

Potyra

Adjective in old Tupi flourished, or a rare case of exceptional bloom*

**(according to the old Tupi dictionary written by Moacyr Ribeiro de Carvalho)*

Marie Hazard and Sophie de Mello Franco are pleased to introduce Potyra, a project conceived to contribute towards the development and well-being of children and young people in the regions of Uruçuca (Bahia) and São Paulo (São Paulo), Brazil.

In December 2021 Marie Hazard temporarily moved to São Paulo, Brazil, a place she had never previously visited but which had surrounded her since childhood. Marie was brought up amongst memories of her grandparent's years as expats in Brazil. Objects recounting their stories of this time (ceramic teacups, photographs, paintings made by her grandmother) today exist within a jigsaw of relics informing Marie's practice. Sophie is Brazilian, brought up in Rio de Janeiro. Marie and Sophie's shared affinity for Brazil led to a trip which would be at the origin of this project.

Marie and Sophie convened in Ilheus, a seaside city in the state of Bahia, known as the homeplace of modernist author Jorge Amado and a historically crucial city in Brazil's tradition of cocoa farming. A few hours drive north along the state's coastal roads, lined by a dense tropical forest, is the town of Serra Grande.

Serra Grande is a district within the municipality of Uruçuca and has a population of around 2,500 people. Like many small towns in Bahia, the central square is at the heart of the community. It is encircled by food vendors, places of worship, a health center, a registry etc. The square is dotted by coconut trees painted white, decorated with coloured bows for the festive season.

Since the decline of Brazil's cocoa trade, the region has relied on tourism as a pillar of its economy. However, the population remains significantly affected by poverty, with its youth facing challenging prospects (less than 38% probability of youths leaving extreme poverty in the state of Bahia (FGV)). Residents of Serra Grande, as well as the region at large, have developed various initiatives to strengthen the local economy. Systems such as bartering, the implementation of alternative and innovative pedagogical methods within the community, are testament to a high level of creative local engagement throughout the area. In fact, some residents of neighboring areas have begun relocating into the region to enroll children in the local schools. Organizations such as **Tabôa** provide a vital framework for social and environmental initiatives to grow and continue this development in the region.

The ten works presented as part of the Potyra project were conceived from elements encountered during this trip; the Tijuípe river meeting the sea, large sandbanks, and brightly coloured fruits. All proceeds from the sale of the ten pieces produced for this project will be directed towards **Tabôa** with the aim to seed the development of an arts and culture initiative in Serra Grande, Uruçuca and to **UNICEF Brasil - Empresa Solidária a Infancia** to support children's rights across Brazil.

Tabôa www.taboa.org.br/index.php/en-us/

UNICEF Brasil - Empresa Solidária a Infancia www.unicef.org/brazil/