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most important factor either.

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YANAK UYWAÑA

The Mutual Nurturing of the Arts

Elvira Espejo Ayca

**Translated from Bolivian Spanish by Pablo Lafuente
edited by Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz**

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To my mother Nicolasa Ayca Mamani,
To my grandmother Gregoria Mamani Payru
and my great grandmother Martina Pumala,
it's thanks to them that I cultivated my thinking

Reason Separated from Sensitivity

I am going to address an issue that I have prepared so that we can travel together. I have called it *yanak uywaña*, or mutual nurturing of the arts.¹ It comes from a reflection on work done with communities who produce textiles from the Oruro department, in the Bolivian Andes.² I trained as an artist in my community,³ after which my experience in the university turned out to be very complex, because I encountered a recurrent insistence on separating concepts through opposition: reason and sensitivity, art and science, subject and object, society and nature. We, Amerindians studying and researching at the university, are expected to learn a theory of art that travels from Greece to Europe and North America and

1 Editor's note: The original title *YANAK UYWAÑA*. *La crianza mutua de las artes* is bilingual Aymara-Spanish. In its broadest sense, the Aymara term *uywaña* may be understood as a mutual process of nurturing, creating, educating, taking care. The full Spanish text is available at https://laplurinacional.com.bo/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/YANAK-UYWANA.-La-crianza-mutua-de-las-artes_ELIVIRA_ESPEJO_AYCA.pdf (last accessed on 20 September 2023).

2 Editor's note: the work resulted in the book *Ciencia de las mujeres: Experiencias en la cadena textil desde los ayllus de Challapata* (2010) and available at <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/textileresearch/3/> (last accessed on 20 September 2023).

3 Editor's note: Ayllu Qaqachaka, in the Avaroa province, also in Oruro.

from there to Latin America, and which proposes a pyramidal structure of knowledge.

After my return, the main question in the communities while working together was: How do we understand art? Many of them maintained, from their own conception, that art exists everywhere. In contrast, my teachers at the university would say that there is no art in the communities, only crafts and archaeological objects. This bothered me, because every community says that each of them has their own forms of artistic expression. It's not that we don't have them, we actually do. The issue is that we don't understand them in the same terms. That made me think, and research. And I reached an important conclusion: that for us, people from the communities, reason and sensitivity can't be set apart.

In fact, they are deeply connected, and there are words that refer to this: *uywaña*, in Aymara, and *uyway*, in Quechua, both of which mean mutual nurturing, which implies a far-reaching connectivity – for example, with raw materials. Without raw materials, art doesn't exist. For weavers, ceramicists and sculptors raw materials are very important. Contrary to what archaeologists and historians often say, *uywaña* neither mean domestication, nor man's ability to dominate land and nature. That would be male, gendered domination, of a kind that doesn't

exist within the communities. What this word means is mutual nurturing with the utmost care. And *uywaña* unfolds in other terms, such as:

– *Uywa uywaña*, or mutual nurturing of animals. For example, the camelids (llama, alpaca, vicuña) and their fleece. Sheep would arrive later, with the colonial occupation. Animals give us wool and *charque*⁴, and therefore we must care for them as much as possible. It is not about domestication, or domination by humans. It is about caring for them as another living being within the territory, and them caring for us when we wear their wool. We must give them our best and respect them, and they are going to give the same to us. They give to us and we give to them, and that is why we talk about mutual care.

– *Ali uywaña*, or mutual nurturing of plants. For example, with cotton, which is an extremely important instance of mutual nurturing. Today we are only familiar with bright white cotton, as the result of the whitening of monoculture, but in the past, there were cotton flowers of several colours (red, blue, green) that later

⁴ Editor's note: *Charque* is dehydrated meat, made by curing thin strips of skinned meat with salt before hanging them up to dry outdoors in the sun and wind.

disappeared through genetic manipulation. Coloured flowers were found in archaeological sites in the northern coast of Peru, revealing the utmost care taken towards the land and the management of water, the selection of seeds, the times of harvest, and the storage of fibres, all the operative chains of processes that are part of such mutual nurturing.

