

**Waiting for Joannes**

Patricia Borges

Marajó Island

Brazil

2019 / 2020

**Patricia Borges (1974, Brazil)**

**Working Title:** Waiting for Joannes

**Type of Project:** photographic series (colour + b&w)

**Project Description:**

Artistic photographic series interpreting human settlements on *Marajó Island* - Amazon river's delta island - in the North of Brazil.

To accomplish a broader vernacular investigation of the contemporary living on Marajó, I will travel by boat through the island rivers twice within a one year period: 2-3 weeks on the dry season and 2-3 weeks on the rainy season (monsoon).

Although I have been to Marajó in 1996 and 2007 - by plane during the dry season for a couple of days - I don't consider the residency project to be a continuation of my previous photographic records. Those trips were too short for a deeper understanding of the local cultural development, involved little displacement on the island and were too brief to explore the equatorial light on its full extent. This new series will be a visual research conducted among the local residents I've met before, but now I'll have the possibility to explore the region by boat, with better technical skills.

Although my project is not an ethnographical registry in strict terms, I believe it to be relevant for long-term indigenous historical studies of Amazonian peoples.

This residency gives me the financial opportunity to pursue a longtime planned and desired immersive project. And also provide international visibility to post-colonial communities from the Amazon. Having this work hosted at the archives of Musée du Quai Branly will ensure a broader audience in France and an eventual continuation of the project by other artists in the future.

**Where:**

The island is located on the North of Brazil, where Amazon river meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Marajó Island is 2.568km from Rio de Janeiro where I live and work. It is the second largest island in South America with a land area of 40.000 square kilometres (as big as Switzerland). The island sits on the equator line 4-6m above the sea level and is entirely flat. 80% of its land get flooded on monsoon season. From approximately 400 BC to 1600 AD, Marajó was the site of an advanced Pre-Columbian society called the Marajoara culture, which may have numbered over 100.000 people at its peak, organised in matrilineal clans. The arrival of the Europeans in the 16th century was catastrophic to the indigenous population of the island; 90% died due to high mortality from Eurasian infectious diseases. Today around 450.000 people live in 16 municipalities - 80% of them catholic, living below the poverty line and among the lowest Human Development Index recorded in the country.

**Project Statement:**

Identity is one of anthropology's oldest and favourite topics of enquiry. What interests me here is the poetics of visual facts; settled life as "fitting objects and the body together" so mentioned by Merleau-Ponty. Landscape as a thing of memory that reflects history, but also as a built environment witness of human presence and material culture.

This is not a portraiture project, not about autochthonous people or their descendants posing to the camera. I venture my eyes to expressive spaces that come into existence due to routine actions and regular behaviours of those individuals gathered on Brazilian Amazonia's villages.

In artistic terms, I take interest on this massive piece of tropical land, scarcely populated and geographically isolated, with a rich historical past and unique ecosystem.

What drives me to this project is the production of undated images. What I would like to emphasise is the feeling that for a brief moment life has stopped. That is an exaggeration, a poetic license appropriated from a sensation I experience in Marajó, where one lives in a much slower pace. Caboclo existence is dictated by nature and seasonal tides. What I photograph now could well be framed in the past or the future. My eyes here lay on an indigenous civilisation partially replaced by European descendants and paused in time - despite its millennial history or precisely due to it.

### **Project Goals:**

1. Explore the region by boat, from Belém (mainland), visiting human settlements in the island through its rivers. Trip 1: dry season (Jun-Aug 2019) / Trip 2: wet season (Nov-Jan 2020)
2. Complete a new series of photographs interpreting local identity expressions and the way people live now, their artefacts, built environment and how they relate to natural forces. Transport the viewer to a poetic Marajoara universe, mythical and religious elements, sacred and profane signs, tradition and present time, abandoned sites and recent architecture.
3. Register both expeditions on pictures and videos, to be edited in a 10min 'making of' movie, for better understanding on how the project was carried out.

