

## **iluikak (2016-2019)**

### Statement

In the wayward Mexico of today, where socio-political instability has prompted society to lose contact with its roots, heritage, and territory, Veracruz is one of many places where Mexican citizens face injustice on a daily basis. In hopes of bringing viewers' eyes and attention to its reality. I have chosen to situate myself and my project in this part of Mexico.

To open a mountain implies entering its multiple dimensions: the mountain as a way of life, as a secret, as a fantasy, as a history, as a nature, as time. La sierra de Zongolica in the state of Veracruz, is tracked by the slow construction of these photographs, shaped by high, mid and low lands as a constant transition of heights and humidity. Its original inhabitants, the Nahuas peoples since ancient times are country workers and more and more they become migrant communities due to the precarious socio-economic conditions and violence in the region, being Veracruz one of the most violent states in the country.

*Ilulikak*, which in Nahuatl means "close to the sky" is a project that assumes fully the tight relationship between what a photographic image creates and the real it comes from. It leads through the furrow between documentary and fiction. In the images, which are tied in their temporalities from the idea of act, a space is managed not only for the visions and symbols of the mountain to emerge, but to create an imaginary at the same time abstract and concrete from the pendular relationship between the visible and the invisible.

## ***The Cimarron and the fandango (2014-2015)***

### Statement

*During the colonial period in the Americas, a Cimarron was a fugitive black slave who lived a free life in isolated corners of society.*

In the 1500s, a large number of African slaves were brought to Mexico as a workforce in different areas: mining, livestock, fishing, and domestic work, among others. By 1742, the population of blacks in Mexico exceeded the Spanish population. Today, around 10% of Mexico's population identifies as black.

In the fight for independence from 1810 to 1821, in which different castes participated, Mexico became the first country in the Americas to abolish slavery.

During the decades of Mexico's consolidation as an independent country, (whose maximum achievement was the establishment of the Political Constitution in 1917), the history of the African population was little by little made invisible. They were recognized within Mexico's constitution.

In the following years, the Afro-descendant population began to group mainly in two points of the Mexican territory: Veracruz and the Costa Chica region, on the border between Guerrero and Oaxaca.

In the last two decades, the black community began a struggle for recognition by promoting debates that revolved around socio-political and identity issues. It was not until 2015 that the legal process of inclusion in the Constitution began. Discussions continue as they fight to obtain in practice the fulfillment of their rights.

Today, the self-defined Afro-Mexican population is building its own version of the past, beginning to recover and reconstruct their history – or, perhaps, to illuminate a history they had kept alive in seclusion.

*The Cimarron and the fandango* speaks allegorically about the past of a black community and its members' journey through the fluctuations of colonial history, their integration into the Mexican territory, and their sense of identity within it. Yet that past isn't merely a descriptive historical concept: it is, above all, a definition of the present. A present, in the case of their Afro-Mexican descendant, that remains marginal, unstable, and immemorial.