It is said that cochineal⁵ was taken from the Americas to Europe because there was no red in Europe. Here, in the Americas, epistemology, philosophy, science and technology were well developed before colonisation. The problem is that there was no appropriate communication of these knowledges, and our philosophies and epistemologies, the age-old knowledge of textiles, ceramics, feather work and basketry, all those specialised practices that passed from one generation to another, were condemned to oblivion. When formal education arrived with colonialism, an epistemological rupture took place.

– *Yanak uywaña*, or mutual nurturing of cultural objects. It may refer to the arts and also to objects, which are in fact

⁵ Editor's note: Cochineal (from Spanish *cochinilla*) is a scale insect native to tropical and subtropical South America, Central America and Mexico. In various American cultures, it has been traditionally used to produce characteristic red pigments for dye and colorants.

subjects. It is commonly said: “My cousin *aguayo*⁶ looked after me”; “My lady *aguayo* looked after me”; “My lady blanket protected me from the wind, the sun and the cold.” It is not about owning for the sake of mere ownership, but rather about taking care of a living being who needs certain things, such as food, to have its life preserved. And the object, which in Aymara and Quechua is identified as subject, suffers and needs to be taken care of: it shouldn’t be left in the sun, for example, and if it is, it needs to be reinforced. When thinking about an item of clothing, we must think about the finishings that protect it, because we consider it alive. It is beautiful as a result of the specific finishings. To a piece of ceramic, we may say: “Thanks to you we may carry our food, and have the possibility of eating well, of drinking well.” The same happens with textiles and other things. These mutual nurturing may be developed in different dimensions: a landscape, a territory, tools, accessories. We don’t say that a thing is ours, like a dead object, but that it is a subject that takes care of us and that we take care of.

6 Editor’s note: The *aguayo* is a square cloth with multiple functions made of wool that women of Andean origin use, for instance, to carry goods or children on their back, or as an adornment.

Mutual Nurturing of Thoughts and Feelings

Since the seventeenth century, reason and sensitivity have been set apart. Afterwards, in Immanuel Kant's and Enlightenment theories, reason was sanctioned as the most important faculty. The focus since has been on rational planning, separated from sensitivity, and the ability to think through other means has been ignored. A hierarchy was created, and based on it, an elite. Such a move paid heed to a particular social class, protecting it, and keeping everyone and everything else outside of the field of art.

Within the communities, such hierarchical rationality doesn't exist. Instead, we use the following words and concepts: reading with your fingertips, reading with your body and reasoning with the sensitivity of your body, of your feet. It is about the interconnectivity between feeling and thinking, which can't be separated. Feeling and thinking go together, as sensing-thinking.⁷ In Aymara we say:

⁷ Editor's note: The Spanish term *sentipensar* is an attempt to translate a common linguistic figure used by many originary nations that do not separate the notions of sensing and thinking. The Aymara example used in the following, *amta yarachb*, literally translates as *amta*, thinking, and *yarachb*, sensing or feeling, and builds one single expression. The term has been appropriated by Spanish-speaking academics such as Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda (1925–2008) in an attempt to postulate a new academic concept, while its tradition is deeply rooted in the linguistic structures of the originary nations.

– *Amta yaracbh uywaña*, the mutual nurturing of thoughts and feelings. Thoughts are cultivated, they are inside the body, inside the landscape, inside the instruments that will come into play. Such synergy of ideas may pass from a young boy to an older person, from an older person to a young girl, or from an idea or instrument to a person. They are not rationalising agents, but, rather, they appeal to such connectivities, experiences and sensitivities in order to be able to generate the *amta yaracbh uywaña*, the shared act of thinking that leads to new acts of creativity. Such shared sensing-thinking is what generates the creativity to make artworks – a constant nurturing of sensing-thinking that allows us to create and recreate.

