

MÀXIMA

This Land of Mine

A FILM BY
MARIEL SOSA



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"During my third year in college, I decided to pack my bags and go back to my homeland in search of a story that I had long awaited to make a reality. With no major TV or production company behind me,

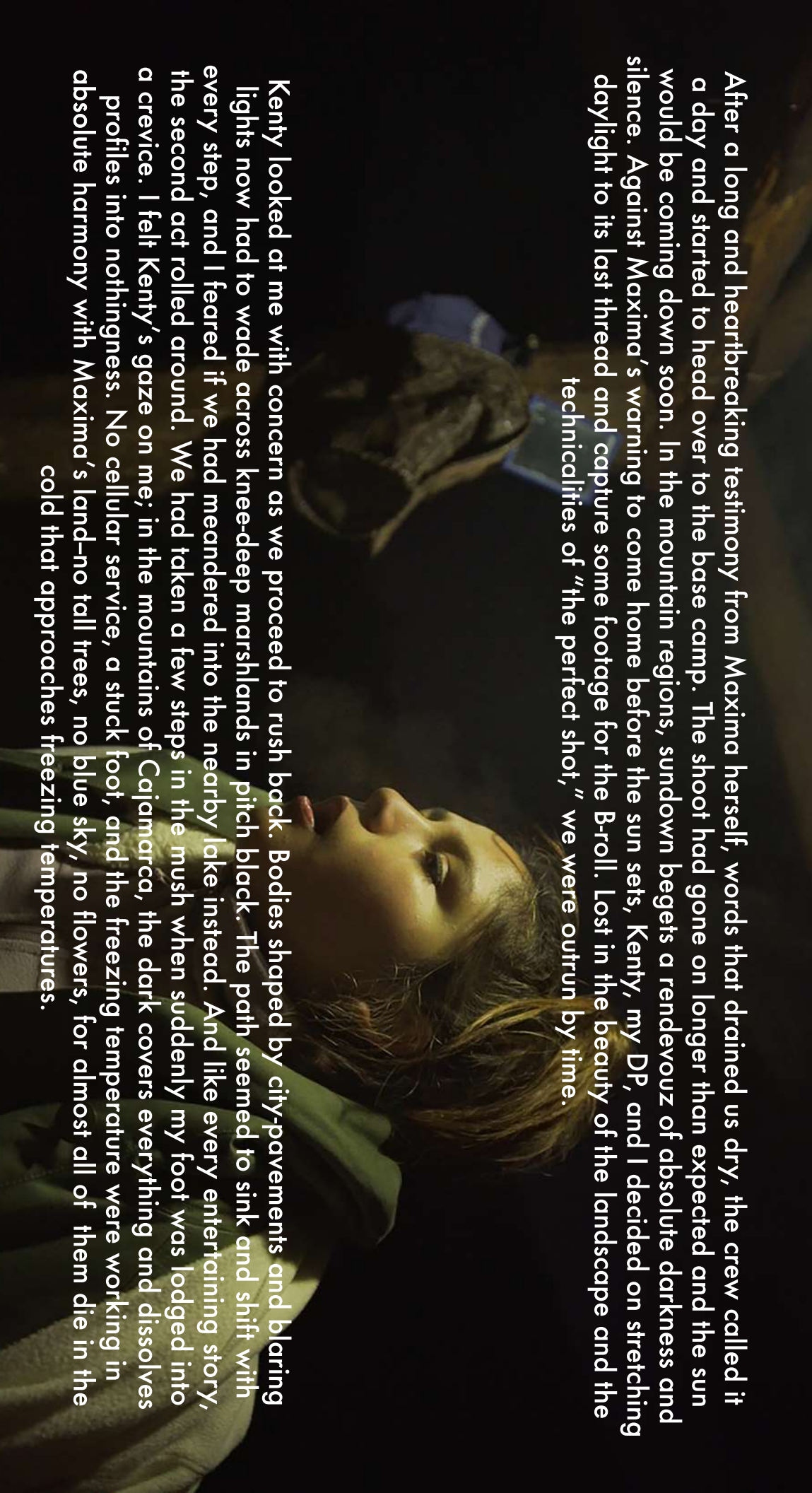
I embarked on the quest to discover the life and fight of Máxima Acuna Atalaya.

