

A BRAZILIAN FAMILY IN ANTARCTICA

Building the Future

Rather than leaving a material legacy for our daughters, Amyr and I just started building something no one can take from them. Something that inflation or time will not corrode. Something they would lead for their entire lives, thinking about the responsibility we all have for preservation and our commitment to pass on the love of nature to others.

Amyr and I always like to travel, especially to remote places. It was on one of these trips that I had the opportunity to visit Antarctica for the first time. It was 20 years ago. I boarded a Russian ship and traveled for 20 days to the southern tip of the peninsula. There were few boats that could reach the Daisy Bay, just as it still is today. That was my goal and I reached it. The trip was so magical that I looked to return over and over again. Interested in returning to the frozen destination, I managed to go back another 14 different seasons, on board other sailing ships besides ours, and other vessels. On every trip I got to know a little more of the route that was to become my favorite on Earth.

It's interesting to note that since then much has changed. Antarctica has become an accessible continent for tourism, visited by thousands of tourists every year. Tourism there is explored through different means: by plane, ship, and even in large or small sailboats. Some tourists opt for ice camping programs while others prefer canoeing. Diving specialists offer underwater programs; the most prepared make trips to the ultimate degrees of latitude. Some climbers do mountaineering climbing. Groups come from many countries around the world. Of course, each of these activities has their price, often the biggest obstacle.

Although it's more frequented by humans today than it was 20 years ago, Antarctica is even better preserved, and reveals it-

self as a very well protected destination. The first time I went, there were several places I visited that had waste dumped around the shelters and scientific stations. Today the rules are clear to visitors, which guarantee the preservation, at least until 2048, when the Antarctic Treaty currently in force expires, and everything should be evaluated with caution.

Antarctica is an almost utopian destination, and in Brazil it has been associated with Amyr's name since the 1980s, when he made a solitary winter trip aboard the sailboat *Paratii*, crossed the Antarctic Circle and went to Margaret Bay. From there he headed to Spitzbergen crossing the Arctic Circle. Indeed, it was talking about this trip to our daughters that I realized that an invisible link always united us as we sat to have a conversation and listen to Amyr speak about his stories. Even when he talked about things that happened when we were together, I always preferred to let him tell it. It's funny to notice how different people see things while sharing the same experience. Sometimes, when telling a story about a trip we took together, his journey seems much better.

The girls were very young when they began to feel the absence of their father, who was away from home for long periods. They observed from the beach, in the backyard of our house, this go and return of Amyr. And often these absences took around 6 months.

I felt a huge void at an end-of-the-year party at school when they had no one to deliver their little letters, and an idea came to me one day when the girls and I were on the beach waiting for Amyr, who had arrived from another long trip. Once he stepped ashore, we asked him to take us with him next time. He was surprised and became thoughtful.

At my family's house, everybody thought that the idea was crazy, as did many of my friends. But it was already decided. The following summer we traveled together for the first time: the 8 year-old twins Tamara and Laura, Marininha, Amyr and me. On that trip Marininha, the youngest, turned 6 years old when we hit Cape Horn for the first time. We went together to Antarctica, and we couldn't imagine what would happen - that trip turned out to be transformative for all of us.

