

"When the elders die, our living library dies"
Soi Sani



ONANYA

A STORY OF THE SHIPIBO AND THE
TRADITIONAL MEDICINES OF THE AMAZON

Onanya is a feature-length documentary that tells the story of an Amazonian tribe that has stood the test of time.

The Shipibo are indigenous gatekeepers of the natural kingdom and its medicinal plants. Ayahuasca, a sacred plant used to heal for millennia, has exploded in popularity but the impact on the culture is taking its toll.





One of only 14 indigenous tribes left in the Amazon Basin of Peru, the majority of Shipibo live in communities that are only accessible by boat. The Shipibo that live around the Amazonian city, Pucallpa, are marginally acculturated with the dominant culture of Peru.

Elements of their culture have been passed through their ancestors for millennia. Despite years of invasion and colonisation, the Shipibo have maintained their traditions and ancestral knowledge.

They are a resilient community that have faced troubles over the years. Whether it's rubber barons enslaving their people, governments taking their land, the wellbeing of the Shipibo has been in the hands of external powers for over a century.



Mama Rosa
aka Pesin Rate

Maestra Rosa Pinedo-Vásquez, more affectionately known as “Mama Rosa”, has 31 years of experience in the practice of plant medicine. Her Shipibo name is Pesin Rate which means beautiful and admirable woman with long hair. Rosa has four adult children, Adelina, Feliciano, Luis and Genaro.



Luis Marquez-Pinedo
aka Soi Sani

Soi Sani, in Shipibo which means ‘wonderful, sociable and friendly man’, has been a healer for 15 years. He served as Principal in Santa Elisa, Pedagogic Director of the public Bilingual Institute in Yarinacocha, and as a Teacher Training Specialist at the University of the Peruvian Amazon.



Genaro Marquez-Pinedo
aka Ronin Mano

Ronin Mano, which means invisible man with the strength and power of the anaconda, is the son of Mama Rosa and part of a lineage of Shamans looking to share his knowledge and wisdom by telling the history of the Shipibo and plant healing ceremonies. He is currently undertaking a shamanic apprenticeship with his brother Feliciano’s guidance.



Feliciano Marquez-Pinedo
aka Kanan Betsa

Kanan Betsa means ‘a man with a good profile and talent in business’. Feliciano became very ill when he was 39. He sought out a local plant healer named Wakapoko who was able to treat him and who imparted significant knowledge of plant medicines to Feliciano.



