Karuara
people of the river

Peruvian Documentary "Karuara, People of the River" selected for Canadian Hot Docs Festival

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A coproduction of Asociación Quisca with the Kukama Indigenous Women's Federation and Radio Ucamara, **the documentary premieres shortly after a Peruvian judge ruled that the Marañón River has intrinsic rights.**

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The new Peruvian documentary "Karuara, People of the River," has been selected for the prestigious Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in Toronto. The world-renowned festival will showcase over 160 documentaries worldwide from April 25 to May 5, 2024.

Directed by Miguel Araoz Cartagena and Stephanie Boyd, the film follows the struggles of a brave Indigenous woman and her community as they confront powerful interests to save their river and the sacred Karuara, or "people of the river".

Mariluz Canaquiri Murayari, who leads a federation of Kukama women in a groundbreaking lawsuit to safeguard the Marañón River, is the film's protagonist and also a co-producer. The film's other producers are Leonardo Tello Imaina of Radio Ucamara, an Indigenous media outlet in the Amazon region and Stephanie Boyd of Quisca.

"Every phase of production brought indigenous artists, elders and journalists together with experienced filmmakers," says co-director Stephanie Boyd. "This is revolutionary in Latin America where most films are still made about indigenous communities, and not with and by them."
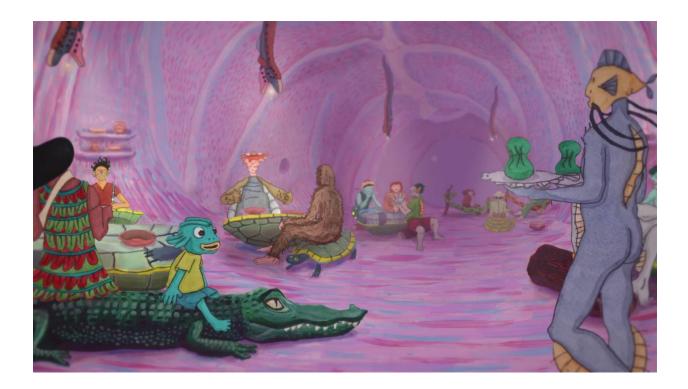
"We're disseminating our ancestral culture through this documentary," says Mariluz Canaquiri. "The film allows us to send a message to people who don't know our cosmovision, to allow them to see our reality, our culture and, in a way, us too, the Kukama people."

The filmmakers used stunning hand painted animations to depict the Karuara's spirit world and take viewers on an incredible journey underwater. These spiritual beings live in a parallel universe beneath the Amazon region's waterways and help maintain the region's delicate ecological balance.
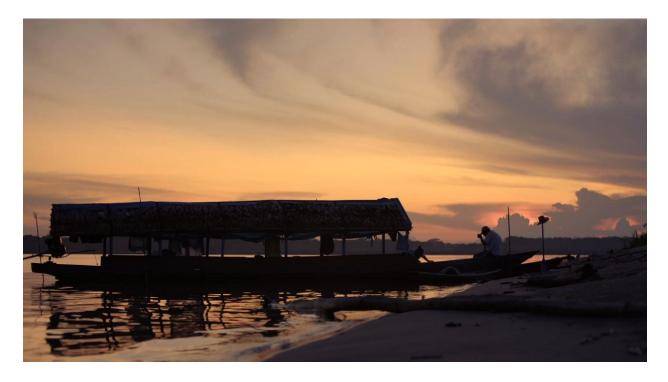
But oil spills, illegal gold mining and other so-called modern developments threaten the Amazon's rivers and spirit world below. The Amazon Basin holds 20 percent of the world's freshwater and is considered the world's lung due to its integral role in carbon sequestration. Destruction of the Amazon will have dire consequences for all humanity.

[This March a Peruvian judge issued a positive verdict, recognizing the inherent rights of the Marañón River, including its right to exist, flow freely and be free of contamination](). The Peruvian government has appealed and the case will have a second hearing in the coming months.

In a world that puts a price tag on nature, "Karuara, People of the River" takes viewers inside the magic and beauty of the Amazon region and reminds us of our sacred connection to water.
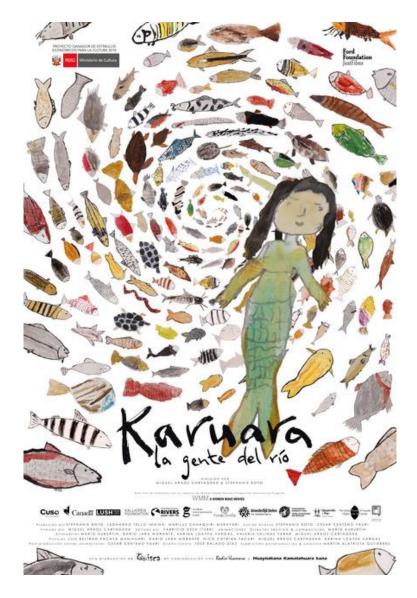
Hot Docs screenings will be held on Tues. April 30th at 5:45 pm and Fri. May 3rd at 10:45 am at the Scotiabank Theater, 259 Richmond St. West. The film's protagonist and coproducer, Mariluz Canaquiri Murayari, will be present to answer questions, alongside directors Miguel Araoz Cartagena and Stephanie Boyd.

Free community screenings will be held in Toronto on May 9th at the Center For Social Innovation, 192 Spadina Ave, at 6 pm, hosted by Cuso International and Cerlac and at Centennial College in Scarborough on May 10th at 10:30 am. Both events will have receptions afterward with refreshments and an opportunity to interact with the filmmakers.

"Karuara, People of the River" was supported by: International Rivers, Cuso International, Rights Action, Lush North American Giving Fund, Development and Peace, the United Church of Canada, Fondo Emilia, Steelworker's Humanity Fund, Broederlijk Delen, Ford Foundation JustFilms, Kalliopeia Foundation and Peru's Ministry of Culture

For more information please visit www.karuara.com