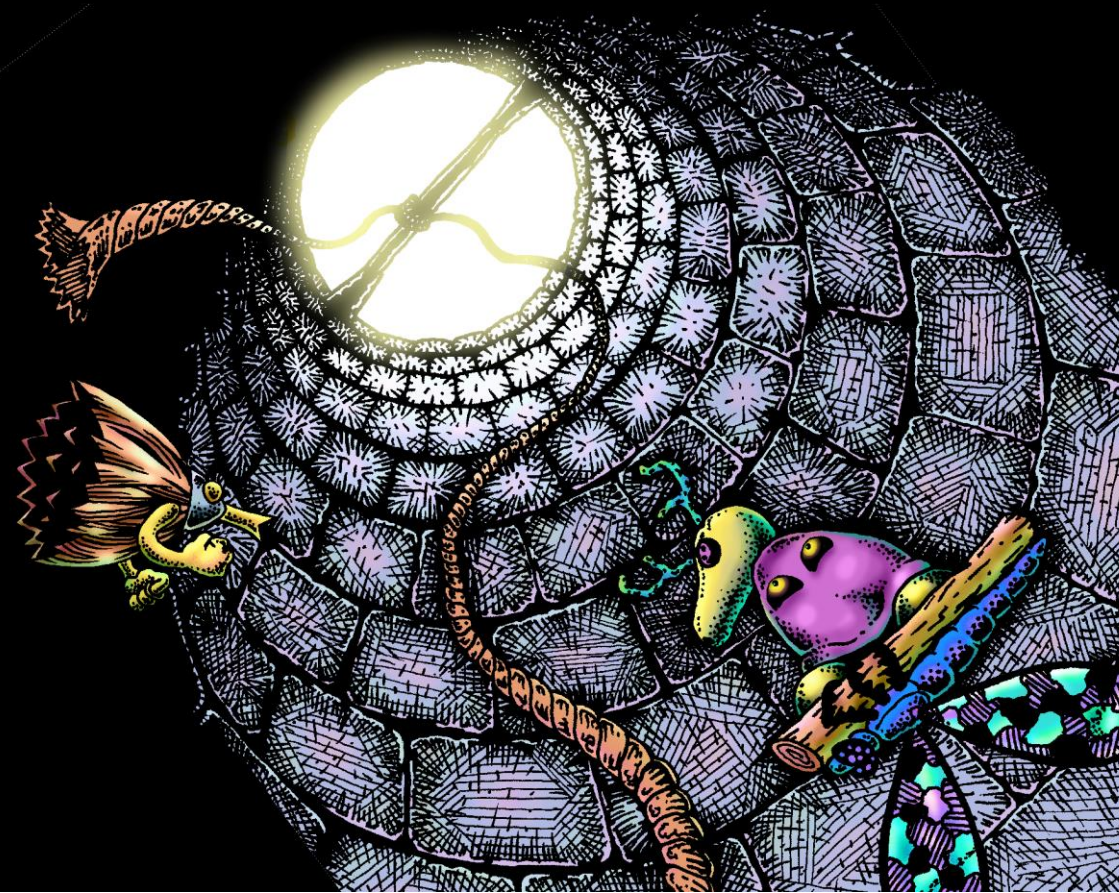


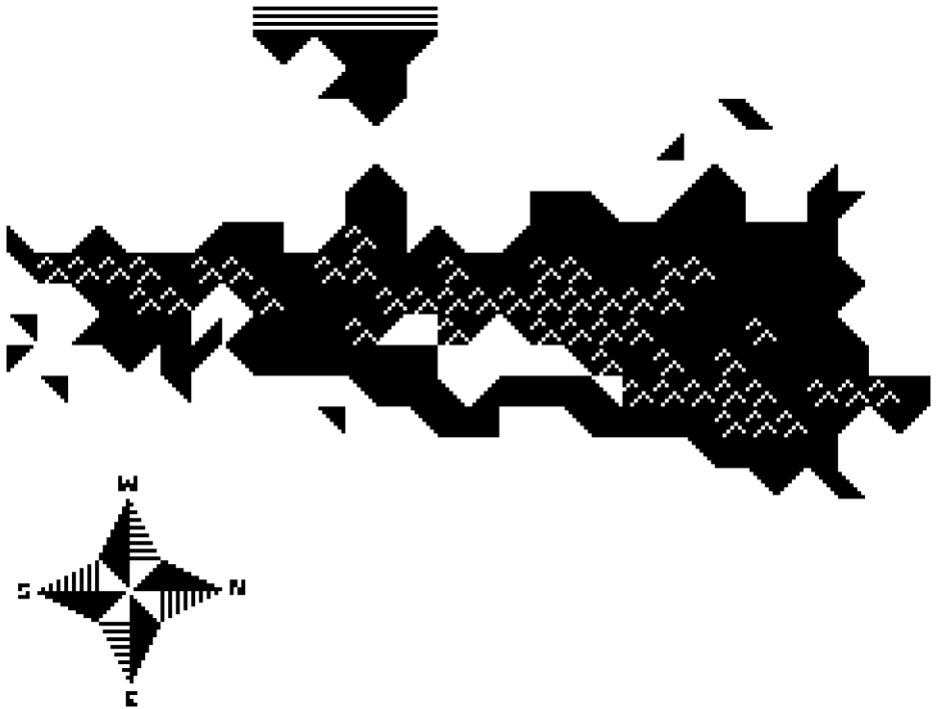
BRUXÓLICO

The Illustrated Book

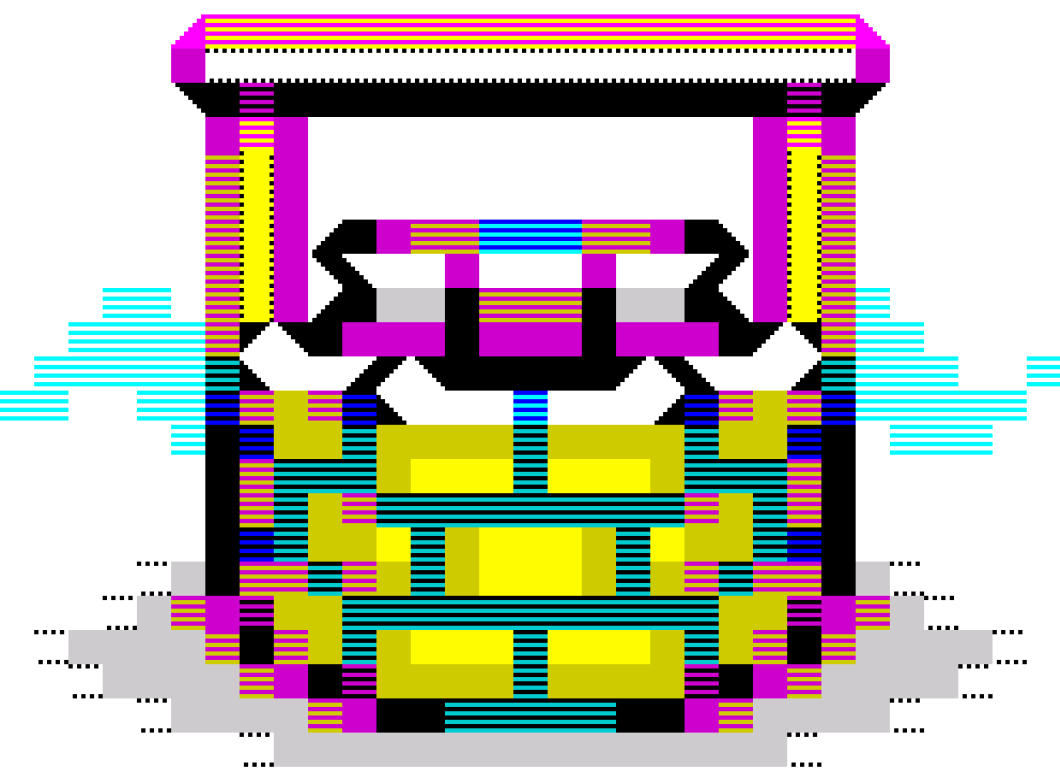
By

Amaweeks





To my parents,
Osmarina Maria de Matos Villalva,
and Paulo Roberto Cardoso Villalva,
both Artists here on this Island.



The Bottomless Well

When I was just a little kid, so very small like that, I saw the most witchlish thing in life.

South from our neighborhood, hidden in the woods, there was an old well, a bottomless well.

Everyone used to throw their rubbish, junk and old things there, like old broom, waste fishnet, torn clothes, broken TV, and also a miserable abundance of bad and disgusting feelings:

Fear, anger, envy, racism, pride and everything else that Lucifer would enjoy.

