

FELICIANO LANNA. THE STORY OF WHITE PEOPLE

ACCOMPANYING BOOKLET FOR VISITORS WITH CHILDREN &
FOR EDUCATORS TO THE EXHIBITION AT THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

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WELCOME!

This booklet serves as a guide in preparing for, and following up on, a visit to the exhibition *Feliciano Lana. The Story of White People*. It is intended for adults with children aged 9 and older, as well as for educators who wish to visit the exhibition with their students from Grade 7 onwards.

The exhibition presents works by the **Desana** artist Feliciano Lana (1937–2020). Lana's paintings take viewers on a journey to the upper Rio Negro region in present-day Brazil. They depict places and events shaped by the history of colonisation, illustrating the effects of missionary activity, the introduction and spread of new diseases, and conflicts over the extraction of gold and rubber.

Feliciano Lana's works provide insight into the realities of colonial violence and exploitation. They address the cultural and social consequences of colonial relationships, reflecting power dynamics and racist ideologies.

All highlighted terms are explained in our glossary at the end of the booklet.

This booklet is designed to engage with and understand Lana's work on colonial violence together with children and young audiences. It encourages reflection and questioning of history, offering background information about Lana and his work, guidance for discussing his paintings, and suggestions for further reflection after the exhibition. At the end of the booklet, you will also find a glossary and references for additional reading.

We wish you an enriching visit and meaningful conversations.



Feliciano Lana explains one of his paintings (film still)

WHO WAS FELICIANO LANA?

Feliciano Lana was born in 1937 in São João Batista, a small settlement on the Tiquié River in northwestern Brazil, where he spent his early childhood. Born to a **Tukano** mother and a **Desana** father, Lana received the **Indigenous** name Sibé, meaning 'Son of the Sun', from his grandfather. Lana's father and grandfather introduced him to the core cultural and spiritual traditions of the Desana people and taught him their ways. At the age of four, to receive a formal education, his father sent him to a boarding school run by the Catholic order of the **Salesians**. It was here that Lana first encountered the non-Indigenous world – an experience that would significantly shape his life. Additionally, he learned to read, write, do arithmetic, speak Portuguese, and draw. After completing his education, Lana lived and worked in Colombia for several years. Upon returning to Brazil, he married and started a family.

Around the mid-1960s, the Salesian missionary Casemiro Béksta (1923–2015) asked Lana to assist in documenting the Indigenous culture of the region. Believing that photography was unsuitable for depicting the complexities of the Desana world, Lana chose instead to represent his knowledge through paintings. Gradually, he made it his life's work to visually preserve the cultural traditions and cosmology of his community.

As a member of a high-ranking **clan**, Lana held an important social role within the Desana community. He was a healer, ritual specialist (**kumu**), and dancer (**bayá**).

Feliciano Lana is one of the first Indigenous artists from the Amazon region to gain recognition beyond his local community. In May 2020, he passed away due to complications from a COVID-19 infection.

NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LANA'S WORK

Feliciano Lana painted using watercolour techniques, with his works characterised by vibrant colours and intricate details. A distinctive feature of his art is the combination of multiple perspectives and the playful manipulation of proportions. While they may appear simple at first glance, Lana's paintings are highly complex in content. For him, painting was a means of visualising the knowledge, **cosmological** beliefs, and experiences of his community. His works are therefore not only artistic creations but also historical narratives and 'translations' of oral history and traditional storytelling into a visual language.

Lana is regarded as a pioneer and a role model for a younger generation of Indigenous Brazilian artists. As early as the 1970s, his work attracted the attention of non-Indigenous Brazilian scholars and artists who acquired his paintings, incorporated them into artistic projects, and eventually also introduced them to European audiences. Consequently, his art has gained considerable importance in cross-cultural dialogue, being seen as a bridge between the Indigenous and the Western experience.

“LANA'S WORK IS A
REPOSITORY OF MAGICAL
AND EVERYDAY KNOWLEDGE.
IT MUST BE STUDIED,
PRESERVED, AND SHARED,
ESPECIALLY FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS.”

Denilson Baniwa (b. 1984),
Baniwa artist, Brazil

Lana's works have been showcased in solo exhibitions in Brazil and acquired by major European museums, such as the British Museum in London, the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt am Main, and most recently, the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. The recognition of his work by such 'Western' institutions has contributed to greater visibility for Indigenous artistic perspectives on a global scale. At the same time, it opens up a space for critical reflection on the exclusions, gaps, and hierarchies present in the **Western art canon**.