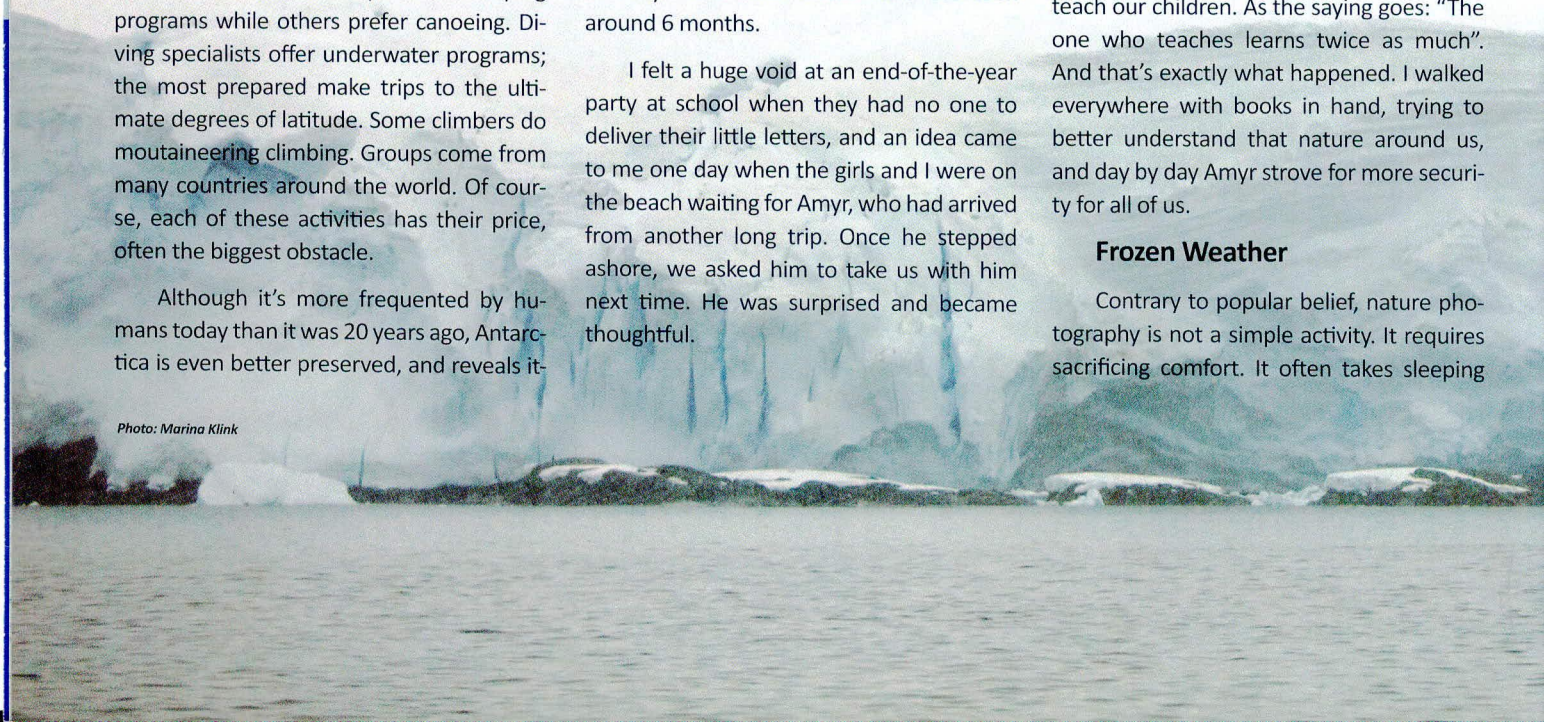
We organized in advance and planned carefully, as this holiday is quite different from trips of many people. Antarctica is a destination where there is no possibility to shop. It is a journey with no stores or hotels: it's exclusively a contemplative destination.

Living on Board

There is no Wi-Fi or mobile phones aboard a sailboat sailing the Antarctic Peninsula, and this has made us bond more each day. We established our routine inside the boat. For those who know what I'm talking about, boats have limited space. This led us to establish our routine on board and learn to maintain discipline. We learn to live with it. Another important thing was the exercise of creativity. It was basic for us to constantly create interests; otherwise the trip would be a constant fight among us. On a family trip to a remote destination, we ended up having to learn many new things in order to teach our children. As the saying goes: "The one who teaches learns twice as much". And that's exactly what happened. I walked everywhere with books in hand, trying to better understand that nature around us, and day by day Amyr strove for more security for all of us.