And then one day things got so bad, so freaking bad, that the well overflowed in a flickering blaze, spitting out every transmorphed little troll to cause mischief on this Island of Desterro.

And so begins the story I'm about to tell.

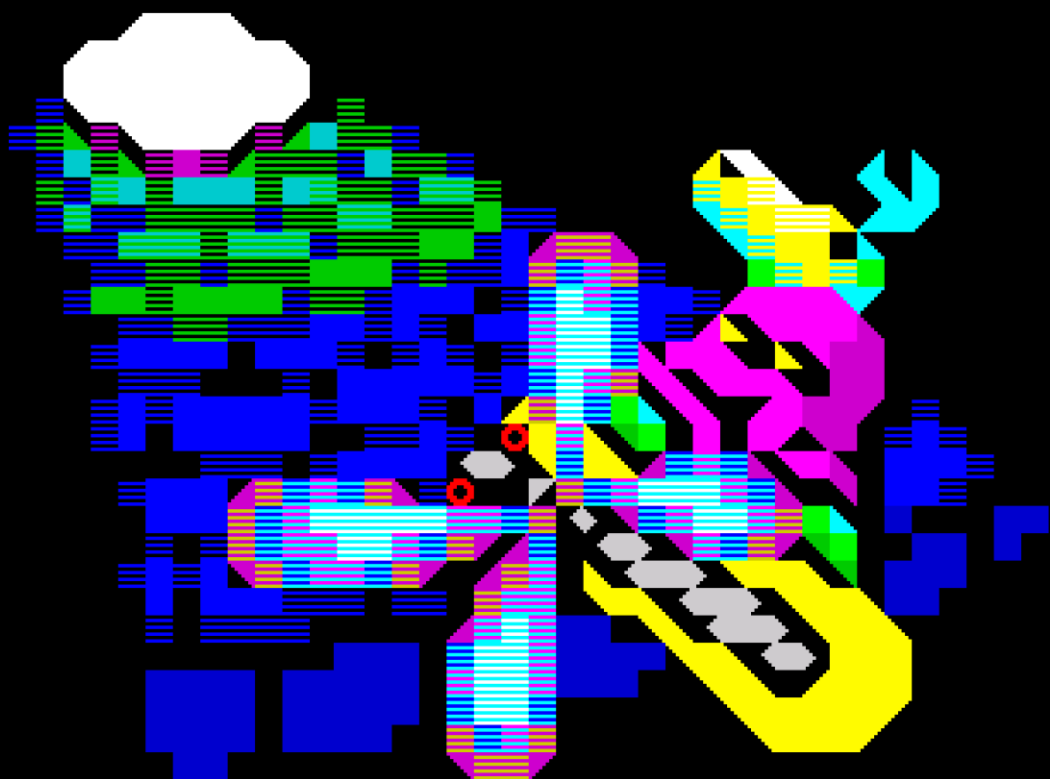


Mischievous

What a curious and strange creature that was. it looked a lot like our "Boi-de-Mamão", only smaller, with two frightening eyes deep in two holes cut in the fabric. It also resembled one of those Halloween ghosts, and in the end that's why they called it Ghost Ox

He didn't understand why at first, but the other creatures that came out of the well in hordes were giving him a hard time, trying to absorb his Anima, the spirit that gave him life. So, he fought back, kicking every creepy-crawly that got in his way.

Because of that, he arrived late at the well, just after that column of fire that dragged the other little devils out. But he found out not all creatures were against him and made friends with a Libelulaçu, who lifted the little one up to the mouth of that abyss, emerging on the Pântano do Sul Beach.





The First Witchlish General

It was on the beach that he faced the first big villain of his odyssey. The Witch signaled by raising her hand, and her hordes responded to her salute. She was a General of old-fashioned, predictable, tiresome, and also ridiculous, troops, noticed the Ghost-Ox.

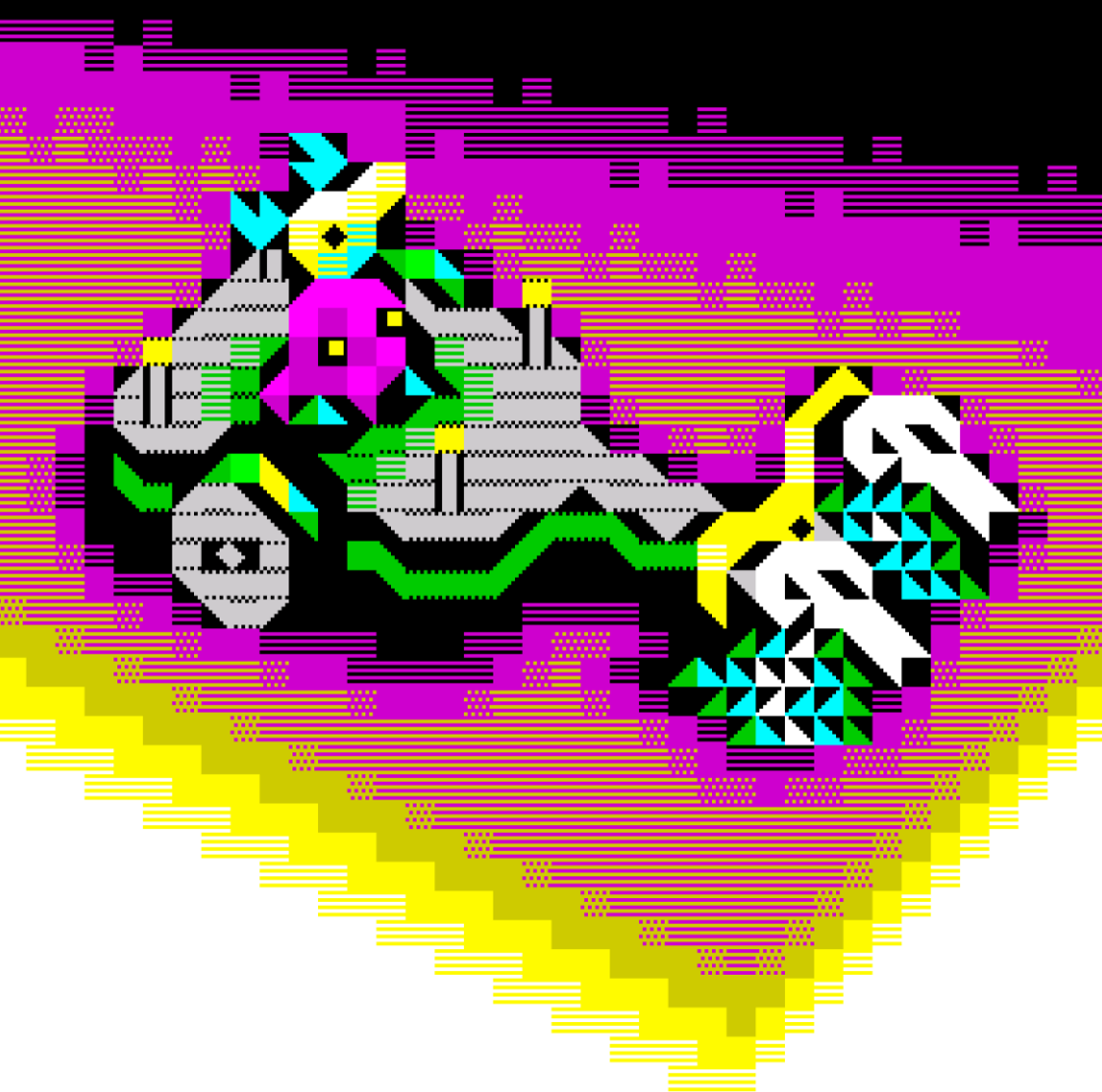
It took more patience than muscle to take down that bossy figure, who despite the menacing appearance didn't have all that much power. Her end came from the very weapons it created by performing invocations and curses.

Forgetting that the Ghost-Ox was also a witchlish being, she ended up giving him extraordinary powers, allowing him to shoot papaya seeds.

And that's how he put an end to that mobster, with a precise projectile right in the forehead.

After such a rough battle the little ghost leaned back in the canoe and took a breather.





