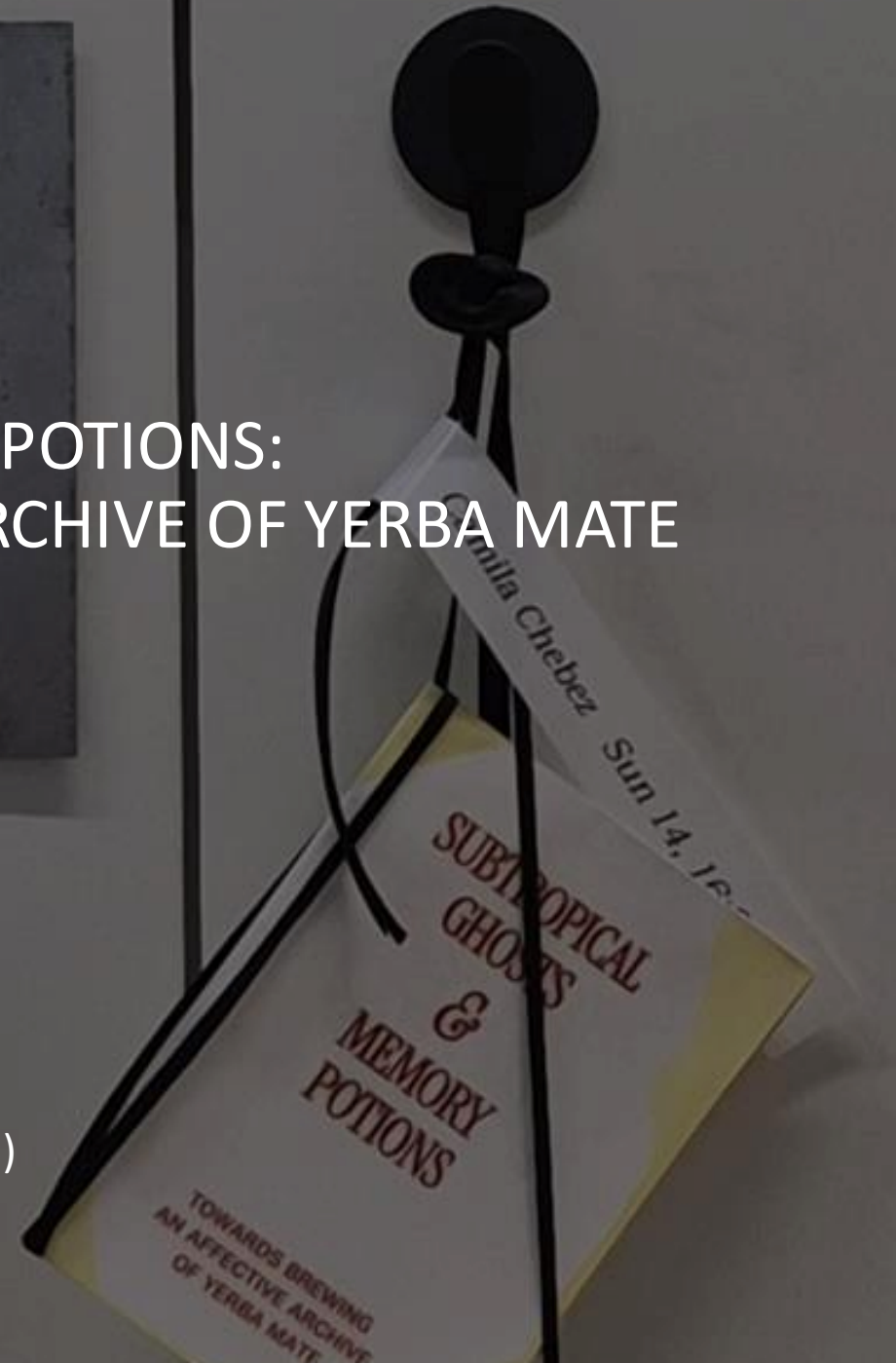


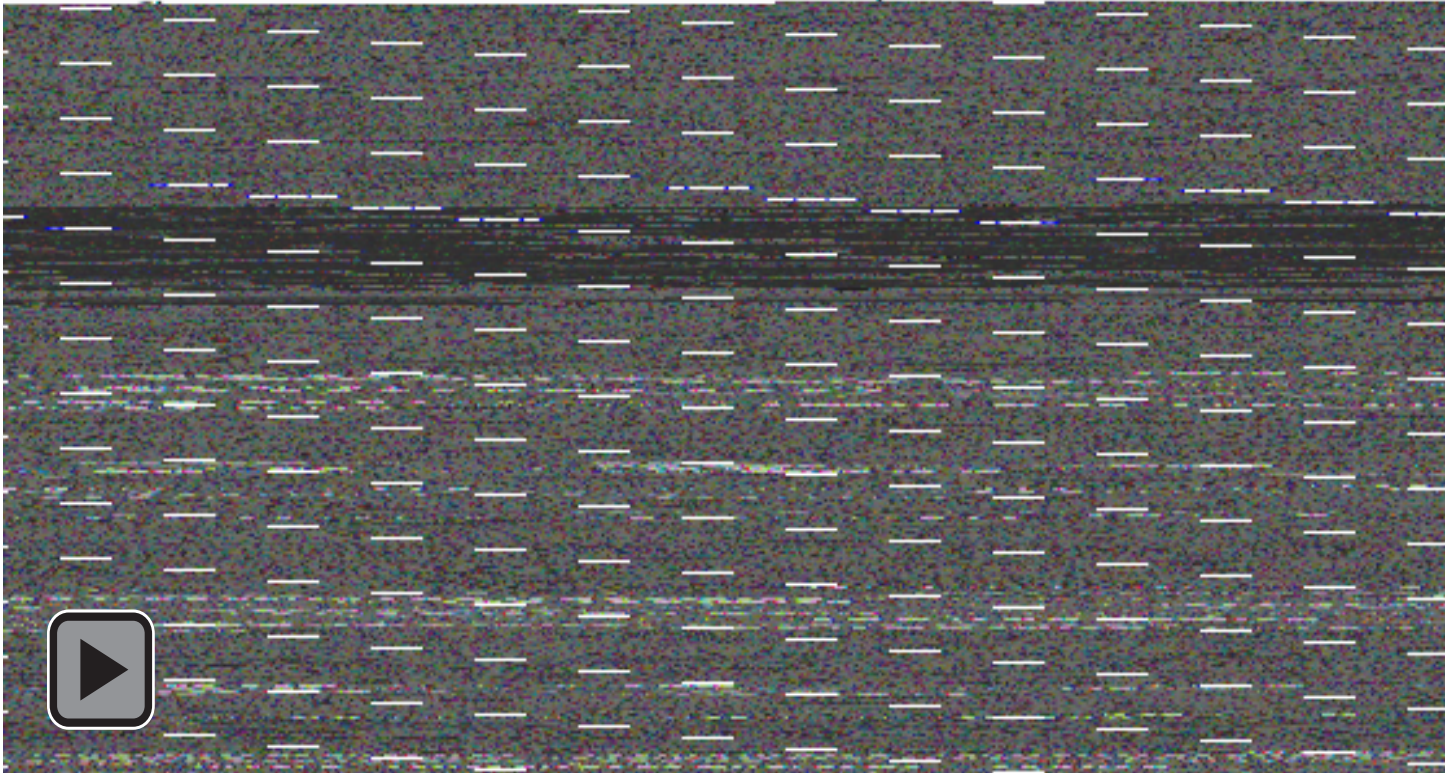
