



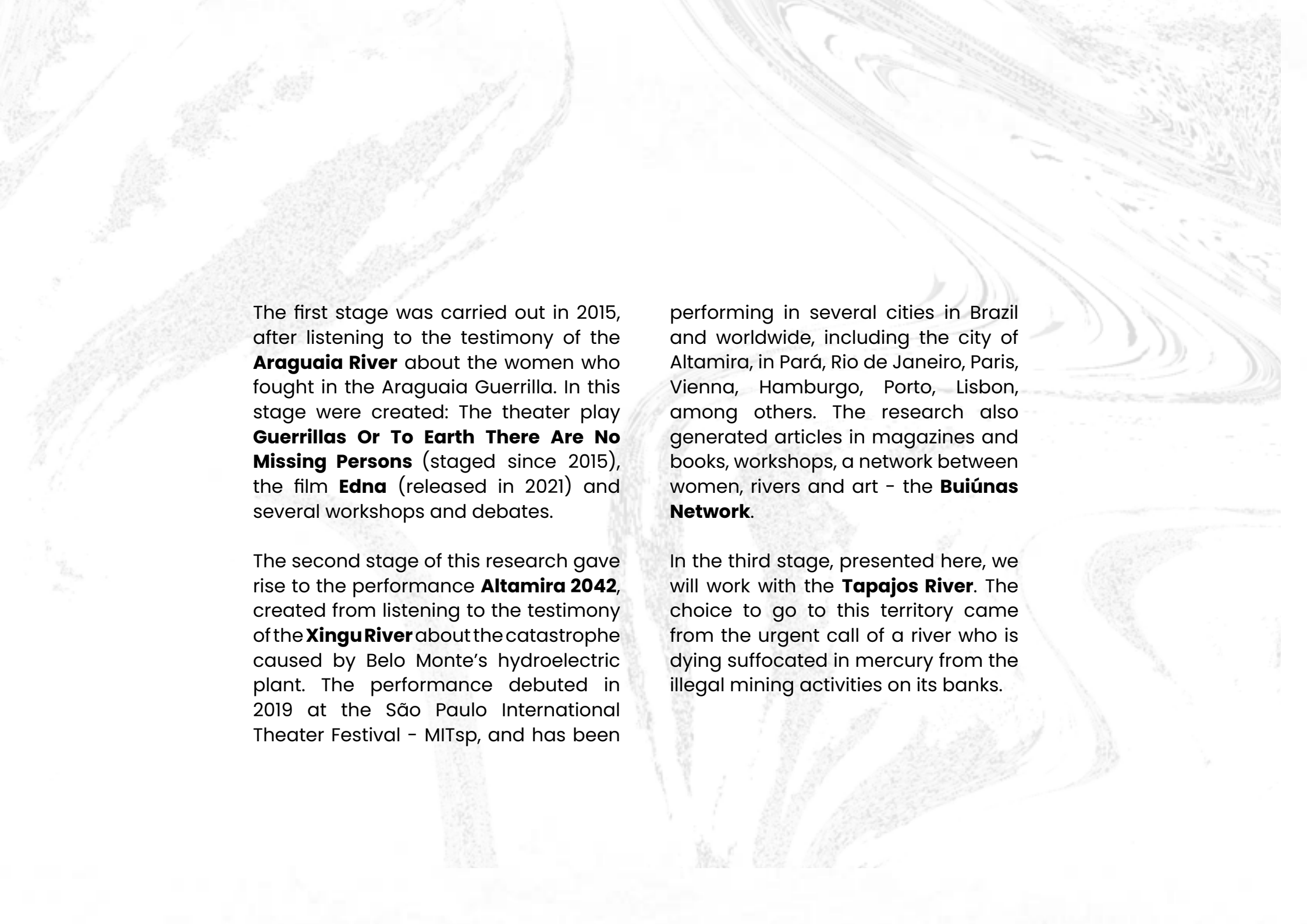
Riverbanks Project On Rivers, Buiúnas and Fireflies is an art research project that has been dedicated, since 2013, to listening and amplifying the witness statement and testimony of Brazilian rivers experiencing a catastrophe.

This research was conceived as a response to the *"Anthropocene"* concept, defined by journalist Eliane Brum as *"the moment when men stop fearing the catastrophe to become the catastrophe themselves."*

The research is an attempt to give humans the capacity of listening to other voices, here, the Witness-Rivers, the Buiuna-Women and the Firefly-Peoples.

Witness-Rivers are those who live an experience that can be called catastrophic, from the perspective of the rivers and the many others that depend on them, humans and non humans. **Buiúnas-Women** are us and them. Women artists of the margins and women from the riverbanks. Female leaders who already bring in their political-poetic imagination the mixture of other space-times.

Firefly-Peoples, for Didi-hubermann (2011), are all those exposed to disappearance, humans and non-humans. Those we have to dislocate to find.

