

INTERVIEW

CURUMIZ – HONOREES ON THE COVER



Alziney Pereira, to the left; Kemerson Freitas, to the right
(Collection: Instagram - @curumiz)

Curumiz, an artistic entity formed by the sum of the individualities of a duo of visual artists born and raised in Parintins, AM - Alziney Pereira and Kemerson Freitas - who bring with them the deep roots of the Amazon. Graduates in Visual Arts from the Federal University of Amazonas, these two artists translate into their works the rich cultural tapestry of the island of the Tupinambaranas people, where the “boi-bumbá” festival resonates as an anthem of the connection between man and nature.

Since childhood, immersed in the diversity of riverine voices and the strength of indigenous culture, Curumiz absorbed the legends and myths that

inhabit their memories. The “toadas” that speak of cosmogony and mystical beings became their sources of inspiration, emotionally drawing the relationship between the sacred and the quotidian. The everyday life of these artists is a universe where men transform into animals and forest spirits dance under the moonlight, telling stories of ancestry.

Upon meeting at university, Alziney and Kemerson embarked on research into indigenous cosmologies, exploring the Amerindian perspective that reveals the richness of spiritual beings and their connections to nature. Through graffiti, digital art, and installations, they create works that not only enchant but also raise awareness about the importance of ancestry and the vital force of the Amazon rainforest.

Curumiz is an invitation to dive into a world where art is the voice of the earth, where each stroke carries the history of a people and reverences Mother Nature.

Next, you will find an exclusive interview conducted with one of the duo members, visual artist Kemerson Freitas, for Extensão em Revista: The conversation was led by the cultural advisor of the Pro-Rectorry of Extension and Community Affairs, Ana Karoline Cordeiro.



Please introduce yourself to our readers and briefly talk about your background and work.

My name is Kemerson Freitas, I'm an artist from Parintins and I'm 28 years old. I graduated in Visual Arts from the Federal University of Amazonas. Although I started a master's degree at UEA, I decided to pause it, but I am considering returning through another graduate program at UEA.

As a visual artist, I work as a graffiti artist and illustrator, in addition to being involved in cultural production. We develop cultural projects, including initiatives for funding laws in the field of urban art and urban arts festivals.

How was the duo formed? And how did you enter the artistic scene of the region?

Alziney and I met at UFAM during the Visual Arts course in 2014. In 2017, we had classes with professors from other regions who brought a more contemporary approach to art. They encouraged us to think about how to work with the Amazon in a contemporary way. That's when we started researching and found inspiration in graffiti, which aligned with our work.



From there, we identified various possibilities to explore such as Amazonian art and art from Parintins. In 2017, we started our artistic production as a duo, experimenting with urban art languages (street art), such as "lambe-lambe" and stencil. Over time, we dedicated ourselves to graffiti, but faced challenges in obtaining materials since there weren't suitable sprays available in Parintins. We needed to travel to Manaus to buy them.

Curumiz at the streets of Parintins – 2018
(Collection: Instagram - @curumiz)

Even though Parintins didn't have a well-established graffiti culture, there was a scene for hip hop and rap. At that time, there was only one graffiti artist in the city who later moved to Santarém. So, we continued our journey in artistic graffiti, influenced by names like Kobra and “Os Gêmeos”. In 2018, we participated in an exhibition at the Curupira Salon, at the Palácio Rio Negro Cultural Center, with two works among various artists. The curator of the Gallery of Largo took an interest in our work and decided to organize an exhibition in Manaus.



Exhibition: “Conterrâneo” at the Galeria of Largo - 2019 (Collection: Instagram - @curumiz)

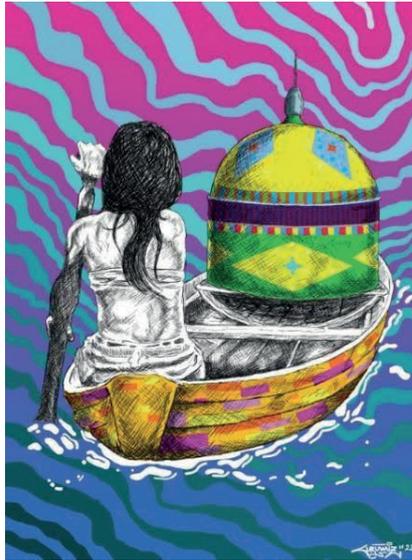
We were surprised because, at a young age, we managed to have our first exhibition. The curator recognized the potential of our work which diverged from the idealized art of the Amazon and its French influences. Thus, in 2019, the Gallery of Largo hosted our exhibition, and we began to integrate into the Amazonian art scene, being invited to exhibitions and urban art festivals in Manaus and other places. As a result, our name and brand became part of the region's art.