– *Amuy'tanakax uywaña*, or mutual nurturing of thoughts and sensitivity in incessant self-reflection. This means that, when thinking, we are not generating a dominant reason that makes judgments so that it may be applied. Instead, it is as if, by applying this thought and feeling to the act of making, the sensing-thinking offers a reflection that may be bettered in the future. So, there is always the possibility of improvement.

That is why we say, for example, “thinking with the fingertips”, when we make a preselection of fibres. The same happens in ceramics, with clay. It is an education that goes through the fingertips, which makes the fingers more

capable than the eyes or the head. The sensitivity of the fingertips perceives the texture of the fibre, and this is lodged in the head and other parts of the body.

This capacity is taught visually, but it's experienced individually. The fingers' eyes need to be opened up, to enable a journey through sensitivity. In order to work with ceramics, we need to ask for permission and respect from the clay mines. A ceremony is organised so that the clay may flow in the best possible manner through our feet. Why our feet? Because we knead clay with our feet. The feet must have the sensitivity of the eyes when they step on the clay. Clay feeds through your feet, and later, when moulding, through your fingers. Within the communities, we say: "Thanks to my feet I could bring together the different raw materials for the ceramics." Marrying, bringing together, joining together. We also say: *chakirayku*, "thanks to my feet". This means my feet have made the clay mix with the water in order to obtain a good substance, which is passed onto the hands. Therefore, the feet are feeling and contributing, as the hands will be later, and in the last instance the eyes. Here we can see how all this sensitivity creates connectivity.

The same happens with textiles, as the fibres feed into the sensitivity of the fingers, which keep this knowledge for the future. It is said that such learning must be awakened during childhood, so that when the eyes can no longer see

the thread, after reaching a certain age, the fingers can easily identify it. That is why it is often said: “I was born spinning and I will spin until the end.”

You think with your feet such joint actions, and you translate them when you carry the raw material on your back. By carrying it on your back, the sensitivity of your body is interacting with the raw material. It is your body that moves it. The raw material is not going to reach the table on its own. The rational element connects all these details; not by judging or giving structure to everything, but by providing a structure for the interventions. It is an act of understanding and doing from the bottom up, something very different from creating hierarchies in the mind.

There is a magnetic field between the raw material, the feet and the hand, a set of larger forces that complement each other to make this construction. Kant and the Enlightenment are not interested in this, they don't think about how these processes, as they develop, have an effect on sensitivity. They don't consider the processes and procedures through which an artwork is constructed. They stop at the idea.

– *Amuy'tanakax uywaña*: sensing-thinking allows us to create in different times and different spaces. And this results in a horizontal perspective. Quechua and Aymara languages

allow you to perceive that you are not superior to anything, that you are part of a diversity of actions within a magnetic field. Everything is horizontal, everything is important. This leads to another term:

– *Jaqichaña*, or creation of the work of art, which is not only planned in the head, but also through the act of complementing raw materials. For example, through a series of actions, wool is processed, and a mutual nurturing of the *ajayu* (spirit) of the raw material begins, coming together with the person. *Jaqichaña* means slowly turning something (a figure, a sculpture, a piece of cloth, etc.) into a person or character. It means turning the effort made by humans, by the tools and means around it, by the space, by the air we breathe and by the temperature into persons or characters. Everything that surrounds us. Respect is always mutual. This means that I am not dominating with my thoughts, but rather I complement my thoughts with the wool, which is a subject. Both subjects will join forces to achieve the thread of life, the yarn.

