

## 10.EldoradoXXI (2016)

### **Technical details**

HD video, 2:39 color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 125 min., Portugal – France – Peru

### **Synopsis**

*Eldorado XXI* is a haunting and mysterious ethnographic reality cut-up. Set in the Peruvian Andes at La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, the highest settlement in the world at 5,500 meters, it depicts an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt with the same tools and means, in contemporaneity as it has been dealt in the ancient times.

*Eldorado XXI* is a parafictional attempt to combine a sensory ethnographic approach with critical media practices.

Some eighty thousand people live in crowded dwellings in La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, without even the minimum for subsistence farming; they foster the hope that one day they will find the means to resettle elsewhere. There are enough stories of fortunes made randomly to keep hope and the fever alive. As a measure of safety, the miners chew large quantities of coca leaves. They carry the leaves in their pockets daily to deceive hunger and prevent exhaustion. If they live to work again the next day, it is common to celebrate with alcohol and to frequent the local brothels. This becomes a quick road to self-destruction, the only motivation behind it being to soften the harshness of everyday life.

Under the system of *cachorro*, the miner works for thirty days without remuneration and on the thirty-first day (if lucky) he is allowed to explore the mine for four hours for his own profit. The little precious metal he might carry down the mountain has now to be separated from the rock through antiquated methods using highly toxic levels of mercury. Then the value of the gold powder has to be negotiated in a nonregulated establishment within the community, and the miner will be offered the minimum amount possible.

The system is an unpredictable lottery; nevertheless *cachorro* means that miners and employers avoid “certain taxes.” It is a mental game, in which the possibility of generating a small fortune motivates the miners. To believe in and aspire to “something bigger” can be a greater motivation than a miserable paycheck at the end of the month; a constant low wage would simply not be worth a life of danger.

La Rinconada and Cerro Lunar are doomed towns, which will very shortly become ghost towns since the mines are running low on precious metal.

You are alone. You hear nothing, you know nothing, and you expect nothing. This is a mysterious film dwelling on the complexity of the human being. It stimulates the viewer to reflect and contemplate, constantly seeking an active audience. It will carry you on a hallucinatory journey. You will not be indifferent to it.



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### **Director's intentions note**

*Eldorado XXI* is a critical media practice parafiction attempt. Aesthetically similar to the majority of contemporary contemplative cinema, the *mise-en-scène* allows the action to unfold in its own rhythm. Drifting organically into non-diegetic orchestrated sequences, the film also lingers on a direct ethnographic cinema fashion approach combining visual sequences accompanied by off sounds.

The question raised is how an individual can carry his entire family to hell seeking a desired fortune and wishing to break free from poverty. A random lottery promises the awakening of one's oblivion of oneself. It is an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt with the same tools and means, in contemporaneity as it has been dealt in the ancient times.

The objective and the subjective are displaced, not transformed. The story remains truthful—really truthful instead of fictionally truthful. But the veracity of the story had not stopped being a fiction. The break is not between fiction and reality, but in the new mode of storytelling, which affects both of them. What is opposed to fiction is not the real; it is not the truth; it is the storytelling function of the poor, insofar as it gives the false the power that makes it into a memory—a legend.

To turn to the words of Glenn Gould: “No Man’s Land is the natural land of the imagination.” It is in this non-place where we assemble ourselves to resist the silence of the universe, in order not to succumb to the pure panic and the threat of dissolution. The silence of the abyss is strange to us, but we do belong to it, a piece of us abandoned to the pure possibilities, to the (un)submissive obsessions of any kind, to fear’s inertia, that we are falsely protected by conventions.

### **Credits**

Written and directed: Salomé Lamas

Cinematography: Luis Armando Arteaga

Sound: Bruno Moreira  
Editing: Telmo Churro  
Assistant editor: Rita Quelhas  
Sound editor: Miguel Martins  
Foley artist: Aleksandra Stojanovic  
Foley sound recorder: Vladan Nedeljkov  
Mix: Fred Bielle  
Color correction: Caique de Souza  
Original music: Norberto Lobo and João Lobo  
Production director: Raquel da Silva  
Production manager: Lali Madueno  
Fixer: Niche Neceforo, Leon Quispe Huaranca  
Drivers: Edwin and Nercy  
Catering: Juan Quispe

With: Adolfo Calcina Cotacallapa, Dayron Calcina Choque, Ronaldino Calcina Inofuente, Julián Calcina Calcina, Grober Mamani Calcina, Esteban Mamani Valegas, Lizbeth Calcina Choque, Reveca Choque Ramos, Cristian Rodrigo Mamani Meza, Denis Calcina Choque, Milagros Alicia Mesa Pacco, Padre Martin, José Mamani, Luis luque, Víctor Raúl Iquise Apaza, Arturo Calsina Ramos, Luz Marina Quispe, Jaime Chalco, Luisa Vargas, María Quispe, Vilma, Hilda, Ovaldina, Beridiana, Virginia, Lourdes Riviera, Elixabeth Montenegro, Plácido Bravo, Julia, Kalisaya, Goya, Amelia oblitera, Andrés Lipa Figueroa, Rusbel Apaza, Leli, Julia, Hugo Supo, Joana, Víctor Raúl Iquise (Alcalde de Ananea), Cinthya Pari, Argandona, Pedro Chambi Cayo

Portugal, O Som e a Fúria

Production: Joaquim Carvalho, Cristina Almeida, Fabienne Martinot, Sofia Bénard  
Accountants: Aline Alves, Amadeu Dores

France, Shellac Sud

Coordination of production: Francine Cadet  
Assistant: Marion Schreiber  
Administration of production: Cyrille de Laleu  
Assistant: Elodie Latriglia  
Marketing: Mélanie Vincent, Jennifer Kirkoz

Peru, Tambo Films

Coordination of production: Celine Wald  
Accountant: César Egoavil

Producers: Luís Urbano and Sandro Aguilar  
Coproducer: Thomas Ordonneau  
Associate producer: Maxim Holland

Translations: Gloria Dominguez (English–Spanish), Joana Cabral, Sublimages (France), Maria Pares (Spain), Isabel Pettermann (Portugal)

Sound and image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho

Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria

Sound studio: Sunflag

Foley studio: Loudness Films

Laboratory: Cosmodigital, Philippe Perrot

Mixing studio: Studio Lemon Pierre Armand, Fred Bielle

Insurance: Gras Savoye, Riskmedia

Support: Instituto do cinema e do audiovisual (ICA), Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC), Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International—Institut Français, EURIMAGES—Council of Europe

Région Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur

Development Support: FIDLab 2013 FID Marseille, DocStation 2014 Berlinale, Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD

Distribution: O Som e a Furia, Shellac Sud





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### **To the Ends of the Earth: An Interview with Salomé Lamas**

**The cinema of the emerging Portuguese director is born out of the tension between thinking and doing, looking and sharing**

*By Jorge Mourinha*

It's one thing to head to the top of the world to shoot at the highest-altitude human settlement, another entirely different to see the result of that shoot projected on a screen. But if the screen is the giant-sized IMAX at Berlin's Sony Center, the experience may be closer than you'd think. Salomé Lamas may look small next to either the top of the world or the IMAX screen, but the Portuguese director, only 29, is a tough cookie behind her apparently fragile and youthful looks, as can be seen from *Eldorado XXI*, the feature film she shot in the Peruvian mining town of La Rinconada, 5500m high in the Andes—a “nightmarish shoot” by her own admission.

(And not the first one. While shooting in Transnistria for another project, the KGB arrested and interrogated her and her crew.)

*Eldorado XXI*, an immersive non-fiction essay bridging Werner Herzog's postcards from the edge of human resilience and exploration and Wang Bing's minimalist observations of struggling communities, was one of the high points of a particularly strong line-up in this year's Berlinale Forum, and is now heading to New York's New Directors/New Films. It's the second feature-length work for Lamas after 2012's *No Man's Land*, an equally fascinating

deconstruction of memory and history, reality and fiction, through the direct-to-camera narrative of a Portuguese special forces soldier turned mercenary for hire.

A film graduate with a masters in art from Amsterdam and currently a PhD candidate in film studies, as well as a former DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm and Rockefeller fellow, Lamas has also a number of short films and video installations and performances under her belt. And while theory underlies all of her work in any format, she always wears it lightly and never forgets there's an audience in front of her that may not be familiar with it.

Her cinema is born out of the tension between thinking and doing, looking and sharing. Eldorado XXI widens the scope of that dichotomy, by engaging with the neo-feudal, post-apocalyptic landscapes of La Rinconada's mining facilities and the impoverished communities that survive there as best they can, in a multi-layered exploration of history, politics, society and capitalism that corresponds to Lucrecia Martel's definition of "political cinema" as raising questions and doubts rather than offering cut-and-dried solutions.

Lamas spoke at the Lisbon offices of production company O Som e a Fúria, in between arriving from France where she supervised Eldorado XXI's post-production, and leaving for Berlin for her film's world premiere. Parts of this interview were first published in and appear courtesy of Público.

Notebook: Eldorado XXI premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival's Forum. Is that something you looked forward to?

Salomé Lamas: We did discuss with the producers where we would pitch the film. Within the big carnival that film festivals usually are, the Forum is open to serious work and treats it accordingly. It's a carefully curated section, with a rigor that transcends the mere sidebar within a big festival, and that makes me very comfortable.

I feel happy being in the Forum, it's the right place for the way the film turned out, within a family of filmmakers that makes sense to me.

N: The Forum makes a point of looking beyond cinema, into the connections with modern visual and multimedia arts. That's something you do as well, switching between installation work and more traditional film.

How do you decide what is the correct form for each project?

SL: In the specific case of Eldorado XXI, the original idea was to make a kind of hybrid documentary, with a loose script and characters. But then it moved in other directions. The long shot at the beginning of the film happened because I was thinking of doing a parallel museum piece, but when I came back from La Rinconada I realized that particular shot could very well be a part of the film. From that moment on, I wouldn't use it in a museum piece so as not to cannibalize my work, and that led the film into a more radical, less classical side.

That was due in part to my own way of structuring and approaching the picture, but also because we shot in such a difficult place. It was a really troublesome shoot, nightmarish almost.

But back to your question, my studies were originally in cinema and it was

only later I did my masters in art, so the installations and gallery work are a more recent development. Probably, though, everything I've ever done has always had that possibility to be presented in either of those venues.

Some projects demand a more consistent financing and lead to different results. It's different to go to La Rinconada on your own than to go to La Rinconada with a team after two years waiting for the funding to come.

I'm always doing many different projects at the same time. This year I'll spend a month in the jungles of Borneo, and I have another project I want to shoot in the Middle East, between Cairo, Dubai and Beyrouth. Smaller projects that I fund in other ways, but that are necessary to me. Not just for artistic reasons but also so I can have a life like everybody else and a job like everyone else. It's really a way to live your daily life.

N: Shooting in the Peruvian Andes is a weird way to live your daily life...

SL: But there is a practical side to it. I don't have a romantic vision of filmmaking, I find creativity and talent meaningless words. I'm closer to being a cobbler, working on a craft you have to master in order to improve. It's all about experiences, and storing experiences, and that makes you look differently at everything. I find it utterly all about experiences, and storing experiences, and that makes you look differently at everything. I find it utterly condemnable that some directors shoot abroad in a very gratuitous way: there's not enough drama in the Northern Hemisphere or in the place they live in, so they go elsewhere in the world to look for it. Those films are very easy to spot, they're much closer to the militant, campaigning documentary, which doesn't really stimulate me as a viewer. I find lots of ethical problems in them. So, on one hand, it's all about managing your daily life, and on the other it's about that storing of experiences and your ability to live anywhere, about understanding how other places you can live in interfere with you and you with them. That's where most of the ideas probably present in all my work come from. The sense of waiting, of finding something surprising to me that I may find interesting to record; of me being an alien in a different reality, and how the friction that creates can generate a project, a desire to bring to the forefront realities unknown or forgotten.

N: But a craftsman usually sits at his table, while you travel around the world...

SL: That's related to a certain mental confusion, and to my sense of hyper-activity [laughs]. I like paradoxes, I like conflict, though I don't deal at all well with conflict. I don't like to shoot, so I put myself in situations I can't later run away from. Sometimes you need to have some luck for it to work out fine; you have to be on the lookout for something, wait for it to happen, whether premeditated or unexpected. But it's also connected with the inability to separate life from work, and with my need to do several projects at the same time. I may be shooting something in a particular corner of the world and then I come across something that links to something else, so I make a note and save it for a future project. You can't just turn off your brain and say, I'm compartmentalizing this. Everything happens constantly at the same time.

N: Do you find people have a different perception of your work depending on

where they come across it first, in the theatre or in the museum?

SL: I don't think so, but it is difficult for me to say because I'm the artist. That's something that comes more from critics, or curators, or even the institutions... It's never something I'm worried about. Also, when you are trying to invoke a lineage, that means you're not really interested in the work but in something else. I'm attracted by a series of things related to the ends of the earth, exiled places, margins; I'm always seeking the limits of the forms themselves, whether of non-fiction cinema or of presentation, showing the same work in different contexts. I don't think that theoretical reflection is what gets the films going, though. That comes from a more... kamikaze side of me, slightly irresponsible, though actually very pragmatic. I'm very aware of the risks I'm taking, which are always measured even when I'm pushing physical or geographical limits.

N: Why do you feel attracted toward those limits?

SL: I think initially out of curiosity towards people, towards all that's around me, and also with the idea of how to translate reality into a filmic language.

N: Your work invites the audience to experience the journey with you, and not just respond passively.

SL: Oh, absolutely, I don't like lazy people. [Laughs] I'm interested in how the perception of the audience changes. I like to push the limits of the audience, whether of appreciation or of understanding. I never liked going to a museum and seeing interactive pieces because they're usually accompanied by instructions on how to interact. I'm more interested in active viewers, and leave others to judge and reflect. Essentially, I ask questions, and questions bigger than myself, and bigger than the audience. There's also something else: a question always has an answer. However, that answer isn't always in the film, or if it is it's hidden in a little box, and it's up to the audience to find it.

N: In shooting in La Rinconada, I'm reminded of Werner Herzog. But his work has a more spontaneous, personal side, while yours is more distanced, very thought through.

SL: I'd love to meet Herzog! But I don't know what his spectrum of enthusiasm is. It probably bleeds into the films. I tend to play with the entire spectrum of what enthusiasm or emotion is, but because of the way I tend to look at things, the films look like they're very controlled. That's another paradox. I'm always looking to let go of control, but I need to have a measure of control. I don't know if both things can coexist, but I feel they do anyway... Just because you don't see me jumping for joy, it doesn't mean I don't feel it, I just don't show it outwardly...

N: You keep saying you don't like shooting. Do you take more pleasure in editing?

SL: I suppose so. Or maybe that's the way I found to live in the world.



[Laughs] I'm always moved by the pleasure of watching, not so much by sharing my way of watching. I take enormous pleasure in watching, but that's never enough. That's why you're always looking for extremes, because it's never enough to just film reality.

N: You make it sound like an addiction...

SL: Yes, maybe. But that's also got to do with obsession. You're always trying to go further while knowing full well you'll never go far enough. So it's that thing of the journey rather than the destination being the thing.

What matters is that I went to La Rinconada and spent time with those people. And that shapes the film, because the end result is always unpredictable. Beforehand, all I can say is, I'm going to go there and bring a film back. Now the film I bring back can be A, or B, or C...

N: ...but you don't really know until you come back.

SL: Precisely. Because very often I haven't even scouted locations, I just get there and set up the camera and shoot in the moment, though that wasn't the case in Eldorado XXI.

N: Do you recognize a through line that connects all your films? Like a worldview of your own?

SL: More than I used to, because I'm constantly asked to inscribe myself in a circle or in a world. Also, I can look at my work in other ways after doing Q&A sessions with audiences, or reading or talking with other people after the film is done. I have a lot of fun developing a project on paper, trying to imagine all the possible outcomes of a reality I don't fully know, and all I can do with it. It's a theoretical construct. Then I go out and shoot, knowing full well I'm playing with expectations, not all of which will come true. There's a more emotive, intuitive side to it; you need to react because you don't always have time to think. You need to be there in the moment, aware. Then, when I return home with the material, I can certainly go back to the theory, but that can be dangerous, because theories don't always work in practice. For the editing to work, I find I need to carry over that intuition, that emotional side from the shoot, while needing a structure. You have to accommodate the film so it becomes a film but then, once it's finished and you're free of it, it becomes something else, it's no longer yours.