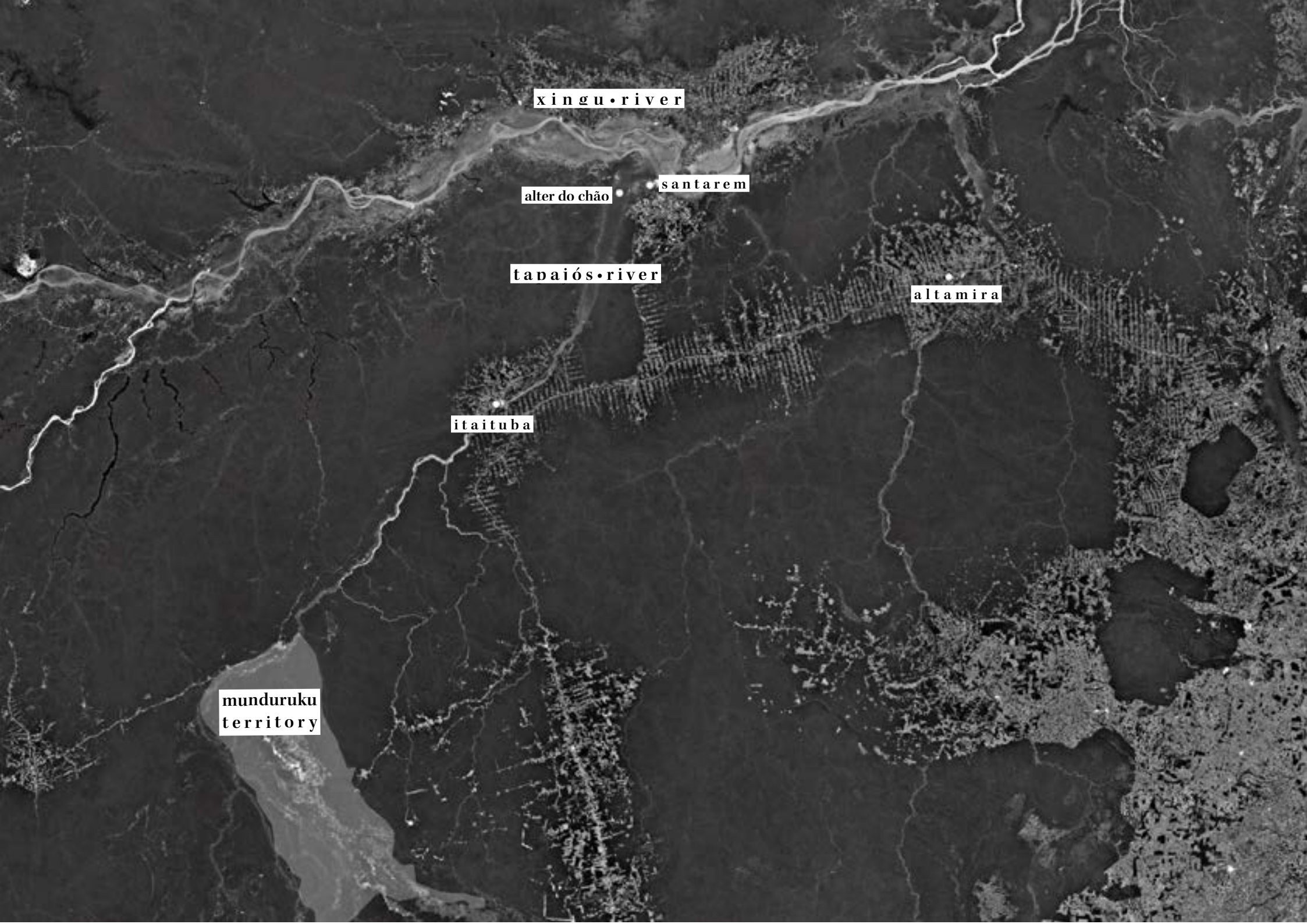


The first stage was carried out in 2015, after listening to the testimony of the **Araguaia River** about the women who fought in the Araguaia Guerrilla. In this stage were created: The theater play **Guerrillas Or To Earth There Are No Missing Persons** (staged since 2015), the film **Edna** (released in 2021) and several workshops and debates.

The second stage of this research gave rise to the performance **Altamira 2042**, created from listening to the testimony of the **Xingu River** about the catastrophe caused by Belo Monte's hydroelectric plant. The performance debuted in 2019 at the São Paulo International Theater Festival - MITsp, and has been

performing in several cities in Brazil and worldwide, including the city of Altamira, in Pará, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, Vienna, Hamburgo, Porto, Lisbon, among others. The research also generated articles in magazines and books, workshops, a network between women, rivers and art - the **Buiúnas Network**.

In the third stage, presented here, we will work with the **Tapajos River**. The choice to go to this territory came from the urgent call of a river who is dying suffocated in mercury from the illegal mining activities on its banks.



xingu•river

alter do chão

• santarem

tapaiós•river

• altamira

• itaituba

munduruku
territory



the same chemicals that create
photography can kill a river

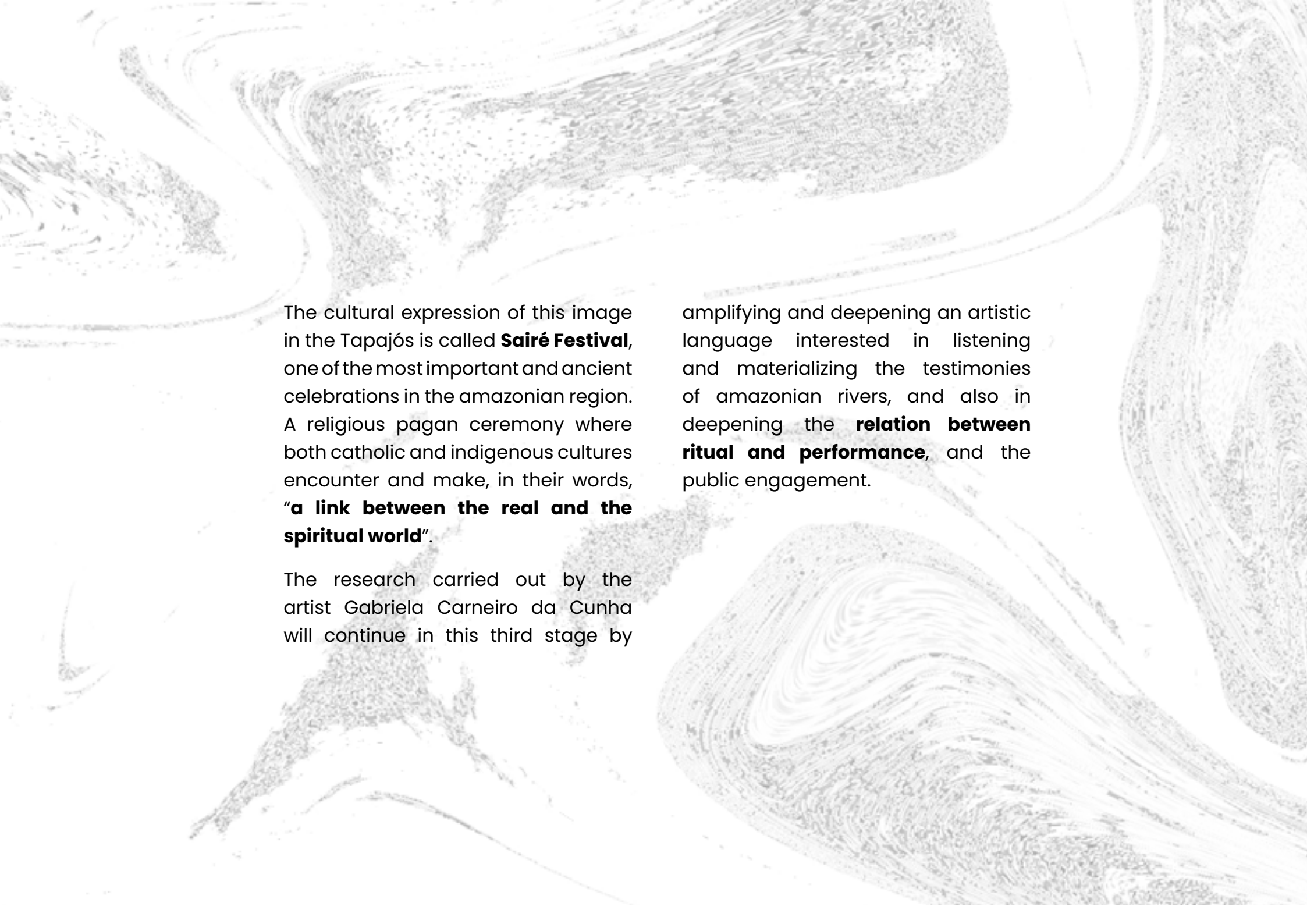
An aerial photograph of a river confluence, showing two distinct water bodies meeting. The water exhibits intricate, swirling patterns of white and grey, suggesting sediment or a specific flow dynamic. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, emphasizing the geometric and organic shapes of the water's movement.

artistic approach

The Tapajós river is home of the important and resilient indigenous **Munduruku people**. The Munduruku people still do not have their land demarcated and officially recognized by the Brazilian State. In recent decades, the Munduruku and some of their female leaders, such as **Alessandra Korap** and **Maria Leusa Munduruku**, have revealed themselves to be the main voices of resistance to illegal mining and the **contamination** of the river, their bodies and their children by mercury.

One of the images that will guide us is the encounter of waters that happens

between the Tapajós River and the Amazonas river, in the margins of Santarém city in the State of Pará, where both rivers follow together hundreds of kilometers side by side without **mixing their waters**. **Two are one**, and one is two. This spot is known for its magical powers. For us, it is the image of a real encounter, a counterpoint of the colonial encounter that devastated and exterminated numerous humans, and non-humans, populations. **An image yet to be revealed.**



The cultural expression of this image in the Tapajós is called **Sairé Festival**, one of the most important and ancient celebrations in the amazonian region. A religious pagan ceremony where both catholic and indigenous cultures encounter and make, in their words, **“a link between the real and the spiritual world”**.

The research carried out by the artist Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha will continue in this third stage by

amplifying and deepening an artistic language interested in listening and materializing the testimonies of amazonian rivers, and also in deepening the **relation between ritual and performance**, and the public engagement.

