a multimodal narrative. He proposes the analysis of a drawing by Itsairu, offered as a gift at the beginning of 1994 to one of his teaching teachers. Based on the multimodal narrative of the researcher-artist Huni Kuin and based on Lagrou's ethnography (1998), Souza develops a philosophical and political reflection on a specific concept of language that is typical of a mythical thought in which verbal and visual codes are specifically articulated in a way that's different from how these codes are articulated in modern thought and cosmology.

The title of the work is *As visões da Anaconda: a narrativa escrita indígena no Brasil (The Visions of Anaconda: the indigenous written narrative in Brazil)*. As in the previous case, my interest, more than in the text's approach, lies in the laterality of the encounter with Itsairu's work and in its ability to affect these researchers and provoke reflection on their visionary Huni Kuin thought.

Souza presents his idea of *multimodal narrative* as an articulation, like Monte, of three (or four) codes: letter, figure, and graphics. Based on Lagrou's ethnographic work, it presents the concepts of *kene* (drawing or graphics) and *dami* (figure). A fourth "code" would be the mythical one that appears in the text as a kind of analogy or in relation to analogy with his narrative of multimodal writing, which he presents as an "unusual phenomenon of writing" that arises in the context of the schooling of these peoples and that could "broaden the vision of the current state of the narrative at the beginning of the millennium in Brazil" (our translation). The text's objective defines its critical approach rather than an anthropological treatment.

In the more anthropological section of the text, the author proposes a reading of Itsairu's drawing and its multimodal narrative grounded in the mythical figure of Yube in Huni Kuin mythology and of *ayahuasca's* origin myth. From Lagrou, the author relates the problem of alterity with Huni Kuin visual thinking.

On the other hand, the uncodified and free figures of the *dami* drawing are seen as representing the product of the transformation process indicated by the *kene*. While *kenê* embodies the almost unrepresentable (and therefore abstract) power of the process of transformation itself, *dami* is seen as representation. As a representation, *dami* is in the place of, that is, it re-presents or indicates something similar absent, the force of mimesis. Meanwhile, *kenê* has the performative, potential, processual, and dynamic value of poiesis (Menezes de Souza, 2002, n.p., our translation).

In his reading of Lagrou, *kene* would be related to the force of alterity, at the same time desirable and dangerous, as can be inferred from mythology and ethnography. The idea of *dami*, however, as the opposite pole of transformation and as representation, needs to be problematized or, at least, updated. Lagrou reflected on the possibility of another reading for the *dami*

in Mahku's work. In this reading, opposition is understood according to Amerindian terms, in which opposition relates and transforms the terms.

What had previously insinuated itself in the delicate tension between the evocative singing of the transformative universe of the *dami* figures and the labyrinthine, chimerically abstract graphics, the *kene*, traced by the women on the surfaces of the huni kuin bodies and ornaments, and which hide between the lines the figures, *dami*, wanting to reveal themselves, gained, with MAHKU movement, an unprecedented way of expressing themselves in a figuration that was more suggestive and expressive than representative (Lagrou, 2020, p. 41, our translation).

Thus, *dami* can be understood as another image of transformation, in relation to reciprocal presupposition with *kene*, thus detaching *dami* from the representational stability that dominates naturalistic ontology.

In Mahku's art, each canvas shows that there is no dami without kene, figure without graphics, just as there is no image without corner, man without woman, sky without water world, boa constrictor without vine, and so on, and vice versa. A figure always contains in itself the birth of another form; every figure refers to the other in a continuous process of becoming (Ibid., p. 41, our translation).

It is not, however, a matter of refuting the fundamental notion developed by Lagrou (2011) according to which the cosmopolitics inherent to the Amerindian visual regime turns against representation, representation understood as the epitome of the State (Mattos, 2024). On the contrary, it is a matter of understanding that figuration itself goes from a stable/stabilizing pole to another transformational one. It is this transformative power of the

dami (in its relationship of reciprocal determination with the *kene*) that would also allow us to understand the *kene* as this perspectivist force that traces a line of flight from representation as a unified and divine point of view that defines the State.

How this relationship between *dami* and *kene*, mediated by the notion of transformation thought from mythical narratives, is central to the research and visual creation of Itsairu's paintings and drawings and a central problem of his current research, rather than taking for granted what commentators on his work say about his visual thinking, I want to think laterally about the relationship between these discourses or even the way in which the thinker Huni Kuin himself affects the ideas of these authors in their different areas.