THE PAINTING SERIES 'THE STORY OF WHITE PEOPLE'

'The Story of White People' is a series of 69 watercolour paintings accompanied by text created by Lana for the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin, shortly before his death. When he received the request, he was initially surprised. For decades, he had made a name for himself with his illustrations on regional topics; now, he was asked to present his perspective on the history of the white people in the upper Rio Negro region. The request highlighted, on the one hand, the often one-sided focus of the **ethnographic gaze** – the '**exotic**' and the 'foreign'. On the other hand, it offered the opportunity to reverse this perspective and rethink how history is represented.

Lana's series focuses on the interactions between Indigenous and **white peoples** within the context of the colonial history of the upper Rio Negro region. According to the Desana origin myth, Indigenous and white peoples once lived together in harmony. However, because the white people had behaved improperly during a ritual, they had been separated. They came into contact once again with the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil in 1500.

In his paintings, Lana depicts the activities of missionaries, armed conflicts related to gold mining, the rubber boom, the presence of military installations and soldiers, the **SPI**, or Indigenous Protection Service, and the encounter with ethnologists. He does not adhere to a linear or chronological order. Instead, he weaves together various events from different periods, creating a narrative that ultimately has neither a beginning nor end. Myth and history intertwine.

What makes Lana's work distinctive, aside from its unique aesthetic, is its value as a medium of **decolonial historiography**. His work reflects what is absent from official history books: the perspectives of the colonised on colonial history. His paintings also illustrate how the lives of Lana's relatives, as well as his own life, are intertwined with the region's history. In this way, his personal perspective becomes an integral part of collective memory and historical narrative.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION FOR HOME OR CLASSROOM

Unheard History?

Societal power structures and inequalities often result in the perspectives and memories of certain groups, such as Indigenous communities, being omitted or marginalised in history books. Even in contemporary media and discourses, the perspectives of disadvantaged or marginalised individuals frequently remain underrepresented. The following exercise is designed to encourage critical thinking about these 'unheard voices'.

Activity

- First, reflect together on which topics and events have shaped the past few years. Whose perspectives on these issues were rarely considered in the media coverage? Relevant examples could include the climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, or a political event.
- Then, create collages on the selected topics using cut-out images and words from magazines. This activity can be done individually or in groups. Encourage participants to incorporate their own experiences into the collages. However, ensure that no one feels pressured to share anything personal.
- Finally, take a collective look at the completed works. What themes were identified, and whose perspectives were represented? Why do some voices often remain unheard?

THE EXHIBITION LAYOUT

The exhibition *Feliciano Lana. The Story of White People* is divided into 12 chapters. We recommend starting the tour with Chapter 1. In this section, a symbolically suggested longhouse (*maloca*) features a video where Lana shares stories about his life. Additionally, you will find the exhibition's only three-dimensional object here – a pot used for preparing *caapi*.

Chapters 1 to 11 each begin with a quote from Lana. The artwork descriptions accompanying the pieces are based on a video interview with Lana and reflect his own words. Background information on the themes of the series is provided in the chapter texts.

In addition to Lana's works, the exhibition also features six works by a new generation of contemporary Indigenous artists from the Amazon region. Like Lana, they engage with collective memories of a violent past.

Chapter 12 consists of a video installation in which other contemporary witnesses from the upper Rio Negro region share their perspectives. Their testimonies underline how the themes Lana addressed remain deeply embedded in the collective memory of the region.

THE THEMES OF THE PAINTING SERIES. A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Lana's series of paintings offers insights into the **cosmological** thinking of the upper Rio Negro region and tells of complex events that are significant in both regional and global historical contexts. To approach this, we suggest the 'See-Think-Wonder' method.

SEE-THINK-WONDER

The 'See-Think-Wonder' method is a tool designed to spark curiosity. It encourages careful observation and description, while also helping to separate observations from interpretations. Comprising three steps, the method also supports the structuring of thoughts.

See

The first step focuses on precise observation. Invite your children/pupils to look at an image for a while and then describe it in detail, without interpreting or evaluating it. Guiding questions include: What do you see? What stands out to you? How are the things depicted? Encourage attention to details like colours, shapes, proportions, and arrangements.