A black and white photograph of a body of water, likely a lake or sea, with sunlight reflecting off the surface. The reflections create a shimmering, textured effect across the water. The text 'tapajós fieldwork' is overlaid in the center of the image.

tapajós fieldwork



During the month of September 2022 we carried out the first field trip to the lower and middle river **Tapajós** region. In this trip, listening to the river took place through three main research axes: the artistic residency in the **Fotoativa collective** in Belém, the **Assembly of Mercúrio** in the **Munduruku Sawre Muybu** indigenous land in the middle Tapajós, and the **Sairé** pagan festival in Alter do Chão in the lower Tapajós.

fotoativa residency



light doesn't bend



The **photoactive residency** took place between the 7th and 10th of September 2022, and it was fundamental for us to understand the possibilities and techniques of photographic development and enlargement that will be worked on in this stage of creation, and which will be detailed later. The collective exists and works for 38 years in the city of Belém, PA.

mercury assembly





The Mercury Assembly took place between the 12th and 15th of September 2022, where the results of the research carried out in 2019 on mercury **contamination** in the body of the **Munduruku** population were delivered. Listening to the statements of scientists, doctors and infected indigenous people was fundamental for understanding the serious situation in which the affected population

lives. The details of this listening can be read in the attached report written by the artist Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha for the newspaper **Sumaúma**. The photographs captured during the assembly will compose the performance, as well as the voices, mainly the testimonies of the women and mothers of the **Munduruku indigenous people**.



for our uterus that are sick



Impacto do Mercúrio em Áreas Protegidas e Povos da Floresta na Amazônia: Uma Abordagem Integrada Saúde-Ambiente

Participante: *Lucas Pires Mendonça* Código: *101-01-0101* Aldeia: *Sacré, Médio*
 Sexo: *masculino* Data de Nascimento: *18/07/2014* Data de Coleta: *29/10/2019*

1) Sobre a análise de mercúrio em amostras de cabelo (concentração de mercúrio)
 Esta análise mede a quantidade de mercúrio que foi absorvida pelo seu organismo devido ao consumo de pescado contínuo. A parte do cabelo analisada (2 cm próximos à raíz) corresponde ao mercúrio que foi absorvido pelo seu corpo durante os 30 dias anteriores à data da coleta da amostra.

Resultado da sua análise (concentração de mercúrio no cabelo) ➔ **14,0 µg/g**

2) Como interpretar o resultado da sua análise?
 Dependendo da quantidade de mercúrio detectada na sua amostra de cabelo, o risco de adoecer varia:

Baixo	Aceitável	Alto	Muito Alto
1 µg/g	2 µg/g	4 µg/g	10 µg/g
< 1 µg/g	1-2 µg/g	2-4 µg/g	> 10 µg/g

Quantidade de mercúrio detectada revela que o seu risco de adoecer é: **Muito Alto**

Concentração de mercúrio na sua amostra de cabelo	14,0 µg/g
Concentração média de mercúrio na comunidade de Sacré - Médio	4,4 µg/g
Concentração média de mercúrio em < 12 anos de Sacré - Médio	5,5 µg/g

3) Quantidade de mercúrio detectada no pescado da sua comunidade, de acordo com a pesquisa da Floresta:

Concentração de mercúrio	Baixo	Aceitável	Alto
	0-1 µg/g	1,1-3,3 µg/g	3,4-10 µg/g
Nome dos Peixes	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril

4) Outras informações importantes sobre a sua saúde:

Próximo Arrecife Intestinal (PAI): 229 mmHg
 Próximo Arrecife Duodenal (PAD): 77,8 mmHg

Pressão arterial média: 133,4 mmHg



Impacto do Mercúrio em Áreas Protegidas e Povos da Floresta na Amazônia: Uma Abordagem Integrada Saúde-Ambiente

Participante: *Lucas Pires Mendonça* Código: *101-01-0101* Aldeia: *Sacré, Médio*
 Sexo: *masculino* Data de Nascimento: *27/02/2000* Data de Coleta: *29/10/2019*

1) Sobre a análise de mercúrio em amostras de cabelo (concentração de mercúrio)
 Esta análise mede a quantidade de mercúrio que foi absorvida pelo seu organismo devido ao consumo de pescado contínuo. A parte do cabelo analisada (2 cm próximos à raíz) corresponde ao mercúrio que foi absorvido pelo seu corpo durante os 30 dias anteriores à data da coleta da amostra.

Resultado da sua análise (concentração de mercúrio no cabelo) ➔ **14,2 µg/g**

2) Como interpretar o resultado da sua análise?
 Dependendo da quantidade de mercúrio detectada na sua amostra de cabelo, o risco de adoecer varia:

Baixo	Aceitável	Alto	Muito Alto
1 µg/g	2 µg/g	4 µg/g	10 µg/g
< 1 µg/g	1-2 µg/g	2-4 µg/g	> 10 µg/g

Quantidade de mercúrio detectada revela que o seu risco de adoecer é: **Muito Alto**

Concentração de mercúrio na sua amostra de cabelo	14,2 µg/g
Concentração média de mercúrio na comunidade de Sacré - Médio	6,4 µg/g
Concentração média de mercúrio em < 12 anos de Sacré - Médio	5,7 µg/g

3) Quantidade de mercúrio detectada no pescado da sua comunidade, de acordo com a pesquisa da Floresta:

Concentração de mercúrio	Baixo	Aceitável	Alto
	0-1 µg/g	1,1-3,3 µg/g	3,4-10 µg/g
Nome dos Peixes	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril

4) Outras informações importantes sobre a sua saúde:

Próximo Arrecife Intestinal (PAI): 229 mmHg
 Próximo Arrecife Duodenal (PAD): 77,8 mmHg

Pressão arterial média: 133,4 mmHg



Impacto do Mercúrio em Áreas Protegidas e Povos da Floresta na Amazônia: Uma Abordagem Integrada Saúde-Ambiente

Participante: *Marcia Pires Mendonça* Código: *101-01-0101* Aldeia: *Sacré, Médio*
 Sexo: *feminino* Data de Nascimento: *07/05/1955* Data de Coleta: *29/10/2019*

1) Sobre a análise de mercúrio em amostras de cabelo (concentração de mercúrio)
 Esta análise mede a quantidade de mercúrio que foi absorvida pelo seu organismo devido ao consumo de pescado contínuo. A parte do cabelo analisada (2 cm próximos à raíz) corresponde ao mercúrio que foi absorvido pelo seu corpo durante os 30 dias anteriores à data da coleta da amostra.

Resultado da sua análise (concentração de mercúrio no cabelo) ➔ **11,7 µg/g**

2) Como interpretar o resultado da sua análise?
 Dependendo da quantidade de mercúrio detectada na sua amostra de cabelo, o risco de adoecer varia:

Baixo	Aceitável	Alto	Muito Alto
1 µg/g	2 µg/g	4 µg/g	10 µg/g
< 1 µg/g	1-2 µg/g	2-4 µg/g	> 10 µg/g

Quantidade de mercúrio detectada revela que o seu risco de adoecer é: **Muito Alto**

Concentração de mercúrio na sua amostra de cabelo	11,7 µg/g
Concentração média de mercúrio na comunidade de Sacré - Médio	6,4 µg/g
Concentração média de mercúrio em < 12 anos de Sacré - Médio	5,7 µg/g

3) Quantidade de mercúrio detectada no pescado da sua comunidade, de acordo com a pesquisa da Floresta:

Concentração de mercúrio	Baixo	Aceitável	Alto
	0-1 µg/g	1,1-3,3 µg/g	3,4-10 µg/g
Nome dos Peixes	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril	Aracaju, aruanã, piracatinga, surubi, curimatã e tamboril

4) Outras informações importantes sobre a sua saúde:

Próximo Arrecife Intestinal (PAI): 156 mmHg
 Próximo Arrecife Duodenal (PAD): 63,3 mmHg

Pressão arterial média: 119,4 mmHg

O FUTURO É AGORA





sairé festival





The Sairé Festival took place between the 16th and 20th of September 2022. A **religious pagan celebration** that reveals the spiritual syncretism of the lower Tapajós region. The photographs captured during the festival will compose the performance, bringing to this work the **spiritual and enchanted** aspects. Also the recordings of prayers, ritual songs and instruments as well as the chorus will compose the **sound dramaturgy**.