At the seam of heaven with earth

Another important moment in which Itsairu's visual thinking will gain a philosophical dimension and academic interlocution will be in Ferreira's dissertation (2010). In this work, the author focuses a central part of his argument on the notion of *Huni Kuin education* in the reading of a conceptual drawing by Itsairu that presents the issue.

This case marks a certain maturation in the way Itsairu himself puts his visionary Huni Kuin thinking. If before this thought was implicit, taken as an expression of a writing or an expressive medium, arousing metalinguistic comments from other authors, in this case, Itsairu presents in the discussion a conceptual design, or now explicitly conceptual, in which he places a thesis on the relations between knowledge regimes and the place of the school in this field of forces.

Here too, the objective is not to reconstitute and properly discuss the author's arguments regarding Huni Kuin school education, but to present how Ferreira is also affected and proposes a dialogue with Itsairu's Huni Kuin visionary thought or philosophy.

For Ferreira, Itsairu's drawing, based on a poem by Tene Huni Kuin, provides the starting point for conceptualizing the Huni Kuin school, the central theme of his dissertation and the ethnography on which it is based. The central point of Tene's poem lies in the verse that gives the dissertation its title: *The seam of heaven with earth*. Commenting on the central notion of Tene's poem and Itsairu's drawing, Ferreira writes about the relationship between regimes of knowledge and the importance of drawing in the central argument of the dissertation:

In short, in 2005, at the Nixpu Pima workshop, C.E.E.I. thought it was *the seam between heaven and earth*, the key metaphor for overcoming dichotomies between knowledge learned in community and that learned in a school. In other words, a simplifying logic was applied, in which adding the indigenous adjective to the expression *school education* would be enough, which would result in the school in the village (Ferreira, 2010, p. 116-7, our translation)

From a hunting story, the author contrasts the notions of anthology (present in the book's title in which the poem is published) and ontology, reiterating his argument:

In such a way, only an indigenous philosophy would admit a tapir that thinks, as much as a sky seamed to the treetops! Thus, not assuming indigenous philosophy as a concept is the same as relegating it to the status of an anthology (*Id., Ibid.*, p. 117, our translation).

To think about this intersection between knowledge regimes in indigenous thinking about and in indigenous or huni kuin appropriation of state education policies, Ferreira also uses the myth of the origin of beads. Itsairu also comments on the drawing with his colleagues,

reinforcing the agency of the boa constrictor in the cosmological conception of Huni Kuin knowledge.

(...) This drawing is for the teacher themselves to understand what it means, what we are dealing with, and what we need. It is a boa constrictor that is also related to the old, as Txanu said: the boa constrictor teaches the old, the old learn, and then the old teach the novices. Young, with old, with women. It's like Renato mentioned with all these yuxibu [strong spirits]. They are with us, and we are with them (José Mateus Itsairu, Yurã Xinã Pewakī workshop, 2006) (Id., Ibid., p. 123-4, our translation).

It is in Itsairu's drawing, therefore, that this continuum between heaven and earth will gain ontological dimensions of indistinction between humanity and other forms of life. This is because the drawing refers to the fact, common in Amazonian mythologies, that knowledge “comes from outside”, that is, that it results from encounters and marriages with other species, as is the case of the boa constrictor or anaconda in the mythology of the Huni Kuin among other peoples of the region.

Based on Lagrou's ethnography (2007), the author draws attention to the power of transformation of the *dami* into an Amazonian ontology (p. 125), here embodied by drawing. The Huni Kuin artist and teacher is also thought of as a shaman or cosmic diplomat of Amerindian perspectivism (p. 126-7) because drawing operates as translation here, including among the Huni Kuin, at the intersection of world-perspectives of humans and non-humans. About the Dami figures, Itsairu later reports to the author:

This here is Yuxī, because Yuxī is worth like the drawing, the *dami* or the image, but in general it is called Yuxī. This is a drawing, but it is worth something as an image. This is the boa constrictor, but it is not actually the boa

constrictor; it represents and presents with the drawings, that is, *dami*. The boa constrictor's mesh is the Yuxī, because Kene comes transformed from a science [of the boa constrictor]. The boa constrictor carries Yuxī. [...] and all things, everything is invention (Interview. José Mateus, 2009) (*Id.*, *Ibid.*, p. 126, our translation)

