

Ecological Emergency in El Salto and Cosmopolitical Aesthetics in Eugenio Polgovsky's *Resurrección* (2016)

DEBORAH MARTIN 

University College London, UK

This article examines the documentary *Resurrección* (Eugenio Polgovsky, 2016), which deals with the catastrophic contamination of Jalisco's River Santiago by industrial waste. It discusses the slow violence of environmental poisoning in this region as a form of necropolitics and of wastelanding, and the campaign of collective Un Salto de Vida, who feature prominently in the film, for a clean river. It goes on to explore the heterogeneous worlds and uncanny, sensorial aesthetics that characterise the film, arguing that through them, it makes a significant contribution to the search for visual forms through which to represent eco-catastrophe, and the reconfigured relationship between human and non-human required to address it.

Keywords: necropolitics, River Santiago, sensorial cinema, slow violence, Un Salto de Vida, uncanny.

Recent discussions of ecologically focused artistic practice emphasise the search for aesthetic languages that can represent the reality and scale of ecological crisis, as well as engendering and eliciting the new configurations of relationships between the human and the planetary or non-human, which are required to address this crisis. Discussions in eco-criticism have paid particular attention to how and whether artistic forms can respond to and express the scale of environmental destruction in order to overcome the defences and cognitive dissonance that characterise our relationship with it. Also important has been the question of whether, through art, ungraspable numbers and hidden realities may be turned into tangible, lived experience, perhaps in this way allowing us to live the ecological knowledge, which we might prefer to turn away from. Particular representational challenges are associated with situations of 'slow violence' (Nixon, 2011), with 'disasters that are slow moving and long in the making, [...] that are anonymous and star nobody, disasters that are attritional and of indifferent interest to the sensation-driven technologies of our image-world' (Nixon, 2011: 3), the effects of which are frequently invisible, intangible or delayed. This article deals with one such situation of slow violence: the catastrophic poisoning by neighbouring factories of the waters of the River Santiago in Jalisco, and of the surrounding air, soil and life, human and non-human. It argues that Eugenio Polgovsky's 2016 documentary film about this crisis, *Resurrección*, engages with these aesthetic questions, rising to the representational challenges presented by slow violent eco-catastrophe.

In addition to creating a poetic register that invites the viewer to live, and feel ecological knowledge, and which competes, stunningly and surprisingly, with a sensation-driven image culture, *Resurrección* responds to the calls for discursive and artistic forms that can take account of, model and elicit the newly configured relationship of humans to the non-human, and the opening of the political field beyond the human, shifts that many now see as a necessary response to planetary crisis. In and beyond Latin America, these changes are often associated with the biocentric and relational knowledge of Indigenous and subaltern people, itself viewed as necessary to the profound social transformations that will be required to address this crisis (Escobar, 2020). Writing on Latin American documentaries

on popular environmentalism in particular, Jorge Marcone (2015) highlights that examples, such as Taboada Tabone's *Trece pueblos en defensa del agua, el aire y la tierra* (2008) and Berlinger's *Crude: The Real Price of Oil* (2009) tend to neglect the 'more than human ontologies and temporalities associated with Indigenous politics in Latin America', preferring instead to focus on 'visible acts of confrontation against neoliberal governments' (Marcone, 2015: 218). More recent work brought together by Carolyn Fornoff and Gisela Heffes in their edited collection *Pushing Past the Human in Latin American Cinema* devotes sustained attention to Latin American cinema's 'refram[ing] of the world not as a unified totality, but as a pluriverse' (Fornoff and Heffes [eds], 2021: 15), through discussions of films including *Caribe* (Ramírez, 2004), *El ojo del tiburón* (Hojiman, 2012), *El canto de Bosawas* (Allgood and de Castro, 2014), *Eco de la montaña* (Echevarría, 2015) and *El botón de nácar* (Guzmán, 2015). Even in these discussions, however, contributors find that there is little engagement with cinematographic rendering of non-human perspectives. As Gisela Heffes puts it in her own contribution to the 'Screening the Pluriverse' section in this collection, in which she discusses the anti-mining documentaries *Cielo abierto* (Ruiz, 2007), *When Clouds Clear* (Bernstein and Slick, 2008) and *Operación diablo* (Boyd, 2010), 'very rarely in these visualisations, are [...] earth-beings [...] introduced as political agents' (Heffes, 2021: 337). Explicitly referring to and echoing Marcone, Heffes argues that 'unlike literature, environmental documentaries focus less on the sacredness of a mountain, a river or Earth beings, and more on environmental conflict itself. [...] In doing so, these documentaries fail to introduce a gaze that critically interrogates the ecological relationships between humans and the more-than-human' (337). With *Resurrección*, Polgovsky redresses the neglect of non-human ontologies identified by Marcone, and goes beyond the approaches to pluriversal representation of many of the films dealt with in Fornoff and Heffes' volume, by creating a cosmopolitical aesthetics – an aesthetics that constructs the non-human, in this case the Santiago, as a being with its own perspective and agency. In doing so, this film counters dominant anthropocentric visual regimes, by diminishing the viewer's sense of mastery and control over the natural environment, and engendering uncanny, unsettling affects associated with the shifting status of the spectator vis-à-vis the non-human.

Proyectos de Muerte, Slow Violence, and Resistance in El Salto and Juanacatlán

The Cuenca Alta del Río Santiago (Upper Basin of the River Santiago), in the Mexican State of Jalisco, is in a state of health and environmental emergency. The area is dominated by the second largest industrial corridor in the country, which runs south from Guadalajara to the municipalities of El Salto and Juanacatlán. Since the 1960s, when the first factories were established near the river, the region has transformed from a series of agricultural and fishing communities to an industrial and commercial zone. During this period, there has been little state policing of companies' adherence to environmental laws; in fact factories are required to monitor their own wastewater and to self-report on their own pollution levels, leading to massive contamination and abundant dispersal of heavy metals and other industrial chemicals in the water, air and soil. This process intensified further from 1994, as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) brought about a massive increase in companies establishing plants in Mexico to take advantage of cheap labour and lax environmental regulation, as US laws tightened. As Tracey Brynne Voyles writes in her book *Wastelanding*:

Environmental problems in the context of contemporary industrialism [...] are imbricated in a treadmill of production, in which extraction of raw materials and dumping of material waste are expanding with markets, often exponentially. The treadmill requires 'wastelands' from which resources are extracted and where (often toxic) waste is increasingly dumped'. (Brynn Voyles, 2016: 8–9)

As with other areas of Mexico and the Global South, El Salto and Juanacatlán have become sacrificial 'shadow places' that invisibly support life in the affluent places of the Global North (Plumwood, 2008), as (foreign) states and corporations outsource ecological degradation and harm, in particular to areas inhabited by minorities, where it can take place out of sight, with lax or inexistent regulation.