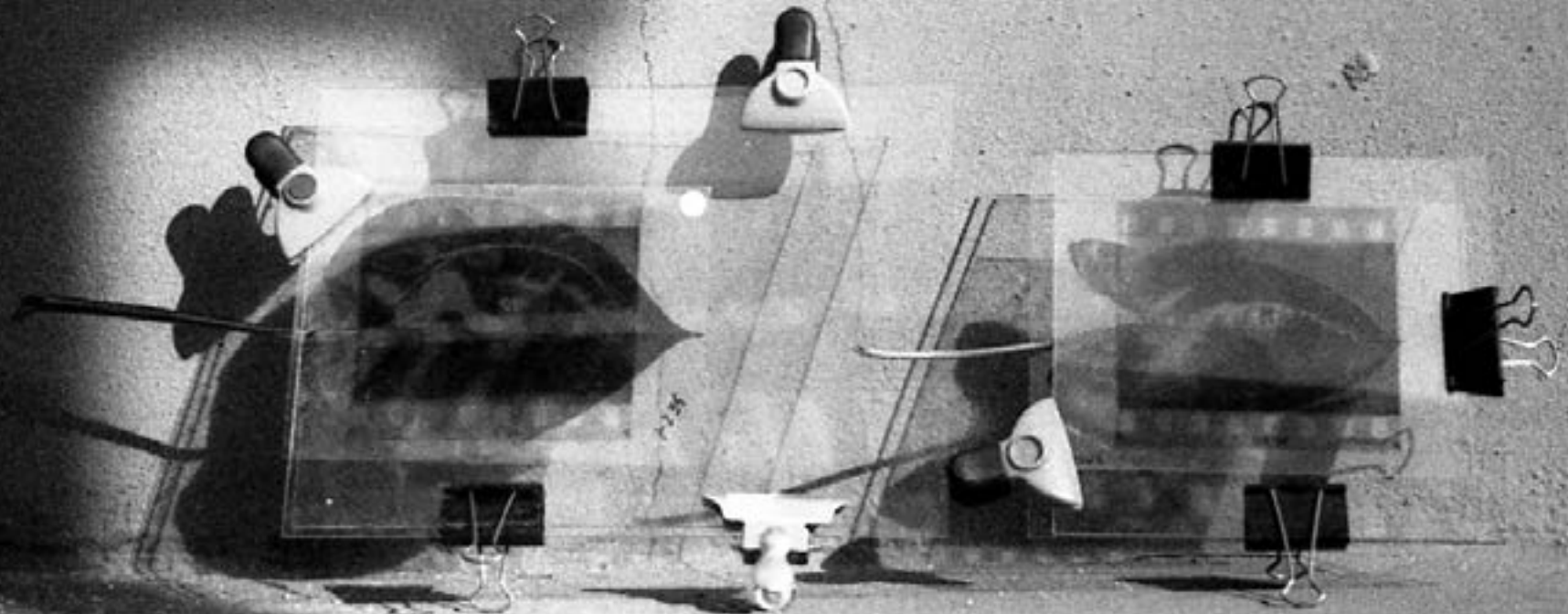
image revelation

the work is a composition
with the world

The proposal is to work the image through the technology of **analog photography**. The alchemy of photographic development as a magical procedure of making existences appear and disappear. A procedure that in its beginnings used, and still uses, even if in tiny amounts, the chemical element responsible for the murder of the Tapajós River and so many beings that inhabit it - mercury. Inspired by Donna Haraway we will make an

"odd kin" with this **chemical element** and bring it to a new articulation in the allied field. The same chemical elements that are causing the disappearance of beings, will be re-compost to make their appearance and amplification. We will work on the various possibilities of operations on images as devices for openings in space-time, and practices of **making possible worlds**.

techniques and processes

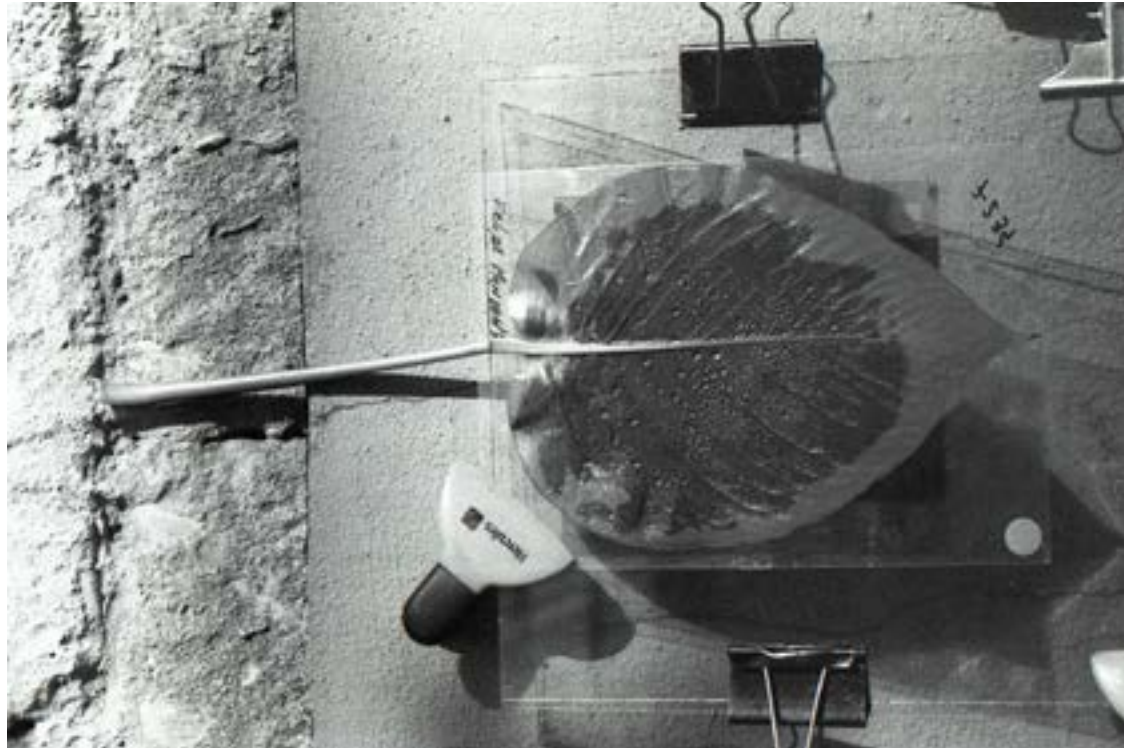


development and --- enlargement techniques

We will work with different techniques for developing and enlarging on photographic paper:

- Enlargement on photographic paper of already developed photos taken in Tapajós
- Enlargement on photographic paper of already developed photos taken in each city.
- Development of negatives and enlargement on photographic paper of photos taken from the audience during each performance.
- Live frame reveal in each performance.