### **Budget:**

Travel (3h by plane + 2h by car + 3h by boat) €2000 x 2 trips = €4000

Guide + Boat Expeditions: €1500 x 2 trips = €3000

Accommodation + Meals: €750 x2 trips = €1500 (€50/day)

Equipment (underwater case for Nikon D810): €1500

Artist fee: €3000-€5000

Total amount requested: €13000-€15000

### **Personal Aesthetic Research:**

I search for images that depict suspended time - in this place where everything is about waiting. It can be waiting for the tide to move up or down, for the rain to come, heat or breeze, for someone to return, goods to arrive. Caboclo's life is all about a constant wait: that something happens, that life improves. And it has been like that for ages.

*Big Island of Joannes* was the name of *Marajó Island* during colonial times.

Waiting for Joannes project is just about a long boat trip: going to the small towns, talk to people, register life in post-colonial Marajó, interpret and transform it, show those images to the world and contribute to a major archive in order to establish a dialog with future generations.

In the past I honestly haven't been very interested on personal stories of people I photographed. Coming from studies on the fields of architecture and urban planning, I was always more interested on places than individuals. It took me a while to understand that as I photograph I search for the soul of the place - and that comes from those who live there, who alter a given space, use the artifacts, the houses and palafitas I point my lenses to. Even when - and specially when - those people are absent from the frame. Sometimes a small detail suffices to illustrate a long waiting. Also to be mentioned, water has been a recurring element in my art and in my life near the sea in the south - but always approached from dry land. To be immersed and conduct my research through Marajó fluvial courses, is a completely new experience that I am very much looking forward to.

Tides:

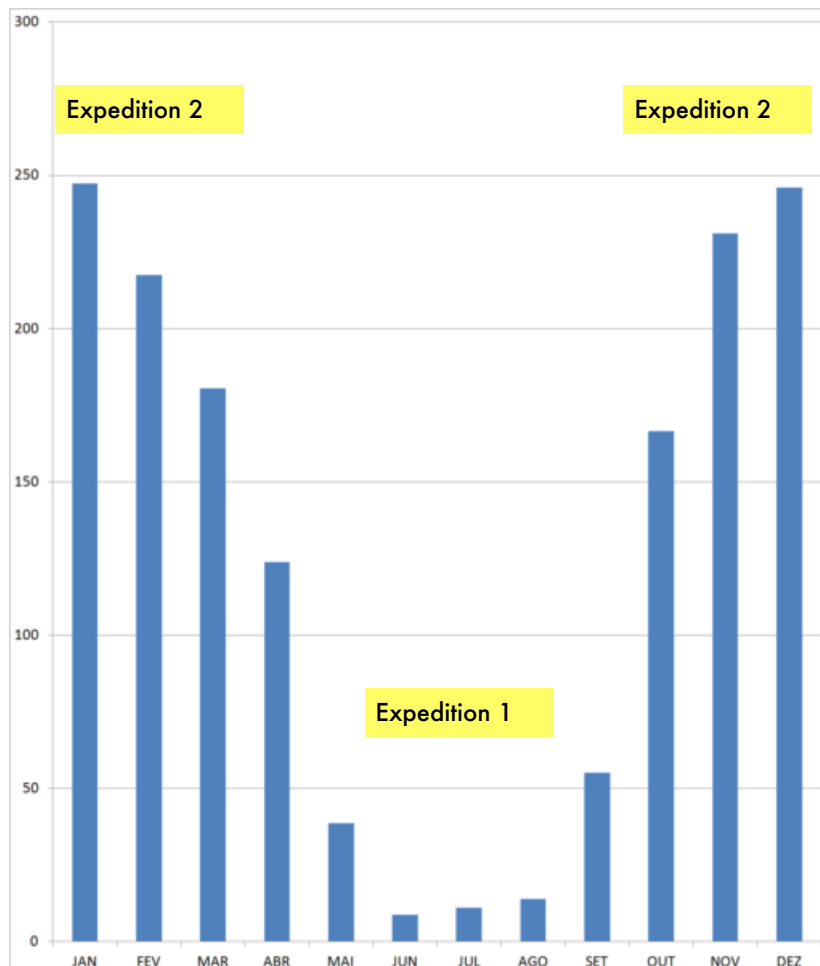


Dry season (Expedition 1)