Also, working with the right people can enrich the film vastly. They will open doors for you and allow you to explore territories you'd be reluctant to explore on your own. A dialogue may allow you to make a suggestion and somebody else will take it to the next level and you'll be thankful they did – that happened in Eldorado XXI with the sound work. You don't always have to have the most brilliant technicians in the world, you just need the right people to understand what you're doing as a person. When the film is done, and it starts being seen and read by the world, then you can go back to the theory, and start thinking how to speak about the film, how to put on paper what happened by impulse. This is one reason why I have a hard time communicating with people during a shoot...

Text originally published by Notebook MUBI publication, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

## Dialogue list

I

*Rinconada, Lunar de Oro only you know how much I've cried.*

*Ritipata, riticucho, pallaqueaba with my friends.*

*Dawn after dawn tolerating cold and hunger.*

*Dawn after dawn oh how sad life is.*

*Fighting mother you who work day and night.*

*Fighting mother you who work day and night.*

*While the men thinking themselves brave abandon their children.*

*While the men thinking themselves brave continue drinking at the bar.*

— I was the daughter of a single mother, a lonely daughter. I grew up with my mother. Who well maybe had little experience. I finished high school at 16 and I left my hometown. Cause my hometown is far. It's Allapata. I came to Puno, looking to develop myself and change my life. Well, I found a partner much older than me.

We spent time together, we became a couple but do to matters of fate we separated, with my four children. I had my four children, two, four, three boys, a girl. Which in the separation we separated in half with the children too.

Two went with him and I stayed with my younger children. Being in...entering the trade of a vendor. We met this man. I also was a radio announcer, and he had a radio station. We met and formed a friendship. He became a widower. He was left with five children. We began chatting; we became a couple and established a home. Both with our children. But things didn't go well for us in the course of life. And there we were...

So I thought to record my... album first so that with the sales we could get ahead. In the middle of recording the video clip our son had an accident. The son from our union. He had the accident during child's play, they stab him and he loses his cornea. So we became very indebted.

With the bank and with other people. We didn't have a way to pay, and we also had a lot of children.

He has five, I have two, that's seven, plus the child we had, eight, plus us that's ten. We couldn't feed ourselves.

We thought. "Where are we going to go work?" He works as a college teacher and doesn't earn much. He earns 282 EUR, which are divided in rent; he had to commute, plus the transport fare. It wasn't enough.

I couldn't be a vendor, because we had kids in primary and secondary school to care for. We couldn't make it. So we thought about coming to the Rinconada mine. Where everybody always said that there was progress and one could lift themselves up.

Blindly, on a January day, we came, my son, my youngest, my husband and I, the four of us. We didn't have money, we only had 11 EUR, and that too was

on loan. Sadly we arrived. This kitchen we didn't have. I had a gas cylinder and two buckets to carry water, my *prasadas*, the plastics.

When we arrived the market didn't exist yet, it was mud, it was dirt. We arrived on a snowy day. There was nowhere to hide, to store our things.

We arrived. There was a game shop where they played goals. I don't know.

Next to it I say. "Lord please, I leave you my children and I'll be back." We left.

I say to my husband. "We rent wherever we find a room." We didn't know anybody nor which door to knock on. So he said to me if all else.

"We will search in the mountain." "No!" It has to be on the outskirts of town where we'll go. So we took to both streets. On one street knocking on both sides. "Knock on all the doors see if they hear you. They might have a room."

"I'm also going to knock on the other side." We knocked. No!

Nobody has a room and they don't know us.

They distrust of others. I'm crying. It's late now. I think it was 5.30 a.m. My children trembling in the square because they didn't know what this place was like.

A man comes out. "Please sir! Please! Rent me a room!" "I don't have one. My sister does."

We knocked on his sister's door. "Rent to them." He says. "Sis rent to them please, one day this could be me, or one of us could be in need." A man comes out and says. "I can't rent to you. What's your work?"

We didn't know what to answer. We couldn't.

He was a professor and I was a vendor or homemaker, I couldn't.

What to offer him? What was my work?

He surprised us. I said. "Sir my husband knows how to work in the radio."

"Before we had work, now we don't, we want to work. We are going to be able to pay you!"

"I have a newly made room but water is running on the floor." "It doesn't matter we want a roof."

We went in with our things, adjusted things with plastics. We settled in and morning came. There was no dinner. We had to go to the square to eat rice with egg. It cost 0.70 EUR. 0.70, 0.70 and it adds up.

"What should I make? What do I cook?"

I had tripe I brought to cook. "I don't have money, what should I make?" "I have no kitchen or gas, a gas cylinder I do have." He ran into his friend of two days. Ask him. "Will you loan me money?" He loans him money. With that we bought gas and a kitchen, this little kitchen. We bought a kitchen and had no more money. Not a single EUR. But I did have a kilo of rice and a bit of sugar. I cook tripe. I boil it because I could now. "I'm going to cook this." I fry, I sell, we live like that for a week. One day we don't have anything. Only enough for their treats. I can't eat any more. I can survive. The three of them are men.

I have to give them more priority, whatever the baby leaves I can eat. That's how we have survived.

One day we went up to the mountain. To the peak. I say. "Where there're a lot of people there has to be gold. Let's *pallaquear* (minerals)!" He told me. "How do we get there?" We were embarrassed. "It's our last chance. I'm not cheating. I have something to offer!"

We arrived. "Sir please can you let us *pallaquear* (choose the minerals)?"

We weren't familiar with gold or metal. "Let's see if you can *pallaquear*."

He sends us to the minerals. "Yes there. *Pallaqueasen*." I am *pallaqueando*, soft stones, smooth stones, no! A guy comes. "Ma'am you are mistaken. You are throwing out the minerals." In one of those scuffs. "Well this looks like metal to me, this is gold!" I say. We couldn't find any. "Tomorrow I will also come." Please I say. "Will you come?" "No."  
Only his people were there, the owner wasn't, only his people. We also went on the following day, we sold four *palos* (sticks). We had 8 EUR.

— First we all wanted to *pallaquear*.

— The baby was also there!  
Sure he didn't gather rocks.  
He was too young.  
He was seven or six years old.  
The oldest was 15, so he's *pallaqueando* with us.

— I began to work with my son Cristian, we went to the mine.  
In the first attempts we haven't had any success. There wasn't any.  
We barely got enough to eat.  
Like this the days were passing by, the months too and little by little we have become familiar with the minerals.  
I began to work like any other person here.  
One starts to work in the lowest position.  
A laborer, a *palero* (carpenter), as a *cartillero* (machinery operator).  
I began to work. Little by little, I began to move up also.  
In different mines with no success. Only enough to eat, sometimes we came out indebted.

— I continued *pallaqueando*. - *Pallaqueando*.  
I recognized the minerals, I've worked here in the back, we've gone there.  
I've worked, thank God.  
Yes, it's gone a bit well for me! But him, particularly, in his work as a male it has not gone well.

Yes, I worked a lapse of almost two years? Almost, no?

—Two years.

— Two years with no success, but in the meantime my wife had discovered the minerals. It kept getting better and better.

— I think so, a bit of luck, and faith also.

— Yes, a lot of people have prospered here.  
It seems like a lie.  
Something I have learned from this experience is that Rinconada gives its blessing and its prosperity, to those who at a time have suffered greatly.  
I worked in the districts in Azangarro. People of a very low class, let's say extremely poor.  
Their children have come to the mine, today they are contractors.

They are successful.  
They are contractors in the mines, with money, cars, big businesses.  
Now they don't even live here.  
They live in Juliaca, Puno...

— It's not easy in the mine, not everything that glitters is gold.  
In Puno and Juliaca they say. "In the Rinconada mine the streets are dripping with money, gold."  
It's not like that as you can see. It's not so easy to find a gram of gold. It's not easy to sell it. On a snowy day you don't even sell a single EUR. Neither for the trader, nor the worker.  
On a snowy day you can't even *pallaquear* because the snow covers everything. The cold kills you. This is for the brave, this land is not...

— Not for everybody...

— They leave, sell everything.  
Their cylinder, their bed. They leave.

— Sadly.

— They leave because they haven't found gold.

— It is 6.00 a.m., plus 21 minutes, the time in all of the national territory.  
It is 6.21 a.m. my dear friends. Good morning my friends. Good morning at this early hour. An attack could have ended in tragedy.  
It occurred in the early hours on Sunday against the building of Radio Latina, in the neighborhood Independencia, in La Rinconada.  
The account took place when two unknown subjects launched sticks of dynamite, on the roof of the second floor of the radio station.  
According to the police it has not been dismissed that the attack was committed by some members of political parties to intimidate the journalists, who are investigating the aspiring candidates for the mayorship.  
A young woman tired of being locked up poisons herself. Her partner prohibited her from seeing her family and threatened her. She couldn't take that her partner would deprive her of her freedom, listeners. She ingested rat poison. She was taken to the hospital Manuel Nuñez Butrón, where they saved her life.  
More headlines. Four drunken subjects seized with a firearm, were arrested, listeners.  
They gave off four shots in the air near a bar, dear listeners. Four subjects were arrested by the police when one fled giving off shots in the air, followed by three others. The strange event occurred on Sunday afternoon when they were drinking liquor. When Luis Choqueguanca Colqueguanca 34 years old, who possessed a gun had an argument with Wilbert Chambi Alegre 27 years old, with whom he was drinking. He threatened him, with the gun to tell him that he had to buy more beer, my dear listeners.  
There's a person who has taken their own life in Rinconada, this is what we non-officially know. Yesterday sadly, it appears, we still don't know the motive.

It is very sad listeners that cases like this occur. No? People who despairingly make a fatal choice. That is not good. Never think to do that because that is negative, I believe that every problem has a solution. Only death doesn't have a solution.

— We buy the gold here and take it to Juliaca and in Juliaca we sell it. Also driving down to Juliaca with gold is risky because of the many robberies that occur. Now to come with the money we have, that is also another risk. This year four or five gold traders were killed. It could even be our clients. They see you buy and they think that we handle a lot of money and they choke you, sometimes with guns also. You are left with nothing, so many years of sacrifice and you lose it all. Well, Rinconada is for...For the people who... have tried everything, no? Then they come here. Yes...Yes, many poor people have gotten ahead here in Rinconada.

— My life was a bit sadder.

I came, I was called to *pallaquear*. So supposedly I was brought here, when they brought me I came. I borrowed some money. I didn't know of the *saca* (extraction of minerals from veins). We didn't have what to *pallaquear* with, we needed our own buckets, tools, and cylinders. We have to buy the water to be able to work. I arrived very naïve, since I didn't know anything.

For me it seemed that the gold had to appear here, but it wasn't like that. When you aren't familiar you don't know what is material and what is gold. A friend said. "The gold is here you just have to search for it." Therefore she would take a big bag, a small bag and a plastic bag. I took a big bag and I could never fill it with gold. I searched, searched and in one of the attempts I found a tiny flake to put in the big bag.

My coworkers had big bags full and I thought. "They have found so much gold!" "I have found nothing!" Just three, four tiny stones. When we had lunch I was afraid to go near them.

Once I was there two, three days, I made a friend, a friend who is a bit...

Who spoke to me. I got near her and saw in her bags. In one there were stones, in the other there were big rocks with gold, and in one other small bag there were tiny rocks also with gold. That's how we search for the flakes, that's what we call them here. "Ah!" I said. And they don't teach you.

We are selfish here.

I didn't know we had to make it *chancar* (crush the mineral).

She told me. "If you are going to *chancar* you have to pay for a *pala* (steel hammer)."

A *pala* is a *pala*! Imagine how many days you must work to wash and gather the mineral!

I said. "How can that be?" So I took an entire day.

You can't smash the rock into tiny bits.

It is the big rocks with a good hammer and I worked.

"Oh not even a bucket full I can *chancar* in a whole day."

Like that I have come to know about gold, minerals... That's how it has been.

— We are independent. We chose the time we want to *pallaquear* or also if we don't. No?

— Yes. If now we say let's go forward, we go forward and if not, not. There is no one who controls us. There's nobody. We don't have to work for a boss.

— Associations have work schedules. From 6.30 a.m. to 8.00 a.m., then after 8.00 a.m. They get off till 12 p.m. or till 2 p.m. Then they go in from 3.00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

— So what we *pallaqueamos* is the waste that is ejected from the mine. That's what we wash and those flakes that are left, those tiny rocks, that's what we gather. We don't have anyone to tell us. "You work this many buckets in order to get paid." No. Everything that we gather is for us. We grind it. We take care of everything.

— Independently.

—Welcome ma'am! How are you? Good morning. Get closer to the mic, the other line is open. How are you? Good morning.

— Very good morning Mr. Niche and in first place a very good morning to you, to the dear town of La Rinconada and to my fellow *pallaqueras* a very good morning.

— Let's see. We're with the vice president of Central de Pallaqueras.

—Yes. Please. I want to clarify something here. Please, I don't want any confusion comrades. All of this that has been done - these requirements - is with the objective of commercializing our gold.

— All of these requirements are placed on you by the Corporación Minera Ananea S.A.?

— Exactly. Exactly.

— Why?

Because all of these requirements make it seem like you are employees of a company. Then I would understand why they are imposing all of these requirements.

— Yes, all of a sudden they have asked for this...

— Why have they asked for this?

— Cause previously...In past years, they say, the Corporation has kept records and there were problems. There was trafficking of gold (Bolivia-Brazil). Why don't they monitor the men? Why don't they go after them like they do with my *compañera*?

— But...

— It is not a crime for a woman...I'm going to say this harshly. It is that in Rinconada it seems like the men are bugged if a woman excels.

— You can't generalize it like that ma'am.

— Well... It might be. No?

I'm not saying that all men are like that. That's why I'm saying. But the men here in Rinconada...

— When you say "the" you're generalizing ma'am!

— Well, I apologize, you are excluded! As I was saying...We the *pallaqueras* have existed for many years in Rinconada. "Since when do we exist?" For many years we've been here.

— But in an unorganized manner.

— Unorganized. Surely.

Now that we are organized, now that suddenly, one of our comrades has dared to participate in politics and run for office. Now it appears that a bucket of cold water is being thrown on them. No? "Why a *pallaquera*?" They say. "No!" Well I am proud to be a *pallaquera* and I'm very aware of what I am. It's not because of this that they are going to humiliate my comrade.

*For the safety of the citizens of Ananea, towns of La Rinconada, Lunar de Oro, Trapiche, rural communities and mining cooperatives, we will install video cameras, surveillance 24 hours a day, communication radios of the latest technology, and training for a safe and healthy district. This 5th of October choose the Quinoa of Poder Andino of your brother Samuel Ramos Quispe, a synonym for work and management. Friend and brother, Samuel Ramos Quispe for mayor, vote for the Quinoa of Poder Andino!*

— Thousands of people commute every day. Thousands of miners commute every day via the neighborhood of Compuerta, my friends. Nowadays Compuerta is terrible, it is full of trash, full of mud you can't walk in the area.

You have to wear boots if not you will lose your shoes. Compuerta is truly like this! We're not exaggerating, the quantity of trash that accumulates is enormous. It's tons! If we were located somewhere else or had another habitat and temperature. My God half of Rinconada would be dead from contamination! From that illness, from that plague that spreads with the heat.

Our good fortune is that we are at above 5000m, the temperatures are low and this is what has been favoring us. If not, we would all be sick. All of our children would be sick! The health center would collapse! It would collapse with this environment that we have. It would totally collapse.

A few days ago I was with some women. We did not speak about trash. We spoke about another topic, IDs. Do you know what their response was? With sarcastic smiles on their faces. "Are you crazy? Why would I change my residency? I am from Puno and I'm forced to work here!" But they don't realize that they live from this town. We eat from this town.

