

Amazona Warmikuna  
By Isadora Romero

Amazona Warmikuna is an ongoing photographic project that portrays in a subjective manner the life of the indigenous women in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest. This series is inspired by the myth of the Amazonas by whom the region receives its name.

According to history, the Amazon Rainforest is one of the few places on Earth that is called after a female character, casually fictional. In the first community I visited, I was struck by the temperament of the women living there: they never stopped defending life and their territory. Thanks to their organization, they have managed to unite the community in the fight against mining and oil exploration, very serious threats nowadays. This project is a tribute to their strength, to their mystical vision of the world. It is a tribute to the women building history and defending their environment.

The community of Sarayaku has several women leaders. One of them is Ena Santi. She remembers how the women gathered one day when the oil companies started to threaten all the communities around Sarayaku. "The men were thinking to make some business with them because they said it would bring progress to the community" then the women visited those nearby communities that agreed to have the oil companies in their territories. "We saw the Pachamama bleeding" she said. And with love and care we convinced the men not to give our land to the oil companies. "We, as women, understand the suffering deeper than men, we can feel the earth suffering." She concluded.

In 1992 women of several communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest called for a march from their territory towards Quito, the Ecuadorian capital, to ask the president to recognize their territories and their right to protect them and live according to their own beliefs. It was a historic march and since then the strength of the Amazonian women has never been underestimated.

I think that in addition to denouncing the inequalities, it is essential to spread stories of resilience, strength and empowerment, stories of the things that work, like Amazona Warmikuna, which invites the observer to a mystic journey reflecting on the indigenous women's worldview, which professes that everything in the jungle is alive; that every plant, animal, object has its spirit, its magic and must be protected in order to achieve a harmonious life. Their fight for preservation of a fragile ecosystem is an example for the world.