The case of El Salto and Juanacatlán, and the contamination of the River Santiago, which is now Mexico's most polluted waterway, has been described by Enrique Enciso, one of the activist-subjects

of the documentary, as a ‘slow motion Chernobyl’ (Fisher and Malkin, 2019). Principal industries in the zone include the chemical, electronic, metallurgic, food and textile. A 2020 list of companies dumping industrial waste into the River Santiago included IBM, Honda, Hershey and Nestlé (El *figón* político, 2020). Agricultural run-off, as well as leachates from nearby rubbish dump Los Laureles, which was established in the 1990s and receives between 3000 and 3500 tonnes of urban waste per day, exacerbate the crisis, but the Jalisco State Water Commission acknowledges that factories are the main cause of the more than 1000 chemicals found in the waters of the Santiago. These include arsenic, chrome, lead, zinc, mercury, toluene, phosphorus, cyanide and synthetic chemicals (Fisher, 2015). Direct contact with the waters of the Santiago can be fatal: in 2008, eight-year-old Miguel Angel López Rocha fell into a tributary of the Santiago, went into a coma and died two weeks later of arsenic poisoning (a cause of death initially denied by the Jalisco authorities) (Arellano-Aguilar et al., 2012: 12). Through air, water and soil pollution, the toxins reach all residents, however, and many recommendations and reports document their catastrophic effect on human health. Kidney failure is the second most common cause of death in Jalisco, and El Salto and Juanacatlán have the highest incidence of this disease in the region. Rates of cancer are also high in the area, as are miscarriages, respiratory disorders and skin diseases (Arellano-Aguilar, 2012). In 2022, the Jalisco State Commission for Human Rights released a report stating that the human rights of the populations of El Salto and Juanacatlán had been violated, due to the covering up of a 2011 study by the Universidad Autónoma de San Potosí, which showed that local children had high levels of heavy metals and other toxic substances in their blood, and that authorities had been aware of, yet had failed to act on this information during the intervening 11 years (Comisión Estatal de DDHH de Jalisco, 2022). The report further states that the authorities are limiting themselves to creating infrastructure for cleaning the Santiago whilst making no effort to control the sources of industrial contamination, minimising any reparation to victims, ignoring communities’ demands and failing to provide medical and social aid to the area. Residents highlight the paucity of medical facilities in El Salto and Juanacatlán, which are unable to cope with the high number of cases of kidney failure in these municipalities, and which mean that patients frequently have to travel for 2 hours to medical appointments (Martin, 2021).

Sociologist Mina Lorena Navarro understands this violence against the *cuercos-territorios* (bodies-territories) of the human and non-human residents of El Salto and Juanacatlán as part of a broader war in Mexico on *cuercos-territorios* codified according to colonial–capitalist logic as resources available to be conquered, ravaged and sacrificed (Navarro, 2020: 46). She contends that, whilst individual episodes and instances of such violence may appear diffuse, unconnected and exceptional, they are in fact part of the violent, destructive logic of capitalism and the *proyectos de muerte* that characterise it (2020: 46). For Víctor Toledo, contemporary Mexico is characterised by ‘un conjunto de *proyectos de muerte* que amenazan la existencia misma de organismos, de elementos vitales como son el agua, los suelos, el aire [...] y, por supuesto de los seres humanos: sus culturas, sus ambientes, sus paisajes, sus territorios’ (2015: 17). Contemporary *proyectos de muerte* are a continuation of colonial logic; as Ghosh writes: the subjugation of the Americas was part of ‘conjoined processes of violence, physical and intellectual, [...] necessary for the emergence of a new economy based on extracting resources from a desecralised, inanimate Earth’ (Ghosh, 2021: 38). Colonial expansion was an ecological process, a process of domination of *cuercos-territorios*, of the eradication of the view of the earth as alive because ‘Only once we imagined the world as dead could we dedicate ourselves to making it so’ (Ehrenreich, cit. Ghosh, 2021: 39).

In ‘Necropolitics’, Achille Mbembe describes how colonialism and racism have created ‘death-worlds’, such as Palestine and apartheid South Africa: ‘new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead’ (Mbembe, 2003: 40, emphasis in original). As Mbembe explains, while Foucauldian biopower explained ‘that domain of life over which power has taken control’ (12) Mbembe’s posits necropower as the right to determine ‘who is disposable and who is not’ (27), in other words, to allow people to die. For Cristina Rivera Garza, Mexico is without doubt one of the places caught in the web of necropower, ‘la compleja red que se teje, entre la violencia y la política, en vastos territorios del orbe’ (Rivera Garza, 2013: 20) and she is among the critics who have understood contemporary Mexican phenomena such as high femicide rates, the drugs war and violent crime in terms of necropower. The concept of death-worlds can also illuminate contemporary cases of environmental pollution, such

as that experienced in El Salto and Juanacatlán, places where residents exist in a ‘state of injury’ (Mbembe, 2003: 21), which can, as Mbembe states in relation to necropolitical injury, ‘persist for a long time, in the form of human shapes that are alive, to be sure, but whose bodily integrity has been replaced by pieces, fragments, folds, even immense wounds that are difficult to close’ (Mbembe, 2003: 35). In El Salto and Juanacatlán, the lack of environmental regulation, of action on investigations that document harm to the local population, of official recording of illness and death linked to environmental pollution and of attention by the authorities to stopping the causes of harm constitutes the assumption on the part of authorities of the right to expose people to the possibility of death, in other words, to let them die.

As in Mbembe’s formulation, populations subjected to necropolitical injury through environmental pollution in the state of Jalisco follow the logic of colonialism: poor, subaltern and marginalised communities are disproportionately allowed to suffer the harmful effects of contaminants in their environment. Whilst the United States outsources ecological harm to Mexico, within the country itself, marginalised communities such as El Salto, the poorest community in the Guadalajara Metropolitan area, are designated as expendable: labelled *ociosos* (lazy) (Navarro, 2020: 46), inhabitants are subject to forms of environmental discrimination, such as the positioning of the Los Laureles rubbish dump (which receives waste from Guadalajara) just upstream from El Salto, whilst poverty and low living standards relative to the general population are exacerbated by state neglect. Drawing on Gillian Rose, Brynne Voyles writes that ‘landscapes of extraction are [...] forms of representation as well as empirical objects’ (Brynne Voyles, 2016: 8), and argues that particular areas are ‘rendered pollutable through discourses of race, gender, class and/or sexual difference, as “wasteland”’ (Brynne Voyles, 2016: 8). Linguistic and discursive representation of a space such as the Upper Basin of the River Santiago is reified through processes including pollution and state (in)action, or (lack of) state provision; in this way, as Brynne Voyles has it, ‘Wastelanding [...] makes real, material, lived what might otherwise only be discursive; [...] ideas about the value of environments are manifested by the material consequences of environmental destruction’ (Brynne Voyles, 2016: 10).

