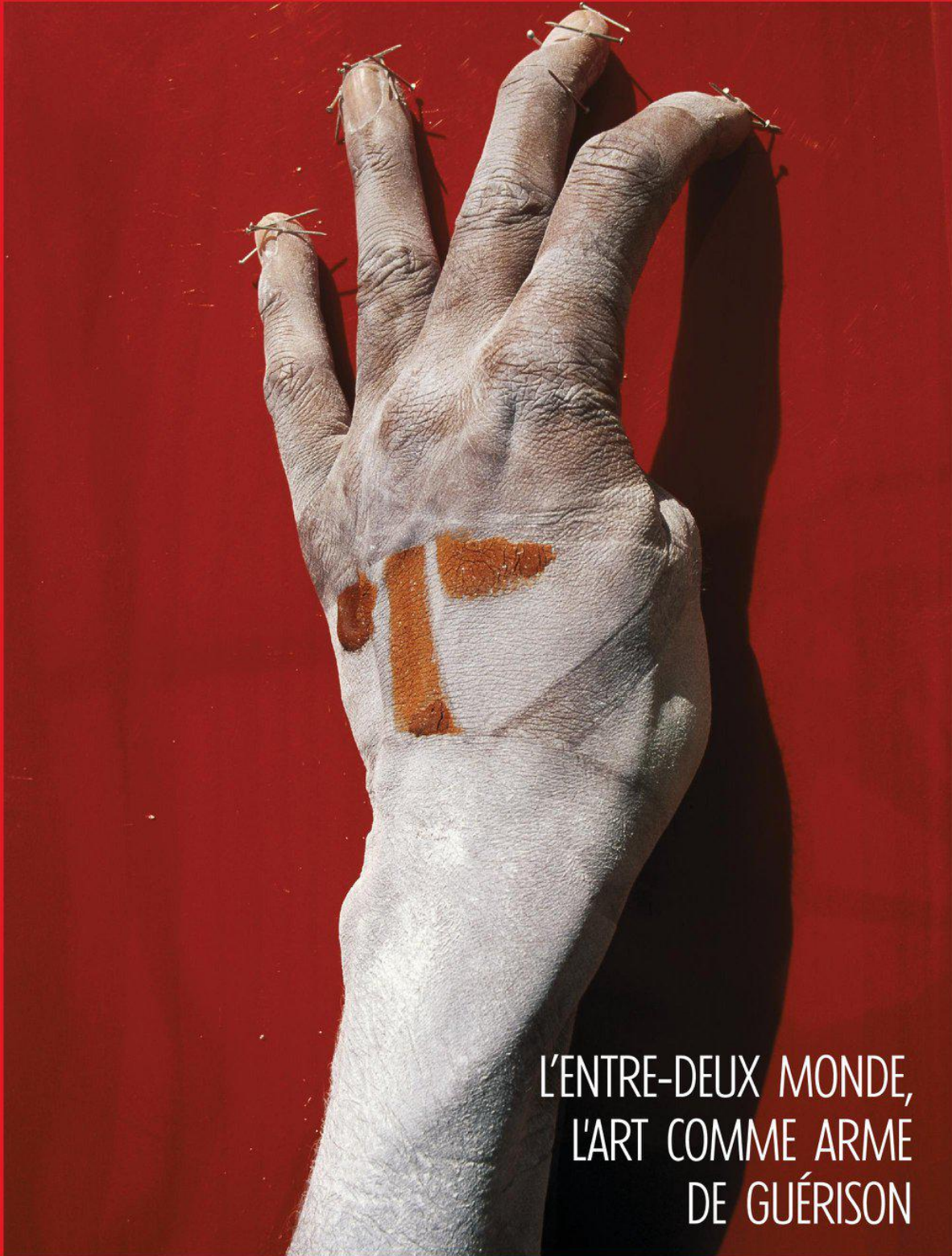


AFRIKADAA

DESIGN & CONTEMPORARY ART

N°12 2019



L'ENTRE-DEUX MONDE,
L'ART COMME ARME
DE GUÉRISON

ORIXÀS HEALING PROJECT

by Jason Gardner



Iemanjá Rising
2011, Brooklyn, NY
38 x 38 sur 43x56,
édition de 8, jet d'encre pigmentée s
ur papier d'archivage Hahnemeule