We educate our children from this Holy Land. While we don't care about the well-being of this town in the least bit. We aren't in the least bit interested that our town of Rinconada could change in some way.

*The force is felt Keiko with the people.*

*The force is felt Keiko with the populace.*

*It is the force of the...*

*This is the force of the young people.*

*This is the force of Leonardo Huanca.*

*For productive, transparent and concerted management.*

*For a safer, more ordered and healthier Ananea.*

*For sustainable and responsible mining for all.*

*With education, health and work.*



*This 5th of October choose the K of Fuerza Popular, for your friend Leonardo Huanca.*

*Leonardo and you with Fuerza Popular choose the K. Yes, the K of Keiko!*

*For the development of Ananea.*

*Choose the K of Fuerza Popular!*

*... is felt Keiko with the people.*

*The force is felt Keiko with the crowd!*

*Fuerza Popular! The K!*

*The K is Fuerza Popular!*

— For our work here, here we don't receive a salary. Here we receive through *cachito* and *cachorro* (payment agreement). *Cachito* and *cachorro* consist of us working a week and a half for the house. We work every day double shifts and the house gives us cuts. These are cuts we get by doing the perforation, we explode it, the gangue is extracted and we take out the mineral. The mercury employed in the job makes you more irritable. It turns you into a more explosive person. Due to the exposure to mercury. And the miner is crude! It depends. If you are lucky it can go very well and if you aren't lucky you don't earn anything.

Currently the mine, almost all of the mine Rinconada is running low. What we are predominantly extracting is mineral. Around here there is native gold. The gold in *charpa* (gold nuggets), this has minimized considerably, we can't find it anymore. So now we are trying to survive only from the extraction of minerals. We extract the mineral, we grind it, we *quimbaletamos* (crush-smelt), we sell it. The problem here is that we are a cooperative. There are more than 415 members, of which more than 60% don't want to be formalized. There's a group that is formalized. But due to those who don't want to be formalized, we are all affected because we all depend on the Corporation. The Corporation is the head. All permits are under the name of the Corporation. Lamentably the mine is drying up! Basically here in Rinconada there is very little gold left. Now what costs the most are the explosives and we can't advance very quickly.

— There are good and bad contractors. Contractors pay every week or biweekly for the *contrata* (work agreement). We haven't had any of the respective payments.

Contractors that... Personally mine is Walter Chambi. That has not paid us our *cachorro* for almost two months. Two months. Therefore we are here... Because he didn't pay our *cachorro* we stole a machine. Well, a piece of machinery so that we could sustain ourselves, at least a month with that money. This is why we are being held at the police station. At this moment we ask for justice, we ask for the support of the people and of all of the workers. It happens not only in this *contrata* but also in others. In Rinconada there have always been these complaints.

— Workers don't complain. They are threatened. Sometimes they're threaten to death and the comrades leave. They don't file a single complaint. They never return. The police department truly favors, the people who have money. Here there are very loyal people. So they put up with it and they are made to

suffer at the police station. Many fellow workers have truly been hidden, lifeless. It has gone that far.

— They hide them inside the mines and their corpses are never found. The contractors don't carry on their conscious how we work like a laborer under this system of payment and they fail to pay our *cachorro*. In order to support our family we place our life at risk here.

— Very well honey. Thank you very much. Very well, now...

— Thank you.

— Honey. We've listened to you.

— Thank you sweet daddy, thanks mommy...

— Thanks to you honey.

— Thank you *papito*. Thanks dad.

— *La Bella Durmiente* is a woman. They are three siblings. Another is in San Rafael. He is male. San Rafael mine, he is male. He is there and is the keeper of that treasure also. And she is the keeper of Rinconada. Back there is Aporoma. It is there in Mount Aporoma. It's on the way to Sandia (jungle). It's a glacier as well.

— The main one here in Rinconada, is *La Bella Durmiente*. She is known by that name now. She was also called for a while in this region; the miners used to call her the *Awichita*. *Awichita* is an elderly person but not in this case. It is the snowy mountain. That's the *Awichita*. They have a lot of faith.

— Every mine has its sacred place. A sacred place where they give offerings to the *Awichita*. Let's say they take their best quality coca leaves and leave her a little portion. They also offer her their *cañihuaco* (cereal), fruits, the best fruits. The best apples, whatever is of best quality. There are also fine liquors. They are small but they toast to her. The *Awichita* is only a big rock with gold, but it is a sacred place for them.

— Before we *picchar* (chew coca) we have to choose the leaves and give it as an offering to the *Awichita* so that we don't have accidents. So that nothing bad happens to us and that we always return home safely. We all learn how to *picchar*, those who don't have to learn.

— Yes...

— Coca is the most sacred thing here in the mine. The *Chinchilico* (treasure keeper) is a myth around here. He is a small character... People always say that he is dressed in gold...

— He exists, personally I haven't seen him. He has seen him!

— It casually happened to me. When I saw him I stood still, my heart froze. I couldn't speak or say anything. I was speechless for a moment.

— Not even his lamp, he said that his lamp went out.

— My lamp turned off by itself. He left like a figure. After a short time I left that mine because I was frightened.  
They have many beliefs...

— They ought to have them. That's the way it is. During the time I have been here I have seen many things. For example, why do miners die, right? Thinking about it and dealing with rituals. It's not necessary for someone to execute a ritual. Why has he died? Cause he doesn't have faith.  
First in *La Bella Durmiente*. They say. "It's only a rock. The rock will give me when I want." Right? He's out drinking he shouts. "The rock has given to me!" But he had not paid tribute to it. When the rock has given him 20g of gold. He sells it and goes out to a bar to indulge himself. In one night the money is gone. He keeps asking cause the rock is going to give more. But it won't give him more. Cause he hasn't given it, rituals, fruit, liquors. He hadn't offered, hadn't thanked the rock and kept asking for more. One of those times a slab falls and crushes him! And he dies! Cause he kept asking.  
The *Awichita* punishes. She gives but she also punishes. The mine is like this, isn't it? It has its props. Its large poles that hold it up. If not the rock can come down, those poles hold it up.

— The risk workers take... Every day there are deaths here.  
That isn't so much because of the safety conditions. Many times it is the negligence of the people. Desperately people here always want to gain a bit more.

— A bit more.

— A bit more for themselves and that is where they get sloppy. In other word, it is their ambition because they want to extract a bit more mineral to take home.

— There weren't any bars or nightclubs. Now there are tons.  
Now at night it is... Uhf! It seems like *Sodom and Gomorra*. Indeed! Those in the hills, lots of lights. Oh! My God! I get lost in those streets. Really! For the single men, for example the single miners work and take their earnings there. Let's say 280 EUR, they save 54 EUR in their room and go out with 215 EUR. Out all night the money vanishes. Others to show off put it all in their wallet. "I will spend 56 EUR!" The next morning they wake up without money, or without shoes, or wounded, or dead. That is how it is here. That's why they call it *no man's land*.

— That's cause the miners like women as they like beer as well. It's a form of distraction let's say, of the stress that they have at work.  
At home, they tell me that, they get tired. Right? Sometimes their wife complains also his children annoy him. They come here to relax. We don't mention the children, no? We play, we laugh, we dance. They relax.

We don't force them to come here. "Come!" They come. When they come they are always single. Even the very old men who come are single. They take off their ring. But others are honest. They say they have a family and wife. "I have my wife." There are some who are honest. But most aren't. They always say they are single. Of the girls? Let's say I serve here. I speak with one with another, let's say. They declare their feelings. "Do you want to be my baby?" I accept. Another. I accept. What if I go to the hotel? What if out vengeance they kill me? They fight or kill each other. That's the way it is here. Let's say that I talk to three or four. What if one day they all show up here? Who am I going to choose? They are not going to want to hug one another. They fight and take out vengeance on the girl. There are many deaths that occur because of that. Here at the mines everything is like that. No one is a saint, even the most saintly sins here.

— Lamentably it was reheated. What upset me the most was that I complained to the waitress that the food was old. She arrogantly said. "How can it be old? We just fried that up." But it was evident that it had been reheated. The potatoes, the chicken and the tomato. When we are served this food we're not being nourished. We're being infected with an illness or... Or some sort of infection this food could have. Thank you.

— Thank you, many thanks. Your participation is very important, we thank you for your call listener. There's a lot to be done in this regard dear listeners. There are restaurants that have terrible service. Honestly the clients don't even complain. "What is that Jesus?"

Yesterday the cook looked like a longshoreman with dirty clothes. He didn't look like a cook. We don't want to say more, but that is the reality of our establishments here in Rinconada. Especially where they handle our food listeners.

Let's remember that Chile was ruled with *manu dura* in the Pinochet era. That change hurt a lot of people. Sometimes it seems like human beings need a firm hand so that we can have change.

A short time ago there were three gold smelting houses in the market, where the meals are prepared. The alderman calls us. "We are taking action." What are they intervening for? To greet and congratulate them? There is no form of sanction. If there is no penalty we will never be able to get things right.

— The *blanqueo* is when they have made no money, not even for their costs. "Brother Brandon I've *blanqueado*. It's been four, five months, one year but I have *blanqueado*."

That's why others come and say. "Mr. Brandon, I want to make an offering to the mine, I have no luck."

Most come with these problems. There are others that come with sentimental problems, couple's problems. "Brother Brandon my spouse has changed. She's behaving badly. I have heard gossips." An infinite number of sentimental problems that a human can have. Those sentimental problems, as it's clearly stated, all of us can have and this is listed globally. But we see

through the sacred coca leaves. Also through the tarot cards, we see how to offer solutions. When it's a problem related to the mine we also see a way. How we can offer support? Someone who is greatly unlucky they mainly ask me. They say: "Brother Brandon, how do I make an offering to *Santa Tierra*?" It's very true. The *Santa Tierra* better known also as the *Pachamama* is a single one globally. Unique, only that in different countries they know it by other names but it's the single one. To make offerings to the *Santa Tierra* it's a very long task. It's as if you are giving food to the *Santa Tierra*. You are feeding the *Santa Tierra*. With your poverty, humility, affection, love and with faith and the *Santa Tierra* gives you in return! The double, triple and even much more. That's the *Santa Tierra*.

So to say, here we use animal fetuses, the fetuses of lamas, alpacas, the fetuses usually of the *vicuña*.

If you say: "Mr. Brandon I'd like to make an offering to the *Santa Tierra* for the mine." If you bring me a fetus of a pig, it won't have an effect. Why? Because that is not for a mining area. That is why the fetus of each animal has a meaning. There're a lot of people who sometimes make offerings with a human fetus, with the miscarriages. To my understanding and I have seen others, who are witch doctors, they do it for the money.

They make offers with humans with elderly people, young ladies who are virgins, young men are used to make offerings to the mine. It is a bit more, it might be 10% or 20% more effective. Of course that they charge you a bit more because obtaining those materials is difficult.

Not only is it harder to get that material but if I'm caught with that material it is punishable by law!

Here in this town of Rinconada there have been found... There have been people without hearts found, lying dead on the street but without a heart.

They're missing organs. Surely, the result that it gives you are bit more effective. What worth does that money have that you're going to earn? Then the fact that you've burnt a man will lie on your conscious. Although they're already dead it doesn't matter you have burnt them.

— Here as the saying goes: "Rinconada is *no man's land*." It's *no man's land*. Why do I say that? Because there is a lot of death, massacres, many hidden deaths, hidden corpses and many missing family members. Meaning it is basically corrupt. Corrupt! *No man's land* where I come without knowing. They already know that the person they are looking at is clueless. So they take him to the mine.

They call it the great *Pagachi* (ritual). They do that to the little ones of seven or eight, to young men and young ladies. They take them. Some say that they give them something in the food to make them fall asleep. Or they take them to night clubs here. They take them, offer them booze and the young men fall asleep. They take their warm sleeping bodies to the mine. They take them around everything... The chimneys, everything... They take them back and take out their hearts. Their hearts are found in the mine right inside the rock.

They *challan* everything, the blood of what they didn't take. The corpse they take it and toss it in the landfill. So that is why a lot of dead bodies appear, corpses, in bags placed in the trash, but without a heart. There are others that are unrecognizable.

A person disappears and fliers after fliers... Hmm on wall after wall appear. Such and such person has disappeared and he's never found. If they sometimes find a tossed corpse it is two months, three months or four months later.

Many times this happens not only because of inopportune opportunists. There are a lot of shootings. There are a lot of stray bullets. There are a lot of cases of corruption and of theft here. Since the authorities allow this. They are corrupt, even the shamans give them money. Others give them money and the authorities turn a blind eye. It is basically their wage. Practically like their minimum wage that they take from the land of Rinconada.

II

— I always forget about the *Awichita*.  
I never remember her.

— I didn't *picchar* at all.

— You didn't chew?

— When I'm around them they say that you should chew or you won't find gold.

— Well, young lady if you don't chew...

— I do chew here.  
When I go to the... I *piccho*.

— You do everything with coca. When you don't *picchas* there's no strength.

— No strength. You become hungry. Your head hurts.

— That's how it is.

— That is why here I only want to chew with baking soda. Here... "Where is the coca?" I keep looking for it.

— Here you *picchas* at home?

— At home I also *piccho*. I use it as a rub. In the evenings my knee hurts, also my feet with the cold...

— On Tuesdays I also chew.

— I don't do coca at home but up here always.

— Me too.

— When your brother isn't there also I chew and when he arrives upss... She can't make it without chewing. Here you are in the mine...

— We are in the mine...

— *Awichita*, only... to work we chew.

— I also don't chew.

— To do laundry I also chew. I go gather coca and quickly I go. Quickly...

— If I don't chew up here I get dizzy.

— It's the gas, the extracted material has that smell. So when you chew coca it goes by quickly. You don't feel it.

— You don't even feel fatigued at all.

— But when you don't chew forget it.

— Also when you don't bring your own coca... When they give you some. You don't feel right. They don't give you very much. It's not the same, they give you very little.

— It warms you up, doesn't it? It warms you up.

— Yes...

— They told me I have smoke...

— In the lungs?

— What do you have? Smoke in the lungs?

— What?

— Smoke.

— Smoke?

— It blackens you. That's what I've heard...

— The stuff we *chancamos* releases off dust.

— By a lot they tell me, he who has checked me...

— Oh God!

— I like it. I smoke.

— I like it too.

— Work will kill us. *Picchando*...

— We will die anyway.

— From gas poisoning also.

— Yes?

— I like to smoke tobacco... The smell makes me feel good.

— She's smoking cigars...

— All this formalization has failed. That's why... Hernando de Soto, a global economist says. "The government has not been formalizing you on the contrary it has been de-formalizing you." That's true! Before we used to work in a well-organized way. We had a work schedule... Aid was provided. Now we are criticized on the radio. Those who have left return... There is no order.

— It's Ollanta's (Humala - President) fault that we lost the gold.

— Yes, it was Ollanta's fault.

— We lost the gold.

— Yes. Who supports the miners first?

— Hum. The miners...

— Yes. He won because of Puno.

— Ollanta won because of the mining sector.  
He wouldn't have won.

— Will they support us...

— ... If the lady wins?

— Who will win? Who will be elected?  
Who will support us? Nobody.

— Who might be elected to office?

— That's not the worst part...

— Keiko (Fujimori) might win. Weren't you telling me that yesterday? You told me. "It will be Keiko." Didn't you?



- Who will win? Alan García (Aprista Peruano)?
- Alan García can return (President 1985-90/2006-11).
- With (Alejandro) Toledo (President 2001/06) it has not been like that.
- No, they created the laws.
- Toledo? Who did?
- Yes. Toledo started, Alan García followed, Ollanta implemented. Ollanta has just been implementing the laws. Nothing else.
- ... El Chino created the laws (Fujimori President 1990-2000).
- El Chino was selling out Peru.
- He would have sold us too.
- He wanted to sell us. I guess! His daughter might win now.
- If she wins, will she sell us?
- Chileans...
- It can't be Chileans in here. Where does Keiko come from? From Japan?
- Keiko was born here. His father and mother were Japanese I believe. No matter who it is. They'll all cheat us. No matter who wins. No government will come and say. "Ladies you have been suffering in such a way" Or. "We'll provide aid." The head of county was elected. He asked for our support. Will he show up here? Never. Whoever becomes the mayor, it doesn't matter who, everything will remain the same.
- Asociación Central Base Lunar de Oro...
- You could take it down to legalization maybe...
- No, now you are going to legalize, how are you going to do that? It's no longer going to be called Base Comité de Lucha Cerro Lunar de Oro?
- No. It's never been called that Mrs. Aida.
- Yes?
- Comité de Lucha Base Lunar de Oro, always...
- It's Asociación de Pallaqueras Central Cerro Lunar. Mrs. Luisa isn't it right?

