

Notes on a graphic journey

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Abstract

This visual essay offers a journey through a series of posters made for campaigns in defense of the environment and the land, led by indigenous and farming communities, as well as environmental organizations, in Ecuador's Amazonia region and other parts of Abya Yala, since 2009. Specifically, they represent acts of resistance to fossil fuel drilling and mining campaigns carried out by multinational corporations such as Chevron-Texaco, or by economic sectors of the national elites, which have torn apart the region's eco-social fabric by forcibly displacing its inhabitants and stripping the land of its resources. This overview of the posters likewise reveals the author's own dynamic understanding of the conflicts, as her perspective shifts from that of doomwatcher to that of situated participant whose practice takes place alongside those who live in this region, with their own culture and worldview. At the same time, the potential of these images is reflected through their reuse by other movements in different geopolitical spheres of Africa and Latin America, forming networks of empathy that have joined together far-flung but like-minded struggles for cultural, economic and environmental difference.

Keywords

Ecuadorian Amazonia; fossil fuel drilling and mining; Abya Yala social movements; graphic-arts resistance; graphic and political journey.



Forest and Subsoil campaign, Oilwatch, 2009.

Forest and Subsoil is the first series the author made after arriving in Ecuador's Amazonia region. It reflects the clash between the world of oil drilling —whose intense destruction and death wreaks havoc on the area's freshwater reserves and ecosystem— and the world of diversity, nature and life.



("Like grandpa always said, keep the oil in the soil")



FESTIVAL POR EL YASUNÍ

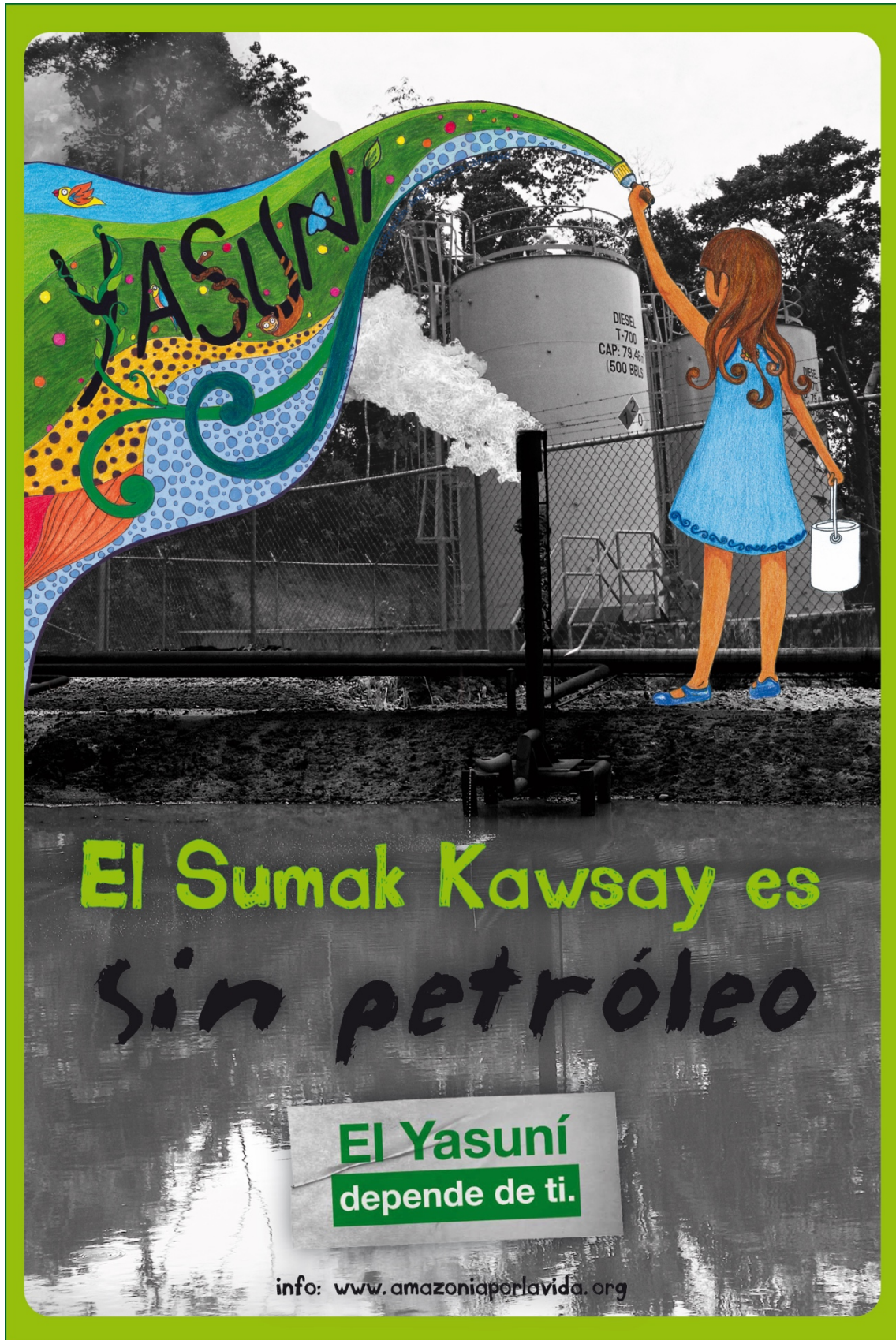
Domingo 28 de febrero de 2010
Concentración: 9:00 Plaza Grande
hacia la Plaza de Teatro