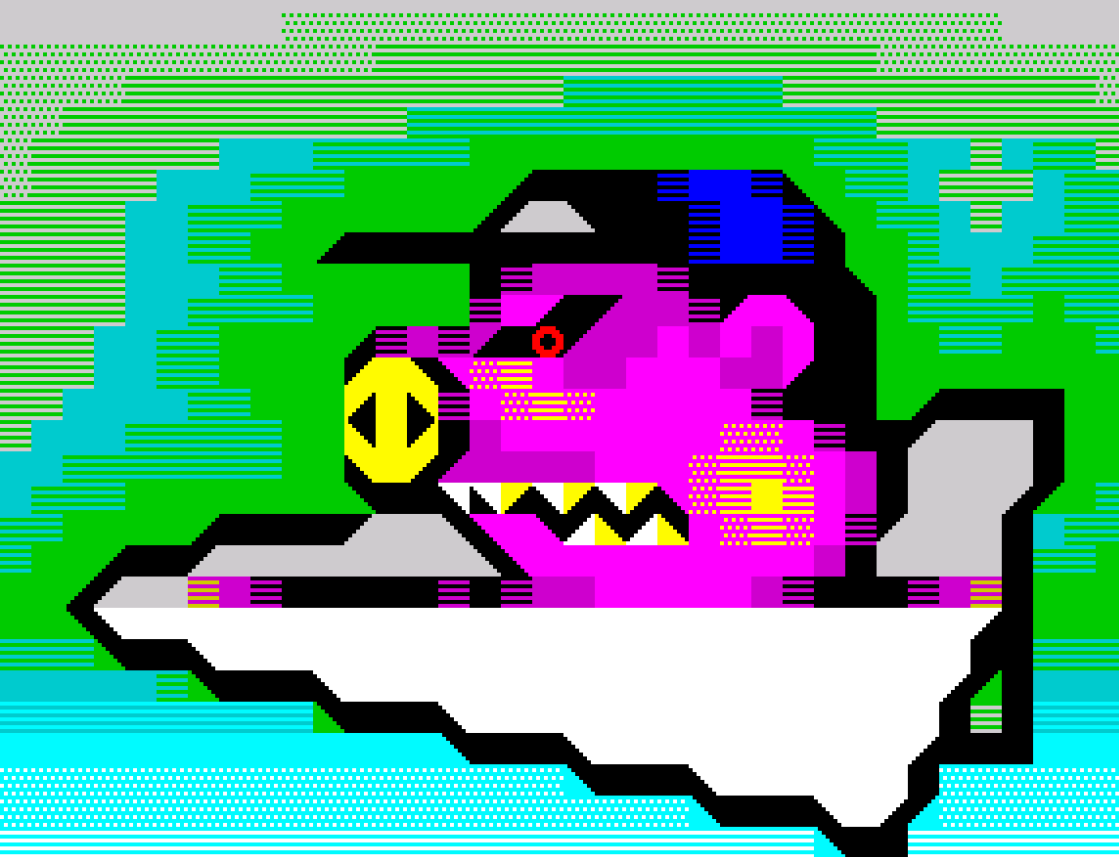
Up and Down

Without their leader to guide them, two bewitched minions fled in panic, accidentally getting hooked up in an ox-wagon. The Ghost-Ox wasn't one to miss an opportunity, and hopped aboard, hitching a ride up to the Sertão do Ribeirão.

Once up there, he ran into a pumped-up rooster, The Crazy Bird mistook the Ghost-Ox for a newly hatched chick, and refused to let him leave the place.

Offended by the rooster's silly insult, the Ghost-Ox hurled a wheel from a sugar cane mill at him, hitting squarely between the eyes. While the feathered foe was disoriented, our main character took off, leaving behind that embarrassing situation.





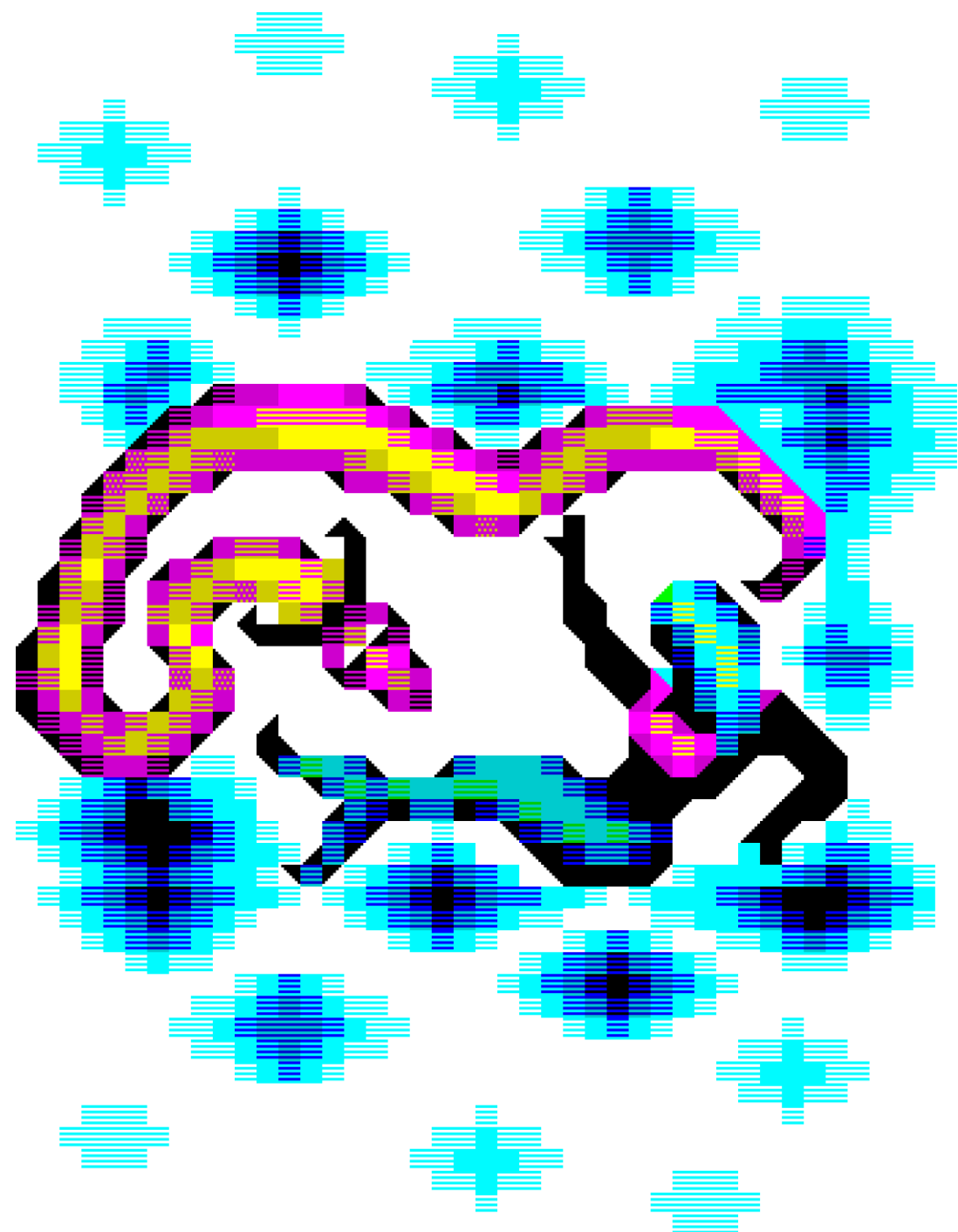
War Pigs

Already at Peri's Lagoon, the Ghost-Ox came face to face with the Second Witchlish General. Oh, what a strange beast, it had a massive head over a tiny body shaped like a paper airplane.

The creature was sly, flew fast, and threw fierce minions against the Ox. But our hero didn't run away from a fight, in fact, he was already convinced that one of his reasons for existing could only be to get rid of these bossy critters.

He stood his ground, fighting patiently, and in a sneaky move, the paper airplane ended up wet with water from the lagoon. Then there was no chance for that troublesome pig-headed creature, it became even more heavy and within the reach of the Ghost-Ox's powerful kicks that sent the fairylish swine back to the abyss from where it came.

Amazed by the skills of the little Ghost, a wandering little soul who was watching everything approached him to strike up a conversation. She then told a splendid story that she had heard from the lagoon's inhabitants.



The mists of Peri's Lagoon

Long ago, tell us the extraordinary Gelci José Coelho, also known as Peninha, in the southern corner of Peri's Lagoon, there lived an Ondina, a Water Elemental, a Selenite creature that resembles a mermaid. She guarded the lagoon's springs and prevented it from drying up.