Think

In the second step, ask your children/pupils to think more in greater detail about what they've seen. Guiding questions include: Why are things represented the way they are? What might the larger context of the depicted subject be? Encourage them to make assumptions but advise caution in jumping to conclusions. It is important that initial interpretations stem from observations.

Wonder

In the third step, the goal is to dive even deeper into the subject and open up new perspectives by asking questions. Guiding questions include: What are you wondering about? What information do you need to put what you see in its proper perspective? What would you still like to know? What else would be interesting to discover? At this point, you can also introduce information to support or challenge their assumptions.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME? RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT AND EVERYDAY LIFE

In addition to careful observation and description, it is helpful to discuss with your children/pupils what Lana's paintings might have to do with the present or their own lives.

A potential connection between the themes in Lana's work and contemporary issues might be found by looking at newspapers – for example, in an article about the political struggles of Indigenous communities today or the exploitation of resources in other parts of the world.

A reference point might also be the school environment. Some of Lana's images refer to the relationship between teachers and students and address corporal punishment. You could ask when corporal punishment was abolished in Germany and what rights children have in schools today.

However, many of the themes in Lana's paintings are so specific to their historical or cultural context that it may not be possible to draw a direct connection to the present or everyday life. It's important not to force this connection. But you always can ask your children or students whether they already know something about the historical events depicted or about Indigenous cultures in South America, or if they are interested in learning more about them.

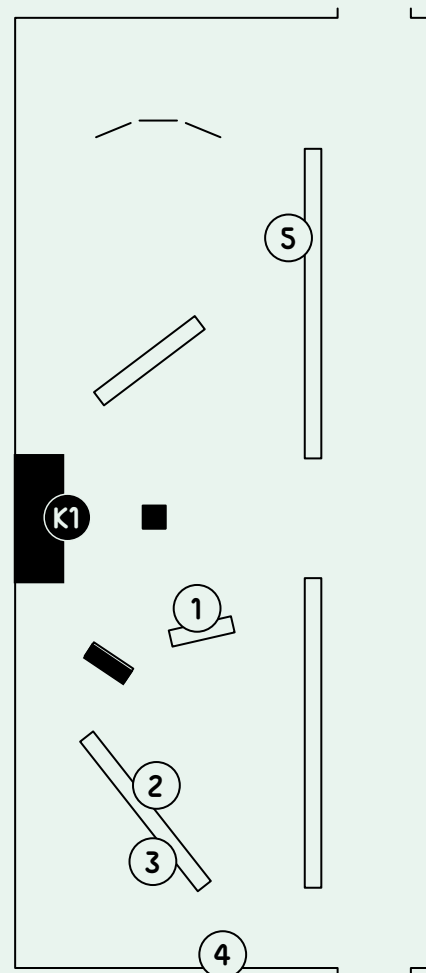
CREATE A SPACE FOR EMOTIONS

The themes in Feliciano Lana's work can be distressing, as they deal with issues like exploitation and physical violence. Therefore, it's important to create a space where emotions can be expressed. Also, draw attention to the positive aspects in Lana's works, such as the strength and resilience of Indigenous communities, who have managed to preserve their existence and cultures up to the present day. Emphasize that it was Feliciano Lana's goal to make the history of his community visible, so that it is also recognised in Europe and remembered.

Consider organising a follow-up discussion where you revisit your impressions from the exhibition. Sharing emotions can help process the experience.

LET'S GET STARTED: 5 EXEMPLARY PAINTING ANALYSES

The following 5 painting descriptions and analyses are intended as examples. They introduce some key themes from the watercolour series and offer suggestions for discussion.



The exhibition layout highlights **Chapter 1** and the **five artworks** that are introduced and discussed in the following sections.

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1: THE RETURN OF THE WHITE PEOPLE



Feliciano Lana, 2019 | *Untitled*, watercolour on paper

What Do You See, What Stands out to You?

This image depicts several people. On the left, there is a woman. In the middle, two men are standing. On the right, there is another woman with two small children on the beach. The people are standing on the shore. They are wearing headdresses, loincloths, leg bands, and skirts. Their attention is directed towards a ship on the horizon. The adults are pointing at the ship.

What Could the Meaning of the Depiction Be?