— Yes.

— Mrs. Luisa we don't have anything ready, not even copies. Or maybe a letter of...

— No, it says Asociación Central.

— I don't have it.

— Convened by Comité de Lucha Base Cerro Lunar.

— Yes.

— I've always done it like that, you know.

— Comité de Lucha is made...

— Comité is as it's always been.

— Until now.

— Comité Rinconada for example... Lucha Base Rinconada...

— Ladies!

— They do it like that at the Corporation.

— Look. It reads. "President of Comité de Lucha de la Asociación de Pallaqueras."

— Let's see ladies come to this side please. The meeting is serious we aren't here to sit around.

— We are not going to postpone the meeting because of one association. We can't postpone this meeting for one association. We have a majority there're six associations present now. From Mercedes put your hands up!

— I don't know, only five...

— From Mercedes!

— Five of us are here.

— Damn it!

— Title the minutes as ordinary.

— This is not an ordinary meeting, it's extraordinary.

— No.

— This meeting is ordinary! When it's extraordinary it's simpler.

— Today we were going to meet simply to talk about the... The document we are going to present to the Public Registry. Isn't that so? Comrades I'm asking you all, is this the case or not? Participate comrades! I won't talk like a crazy person, this is not how things work. I guess we are associations and organizations. We must be more united every day.

— Last time it was ordinary, with a lot of people. As I was commenting with the sir. Today it's small. It's extraordinary.

— Write extraordinary then.

— At extraordinary meetings only one topic is addressed.

— I have a pen.

— Yes

— The presidents should leave their cell numbers for us to get in touch in case of an emergency.

*In the heart of Mount San Francisco,  
In the river, wind and snow.  
There you find the strong and fighting men of today.  
Rinconada, land of miners.  
Where contractors, pallaqueras and merchants work.  
Where I spend my life next to them.  
Happy day Rinconada.*

—Thank you.

— You are going to follow my steps.

— Ok.

— Almighty God. Brothers tonight I want you to understand me very well. When I say to repeat the prayer you are going to repeat it. Meaning you are going to follow my steps. The first six leaves. This is your job. This is the *Santa Tierra Pachamama*, the *Awichita* who's always with us. This is your health and this is protection, so nothing bad happens to you here in this mining center.  
My Lord.

— My Lord.

— Holy God. Almighty God.

— Holy God. Almighty God.

— On this night. Holy night. I ask you. To my name.

— On this night. Holy night...

— ... Protect me... Bless me... Almighty God.

—... Bless me... Almighty God.

— Holy *Santa Tierra*...

—Holy *Pachamama*... I ask you.... On this night... and I offer...  
with affection... with humility...with love... my offering. Thank you... *Tierra Santa*. Amen.

— Brother ask for what you want so that you can... Set your table.

— Mentally?

— You can speak out loud or say it mentally.

— My God, Holy God, Almighty God. Blessed Lord in your name illuminate him. Jesus, blessed God, blessed God, Lord, Holy God, Holy God, God Almighty, Lord... Give him strength so that he may have success in his work at the mine. Illuminate him blessed God. *Santa Tierra* give him strength, give him power. Protect him of all danger, of all the envious people, selfish people, spiteful people. So that he may have success at work, for the well-being of his family. Give him strength blessed *Santa Tierra*, Holy *Pachamama* in your name cleanses him. I present at this moment your son, on this holy night with this holy mass. So that he may succeed in all aspects of his work during this year 2015. Amen. Do this three times.

It won't take much longer. We are almost finished.

— Thank you Lord Jesus for your glorious resurrection. Make it so that every one of us, leaves behind our tomb of sin, and lives as if resurrected among others.

*Our Father, Who art in heaven;  
Hallowed be Thy Name;  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.*

Long live this cross of May!

— Long live!

— Long live the *alferados* (religious patron) of this year 2015!

— Long live!

— Long live the new *alferados* for the year 2016!

— Long live!

— We congratulate dear brothers and sisters with a loud applause the... the new *alferados*, the main *alferado*, the number one *alferado*, let's hear it! Take your hats off mothers or your face will be covered and Jesus won't see you.

— Padre Martin.

*My life is ending,  
I will never look for you.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sad...  
like you killed my poor heart.  
With a glass of beer...  
I would not have this sadness.  
For you my Love!  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.*

— People of Rinconada! Get up, get up! That's it!  
The Rosales family! Where is the Rosales family? Give us a shout!  
Yes, yes, yes! People of Rinconada! And Lunar! Get up! Lunar!  
That's it! That's it! That's it! Like this! Like this!

Sound and image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho  
 Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria  
 Sound studio: Sunflag  
 Foley studio: Loudness Films  
 Mixing studio: Studio Lemon, Pierre Armand, Fred Bielle  
 Laboratory: Cosmigital, Philippe Perrot  
 Insurance: Gras Savoye, Riskmedia  
 Support: ICA – Instituto do cinema e do audiovisual, CNC – Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International – Institut Français, EURIMAGES – Council of Europe  
 Région Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur  
 Développement Support: IDLab 2013 FD  
 Marseille, Berlinale – DocStation 2014, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD

#### DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS NOTE

*Eldorado XXI* is a critical media practice purification attempt. Aesthetically similar to the majority of contemporary contemplative cinema, the mise-en-scène allows the action to unfold in its own rhythm. Drifting organically into non-diegetic orchestrated sequences, the film also lingers on a direct ethnographic cinema fashion approach combining visual sequences accompanied by off sounds.  
 The question raised is how an individual can carry his entire family to hell seeking a desired fortune and wishing to break free from poverty. A random lottery promises the awakening of one's oblivion of oneself. It is an illusion that leads men to self-destruction, moved by the same interests, dealt with the same tools and means, in contemporaneity as it has been dealt in the ancient times.  
 The objective and the subjective are displaced, not transformed. The story remains truthful—really truthful instead of fictionally truthful. But the veracity of the story had not stopped being a fiction. The break is not between fiction and reality, but in the new mode of storytelling, which affects both of them. What is opposed to fiction is not the real, it is not the truth; it is the storytelling function of the poor, insofar as it gives the false the power that makes it into a memory—a legend.  
 To turn to the words of Glenn Gould: "No Man's Land is the natural land of the imagination." It is in this non-place where we assemble ourselves to resist the silence of the universe, in order not to succumb to the pure panic and the threat of dissolution. The silence of the abyss is strange to us, but we

do belong to it, a piece of us abandoned to the pure possibilities, to the (un)submitive obsessions of any kind, to fear's inertia, that we are falsely protected by conventions.

#### IALOGUE LIST

I  
 — Rinconada, *Lunar de Oro* only you know how much I've cried. *Ritipata, riticucho, pallaqueabo* with my friends.  
*Dawn after dawn tolerating cold and hunger. Dawn after dawn oh how sad life is. Fighting mother you who work day and night. Fighting mother you who work day and night. While the men thinking themselves brave abandon their children. While the men thinking themselves brave continue drinking at the bar.*  
 — I was the daughter of a single mother, a lonely daughter.  
 I grew up with my mother.  
 Who well maybe had little experience.  
 I finished high school at 16 and I left my hometown.  
 Cause my hometown is far.  
 It's Alapata.  
 I came to Puno, looking to develop myself and change my life.  
 Well, I found a partner much older than me.  
 We spent time together, we became a couple but do to matters of fate we separated, with my four children. I had my four children, two, four, three boys, a girl.  
 Which in the separation we separated in half with the children too.  
 Two went with him and I stayed with my younger children.  
 Being in... entering the trade of a vendor.  
 We met this man.  
 I also was a radio announcer, and he had a radio station.  
 We met and formed a friendship.  
 He became a widower.  
 He was left with five children.  
 We began chatting, we became a couple and established a home.  
 Both with our children.  
 But things didn't go well for us in the course of life.  
 And there we were...  
 So I thought to record my...  
 —Album first so that with the sales we could get ahead.  
 In the middle of recording the video clip our son had an accident.  
 The son from our union.  
 He had the accident during child's play, they stab him and he loses his cornea.  
 So we became very indebted.

I am *pallaqueando*, soft stones, smooth stones, not!  
 A guy comes. "Ma'am you are mistaken. You are throwing out the minerals."  
 In one of those scuffs. "Well this looks like metal to me, this is silver." I say.  
 We couldn't find any. "Tomorrow I will also come."  
 Please I say. "Will you come?" "No."  
 Only his people were there, the owner wasn't, only his people.  
 We also went on the following day, we sold four *palos* (sticks). We had 8 EUR.  
 —First we all wanted to *pallaquear*.  
 —The baby was also there!  
 Sure he didn't gather rocks.  
 He was too young.  
 He was 7 or 6 years old.  
 The oldest was 16, so he's *pallaqueando* with us.  
 —I began to work with my son Cristian, we went to the mine.  
 In the first attempts we haven't had any success. There wasn't any.  
 We barely got enough to eat.  
 Like this the days were passing by, the months too and little by little we have become familiar with the minerals.  
 I began to work like any other person here. One starts to work in the lowest position.  
 A laborer, a *palero* (carpenter), as a *cartillero* (machinery operator).  
 I began to work. Little by little, I began to move up also.  
 In different mines with no success. Only enough to eat, sometimes we came out indebted.  
 —I continued *pallaqueando*.  
*Pallaqueando*.  
 I recognized the minerals, I've worked here in the back, we've gone there.  
 I've worked, thank God.  
 Yes, it's gone a bit well for me! But him, particularly, in his work as a male it has not gone well.  
 —Yes, I worked a lapse of almost two years?  
 Almost, no?  
 —Two years.  
 —Two years with no success, but in the meantime my wife had discovered the minerals. It kept getting better and better.  
 —I think so, a bit of luck, and faith also.  
 —Yes, a lot of people have prospered here. It seems like a lie.  
 Something I have learned from this experience is that La Rinconada gives its blessing and its prosperity, to those who at a time have suffered greatly.  
 I worked in the districts in Azangarro. People of a very low class, let's say extremely poor. Their children have come to the mine, today they are contractors.

They are successful.  
 They are contractors in the mines, with money, cars, big businesses.  
 Now they don't even live here.  
 They live in Juliaca, Puno...  
 It's not like that as you can see.  
 It's not so easy to find a gram of gold.  
 It's not easy to sell it. On a snowy day you don't even sell a single EUR.  
 Neither for the trader, nor the worker.  
 On a snowy day you can't even *pallaquear* because the snow covers everything. The cold kills you.  
 This is for the brave, this land is not...  
 —They leave, sell everything.  
 Their cylinder, their bed, they leave.  
 —Sadly,  
 —They leave because they haven't found gold.  
 — It is 6:00 a.m., plus 21 minutes, the time in all of the national territory.  
 It is 6:21 a.m. my dear friends.  
 Good morning my friends.  
 Good morning at this early hour.  
 An attack could have ended in tragedy.  
 It occurred in the early hours on Sunday against the building of Radio Latina, in the neighborhood Independencia, in La Rinconada.  
 The account took place when two unknown subjects launched sticks of dynamite, on the roof of the second floor of the radio station.  
 According to the police it has not been dismissed that the attack was committed by some members of political parties to intimidate the journalists, who are investigating the aspiring candidates for the mayorship.  
 A young woman tired of being locked up poisons herself.  
 Her partner prohibited her from seeing her family and threatened her.  
 She couldn't take that her partner would deprive her of her freedom, listeners. She ingested rat poison.  
 She was taken to the hospital Manuel Nuñez but not, it's where they saved her life.  
 More headlines. Four drunken subjects seized with a firearm, were arrested, listeners.  
 They gave off four shots in the air near a bar, dear listeners.  
 Four subjects were arrested by the police when one fled giving off shots in the air, followed by three others.  
 The strange event occurred on Sunday afternoon when they were drinking liquor.

With the bank and with other people.  
 We didn't have a way to pay, and we also had a lot of children.  
 He has five, I have two, that's seven, plus the child we had, eight, plus us that's ten.  
 We couldn't feed ourselves.  
 We thought: "Where are we going to go work?"  
 He works as a college teacher and doesn't earn much.  
 He earns 282 EUR, which are divided in rent; he has to commute, plus the transport fare.  
 It wasn't enough.  
 I couldn't be a vendor, because we had kids in primary and secondary school to care for.  
 We couldn't make it.  
 So we thought about coming to La Rinconada mine.  
 Where everybody always said that there was progress and one could lift themselves up.  
 Blindly, on a January day, we came, my son, my youngest, my husband and I the four of us.  
 We didn't have money, we only had 11 EUR, and that too was on loan.  
 Sadly we arrived.  
 This kitchen we didn't have.  
 I had a gas cylinder and two buckets to carry water, my *prasadás*, the plastics.  
 When we arrived the market didn't exist yet, it was mud, it was dirt.  
 We arrived on a snowy day.  
 There was nowhere to hide, to store our things.  
 We arrived. There was a game shop where they played goals. I don't know.  
 Next to it I say: "Lord please, I leave you my children and I'll be back." We left.  
 I say to my husband: "We rent wherever we find a room."  
 We didn't know anybody nor which door to go to.  
 So he said to me if all else.  
 "We will search in the mountain." "No!"  
 It has to be on the outskirts of town where we'll go.  
 So we took to both streets.  
 On one street knocking on both sides.  
 "Knock on all the doors see if they hear you. They might have a room."  
 "I'm also going to knock on the other side."  
 We knocked. No!  
 Nobody has a room and they don't know us.  
 They distrust of others.  
 I'm crying.  
 It's late now.  
 "I think it was 5:30 a.m."  
 My children trembling in the square because they didn't know what this place was like.  
 A man comes out.  
 "Please Sir! Please! Rent me a room!"  
 "I don't have one. My sister does."  
 We knocked on his sister's door.  
 "Rent to them." He says. "Sir, rent to them

please, one day this could be me, or one of us could be in need."  
 A man comes out and says.  
 "I can't rent to you. What's your work?"  
 We didn't know what to answer.  
 We couldn't.  
 He was a professor and I was a vendor or homemaker. I couldn't.  
 What to offer him?  
 What was my work?  
 He surprised us. I said, "Sir my husband knows how to work in the radio."  
 "Before we had work, now we don't, we want to work.  
 We are going to be able to pay you!"  
 "I have a newly made room but water is running on the floor."  
 "It doesn't matter we want a roof."  
 We went in with our things, adjusted things with plastics.  
 We settled in and morning came.  
 There was no dinner. We had to go to the square to eat rice with egg.  
 It cost 0.70 EUR.  
 0.70, 0.70 and it adds up.  
 "What should I make?"  
 What do I cook?  
 I had triple I brought to cook. "I don't have money, what should I make?"  
 "I have no kitchen or gas, a gas cylinder I do have."  
 He ran into his friend of two days. Ask him. "Will you loan me money?" He loans him money. With that we bought gas and a kitchen, this little kitchen.  
 We bought a kitchen and had no more money. Not a single EUR.  
 But I did have a kilo of rice and a bit of sugar. I cook triple. I boil it because I could now.  
 "I'm going to cook this."  
 I fry, I sell, we live like that for a week.  
 One day we don't have anything. Only enough for their treats. I can't eat any more.  
 I can survive.  
 The three of them are men.  
 I have to give them more priority, whatever the baby leaves I can eat. That's how we have survived.  
 One day we went up to the mountain.  
 I say. "Where there're a lot of people there has to be gold. Let's *pallaquear* (minerals)!"  
 He told me: "How do we get there?"  
 We were embarrassed.  
 "It's our last chances. I'm not cheating. I have something to offer!"  
 We arrived. "Sir please can you let us *pallaquear* (choose the minerals)?"  
 We weren't familiar with gold or metal.  
 "Let's see if you can *pallaquear*."  
 He sends us to the minerals.  
 "Yes there. *Pallaqueasen*."