It is this cosmographic dimension that is already present here and that I want to highlight in the research that Itsairu is currently developing. However, more than thinking of him as an example of Amerindian thought or Amazonian ontology, I seek to think about how Itsairu has been a reference for his colleagues in terms of proposing research writing that precisely updates his knowledge practices. In this case, an update that takes place in the relationship with the otherness of the university and academic research and writing of the white. In what way is it possible to prevent this dangerous alterity from devouring the researcher and for him to return to his point of view, even if affected by the Other?

Thinking about the image

I would like to return to the problem of Itsairu's visual thinking previously posed by the authors, according to their research questions and theoretical references, to think about it from their own research and the problem posed by it. Alongside the reflective dimension of his visual thinking, I am interested in the journey of his research that crosses his practice of visual and even artistic research.

As I have already sought to problematize in other contexts based on Mahku's work, the idea here is to think about a specifically indigenous visuality or, in this case, a Huni Kuin visuality to understand the circulation of these images in the contemporary art environment.

The idea is not to summarize the long and prolific journey of the artist researcher, an important project to be done, but rather to put into perspective his path as an artist researcher, whose impact must have been clear in the three works presented.

Itsairu drew attention for his visual thinking from the beginning of his career as a research professor. This in an environment where drawings marked by a particular aesthetic proliferated, which illustrated the first publications of the so-called didactic materials aimed at indigenous school education. He has participated in a large number of editorial projects in his journey as a graphic artist, with a work that continues to impact the neighborhood zone of regimes of expression (writing), as his commentators point out. I will now focus on his most recent works.

I met Itsairu in 2001 and was his teacher between 2008 and 2010, when I was able to visit his community more than once in the Kaxinawa Lower Jordão River Indigenous Land as a teacher. In 2010, due to his father's passing, he had to stop the course and was unable to return. In 2023, Itsairu returns to the area of Languages and Arts through a new selection process. Our collaboration in this new period is marked by a photo he sent me of a group of painter-artists that he had been organizing and guiding in the Huni Kuin community of Cruzeiro do Sul.

FIGURE 1: Collective of Huni Kuin artist researchers.

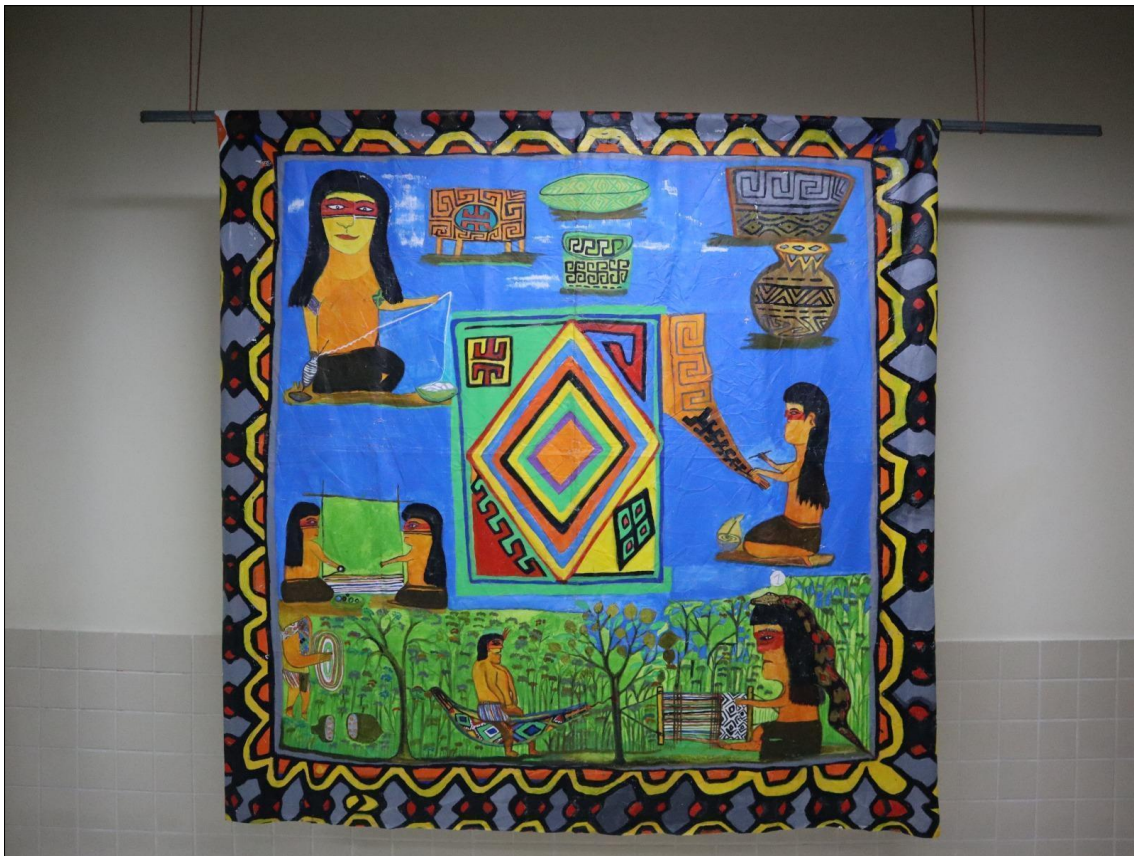
Source: Collection of the artist Itsairu Huni Kuin, 2023. Photo: Akuani Huni Kuin.