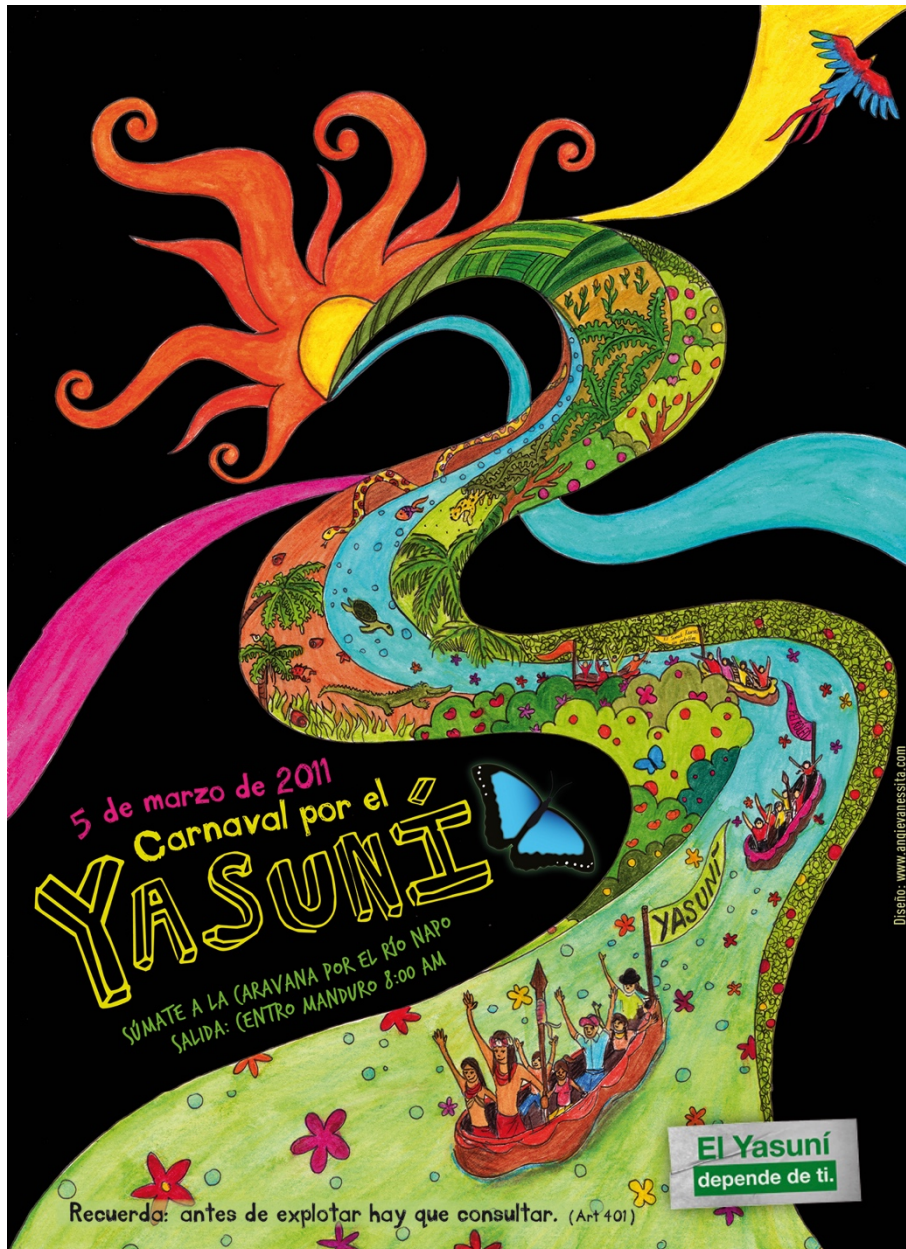
Danza
Amalgama
Teatro
Dionisio's Darg
Música
Cumbia Proleta
Mala Maña
Punto de Encaje
Ruta 7
Proteus
Alukar
Gatos de Tulpa Vieja
Tambores y Otros Demonios
Circo del Caos
Performance
Rafael Álvarez (Felo)
Sorpresa para el Yasuni:
En el Tejar

Feria con propuestas, foros, cine, documentales, exposiciones y actividades para niños.

