

UC Berkeley

nineteen sixty nine: an ethnic studies journal

Title

Natural Reflexes and Cuauhtli y Abuela

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3ng0d9vj>

Journal

nineteen sixty nine: an ethnic studies journal, 2(1)

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Publication Date

2013

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Vanessa Quezada, Natural Reflexes, 8" x 10", Photograph.

Natural Reflexes

Vanessa Quezada

This photograph captures the Peace and Dignity Journeys as they passed through the Plaza de Paz in San Cristobal de la Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. The Peace and Dignity Journeys are a seven-month ceremony during which participants live in a number of communities rich in ancient wisdom and enduring traditions. While walking with indigeneous communities, runners are sensitized to the injustices facing different populations such as decreased rights to native land and water. The photo speaks to the Zapatista National Liberation Army's major movement against global neoliberalism in Chiapas. The women pictured portray centuries of exploitation, and exhibit a natural reflex to hide from cameras. They depict the necessity of finding alternatives to neoliberalism. They underscore the need to share human experiences; to walk our truths and assert our livelihoods and establish inclusive dialogue for social transformation.



Vanessa Quezada, Chuauhtli y Abuela, 5" x 7", Photograph.

Cuauhtli y Abuela

Vanessa Quezada

This photograph was captured in Wirikuta, Mexico on the Peace and Dignity Journeys. Canadian mining companies have been granted over 22 concessions to unearth metals in Wirikuta, which are destroying the land, poisoning the water and threatening the way of life of the Wixaritari people. The photo captures running with sacred staffs from Alaska to Guatemala. In 2012, the Journeys were dedicated to the sacredness of water, to inspire community mobilization and dialogue. Born from an indigenous spiritual movement, the Peace and Dignity Journeys are a catalyst for communities to explore and to develop empathy and resiliency. They address traumas and injustices, enabling marginalized communities to reconstruct their histories. They further revitalize the unheard voices of indigenous people, allowing a path for integration and global family. The Peace and Dignity Journeys are an ancient form of delivering messages. They give us the opportunity to awaken our memory and practices of healing physically, mentally, and spiritually with the earth and each other. This photo is unaltered, and for me, exhibits the raw, illuminated path of hope.