

# THE IMAGES I LACK

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The women of my Family have always had a relationship with *time*. When I was little, my maternal grandmother used to say that “time gives, time takes back, time passes and turns the pages!” My mother would tell me, Luiza: “it’s time the one that ages tobacco!” And this time, ever so present throughout my life, has always been a bit different: at home, we used to live it as if it parented us; it was a tree, an entity, an Orixá. And we used to recognize it by Irôko, the first tree, the one that connects the sky to the Earth, through which all Orixás descended to our world. Irôko was one of *the images I lacked*, one of my settlements.

In 2018, I decided to pursuit this *plot* of mine and, in my mother’s company, live this time photographically. People who are born in the Recôncavo have their lives plotted by *terreiros* and in these spaces, the *ploi* refers not only to someone’s life, but also to an *entangled* (Ingold 2012) mix of relations between humans and orixás. *Having a plot* means, in a way, being the Orixá and in the other, bearing a little of each. Therefore, seeing Irôko once again is *remembering* together some images with the narrative threads of my mother and my grandmother Dete. Thus, we followed our way through Santo Amaro da Purificação, Acupe, Saubara, Cachoeira, Santo Estevão, Suape, Madre de Deus, cities located in the Recôncavo Baiano that keep our ancestry.

For 130 years, in Santo Amaro da Purificação’s Market Square, a big tent has been lifted, where Bembé do Mercado, a typical xirê<sup>1</sup> manifestation, occurs. There, during three days before May 13th, the Community of the *terreiro* – one of the oldest and most important, composed of several nationalities and surroundings, as well as Salvador’s *terreiros* – plays all day long, remembering the legal extinction of slavery and reaffirming its African-based identity. In June 1958, the party took a religious dimension following floods in the city and a violent firework explosion that set the market on fire. The Santamarense tradition says that if there is no touch, the city lives catastrophic moments. Such incident burst my family into flames. Among the hundreds of dead people, my mother found my uncle, who “carried the number 99 of the unrecognizable”. This event brought depression, madness and many hardships to my relatives. As I went through the consummation of these memories in Santo Amaro’s Market, I evoked the company of Didi Huberman (2012), whose words used to comfort me when thinking of the images in their gapping and remnant condition, like ashes of everything that has ever burned me. In this essay, I bring some of the images I lacked<sup>2</sup>.

**TRANSLATION**  
Thomas Speroni

1. Public ritual of festive traits in honor to Orixás.  
2. Part of an ongoing essay.







barbaraCopque.





# GÊNEROS ALIMENTÍCIOS





# AÇOUGUE SÃO FRANCISCO

AÇOUGUE MORDOMIA  
CARNES APARTIR DE  
R\$ 2,50  
CARNE DE 1º  
CARNE S/OSSO  
" " C/OSSO  
FÍGADO  
FATO  
MOCOTÓ  
PASSARINHA  
BUCHO PURO  
BOFE



















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## ABSTRACT

**KEYWORDS**  
Visual anthropology;  
photography;  
memory; ancestry;  
Sankofa.

In this essay, I propose to give form to my mother's shared remembering as well as to experience my own memories with photography by putting myself into an activity of imagination during a trip to the Recôncavo Baiano, land of our ancestry.

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