As Nixon discusses, chemical and toxic degradation of the environment is often slow and invisible, and acts in ways that are difficult to detect or make visible (Nixon, 2011: *passim*), gradually leaving communities ‘stranded in a place stripped of the very characteristics that made it inhabitable’ (2011: 19). The drawn-out temporality of environmental pollution and degradation, and the slowness of violence on, and killing of, *cuerpos-territorios* in the Santiago River Basin, recalls the temporal features of the death-world, in which injury may ‘persist for a long time’ (Mbembe, 2003: 21), whilst the effects of the violence are often invisible, ‘driven inward, somatised into cellular dramas of mutation that – particularly in the bodies of the poor – remain largely unobserved, undiagnosed, and untreated’ (Nixon, 2011: 6). As Barbara Adam writes, ‘chemical processes [such as] air and water pollution, and radiation [are] phenomena where the impacts of actions work invisibly below the surface until they materialise as symptoms – some time, somewhere. At the point of materialisation, however, they are no longer traceable with certainty to original sources’ (Adam, 1998: 10). Gradual accumulation of toxins and degradation of *cuerpos-territorios*, and delayed, invisible effects that are difficult or impossible to trace, all characterise the contamination caused by industrial pollution in the Upper Basin of the River Santiago, and all constitute challenges to its representation.

In the face of death, the collective Un Salto de Vida (A Leap of Life) was created in 2006. Through public meetings, protests, studies and the production of written material and more recently audiovisual content, the collective has greatly increased the visibility, and public awareness and understanding of the health and environmental emergency their community is living through. Since 2008, Un Salto de Vida have run the ‘Tour del Horror’, a guided tour of points at which contaminants are discharged into the Santiago. Graciela González, a founding member of the collective, has undertaken studies of atmospheric pollution by microparticles of heavy metals and records the names of those in the area who die of kidney failure and cancer, creating what she terms a ‘virtual cemetery’, since the authorities do not record this information. In the wake of accelerating and multiple threats to the area in the form of further planned megaprojects and residential projects, the collective’s work now encompasses a broader range of issues beyond the pollution of the Santiago. In 2019, in part due to pressure from Un Salto de Vida, the Government of Jalisco cancelled plans for a thermoelectric plant, La Charrería, in Juanacatlán, because of its likely environmental impact (Navarro, 2020: 44). The group is

currently campaigning against large-scale projects including the privatisation of the land surrounding the El Ahogado weir for housing development, and six megaprojects including hydroelectric and geothermic plants that would make this area the largest industrial corridor in Mexico (Sofi Enciso, in Martin, 2022). In 2021, Un Salto de Vida produced the 'Pueblos en Resistencia' Youtube series, 2021, which defines the communities of the Chapala-Santiago basin as a 'territorio de sacrificio' and brings together testimonies from inhabitants of villages along the river basin, including Tecuatitlán, Huaxtla, Casa Blanca, Chapala and Mezcala. Through raising awareness of the emergency in their area, Un Salto de Vida hope to prevent further 'El Saltos' from emerging elsewhere in Mexico (Sofi Enciso, in Martin, 2022). Their work has come at a high cost to their own personal safety; members of the collective have been subject to threats and intimidation, including having their van set fire to in April 2021, and have spent periods in hiding.

Un Salto de Vida agitate and hope for a process of ecological and hydrological regeneration of the Cuenca Alta del Rio Santiago – a *resurrección*. In addition to the above activities, they engage the local community with projects such as the creation of community orchards and the regeneration of degraded areas, work that sits within a broader symbolic and cultural project to counter 'epistemicide', to resurrect or revivify ways of knowing the world and relating to the non-human that have been eradicated or are on the verge of extinction, and which, as Brynne Voyles argues, must be rendered marginal and unimportant in order for environmental destruction to take place (Brynne Voyles, 2016: 11). Indigenous and historical territorial rights are emphasised in the campaign of Un Salto de Vida, whose members align themselves politically with indigeneity, working closely with Indigenous groups of the river basin, including the Cocas, taking on their fight for culture and identity, and emphasising and celebrating their own ancestral connection to the territory and its native peoples (Enrique Enciso, in Martin, 2021; Sofi Enciso, in Martin 2022). Following Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, this could be seen as a process of re-becoming Indigenous such as the one these scholars observe in Brazil, where there are 'peasant communities who decide to go back to being Indigenous, proving judicially their historical continuity with native peoples' (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, 2017: 121). As Joan Martínez Alier discusses, the environmentalism of the poor frequently centres on social justice, recognition, participation, Indigenous rights and the sacredness of elements of the environment such as rivers or trees (Martínez Alier, 2014: 241), and Víctor Toledo's discussion of the Mexican context suggests that this is no exception; socio-environmental struggles in the country incorporate questions of territory, culture and historical memory, and are pursued through the construction of ways of life other than the modern (Toldeo, 2015: 89). Mario Blaser and Marisol de la Cadena call alliances such as that of Un Salto de Vida and local Indigenous groups, 'heterogenous worldings' which 'may [...] be capable of refracting the course of the one-world world and proposing [...] the practice of a world of many worlds' (Blaser and de la Cadena, 2018: 4).

Resurrección: A Film of Many Worlds

Resurrección, Eugenio Polgovsky's remarkable 2016 film about the environmental and health emergency in El Salto and Juanacatlán, does something that the large number of scientific reports, academic articles and journalistic pieces produced over many years documenting and calling out the pollution of the Santiago, are not able to do: it translates this 'heterogenous worlding' to the screen, converting it into audiovisual form and into lived experience for the spectator. Polgovsky's filmography, which also includes the documentaries *Trópico de Cáncer* (2004), *Los herederos* (2008) and *Mitote* (2012), is one that consistently turns its attention to ignored and invisibilised subjects, communities and realities, and that establishes a relationship of equality between the spectator and the marginalised beings – child labourers in *Los herederos*, contaminated Earth beings and local residents in *Resurrección* – whose realities they record. This means a notable lack of the expository and informational means by which documentaries often establish their authority or make a case as well as, frequently, the interruption of traditional subject-object viewing relations, and establishing relations of tactile intimacy with the onscreen. In *Resurrección* authorial subjectivity, official, scientific or academic voices fade or disappear completely; instead, the exposition in this documentary comes from the community members themselves; the film privileges their testimony, their interpretation of events, and their political analysis.