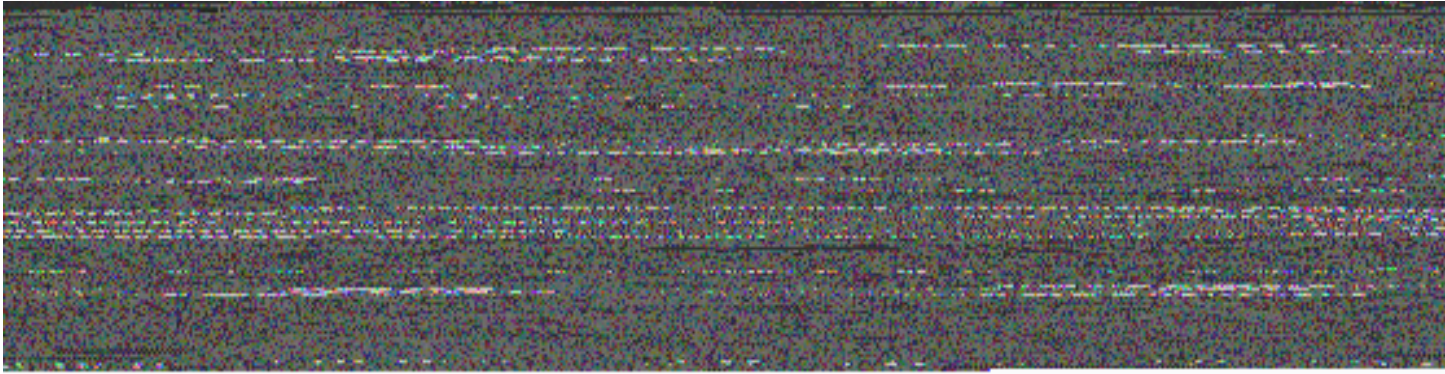