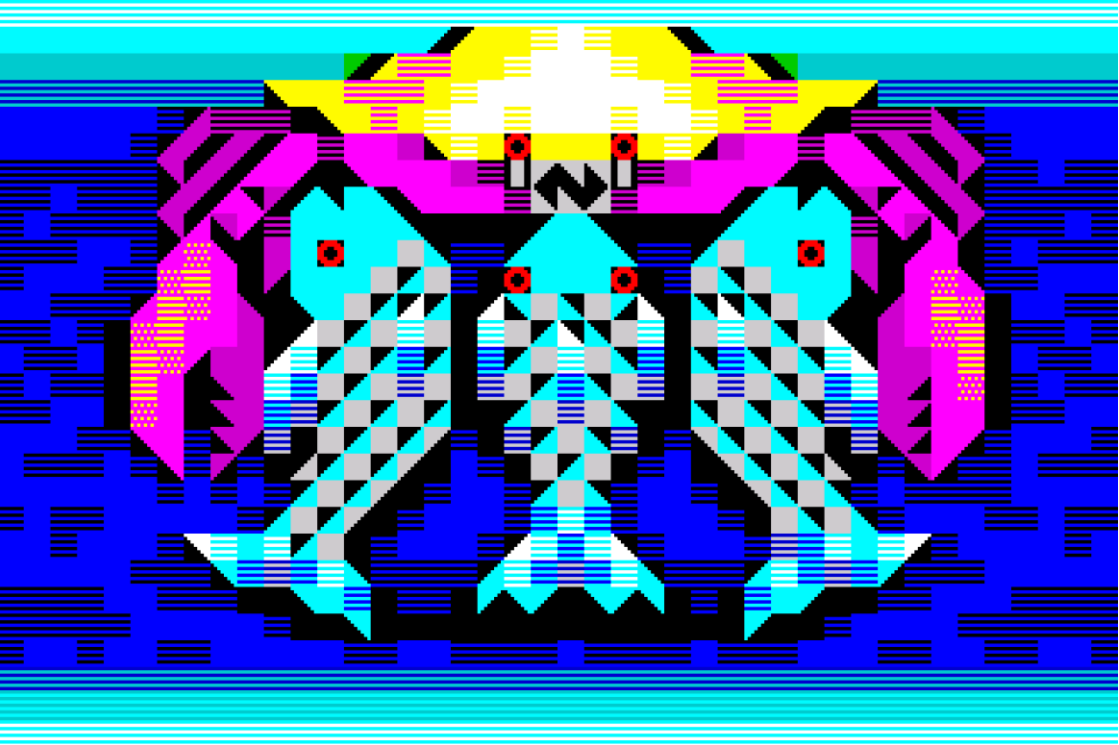
One day, a strong South Wind blew in, bringing with it the legendary Fire Snake, the M'boi Tatá, from the ancient Tupi legend. Here in this place this Fire Elemental looked like a flaming dragon with a bull's head.

When these two legendary creatures met, they fell for each other immediately, even though they were complete opposites. However, they feared the consequences of their love and kept their distance.

M'boi Tatá kept visiting the lagoon, and Ondina would always show up on the water's surface, singing of joy, then crying for the absence of the lover's touch, making the water salty.

One day, they finally could no longer hold their feelings, and came together in a tight embrace. A brief one, as soon he, fire, and she, water, evaporated into mist, giving rise to a new Elemental, now of the Air.

Every time that strong South Wind blows on a cloudy and humid day, they return to the place where their love was born, now transmuted forever by that meeting.



Friendships and Rides

The Ghost-Ox was on a wild ride, cruising through the Island of Desterro from south to the north, following the track of the transmogrified creatures that became increasingly spooky. But this little ox wasn't alone in his journey, and met with a Crab that was carried over the ocean by a mantle of mullet fish, and by the Caldeirão Beach approached our friend:

"Hey, you! Yeah, you! Get on my back and I'll give you a ride. With the help of the mullets, I can handle it. I've done it before carrying a veiled lady".

Our Ghost didn't hesitate for a second and hopped right on the Crab's back. A few snobbish witchlish Jet Sky, who think they own the beach, appeared to bother them, but they were no match for our smart

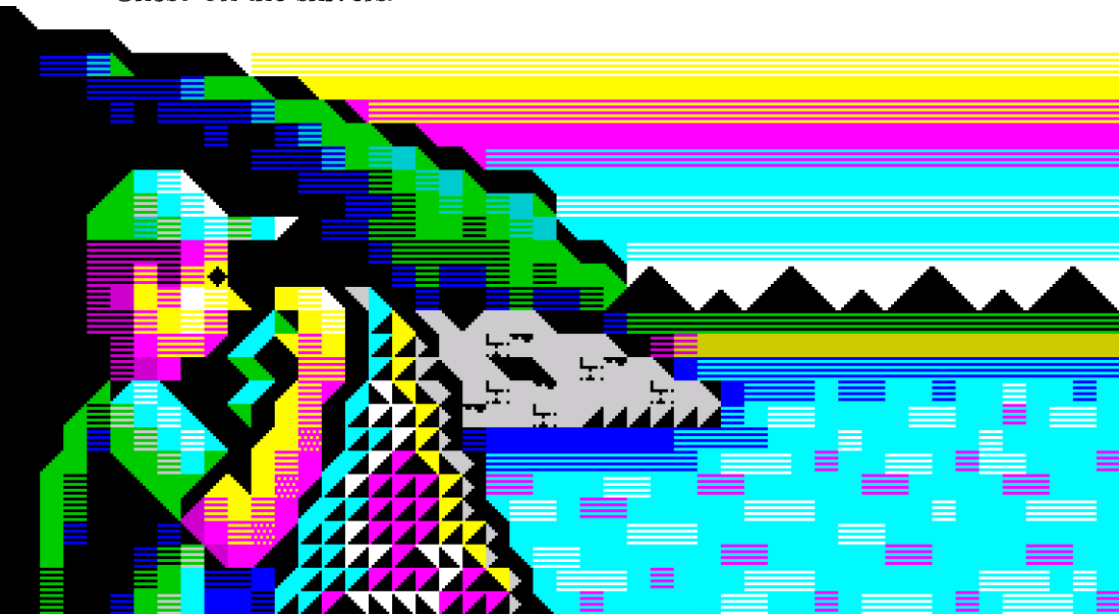
little ox. Soon enough, the Crab dropped him off at the Secret Beach, on a neat rocky shore spot.

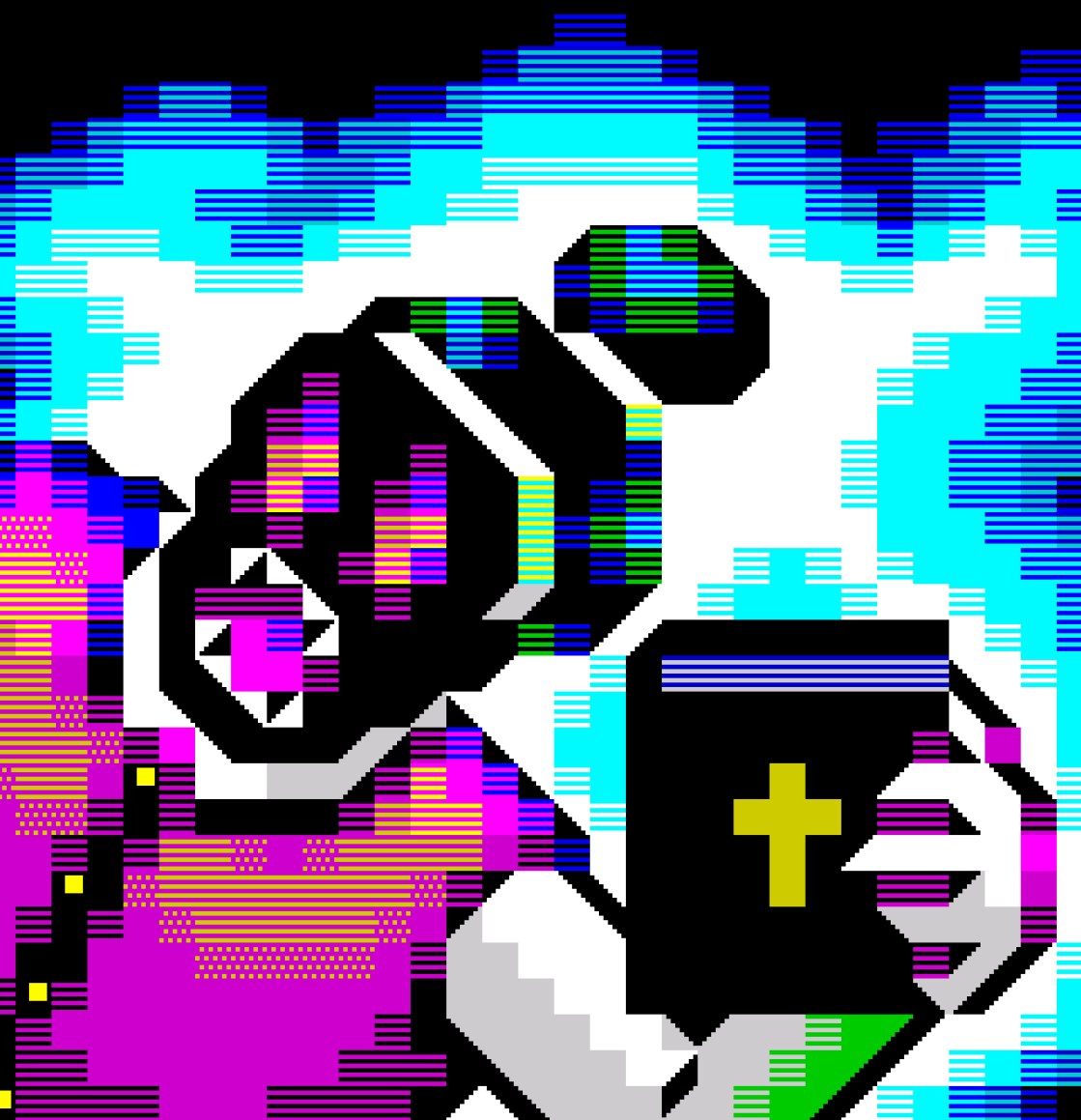
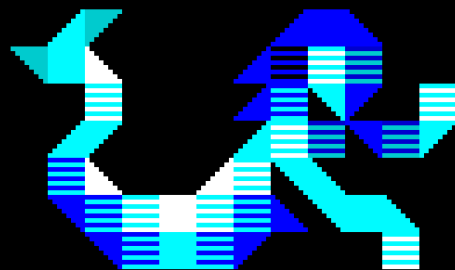
It was there that the Ghost-Ox met a fisherman who was strangely chill about seeing such supernatural creature. The man said that the path along the Gravatá Trail was easy, and started jumping from rock to rock like he was weightless. The little ox followed the path and stumbled across a big Dragon's head, which at first was ready for a fight. But it was just a misunderstanding: the old dragon-like creature just didn't want to be bothered in its sleep.