There are no interviews with scientists, doctors, or politicians, no narrator and no intertitles (except occasional dates). Official discourses are present in the film only via the ironic insertion of a 2012 broadcast in which local government promotes its 'green' agenda – the 2012 installation of the 859 million peso 'El Ahogado' treatment plant that, despite being one of the biggest such plants in Mexico, does not treat heavy metals or many synthetic chemicals (McCulligh, 2022). Cindy McCulligh, a researcher who has published extensively on the pollution of the Santiago, describes how politicians use the instalment of wastewater treatment plants in the region for good publicity. Such installations have a high 'symbolic value', but serve mainly to divert state funds to private treatment companies, whilst the plants, once installed, tend to be so poorly maintained as to be largely ineffective (McCulligh, 2022). The broadcast included in *Resurrección* features 'Blue Marble'-type images of the Earth, and other images that are examples of 'Anthropocene Visuality', which, as T.J Demos argues, functions to reinforce the idea that 'we' humans 'have mastered nature, just as we have mastered its imaging' (Demos, 2017: 28) and which the visuality of *Resurrección* as a whole contests. Companies that discharge untreated waste into the river are referred to only through the residents' testimony, or through fleeting shots of their factories such as that of the company Huntsman (formerly CIBA GEIGY). By pushing official discourses and corporate polluters to the margins, *Resurrección* gives prominence to 'people whose witnessing authority is culturally discounted' (Nixon, 2011: 16). By eschewing 'data', it equally resists the 'information dump mode' that Timothy Morton sees as the current mode of ecological discourse (Morton, 2018: 9); and one that engenders a kind of 'ecological PTSD' that according to Morton functions to impede change (Morton, 2018: 13). *Resurrección* sidelines what Blaser and De la Cadena call the 'one-world world' (Blaser and De la Cadena, 2018: 3), which dominates Western academic, scientific and even environmentalist discourse, by privileging local, subaltern perspectives and Indigenous worldviews. These worldviews are present through the oral narration of community members, but even more strikingly and more disruptively, through the privileging of the perspective of the river itself, in sequences in which the human fades or disappears completely in order for the river to take centre stage as 'Earth-being' (de la Cadena, 2015) invested with its own force, agency and consciousness.

The river is present in the documentary through Polgovsky's insistent footage of it, frequently covered with large amounts of white foam (Figure 1). This foam is the most visible and visual aspect of the pollution, which the film makes great use of, even aestheticising this at points (Figure 2). Polgovsky's footage documents the state of the river in 2015, but the film also makes significant use of early and mid-century photographs and films uncovered by Polgovsky in domestic and international archives, which show the river in its pre-industrial, unpolluted state. Through work at the Archivo General de la Nación, Archivo Reyes and others, Polgovsky attempted to locate, and eventually to preserve digitally (through inclusion in his own film), the visual imprint of the clean river, and the way in which local life revolved around it prior to industrialisation; a principal documentary task of *Resurrección* is to make that river – which cannot be directly seen or experienced in the present – visible, available to the viewer. The archival films appear intermittently in *Resurrección*, as a series of ghostly irruptions that, projected at slower speeds to hint at the stillness (or death) that resides in moving images (Mulvey, 2006) or dissolving into or out of images from the present day, briefly 'resurrect' or revivify the river as it once was, suggesting a haunting of today's Santiago by its former state. In these moments, just as ghosts return to demand justice, the river's living and unpolluted past returns to challenge its destruction and despoliation in the present, as if that former river were restless, agentic and undead. The early twentieth-century images show the river as a site of swimming, paddling and recreation, whilst excerpts from mid-century tourist films such as *Guadalajara (1940)* emphasise the waterfall El Salto de Juanacatlán (or 'Mexican Niagara', as it was known), as a popular tourist destination. These ghostly inserts loom large in the overall visual composition of *Resurrección*, which accentuates their aesthetic beauty by dwelling on the use of colour in tourist images, or light twinkling on the surface of the water at sunset. These archival images of the river are paired with Grieg's 'The Death of Ase' from *Peer Gynt*, a mournful, elegiac string lament for the protagonist's dying mother (a character who does later come back to life), which functions to construct a melancholic and loving gaze on, and relation to, these images. The melancholia associated with the loss of these realities is further evoked by the discolouration, scratched surfaces and decayed edges of these old images, which 'flaunt their

Figure 1. White foam caused by industrial pollution floats on the surface of the River Santiago, as a local resident recalls the river's pre-industrial days



Figure 2. Globules of white foam caused by industrial pollution swirl and dance in the air, creating a strange and arresting visual effect



tenuous connection to the reality they index [and] appeal to a look of love and loss' on that which is represented (Marks, 2001: 91); in this case, the river.

Resurrección forms part of a constellation of audiovisual engagements with the pollution of the Santiago, including a short film by Polgovsky himself (made for Greenpeace in 2013), several other documentaries that predate Polgovsky's film (e.g. *Silent River* [2014]), as well as the activist videos made subsequent to its release. Acknowledging and reflecting upon this constellation of which it is a part, *Resurrección* is preoccupied not only with representing the river and its pollution but also with visualisations of, and the act of viewing, these things. In addition to the archival images, Polgovsky stages many small scenes of viewing, filming residents as they watch contemporary materials, including a 2005 TV documentary, *Salto de Juanacatlán: donde el agua envenena*, 2005 (*Salto de Juanacatlán: Where the Water Poisons*) as well as sift through older ones including slides and photos revealing pristine waters and bucolic local settings, focusing in particular on the way these earlier visual documents

Figure 3. A dissolve suggests the haunting of the River Santiago in its present contaminated state by its pre-industrial past



reveal the unpolluted river and its environs to the children and young people of the area who have never experienced it as such. As Paula Serafini writes in *Creating Worlds Otherwise*, in situations of environmental conflict, ‘documentation is also about facilitating processes of memorialisation’, tasks that must be carried out by artists and documentary filmmakers (Serafini, 2022: 26). As *Resurrección* makes clear, the visual sources it incorporates, as well as the elderly community members, whose memories of the river as playground and food source the film also dwells on, are the precarious last remaining links with an uncontaminated river. Assembling a myriad of (audio) visual forms through which both diegetic and extra-diegetic audiences apprehend the pre- and post-industrial river, *Resurrección* emphasises the value of visual forms to document reality and serve as the memory of a community, as well as their ability to affect, move and mobilise us, as residents are seen viewing images that become a trigger for memory, for discussion and for political organising. As Gan et al., 2017 write in their Introduction to *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*:

