



Press release Fotomuseum Winterthur, August 2021

Claudia Andujar

The Yanomami Struggle

23.10.2021–13.02.2022

For five decades, photographer Claudia Andujar (b. 1931) has dedicated her life and work to the indigenous Yanomami communities in the Amazon region of Northern Brazil. In the late 1970s, when the community found itself subjected to severe external threats, the Swiss-born photographer, who is based in São Paulo, began fighting for the Yanomami's rights. Her fourteen-year battle alongside Yanomami leader Davi Kopenawa and other concerned parties led to an official demarcation of the community's land in 1992. Today, Andujar's activist efforts are as relevant as ever – as is illustrated by current events, such as the ongoing deforestation and environmental destruction caused by mining and ranching, human rights violations in the region or the spread of malaria and COVID-19.

The exhibition *Claudia Andujar – The Yanomami Struggle*, which brings together photographs, audiovisual installations, Yanomami drawings and other documents, is based on two years of research in Andujar's archive. It is the first major retrospective dedicated to the work of the Brazilian activist, a survivor of the Holocaust, who has devoted her life to photographing and defending the Yanomami – one of Brazil's largest indigenous communities – threatened by public and private greed. Since 1971 Andujar has been documenting this community, a people living in relative isolation in the northern Amazon rainforest. She subsequently went on to join the community, thus deepening relations between them.

The first part of this exhibition presents the evolution of Andujar's artistic work during the 1970s, when she sought to share her fascination with the Yanomami's shamanic culture in her photography and illustrated books. Her photographic documentation of spiritual rituals, her sensitive portraits and a project with Yanomami drawings that she initiated gave viewers insights into the community's way of life. At the same time, however, Brazil's military dictatorship initiated a national plan to colonise Amazonia and exploit its natural resources, which led to the mass spread of deadly diseases among the Yanomami. In the face of this catastrophe, Andujar's work became increasingly activist.



“That’s when I started thinking about developing a whole project that would allow me to both immerse myself in the Yanomami culture and develop strategies to defend them. I didn’t think about making it my life’s work, but that’s what happened – I’m still involved and probably will be until the end of my life.”

Claudia Andujar, photographer and activist

The second part of the exhibition shows how Andujar moved away from art to focus on direct political action as part of the struggle to defend the Yanomami people. In 1978 Andujar and a group of activists founded an NGO to advocate Yanomami rights and assert the community’s territory. During the 1980s she travelled the world with the Yanomami shaman and spokesperson Davi Kopenawa to mobilise international attention. Their long-fought battle culminated in the demarcation of Yanomami territory in 1992 – a victory that is now being undermined by the policies of the current Brazilian government.

The Brazilian government is failing to protect indigenous communities and their territory against the invasion of illegal gold mining, deforestation and land grabs. The arrival of COVID-19 constitutes a new threat to the life of the Yanomami, who have organised the international campaign #MinersOutCovidOut. The exhibition brings into focus the humanitarian and environmental crises that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

An exhibition by Instituto Moreira Salles in Brazil, in partnership with Hutukara Associação Yanomami and Instituto Socioambiental, curated by Thyago Nogueira. In cooperation with CULTURESCAPES 2021 Amazonas and planned as an international collaboration with the Fondation Cartier in Paris, the Triennale Milano, the Fundación MAPFRE in Madrid and the Barbican Centre in London.

About Claudia Andujar

Claudine Haas was born on June 12, 1931, in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, as the only daughter of Germaine Guye, a Swiss Protestant, and Siegfried Haas, a Hungarian Jew. Claudine grew up in Northern Transylvania. After the separation of her parents, she lived with her father. Following the German military occupation of Transylvania, her father and other members of his family were deported to Auschwitz and Dachau, where they would all perish. Claudine and her mother fled to Switzerland, before Claudine moved alone to New York, where she settled and adopted the name Claudia.

She married Julio Andujar, a Spanish refugee, divorcing him shortly afterwards but keeping his surname to conceal her Jewish origins. In the mid 1950s Andujar left New York to reunite with her mother in Brazil. She arrived in São Paulo, where she continues to live today, and began to take an interest in photography. In the early 1970s, with the help of a John Simon Guggenheim grant, she made the first of many trips to the Catrimani River basin in the northern Brazilian Amazon, where she conducted most of her photographic work on the Yanomami. In the mid 1970s she began to campaign for the rights of the



Yanomami, whose way of life was under threat from the construction of a highway and various other perils, including mining and epidemics.

In 1977 the Brazilian government expelled Andujar from the Yanomami's territory. She subsequently co-founded the Commission for Creation of the Yanomami Park (CCPY), an NGO dedicated to the defence of the territory, culture and human rights of the Yanomami. A year later, Andujar was authorised to return to the Yanomami's territory, where for decades she has been drawing attention to their ongoing challenges in a wide variety of projects – first as a political activist and later with the help of her numerous photographs and archive.

Accompanying programme

The exhibition is accompanied by a varied programme of events.

Opening & Drinks

Welcome address by the president of the foundation's board of trustees, Dorothea Strauss; introduction by the curator Thyago Nogueira and the museum director Nadine Wietlisbach
Friday, 22.10.2021, from 18:00

Tour and talk with **Jeremy Narby**, anthropologist, and **Ibã Sales Huni Kuin**, shaman, on sensible ways of harnessing rainforest resources
Saturday, 23.10.2021, 14:00

Guided tour with the curator Thyago Nogueira
Saturday, 23.10.2021, 15:30

Tour and talk with Nadine Wietlisbach and **Dr Omar Bellprat**, climate scientist, on natural disasters in the Amazon, forest fires and their consequences
Saturday, 27.11.2021, 14:00

Tour and talk with Nadine Wietlisbach and **Andrea Hinteregger De Mayo**, independent art consultant and curator, on art from Brazil, photographic practices and the global marketplace
Saturday, 11.12.2021, 14:00

Online panel discussion with international guests on activism and exoticisation in the press as well as humanitarian aid, representation and communication
Saturday, 22.01.2022, 14:00

Subject to changes due to the current situation



Information on the museum

Fotomuseum Winterthur is at the forefront of presenting and discussing photography and visual culture. As part of its repertoire of temporary exhibitions devoted to individual artists and group shows, the museum displays works by young photographers as well as those with an established reputation. In addition, it examines photographic phenomena in the context of new technologies and digital media, exposing them to critical scrutiny. A broad range of artistic, applied and cultural forms of photography are explored, with a primary focus on dialogue and the exchange of ideas. The institution is committed to the considered, autonomous and creative use of media. Its collection (which dates back to 1960) has helped to shape the history and narratives of photography as well as our understanding of it as a medium in all its different forms.

Fotomuseum Winterthur was founded in 1993. In 2002, it combined with Fotostiftung Schweiz to create the Fotozentrum – Switzerland's foremost centre for photographic expertise.

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