

A cloak as an ambassador

A feather cape by Glicéria Tupinambá is on display at the Museum der Kulturen Basel until 15 August. In 2024, it was the centrepiece of the Brazilian pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Glicéria Tupinambá was the first indigenous artist to represent her country, Brazil, at the Venice Biennale. She presented a cloak that she had woven with her community. The feather cape incorporated the results of research she had conducted in Basel in spring 2023 while studying a historical feather cloak in the collection of the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) (see [blog](#) entry dated 8 May 2023). She is now presenting her work in the exhibition “Creators”.

There are only eleven feather capes left in the world, made by the Tupinambá in Brazil in the 16th and 17th centuries. One of them has been preserved in Basel since 1918. The feather cloaks were and remain a central part of the religious and social life of the Tupinambá.

In 2006, scientist and activist Glicéria Tupinambá began researching feather capes. She works with historical photographs, paintings and archival materials. To create new capes, she draws on dreams, the knowledge of her ancestors, traditional techniques for making fishing nets and the support of the animals, plants and spirit beings of her territory, Serra do Padeiro in the state of Bahia. Her works reflect the reappraisal of the colonial era, the struggle for land rights and the role of women.

Connecting people

The feather capes have the power to connect people, forge new relationships and continue the history of the Tupinambá. This is precisely the aim of the feather cape's journey through Europe. It is an ancestor, ambassador and spokesperson for the Tupinambá community.

In Basel, it will meet its “old” relative – a special moment. Glicéria and lawyer Jessica Tupinambá are using the meeting of the capes for diplomatic purposes to strengthen the fight for their territory. They are seeking dialogue with visitors, organising workshops and hoping to find new allies.

Brazilian filmmaker and academic Fernanda Liberti will also come to Basel for talks. The contrast between the natural and man-made worlds is a recurring theme in her visual work. Her video installation “Feather by Feather: The Cloak in Motion” is on display in the exhibition “Creators”.

Public events “Cloaks in Motion”:

24 and 25 July, 4 p.m.

Meetings with Glicéria and Jessica Tupinambá in the exhibition

26 July 2025, 2–4 p.m.

Workshop with Glicéria and Jessica Tupinambá on the techniques used to make feather capes

27 July 2025, 3 p.m.

Exhibition talk with Glicéria, Jessica Tupinambá and Fernanda Liberti about their works and the current situation of the Tupinambá

Press photos are available on our [website](#). More about the artists and the lawyer on the next page:

Glicéria Tupinambá (born 1982), also known as Célia Tupinambá, lives in Serra do Padeiro in the indigenous territory of the Tupinambá in Olivença in the south of the Brazilian state of Bahia. The artist, activist, educator and scholar is primarily committed to issues of education, community organisation and women's rights. In 2021, she curated the exhibition “Kwá yapé turusú yuriri assojaba tupinambá | This is the great return of the Tupinambá mantle” at Funarte Brasília. In 2022, she won the 10th edition of the ZUM/IMS Photography Grant with the project “We are birds that walk”. In 2024, her work and that of her community were the focus of the Brazilian pavilion at the Venice Biennale. She is currently working on her PhD at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

Jessica Tupinambá (*1991) also lives in Serra do Padeiro. She is an activist, researcher and a leader in her community of Serra do Padeiro. She holds a bachelor's degree in law and administration with a specialisation in state and indigenous community law and human resources management. She is a teacher at the Tupinambá Serra do Padeiro State Indigenous School and a member of the legal department of the indigenous organisation MUPOIBA. She is currently assistant and advisor to Glicéria Tupinambá on projects with museums and the feather cloaks and other artefacts of the Tupinambá.

Fernanda Liberti (*1994) is a Brazilian artist and scholar. Her works invite viewers to immerse themselves in the reality presented to them. Her artistic practice is a recognition and exploration of postcolonial experiences and the importance of the memories of people of colour, diaspora, women and LGBTQ+ people in the 21st century. In 2022, she earned a Master of Arts in Photography from the Royal College of Art in London with her research in collaboration with the indigenous community of the Tupinambá in Serra do Paderio, Bahia, Brazil. She was selected as one of Dior's award winners at Luma Arles during “Les Rencontres d'Arles” in 2022 and received the British Journal of Photography International Photo Award “Portrait of Humanity”. In 2023, she won the Deloitte Photo Grant.