At the time, when I asked about this work with the collectives of artist researchers, he also told me about his group in the village, in his community in the Indigenous Land on the Jordão River. The idea of a group or collective of artist-researchers continues to interest me as a possible research procedure and writing machine for Huni Kuin research, and then I proposed to him developing a project to encourage the movement around these collectives. As we enter into reflections on Huni Kuin's visionary thought, I draw attention to the importance of this collective agency's dimension in producing vision-images in Itsairu's argumentation.

I realized then that he was interested in using paintings on canvas to convey and conceptualize the practices of Huni Kuin knowledge. In the case of the two canvases that appear in the photos, the interest was already expressed, which I identified better later, in articulating *kene* and *dami*, two

types of image that, in the case of Huni Kuin, can gain complements such as image-movement or image-transformation, or image-event, insofar as this notion of Huni Kuin image is not unequivocal in relation to the Western idea of image. As can be seen in both images, the *kene* occupies the center of the canvas, and from it the force of transformation of the *dami* seems to erupt, which cuts out from the Huni Kuin myths precisely the passages of transformation or becomings, as can be seen in the becoming-boia constrictor in the lower corner of the next image. At the same time, I came across the canvases he had been painting. One in particular caught my attention.

FIGURE 2: Painting by Itsairu Huni kuin.



Source: Author's Collection. Photo: Alexandra Deitos, 2024.

About this drawing. This drawing is a painting about the transformation of *kene*, of graphics, ours. It's our [graphics]. History, there is a history that transformed, if a *kene*

emerged. This is a [story of] the emergence of *kene*. It is the first *kene* graphics of the Huni Kuin people that have reached the memories of the Huni Kuin people. In the past, no one did that, those graphics. Then later, some time, a boa constrictor appeared and taught the woman. It was the first teaching, the first symbol of this *kene* that the woman learned. Call *txere beru*. *Kene txere beru*. And today, all the elderly women, to be able to be the artisan, to be able to be the *kene* master, this is the first step of teaching and learning. And after this first symbol, there is this round, each drawing, each work, that today women work with these paintings. Both in ceramics, in basketry, and in other articles. With *genipap* too, *Nane*. And there is all this activity. There is the *boa constrictor* there in the woman, teaching. This is a scene like the *boa constrictor* taught, and today it works, moves, strengthening our knowledge, with the appreciation of paintings. And today we are also now bringing on the canvas, in the fabric, the drawings with this demonstration of how it came about, how it transformed, how women learned it, who taught, with whom they learned. So this is a learning, teaching with nature, with the *boa constrictor* and also the voices: with the vegetables, with the singing, with the stories as well. There are the stories, the singing, and the practices in the paintings. And the paintings move in all processes, in all moments of participatory work. This is our experience that today we are sharing, when we take *nixi pae*, the [body] paintings have to be painted. When he makes a festivity, of joys, or baptisms, or *katxa nawa*, work, fishing. While the community is with its practices. We, both women and men, work with our cultural activities, practices, and appreciation (Itsairu, June 2025, our translation)

One thing I must highlight in this passage articulates the problem posed by perspectivism and multinaturalism in the Amazon (Viveiros de Castro, 2002), as well as by the headline of this publication, that is, other ideas of nature beyond the modern divider and the regimes of exchange, communication, and kinship (in short, relation) beyond the human.