Do you consider your work to have been influenced by other artists?

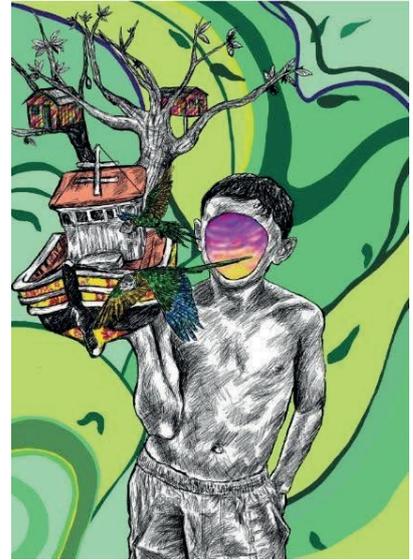
During our research on graffiti, the first work that caught our attention was by “Os Gêmeos”. We were impressed by the poetics and aesthetics they incorporate into their work, especially the vibrant colors that changed our perception of art. This led us to explore imaginative influences, especially related to cosmology and Amazonian culture, drawing inspiration from authors like Paes Loureiro and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro who address themes such as the poetics of the Amazonian imagination and Amerindian perspectivism.



“Ser Kumá das Águas”
Series: Antropomorfia Amazônica
100x140 cm - Year:2021
Technique: Spray and acrylic on
canvas.



“Pequeno proeiro de beiradão”
Series: Antropologias ribeirinhas
1771 x 2363 pixels - Year: 2023
Technique: Digital art



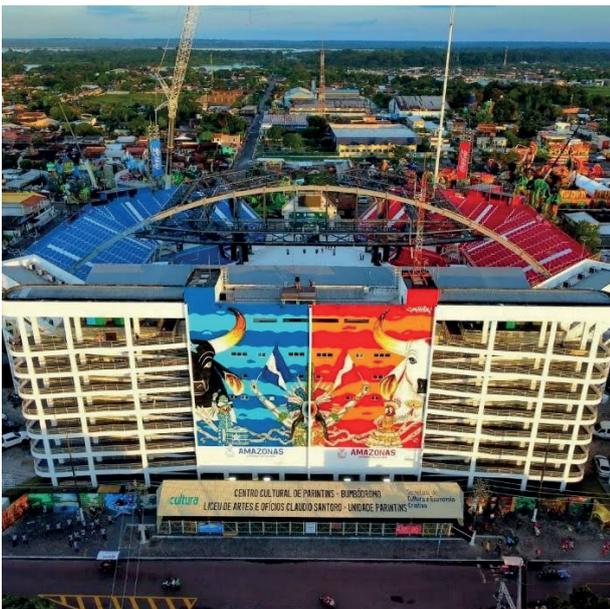
Sem nome
Series: Cúpulas 1771x2363 pixels -
Year:2021
Technique: Digital Art

We delved into the idea of anthropomorphic references, realizing that in the Amazon, both among indigenous peoples and river dwellers, there are narratives about "geramentos," which are stories of people transforming into animals. This concept resonated greatly in our lives and was also explored in literature. Thus, we began reading more about these authors and identifying influences from indigenous artists who address similar themes. This led us to a vast array of references, involving visual artists in graffiti, painting, and literature.

How does the creative process of the duo occur?

Our work used to be more rustic. We used to get together to draw with pencils, where I would offer an opinion, and he would complement it, or vice versa. As the saying goes, "two heads are better than one." We believe that this union of ideas results in good work. Although we collaborated, we wanted the piece to reflect a unique style, as if it were created by a single artist. Thus, we managed to develop a recognizable signature, using hatching and colors that unified our style, even though we are two distinct artists.

Curumiz is, in fact, an entity that represents the sum of our individualities, and we have always valued this unique signature.