The fact that the people on the shore are pointing at the ship suggests that they are experiencing something significant or unexpected. Perhaps they have never seen such a foreign ship in their lives?

What Are You Wondering About? What Would You Like to Know? What Would Be Interesting to Find out?

Who might be on the ship? What could it be carrying?

Background Information

'The Return of the White People' visualises the historic moment of the arrival of the Portuguese navigator and coloniser Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500 – an event with profound consequences for the Indigenous population of Brazil. It forever changed their lives. Estimates suggest that the population of South America was reduced to 10% of its previous size as a result of colonisation. The main causes for this drastic decline were the systematic enslavement and the spread of diseases introduced by the Europeans.

What makes Lana's painting remarkable is that it is told from the perspective of the Indigenous peoples, rather than that of the European sailors, who are often euphemistically referred to as 'discoverers'

and frequently glorified in history books. The image clearly shows that the land the sailors are arriving at is already inhabited.

Lana also references the origin myth of the Desana people, according to which Indigenous and white peoples once lived together. However, due to the misconduct of the white people during a ritual, they were expelled from the Desana territory. In the scene depicted, the Indigenous peoples recall this time of coexistence. According to Lana's description of the image, they whisper to one another as they see the ship: 'Look, look, those must be the white people.'

In Chapter 1 of the exhibition several episodes from the origin myth are illustrated.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION FOR YOUR EXHIBITION VISIT

A Change of Perspective through Poetry

What might the people on the beach think and feel as they see the ship on the horizon? Feliciano Lana's artwork shifts the focus to the perspective of the Indigenous peoples. In doing so, he challenges the colonial narratives that often prioritise and glorify the perspectives of the European 'explorers'.

Activity

- Take another look at Lana's painting together with your children or pupils and let it soak in. Encourage them to imagine themselves in the place of the people on the beach, reflecting on how they might have experienced the arrival of the Europeans on the American continent.
- Then, suggest capturing their impressions through a poetic form called an *elfchen*, or 'elevenie'. What are *elfchen*? *Elfchen* are poems consisting of eleven words, arranged over five lines. The first line consists of one word, the second line of two words, the third line of three words, the fourth line of four words, and the fifth line of one word.

Example of an *Elfchen* on Lana's Painting:

Morning
Blue sky
Ship on horizon
Fear drifts in wind
Uncertainty

2: DISEASES



Feliciano Lana, 2014 | *Masern*, watercolour on

What Do You See, What Stands out to You?

In this painting, a woman wearing a loincloth is covered in red spots. She appears to be scratching herself under her arm. She is standing on a green surface, which takes up two-thirds of the image. In the background, there is a forest and a cloudy sky.

What Could the Meaning of the Depiction Be?

With this painting, Lana addresses the infectious diseases and epidemics brought by the European colonisers. The impact of these epidemics was devastating, leading to the death of many thousands of Indigenous peoples who had no immunity to the viruses and bacteria introduced from Europe, such as measles, influenza, or smallpox.

What Are You Wondering About? What Would You Like to Know? What Would Be Interesting to Find out?

Can the scene be placed in a specific time period?
What effect does the cloudy sky create?

Background Information

The paintings on the theme of diseases in this exhibition are reproductions. The original artworks are held by the Museu do Índio in Rio de Janeiro. While they are not part of the series 'The Story of White People', they were included in the exhibition as they shed light on a central aspect of the colonial encounter.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, deadly viruses introduced to South America by the European invaders initially tended to spread along the coastlines before reaching the interior. The lack of immunity and the dire conditions endured by the Indigenous peoples under white rule contributed to widespread fatalities. The upper Rio Negro region experienced its first smallpox outbreak in 1740, followed by a severe measles epidemic in 1749. In the 19th and 20th centuries, outbreaks of influenza, whooping cough, measles, and malaria became frequent. These diseases spread particularly quickly in the rubber forests, where brutal working conditions prevailed. Additionally, colonial and government agents, as well as missionaries, played a role in the transmission of diseases.

Today, numerous Indigenous communities still live in the Amazon region, with some avoiding contact with the so-called 'Western civilisation'. For these groups, diseases such as measles or influenza continue to pose a deadly threat. Lana's painting is therefore, in a sense, timeless. The dramatic sky could metaphorically represent the looming threat of infectious diseases.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION FOR HOME

Research Task

Encourage your children or pupils to research online about the dangers of infectious diseases for Indigenous communities in the Amazon region. Have them find out what solutions Indigenous communities have developed today to protect their health from such diseases. What challenges do they face in doing so?