Our era of human destruction has trained our eyes only on the immediate promises of power and profits. This refusal of the past, and even the present, will condemn us to continue fouling our own nests. How can we get back to the pasts we need to see the present more clearly?’. (Gan et al., 2017: 3)

Resurrección as a whole becomes a compendium of visual and oral imaginaries of the Santiago, and of the river’s varying aspects, framings, meanings and entanglements with human and non-human life, through time; in this way, the film both takes us back to the past we need to see its present more clearly, and reflects on the potential of visual forms, especially film, to engage us politically and poetically with both. In its palimpsestic approach to time, in which the past and the present of the Santiago seem to exist simultaneously, through the use of dissolves (Figure 3), *Resurrección* also suggests worldviews and temporalities other than the linear, Western one.

The film opens with a long, slow, vertical pan over the tangled and exposed aerial roots of a tree, following these upwards as they form a tangled and knotted trunk, complex with many off-shoots and strands. The vegetation is itself growing around and through other materials – including rocks and a brick wall – partially covered with plaster, whilst sprayed graffiti covers parts of both trunk and wall. This opening models a porous and interconnected relationship between human and non-human; an entanglement of timescales, materials and life forms that is augmented by the narration of activist Enrique Enciso, relating the river’s importance in local myth and Indigenous cosmology:

Ecological Emergency in El Salto and Cosmopolitical Aesthetics

El Salto, con sus escasos cien años de vida, está sentado en el occidental estado de Jalisco en este país, México. Dicen en el sur que la patria de uno es el país de la infancia. Ese es el verdadero territorio, y el territorio de la infancia fue allá, donde está un río milenario al que los Tecuexes, Cocas, Tepehuanos, Coras, Huixaricas, Nahuas, Teotihuacanos, Purepechas y aquellos que no recuerdo, lo nombraban con gran respeto, El Chinaguápan –palabra que salió de abajo, del inframundo, del país de los muertos, el ‘Mictlán’, con sus nueve infiernos. Uno de estos infiernos, el noveno, le dio nombre al gran río Chinaguapan. El río, para estos pueblos, fue su patria y su frontera.

This opening positions the view of the river solidly within Indigenous forms of knowledge and understanding, thereby suggesting both the resurrection or revivification of repressed Indigenous ways of knowing the world, specifically making the river the site of this action by privileging the name and identity given to it in Indigenous cosmology. Re-naming – the erasure of meaning of conquered territories – was a crucial part of the process of their colonial subjugation. This opening highlights the river’s name and identity as a force emanating from the underworld, and thus with the crossing of boundaries between dead and living. On Mexico’s Día de los Muertos, local residents make an altar to the river, inviting and hoping for its return to unpolluted life; following Indigenous cosmologies, they construct it as an Earth-being (de la Cadena, 2015) that can resurrect. Like these local activist practices, in its thinking about, and representation of the river, *Resurrección* ‘think[s] with cosmovisions that have always conceptualised and constructed their experience from below and with the earth’ (Escobar, 2020: 7).

Returning to life these repressed and eradicated epistemologies of the river, Polgovsky’s film is notable for the way in which it unsettles the river’s status as object in the representation, making it protagonist and subject, and imbuing it with an uncanny, watchful gaze. Unlike traditional visual production of nature and landscape, which tends to render unfamiliar space comforting and safe for the viewer, *Resurrección*’s present-day footage of the river instead emphasises the unhomeliness of the river and its environs, evoking ‘the defamiliarisation of the natural world that arises from our repressed sense that “Nature” lies absolutely beyond the horizon of human knowledge and perception’ (Eggan, 2017: iii). As writers on the ecological or environmental uncanny have discussed, our (Western) recognition, or renewed perception of the agency and perspective of the non-human produces feelings of uncanniness because (Western) human subjectivity is challenged when ‘in the world beyond the human we find things we generally feel comfortable attributing only to ourselves’ (Kohn, 2013: 1). Experiencing the repressed understanding of the agency and perspective of the non-human – like so many experiences associated with the uncanny – challenges the sense of integrity and uniqueness of the subject, making ‘one’s sense of oneself [seem] strangely questionable’ (Royle, 2003: 1) as well as undermining the traditional sense of power over the environment or nature that is constitutive of Western subjectivity. For writers including Amitav Ghosh (2016) and Mary Louise Pratt (2022: 123), the uncanny is a particularly suitable term for characterising our current state and the awareness brought about by ecological crisis. As Ghosh writes:

No other word comes close to expressing the strangeness of what is unfolding around us. For these changes are not merely strange in the sense of being unknown or alien; their uncanniness lies precisely in the fact that in these encounters we recognise something we had turned away from: that is to say, the presence and proximity of nonhuman interlocutors. Yet now our gaze seems to be turning again; the uncanny and improbable events that are beating at our doors seem to have stirred a sense of recognition, an awareness that humans were never alone, that we have always been surrounded by beings of all sorts who share elements of that which we had thought to be most distinctively our own: the capacities of will, thought and consciousness. (Ghosh, 2016: 30–31)

In her work on political ontology, Isabelle Stengers argues for the politically productive nature of what she terms the ‘fright’ evoked by animism, the feeling ‘that some “other” has intruded, has influenced or modified us, possibly even caused our metamorphosis. ... The essential fright is that the truth of what I perceive, of what I feel, of what I think resides in an Other’ (Nathan, cit. Stengers, 2018: 98). For Stengers, animism challenges and unsettles the modern imperative not to regress, not to

return to previous stages of development in which we were unable to distinguish belief from reality. Therefore, ‘when ontological politics demands that we take seriously the existence and power of other-than-human beings, it is we who cry: do not demand that we do that when we ourselves are concerned, or you will destroy us. A strange equality is at last achieved’ (Stengers, 2018: 100). Animism should be reclaimed, according to Stengers, because it has the capacity to make us feel a threat to what constitutes us as subjects, and to thereby level the terrain. This kind of levelling can contribute to a cosmopolitics, a politics of the human and the non-human, in which it becomes apparent that that ‘the political arena is peopled with shadows of that which does not have a political voice, cannot have, or does not want to have one’ (Stengers, 2005: 996).

