

Ana Elena Tejera's lyrical docufiction *Panquiaco* fluidly navigates the relation of Panamanian indigeneity to global diaspora. Defined by water, Panama is an isthmus that bridges Central and South America and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, a geographical nexus demarcated by colonisation, trade and transit. Yet an indigenous chronicle of the land of 'two seas', and the ocean as an animating cosmology, precedes it.

*Panquiaco* was filmed with the collaboration of the Ustupu community in Guna Yala, in Campo Laurel and in Darién, Panama, and in the Portuguese town of Vila do Conde, and Tejera's participants portray themselves. The film opens on a Koguis creation myth that posits the sea as a force: as much epistemological as spiritual, enfolded origin and subjective imagination. 'The sea was not water, nor a thing nor a person. It was our mother, it was our memory, it was our thought.' Such an expansive sense of the potentiality of the oceanic opposes the ways in which the sea has historically been harnessed: a paradoxical medium for imperial and capitalist circulation, exploitation, extraction.

This tension animates Tejera's film through its focus on Cebaldo de León Smith, a Dule fisherman's assistant living in Northern Portugal. Cebaldo yearns for home in Guna Yala, and flickers of that life thickly present as remembered elsewhere. In the cold, foggy, purple Portuguese evening skies and craggy coast, Cebaldo toils, then drinks in port-town bars and listens to *saudade*-laced songs on the jukebox. In private, he plays an answering-machine recording of family members' messages, their long-ago-captured voices describing how they have waited – anniversaries of deaths unmet with his visitation. Reminiscences of childhood bring images of a boy playing and bathing in undulating water infused with medicinal plants, leaves sticking to his wet skin.

Such longings invite a reckoning with the filial ghosts that remain there, cemented in the gulf of absence. Tejera interweaves Cebaldo's homecoming with the practices of the Ustupu community: women intricately embroider Guna *mola* in scarlet cloth and mustard thread; elders sing and prepare for a funerary rite. The elements of subjective memory and collective sacraments intersect with the saga of Panquiaco, who directed the Spanish colonial conquistador Vasco Núñez de Balboa to Europe's first encounter with the Pacific Ocean. Panquiaco's grief at his own betrayal of the land is allegorised, linked to Cebaldo's mourning work, both figures left to 'wandering between two seas'. The self-exiled subject must reconcile himself with earthly and spiritual departure.

Indigenous poet leader and botanical healer Fernando Fernández, among other oracular figures, advise Cebaldo that his task is a difficult one. 'The sea is waiting for you, wherever you are... The land that we lose does not return. You have to let it go.' Such a loss of land links a floating transit and a deeper historicity of colonial dispossession. Yet the sea's exigency embraces the breath and spirit of the exile, engulfing the tumult of the castaway who drifts far from home.

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