Some suggested sources can be found at the end of this booklet.

3: MISSION



Feliciano Lana, 2019 | *Untitled*, watercolour on paper

What Do You See, What Stands out to You?

In this image, there is an adult figure wearing a white robe, pulling a boy by his hair. To the right, leaning in the doorway, is another person, also dressed in a white robe and wearing glasses. To the right of the second adult, two children sit hunched over on a school bench. The children are barefoot and only wearing shorts. The two men in white robes are wearing shoes. On the right wall, there is an opaque window, and in the foreground, on the left, there is a board with a math exercise written on it. Through the doorway, you can see a forest.

What Could the Meaning of the Depiction Be?

Lana portrays a scene in a school, where the adults are Salesian priests, identifiable by their white robes with upright collars. The rough physical treatment of the pupil is illustrative of their authoritarian teaching methods. The priest in the middle seems to be supervising the scene – he possibly symbolizes the authority exercised by missionaries in the upper Rio Negro region. The hunched posture of the students on the bench may reflect their fear of punishment. The image addresses the physical and psychological violence inflicted on children through their education by Christian missionaries.

What Are You Wondering About? What Would You Like to Know? What Would Be Interesting to Find out?

What might the children in the image be feeling?
Why is the window in the image opaque?

Background Information

A central theme in Lana's painting series is the presence and influence of Christian missionaries, who arrived in multiple waves in the upper Rio Negro region. Among the first missionaries were the **Jesuits** in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. From 1915 onwards, the Salesian order gained significant influence. During this time, the region was largely under the control of so-called '**rubber barons**', who exploited both resources and people.

The Salesians established boarding schools to reshape the local culture through a younger generation re-educated in the Christian faith. Additionally, they actively opposed the spiritual practices and rituals of the region. These events had a traumatising effect on multiple generations of Indigenous peoples.

Feliciano Lana, himself a former boarding school student, depicts experiences that he likely endured or witnessed first-hand. In a personal account, he describes how he and his fellow students suffered from being forbidden to speak their own language. He also recalls how the unfamiliar food at the boarding school made him and many others sick. However, Lana also speaks of amicable relationships with some priests who accompanied him during his time at the boarding school.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION FOR YOUR EXHIBITION VISIT

Speaking Thoughts out Loud

The aim of this exercise is to give the boy in the painting a voice through your own words. By doing so, you creatively break through the depicted scene of oppression and transform it into an empowering scenario.

Aufgabe

- At the beginning, make it clear that it is not compulsory to participate in this exercise, as it can have a strong emotional impact.
- Now stand together in a semicircle in front of Lana's image and imagine yourselves as the children depicted. What might be going through their minds?
- Then invite each person to say aloud a fictitious thought. You may also let your group vary their volumes, repeat sentences, or speak in unison.
- In a final reflection round, offer the opportunity to share impressions from the exercise.

4: MILITARY



Feliciano Lana, 2019 | *Untitled*, watercolour on paper

What Do You See, What Stands out to You?

In this painting, there is a raised mound of earth with four white 'pipes' placed on pedestals. Directly in front of them, three soldiers in uniform stand holding rifles. One of the soldiers is hoisting a green flag with a white emblem. In the bottom right corner of the image, four more soldiers stand in a row. They, too, are armed with rifles. The soldiers have their backs turned towards the viewer. In the background, three mountains can be seen – two are blue, while one is black. A river containing three small islands with trees dominates the centre of the image. To the left and right of it, dense green forest extends across the landscape.

What Could the Meaning of the Depiction Be?

The 'pipes' on the hill are actually four cannons. The soldiers' task might be to guard or operate them. The positioning of the cannons by the river suggests they were placed there to protect or defend the waterway. About two-thirds of the painting is taken up by nature. Feliciano Lana may be using this imagery to illustrate the destructive impact of military presence in what was once a peaceful, natural environment.

What Are You Wondering About? What Would You Like to Know? What Would Be Interesting to Find out?

What symbolic meaning could the different colours of the mountains in the background have? Why are the soldiers hoisting a flag?