One of the most talked about and emblematic characters in the national news for over five years, Máxima gained popularity in 2011 after her refusal to sell her land to a multi-billion dollar gold mining company.

That same year, I traveled with a group of volunteers to Cajamarca on a mission targeting impoverished communities in the region. During one of my visits to the main square, I witnessed an episode that would change my life and redefine the future. As I was walking around, I happened to see a group of protesters approaching the main plaza. People of all ages and backgrounds, ranging from farmers to teachers were chanting in unison, "water yes, gold no." Even in the distance, I could spot that one figure leading the march.

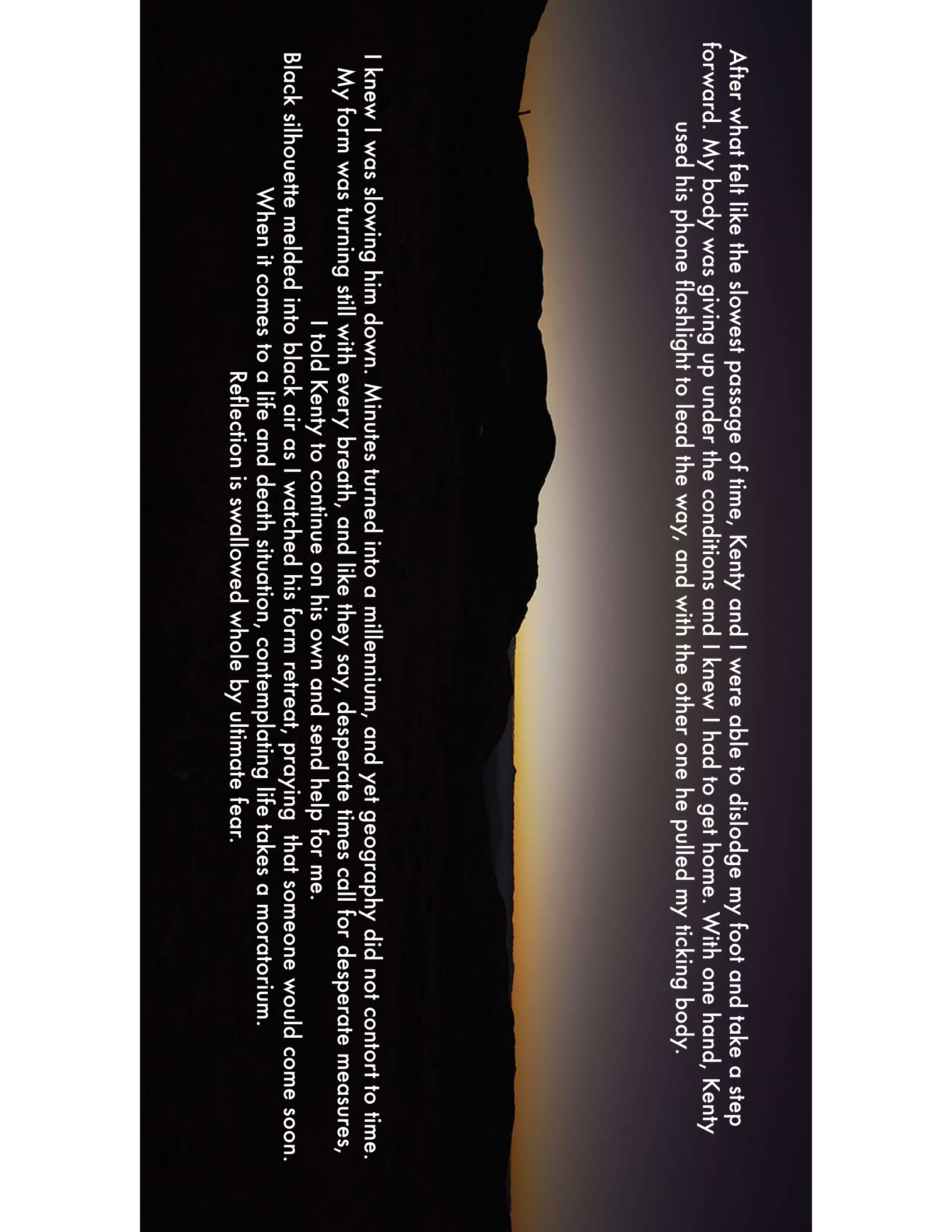
In the center, with her right hand balled into a fist and a white sombrero on her head, this 4' 5" woman denounced the human and environmental crimes committed by the biggest mining corporation in Latin America, Yanacocha.