This portrait series documents Brazilians or those in the Brazilian Diaspora who live in New York. They are all artists who utilize the healing power of the *orixàs* (Afro-Brazilian deities), either as a special focused ritual, or as a spiritual guide and way of living and interacting with the world. The portraits are not direct representations of the *orixàs*, but a conversation with each artist as they show their version and how they interpret the signs symbols and colors of each deity.

Living far from their home country, they wear beads in certain colors, invoke the name, and learn specific dances and movements when healing is needed, either to find their path, or solve specific problems. There are also certain items or objects that have a strong connection to each *orixà* and manifests in each artist's interpretation. Iemanjá, the queen of the sea, is motherly and protective, with blue and white as her colors and shows white flowers and sea shells as some of her symbols. Oxúm is connected to destiny and divination, and uses a mirror to view her reflection as a

symbol of beauty, pleasure and sexuality, and often is portrayed in yellow. Ogun is the warrior symbol and often dressed in red, using iron tools such as knives or scissors to clear the path for his followers. Everyone has their one or two *orixàs* that are theirs, that most closely matches their external personality, and inner forces driving their lives. This usually comes from rolling the bones (*jogo de búzios*), where a priest or priestess (*yalorixà*) will take key pieces of information from the person's life and then divine which *orixà(s)* are linked to the person and guide them. Each person connects to their *orixà* in a different way, but all interpret the fundamental qualities and ideas of their *orixà*, whether in day to day activities or to address larger issues in their lives.

Alegria and Janete Silva are Brazilian dancers living in New York and in their demonstration of their homage to Ogun, they use both movements that are both connected to capoeira and also represent ceremonial power positions of the *orixà*. "We draw our daily energy and vitality from these movements, and we escape to natural surroundings



Oxúm Portrait with Mirror
2011, Brooklyn, NY
38 x 38 sur 43 x 56, édition de 8,
jet d'encre pigmentée sur papier d'archivage Hahnemeule

to practice them and re-affirm and reinforce our dedication to dance as a craft and art form." Whether the movement is a duet, a stack of the two of them, or a single form, it is honoring the ritual movement of the traditional ceremony.

Atlanta Amado Foresyth is a singer and performer, and turns to Oxúm in times when she is at a creative low point. "My roots are in Cape Verde and Brazil, and for me I return to Oxúm when I need her maternal power to inspire me to continue my artistic practice or even write a few new songs!" The gyrations and twisting of her body as she poses represents the artist's journey, both as a person and as a singer and public figure.

Alba Peña is an emerging actor and writer, and was born and raised in Dominican Republic but has third generation Brazilian ancestry. For her, lemanjá makes sense because "I've always been drawn to the sea and the water, living in an island country. My colors are blue and when I started encountering lemanjá it connected me with a sense of purpose and beauty that I continue to rely on in

auditions and rehearsals." The peace and calm of the ocean represents her reserve and stability in the tumultuous ride of stage and screen.

What these three artists have in common besides a connection to Brazil and a strong belief in the pantheon of the orixàs, is that they utilize this belief and link the spiritual and quotidian to observe these practices and keep the orixàs in mind in their daily lives.

Biography : Jason Gardner tells stories, using photography and video within the framework of Visual Anthropology. He is passionate about music, culture, totems, and ritual, and how they impact how a society expresses itself. Jason published *A Flower in the Mouth*, a book of photography and writing about the culture, music and rituals of Carnaval in Pernambuco, Brazil.

Lemanjá Beach
2011, Brooklyn, NY
38 x 38 sur 43 x 56, édition de 8,
jet d'encre pigmentée
sur papier d'archivage
Hahnemeule





Ogun Totem Duo 2011, New York, NY

40 x 50 sur 43 x 56, édition de 8, jet d'encre pigmentée sur papier d'archivage Hahnemeule