It's through the fingertips that the textures can be told apart, and the body is nurtured. Weaving with the spinning wheel, several force fields come together. The first one is in the hands; it is the force of the hands. The second is the force of the wheel, which is both a tool and a character. The third is the wool. The three of them

together turn the wool into thread, and the thread is the beginning of the artwork. Another term is:

– *Yanak jaqichaña*, or mutual nurturing of things, which will require the intervention of specific tools, who are also subjects. The instruments will help to produce, and reproduce, to create or bring into being, to improve and surpass, in complementary actions. And then:

– *Ali uywiri*, the specialist in the mutual nurturing of plants. This specialist knows the land, the seeds, the food and the water, he knows the right time to obtain the fibres, as part of very specialised processes and procedures. And then:

– *Uywa qamani*, in Aymara, and *uywa qamayux*, in Quechua, who is the specialist in the mutual nurturing of animals. For them, the specialist will think about territory, the pastures, the water and the life cycle of the animal: when the offspring will be born, when it will grow, when vitamins will be needed, when it will be able to work. And then:

– *Qapu qamani*, in Aymara, and *pusbkax qamayux*, in Quechua, the specialist in the mutual nurturing of spinning. The raw material passes through the mutual nurturing of animals and plants, and later through the mutual nurturing of spinning. Why this specialisation? Because the thread doesn't come into being on its own,

but only when we bring together the force fields of the spinning wheel, the wool, the fibre and the hands. And then:

– *Sami qamani*, in Aymara, and *llimphi qamayux*, in Quechua, the specialist in the mutual nurturing of natural dyes who composes the colour trays by water immersion, a practice historically parallel to Isaac Newton's theory of steam, light and shadow. The *sami qamani* or *llimphi qamayux* is complemented with the chemical reaction of the plants and of the minerals, generating a different type of molecule that fixes itself onto the structure of the fibre. The plant is a person, a living being that has the sensitivity to donate the colour, and at the same time works as medicine. And then comes:

– *Sawu qamani*, in Aymara, or *away qamayux*, in Quechua, who is the specialist in the mutual nurturing of textile. They are very specialised, being the persons who weave. This nurturing involves the creation of the loom, the creation of iconography through technique, and of people specialised in exchanges and commercialisation. And then:

– *Luraña*, which is the process of making the artworks with your feet, hands, head, heart, body... in actions that complement each other. And *luriri*, the creator,

male or female. *Yanak luriri* is the creator of things, the person who brings together the different fields of action, and who has a specialised reading of the tools. The sensitivities pass through the body and achieve a finesse. *Luraña* relates to balance and complementarity, to being able to integrate the hands and tools that are required in the exact processes and procedures for the creation of a work of art.

Which movements of your body will complement this sensitivity? In this process of learning all the senses are present: that of the feet, of the hands, of the body, of the eye, of the head, of the heart. And also, as we say in Aymara, *chuymamantiw lup'ita*, “you think with your lungs”. Why are lungs so important? Because if we don’t breathe, we don’t exist. In Aymara we don’t say, “I love you with all my heart”, but “I love you with all my lungs”. You say, “thinking with the lung”. You even say, “the cloud is the greatest source of inspiration for my thoughts”.

In the dominant version of Greco-Latin thought, making an artwork is an action in which such conjugation of sensitivities is lost. Reason predominates, and art is understood on the level of superficial, aesthetic beauty. In Aymara we say *taq'i amayunpi saltata*: “you must lead with all your senses.” The senses of the fingers, of the feet, of the eyes, of thought, of the instruments and

of the raw material: they mutually direct themselves. With many things that need coordination, it's necessary to give them direction in order to obtain the best possible results.

This leads to the integration of all actions in order to reach the thread of life. Therefore, I am not the executor. I don't do it for egocentric reasons, but because of respect for the instruments, for the raw materials that come together and that must be given direction. It is about the possibility of mutual respect between subjects and diverse life forms. Mutual nurturing goes through many actions, and in them everyone has the right to be together. We may talk about the right of the land, the right of nurturing the raw materials, the right to life of animals and plants.

This helps us to understand that art is not bound to superficial beauty, to the consumption of sweetness through the eyes and the explosion of the senses, but that it is a conjunction of many sensitivities that make us go beyond what we feel. This leads to a permanent reflection instead, we think in extractivist terms, rather than creating a balance with the environment or the raw materials.