After some trek, our friend finally made it to Conceição Lagoon, but it was exhausted and needed to catch a breath. To his surprise the fisherman was already there, and at seeing the state of the little ox he said:

"Yo, hop in the car and I'll give you a ride down Rendeiras Avenue".

As he drove, the fisherman told some wild story that gave the Ghost-Ox the shivers.





The Iconoclast Witch

Josefa thought she was a good-hearted person, but every time she walked past that statue of Iemanjá, she got this crazy urge, from the depths of her soul, to smash it to bits. She always mumbled to herself:

"Ugh, what an ugly statue! How could this even be considered art?"

Her Church's Pastor was always talking about how it was an idol of evil, a pagan character unworthy of existence. One day, as she neared the statue, she heard a ghostly voice out of nowhere:

"The Sun's got thirteen rays, and so does the moon,
Devil's gotta jump to hell, 'cause this soul ain't his soon.
Rough and Bumpy, tail of a donkey.
Sting in your feet and whip in your ass.
Under the roof, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Fontist.
Over the roof, St. John the Baptist.
Witch, Great-Great-Witch, do not enter this house,
or this whole damn town, you louse.
By all the saints, of the saints, Amen!"

Upon hearing that, the woman was consumed with a primal fury, taken by an obtuse and quadruped hatred: her face, twisted into a scowl; her nails, became claws; and her words, turned into gibberish. With her Bible in hand, she attacked the silent statue.

Yes, those who witnessed such a scene say they've never seen anything more eyesore. In the end she couldn't really deal to much damage to the Idol, and just ended up making a fool of herself, while everyone at the bus stop was laughing like there was no tomorrow.

Some people say it was some long-haired boys who whispered that prayer against the witch from behind the statue. But who knows for sure? That's just what I heard through the grapevine.



The Exorcism

It was with the fisherman ride that the Ghost-Ox arrived at Josefa, the 3rd Witchlish General. A creature that was the living proof that religion does not guarantee protection against wicked spirits, or sometimes can even make things worse.

As soon as she saw the Ghost-Ox, her fury became even more frenzied. The possessed creature lifted her long skirt and spawned some Jumping Clog Witches, such as those from the legend of the Twin Witches of Franklin Cascaes.

So far it was the most hysterical varmint. She could not stand still, moving like crazy over the small Ghost-Ox, and pointing her book skywards, no longer aware of what was written there.

The witch danced like a maniac so much, stomping and jumping, that she got tired, and then stood still to recite words in strange languages. That's when our friend Ox exorcised that madness back to the very burrow from which it came.

The defeated demon spoke some sense before it disappeared into the ether:

"It's all that swindler's fault".



The Pharisee Preacher

Following information from the long-haired kids chilling by the Lagoon, the Ghost-Ox went after the Fourth Witchlish General. It hides from sun light in a stone cave, called Toca do Urubu in Sertão do Assopro, and our friendly Ghost had to trek through the woods to get there. That entire long walk to get into this gloomy place just to find an enchanted lamp and a note:

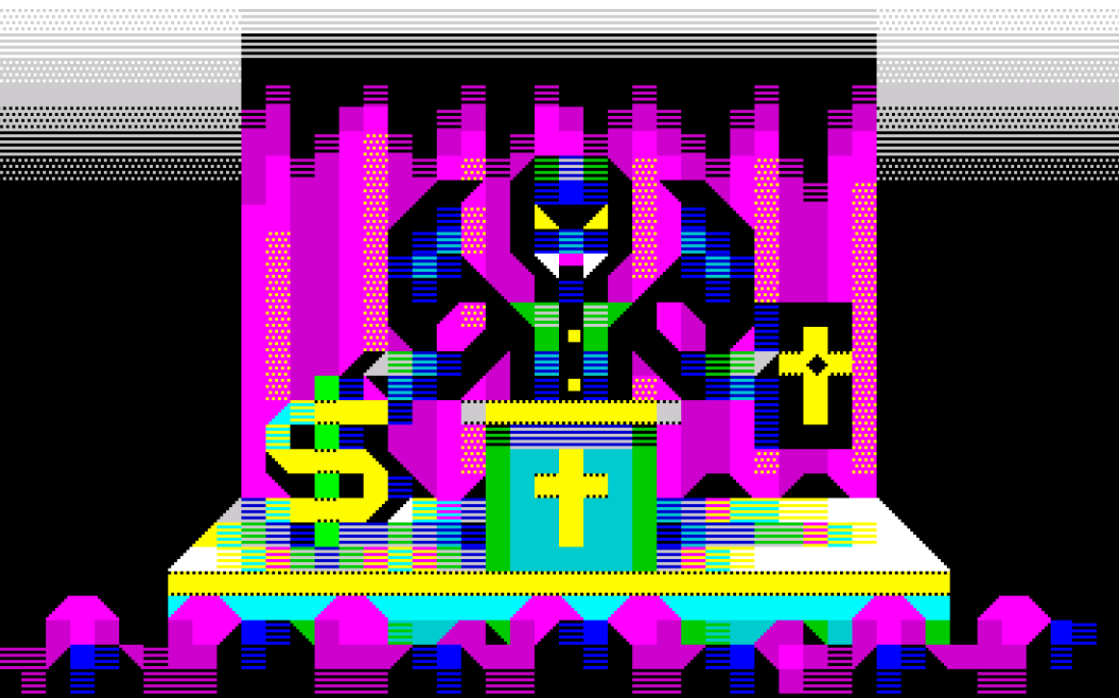
"Gone preaching, won't back until morning".

He then descended to the Costa da Lagoa and came across a scene straight out of a Jules Verne story: a Kraken, embracing a vessel with its tentacles and preventing it from leaving. The Ghost-Ox who was already becoming impatient, shot it with a papaya seed right in the eye balls, paralyzing the creature that released the boat. The Ox certainly hopped on for another ride.

It was already late at night when he arrived in that endless pine forest of Parque do Rio Vermelho. And in that darkness, he finally found the infamous bloodsucker: money parasite, vital energy burglar, a true psychic vampire.

At this very point, the Ghost-Ox was really getting tired of these long battles. All four elusive Generals from that Witchlish Apocalypse were tricky. They always made sure to stay out of reach from his attacks, sending their troops of impolite minions. But he also learned that being clever helps the small to overcome the big foes. Eventually, the vampire would be tired of flapping its wings and descend to ground level.

And so it was that the Ghost-Ox patiently dodged the winged critters and waited until the mobster descended and hit him with a powerful and accurate kick. A good whack sometimes has its effectiveness too.