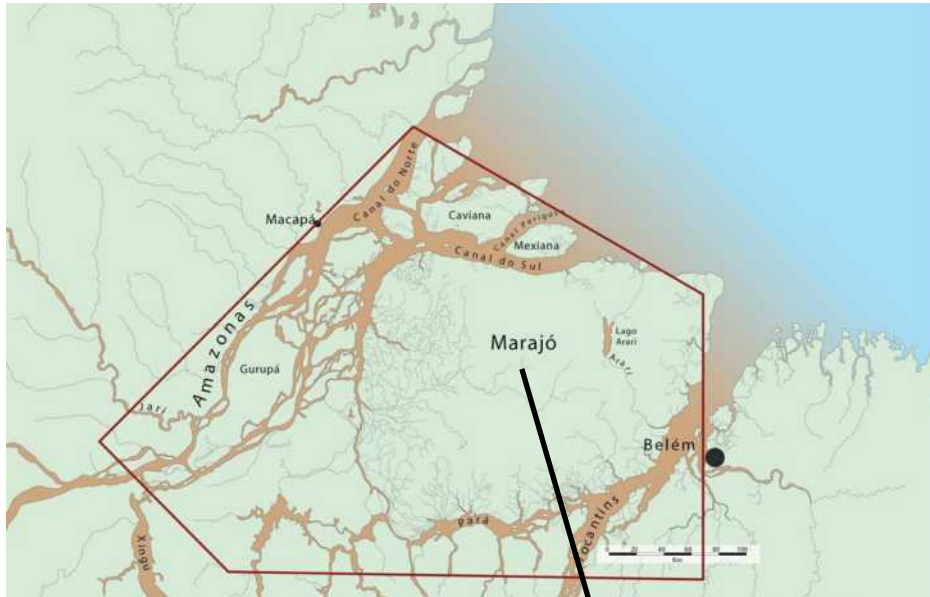


Wet season (Expedition 2)

Precipitation chart / average rainfall (mm):



Residency Location:



**References:**

- Barroso, V. *Marajó*, Cia Editora Americana. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil 1954.
- Marajó, Barão de; Abreu, J. C. da G., *As Regiões Amazônicas: Estudo Chorographicos dos Estados do Gran Pará e Amazonas*. Secr. Est. da Cultura. Belém, Brasil 1992.
- Meggers, B.J.; Evans, C. *Archaeological Investigations at the Mouth of the Amazon*. Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 167. U.S. Govt. Print. Off. Washington, DC, USA 1957.
- Meggers, B.J. *Pre-Columbian Amazonia*. Nat. Geo. Research Expl. 1994.
- Rego Monteiro, V. *Quelques Visages de Paris*. Imprimerie Juan Dura, Paris 1925
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- Roosevelt, A.C. *Moundbuilders of the Amazon: Geophysical Archaeology on Marajó Island, Brazil*. Academic Press. San Diego, CA, USA 1991.
- Schaan, D.P. *The Camutins Chieftdom: Rise and Development of Social Complexity on Marajó Island, Brazilian Amazon*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, PA, USA 2004.
- Schaan, D.P. *Long-term Human Induced Impacts on Marajó Island Landscapes, Amazon Estuary*. Diversity Journal, web 2010.
- Seamon, David. *A Way of Seeing People and Place: Phenomenology in Environment - Behaviour Research*. In Wapner, 2000.
- Weiss, Gail. *Intertwinings: Interdisciplinary Encounters with Merleau-Ponty*. State University of New York Press. Albany, NY, USA 2008.



Watercolour from José Joaquim Freire (XVIII Century - Colonial period, 1701-1800)



Patricia Borges, 2007

**Previous Images:**



**Previous Images:**





**Previous Images:**



Patricia Borges, 1996 and 2007

**Previous Images:**



## **Biography:**

### Education

Visual Arts - post graduation: EAV Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro / Brazil 2015-2019  
Screenplay and Cinematography - post graduation: AIC, Rio de Janeiro / Brazil 2016-2017  
Photography - post graduation: ACP, Sydney / Australia 2002-2003  
Architecture and Urban Planning - graduation: PUC-PR Curitiba / Brazil 1992-1999