Trae tu camiseta y te la estampamos!

Festival to promote Yasuní National Park. *Amazonia for Life* campaign, 2010.





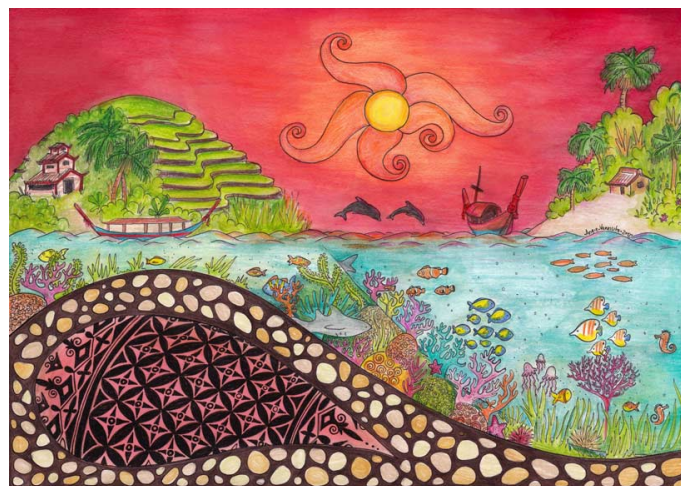
Carnival for Yasuní National Park, 2011.

Various communities and youth organizations from different provinces of Ecuador traveled down the Napo River in canoes and motorboats, equipped with signs, costumes and music, to show our support for the campaign against oil drilling in Yasuní National Park.



Cry of the Living Forest, 2012

In 2012, the indigenous Kichwa people of Sarayaku (Ecuador) issued the Kawsak Sacha (Living Forest) declaration, proclaiming the forest to be a living being, and demanding it be treated as a subject of law endowed with rights.



Africa, Latin America and Asia, Subsoil series, 2012.

The 2011 UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties —COP17— was held in Durban, South Africa. There, the international Oilwatch network submitted a proposal to leave oil “in the soil” in order to allow countries of the Global South to preserve not only their land and ecosystems, but also their cultural and social relations.



Artemises, 2013.

Oilwatch submitted the document *Annex 0* at the COP19 climate conference held in December 2013 in Warsaw, proposing an end to the crude oil industry and calling for oil to be left in the ground.



Women Weaving Territories, 2014.

In Colombia, the organization CENSAT: Agua Viva, together with the School of Sustainability, developed a pamphlet reflecting on the impacts of the mining industry and how to organize against it. This work guide identified points in common among initiatives spread all across the different regions of Colombia.



Intag Tree, 2015.

Communities in Ecuador’s high-altitude Intag Valley have been resisting the mining industry’s designs on their land for the past twenty years. Because freshwater is one of Intag’s greatest resources, the roots of the tree of life are depicted as rivers flowing through this beautiful valley. Various groups and organizations have used the poster, for example for the Condor Range Conference (Jornadas Cordillera del Cóndor), which centered on the valley’s traditions and people, as well as the threat of the corporate mining industry, FLASO, UASB, 2017.



Aleph, 2016.

Bulletin on the Rights of Nature. International Forum on Memory, Environment and Truth for Peace-Building in Colombia.



No to Fracking, 2016.

Poster for the Second National Conference Against Fracking, Colombia.



Shuar Power, 2016.

In December 2016, indigenous Shuar protesters from the province of Sucumbíos peacefully occupied the facilities of a mining company, demanding its immediate withdrawal from their territory. This led the Ecuadorian government to instigate a series of clashes with the Shuar there, creating a province-wide state of siege. *Shuar Power* was intended to spread the word about what was going on in Shuar territory.



Shuar Women, 2017

The image *Shuar Women* arose after the clashes inside Shuar territory and the month-long siege. Organizations like Shuar Arutam, Acción Ecológica or the National Women's Rights Platform have used the image for their activities.



Girls of the River, 2017.

A year after the assassination of Honduran activist Berta Cáceres, who was fighting the Agua Zarca mega-dam project, I made *Girls of the River*, an image used in 2019 by the organization Cali Women on Strike (En Cali las mujeres paramos), to mark the March 8 women's strike, which commemorated Cáceres's struggle. The Lenca people of Honduras and El Salvador believe that rivers are watched over by girl spirits. For the Lenca, Berta is now one of these spirits caring for the rivers.



Dreaming La Guajira (without coal mining), 2018.

Located in the Colombian department of La Guajira, El Cerrejón is the world's largest open-pit coal mine. The indigenous, farming and African Diaspora communities that have historically called this area home have been suffering the adverse effects of the mine for the past fifty years. Communities, mine workers and activists have come together to propose a post-coal future for La Guajira.



Energy transition, 2019

National and International Conference: Constructing Energy and Climate Justice, Bogotá.