Initially, in this case, it is about the way in which myth is the specific discourse for thinking about knowledge and the different regimes of knowledge precisely because of the way it positions the person/figure of the boa constrictor when presenting a conception of relational knowledge, that is, in which it is in the very nature of knowledge to provide bonds. Instead of a notion of image as a cutout, frame, or freeze, this visuality allows us to present the image of transformation or the world of unstable bodies (Vilaça, 2005; Viveiros de Castro, 2006), typical of this relational ontology.

This image of transformation is inherent to the conception of research (and writing of research) presented by Itsairu at the time. The specificity of Huni Kuin research and its writing is problematized by the visuality presented in the painting, which articulates ancestral history (myth) with the Huni Kuin image and its importance in producing and transmitting knowledge, and, therefore, also in updating this knowledge. Two research procedures that also update the encounter with the boa constrictor and the other voices involved in this practice of knowledge through the practice of research via Huni Kuin painting. When talking about voices, I call attention to the fact that Itsairu articulates the agency of vegetables (genipap, *nixi pae*) with the practices of knowledge in which the voice is the line of flight from becoming, in this case, the stories and the singing.

This work is a research dialogue, bringing this work as if it were the archive, as if it were a library, the wisdom of each one's memories. It's in the people. And today, the academics, we are increasingly deepening, immersing

ourselves, researching in our community and villages. And bringing it to the university, translating with the languages of art, both in translation writings, written in Portuguese *hãtxa kuin*, and also bringing the voices: the singing, the stories, the drawings, and also with all these works of drawing, of handicrafts. And today we are holding our seminars during our training. Every course, every module, we are looking for research in the villages and taking it to the university to share, contribute, dialogue, learn from each other, presenting to our colleagues who are coming from other villages, from other communities all the research as well, every one brings their different ways of research that was researched and that was guided by each of our informants, of each of our advisors in our communities. And that's why today we are feeling stronger, discovering the secrets that are inside people. And that's why something is built. Every person is reborn in a new world. So we are bringing this to our wisdom, and today we are now sharing it with you, with our students, with our shaman teachers, in the important moments of our research, of every research, we are transforming more and more the important things that we are now with these cultural values of ours. Our culture is our greatest protection of the people (Itsairu, 2025, our translation).

Itsairu's presentation of his painting, articulating the idea of a writing of images with his notion of research, poses the problem of *voices* in the practices of Huni Kuin knowledge. We could read the work of writing that he presents when talking about the painting that presents the myth, but not in its narrative dimension, but in what he calls the transformation of the *kene*. This passage from the myth transformation and the voices of animals and plants to the writing of the transformation images is what could be understood here as cosmography. Thus, in this

context of indigenous research, cosmography would imply a theory of writing that would articulate these elements.

In contact with these materials (paintings and the photo of the collective) and also realizing that the house acquired by Itsairu on the banks of the Juruá River for the time of the university of the Indigenous Course increasingly resembled a studio, where a large number of Huni Kuin children and young people who live today in Cruzeiro do Sul circulated, we started thinking about making a film.

The film was supposed to make it possible to record the emergence of a Huni Kuin artistic research movement around a series of open workshops and ateliers promoted by Itsairu with the Huni Kuin community of the Juruá valley. Many of these young people are greatly interested in the movement around (the articulation) of the Acre indigenous music scene and the contemporary Huni Kuin visual arts, of which Mahku's outstanding participation in the Venice Biennale is a strong vector.

Also in 2023, we included Itsairu's painting in the exhibition *A universidade é na vila (The University is in the Village)*, during the II Seminar of Indigenous Academics of Acre. Curated by Professor Mariana Pantoja and me, the exhibition presented their research with the communities with images and reflections by the academics. On the occasion, another artist-researcher of the paintings that make up this class of the course in the area of Languages and Arts, Sina Yawanawa, also brought his paintings to this exhibition.