The Ghost-Ox

If there is one long beach at our Island, it is Moçambique Beach. There, on nights of full moon and strong sea breeze, when the stretch of sand disappears into the infinity of that salty mist, fantastic things are spotted.

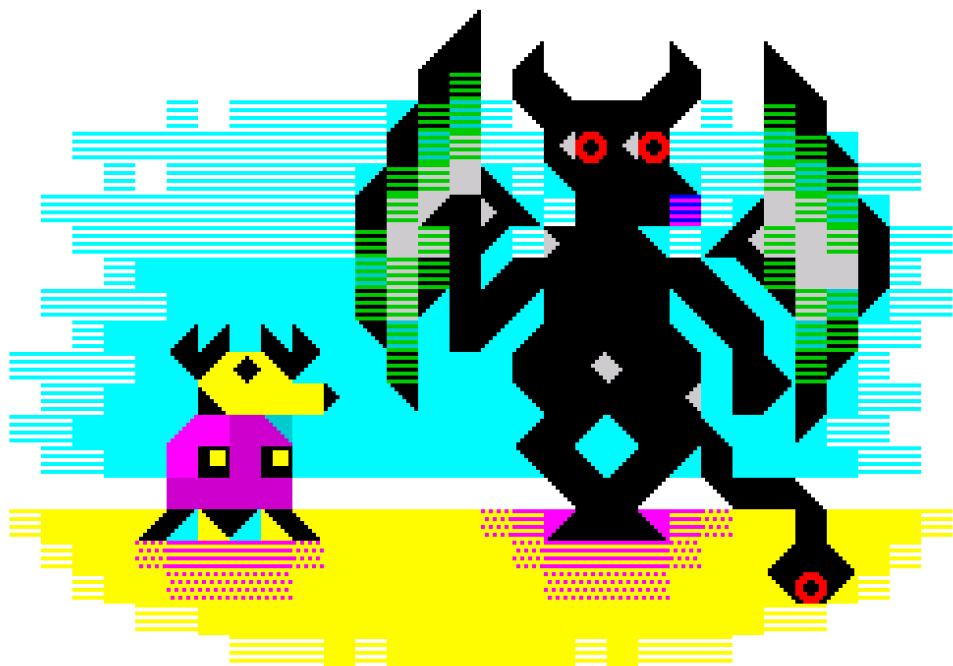
One night, some fishermen were keeping watch for the Mullet fishery. They spent the night in a small group, always looking out at sea from atop the dunes, enduring the cold while telling stories and drinking Cachaça. One of them notices something moving through the dense sea mist:

"Look, what a strange thing, it looks like there's a Boi-de-Mamão on the beach."

"Are you crazy, man? Why would there be such a thing on the sand beach at 3 am?"

The two fisherman were frozen, feeling paralyzed by such an apparition. The creature indeed resembled our Boi-de-Mamão, but different, more ghostly. The strange spectre stayed there looking at the two pale men for a few minutes.

Some say it was just a made-up story to pass the long night, or that the Cachaça had already gotten to their heads. But the two fishermen swear to this day that they saw the ghostly ox in the middle of the sea mist in Moçambique Beach.



Mon, I appeared on TV!

Lost, with no clues or direction to go, the Ghost-Ox wandered through the dense mist of the Beach. It seemed like he was there for an eternity, so long that he had started to forget his own name.

He walked, and walked, until, from the middle of the endless fog, he heard a deep voice:

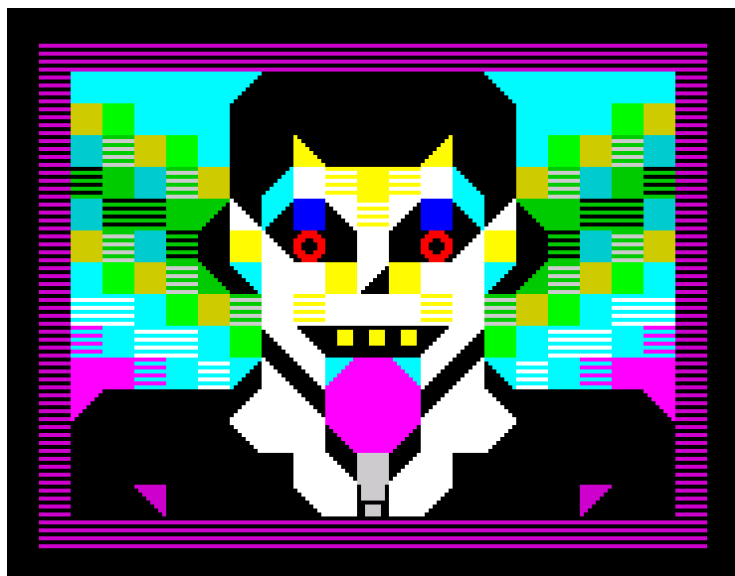
"I know what you're looking for, little one. The Social Climber Witch lives in the Itaguaçu region. Hop on my back and I can take you most of the way".

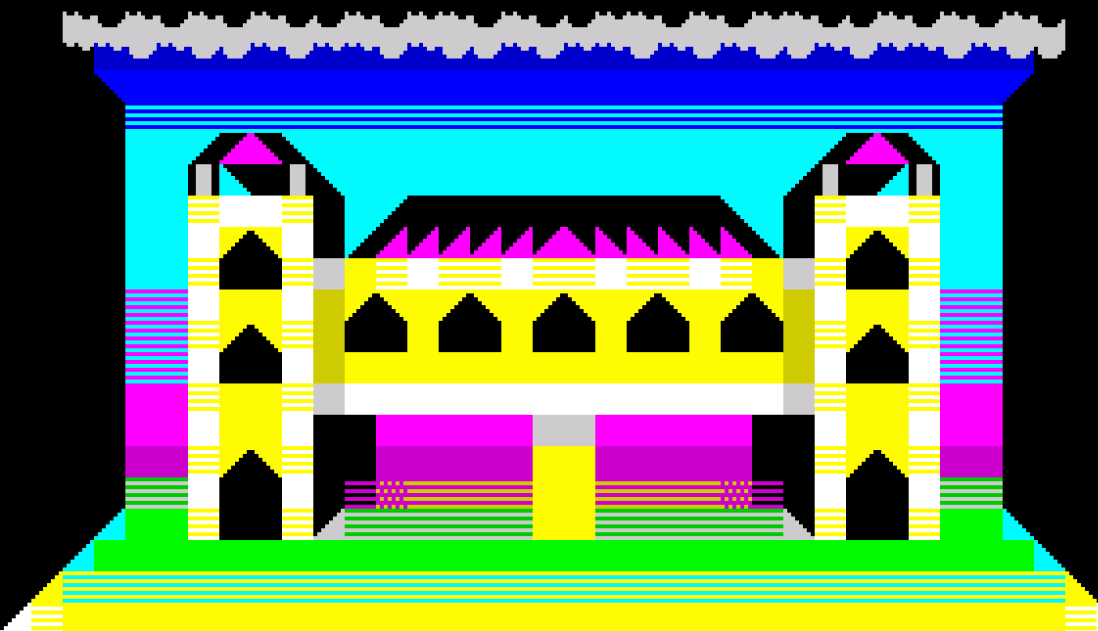
It was a Boitatá, who was meditating there, who spoke. Together they fled out from that sort of limbo.

Of course, some Tele-Receptive Necromancer had to try to stop the protagonist of our story, after all, that's why they're well paid. Flying Rag Witches and Witchcopters didn't stand a chance against the agility of the Boitatá, who moved freely through the skies. But it was impossible to dodge all the frenetic subatomic cathode rays shouted by some Diabolic Antennas. They hit the Ghost-Ox, who fell on the Cross Mount, between the TV transmission antennas.

From some big banner screen emerged a Tele-witchlish Apparition. With his glazed eyes and microphone on his neck, he summoned Flying Bull Heads to frantically attack the little Ghost-Ox.

But our cute little ghost knew that the weak point of such a creature was its arrogant vision: Big Brother's eyes, on panoptic surveillance, with its bionic gaze addicted to a single way of seeing the world. A well-placed kick on those crazed vicious spheres and the TV man loses all his power and control.