When Luis Choqueguanca Colqueguanca 34 years old, who possessed a gun had an argument with Wilbert Chambi Alegre 27 years old, with whom he was drinking.  
 He threatened him, with the gun to tell him that he had to buy more beer, my dear listeners.  
 There's a person who has taken their own life in La Rinconada, this is what we non-officially know.  
 Yesterday sadly, it appears, we still don't know the motive.  
 It is very sad listeners that cases like this occur. No? People who despairingly make a fatal choice. That is not good.  
 Never think to do that because that is negative. Believe that every problem has a solution.  
 Only death doesn't have a solution.  
 —We buy the gold here and take it to Juliaca and in Juliaca we sell it.  
 Also driving down to Juliaca with gold is risky because of the many robberies that occur.  
 Now to come with the money we have, that is also another risk.  
 This year four or five gold traders were killed. It could even be our clients.  
 They see you buy and they think that we handle a lot of money and they choke you, sometimes with guns also.  
 You are left with nothing, so many years of sacrifice and you lose it all.  
 Well, La Rinconada is for...  
 We didn't have what to *pallaquear* with, we needed our own buckets, tools, and cylinders.  
 We have to buy the water to be able to work. I arrived very naïve, since I didn't know anything.  
 For me it seemed that the gold had to appear here, but it wasn't like that.  
 When you aren't familiar you don't know what is material and what is gold.  
 A friend said. "The gold is here you just have to search for it."  
 Therefore she would take a big bag, a small bag and a plastic bag.  
 I took a big bag and I could never fill it with gold.  
 I searched, searched and in one of the attempts I found a tiny flake to put in the big bag.

My coworkers had big bags full and I thought. "They have found so much gold!"  
 "I have found nothing!"  
 Just three, four tiny stones.  
 When we had lunch I was afraid to go near them.  
 Once I was there two, three days, I made a friend, a friend who is a bit...  
 Who spoke to me. I got near her and saw in her bags.  
 In one there were stones, in the other there were big rocks with gold, and in one other small bag there were tiny rocks also with gold.  
 That's how we search for the flakes, that's what we call them here.  
 "Ah!" I said. "And they don't teach you. We are selfish here."  
 I didn't know we had to make it *chancar* (crush the mineral).  
 She told me. "If you are going to *chancar* you have to pay for a *pala* (steel hammer)."  
 A *pala* is a *pala*! Imagine how many days you must work to wash and gather the mineral!  
 I said. "How can that be?"  
 So I took an entire day.  
 You can't smash the rock into tiny bits.  
 It is the big rocks with a good hammer and I worked.  
 "Oh not even a bucket full I can *chancar* in a whole day."  
 Like that I have come to know about gold, minerals... That's how it has been.  
 —We are independent. We chose the time we want to *pallaquear* or also if we don't. No?  
 —Yes, if now we say let's go forward, we go forward and if not, not.  
 There is no one who controls us. There's nobody. We don't have to work for a boss.  
 —Associations have work schedules.  
 From 6:30 a.m. to 8 a.m., then after 8 a.m. They get off till 12 p.m. or till 2 p.m.  
 Then they go in from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
 —So what we *pallaqueamos* is the waste that is ejected from the mine.  
 That's what we wash and those flakes that are left, those tiny rocks, that's what we gather.  
 We don't have anyone to tell us. "You work this many buckets in order to get paid." No.  
 Everything that we gather is for us.  
 We grind it. We take care of everything.  
 —Independently.  
 —Welcome ma'am! How are you?  
 Good morning.  
 Get closer to the mic, the other line is open. How are you? Good morning.  
 —Very good morning Mr. Niche and in first place a very good morning to you, to the dear town of La Rinconada and to my fellow *pallaqueras* a very good morning.  
 —Let's see. We're with the vice president of Central de Pallaqueras.

— Yes, please.  
I want to clarify something here. Please, I don't want any confusion comrades. All of this that has been done these requirements—is with the objective of commercializing our gold.  
— All of these requirements are placed on you by the Corporación Minera Ananea S.A?  
— Exactly, Exactly.  
— Why?  
Because all of these requirements make it seem like you are employees of a company. Then I would understand why they are imposing all of these requirements.  
— Yes, all of a sudden they have asked for this...  
— Why have they asked for this?  
— Cause previously...  
In past years, they say, the Corporation has kept records and there were problems. There was trafficking of gold (Bolivia-Brazil). Why don't they monitor the men? Why don't they go after them like they do with my compañeros?  
— But...  
— It is not a crime for a woman...  
I'm going to say this harshly... seems like the men are bugged if a woman excels.  
— You can't generalize it like that ma'am.  
— Well...  
It might be. No?  
I'm not saying that all men are like that. That's why I'm saying.  
But the men here in La Rinconada...  
— When you say "the" you're generalizing ma'am!  
— Well, I apologize, you are excluded!  
As I was saying... We the *pallaqueras* have existed for many years in La Rinconada.  
"Since when do we exist?"  
For many years we've been here.  
— But in an unorganized manner.  
— Unorganized. Surely.  
Now that we are organized.  
Now that suddenly, one of our comrades has dared to participate in politics and run for office. Now it appears that a bucket of cold water is being thrown on them. No?  
"Why a *pallaquera*?"  
They say, "No!"  
Well I am proud to be a *pallaquera* and I'm very aware of what I am.  
It's not because of this that they are going to humiliate my comrade.

For the safety of the citizens of Ananea, towns of La Rinconada, Lunar de Oro, Trapiche, rural communities and mining cooperatives, we will install video cameras, surveillance 24 hours a day, communication radios of the latest technology, and training for a safe and healthy district. This 5<sup>th</sup> of

October choose the Quinoa of Poder Andino of your brother Samuel Ramos Ouispe, a synonym for work and management. Friend and brother, Samuel Ramos Ouispe for may-or, vote for the Quinoa of Poder Andino!  
— Thousands of people commute every day. Thousands of miners commute every day via the neighborhood of Compuerta, my friends. Nowadays Compuerta is terrible, it is full of trash, full of mud you can't walk in the area. You have to wear boots if not you will lose your shoes. Compuerta is truly like this! We're not exaggerating, the quantity of trash that accumulates is enormous. It's tons! If we were located somewhere else or had another habitat and temperature.  
My God half of La Rinconada would be dead from contamination!  
From that illness, from that plague that spreads with the heat.  
Our good fortune is that we are at above 5,000 meters, the temperatures are low and this is what has been favoring us.  
If not, we would all be sick.  
All of our children would be sick!  
The health center would collapse! It would collapse with this environment that we have. It would totally collapse.  
A few days ago I was with some women.  
We did not speak about trash.  
We spoke about another topic, IDs.  
Do you know what their response was?  
With sarcastic smiles on their faces.  
"Are you crazy? Why would I change my residency?"  
I am from Puno and I'm forced to work here!"  
But they don't realize that they live from this town. We eat from this town.  
We educate our children from this Holy Land. While we don't care about the well-being of this town in the least bit.  
We aren't in the least bit interested that our town of La Rinconada could change in some way.

The force is felt Keiko with the people. The force is felt Keiko with the populace. It is the force of the... This is the force of the young people. This is the force of Leonardo Huanca. For productive, transparent and concerted management. For a safer, more ordered and healthier Ananea. For sustainable and responsible mining for all. With education, health and work. This 5<sup>th</sup> of October choose the K of Fuerza Popular, for your friend Leonardo Huanca. Leonardo and you with Fuerza Popular choose the K. Yes, the K of Keiko! For the development of Ananea.

Choose the K of Fuerza Popular!  
...Is felt Keiko with the people.  
The force is felt Keiko with the crowd!  
Fuerza Popular! The K!  
The K is Fuerza Popular!

— For our work here, here we don't receive a salary.  
Here we receive through *cachito* and *cachorro* (payment agreement).  
*Cachito* and *cachorro* consist of us working a week and a half for the house.  
We work every day double shifts and the house gives us cuts.  
These are cuts we get by doing the perforation, we explode it, the gangue is extracted and we take out the mineral.  
The mercury employed in the job makes you more irritable. It turns you into a more explosive person.  
Due to the exposure to mercury.  
And the miner is crude!  
It depends. If you are lucky it can go very well and if you aren't lucky you don't earn anything.  
Currently the mine, almost all of the mine La Rinconada is running low.  
What we are predominantly extracting is mineral.  
Around here there is native gold.  
The gold in *charga* (gold nuggets).  
This has minimized considerably, we can't find it anymore.  
So now we are trying to survive only from the extraction of minerals.  
We extract the mineral, we grind it, we *quimbaleamos* (crush-smelt), we sell it.  
The problem here is that we are a cooperative. There are more than 415 members, of which more than 80% don't want to be formalized.  
There's a group that is formalized.  
But due to those who don't want to be formalized, we are all affected because we all depend on the Corporation.  
The Corporation is the head. All permits are under the name of the Corporation.  
Lamentably the mine is drying up!  
Basically here in La Rinconada there is very little gold left.  
Now what costs the most are the explosives and we can't advance very quickly.

— There are good and bad contractors.  
Contractors pay every week or biweekly for the *contrata* (work agreement).  
We haven't had any of the respective payments. Contractors that...  
Personally mine is Walter Chambi.  
That has not paid us our *cachorro* for almost two months.

Two months.  
Therefore we are here...  
Because he didn't pay our *cachorro* we stole a machine.  
Well, a piece of machinery so that we could sustain ourselves, at least a month with that money. This is why we are being held at the police station.  
At this moment we ask for justice, we ask for the support of the people and of all of the workers.  
It happens not only in this *contrata* but also in others.  
In La Rinconada there have always been these complaints.  
— Workers don't complain.  
They are threatened.  
Sometimes they're threaten to death and the comrades leave.  
They don't file a single complaint.  
They never return.  
The police department truly favors, the people who have money.  
Here there are very loyal people.  
So they put up with it and they are made to suffer at the police station.  
Many fellow workers have truly been hidden, lifeless. It has gone that far.  
— They hide them inside the mines and their corpses are never found.  
The contractors don't carry on their consciences how we work like a laborer under this system of payment and they fail to pay our *cachorro*.  
In order to support our family we place our life at risk here.

— Very well honey.  
Thank you very much.  
Very well, now...  
— Thank you.  
— Honey, We've listened to you.  
— Thank you sweet daddy, thanks mommy...  
— Thanks to you honey.  
— Thank you *pepito*.  
Thanks dad.  
— La *Bella Durmiente* is a woman.  
They are three siblings.  
Another is in San Rafael.  
He is male.  
San Rafael mine, he is male. He is there and is the keeper of that treasure also.  
And she is the keeper of La Rinconada.  
Back there is Aproma.  
It is there in Mount Aproma.  
It's on the way to Sandia (jungle).  
It's a glacier as well.  
— The main one here in La Rinconada, is La *Bella Durmiente*. She is known by that name now.

She was also called for a while in this region; the miners used to call her the *Awichita*. *Awichita* is an elderly person but not in this case. It is the snowy mountain. That's the *Awichita*.  
They have a lot of faith.  
— Every mine has its sacred place.  
A sacred place where they give offerings to the *Awichita*.  
Let's say they take their best quality coca leaves and leave her a little portion.  
They also offer her their *cañihuaco* (cereal), fruits, the best fruits.  
The best apples, whatever is of best quality. There are also fine liquors.  
They are small but they toast to her.  
The *Awichita* is only a big rock with gold, but it is a sacred place for who.  
— Before we *picchar* (chew coca) we have to choose the leaves and give it as an offering to the *Awichita* so that there isn't have accidents. So that nothing bad happens to us and that we always return home safely.  
We all learn how to *picchar*, those who don't have to learn.  
— Yes...  
— Coca is the most sacred thing here in the mine.  
The *Chinchilico* (treasure keeper) is a myth around here.  
He is a small character...  
People always say that he is dressed in gold...  
— He exists, personally I haven't seen him.  
He has seen him!  
— It casually happened to me.  
When I saw him I stood still, my heart froze. I couldn't speak or say anything.  
I was speechless for a moment.  
— Not even his lamp, he said that his lamp went out.  
— My lamp turned off by itself.  
He left like a figure.  
After a short time I left that mine because I was frightened.  
They have many beliefs...  
— They ought to have them. That's the way it is. During the time I have been here I have seen many things.  
For example, why do miners die, right?  
Thinking about it and dealing with rituals. It's not necessary for someone to execute a ritual. Why has he died?  
Cause he doesn't have faith.  
First in La *Bella Durmiente*. They say, "It's only a rock. The rock will give me when I want." Right?  
He's out drinking he shouts, "The rock has given to me!" But he had not paid tribute to it.  
When the rock has given him 20 grams of gold.  
He sells it and goes out to a bar to indulge himself.  
In one night the money is gone.

He keeps asking cause the rock is going to give more.  
But it won't give him more. Cause he hasn't given it, rituals, fruit, liquors.  
He hadn't offered, hadn't thanked the rock and kept asking for more.  
One of those times a slab falls and crushes him! And he dies! Cause he kept asking.  
The *Awichita* punishes.  
She gives but she also punishes.  
The mine is like this, isn't it?  
It has its props.  
Its large poles that hold it up.  
If not the rock can come down, those poles hold it up.  
— The risk workers take...  
Every day there are deaths here.  
That isn't so much because of the safety conditions.  
Many times it is the negligence of the people. Desperately people here always want to gain a bit more.  
— A bit more.  
— A bit more for themselves and that is where they get sloppy.  
In other word, it is their ambition because they want to extract a bit more mineral to take home.

— There weren't any bars or nightclubs.  
Now there are tons.  
Now at night it is... Uh! It seems like *Sodom and Gomorra*. Indeed! Those in the hills, lots of lights. Oh! My God! I get lost in those streets. Really!  
For the single men, for example the single miners work and take their earnings there.  
Let's say 280 EUR, they save 54 EUR in their room and go out with 215 EUR.  
Out all night the money vanishes.  
Others to show off put it all in their wallet.  
I will spend 56 EUR!  
The next morning they wake up without money, or without shoes, or wounded, or dead.  
That is how it is here.  
That's why they call it *no man's land*.  
— That's cause the miners like women as they like beer as well.  
It's a form of distraction let's say, of the stress that they have at work.  
At home, they tell me that, they get tired.  
Right?  
Sometimes their wife complains also his children annoy him. They come here to relax.  
We don't mention the children, no?  
We play, we laugh, we dance.  
They relax.  
We don't force them to come here.  
When they come they are always single.  
Even the very old men who come are single.

They take off their ring.  
But others are honest.  
They say they have a family and wife.  
"I have my wife."  
There are some who are honest. But most aren't.  
— They always say they are single.  
Of the girls? Let's say I serve here.  
I speak with one with another, let's say.  
They declare their feelings. "Do you want to be my baby?" I accept.  
Another, I accept. What if I go to the hotel?  
What if one day they all show up to the hotel?  
They fight or kill each other.  
That's the way it is here.  
Let's say that I talk to three or four.  
What if one day they all show up here?  
Who am I going to choose?  
They are not going to want to hug one another.  
They fight and take out vengeance on the girl.  
There are many deaths that occur because of that.  
Here at the mines everything is like that.  
No one is a saint, even the most saintly sins here.

— Lamentably it was reheated.  
What upset me the most was that I complained to the waitress that the food was old. She arrogantly said, "How can it be old? We just fried that up!" But it was evident that it had been reheated.  
The potatoes, the chicken and the tomato.  
When we are served this food we're not being nourished.  
We're being infected with an illness or... Or some sort of infection this food could have.  
Thank you.  
— Thank you, many thanks. Your participation is very important, we thank you for your call.  
Listener.  
There's a lot to be done in this regard dear listeners.  
There are restaurants that have terrible service. Honestly the clients don't even complain.  
"What is that Jesus?"  
Yesterday the cook looked like a longshoreman with dirty clothes. He didn't look like a cook.  
We don't want to say more, but that is the reality of our establishments here in La Rinconada.  
Especially where they handle our food listeners.  
Let's remember that Chile was ruled with *manu dura* in the Pinochet era.  
That change hurt a lot of people.  
Sometimes it seems like human beings need a firm hand so that we can have change.  
A short time ago there were three gold smelting houses in the market, where the meals are prepared.  
The alderman calls us. "We are taking action."  
What are they intervening for?  
To greet and congratulate them?  
There is no form of sanction.