Background Information

This painting belongs to Lana's depictions of military presence in the upper Rio Negro region. The location shown is the São Gabriel Fort, built by the Portuguese colonial power in the mid-18th century to defend its territorial claims against the Spanish colonisers, who also sought to control the resource-rich land surrounding the fort. The hoisting of the flag may therefore be interpreted as a symbolic act of asserting power.

In Lana's paintings, military installations, rifles, and cannons symbolise the fundamental differences between the white people and the Indigenous peoples: while the white people used rifles as instruments of violence and control, for the Indigenous peoples, they remained foreign artefacts; they may have used them, but they never mastered them.

In his description of the painting, Lana mentions the names of the depicted mountains, indicating that the landscape in his work is more than just a silent witness to history – it holds its own cultural and spiritual significance. It is part of the cosmos and the spiritual identity of the Indigenous population of the region.

The location depicted also holds personal significance for Lana, who lived for some time with his family near the ruins of Fort São Gabriel.



Feliciano Lana, 2019 | *Untitled*, watercolour on paper

What Do You See, What Stands out to You?

In this painting, three people are depicted. The man on the left has a moustache and is dressed in shoes, trousers, a shirt, and a hat. A pistol is tucked into his belt. He raises his right hand, while his left hand grabs the arm of the person standing next to him. The man and woman on the right are barefoot and wearing only shorts and a skirt, respectively. Both are holding small buckets. The woman on the right lowers her head. Noticeably, the man on the left is depicted significantly larger than the two people on the right. The background is yellow, and the ground is green.

What Could the Meaning of the Depiction Be?

The figures in the painting appear to be in a hierarchical relationship. The pistol in his belt, his clothing, the dominant gesture, and even his size – all these suggest the power and authority of the man on the left. In contrast, the people on the right, with their minimal clothing and small buckets instead of weapons, seem to be in a subordinate position, possibly indicating a form of servitude or subjugation.

What Are You Wondering About? What Would You Like to Know? What Would Be Interesting to Find out?

Why are the people on the right carrying buckets, and what might be inside them? Why is the larger figure raising his hand towards the people on the right?

Background Information

A key theme in Lana's painting series is the economic exploitation of natural resources and Indigenous bodies. The global rubber boom in the early 20th century had a devastating economic and social impact on the Amazon region. Indigenous peoples, who had cultivated rubber trees for centuries, were now forced into a system of debt bondage known as **Aviamento**.

According to Lana's description of the painting, the man on the left is a **patron** or his security guard. The two people on the right are rubber tappers. They have cut into rubber trees but, as Lana comments, 'did not even bring back a gallon of the milk'. This means the rubber workers are being punished for not extracting enough rubber sap. The painting appears to highlight not only the social inequalities and power imbalances between Indigenous peoples and white people but also the direct physical threats and violence that characterised the working conditions.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Gestures of Power

Lana's painting reflects power imbalances in the colonial context. The following exercise aims to deepen the understanding of these power dynamics and to consider the emotional impact of 'gestures of power'.

Activity

- Together, brainstorm what 'gestures of power' might be. Ask if anyone in the group would like to demonstrate such a gesture.
- Then divide your group into two parts. While one person from Group A performs a gesture, the people in Group B simply observe. Afterward, switch roles. You can conduct several rounds.
- In the reflection round, describe together what feelings these gestures evoked. How was power felt? What was it like to step into and out of the respective roles?
- Discuss how power is conveyed through body language and in which social contexts 'gestures of power' might still play a role today. How might one resist such gestures of power? What could gestures of resistance look like?

IN CONCLUSION

You and the children in your care have visited an exhibition that took you in your thoughts to Brazil. You have immersed yourselves in the themes of Feliciano Lana's pictorial work and put yourselves in the position of the people depicted in his paintings. How do you feel now about this experience?

Conduct a small closing round, where everyone can say what moved them about Feliciano Lana's images or what they have learned. Feel free to summarize again:

The themes Lana addresses in his paintings help to understand the history of the colonial period from the perspective of Indigenous communities. This is something special, as official history books often only tell the stories of rulers. Feliciano Lana felt it was important to report on these painful experiences and visualise them. As a result, they can be remembered and not forgotten. Lana's paintings can be seen as a call to critically observe and question the injustices that shape our world today.

Thank you for taking the time to visit the exhibition and reflect on it.

This section of a map shows the upper Rio Negro region, where the events depicted by Feliciano Lana in his painting series 'The Story of White People' took place.