SUBTROPICAL GHOSTS AND MEMORY POTIONS: TOWARDS BREWING AN AFFECTIVE ARCHIVE OF YERBA MATE (2026)

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Design by Reto Riggs Printed in Basel, 2026
Fonts in Use: Ronzino (Colletttivo.it: Luigi Gorlero, Nunzio
Mazzaferro), Instrument Serif (fragTYPE: Rodrigo Fuenzalida)





The zine *Subtropical Ghosts and Memory Potions: Towards Brewing an Affective Archive of Yerba Mate* was created as a companion publication to the art exhibition presented at the *Undisciplined Ethnobotany* conference, organized by the Society for Ethnobotany in Montpellier, France.

The publication documents an interdisciplinary research-art project developed in collaboration by Camila Chebez, Danuka Ana Tomas, and Barbara Mączka.

How is an energy drink connected to a disappearing jungle?

SUBTROPICAL GHOSTS & MEMORY POTIONS

TOWARDS BREWING
AN AFFECTIVE ARCHIVE
OF YERBA MATE

This recipe emerges from an ongoing practice of working with natural pigments and plant-based materials as carriers of memory, transformation, and emotional connection. In this project, extracting pigment and ink from Yerba Mate informs the collective ritual of building an affective archive. Just as pigment forms through extraction, precipitation, and sedimentation, the archive develops through layered acts of participation. During the exhibition, archival photographs are distributed to participants, who collectively place them onto growing fabric rings that resemble tree rings. The images are transferred via cyanotype and later dyed with Yerba Mate ink, embedding memory within the textile. The ritual mirrors pigment-making itself: slow accumulation, transformation through contact, and shared material engagement.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR A BUBBLY COUNTER NARRATIVE



BY DANUKA ANA TOMAS IN
COLLABORATION WITH MATE

3

This practice is a soft protest, intimate but political, a never-ending conversation about the invisible yet invincible world of care. A relational, systemic practice and an ethical responsibility rather than a gendered obligation. Care is deeply present in our everyday lives, an ongoing process of nurturing, attention, and interdependence across human and more-than-human worlds. Through a reciprocal fermentation process we can question who is care and brew our own antidote, a counter-narrative, to extractive modes of consumption inherently implicated within the act of consuming Yerba Mate, a plant turned to product now increasingly present in Swiss stores in the shape of energy fizzy drinks.

Ginger Bug¹

Wild fermented starter culture for brewing an antidote.

1. Laura Miodzik from the fermentation collective "fiff" (@f.i.f.f.fermentation) introduced me to the beautiful world of more-than-human fermentation skills. My knowledge is rooted in theirs and adapted further with my peers

This interdisciplinary project traces the journey of yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*) between northern Argentina and Switzerland, uncovering intertwined stories of green colonialism, ecological loss, extractivism, and cultural memory.