‘Reclaiming animism’ by re-vivifying that which was, in reality, never dead, can be seen as a crucial part of the project of *Resurrección*. In addition to its play with cinema’s potential for re-vivification through its resurrection of old archival images, views and times of the river, *Resurrección* also extensively evokes the river’s gaze and consciousness in unsettling ways, creating a cosmopolitical aesthetics of the river. Over and over in the film, the river displaces the human in strange and unsettling sequences where human voices or figures fade out to be replaced by sounds of rushing water, and by significant long takes without narration in which the river is filmed in close-up, its course followed by the camera as it rushes over stones, white with foam from industrial discharge, or red with leachates. The length of time given to the river, the amplification of its sounds, the use of framing, and close-ups construct the river as protagonist, as Earth-being, suggesting its agency and consciousness. The ominous music that frequently accompanies long takes of the river in its current contaminated state contributes to the unsettling effect, whilst shots that view the rushing water through the knocked out windows of a crumbling building, or through branches, function to suggest the river’s unsettling, watchful gaze on us. As the film’s editor Mara Polgovsky writes: ‘En *Resurrección* es principalmente el río quien nos mira’ (Polgovsky, 2020: 190).

In this way, the film can be seen as eliciting the kind of ecological awareness discussed by Timothy Morton, an awareness that ‘might have something intrinsically uncanny about it, as if we were seeing something we shouldn’t be seeing’ (Morton, 2012: 58). Morton writes about the ways in which the experience of art can provide a model for ecological awareness, by giving us the feeling of being ‘seen’ by our environment, just as Polgovsky elicits in the viewer of *Resurrección* the feeling of being ‘seen’ by the river, the uncanny sense that ‘what I perceive, what I feel, resides in an Other’ (Stengers, 2018: 98). Morton, discussing Oliafur Eliasson’s 1993 installation *Beauty* talks about the ways that being ‘seen’ by a spectral rainbow created by a spotlight shone on a curtain of mist ushers the viewer of/participant in this artwork into a different relationship with the world around them, allowing them to ‘[realise] that we are bound up in reciprocal relationships with other beings in our world’ (Morton, 2020). ‘Being seen’ allows for the overcoming of the sense of disconnection from the world. As artist Eliasson puts it of his work: ‘The rainbow hosts the opportunity for you to feel seen by the rainbow – once I successfully feel connected, I am more likely to treat the world better’ (in Morton, 2020). Like *Beauty*, *Resurrección*, ‘provide[s] a model for the kind of coexistence ecological ethics and politics wants to achieve between humans and non-humans’ (Morton, 2018: 41), fostering connection between viewer and river.

As the Juanacatlán Falls agitate the water, creating foam which the wind then disperses, spreading pollutants to the neighbouring areas (Arellano-Aguilar, 2012: 29), Polgovsky’s camera captures it swirling and dancing in the air, creating some of the strangest, most beautiful and arresting images in the film, images that are returned to several times (Figure 2). Glistening white foam globules, dancing on the breeze, suggest the apparently inanimate coming to life, and are imbued with the uncanniness of the renewed awareness of the agency and consciousness of other life forms and of the planet that Ghosh associates with the Anthropocene, and with the indeterminate, ghostly and boundary-troubling qualities of pollution which, though it may have been dumped many years ago, travels unseen in water and soil, working on bodies invisibly or existing latently and emerging years later in unpredictable ways. As Gan et al., 2017 write of radioactive waste, chemical pollution too ‘has [an] uncanny quality [...] we cannot see it even as we learn to find its traces, it disturbs us in its indeterminacy; this is a quality of ghosts’ (Gan et al., 2017: 2). Imbuing the pollution with mobility and agency, Polgovsky’s poetics of toxicity question its status as inanimate, evoking the way in which, as Nixon argues, the toxic and the spiritual ‘interpenetrate and blend’ for many of the world’s people, ‘creating a hybrid world of

technonuminous fears' (Nixon, 2011: 62–3). The striking images and strange beauty of the foam also render visual, spectacular, the violence of mainly invisible and intangible chemical pollution which, as Nixon writes, therefore mostly eludes (visual) representation. In this way, Polgovsky finds a visual register that manages to 'bring home, and bring emotionally to life, threats that take time to wreak their havoc, threats that never materialise in one spectacular, explosive, cinematic scene' (Nixon, 2011: 14).

Resurrección also registers the tactile, sensory and embodied effects of the pollution on the community's human and non-human inhabitants. Close-ups of toxic foam on the river's surface function to make toxicity tangible to the viewer, through appeals to the sense of touch, connecting the viewer with the lived experience of this violence through haptic and textural images, including long takes of the white foam that focus on its textured surface. In time-images such as these, the emphasis shifts away from narrative and event, and towards the body and the senses, as spectators' touch-memories are elicited. In this way, the film elicits a spectatorial embodiment of ecological knowledge from which we habitually turn away, fostering an ethical engagement on the part of the spectator with the hidden realities of contamination. Film, which can work to challenge the boundedness of the spectator's body, has a role to play here, in overcoming the representational challenges posed by 'slow violences' such as the pollution of the Río Santiago.

Resurrección maintains an intense focus on the lived and bodily experiences of residents, as it documents life in this region. Further sensorial elements of life near the polluted Santiago are evoked: we hear residents talk about the effects on local human, animal and plant health, and increased mortality rates, but also about the smell of the pollution, the constant feeling of breathing air thick with it. In his article, on 'Toxic Space and Time' in areas of Louisiana affected by petrochemical pollution, Thom Davies draws attention to the way residents' intimate and domestic spaces are penetrated by foul, disconcerting smells, the way these interrupt sleep and amount to a kind of 'sensory siege', or violent invasion of peoples' spaces and rupture of everyday rhythms (Davies, 2018: 9). For Deborah Davis Jackson, because of the way in which smell 'entails the embodiment of the perceived substance, thus connecting self and surroundings in profound and transformative ways', the effect of toxic fumes on communities is to bring about a powerful sense of alienation from the space they inhabit, a condition she calls 'dysplacement' (Davis Jackson, 2011: 606). By combining residents' testimonies of the foul smells invading their living quarters at night, and by maintaining a visual focus on air thick with foam globules, suggestive of smaller and less visible particles, Polgovsky's film brings us into a sensory, embodied awareness of what it is to live in the Cuenca Alta del Río Santiago.