Aviamento The term refers to a specific form of enslavement where **Patrons** (typically European colonists) provided Indigenous or Afro-Brazilian workers with food and other goods. In exchange, these workers were obliged to work for the Patrons, often under extreme conditions and with little to no pay.

Baniwa The Baniwa are an Indigenous community traditionally living along the Rio Içana, Rio Tiquié, and their tributaries in the border region between Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela.

Bayá A *bayá* is a dancer and singer with special abilities, as well as unique knowledge of myths, prayers, and songs.

Caapi *Caapi* (also known as Ayahuasca) is a widely used, highly hallucinogenic drink in the Amazon region, made from a vine species. It is consumed during rituals, and only certain initiated individuals are allowed to consume *caapi*.

Clan In the social systems of the **Desana** and **Tukano** peoples, clans are kinship groups within larger social associations. Each clan traces its origins to a common ancestor.

Conquistador A conquistador was a Spanish or Portuguese, predominantly male, 'conqueror' who took part in the colonisation of territories in the Americas, Africa, and Asia during the 15th and 16th centuries. Many led military expeditions to claim new lands for their home countries.

Cosmology/Cosmological The term 'cosmology' is derived from the Greek word *kósmos*, meaning universe or world order. In ethnology, cosmologies refer to a community's beliefs about the origins and structure of the world, as well as humanity's role within it. Often, cosmologies reflect the social and moral values of a community and describe the relationships between humans, nature, and the supernatural.

Decolonial Historiography Decolonial historiography aims to tell colonial history from the perspective of the colonised, in order to question the dominant, often **Eurocentric** narratives developed during and after colonisation. It seeks to break down persistent colonial ways of thinking and power structures.

Desana The Desana are an Indigenous community primarily based along the banks of the Tiquié River and its tributaries in the northwestern Amazon. The Desana refer to themselves as Umukomasã.

Ethnographic Gaze The 'ethnographic gaze' refers to a central principle of ethnography, which involves observing, analysing, and attempting to understand cultures from a detached, external perspective. Criticism of the 'ethnographic gaze' asserts that it sets the standards and beliefs of the observer as the norm and focuses solely on what appears 'different' or 'foreign' from the observer's perspective, thus risking **exoticisation**.

Eurocentrism Eurocentrism refers to a perspective in which non-European societies or states are judged and evaluated according to the standard of supposedly European values and societal categories.

Exotic/Exoticising The word 'exotic' comes from Greek and is often translated as 'foreign' or 'alien'. It describes something that, when measured against one's own Eurocentric perception, appears unfamiliar, new, or 'different'. Exoticisation occurs when people or cultures are simplistically reduced to one aspect of their identity, thereby being stereotyped.

FUNAI The Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas (National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples) is the Brazilian government agency responsible for protecting the rights, cultures, and territories of Indigenous communities in Brazil. It was established in 1967 and is part of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

Indigenous The term 'indigenous' is derived from the Latin *indigena*, meaning 'native'. It refers to people who inhabited an area before it was conquered by others. The term is a general one; most Indigenous groups use their own names for self-identification. In the context of collective political struggles, many Indigenous peoples have adopted the term as a collective self-identification. For the **Tukano** and **Desana**, the term also represents specific lifestyles and cultural identities, evident in food, clothing, and the things people own. The capitalisation of the term highlights its political significance.

Jesuits Jesuits are the members of the Society of Jesus, a Catholic religious order founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534.

Kumu A *kumu* is a healer who cares not only for the physical health of the community but also for its mental and spiritual well-being. *Kumus* possess extensive knowledge of medicinal plants and myths and play a key role in conducting rituals. They undergo long periods of training under the guidance of older healers and are held in high esteem and earn great respect within their communities.

Maloca *Malocas* are traditional communal houses. These elongated structures, often referred to as 'longhouses', are built from wood with roofs made of palm leaves. Due to the influence of missionary efforts, many *malocas* were abandoned as residential dwellings, but they continue to serve as spaces for gatherings, celebrations, and rituals. *Malocas* hold significant cultural and spiritual importance. They house ritual objects and serve as places where knowledge and traditions are passed down. In ritual contexts, they symbolise the cosmos, with supporting pillars, the roof, and the interior space representing mountains, the sky, and the womb.

