

**¡ITE!/ ¡NENO!/ HERE!  
Responses to Covid-19**

This exhibition is a reflection in real-time by indigenous artists and thinkers on how Covid-19 impacted the lives of native and urban Amazonian populations, evaluating the responses of the State, the society and *our* survival strategies. *We*, the inhabitants of the Amazon, have been suffering from the impact of Covid-19 along with a long history of oppression and neglect by governments and society that still does not take us seriously as citizens, and more so citizens with rights and voice. However, we have learned to unite our voices and bodies and look for ways to respond to adversity. HERE! evidences *our* presence, *our* right and fight for life, and the right to defend *our* way of life.

This exhibition is the result of a work in dialogue between artists and curators. The works are in themselves channels to explore indigenous responses to and experiences of Covid-19, illuminating how this pandemic affects, is understood and responded to at the local level. With works in llanchamas painted with natural and acrylic dyes, and including other elements of the forest such as tree bark, Santiago Yahuarcani explores the impact of Covid-19 in the Uitoto community of Pebas that translates into the dark tone of the backgrounds of their paints. Yahuarcani emphasises the foreign aspect of the virus that takes the form of a big monster as well as of black silhouettes in western clothes, and expresses the attack he suffered with Covid-19 in a set of self-reflective works. In addition, the artist materialises in the group of agents – owners and spirits seen in the ceremonies – who act in determining the healing processes in works that lead us along the path of Amazonian indigenous science and philosophy. On the other hand, Harry Pinedo / Inin Metsa reflects on the impact of Covid-19 in the urban Shipibo community of Cantagallo and from his experience as a young indigenous Lima inhabitant. Pinedo puts in counterpoint the repressive responses of the government and at the same time shows the networks of solidarity that transcend barriers. Pinedo also shows the active study of shamanism and plants with works that issues of breathing to the fore, and invites to an extensive use of these plants and forms of healing. In the work of both artists, Covid-19 takes a materialisation *other* and a common goal of defending life.

This exhibition is curated by the artist and writer Rember Yahuarcani and the anthropologist Giuliana Borea, who have a long history of collaboration. In this exhibition they once again use the *we* as an arena to think of the agendas that bring them closer together, without cancelling the differences, and without claiming a neutral voice. In addition, this exhibition in a commercial art gallery is intended as an explicit intervention of indigenous art and voice in the art market. Here! receives support and is part of the project "Conquering Self-representation: A collaborative approach to the political-aesthetic dimension of Amazonian art" (Amazonart) of the University of Essex, and of the project "Art and Activism against repression during the Covid-19 Crisis " of the University of York (UK).

Pebas and Norwich, November 2020

Rember Yahuarcani and Giuliana Borea

More information about the projects in:

- <http://amazonart-project.com/>
- <https://www.hrdhub.org/here>

## ARTISTAS

**Santiago Yahuarcani** (b. 1960) is a visual artist and an indigenous leader of the Uitoto peoples. His work revolves around the Amazonian ontologies and the genocide policies against Amazonian people. His work on indigenous suffering and human exploitation with the rubber boom has impacted Peru's national memory. He has also worked on issues of the extractivist exploitation and currently he is documenting and expressing indigenous strategies towards the Covid-19. Amongst his recent exhibitions is "The Place of the Spirits" (ICPNA 2019). His work is in the Museo de Arte de Lima and Museo de Arte de San Marcos collections, and has been featured in Latin America, the US, Europe and Asia. He is a recipient of the "Art and Activism against repression during the Covid-19 crisis" grant of the University of York.

**Harry Pinedo/Inin Metsa** (b.1988) is a visual artist and an intercultural teacher. He belongs to the Shipibo people and lives in Cantagallo in Lima. His work focuses on the internal migration from Shipibo Amazonian native communities to Lima and the various battles to establish a native urban community, raising questions of citizenship and housing rights. His first individual exhibition 'The Yanapuma Splendor' (2017) tackled the contamination in the Amazon receiving wide coverage and local impact. Currently he is analysing the Shipibo answers to COVID-19 and is a recipient of the "Art and Activism against repression during the Covid-19 crisis" grant of the University of York.

## CURADORES

**Rember Yahuarcani** is an artist and writer. His artistic work focuses on the Uitoto ontologies and Amazonian worlds and his practice urges the respect of indigenous worlds. His work has been featured in Latin America, US, UK, China, and has won the II Intercontinental Biennale of Indigenous Art. He has also published four books and been the recipient of Peru's National Award for Children's Literature. With the Covid-19 crisis he has become a first-hand witness and an active voice reporting the critical situation in the Amazon and proposing reforms. He has published his analyses as an opinion columnist in *El Comercio* newspaper. He is a recipient of the "Art and Activism against repression during the Covid-19 crisis" grant of the University of York.

**Giuliana Borea** is Director of the Amazonart Project as part of her Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Sociology at the University of Essex, and a Lecturer in Anthropology at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. She has been Peru's Director of Museums and Cultural Heritage and Coordinator of the Lima Contemporary Art Museum. Amongst her recent publications are the chapter, written with Rember Yahuarcani, 'Amazonian Waterway, Amazonian Water-Worlds: Rivers in Government Projects and Indigenous Art' (2020). She is the editor of *Arte y Antropología: Estudios, Encuentros y Nuevos Horizontes* (PUCP 2017) and author of the book *Configuring the New Lima Art Scene: An Anthropological Analysis of Contemporary Art in Latin America* (Routledge 2021).