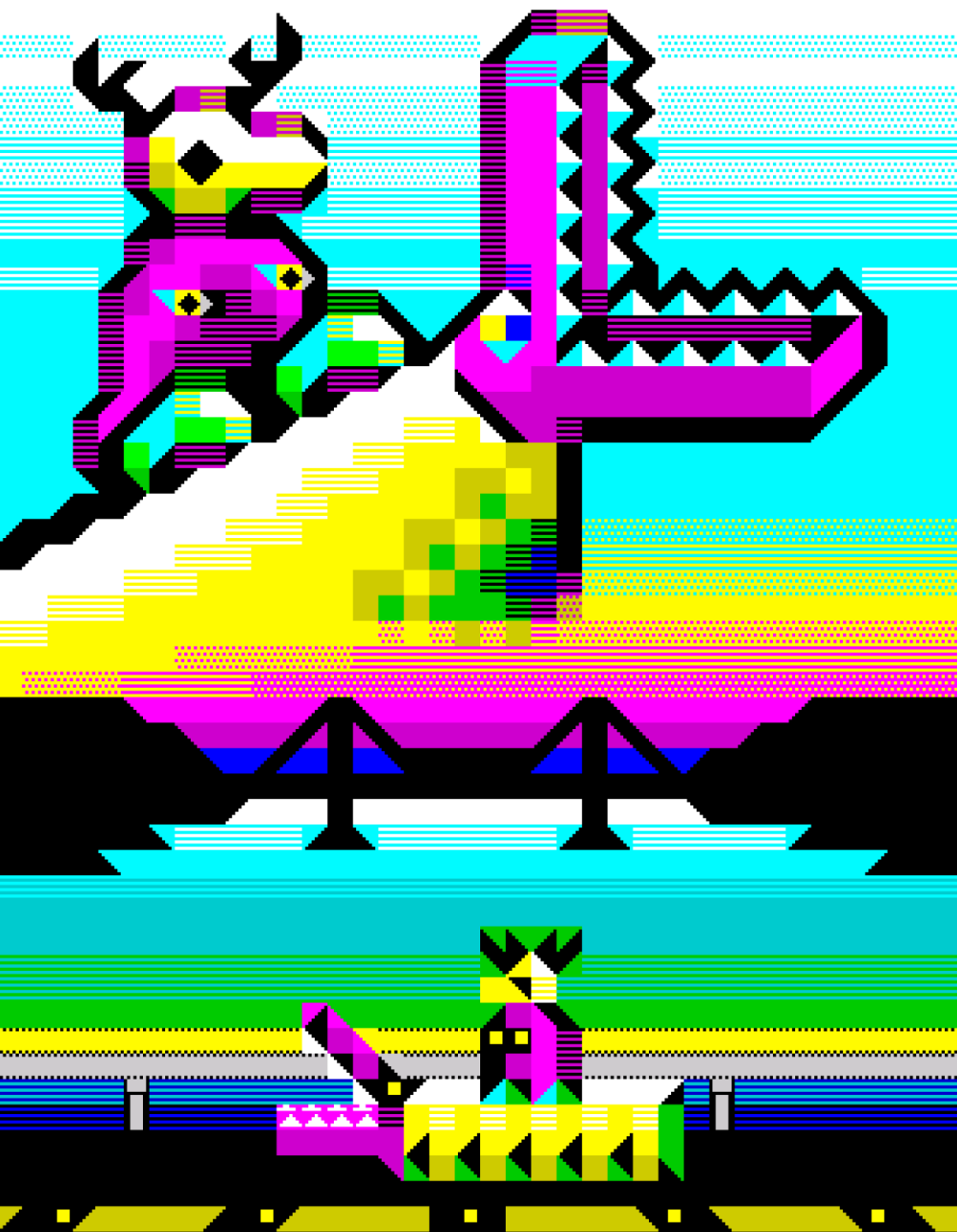


The Bernuncia Express

The Ghost-Ox was worried because to reach Itaguaçu he has to leave the Island and cross the bridge amidst the heavy traffic of vehicles. But as he approaches the historic Public Market Building, a familiar song could heard:

"Bernuncia is very wild, and swallowed Mané John
It eats bred, cookies, and everything along.

The story of how the Ghost-Ox knew Bernuncia from previous Carnivals would be too long to tell now. What matters is that he found an old friend and a reliable ride. The wild creature promptly took him on its back, sliding through the bridge in no time and dropping him off on the continent.





The High Society Witches

Some people, when they talk about witches, immediately think of old, ugly, repulsive women, complete hags. But in fact a witch's greatest weapon is her charm, her exterior and apparent image.

Charm is also a word that means spell, mandrake, sympathy, or seduction. And there is nothing more seductive in our world than a man or woman with possessions and money.

The biggest witchlish creatures in this town appear on social columns of newspapers, and hang out in the VIP sections of parties with TV stars and internet sub celebs. They get everything they want using the silver spell, rarely being unmasked.

They often elect among themselves, in their witchlish congresses, the Chief Witch, never by chance the one who has the most power, money, and possessions in this land. They live off the exploitation of the weaker, impoverished and brutalized by predatory real state, which pushes the poor into the slums and keeps them there by force, and expels the traditional fishermen with landfill and gentrification.

They ruin the land and also our spirit, as our Island loses its true riches: black culture turned into souvenirs, indigenous traditions get forgotten, and Azorean settlers' habits become an empty slogan.

The Berbigão disappears from the shores, and the fisherman's food becomes a luxury item, while Franklin Cascaes Witches are turn into weekend Wicca. Everything to shape this land to the rich ones desires.

And it really takes a lot of self-image of light and kindness to hide the real gloomy atmosphere, the ugliness, the inequality, the pain, the exploitation, and the suffering of the miserable life that the lower classes lead as they ride the overcrowded public transportation.

It is not the image projected by TV, internet bubbles, or social columns, that really count for what this world is made of, but is the reality, material and immediate, of the people who really work and move the city.

Finally, a great truth is imposed: there is nothing more witchlish than the world of money.



The Storm

And there she stood, the Main Witch, proud as ever despite her failed decadent plan to make a "scorched earth" of that place. She had lost her four generals and her army to a humble creature such the Ghost-Ox, who even lacked hands or arms. Little did she know that he had help from friends and comrades in this journey. Now she faces him, the complete incredulous President Witch.

So it didn't take long for the hag to completely lose her mind. As she raged and cursed, her head abandoned the body behind advancing irrationally towards our friend. Deep down she knew that her fate was already sealed.

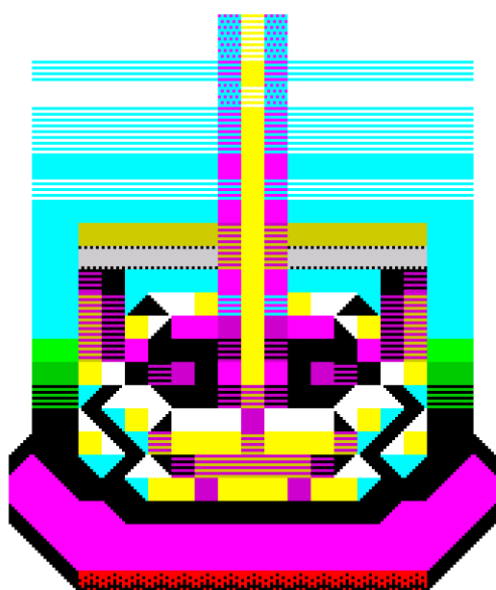
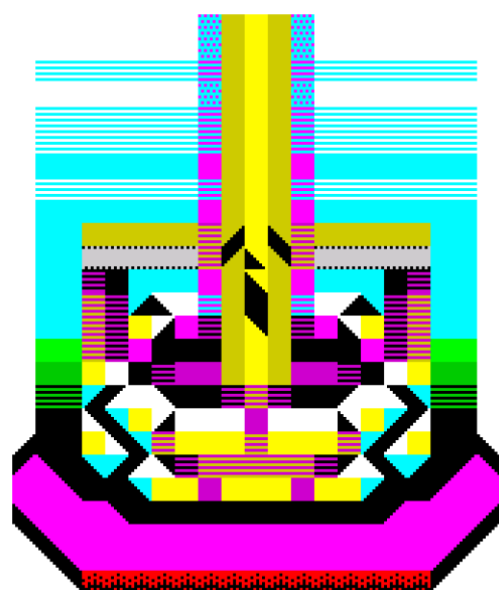
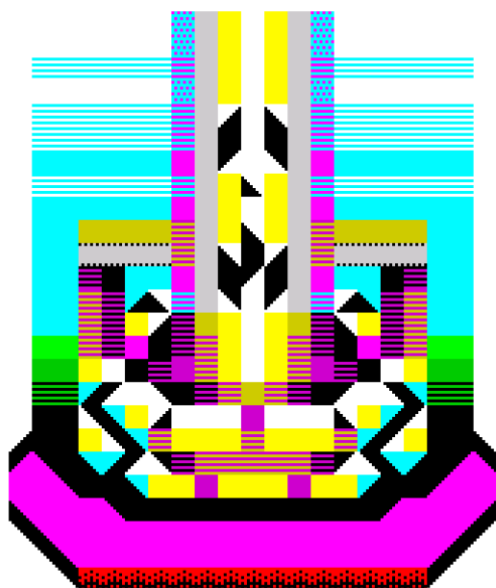
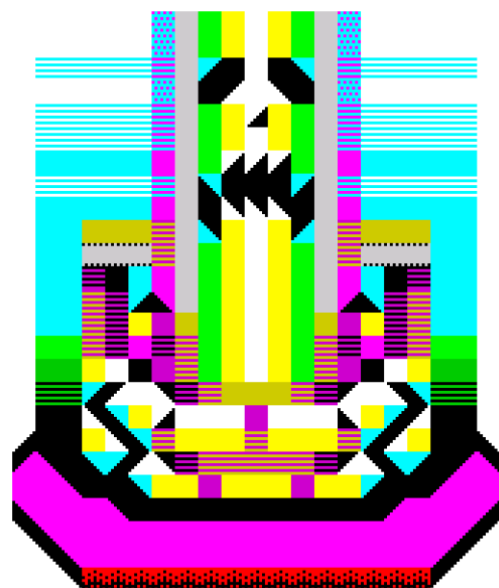
By this time, a burning wind was already carrying all that nonsense back into the well. But the witch was fueled by the same raw material as the lowest feelings, so all she could feel was hatred.