As Amanda Eaton McMenamin writes: 'If ecological violence is often too slow to adequately represent on the visual register, the instigation of the other senses more readily conveys a sense – an affective, embodied reaction – of urgency in relation to environmental depredation' (Eaton McMenamin, 2021: 96). In addition to evoking a smellscape, the film evokes the embodied experience of community members through close attention to affected bodies, including close-ups of dialysis tubes penetrating the stomach flesh of children living with kidney failure (Figure 4), in this way making clear the 'state of injury' (Mbembe, 2003: 21) in which residents exist. Over its course, the film registers both the dead and dying animals such as birds and fish that cannot survive in these polluted environs, as well as the 'human shapes that are alive, to be sure, but whose bodily integrity has been replaced by pieces, fragments, folds, even immense wounds that are difficult to close' (35). The film follows a young girl called Lupita, with a rare skin condition thought by the director to be García-Hafner-Happle syndrome, which causes raised, darker lesions on the skin, which are visually very shocking. Such skin lesions are known to be caused by exposure to arsenic in drinking water (Karagas et al., 2015), and arsenic is one of the many pollutants found in the waters of the Santiago, which many local residents boil, believing this makes it safe to drink. As her mother recounts, Lupita has been assessed several times, but the family has never been given the results of biopsies, or received a diagnosis. Over the course of the documentary, Polgovsky's camera registers other, much younger children, and babies whose skin bears the beginnings of lesions similar to Lupita's.

Figure 4. Close-up of the body of a young boy with kidney failure and his dialysis tube



Conclusion

This article has argued that *Resurrección* contributes significantly to the search for visual forms through which to both document ecological catastrophe, and its effects on environmental and human health, as well as to model the reconfigured relationship between the human and the non-human, which will be required to address it. The film's ethical and political commitment to the local human community is balanced with an equal commitment to the non-human, to the river and its environs. These are entangled and constitute the worlds portrayed in *Resurrección*, worlds that centre around subaltern and non-human perspectives, to the virtual exclusion of the majoritarian or 'one-world' voices that dominate so much discussion of eco-crisis. Polgovsky's documentary shows, without telling, the potential of visual forms, especially film, to resurrect and revivify past realities we need to know in order to deal with the present crisis, to act as the repository of a community's memory, and to stimulate resistance and organising against the catastrophic harm caused by the reckless pursuit of profit. On the other hand, the fact that *Resurrección* includes many previous examples of visual evidence of the polluted river and its catastrophic effects hints at the potential futility of even powerful and moving audiovisual materials in the face of industrial might and a lack of political will.

Resurrección resurrects and revivifies the Santiago not only through returning to life archival footage of and past gazes on the river, but also in the sense of imagining and representing the river as alive, thus combatting powerful forces that imagine nature as dead in order to destroy it. By attributing qualities to the river that we are normally more comfortable attributing only to ourselves, the film attempts to re-awaken in the spectator the strange familiarity that a newly configured relation to the planet necessitates. In making us seen by the river and replacing traditional framing and perspective with close-ups, cropped views and tactile visuality, the film counters 'Anthropocene Visuality', decentering a dominant spectatorial subjectivity associated with the objectivising and dualistic stance of human dominion over nature (Escobar, 2020: *passim*), and instead suggesting the relational perspective that Arturo Escobar sees as essential to addressing ecological crisis, and the 'haunting, uncanny [...] dimension' that, as Morton writes, 'we will need to embrace [...] in order to care for ourselves and other life-forms' (Morton, 2017: 38). Strange, powerful, tactile and sensorial images combine in this film to undermine the sense of human dominion over nature, to elicit embodied knowledge and connection, and to counter the 'spectacle deficiency', of the slow, often invisible violence being perpetrated on the *cuerpos-territorios* of the Cuenca Alta del Río Santiago.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Enrique Enciso, Sofi Enciso, Ricki O'Rawe and Mara Polgovsky for discussions that have informed this article. I dedicate it to the memories of Eugenio Polgovsky and Erica Segre, with gratitude.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

References

- Adam, B. (1998) *Timescapes of Modernity: The Environment and Invisible Hazards*. Psychology Press: London.
- Arellano-Aguilar, O. (2012) Estudio de la contaminación en la cuenca del río Santiago y la salud pública en la región. [WWW document]. URL https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316430481_Estudio_de_la_contaminacion_en_la_cuenca_del_rio_Santiago_y_la_salud_publica_en_la_region [accessed 19 April 2023].
- Blaser, M. and de la Cadena, M. (2018) 'Pluriverse: Proposals for a World of Many Worlds' in M. Blaser and M. de la Cadena (eds.) *A World of Many Worlds*. Duke University Press: Durham, 2–22.
- Brynn Voyles, T. (2016) *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Jalisco (2022) Recomendación 23/2022. [WWW document]. URL <http://historico.cedhj.org.mx/recomendaciones/emitidas/2022/Reco%2023-2022%20VP.pdf> [accessed 18 July 2023].
- Danowski, D. and Viveiros de Castro, E. (2017) in T. R. Nunes (ed.) *The Ends of the World*. Polity Press: Cambridge.
- Davies, T. (2018) 'Toxic Space and Time: Slow Violence, Necropolitics and Petrochemical Pollution'. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108(6): 1537–1553.
- Davis Jackson, D. (2011) 'Scents of Place: The Displacement of a First Nations Community in Canada'. *American Anthropologist* 113(4): 606–618.
- de la Cadena, M. (2015) *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Demos, T. J. (2017) *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today*. Sternberg Press: Berlin.
- Eaton McMenamin, A. (2021) 'Slow Violence in the Slow Cinema of Lisandro Alonso' in C. Fornoff and G. Heffes (eds.) *Pushing Past the Human in Latin American Cinema*. SUNY Press: Albany, 89–108.
- Eggan, T. (2017) *The Ecological Uncanny: Estranging Literary Landscapes in Twentieth Century Narrative Fiction*. Doctoral dissertation. Princeton University: Princeton.
- Eliasson, O. (1993) Beauty. Materials: Spotlight, Water, Nozzles, Wood, Hose.
- Escobar, A. (2020) *Pluriversal Politics*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Fornoff, C. and Heffes, G. (2021) 'Introduction: Latin American Cinema beyond the Human' in C. Fornoff and G. Heffes (eds.) *Pushing Past the Human in Latin American Cinema*. SUNY Press: Albany, 1–24.
- Gan, E. (2017) 'Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene' in E. Gan (ed.) *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1–14.
- Ghosh, A. (2016) *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Chicago University Press: Chicago.
- Ghosh, A. (2021) *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis*. John Murray Press: London.
- Heffes, G. (2021) 'Undisciplined Knowledge: Indigenous Activism and Decapitation Resistance' in C. Fornoff and G. Heffes (eds.) *Pushing Past the Human in Latin American Cinema*. SUNY Press: Albany, 327–344.
- Karagas, M. R., Gossai, A., Pierce, B. and Ahsan, H. (2015) 'Drinking Water Arsenic Contamination, Skin Lesions, and Malignancies: A Systematic Review of the Global Evidence'. *Current Environmental Health Reports* 2: 52–68.
- Kohn, E. (2013) *How Forests Think: Towards an Anthropology beyond the Human*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- Marcone, J. (2015) 'Filming the Emergence of Popular Environmentalism in Latin America: Postcolonialism and *Buen Vivir*' in E. de Loughrey, J. Didur and A. Carrigan (eds.) *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities: Postcolonial Approaches*. Routledge: New York, 207–225.
- Marks, L. U. (2001) *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Cinema*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Martínez-Alier, J. (2014) 'The Environmentalism of the Poor'. *Geoforum* 54: 239–241.