The Big Rupture

I believe the big break took place in the eighteenth century, when the works of art were hierarchised, and the following questions emerged: What is art? What doesn't qualify as art? This led to divisions, to social classification, and to the act of differentiating between those who attend university and those who don't.

All the specialisations mentioned earlier in the text refer to training, and to their own type of university. The concept of mutual nurturing goes through the *jiwasa*,⁸ a “we” that includes the interlocutor, and through a division of tasks fulfilled by diverse elements and bodies, such as gathering the clay, carrying it, kneading it with your feet and passing it through the hands. Several people can do it at the same time, there is no artist acting on his own, in his studio, producing the artwork, no spectator who, on his own, contemplates the work at the gallery. In the mutual nurturing, this separation does not apply. Within the *jiwasa*, the totality of the human being as executor is present. But we are executors thanks

⁸ Editor's note: In Aymara the term *jiwasa*, which is commonly translated as “we/us”, may include animals, water, rivers, the landscape, the environment, everything that is considered vital to the community. All these elements constitute the “we”.

to the animal, the plant, the stone and the clay, who are also living beings.

In such operative chains⁹ there is always *jiwasa*, while within the rational model there is only “I”: I am the person who decides, I am the person who thinks, I will be the one to execute, I, I, I, I. And this eventually leads to male domination, man dominates over everyone else. In the Aymara linguistic structure, in contrast, the idea is that “we carry all of us” through mutual respect, all having the same value. That is the *jiwasa*, which is inclusive of all modes of existence, among them the *naya*, “I”.

In Aymara we say *uraqin uywatatwa*: “I have been nurtured by the land.” Which is like saying: “I am not the one who nurtured everything, I am also nurtured.” When you think that the land nurtures you, the water nurtures you, the wind nurtures you, the fire nurtures you, you must develop a lot of affect and care so as to integrate them in the best possible manner, because we need each other. It is a balance that comes from understanding the universe. In many cases, these theories lose their essence when they are hierarchised and trapped within a rational model.

⁹ Editor’s note: The author uses the term *cadena operatorias* in the original Spanish, which corresponds to the archaeological approach of the *Chaîne opératoire* (chain of operations), the step-by-step analysis of artefacts – from raw material to production to use and the resulting further products.

Diversity of Epistemologies and Philosophies

Uñachht'ayaña means “exhibiting to all the people”. In a community celebration, you can present the best clothes or the best artwork and everyone has the right to see it. It is a public exhibition for all, without limitations. We go to the celebration with everything because we must show what we are. And it is available for everyone: children, grown-ups, internal and external visitors; it is a gallery open to all.

Even though it is commonly said that art galleries are places for all, they are enclosed by four walls, and in many cases difficult to access. They are often restricted to some social classes and allow for an “I” to present an artist and another “I” to sell the work of this artist. Everything is built around an image and two or three people. The celebration within the community is not something to be experienced alone. It is for the community, because we go there as a group, and we comment as a community: “What did you think of that community?” – “They presented themselves like this.” – “They presented themselves like that.” And the same happens from the other side. These are debates that generate new ideas, new sensitivities, new aesthetics of colour, of

shape, of techniques, of structures. They recreate the operative chains of processes, and this generates creativity.

Art galleries are a function of hierarchical epistemic geopolitics. It is a philosophy rationalised for conquest and domination. And this was implemented in every dimension. I believe its most intense manifestation in Latin America is professionalisation. If you don't have a degree, you are not professional, and it is easier to dominate you. With mutual nurturing, we understand how contemporary art also generates fragmented epistemic extraction. A performance often consists in taking a fragment of an action from a community to a gallery. I call it predation of small things. But what would it be like, instead, to understand things as a people, as a community? I don't mean in the sense of looking for equivalent translations in art. I talk about using epistemological and philosophical terms from the community, according to the structure and territory that gives shape to their logics. How are things understood from this point of view? From a diversity of philosophies, with their own logics, I believe.