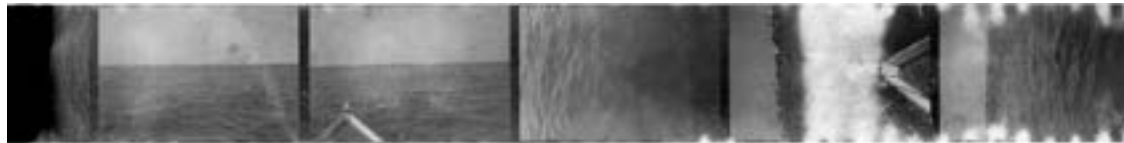
photogenic drawing

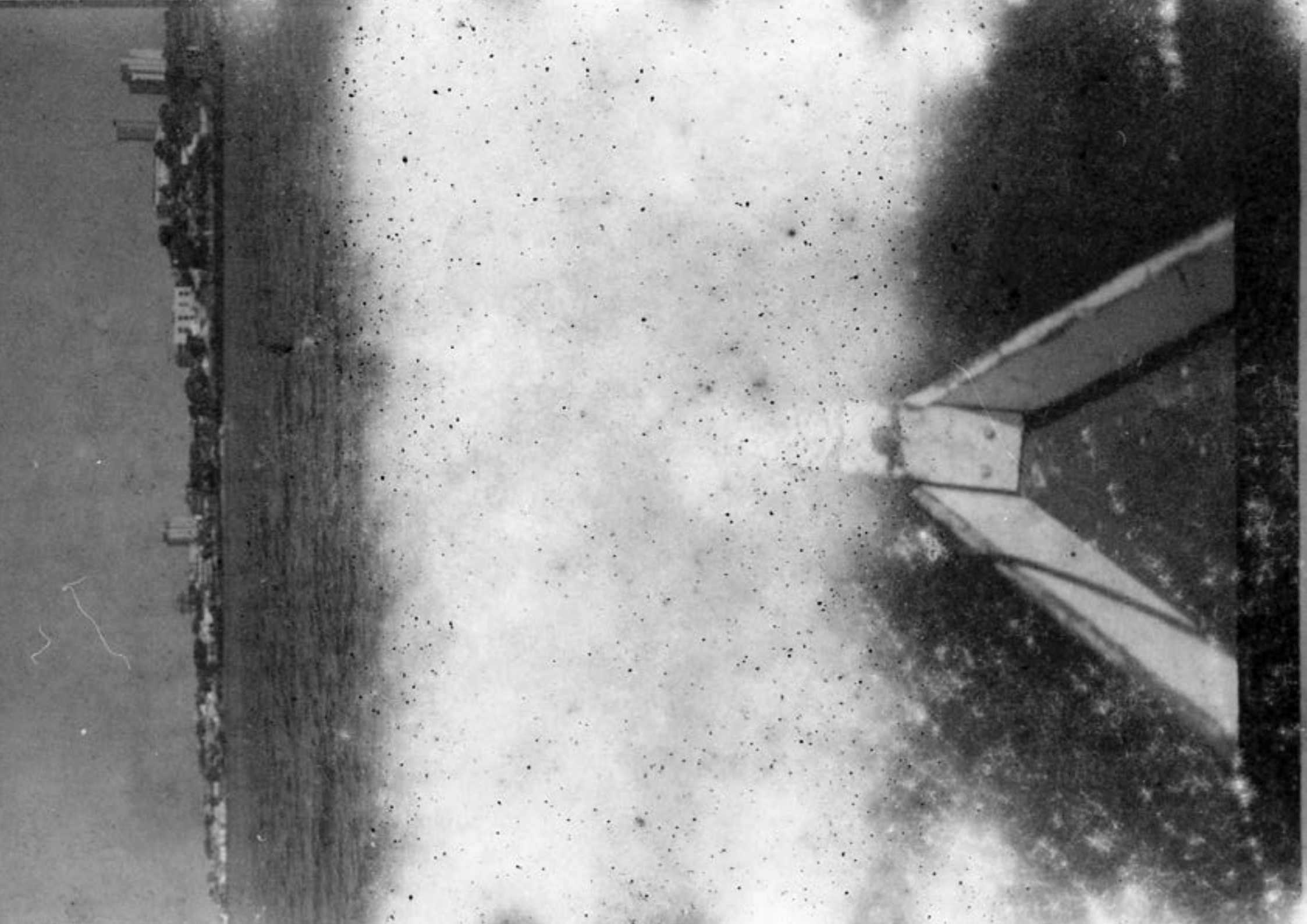






fungus







light brush





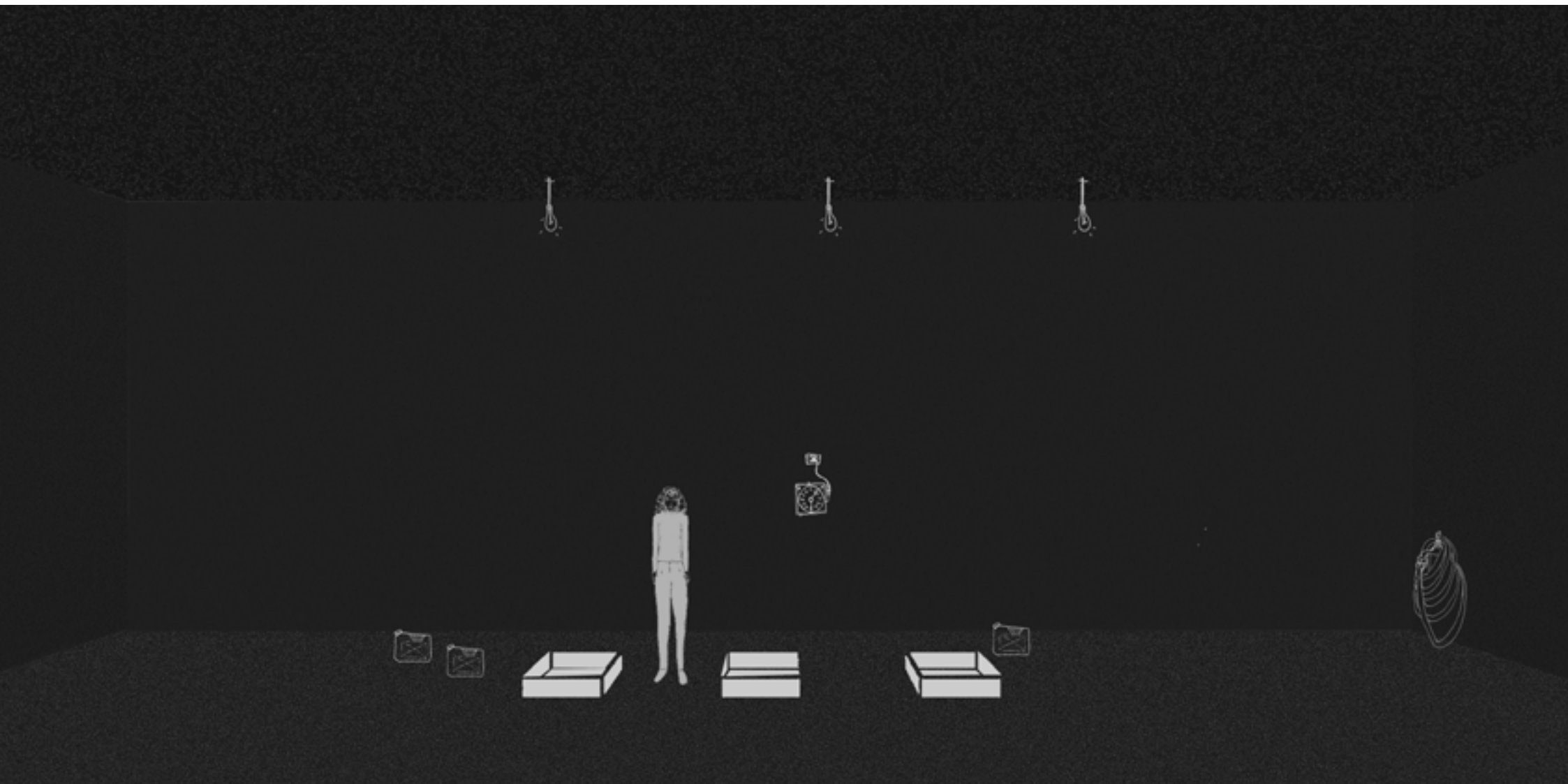
sound revelation

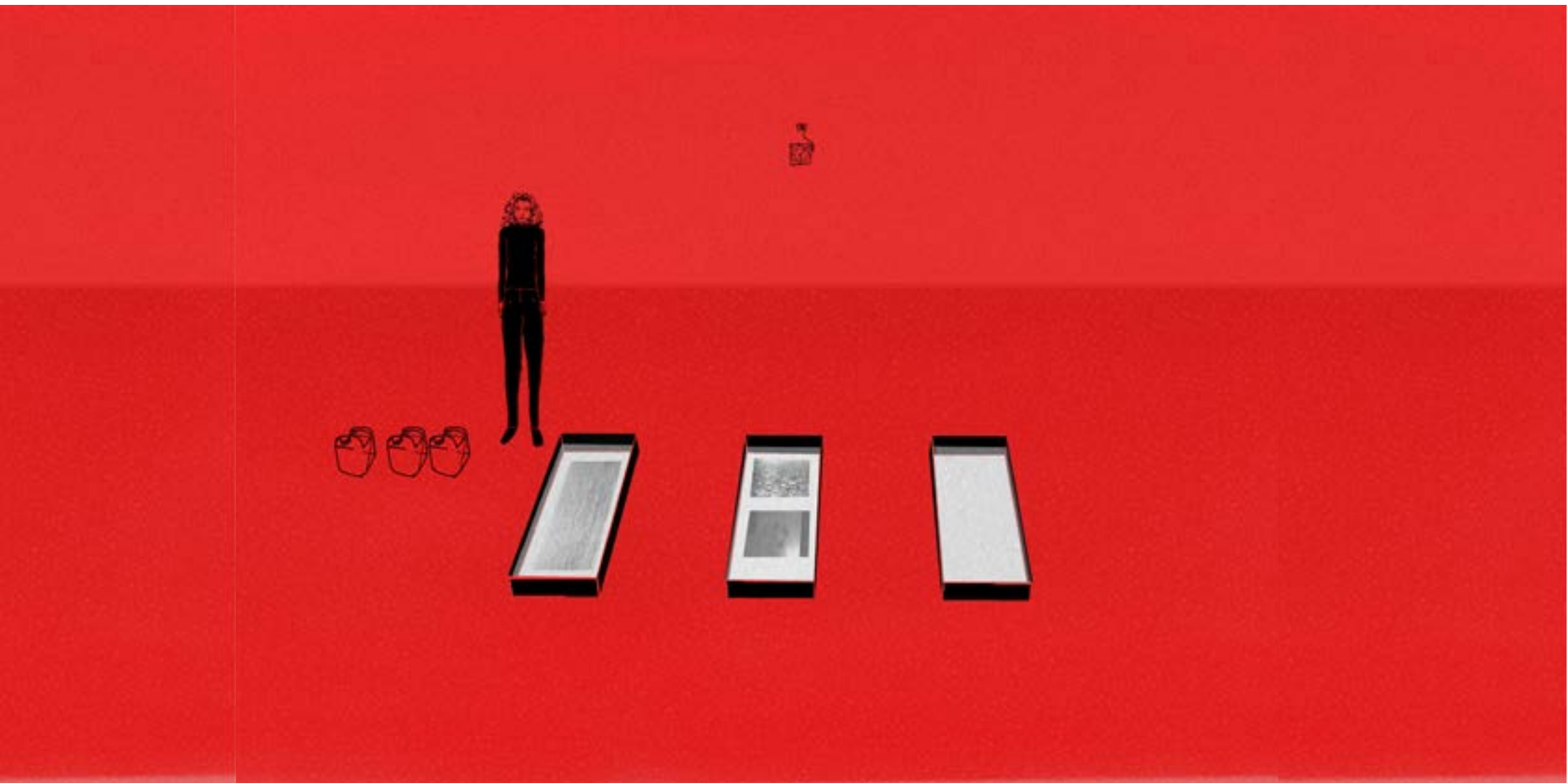
The proposal is to bring the testimony of Tapajós River about its contamination, through the perspective of the **mothers** who live on the banks of the river. The assembly made it clear that the most affected in this case of contamination are the **mother and their wombs, fetuses and newborns**. The contamination causes much more damage during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

For that we will continue to bring to the stage the voices of people who are most affected, in this case the testimonies of Munduruku mothers, as sounds of river water and womb water. Also we will work with the sound and music of the Sairé Festival. The proposal is to make **the audience become the chorus and the instruments** of this performance-ritual.