### Professional Activities

Visual Artist - Patricia Borges Arte Contemporanea Ltda, Rio de Janeiro / Brazil 2015-2019  
Fine Art Photographer - Patricia Borges Escritorio de Arte, Rio de Janeiro / Brazil 2013-2019  
Cinematographer - Patricia Borges Escritorio de Arte, Rio de Janeiro / Brazil 2016-2017  
Comercial Photographer - Modus Imagens, Curitiba / Brazil & Sydney, Australia 2002-2013  
Architect and Urban Planner - Modus Arquitetura, Curitiba / Brazil 2000-2013

### Exhibitions

Luxembourg Art Fair, Luxembourg 2019 (Dec)  
Galerie Etienne de Causans, Paris 2019 (Nov)  
CorpoRealities, PH21 Gallery, Budapest 2019  
Circuito de Arte Contemporanea de Curitiba, MuMa museum, Brazil 2019  
Venice Videoart Festival, Palazzo Ca'Zanardi and The Room Gallery, Venice 2018  
Clio Art Fair, New York 2018  
Tokyo Art Fair, Japan 2018  
228e Salon Des Artistes Français, Paris 2018  
LACDA Snap-to-grid, Los Angeles Center for Digital Art / USA 2017  
The Street Experience - Galeria Millepiani, Roma 2017  
X Biennale D'Arte di Roma, Italy 2014  
IX Florence Biennale, Italy 2013

### Awards

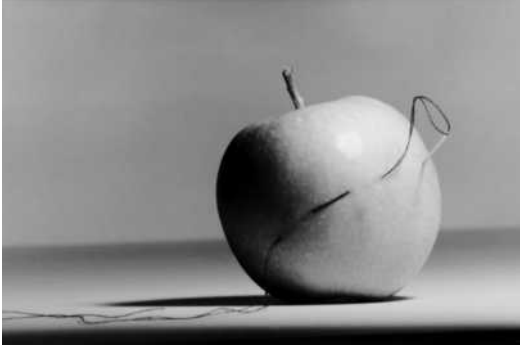
Life Framer - Civilization Photo contest (honorable mention), UK 2019  
IPA Int'l Photography Awards - Street Photo Contest (honorable mention), Los Angeles 2019  
Premio Arte Laguna (1st selection - Photography) Venice 2019  
PX3 Prix de La Photographie (honorable mention) Paris 2018  
Reynaldo Roels Jr 3rd Installation Prize (nominee), Rio de Janeiro 2017  
1st Prize in Photography, X Biennale di Roma, Italy 2014  
1st Prize in Photography, IX Biennale di Firenze, Italy 2013

### Publications

Collector Book - New Perspectives, Contemporary Art Curator Magazine / 2020 (next)  
u+i Magazine - Contemporary Architecture From The 60's (Brazil+Australia) / Sept 2019  
F-Stop Magazine - Consumption Issue #96 / Aug 2019  
Spotlight Magazine - Circle Foundation for The Arts, Lyon / France 2019  
Adore Magazine, Vancouver / Canada 2018  
Hysteria.etc.br online platform, Brazil 2018  
Cultura Brasileira Hoje book, Rio de Janeiro 2018  
Times To Be Feminine zine, New York 2017  
Liquid World book, Rio de Janeiro 2017  
Agulhas book, Rio de Janeiro 2016  
The Cake book, Rio de Janeiro 2016

**Recent works:**

[www.patriciaborges.com](http://www.patriciaborges.com)



[Incômodos Series \(2001-2013\)](#)



[Bodyscapes Series \(2012\)](#)



[My Life in B&W Series \(1994-2019\)](#)



[Skin Series \(2001-2015\)](#)



[Sutures Series \(2015\)](#)



[Transparencies Series \(2015-2017\)](#)



[Natural Order Series \(2017\)](#)



[Alone Series \(1997-2019\)](#)

**Recent works:**

[www.patriciaborges.com](http://www.patriciaborges.com)



On The Move (1999-2019)



Heavy Metal Series (1997-2019)



Architecture Series (1995-2019)



Architectonica Series (2016)



The Past Series (2012)



Sky Slices Series (2005-2019)



Penance & Privilege Series (2015)



Liquid World Series (2014)

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**Thank You**