If there is no penalty we will never be able to get things right.  
— The *blanqueo* is when they have made no money, not even for their costs.  
"Brother Brandon I've *blanqueado*. It's been four, five months, one year but I have *blanqueado*." That's why others come and say, "Mr. Brandon, I want to make an offering to the mine. I have no luck."  
Most come with these problems.  
There are others that come with sentimental problems, couple's problems.  
"Brother Brandon my spouse has changed. She's behaving badly. I have heard gossips."  
An infinite number of sentimental problems that a human can have.  
Those sentimental problems, as it's clearly stated, all of us can have and this is listed globally.  
But we see through the sacred coca leaves. Also through the tarot cards, we see how to offer solutions.  
When it's a problem related to the mine we also see a way. How we can offer support?  
Someone who is greatly unlucky they mainly ask me.  
They say, "Brother Brandon, how do I make an offering to Santa Tierra?"  
It's very true. The *Santa Tierra* better known also as the *Pachamama* is a single one globally. Unique, only that in different countries they know it by other names but it's the single one.  
To make offerings to the *Santa Tierra* it's a very long task.  
It's as if you are giving food to the *Santa Tierra*. You are feeding the *Santa Tierra*.  
With your poverty, humility, affection, love and with faith and the *Santa Tierra* gives you in return!  
The double, triple and even much more.  
That's the *Santa Tierra*.  
So to say, here we use animal fetuses, the fetuses of llamas, alpacas, the fetuses usually of the *vicuña*.  
If you say, "Mr. Brandon I'd like to make an offering to the *Santa Tierra* for the mine."  
If you bring me a fetus of a pig, it won't have an effect.  
Why? Because that is not for a mining area.  
That is why the fetuses of each animal has a meaning.  
There's a lot of people who sometimes make offerings with a human fetus, with the miscarriages.  
To my understanding and I have seen offerings, who are witch doctors, they do it for the money.  
They make offers with humans with elderly people, young ladies who are virgins, young men are used to make offerings to the mine.

It is a bit more, it might be 10% or 20% more effective.  
Of course that they charge you a bit more because obtaining those materials is difficult. Not only is it harder to get that material but if I'm caught with that material it is punishable by law.  
Here in this town of La Rinconada there have been found...  
There have been people without hearts found, lying dead on the street but without a heart.  
They're missing organs. Surely, the result that it gives you are bit more effective.  
What worth does that money have that you're going to earn?  
Then the fact that you've burnt a man will lie on your conscious.  
Although they're already dead it doesn't matter you have burnt them.

— Here as the saying goes:  
"La Rinconada is *no man's land*."  
It's *no man's land*.  
Why do I say that?  
Because there is a lot of death, massacres, many hidden deaths, hidden corpses and many missing family members.  
Meaning it is basically corrupt.  
Corrupt!  
*No man's land* where I come without knowing. They already know that the person they are looking at is clueless.  
So they take him to the mine.  
They call it the great *Pagachi* (ritual).  
They do that to the little ones of seven or eight, to young men and young ladies.  
They take them. Some say that they give them something in the food to make them fall asleep.  
Or they take them to night clubs here.  
They take them, offer them booze and the young men fall asleep.  
They take their warm sleeping bodies to the mine.  
They take them around everything...  
The chimneys, everything...  
They take them back and take out their hearts.  
Their hearts are found in the mine right inside the rock.  
They *chalfan* everything, the blood of what they didn't take. The corpse they take it and toss it in the landfill.  
So that is why a lot of dead bodies appear, corpses, in bags placed in the trash, but without a heart.  
There are others that are unrecognizable.  
A person disappears and fliers after fliers...  
Hmm on wall after wall appear. Such and such person has disappeared and he's never found.

If they sometimes find a tossed corpse it is two months, three months or four months later.  
Many times this happens not only because of inopportune opportunists.  
There are a lot of shootings.  
There are a lot of cases of corruption and of theft here.  
Since the authorities allow this. They are corrupt, even the shamans give them money. Others give them money and the authorities turn a blind eye.  
It is basically their wage. Practically like their minimum wage that they take from the land of La Rinconada.

— I always forget about the *Awichita*. I never remember her.  
— I didn't *picchar* at all.  
— You didn't chew?  
— When I'm around them they say that you should chew or you won't find gold.  
— Well, young lady if you don't chew...  
— I do chew here.  
When I go to the... I *piccho*.  
— You do everything with coca. When you don't *picchas* there's no strength.  
— No strength. You become hungry. Your head hurts.  
— That's how it is.  
— That is why here I only want to chew with baking soda.  
Here... "Where is the coca?"  
I keep looking for it.  
— Here you *picchas* at home?  
— At home I also *piccho*. I use it as a rub.  
In the evenings my knee hurts, also my feet with the cold...  
— On Tuesdays I also chew.  
— I don't do coca at home but up here always.  
— Me too.  
— When your brother isn't there also I chew and when he arrives ups...  
She can't make it without chewing.  
Here you are in the mine...

— We are in the mine...  
— *Awichita*, only... to work we chew.  
— I also don't chew.  
— To do laundry I also chew.  
I go gather coca and quickly I go. Quickly...  
— If I don't chew up here I get dizzy.  
— It's the gas, the extracted material has that smell.  
So when you chew coca it goes by quickly. You don't feel it.  
— You don't even feel fatigued at all.  
— But when you don't chew forget it.  
— Also when you don't bring your own coca...  
When they give you some. You don't feel right. They don't give you very much.  
It's not the same, they give you very little.  
— It warms you up, doesn't it?  
It warms you up.  
— Yes...  
— They told me I have smoke...  
— In the lungs?  
— What do you have? Smoke in the lungs?  
— What?  
— Smoke.  
— Smoke?  
— It blackens you. That's what I've heard...  
— The stuff we *chancamos* releases off dust.  
— By a lot they tell me, he here has checked me...  
— Oh God!  
— I like it. I smoke.  
— I like it too.  
— Work will kill us. *Picchando*...  
We will die anyway.  
— From gas poisoning also.  
— Yes?

— I like to smoke tobacco...  
The smell makes me feel good.  
— She's smoking cigars...  
— All this formalization has failed.  
That's why... Hernando de Soto, a global economist says.  
"The government has not been formalizing you on the contrary it has been de-formalizing you."  
That's true! Before we used to work in a well-organized way.  
We had a work schedule... Aid was provided.  
Now we are criticized on the radio.  
Those who have left return...  
There is no order.  
— It's Ollanta's (Humala-President) fault; that we lost the gold.  
— Yes, it was Ollanta's fault.  
— We lost the gold.  
— Who supports the miners first?  
— Hum. The miners...  
— Yes. He won because of Puno.  
— Ollanta won because of the mining sector. He wouldn't have won.  
— Will they support us...  
— ...! the lady wins?  
— Who will win? Who will be elected? Who will support us? Nobody.  
— Who might be elected to office?  
— That's not the worst part...  
Keiko (Fujimori) might win.  
Weren't you telling me that yesterday? You told me, "It will be Keiko." Didn't you?  
— Who will win? Alan García (Arista Peruano)?  
— Alan García can return (President 1985-1990/2006-2011).  
— With (Alejandro) Toledo (President 2001-2006) it has not been like that.  
— No, they created the laws.  
— Toledo? Who did?  
— Yes. Toledo started, Alan García followed, Ollanta implemented.

Ollanta has just been implementing the laws. Nothing else.  
— ...El Chino created the laws (Fujimori President 1990-2000).  
El Chino was selling out Peru.  
— He would have sold us too.  
— He wanted to sell us. I guess!  
— If she wins, will she sell us?  
— Chileans...  
— It can't be Chileans in here.  
Where does Keiko come from?  
From Japan?  
— Keiko was born here.  
His father and mother were Japanese I believe.  
No matter who it is.  
They all cheat us.  
No matter who wins.  
No government will come and say.  
"Ladies you have been suffering in such a way." Or "We will provide aid."  
The head of county was elected. He asked for our support. Will he show up here? Never.  
Whoever becomes the mayor, it doesn't matter who, everything will remain the same.  
— Asociación Central Base Lunar de Oro...  
— You could take it down to legalization maybe...  
— No, now you are going to legalize, how are you going to do that?  
It's no longer going to be called Base Comité de Lucha Cerro Lunar de Oro?  
— No. It's never been called that Mrs. Aida.  
— Yes?  
— Comité de Lucha Base Lunar de Oro, always...  
— It's Asociación de Pallaqueras Central Cerro Lunar.  
Mrs. Luisa isn't it right?  
— Yes.  
— Mrs. Luisa we don't have anything ready, not even copies. Or maybe a letter of...  
— No, it says Asociación Central. I don't have it.

— Convened by Comité. de Lucha Base Cerro Lunar.  
— Yes.  
— I've always done it like that, you know.  
— Comité de Lucha is made...  
— Comité is as it's always been.  
— Until now.  
— Comité La Rinconada for example...  
Lucha Base La Rinconada...  
— Ladies!  
— They do it like that at the Corporation.  
— Look. It reads: "President of Comité de Lucha de la Asociación de Pallaqueras."  
— Let's see ladies come to this side please.  
The meeting is serious we aren't here to sit around.  
— We are not going to postpone the meeting because of one association.  
We can't postpone this meeting for one association.  
We have a majority there're six associations present now.  
From Mercedes put your hands up!  
— I don't know, only five...  
— From Mercedes!  
— Five of us are here.  
— Damn it!  
— Title the minutes as ordinary.  
— This is not an ordinary meeting, it's extraordinary.  
— No.  
— This meeting is ordinary!  
When it's extraordinary it's simpler.  
Today we were going to meet simply to talk about the...  
The document we are going to present to the Public Registry.  
Isn't that so? Comrades I'm asking you all, is this the case or not?  
Participate comrades! I won't talk like a crazy person, this is not how things work.  
I guess we are associations and organizations.

We must be more united every day.  
— Last time it was ordinary, with a lot of people.  
As I was commenting with the sir.  
Today it's small. It's extraordinary.  
— Write extraordinary then.  
— At extraordinary meetings only one topic is addressed.  
— I have a pen.  
— Yes  
— The presidents should leave their cell numbers for us to get in touch in case of an emergency.  
— In the heart of Mount San Francisco, In the river, wind and snow.  
There you find the strong and fighting men of today.  
*Rinconada, land of miners.*  
Where contractors, *pallaqueras* and *merchants* work.  
Where I spend my life next to them.  
*Happy day Rinconada.*  
Thank you.  
— You are going to follow my steps.  
— Ok.  
— Almighty God.  
Brothers tonight I want you to understand me very well.  
When I say to repeat the prayer you are going to repeat it.  
Meaning you are going to follow my steps.  
The first six leaves. This is your job.  
This is the *Santa Tierra Pachamama*, the *Awichita* who's always with us.  
This is your health and this is protection, so nothing bad happens to you here in this mining center. My Lord.  
— My Lord.  
— Holy God. Almighty God.  
— Holy God. Almighty God.  
— On this night, Holy night. I ask you. To my name.  
— On this night, Holy night. I ask you. To my name.  
— On this night, Holy night...

...Protect me... Bless me... Almighty God.  
...Bless me... Almighty God.  
— Holy Santa Tierra...  
Holy Pachamama... I ask you.  
...On this night... and I offer...  
with affection... with humility...  
...with love... my offering.  
Thank you... Tierra Santa. Amen.  
Brother ask for what you want so that you can... Set your table.  
— Mentally?  
— You can speak out loud or say it mentally.  
My God, Holy God. Almighty God.  
Blessed Lord in your name illuminate him.  
Jesus, blessed God, blessed God,  
Lord, Holy God, Holy God, God Almighty, Lord...  
Give him strength so that he may have success in his work at the mine.  
Illuminate him blessed God.  
Santa Tierra give him strength, give him power.  
Protect him of all danger, of all the envious people, selfish people, spiteful people.  
So that he may have success at work, for the well-being of his family.  
Give him strength blessed Santa Tierra, Holy Pachamama in your name cleanses him.  
I present at this moment your son, on this holy night with this holy mass.  
So that he may succeed in all aspects of his work during this year 2015. Amen.  
Do this three times.  
It won't take much longer.  
We are almost finished.  
— Thank you Lord Jesus for your glorious resurrection. Make it so that every one of us, leaves behind our tomb of sin, and lives as if resurrected among others.  
*Our Father, Who art in heaven; Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.*  
— Long live this cross of May!  
— Long live!  
— Long live the *alferados* (religious patron)



of this year 2015!

— Long live!

— Long live the new *alferados* for the year 2016!

— Long live!

— We congratulate dear brothers and sisters with a loud applause the... the new *alferados*, the main *alferado*, the number one *alferado*, let's hear it! Take your hats off madams, or your face will be covered and Jesus won't see you.

— Padre Martin.

*My life is ending,  
I will never look for you.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sad...  
like you killed my poor heart.  
With a glass of beer...  
I would not have this sadness.  
For you my Love!  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.  
In a glass of beer,  
I will kill this sadness,  
like you killed my poor heart.*

— People of La Rinconada!  
Get up, get up!

#### TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH AN INTERVIEW WITH SALOMÉ LAMAS

**The cinema of the emerging Portuguese director is born out of the tension between thinking and doing, looking and sharing**  
by Jorge Mourinha

It's one thing to head to the top of the world to shoot at the highest-altitude human settlement, another entirely different to see the result of that shoot projected on a screen. But if the screen is the giant-sized IMAX at Berlin's Sony Center, the experience may be closer than you'd think. Salomé Lamas may look small next to either the top of the world or the IMAX screen, but the Portuguese director, only 29, is a tough cookie behind her apparently fragile and youthful looks, as can be seen from *Eldorado XXI*, the feature film she shot in the Peruvian mining town of La Rinconada, 5,500 meters high in the Andes—a "nightmarish shoot" by her own admission.

(And not the first one. While shooting in Transnistria for another project, the KGB arrested and interrogated her and her crew.)

*Eldorado XXI*, an immersive nonfiction essay bridging Werner Herzog's postcards from the edge of human resilience and exploration and Wang Bing's minimalist observations of struggling communities, was one of the high points of a particularly strong lineup in this year's Berlinale Forum, and is now heading to New York's New Directors/New Films. It's the second feature-length work for Lamas after 2012's *Terra de Ninguém* (No Man's Land), an equally fascinating deconstruction of memory and history, reality and fiction, through the director-camera narrative of a Portuguese special forces soldier turned mercenary for hire.

A film graduate with a masters in art from Amsterdam and currently a PhD candidate in film studies, as well as a former DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm and Rockefeller fellow, Lamas has also a number of short films and video installations and performances under her belt. And while theory underlies all of her work in any format, she always wears it lightly and never forgets there's an audience in front of her that may not be familiar with it.

Her cinema is born out of the tension between thinking and doing, looking and sharing. *Eldorado XXI* widens the scope of that dichotomy, by engaging with the neo-feudal, post-apocalyptic landscapes of La Rinconada's mining facilities and the impoverished communities that survive there as best they can, in a multi-layered exploration of history, politics, society and capitalism

that corresponds to Lucrecia Martel's definition of "political cinema" as raising questions and doubts rather than offering cut-and-dried solutions.

Lamas spoke at the Lisbon offices of production company O Som e a Fúria, in between arriving from France where she supervised *Eldorado XXI*'s post-production, and leaving for Berlin for her film's world premiere. Parts of this interview were first published in and appear courtesy of Público.

**NOTEBOOK** *Eldorado XXI* premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival's Forum. Is that something you looked forward to?

**SALOMÉ LAMAS** We did discuss with the producers where we would pitch the film. Within the large window that film festivals are, the Forum is open to experimental work and treats it accordingly. It's a carefully curated section, with a rigor that transcends the mere sidebar within a big festival, and that makes me very comfortable.