- Mariel Sosa

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is shown in profile, looking upwards. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, jacket. In the background, a large, dark sculpture of an animal's head, possibly a bear or a dog, is visible. The scene is dimly lit, with the woman's face and hair catching some light. The overall mood is contemplative or awe-struck.

After a long and heartbreaking testimony from Maxima herself, words that drained us dry, the crew called it a day and started to head over to the base camp. The shoot had gone on longer than expected and the sun would be coming down soon. In the mountain regions, sundown begets a rendezvous of absolute darkness and silence. Against Maxima's warning to come home before the sun sets, Kenty, my DP, and I decided on stretching daylight to its last thread and capture some footage for the B-roll. Lost in the beauty of the landscape and the technicalities of "the perfect shot," we were outrun by time.

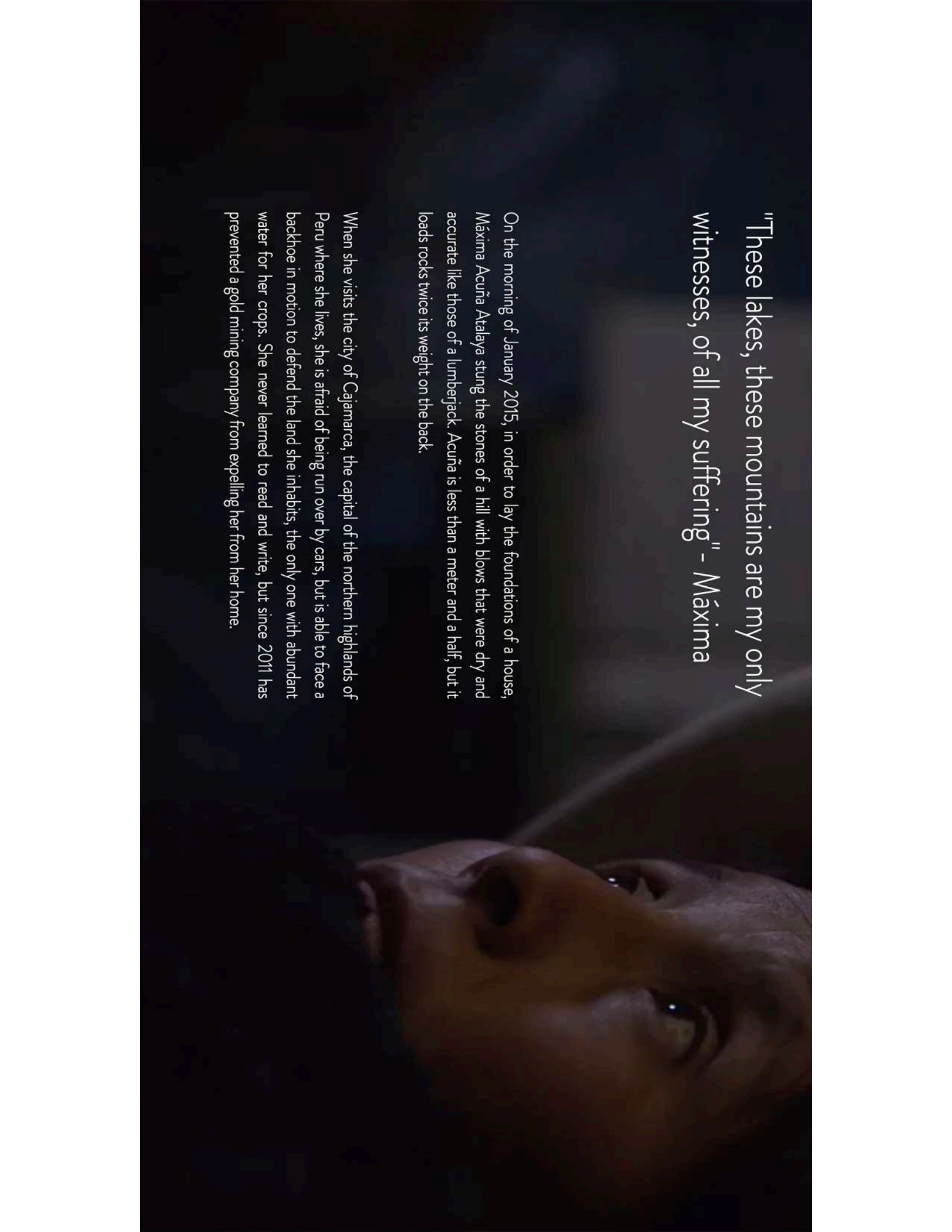
Kenty looked at me with concern as we proceed to rush back. Bodies shaped by city-pavements and blaring lights now had to wade across knee-deep marshlands in pitch black. The path seemed to sink and shift with every step, and I feared if we had meandered into the nearby lake instead. And like every entertaining story, the second act rolled around. We had taken a few steps in the mush when suddenly my foot was lodged into a crevice. I felt Kenty's gaze on me; in the mountains of Cajamarca, the dark covers everything and dissolves profiles into nothingness. No cellular service, a stuck foot, and the freezing temperature were working in absolute harmony with Maxima's land-no tall trees, no blue sky, no flowers, for almost all of them die in the cold that approaches freezing temperatures.