FIGURE 3: Exhibition *The university is in the village.*

Source: Author's Collection. Photo: Alexandra Deitos, 2023.

Throughout the first modules of the course, the students presented the knowledge practices of their peoples that they were interested in researching. In the case of Itsairu and Sina, as well as in the research proposal of another academic, Xinã Puyanawa, the visionary thought or visuality of their peoples appeared both as an idea of knowledge to be studied and as a research procedure through the production of images.

The meeting of these three artist-researchers was the germ for the creation of the Network of Articulation of Artist Researchers of Acre, Raapia. The initial idea of the network is the exchange of experiences, the promotion of artistic actions and exhibitions, and collaboration between researchers. The network also aims to foster indigenous artistic research, focusing on the articulation of the visual arts with other arts. With this, the collective also seeks to discuss indigenous research practices

specifically. In addition to this central nucleus that gave rise to the Network, the Network gains in heterogeneity through the research of other academics in the course, such as Txima Huni Kuin, Yube Huni Kuin, and Dua Buse Huni Kuin.

An important milestone that brought together the three artists in presenting the Network to the academic community was the first open Atelier, which took place on the UFAC – Floresta campus during the 2024 Journey of Professions. The action consisted of the concomitant production of three canvases by researchers Itsairu, Xinã, and Sina, who were assisted by colleagues from the course, respectively, Yube Huni Kuin, Inuhua Nukini, and Uhnepa Nukini.

FIGURE 4: Raapia open studio.



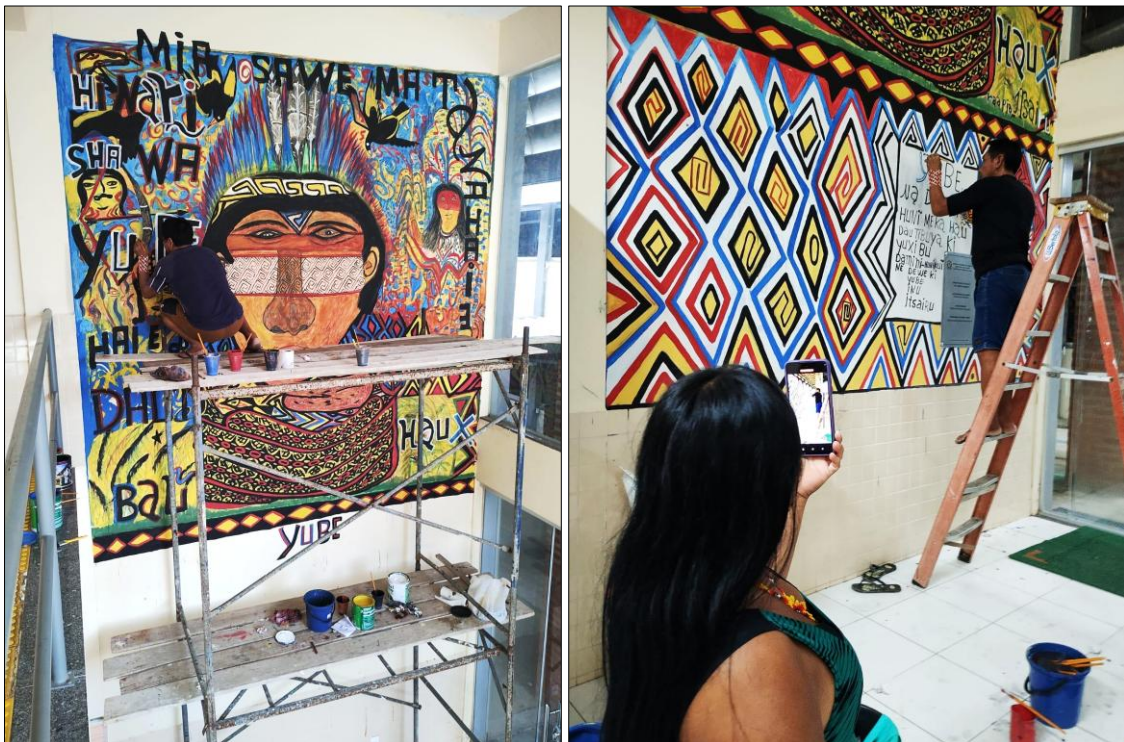
Source: Author's Collection. Photo: Alexandra Deitos, 2024.