We could work from a diversity of epistemological thoughts, such as sensing-thinking. Sensing-thinking shows us balance, not domination. I believe these terms can help us land in the present in the best possible

manner. Thinking from these terminologies in order to improve and to guarantee a large-scale opening of thoughts through different spaces. I believe thinking processes in the Lowlands are very different from those in the Highlands.¹⁰ In the Highlands we talk a lot about animals, because the mutual nurturing of animal fibres predominates, while in the Lowlands, in the Tropics, vegetal fibres predominate.

Mutual nurturing in the Lowlands is different in its processes and procedures. If we come to understand them, we will be able to see how art is developed and how we can understand ourselves through such diversity. This is a task for young people, who need to work hard to be able to set these ways of thinking in contrast, rather than absorbing ways of thinking that are not coherent with what we are. We need to think and rethink from the perspective of who we are, what we are like, and how we project ourselves towards the future.¹¹

10 Editor's note: The Bolivian Highlands refer to the Andean plateau and valleys regions, including the departments of La Paz, Potosí, Oruro, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Tarija. The Lowlands are located on the East and characterised by their Amazonian climate, with the departments of Santa Cruz, Beni and Pando.

11 Editor's note: Since the MAS-IPSP (Movement for Socialism – Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples) assumed government in 2006, and with the approval of a new Political Constitution

In India, with the mandalas and the temples, art and the sacred are very close to one another. The temple is the open sacred space where you enter, showing respect, following a set of actions that society at large is familiar with. The same happens with the *wak'as* in the Andes: sacred places and large-scale artworks, as a result of the sculptural construction of the stones, for which we have the utmost respect.

I like to think from this diversity of epistemologies and philosophies, be it in a region, a community, a house or a family. From the point of view of the *uywa-ña*, or the *uyway*, of mutual nurturing, you think from the material and from the immaterial, from the tangible and the intangible. How can we do mutual nurturing of the intangible? For example, the clouds? At a certain moment in time, it is necessary that they be close to the

which understands Bolivia as Plurinational State composed of thirty-six equal nations, there has been an increasing politicisation of regional differences, mainly that between the Highlands and Lowlands. The binary of High and Lowlands has been instrumentalised as one of the main strategies of the right and far-right opposition to destabilise the Plurinational State, the governmental protection of cultural diversity and the political mandate of the new constitution to “decolonise” Bolivia. The concept of mutual nurturing may be one way to generate a common ground for the cultural and political work of decolonisation that is yet to be accomplished.

land, to make it humid and fertile. So we organise ceremonies for them to come, filled with water. And the mutual nurturing of the clouds contributes to the mutual nurturing of raw materials.

Kant and the Enlightenment couldn't understand this unfolding of the pluri-sensorial nature of things, because the common thread of praxis was broken. Rational hierarchy was imposed on everything, without understanding the cultures and civilisations that developed their own notions in their own spaces and times.

When I visited India, I was impressed by the realisation that the Baroque had developed in India and China before it took place in Europe, contrary to what Eurocentric literature says. And in our archaeological sites, in Mexico, in Guatemala, in Tiwanaku¹², in Cusco, modern art had already developed. In this sense, we need to understand the philosophical thinking of the communities themselves, so that we may have mutual respect between places and peoples.

12 Editor's note: Tiwanaku in Bolivia, near Titicaca Lake. Tiwanaku is often referred to as one of the great civilisations of America between 100 and 1000 AD. Their empire extended throughout the Andes and is considered as the model for the Inca empire centuries later. In the context of Bolivia, Tiwanaku plays a foundational role in terms of cultural identity. Its main spoken language was Aymara.