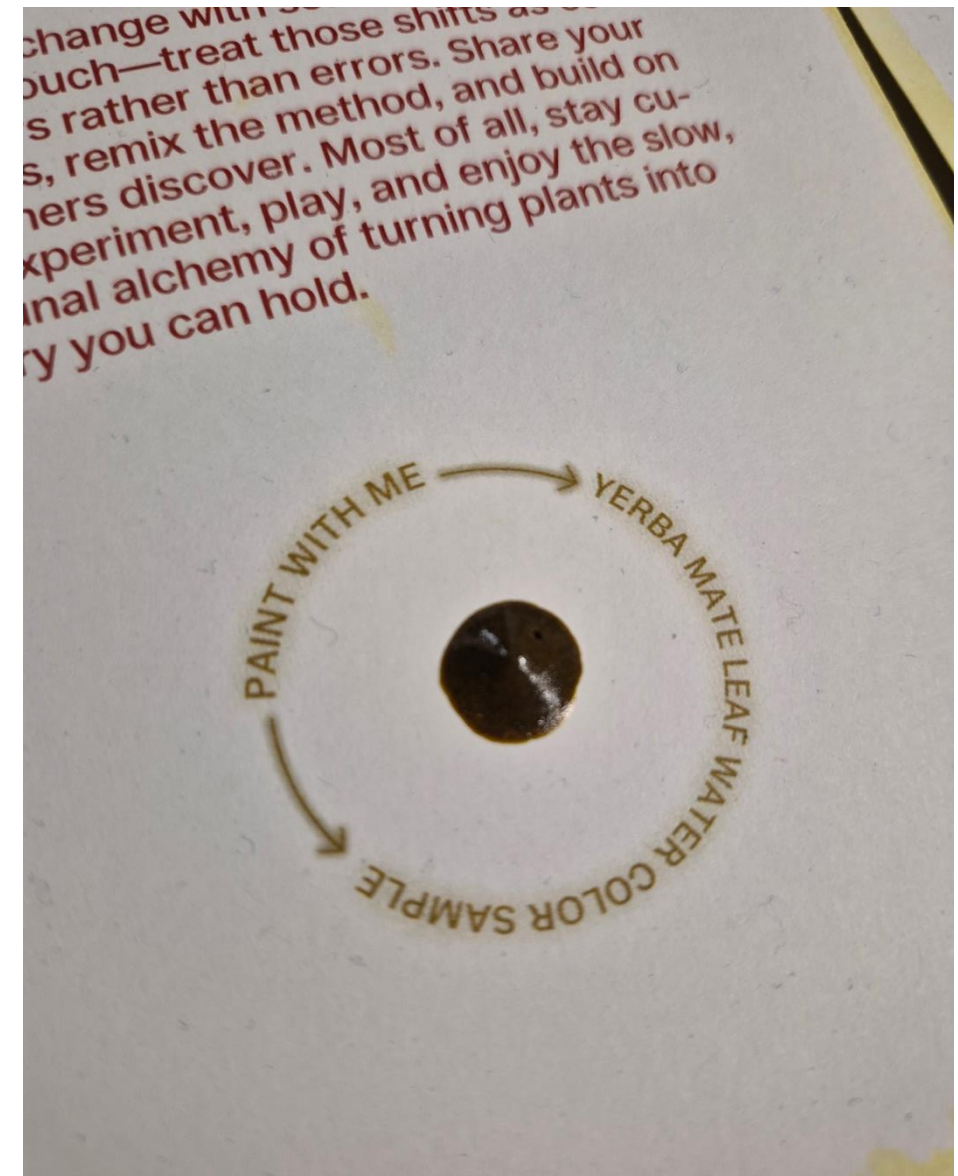
Alongside the project's narrative, the publication invites readers into its material practice through two original recipes: one for brewing a naturally fermented sparkling drink using a ginger bug, and another for producing natural lake pigments from yerba mate leaves. Together, these recipes propose fermentation and pigment-making as artistic methods of sensory ethnography—ways of learning through touch, taste, color, and making.





Inside this publication, you will find a sample of watercolor paint made from mate leaves. Color the archival sketch and follow the plant's slow movement as it settles into color, gesture, and memory.

Image credits: Flowering branch, Sprecher, Andreas, *Tropische und subtropische Weltwirtschaftsgüter: ihre Geschichte, Kultur und volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung. Der Teestrauch und der Tee, die Mate- oder Paraguayteeblätter.* Stuttgart: Ferdinand Eke, 1936.



The publication unfolds into a large A3 poster featuring an archival drawing of the yerba mate plant, accompanied by a sample of handmade watercolor paint made from yerba mate.



This small publication is shared as a mate offering to re-attune to vegetal temporalities and renew our bonds as members of a soil community. Extending this gesture, we also offer a set of handmade watercolours and inks crafted from the yerba mate plant, inviting readers to paint, reflect, and respond in their own way to the question:

How do you care for your plant companions?



Documentation of the exhibition presented during the *Undisciplined Ethnobotany* conference, including visualizations of possible exhibition arrangements in the display window. Photo by Camila Chebez.

Item	Includes	Price
 Artist Publication – Solidarity Price	Zine with two recipes, fold-out A3 poster, integrated handmade watercolor sample	CHF 25
 Artist Publication – Standard Price	Zine with two recipes, fold-out A3 poster, integrated handmade watercolor sample	CHF 35
 Artist Publication – Supporter Price	Same publication; helps subsidize solidarity copies and future independent publications	CHF 45
 Material Edition*	Artist Publication + handmade watercolor + handmade yerba mate ink	CHF 65
Handmade Yerba Mate Watercolor	Individual handmade watercolor pan	CHF 15
Handmade Yerba Mate Ink	Individual bottle of handmade ink	CHF 10

***The Material Edition** includes the complete Artist Publication together with one handmade watercolor and one handmade ink made from yerba mate, available at a reduced bundle price. All pigments and inks are handcrafted in small batches.