Strengthening indigenous artistic research, understood here as cosmography, as previously presented by Itsairu as the use of artistic

language to present visionary thinking, as well as the very visuality (conception of vision-image) of these peoples, was also recognized at the 2024 Indigenous Academics Seminar. In its 3rd edition, the Seminar’s organizing committee adopted the theme “The arts as an expression of knowledge of native peoples.” The Seminar is the main indigenous academic event at UFAC and in the state of Acre and brings together these academics with the communities of the peoples of the region in research presentations, cultural manifestations, and discussion tables on indigenous research issues.

To strengthen the participation of artist-researchers and give visibility to their work, as well as to that of other academics who use visionary and artistic images in their research, we proposed the exhibition *Visual Arts as an Expression of indigenous knowledge*. It was in the context of the exhibition that we also collaborated with the Center for Education and Letters (CEL) on the production of the mural Hawe Dautibuya, made by Itsairu with the assistance of colleagues Kupi Huni Kuin and Yube Huni Kuin.

FIGURE 5: Hawe Dautibuya Mural, UFAC Forest.



Source: Author’s Collection. Photos: Amilton Pelegrino de Mattos, 2024.

Itsairu spoke to me many times about the character or transformational nature of the *dami*, including how the *dami* can be understood in relation to the *huni meka* and the narratives of the ancients, the *shenipabu miyui*. However, this only became clearer at the meeting of the Huni Kuin research artists from the São Joaquim Memory Center village when Itsairu explained, in *hatxa kuin*, that *dami* would be painted from the Shenipabu Miyui and that each one should select a narrative that presented a good transformation to be painted. However, he pondered, it was not a matter of painting the entire narrative, using the paintings already on the walls of the place as examples, but of the moments when the transformation occurs. The idea was that the paintings would depict precisely a paradoxical expression: the images of transformation.

This notion of *dami*, linked to *kene* and its power of transformation, the theme of Itsairu's research, was also conveyed in the preparation of a short course we offered together in 2024.

Speaking of “transformation of drawing”, transforming is drawing that transforms, both body painting, painting on the walls, on the woods. And also, today I work with production on canvas. This painting means drawing, a transformation of history. It is an imagery that the story brings the experience, and the drawing does the transformation, to see the forms of process, of happening in the passages of the stories. Through drawing, it is also an experience that you bring a dream, and bring these drawings to show that the drawing is on the skin and also on the canvas. I've already done 12 drawings of transformation drawing work. Everyone is *daminibu*, transformation is *dami*, *daminibu* transformation. So that's my painting. I do a painting of transformation and about transformation and retransforming by showing the images, the drawings, the graphics as well, with *kene*. So *kene* relates

all these, both on the canvas, on the wood, on the walls of a house, everywhere, every corner, in any part of our body if it belongs to these *kene* and *keneya* graphics, *keneya* to paint herself (Itsairu, 2024, our translation).

Also in 2024, we approved the project to make the film *Nukun Beya Xinã Kuxipa – Cultura é nossa maior proteção* (*Nukun Beya Xinã Kuxipa – Culture is our greatest protection*), which portrays Itsairu's performance at the forefront of the recent movement to train and perform Huni Kuin artist-researchers. The film's production team accompanied Itsairu between 2024 and 2025 between the university and the village and organized two workshops/meetings with important artists to foster the identity of these artist collectives, which currently operate between the Jordão River and the Juruá valley. The film is in its final stages, and its first versions have already been screened by the local Huni Kuin community.

Conclusion

From an ethnographic approach, that is, one that problematizes and contrasts cosmologies of different social formations and their writing practices, in this work I sought to present and discuss elements of the journey of Itsairu Huni Kuin's researcher, artist and visionary thinker, as well as to pose the problems, sometimes in his own terms, of the writing of his current Huni Kuin academic research.

I conclude that the expressive practices of his research problematize the notions of image, verbal textuality, and other media, proposing a *writing* typical of the Huni Kuin research, according to the conception of its own language that supposes relationality (relational ontology) beyond the human and, therefore, the modern nature/culture division. His expressive experiments place his research in a coplanarity relationship with the practices of Huni Kuin knowledge, updating (rather than registering) them.

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