**Mural "Vitória da Cultura Popular" for the 56°
Festival
Folclórico de Parintins - 2023**
(Collection: Instagram - @curumiz)

Currently, our process has become more digital, partly due to market demands and the need for evolution. We use programs like Photoshop and CreActe, among other software available for artists. When we receive a commission, like the mural for the 56th Folkloric Festival of Parintins, commissioned by the Government of Amazonas, we start by creating a digital sketch. We present this sketch to the client, along with a projection of the location where the work would be executed. In the case of the mural at the "Bumbódromo", we explored various ideas that evoke the emotions of being "Caprichoso" or "Garantido". After presenting the sketches, we await approval from the Secretary of Culture and the Government of Amazonas to start the actual graffiti work on the mural. This method is generally used in the duo's creative process.

Do you have any collaboration with the State University of Amazonas (UEA)? Have you carried out any actions with the participation or mediation of UEA? If not, would you like to be a part of cultural and extension activities with the University in the future?

In Manaus, at the invitation of the "Escola Normal Superior", we created a piece at the container laboratories of UEA, themed around Amazonian biodiversity. The result was very beautiful. Here in Parintins, we also collaborate with UEA professors, especially in the areas of History and Arts who appreciate our graffiti work. Recently, we made the mural of the Samsung Ocara - Digital Entrepreneurship Hub of the Amazon at UEA in Parintins.



Mural at Ocara Samsung at CESP/UEA – 2023 (Photo: Eder Repolho)

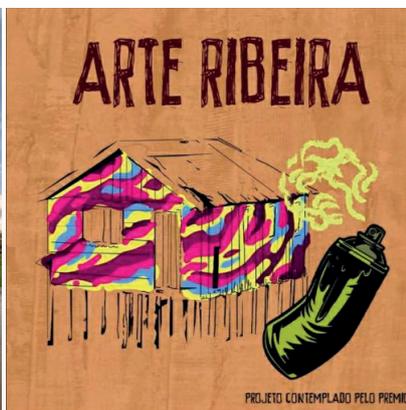


Container Laboratories at ENS/UEA – 2021 (Collection: @curumiz)

This partnership with the University and professors is valuable as it promotes exchanges of experiences. Additionally, we have a great appreciation for working with the youth. We believe that through our experience and art, it's possible for young people to develop socially and economically. Our approach shows that art can positively impact their lives.

When we bring our work to riverine regions, we're not just painting for the sake of painting: there's a strong social component involved. In the "Arte Ribeira" project, for example, many riverine people had never left their communities or visited an art gallery. Thus, our art, through graffiti, plays a significant social role, promoting access to knowledge and culture. UEA can be a crucial partner in this process.

Comment on the experience of the "Arte Ribeira" project, included in the "Programa Cultura Criativa" – 2020, under the Aldir Blanc Law.



This project was an incredible experience for us as artists. We transformed houses into true works of art, and this allowed people who never left their communities, or who visited Parintins but never entered a gallery or the School of Arts, to have the opportunity to appreciate art in a new way.

We carried out this work in three distinct riverine communities. The first was the Valéria Community, located on solid ground. The second was Bom Socorro do Zé Açu, also on solid ground but facing challenges with floods and droughts. Finally, we were in Vila Amazônia, a stilt house community completely surrounded by water, where transportation is only by bridges or canoes.

It was a very enriching experience for us, especially because we are children of riverine people. Our grandparents, parents, and relatives came from this reality, and this connects us to our ancestry and to the sense of belonging to our place of origin. This exchange of experiences was truly meaningful.

Finally, how do you define the work of "Curumiz"? And what do you expect for the future?

With all humility, I consider Curumiz's work to be a form of innovative art. Nowadays, I see many people exploring different ways to express themselves, including the use of graffiti. I'm very happy to see people from Parintins using this technique in their creations. I believe it's crucial to innovate in art, exploring colors and the diversity of themes rather than limiting ourselves to a romanticized vision of the Amazon.

As an artist, I feel the need to address climate issues in my work. It's important for artists to dedicate themselves to these themes and to avoid artistic complacency.

In the future, we intend to take these narratives abroad, promoting the art of the interior and of Parintins in international galleries, if possible. We will continue to explore these significant artistic questions.