- Mbembe, A. (2003) 'Necropolitics'. *Public Culture* 15(1): 11–40.
- McCulligh, C. (2022) 'Wastewater and Wishful Thinking: Treatment Plants to "Revive" the Santiago River in Mexico'. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* [WWW document]. URL <https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486221125230>. [accessed 16 November 2023].
- Morton, T. (2012) *The Ecological Thought*. Harvard University Press: London.
- Morton, T. (2017) *Humankind*. Verso: London.
- Morton, T. (2018) *Being Ecological*. Penguin: London.
- Mulvey, L. (2006) *Death 24 x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*. Reaktion Books: London.
- Navarro, M. L. (2020) 'Violencia biocida sobre los cuerpos-territorios en resistencia en la Cuenca Alta del río Santiago'. *Voces de la Ciudadanía*. SEMARNAT: Mexico City. [WWW document]. URL https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/558612/7_Violencia_biocida_web.pdf [accessed 18 July 2023].
- Nixon, R. (2011) *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
- Plumwood, V. (2008) 'Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling'. *Australian Humanities Review* 44(2): 139–150.
- Polgovsky, M. (2020) 'Resurrección: la poética del montaje' in M. Polgovsky (ed.) *Eugenio Polgovsky: la poética de lo real*. Ambulante Ediciones and Tecolote Films: Mexico City, 185–194.
- Pratt, M. L. (2022) *Planetary Longings*. Duke University Press: Durham.
- Rivera Garza, C. (2013) *Los muertos indóciles: necroescrituras y desappropriación*. Mexico City: Tusquets Editores.
- Royle, N. (2003) *The Uncanny*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.
- Serafini, P. (2022) *Creating Worlds Otherwise: Art, Collective Action and (Post)Extractivism*. Vanderbilt University Press: Nashville.
- Stengers, I. (2005) 'The Cosmopolitical Proposal' in B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds.) *Making Things Public*. MIT Press: Cambridge.
- Stengers, I. (2018) 'The Challenge of Ontological Politics' in M. Blaser and M. de la Cadena (eds.) *A World of Many Worlds*. Duke University Press: Durham, 83–111.
- Toledo, V. (2015) *Ecocidio en México: la batalla final es por la vida*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.

Films and Videos

- Caribe* (2004) Dir. Esteban Ramírez. Cinetel S.A: Costa Rica.
- Cielo abierto* (2007) Dir. Carlos Ruiz. Rioxa Films: Argentina.
- Crude: The Real Price of Oil* (2009) Dir. Joe Berlinger. First Run Features: USA.
- Eco de la montaña* (2015) Dir. Nicolás Echevarría. Cuadro Negro, Ithaca, Piano: USA, Mexico.
- El botón de nácar* (2015) Dir. Patricio Guzmán. Atacama Productions, Valdivia, MedioPro: France, Spain, Chile, Switzerland.
- El canto de Bosawas* (2014) Dirs. Brad Allgood and Camilo de Castro. Cale Producciones: USA, Nicaragua.
- El ojo del tiburón* (2012) Dir. Alejo Hoijsman. Astronauta Films, Gema Films, ICAA: Spain, Argentina, Nicaragua.
- Guadalajara* (1940) Photography by L. Osorno, Mitla Films: Mexico. Held at the Library of Congress, Washington.
- Los herederos* (2008) Dir Eugenio Polgovsky. Tecolote Films, Visions Sud-est: Mexico.
- Mitote* (2012) Dir Eugenio Polgovsky. Tecolote Films: Mexico.
- Operación diablo* (2010) Dir. Stephanie Boyd. Guarango: Peru.
- 'Pueblos en Resistencia' Series (2021) Dirs. Collective Salto de Vida. [WWW document]. URL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EECHRdj3z4A> [accessed 18 July 2023].
- Resurrección* (2016) Dir. E. Polgovsky. Tecolote Films: Mexico.
- Silent River* (2014) Dirs. J. Jaacks and S. Fisher. EPF Media: USA.
- Salto de Juanacatlán, donde el agua envenena* (2005) Dir J. J. Esquivel. IMDEC: Mexico.
- Trece pueblos en defensa del agua, el aire y la tierra* (2008) Dir. Francesco Taboada Tabone: Atahualpa Caldera, Fernanda Robinson, Francesco Taboada Tabone, CRIM-UNAM, GAIA A.C.: Mexico.
- Trópico de Cáncer* (2004) Dir Eugenio Polgovsky. CCC: Mexico.
- When Clouds Clear* (2008) Dirs. Danielle Bernstein and Anne Slick. Clear Films, El Otro Lado Films, Net-Head Films: USA.

Newspapers/Interviews

- El figón político (2020) ¿Cuáles son las empresas en Jalisco que arrojan sus desechos al Río Santiago?. WWW document. URL <https://elfigonpolitico.com/cuales-son-las-empresas-en-jalisco-que-arrojan-sus-deshechos-al-rio-santiago/> [accessed 18 July 2023].
- Fisher, S. (2015) River of Death. Type Investigations. 2 June. WWW document. URL <https://www.typeinvestigations.org/investigation/2015/06/02/river-death/> [accessed 18 May 2023].
- Fisher, S. and Malkin, E. (2019) A Slow-Motion Chernobyl: How Lax Laws Befouled a Mexican River. *New York Times*, 31 December.
- Martin, D. (2021) Interview with Enrique Enciso. 17 September. Unpublished.
- Martin, D. (2022) Interview with Sofi Enciso. 27 January. Unpublished.
- Morton, T. (2020) The Hurricane in Your Cereal Bowl. 9 Jan 2020. Prod Chris Elcombe. A Reduced Listening Production for BBC Radio 4.