Reason and aesthetics have been instruments to guarantee Western philosophy's domination, which has attempted to create a monoculture in order to justify the extraction of raw materials such as gold and silver, the extraction of cultural goods that are kept in museums today, and the epistemological extractivism of the researchers.

Our sensitivity allows us to achieve a full equilibrium. We are people, community and nature. But hierarchical thinking says that nature is not part of society. We talk about oral histories, communal economies, the sciences and technologies of the communities, and, in that balanced sensitivity, we talk about mutual nurturing.

Terms don't function independently; they work within a structure. In this episteme, "I" is not a dominant term, as it is within formal, Western education. *Jiwasa* is an extremely interesting pronoun. When you go to the hill or mine to obtain clay, you ask for permission to the hill or the mine's being, because for us they are people: "Please, help me so that the clay comes out in the best possible way, that it lets itself loose." There is an infinity of power in that request, that results in having the clay in your hands, taking it to the workshop or home, where the artwork will be made.

The same thing happens when, within the group, coca leaves, are brought into the mouth, or during the *ch'alla*¹³. We say *jiwasa walikisna*: “I hope we complement each other in the best possible way.” I am saying this to the clay through the coca leaves. The characters gather in force fields that are yours, mine and of the instrument. This generates a synergy, a movement of coming together in order to create another character. And it is not individualistic. “I” is not the character. The characters will complement each other in order to recreate the other character.

Within the community, cultural goods require such *uywaña* treatment, which ensures their conservation and preservation. You have to take care of the light, the humidity, the temperature, so that the life of the cultural good is extended. Those terms are understood quickly within the community, because they are part of its logic. But many people have migrated from the communities to the cities. The first generation still maintains a connection, but the second risks losing it. They don't understand the utmost care practised by their own

13 Editor's note: *Ch'alla* is a ceremony or “baptism” (sprinkling) that includes ritual offerings, alcohol, coca, sweets, tobacco, etc., to ask for fertility and prosperity or for abundance.

communities. It's a mixture between, on the one hand, individualisation and consumption and, on the other, the question of how connectivity and mutual processes may be recuperated. The lack of familiarity with the language structure causes difficulties in the communication between generations, between their times and spaces, which in turn obstructs the exercise of thinking our philosophies – *jiwasan amayusa* – the understanding of the mutual nurturing of our cultural goods.¹⁴

Beauty is not the final aspiration, raw materials are not the key element, you are not the most important factor either. We are in a mutual, balanced respect. We are *jiwasa*.

14 Editor's note: *Jiwasan Amayusa/El pensar de nuestras filosofías* (2019–2020) is the title of a video-trilogy by Elvira Espejo Ayca and also the title of her homonymous solo-exhibition at Espacio Simón I. Patiño in La Paz, Bolivia, in 2019. As part of the exhibition *Reactivando Videografías* (2020–21) the video-trilogy was on view at the Real Academia de España en Roma, Rome, Italy, and in Spanish Cultural Centres in Asunción, Paraguay, and La Paz, Bolivia, amongst others. The exhibition project can be accessed online and is available at: <https://www.reactivandovideografias.com/expo> (last accessed on 27 September 2023).

Elvira Espejo Ayca is an artist, musician, weaver and storyteller in the oral tradition of her place of origin, the Allyu Qaqachaka in the Avaroa province, department of Oruro, Bolivia. She has been director of the National Museum of Ethnography and Folklore (MUSEF) in La Paz since 2013.

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This booklet is part of the publication series of the *Decolonial Studies Program (DSP)* at the Akademie der Künste der Welt/Köln (Academy of the Arts of the World/Cologne, ADKDW). The *DSP* is an education-oriented series of events (2022–2023) with a focus on post-colonial, de-colonial and anti-colonial studies. It aims at providing a discursive framework and accompanying program to the major exhibition projects of the ADKDW, and as a site for its own production of knowledges. The topical focus is on the investigation of structural colonialism on both a global and a local level as well as on its effects on forms of government, economy and environment, knowledges and knowledge transfer.

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