The Forum was the right place for the way the film turned out, within a family of filmmakers that makes sense to me.

**N** The Forum makes a point of looking beyond cinema, into the connections with modern visual and multimedia arts. That's something you do as well, switching between installation work and more traditional film.

How do you decide what is the correct form for each project?

**SL** In the specific case of *Eldorado XXI*, the original idea was to make a kind of hybrid documentary, with a loose script and characters. But then it moved in other directions. The long shot at the beginning of the film happened because I was thinking of doing a parallel museum piece, but when I came back from La Rinconada I realized that particular shot could very well be a part of the film. From that moment on, I wouldn't use it in a museum piece so as not to cannibalize my work, and that led the film into a more radical, less classical side.

That was due in part to my own way of structuring and approaching the picture, but also because we shot in such a difficult place. It was a really troublesome shoot, nightmarish almost.

But back to your question, my studies were originally in cinema and it was only later I did my masters in art, so the installations and gallery work are a more recent development. Probably, though, everything I've ever done has always had that possibility to be presented in either of those venues. Some projects demand a more consistent financing

and lead to different results. It's different to go to La Rinconada on your own than to go to La Rinconada with a team after two years waiting for the funding to come.

I'm always doing many different projects at the same time. This year I spend a month in the jungles of Borneo, and I have another project I want to shoot in the Middle East, between Cairo, Dubai and Beyrouth. Smaller projects that I fund in other ways, but that are necessary to me. Not just for artistic reasons but also so I can have a life like everybody else and a job like everyone else. It's really a way to live your daily life.

**N** Shooting in the Peruvian Andes is a weird way to live your daily life...

**SL** But there is a practical side to it. I don't have a romantic vision of filmmaking. I find creativity and talent meaningless words. I'm closer to being a cobbler, working on a craft you have to master in order to improve. It's all about experiences, and storing experiences, and that makes you look differently at everything. I find it utterly all about experiences, and storing experiences, and that makes you look differently at everything. I find it utterly condemnable that some directors shoot abroad in a very gratuitous way; there's not enough drama in the Northern Hemisphere or in the place they live in, so they go elsewhere in the world to look for it. Those films are very easy to spot, they're much closer to the militant, campaigning documentary, which doesn't really stimulate me as a viewer. I find lots of ethical problems in them.

So, on one hand, it's all about managing your daily life, and on the other it's about that storing of experiences and your ability to live anywhere, about understanding how other places you can live in interfere with you and you with them. That's where most of the ideas probably present in all my work come from. The sense of waiting, of finding something surprising to me that I may find interesting to record; of me being an alien in a different reality, and how the friction that creates can generate a project, a desire to bring to the forefront realities unknown or forgotten.

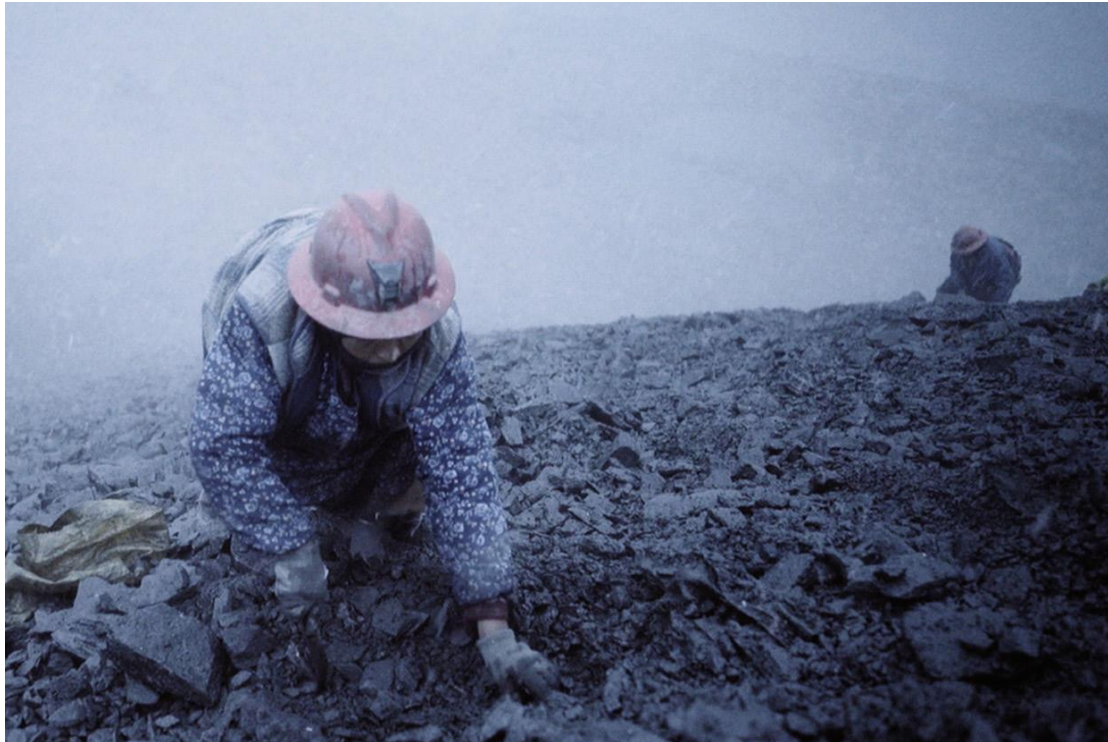
**N** But a craftsman usually sits at his table, while you travel around the world...

**SL** That's related to a certain mental confusion, and to my sense of hyper-activity [laughs]. I like paradoxes. I like conflict, though I don't deal at all well with conflict. I don't like to shoot, so I put myself in situations I can't later run away from. Sometimes you need to have some luck for it to work out fine; you have to be on the lookout for some-





EldoradoXXI (2016)



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## Eldorado XXI

### Salomé Lamas

**Producer** Luis Urbano, Sandro Aguilar, Thomas Ordonneau. **Production companies** O Som e a Fúria (Lissabon, Portugal), Shellac Sud (Marseille, France). **Written and directed by** Salomé Lamas. **Director of photography** Luis Armando Arteaga. **Editor** Telmo Churro. **Music** João Lobo, Norberto Lobo. **Sound design** Miguel Martins. **Sound** Bruno Oliveira Dias.

DCP, colour. 125 min. Spanish, Quechua, Aymara.  
Premiere 15 February 2016, Berlinale Forum

The panoramic shots are breathtaking: a majestic mountain landscape in winter, flat-roofed tin shacks covering next to one other, women perched on steep slopes using primitive tools to break through pieces of rock. La Rinconada is situated over 5,000 meters high in the Peruvian Andes, on the edge of a gold mine. This 21st century El Dorado is an inhospitable place, where untold numbers of people live and work in the most precarious of conditions, hoping both for gold and a better life. Salomé Lamas has constructed a cinematic diptych to convey the extremity of this situation and the dimensions of its misery without having to resort to graphic images. While an hour-long single take from a fixed camera position shows an endless stream of mine workers trudging up and down a garbage-lined path day and night, voiceovers speak of cold, hunger, poverty, danger to life and limb, atrocities and lawlessness. The second half of the film then places haunting observations of something like the normal and the everyday alongside all this: chitchat while chewing coca leaves, rituals and social gatherings with music and dancing. It's only then that the true eeriness of the setting comes to light.

*Birgit Kohler*

66<sup>th</sup> International  
Film Festival  
Forum

O Som e a Fúria  
and Shellac Sud  
present

a film by  
SALOMÉ LAMAS

# ELDORADO XXI

cinematography  
LUIS ARMANDO AKTEAGA

sound  
BRUNO MOREIRA

editing  
TELMO CHURRO

sound editing  
MIGUEL MARTINS

grading  
CAIQUE DE SOUZA

mix  
FRED BIELLE

production manager  
RAQUEL DA SILVA

associated producer  
MAXIM HOLLAND

co-producer  
THOMAS ORDONNEAU

producers  
LUÍS URBANO  
SANDRO AGUILAR

produced by

O SOM E A FÚRIA

supported by

PRODUÇÃO

with the participation of

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selected for the festival 2016

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Eldorado XXI (2016), Art by Barbara Says, 2016





### On Salomé Lamas's ELDORADO XXI Lawrence Weschler

At 5100 meters (16,700 ft.), the sprawling Andean goldmining encampment at La Rinconada, in the southeastern corner of Peru, just shy of the Bolivian border, is quite simply the highest-elevation permanent human settlement in the world, encompassing a population of close to 30,000 souls, the vast majority of them desperately poor. The principal enterprise there is overseen by the Corporation Ananea, but, as William Finnegan pointed out in a recent piece in the New Yorker ("Tears of the Sun: The Gold Rush at the Top of the World," April 20, 2015), "Nearly all the mines and miners there are 'informal,' a term that critics consider a euphemism for illegal. [Others] prefer the term 'artisanal.' The mines, whatever you call them, are small, numerous, unregulated, and, as a rule, grossly unsafe. Most don't pay salaries, let alone benefits, but run on an ancient labor system called *cachorro*. This system is usually described as thirty days of unpaid work followed by a single frantic day in which workers get to keep whatever gold they can haul out for themselves."

Not surprising, then, that such an extreme locale might draw the attention of the precociously accomplished young Portuguese filmmaker Salomé Lamas (still in her twenties though already the veteran of cinematic projects ranging from the Azores to the Netherlands to Moldovan Transnistria and focusing on everything from the confessions of former French Foreign Legionnaires and Portuguese colonial mercenaries to the midnight exertions of North Sea fishermen and the borderland perambulations of Post-Soviet nowhere-men) — but aye, the terrible splendors, by turns devastating and grace-flecked, that she has managed to haul back from her time up there.

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or the endlessly roving vantage in Sokurov's Russian Ark, except that in this instance (an audacious Copernican flip!) the camera doesn't move at all, peering down instead from on high as Lamas holds her unblinking gaze for close to an hour, while dozens and then hundreds (and presently thousands?) of miners, groaning under the weight of their burdens, trudge by in squeezed files, some heading up and others down the narrow pitched mountain path, the scene starting out in thin crepuscule but persisting into pitch black (by the end all we see are the criss-crossing beams of the workers' hardhat headlamps), the soundtrack consisting of the crunch of their boots played off against stray wisps of audio testimony and wafting passages of radio banter. A human antfile. A Dantesque Escherscape: Möbian Sisyphe.

An hour in, Lamas finally blinks, and what follows is a veritable avalanche of sense impressions, one haunting and haunted setpiece after the next. Tin shacks scattered about a high desert plateau. The wind. Snug inside one of those shacks, a huddle of weathered women, bundled against the cold, sifting and sorting coca leaves, stuffing the occasional wad into their cheeks as they trade gossip and often surprisingly sophisticated political analyses (one of the women weaves in the insights of the economist Hernando de Soto) laced between considerations as to the relative benificences of coca chew and tobacco toke. A lone truck lumbering up a stark barren switchback. In the distance, silhouetted against a precipice of scree, a few individuals braving the blowing snow, hunched deep, scabbaling, clanking, chipping at the rocks, leaning in, tossing most of the shards aside, stuffing the occasional promising chunk into ever more bulging bags and then heaving their tentative hordes back up the crumbling screeface. (It occurs to us that in much the way they are sifting for ore, Lamas is panning for souls, the main difference between them being the veritable bonanza of her takings compared with the pathetic paucity of theirs.)

Later on, an organizing meeting on an exposed windswept plateau. And then a different lone truck comes wending down the steep mountain track, its back filled with miners already celebrating the end of their grueling day; a bit after that, we meet up with the same guys once again, though now they are grotesquely masked and prodigiously caped, dancing up a storm around a spitting bonfire: Gaya incongruously set to the frantic pulse of the latest in electropop.

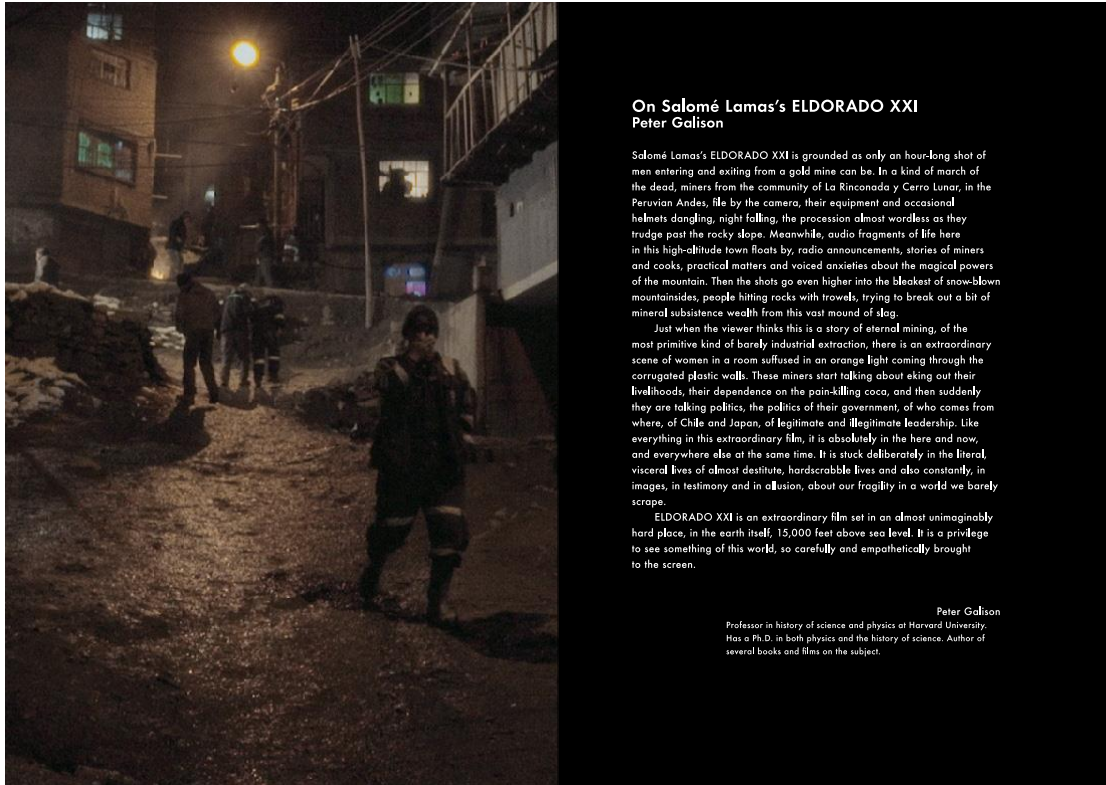
Elsewhere, earnest rituals imploring the protection of various patron saints. Or nighttime alleys, with drunks tumbling out of shanty bars. Or a little boy scrunched alone in his little shed, gazing intent, palming of all things a remote control unit (could it be that he is playing video games?), after which we get to see him one last time as he simply stares out at us, his gaze mute, shy, inheld, penetrating, perfect: and then the thing he goes and does!

The hush, in short, of witness. Toward the end of it all, Lamas's visit opens out onto a daytime procession of some sort, a religious festival, and amidst the clanging and the toots, the banging and the shouts, the shuffle and gavotte, the sway and dip, the soar and smiles — two hours in and somehow, thanks to Lamas's intrepid wizardry, the feeling rises and we know, we just know that we have been someplace!

Someplace we will in fact likely never go, though on second thought, as we emerge from the trance in which Lamas has had us entrammelled all this time, and gaze, say, down upon the rings on our fingers or the baubles hanging from our ears or necks, a place whose sordid travails actually implicate us all, and profoundly so. And what are we to make of that?

Lawrence Weschler  
Former staff writer at The New Yorker. Awarded author of several books. Lectured at several universities and director emeritus of the New York Institute for the Humanities at NYU.