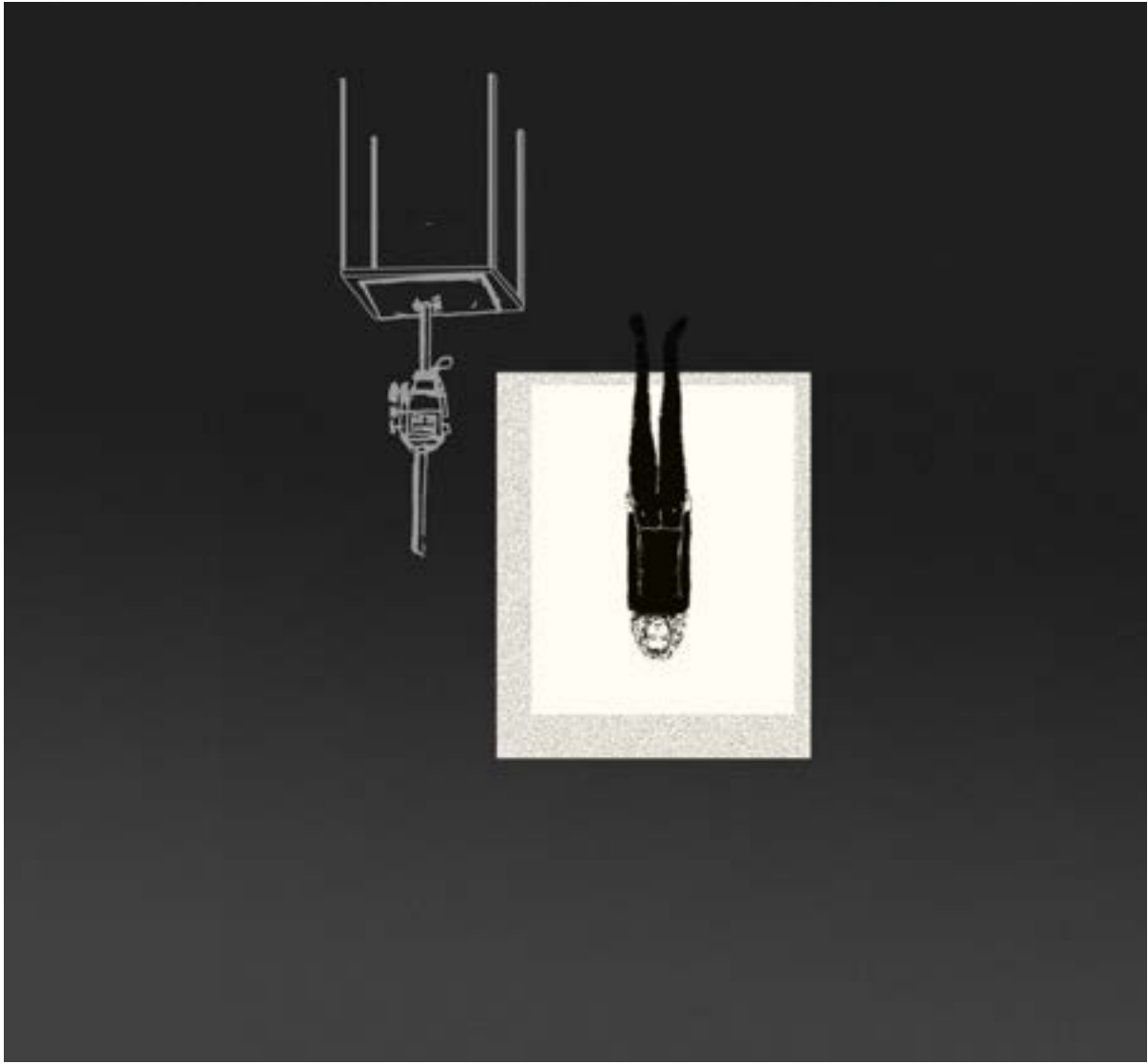
scenic design

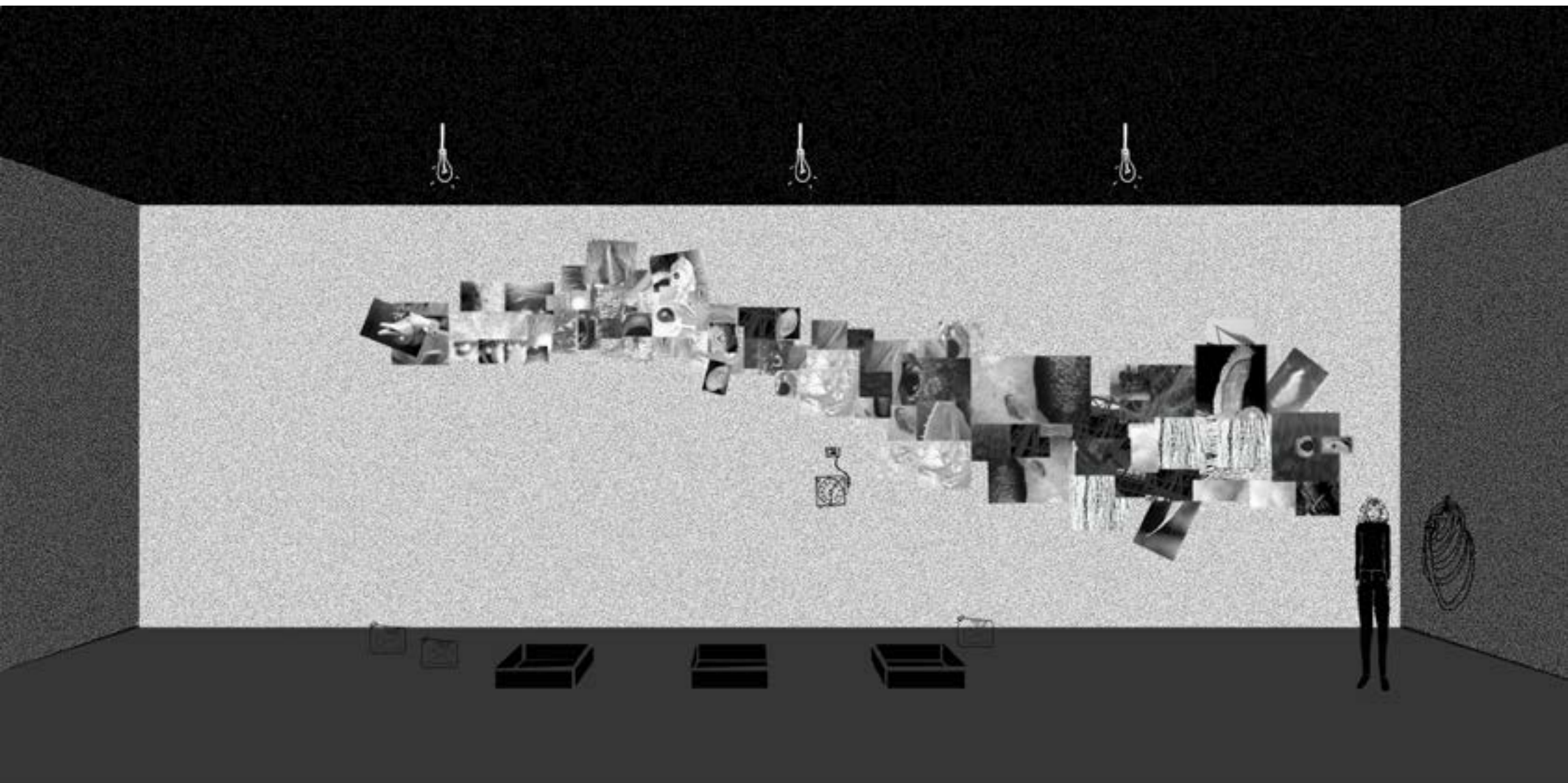






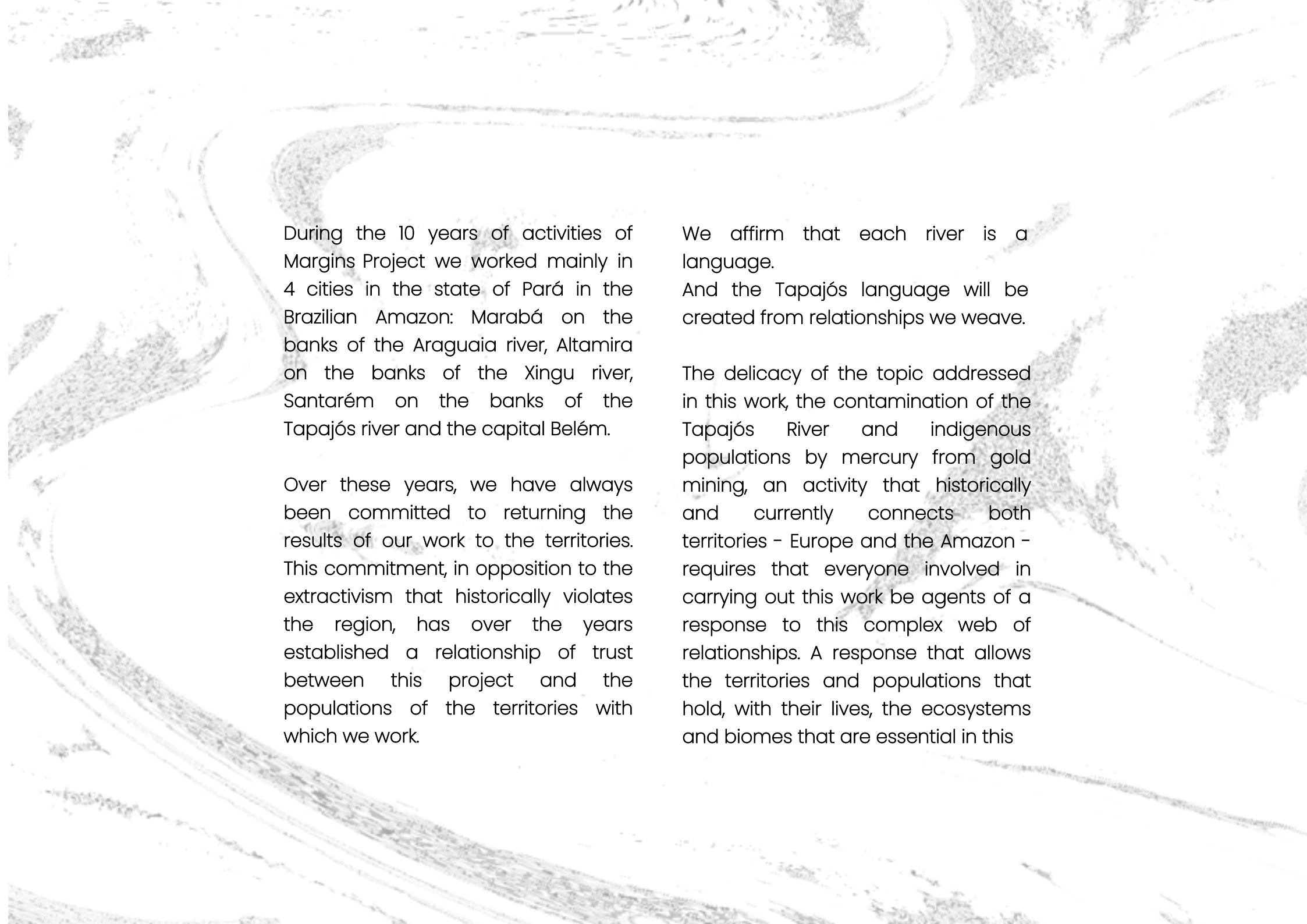






An aerial photograph of a wide river with a large, irregularly shaped island in the center. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right. On the right side of the island, there is a waterfall cascading into the river. The surrounding landscape is a mix of light and dark green, indicating different types of vegetation. The text 'tour of tapajós in the amazon' is overlaid in the center of the image.

tour of tapajós in the amazon

An aerial photograph of a wide river with a prominent meander loop. The water is a light, milky color, and the surrounding land is a mix of green and brown, indicating a natural, somewhat undeveloped landscape. The river's path is clearly visible as it curves through the terrain.

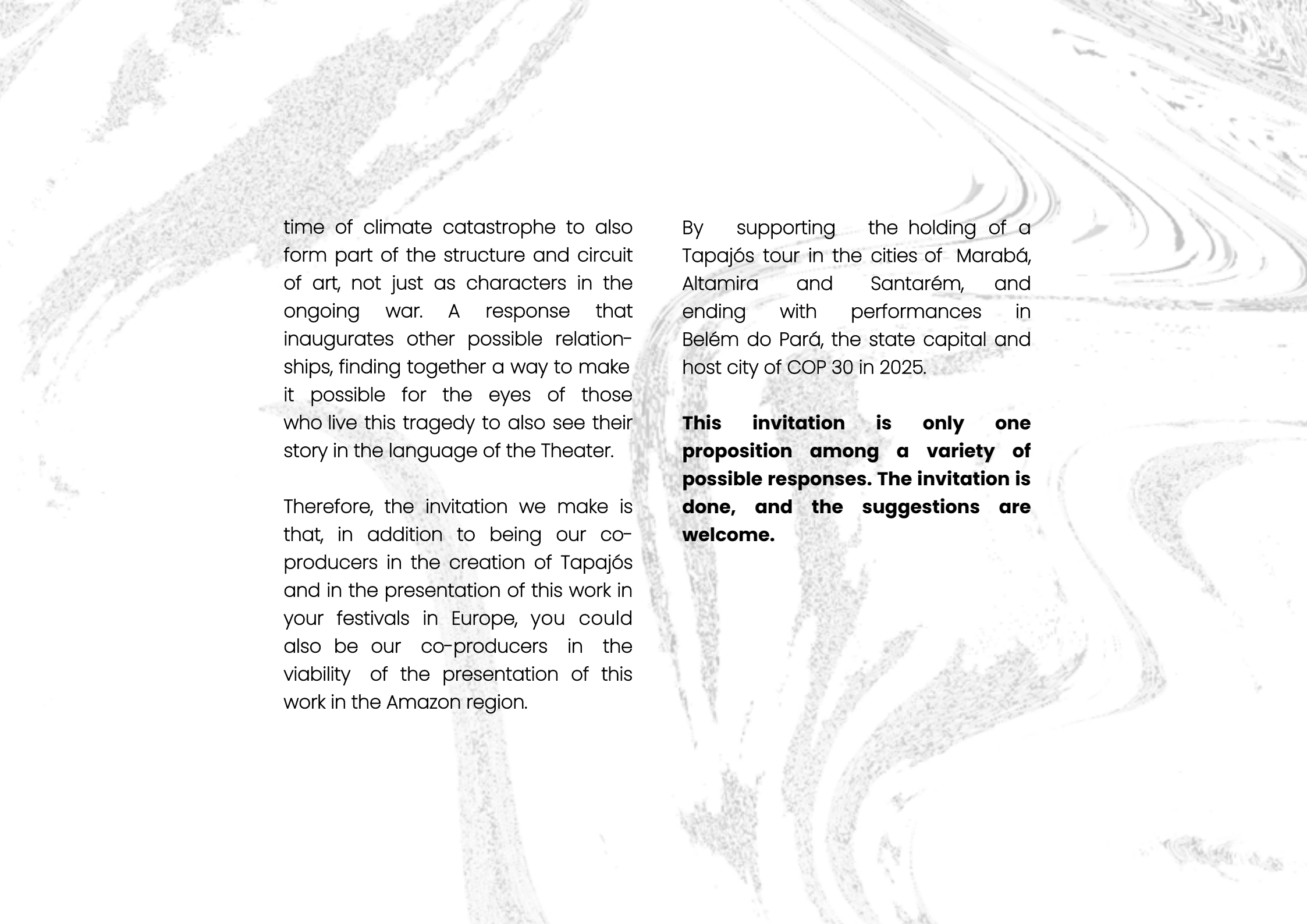
During the 10 years of activities of Margins Project we worked mainly in 4 cities in the state of Pará in the Brazilian Amazon: Marabá on the banks of the Araguaia river, Altamira on the banks of the Xingu river, Santarém on the banks of the Tapajós river and the capital Belém.

Over these years, we have always been committed to returning the results of our work to the territories. This commitment, in opposition to the extractivism that historically violates the region, has over the years established a relationship of trust between this project and the populations of the territories with which we work.

We affirm that each river is a language.

And the Tapajós language will be created from relationships we weave.

The delicacy of the topic addressed in this work, the contamination of the Tapajós River and indigenous populations by mercury from gold mining, an activity that historically and currently connects both territories - Europe and the Amazon - requires that everyone involved in carrying out this work be agents of a response to this complex web of relationships. A response that allows the territories and populations that hold, with their lives, the ecosystems and biomes that are essential in this



time of climate catastrophe to also form part of the structure and circuit of art, not just as characters in the ongoing war. A response that inaugurates other possible relationships, finding together a way to make it possible for the eyes of those who live this tragedy to also see their story in the language of the Theater.

Therefore, the invitation we make is that, in addition to being our co-producers in the creation of Tapajós and in the presentation of this work in your festivals in Europe, you could also be our co-producers in the viability of the presentation of this work in the Amazon region.

By supporting the holding of a Tapajós tour in the cities of Marabá, Altamira and Santarém, and ending with performances in Belém do Pará, the state capital and host city of COP 30 in 2025.

This invitation is only one proposition among a variety of possible responses. The invitation is done, and the suggestions are welcome.

RIVERBANKS PROJECT | ON RIVERS, BUIUNAS AND FIREFLIES

tapajós

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RIVERBANKS PROJECT | ON RIVERS, BUTINAS AND FIREFLIES

tapajós

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