Patron Patrons were large landowners who brought vast amounts of land under their control, exploiting Indigenous peoples and enslaved individuals from the African continent to work on their estates.

Rubber Barons 'Rubber barons' were powerful intermediaries who gained immense wealth and influence during the rubber boom in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly in the Amazon region.

Salesians Salesians are members of the Catholic religious congregation Salesians of Don Bosco, Founded in 1859 by John Bosco (Don Bosco).

SPI The Serviço de Proteção aos Índios (SPI) was a Brazilian government agency established in 1910 to protect Indigenous groups and promote their integration into the national society. Due to numerous scandals, the SPI was dissolved in 1967 and replaced by the present-day Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas (**FUNAI**).

Tukano The term Tukano refers both to a language family and an Indigenous community. The Tukano people primarily live along the banks of the Tiquié, Papuri, and Uaupés Rivers, as well as the Rio Negro, in the northwest Amazon region, spanning present-day Brazil and Colombia. They refer to themselves as Ye'pâ-masa or Daséa.

Western Art Canon A canon is a collection of particularly significant and recognised works in the fields of art, literature, or science. The term 'Western art canon' refers to a selection of artistic works shaped by Eurocentric values, privileging and integrating certain cultural expressions while exoticising and marginalising or excluding others. For a long time, works by women were almost entirely absent from Western art collections. Indigenous and non-Western art traditions continue to be largely ignored.

White / White People The social category 'white' (or 'white' people) refers to individuals who hold a dominant and privileged social position within a racist system. For the Desana and Tukano, the term 'white' primarily denotes specific ways of life and cultural identities, evident in people's food, clothing, and possessions. From their perspective, the category of 'white' also includes Black people who were brought to Brazil by Europeans as enslaved individuals. Since 'white' is not a self-designation, it is written in lowercase here.

SUGGESTED LITERATURE & SOURCES

CATALOGUES ON FELICIANO LANA:

Oliviera, Thiago da Costa & Scholz, Andrea (eds.) (2021):

Feliciano Lana: die Geschichte der Weißen. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag.

This catalogue serves as the primary source and foundation for this booklet. It presents Feliciano's series of paintings titled 'The Story of White People', accompanied by contributions from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts.

Lana, Feliciano (1988): *Der Anfang vor dem Anfang. Booklet accompanying the exhibition 'Die Mythen Sehen. Bilder und Zeichen vom Amazonas'*. Frankfurt am Main: Museum für Völkerkunde.

ARTICLES AND WEBSITES WITH INFORMATION ON FELICIANO LANA:

Baniwa, Denilson (2020): *A Roundhouse-Museum for Feliciano Lana, the Son of Dream Drawings*:

<https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/carla/2020/06/05/a-roundhouse-museum-for-feliciano-lana-the-son-of-dream-drawings>

(last accessed 24 March 2025)

Museu da Amazônia:

<https://museudaamazonia.org.br/en/the-idea>

(last accessed 24 March 2025)

Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research (SDCELAR):

<https://www.sdcelarbritishmuseum.org> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS AND INITIATIVES:

ANMIGA (Articulação Nacional das Mulheres Indígenas Guerreiras da Ancestralidade):

ANMIGA is an alliance of Indigenous women from all regions of Brazil.

<https://anmiga.org/en/home-english> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

APIB (Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil):

APIB is a national network formed in 2005, bringing together various Indigenous organisations.

<https://apiboficial.org> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

COIAB (Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira):

COIAB is an advocacy group for Indigenous organisations in the Brazilian Amazon, Founded in 1989.

<https://coiab.org.br> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

FOIRN (Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro):

FOIRN is the umbrella organisation for all Indigenous organisations in the upper Rio Negro, Founded in 1987.

<https://foirn.org.br> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

ISA (Instituto Socioambiental):

ISA is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1994, working for the protection of the environment and Indigenous communities' rights in Brazil. It received the status of 'Organização da Sociedade Civil de Interesse Público' (Civil Society Organisation of Public Interest) in 2002.

<https://www.socioambiental.org/en> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

Instituto Maracá:

Instituto Maracá is a civil society organisation founded in December 2017. Its mission is to preserve and make visible the historical, ecological, and cultural heritage of Indigenous communities in Brazil. The organisation is led jointly by Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals.

<https://www.institutomaraca.org.br/en> (last accessed 24 March 2025)

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