**On Salomé Lamas's ELDORADO XXI**  
Peter Galison

Salomé Lamas's *ELDORADO XXI* is grounded as only an hour-long shot of men entering and exiting from a gold mine can be. In a kind of march of the dead, miners from the community of La Rinconada y Cerro Lunar, in the Peruvian Andes, file by the camera, their equipment and occasional helmets dangling, night falling, the procession almost wordless as they trudge past the rocky slope. Meanwhile, audio fragments of life here in this high-altitude town float by, radio announcements, stories of miners and cooks, practical matters and voiced anxieties about the magical powers of the mountain. Then the shots go even higher into the bleakest of snow-blown mountainsides, people hitting rocks with trowels, trying to break out a bit of mineral subsistence wealth from this vast mound of slag.

Just when the viewer thinks this is a story of eternal mining, of the most primitive kind of barely industrial extraction, there is an extraordinary scene of women in a room suffused in an orange light coming through the corrugated plastic walls. These miners start talking about eking out their livelihoods, their dependence on the pain-killing coca, and then suddenly they are talking politics, the politics of their government, of who comes from where, of Chile and Japan, of legitimate and illegitimate leadership. Like everything in this extraordinary film, it is absolutely in the here and now, and everywhere else at the same time. It is stuck deliberately in the literal, visceral lives of almost destitute, hardscrabble lives and also constantly, in images, in testimony and in a *lusion*, about our fragility in a world we barely scrape.

*ELDORADO XXI* is an extraordinary film set in an almost unimaginably hard place, in the earth itself, 15,000 feet above sea level. It is a privilege to see something of this world, so carefully and empathetically brought to the screen.

Peter Galison  
Professor in history of science and physics at Harvard University.  
Has a Ph.D. in both physics and the history of science. Author of  
several books and films on the subject.

Eldorado XXI (2016), Excerpts from press kit, Art by Barbara Says, 2016

## Text

### Units of Measurement: *Eldorado XXI*

By James Lattimer

What can five shots hold? Two are enough to capture a landscape, an expanse of rock, ice, cloud, and snow so vast it feels like the frame can hardly contain it, like the lake, mountains, and sky stretch on forever. Everything appears frozen, immobile, devoid of life, it's only when a bird flies overhead and the wind moves through the blackened reeds that you can even tell it's not a photograph. There's no sign of where the voice might be coming from, it can only have emerged from beneath the tundra, carried and amplified by the wind. It sings of a sorrow as immeasurable as the land, of endurance, of endless exertion and the endless drinking needed to assuage it, of a life spent between Lunar de Oro, Rinconada, and *pallaquear*.

One more shot and something else emerges from the landscape, although it carries the same grey and white color. At first glance, this could be a natural formation, some rare mineral outcrop spilling out of the side of the mountain, a geological structure of countless proliferating rectangles. A cut follows and with it certainty, the rectangles are iron huts and the outcrop is a city, albeit one as silent and still as the expanse it nestles within. One final cut and the city fills the frame, but this is a city unlike any other. No light, no color, no movement, nothing that stands out, nothing to catch your eye. A place of pure function, without ornament, a place extracted from the elements, not designed. Five shots to hold a landscape and a city and blanket both in misery.



What can one shot hold? It can track the changes in light that occur over fifty-seven minutes. It's dusk at the beginning and you can still see the path, a strip of mud that zigzags down the mountain, disappearing from time to time behind the mounds of sandbags and trash that form its makeshift borders, topped off with a sprinkling of snow. For a while, there's light enough to make out the yellow and orange of the hard hats, the patterns that adorn bags and clothing alike, the white reflective strips on the black uniforms. But darkness falls quickly and soon only torches light the way, marking the course of the now-invisible path, alighting on the rubble and detritus encased in the muddy, icy ground, picking out babies strapped to their mothers, sacks resting on shoulders, bent backs swaddled in thick blankets. Although the radio announcer says it's 6:21 am, it's getting darker by the minute, day and night make little difference here and time is a relative concept. These fifty-seven minutes could be any fifty-seven minutes, a unit of measurement as perfectly unwieldy as the place it's measuring.

The announcer is one voice among many, one voice amid the flurries of call-ins, interviews, and news reports, election ads, music, and extended first-person testimonies. People talk of arriving with neither money nor experience, of learning to extract gold without guidance, of selfishness, isolation, and hardship. Shootings in the street, desperate suicides, dynamite attacks, robberies; the voice that sang the opening song wasn't beneath the tundra, it was here. Stories pass through the mind and bodies pass in front of the camera, and the natural impulse is to attach one to the other. But while the flow of stories sometimes slows, the stream of bodies is ceaseless; for every body you manage to affix a story to, there are ten left without one. Things are not neat and not everyone gets their say; for each story that can be told, there are scores more that cannot.

When talk turns to prospects, to aspiration, to hierarchies, each person passing the camera becomes a fleeting embodiment of the only two possible directions. Some start from nothing and ascend, taking the road that leaves behind the individual to reach the association, a place within the Corporation located at the summit. It's a seductive trajectory, which is why the stream of bodies never abates. But few reach the top; even while a wife may rise, a husband can still fall. It's not just that it's hard to get your footing, a place as volatile as this can take your feet out from under you. This image is thus a constant reminder, that any path that leads up must also lead down.

By the time the mountainside is in total darkness, there's nothing to stop sound from overriding space. When the wind begins to howl, it's as if the scene has moved further up the mountain, where the throngs of people must cling on to the rock for dear life. When the noise of dripping water comes to the fore and everything starts to echo, it's as if the people no longer swarm up and down the mountain but rather inside it, passing through the vast cavern where *La Bella Durmiente*, the *Awichita* dwells, two names of many for the sacred keeper of Rinconada's treasure. If it weren't so dark, you could see the offerings littering the ground: coca leaves, fruit, liquor, human hearts ripped from bodies still living; the greater your offering, the greater the protection. But this is just one more relationship of scale in a place that is full of them, so

many, in fact, you could overlook the one simplest and most shocking. For light, time, subject or location may change, but whatever happens, there's no breaking the chain. One shot to hold the fuel that powers the mountain, a stream of bodies that never ends.

What is left to do when the counting is done? Mental images need fleshing out, relationships need adjustment, and first assumptions need to be overturned. After all the endless climbing, only a vehicle can take you to the highest plateau. Up here, the parts are familiar but their arrangement different. There are the same iron huts from the city below, but here they form clusters, not one conjoined mass. The time it takes for the thunder to cross the valley proves the landscape is as vast as ever, but there's no snow on the ground; beyond the piles of debris, there are even tufts of grass. When the workers take to the slopes to sift through the scree, it's the same story. You've seen the helmets and been told the names of the tools, but this is the first time you've seen them put to use. You've heard the sound of the wind whipping the mountain, but you've never seen how easily it could pull you off the edge.

The woman chewing coca leaves do indeed mention *Awichita*, but also all the other, more prosaic things the leaves protect from, whether dizziness, hunger, or fatigue. Their chatter reveals that the true gods of the mountain are just as earthbound, if still impossibly far away, deities named Fujimora, Ollanta, or García with temples in distant Lima. Just like in the election ads, it's all about promises, not how they're delivered. When an offering is made on the mountainside, reality is less spectacular than the imagination, a modest nighttime ceremony held on a pile of trash, with torches and a small fire for atmosphere. There's something far more ceremonial about how the mysterious figures in masks and hats dance in frenzy around the bonfire, although it's never clear what it is they're invoking: suffusion with divine energy or release from infernal work. It's no coincidence that the masks arrive when perspectives are already shifting: when the little boy nervously places the mask over his face as asked, it's as much about changing what things look like as how they're actually seen.

When the camera returns to the city, it no longer feels like the place seen at the start. Whether down at street level or viewed from above, there is now light, color, and movement, a place of noise, activity, life. Both the steep, narrow streets and the many bodies thronging through them recall the pathway up the mountain, although now there are more than two directions to choose from. Girls veer off to the side, a couple wander down the hill together, a man stops to urinate in the street before dragging his inebriated friend with him up the road. It didn't look like there was any space for celebrations, yet the square before the church can hold music stages, marquees swathed in yellow bunting, and a long, curving line of plastic chairs, to say nothing of the crowds of people. It's Easter and the sky is blue, the *alferados* have been generous, the costumes and icons are lined with gold. It's only when the dancing gets going that thoughts return to sorrow, which is now something to be fought, not to be measured: "In a glass of beer, I will kill this sadness". It looks like a happy ending but this is not the end, there's still one final glimpse

of the landscape to remind you it's as implacable as always. You must take the ice-rimmed passage to reach the cavern in your mind.

What is the sum of three parts? The experience of a place and the maxims used to document it: there are things you can quantify and others you cannot; only a complex structure can do justice to a complex subject; how you see a place at the beginning is never how you see it in the end.

## **Text**

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*By Lawrence Weschler*

At 5100 meters (16,700 ft.), the sprawling Andean goldmining encampment at La Rinconada, in the southeastern corner of Peru, just shy of the Bolivian border, is quite simply the highest-elevation permanent human settlement in the world, encompassing a population of close to 30,000 souls, the vast majority of them desperately poor. The principal enterprise there is overseen by the Corporacion Ananea, but, as William Finnegan pointed out in a recent piece in the *New Yorker* ("Tears of the Sun: The Gold Rush at the Top of the World," April 20, 2015), "Nearly all the mines and miners there are 'informal,' a term that critics consider a euphemism for illegal. [Others] prefer the term 'artisanal.' The mines, whatever you call them, are small, numerous, unregulated, and, as a rule, grossly unsafe. Most don't pay salaries, let alone benefits, but run on an ancient labor system called *cachorro*. This system is usually described as thirty days of unpaid work followed by a single frantic day in which workers get to keep whatever gold they can haul out for themselves." Not surprising, then, that such an extreme locale might draw the attention of the precociously accomplished young Portuguese filmmaker Salomé Lamas (still in her twenties though already the veteran of cinematic projects ranging from the Azores to the Netherlands to Moldovan Transnistria and focusing on everything from the confessions of former French Foreign Legionnaires and Portuguese colonial mercenaries to the midnight exertions of North Sea fishermen and the borderland perambulations of Post-Soviet nowheremen)—but aye, the terrible splendors, by turns devastating and grace-flecked, that she has managed to haul back from her time up there.

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Shortly after the credits, the biggest marvel of all: another long take (long and then longer and then longer still)—one is put in mind of those amazing careering single-takes at the outsets of Scorsese's movies or the endlessly roving vantage in Sokurov's *Russian Ark*, except that in this instance (an audacious Copernican flip!) the camera doesn't move at all, peering down instead from on high as Lamas holds her unblinking gaze for close to an hour, while dozens and then hundreds (and presently thousands?) of miners,

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Text originally published in Artenol Magazine, Summer 2016; published by Art Healing Ministry, New York, NY.

## **Text**

### **Matt Turner – Salomé Lamas**

By Matt Turner

No stranger to the intrepid, Portuguese filmmaker Salomé Lamas has, over an expanding, deeply ambitious body of shorts, installations and features, traversed many worlds. Before reaching her thirtieth birthday, Lamas has transported viewers to locales extreme and unseen - charting, in her early place portraits, Portugal's oldest camping park in *A Comunidade / The Community* (2012) and one of its more remote territories, the autonomous Azores archipelago in *Encounters with Landscape 3X* (2012); excavating dilapidated interiors (both architectural and psychological) in the bruising, complex interview films made in Lisbon, *Terra De Ninguém / No Man's Land* (2013) and Berlin, *Le Boudin* (2014); before moving to more inconceivable and implacable territories, such as those seen and sensed in the seaside setting of archaeological meta-investigation *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (2013), or deep in Moldova's forests in man-landscape relationship puzzle *A Torre / The Tower* (2015) - bucking conventions and testing limits with each new foray. Forthcoming projects have taken her even wider afoot, to contested republic Transnistria for *Extinção / Extinction* (2017); and into the fantastic and imagined - creating a fictional utopia for *Ubi Sunt I - III* (2017) or exploring the "physical experience of reality" through the terraforming, metaphorical topography of *Coup de Grâce* (2017). However, the most treacherous and stupendous space visited will likely remain that of her stunning second feature *Eldorado XXI* (2016), *La Rinconada*.

The highest elevation permanent settlement in the world, perched 5500m atop the Peruvian Andes, *La Rinconada* is home to a populous, deeply impoverished community of gold-miners. Receiving their pay only in the ore they can carry, they slave en masse in the hope of that one revelatory discovery that will lift them and their family from destitution. This salvation is nigh on impossible, their drudgery unending, and the brutish commitment made to this most unforgiving of work seemingly misplaced; yet they continue, fools banking on a corrupt system. This illusion ties content with form, linking the delusion of those seen in the film to an enquiry central to Lamas' work and that of many of her contemporaries - the question of truth, or inversely, the value of what might be called 'authentic deception'. In an introduction to the book on her practice - 'PARAFICTION: Selected Works', Lamas asks: "is truth an illusion, is illusion a truth, or are they exactly the same thing?" Each of her films ask this too. Rooted in theory but grounded in reality, all are concerned with the codes by which filmmaking operates, whilst suggesting a desire to work outside of an obligation to veracity; an approach Lamas calls "the politic of make-believe". A graduate of both art and cinema, Lamas makes films that are born out of thought but versed in practicality, beginning with concepts before experimenting upon them. She probes her subjects, interrogates the landscape, and examines how the two interact as much as her role in making

them do so. It is *Eldorado XXI*, described by Lamas as “a critical practice media parafiction attempt”, that may be seen as the culmination of this ‘theory into praxis’ methodology. Merging a ‘sensory ethnography’ approach with something more theoretical, the imposition of structure lends life to the film rather than restricting it.

After an opening series of gorgeous panoramas that serve to place the subsequent action within its grand, pictorial setting, *Eldorado XXI* moves towards epic duration. A dramatic, captivating shot spans the full length of an hour and the passing of day into night. As light fluctuates over a mountainside tableaux depicting the miner’s journey to and from their dig-site, an endless carriage of bodies are seen, becoming increasingly abstracted and amorphous against the landscape as the visible light diminishes. At the same time - but importantly dislocated and non-directly representational - comes a barrage of multilayered, textural sound. Lamas overlays radio snippets, interviews, testimony and conversations, as well as a host of atmospheric recorded and designed sound. Storytelling and mythmaking from the townspeople are blended with that witnessed and captured by Lamas, merging a ‘participatory ethnography’ mode with the filmmaker’s own devices and constructs. The result is a sound canvas layered with the richness of the real whilst remaining free from the constraints of an obligation to representational truth, the participants actively involved in the shaping of their own narrative, with Lamas free to mould and displace it.

In the film’s second half, many of the situations described in the previously heard audio are seen directly, with more traditional material recorded directly and presented as is - sound diegetic, actors present in the frame. Wives gather to swap tales and political discourse; miners battle the land in pursuit of their impossible dream by day and cavort around a fire in drunken abandon by night; and all the while the hostile, monolithic landscape stands silently around them, swallowing villagers, trucks and wildlife indiscriminately. These second act scenes - whilst all depicting a lifestyle that would be considered by most assessments as miserable - are lent, through this bifurcated two-film structure, a richness and warmth by the context understood from the preceding audio of the first act, a veritable tapestry of human testimony for the active viewer to apply to the observed scenarios. While a miner warns viewers early on that “not everything that glitters is gold,” that doesn’t mean the opposite is not true; for Lamas’ films find grace in squalor, complexity in violence, and redemption in misery. The situation in *La Rinconada* is hopeless, and as the system that condemns these men to labour fruitlessly in pursuit of a sliver of promise is totalising, the likelihood of chancing upon escape from this eternal poverty is minuscule. Yet, what the form of Lamas’ film conveys is that these lives are not built from the value of their toil but from the wealth of their lived experience and the strength of their community. *Eldorado XXI* is landscape cinema in an empathetic and human mode, a beautiful scrapbook of the texture and flavour of humanity’s inscription upon nature, a culture built out of sacrificial labour, histories hammered into rock. To borrow Lamas’ words again, *Eldorado XXI* “will carry you on a hallucinatory journey. You will not be indifferent to it.”

Text originally published in Frames of Representation Book, Winter 2017;  
published by ICA – Institute of Contemporary Art, London, UK.



EldoradoXXI (2016) Salomé Lamas: Solo, Solar – Galeria de Arte Cinemática, Portugal 2017