After what felt like the slowest passage of time, Kenty and I were able to dislodge my foot and take a step forward. My body was giving up under the conditions and I knew I had to get home. With one hand, Kenty used his phone flashlight to lead the way, and with the other one he pulled my ticking body.

I knew I was slowing him down. Minutes turned into a millennium, and yet geography did not contort to time. My form was turning still with every breath, and like they say, desperate times call for desperate measures, I told Kenty to continue on his own and send help for me.

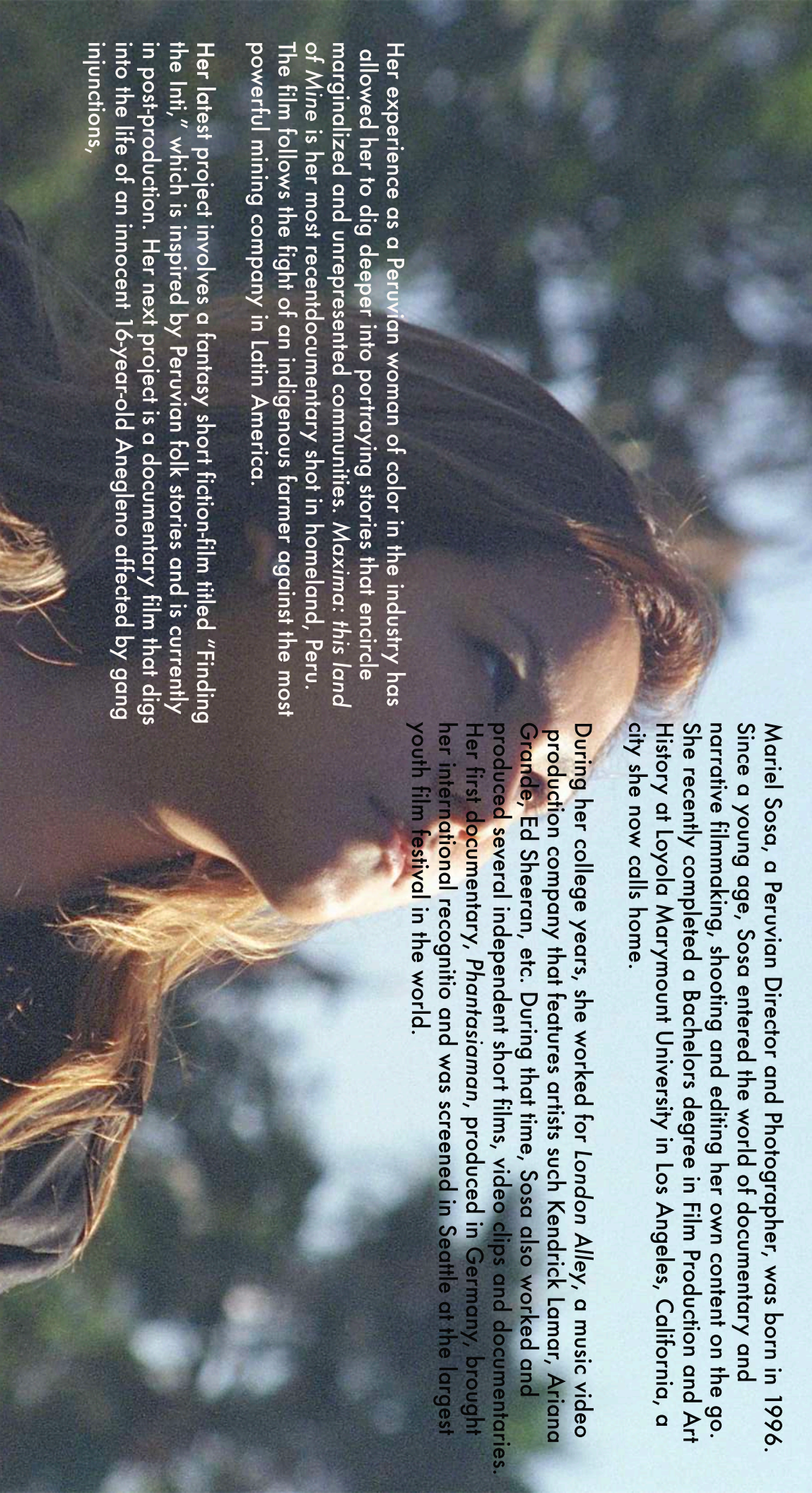
Black silhouette melded into black air as I watched his form retreat, praying that someone would come soon. When it comes to a life and death situation, contemplating life takes a moratorium. Reflection is swallowed whole by ultimate fear.