"I am in charge, I have the power, obey me!" said the detached head.

The Ghost-Ox still had a few papaya seeds left to use as ammunition against the creature, keeping a safe distance as he waited for the right moment to strike.

"I am in charge, I have the power, obey me!" - Kept saying the abomination.

From up in the clouds, the infamous bottomless well could already be seen just below.



Epilogue

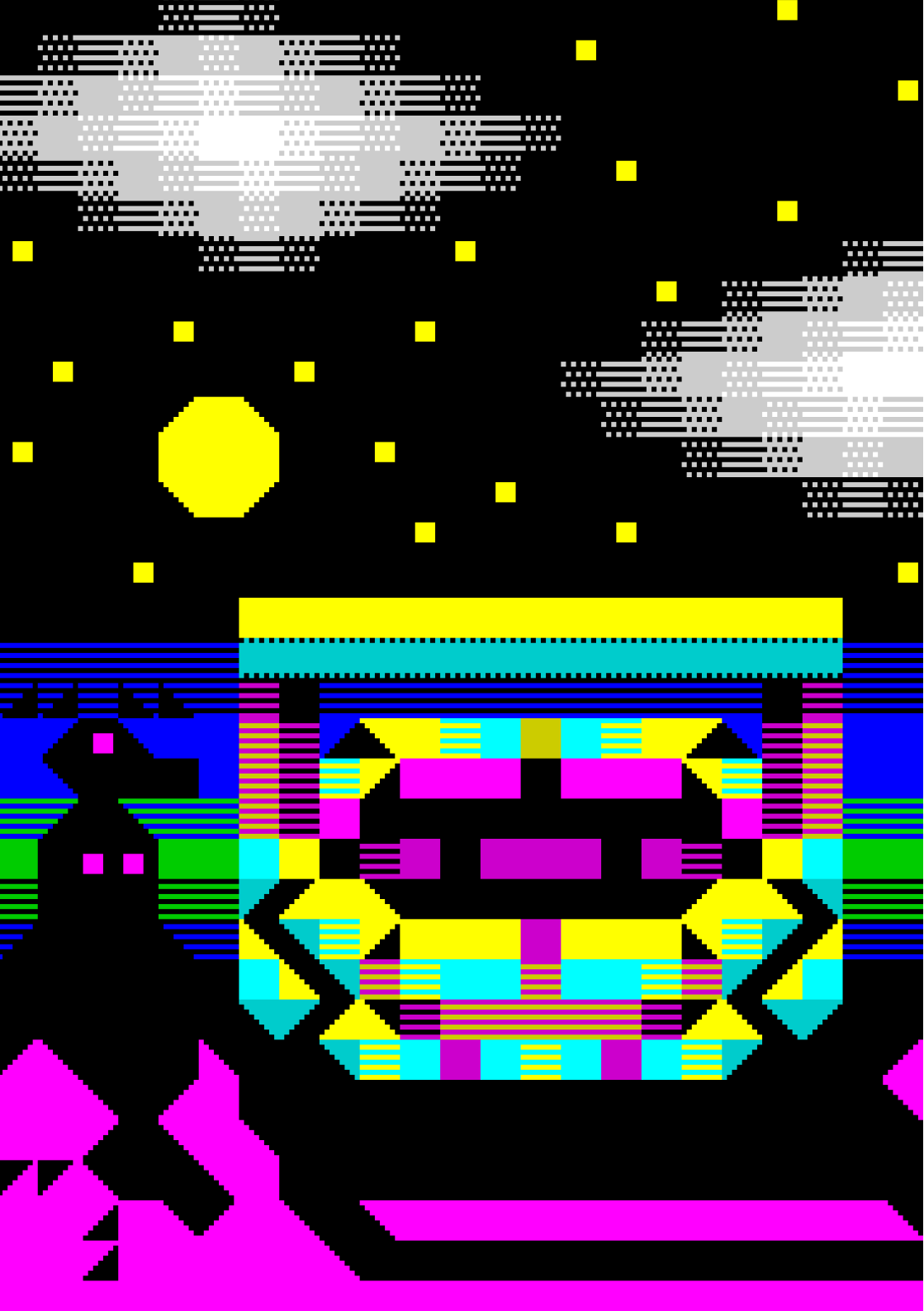
And all that malevolence was dragged back into the well, carried by that devilish gust of burning wind.

People say that the little Ghost-Ox, the Papaya-headed fairylish creature from our tale still hangs around the Pântano do Sul Coast, scaring any folk who approach such Pandoric Abyss.

What motivated him to his great feat? I believe all he wanted was to be remembered. May his story be told for generations, so he can continue to exist and fulfill his purpose.

Believe me, to this day, all that infamy, all that witchlish evil, is still contained in the infinite depths of the umbratic well.

Who knows how long it'll stay that way. But best be prepared, for when the well overflows again.





Glossary

BERBIGÃO - A small shelled mollusk very similar to a cockle.

BERNUNCIA or **BERNUNÇA** - Another folk character from the same popular expression of the Papaya-Ox.

BOI-DE-MAMÃO - The Papaya-ox, a popular folk character and dance on the Brazilian south coast, receiving other names like "Boi Bumba" on other regions.

CACHAÇA - Traditional distilled drink made from sugarcane.

FAIRYLISH - A translation from a neologism "fadórico" or "fadólico" used by Franklin Cascaes. Used as adjective for fairy creatures related do destiny, doom.

LIBELULAÇU - Giant dragonfly-like creature.

TRANSMORPHED - Translation for the neologism "transmorfoseado", used by Franklin Cascaes. It means something that has its shape altered, most of the time inanimate objects that gain movement and personality.

WITCHLISH - A translation from the neologism "bruxólico" used by Franklin Cascaes. It means something similar to "bewitching", but with a "devilish" meaning to it.

Illustrated Book Credits

Texts and Illustrations by Amaweks.

English Revision by Clive Townsend. Portuguese Revision by Ju.

Layout by Amaweks and Filipe Veiga.

Inspired by the Work of Franklin Cascaes, Gelci José Coelho, and by the folk culture of the Island of Santa Catarina. Also Inspired by the work of my parents, Osmarina and Paulo Villalva, both local artists.

The story "The Ghost-Ox" is inspired by conversations with his friend Luiz Souza, and in a short story he wrote with the same name and which describes what he calls "Matáriu", the "beach of oblivion".

Short story "The Mists of Peri's Lagoon" adapted from a narrative told by Gelci José Coelho, AKA Peninha, in conversations with Amaweks and Luis Souza, during interviews conducted in 2022 and published in Anacronia Magazine Nº1. Peninha, who during the post-production of this work passed away, and for this reason I want to dedicate a few brief words to him here.

Peninha, as if being a disciple and the one who dedicated his life to the conservation and dissemination of the work of Franklin Cascaes was not enough, he was also an artist with a unique and creative work of art, continuing the work of our great master.

Peninha, the greatest storyteller of the Island, and who represents to us, local artists, the great example of what to do with the legacy of Cascaes: preserve, disseminate, educate, but also create from that rich universe, "tell the tale and add a point," he would say.

Long live Peninha, long live Cascaes, and long live culture, all culture, popular, of all the people, of this historically repressed Island of Desterro.