Frozen Weather

Contrary to popular belief, nature photography is not a simple activity. It requires sacrificing comfort. It often takes sleeping





Klink family

in tents without power or taking a shower, sometimes running the risk of freezing your fingers, carrying a lot of weight, walking long distances, or feeling too cold or too hot. The important step is when we can slow down; when we disconnect from the way we live in big cities, and create intimacy with nature. It is when we connect with the real world that opens before us. More than pushing a button and printing images, I have used the photographs as my own voice..

The photograph was the form I found to connect with what I like; it was the way I found to build a kind of very solid invisible bridge between people who may never have left their cities, and may never have stopped to look at the environment itself with the explosion of life that exists in remote places. Shooting icy landscapes and polar animals fascinates me, and I look to transmit their struggle for survival in the cold. This family trip was not only fun for them. We had an agreement that they would have the daily task of making their personal records of the trip. These records, added to the photos I took, eventually allowed for the project that came next.

I went to girls' school and suggested we look at our trip as a field study activity. It happened. In return they presented in the classroom, using the diaries as a source of content and my photographs as illustrations.

The presentations were repeated in other classrooms, in other schools and ended up making it to the corporate world, currently numbering more than 130 lectures presented.

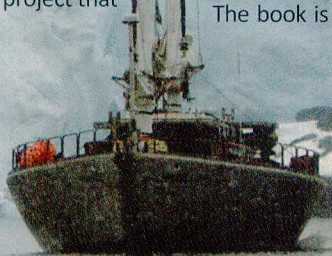
In one of these presentations that they made, an 11-year-old boy was so impressed he made a drawing that he gave us when leaving the auditorium. His drawing showed a whale and it read: "I'm going home to search on the internet things I can do to save the whales." That's when I realized that all they learned through us was moving forward and becoming part of the thoughts of other young people. At that instant I was sure that all our efforts had paid off. It is when we realize that we can make a difference to someone. The experience gained horizons when the content of the lectures became a book by the sisters called "Holidays in Antarctica." The book is now in its 7th edition, and it is

adopted in more than 60 schools in Sao Paulo, including public schools.

Passion for the Cold

Here at home, when it comes to traveling to Antarctica, Amyr is the absolute record-holder. Besides numbering more than 40 expeditions, he is also our greater supporter. He was the one who spread among us this great passion for the icy regions, and who made it possible for us to take our daughters to the Southern Continent seven times. Traveling aboard Paratii2, they could even sail the Optimist to the south of the Antarctic Circle.

Our daughter Tamara was even there twice more, but these opportunities came with the Brazilian Navy. During the 2014 summer vacation, she stayed home to prepare the material and participate in a cultural contest offered to high school students from all over Brazil that was organized by the Brazilian Navy. She produced a 3-minute video on her own demonstrating the importance of Brazil's presence in Antarctica and ended up being one of four winners. The award was the great attraction: to visit the



Sailboat Paratii 2

Brazilian Comandante Ferraz Station with the Navy and through the eyes of scientists. It was a very special opportunity for her.

But the best trips are those when we travel as a family, and we have that feeling that we travel as a whole. More than being together, the residual of a contemplative journey is what follows, when we see our children transmitting their learning about the importance of preserving nature to other young people. It's rewarding to look at the whole process and see that everything went right because we spent more time to-

gether, trying to make our children see the true value of things, the importance of valuing nature and the immense joy of returning to Antarctica again.

Being able to guide our children is a gift, and the feeling is summarized in the text that I read on a plaque affixed to the airport in Johannesburg: Alone you go fast, but together we'll go further.

Source: Marina Klink is a Nature Photographer, author of the book "Antártica - A Última Fronteira" (Antarctica - The Final Frontier), released in February 2014 in Port Lockroy, on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Photos from Marine Klink's personal files



Amyr and Marina Klink while visiting the Brazilian Station in Antarctica



Amyr Klink with his daughters in pinguineira

Photo: Marina Klink



Marina Klink on top of the pole of sailboat Paratii

Photo: Marina Klink