"These lakes, these mountains are my only witnesses, of all my suffering" - Máxima

On the morning of January 2015, in order to lay the foundations of a house, Máxima Acuña Atalaya stung the stones of a hill with blows that were dry and accurate like those of a lumberjack. Acuña is less than a meter and a half, but it loads rocks twice its weight on the back.

When she visits the city of Cajamarca, the capital of the northern highlands of Peru where she lives, she is afraid of being run over by cars, but is able to face a backhoe in motion to defend the land she inhabits, the only one with abundant water for her crops. She never learned to read and write, but since 2011 has prevented a gold mining company from expelling her from her home.



Marisel Sosa, a Peruvian Director and Photographer, was born in 1996. Since a young age, Sosa entered the world of documentary and narrative filmmaking, shooting and editing her own content on the go. She recently completed a Bachelors degree in Film Production and Art History at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, a city she now calls home.

During her college years, she worked for London Alley, a music video production company that features artists such as Kendrick Lamar, Ariana Grande, Ed Sheeran, etc. During that time, Sosa also worked and produced several independent short films, video clips and documentaries. Her first documentary, *Phantasiaman*, produced in Germany, brought her international recognition and was screened in Seattle at the largest youth film festival in the world.

Her experience as a Peruvian woman of color in the industry has allowed her to dig deeper into portraying stories that encircle marginalized and unrepresented communities. *Maxima: this land of Mine* is her most recent documentary shot in homeland, Peru. The film follows the fight of an indigenous farmer against the most powerful mining company in Latin America.

Her latest project involves a fantasy short fiction-film titled "Finding the Inti," which is inspired by Peruvian folk stories and is currently in post-production. Her next project is a documentary film that digs into the life of an innocent 16-year-old Anegleno affected by gang injunctions,



KENTY AGUIRRE
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Born in Lima, Perú in 1989. Peruvian cinematographer who began his career studying at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, where he now teaches. Completed further studies in cinematography at EICTV (Cuba) in 2015, and currently works as freelance DP on documentaries, short films and advertisement.



JUAN TORRES
SOUND DESIGNER

Born on October 27, 1986 in Huancayo, Peru. He achieved prominence as a sound assistant to Guillermo Palacios and also in sound editing with Omar Pareja. His professional work in the field of cinema started with the feature film "Un lugar lejano", a co-production from Venezuela, Argentina and Spain, which was directed by José Ramón Novoa.



YANNICK WANDER
MUSIC COMPOSER

Born in Marburg, Germany, in 1990 he is a composer and multi-instrumentalist who is rooted in a variety of musical styles. After playing the Piano as a child he fell in love with (psychedelic) rock Guitar and electronic sound design. While studying Social Sciences he started Djing in- and outside Germany and released original tracks on international underground labels.