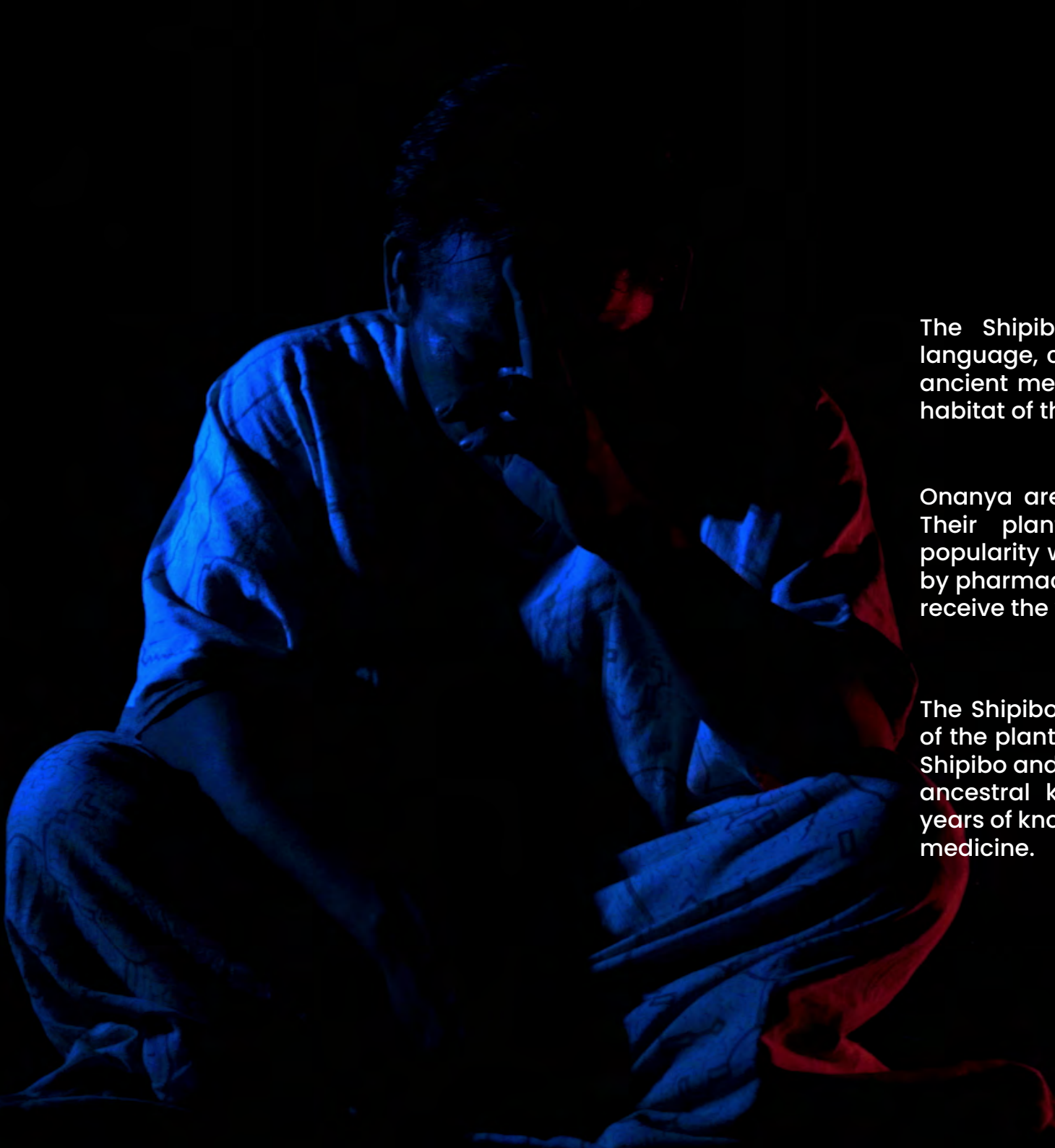
Adelina Marquez-Pinedo
aka Iso Wabi

Adelina was initiated to Plant Medicines due to her own sickness that she was not able to cure for years. After discovering the healing potential of the plant world, she decided to dedicate her life to Master Plants and became a Maestra, just like her mother and brothers.



Gilberto Picota-Lopez
aka Sina Nima

Sina Nima means ‘a serious and positive man’. Gilberto’s father was a healer since the age of 12 and practiced Shamanism for over 66 years, healing many people of numerous different diseases. He belongs to a group of healers known as Meraya, extremely powerful healers of the Shipibo.



The Shipibo have a rich culture, a unique language, colourful artwork, delicious foods and ancient medicines that are in harmony with the habitat of the local land.

Onanya are healers of the Shipibo community. Their plant healing treatment has gained popularity with the west, people disenfranchised by pharmaceuticals, travel thousands of miles to receive the wisdom of plants.

The Shipibo are deeply influenced by the power of the plants, animals and natural elements. The Shipibo and their culture are at risk of losing their ancestral knowledge. With that, thousands of years of knowledge lost; loss of language, art and medicine.

This documentary provides rare access to the lives of a family Shipibo Onanya, providing insight into their culture, their traditions and the world of the Shipibo.

WATCH THE TRAILER



Paris Tume
Director/Producer

Paris is an award-winning dynamic film director who has made a name for himself in the film industry. He is passionate about storytelling and social issues. His work has been recognized by major TV networks and film festivals.



Nick Smith
Composer

Hidden Sound is a UK-based audio production company founded in 1998 by award-winning music producer Nick Smith. They specialize in creating and licensing music for advertising, documentaries, libraries, and films, working with experienced musicians, composers, and engineers for each project.



Leo Candian
Colourist

Leo Candian is a colorist with 10+ years of experience, migrating from photography to video and film production. Leo has worked on many projects in features, docs and photography. He was awarded best photography prize at the Gramado festival in 2019.



Kristin Tieche
Editor

Kristin is a seasoned creative producer and editor with a proven track record of producing high-performing video content. Kristin is passionate about multimedia storytelling, taking inspiration from social media, email, website, and other media to build a culture of high-performing content.



Bill Chesley
Sound Design

Bill Chesley an award-winning sound designer, creates sonic levels that elevate projects by maximizing the impact of sound. The award winning Sound Designer has received Emmy awards for his work, plus many more.

THE FILM TEAM

This documentary was made after a personal journey of self-discovery. Travelling the world asking the existential questions like - Who am I? What is my purpose? After travelling the world in search of new experiences, embracing unfamiliar cultures, living with people I couldn't speak to verbally. It was on my concluding trip that I discovered the Shipibo.

Upon my journey, a pilgrimage took place to explore the Amazon, its inhabitants and to drink the jungle elixir that is ayahuasca.

It was during this experience that I encountered the Shipibo and during one night under the dazzling stars of the milky way, this little whisper came to me, illuminating my mind; to make a documentary for the Shipibo.

The new journey of discovery began that night, a journey I never knew would take me where I am today. A 4 year journey which involved 3 visits to Peru, 6 months of living in the Jungle, trips to Spain and the Netherlands, to tell their story.

Onanya has been created to celebrate the beauty of the Shipibo culture, recognise its unique customs and the allure of its people. However, the Shipibo face troubles which are shaping the outcome of their future. Decline and destruction paves the pathway if nothing is done to protect and preserve their way of life. Another culture lost to the machine of globalisation.

During my 4 years of learning and listening, 4 key pillars were identified to protect and preserve the way of the Shipibo.



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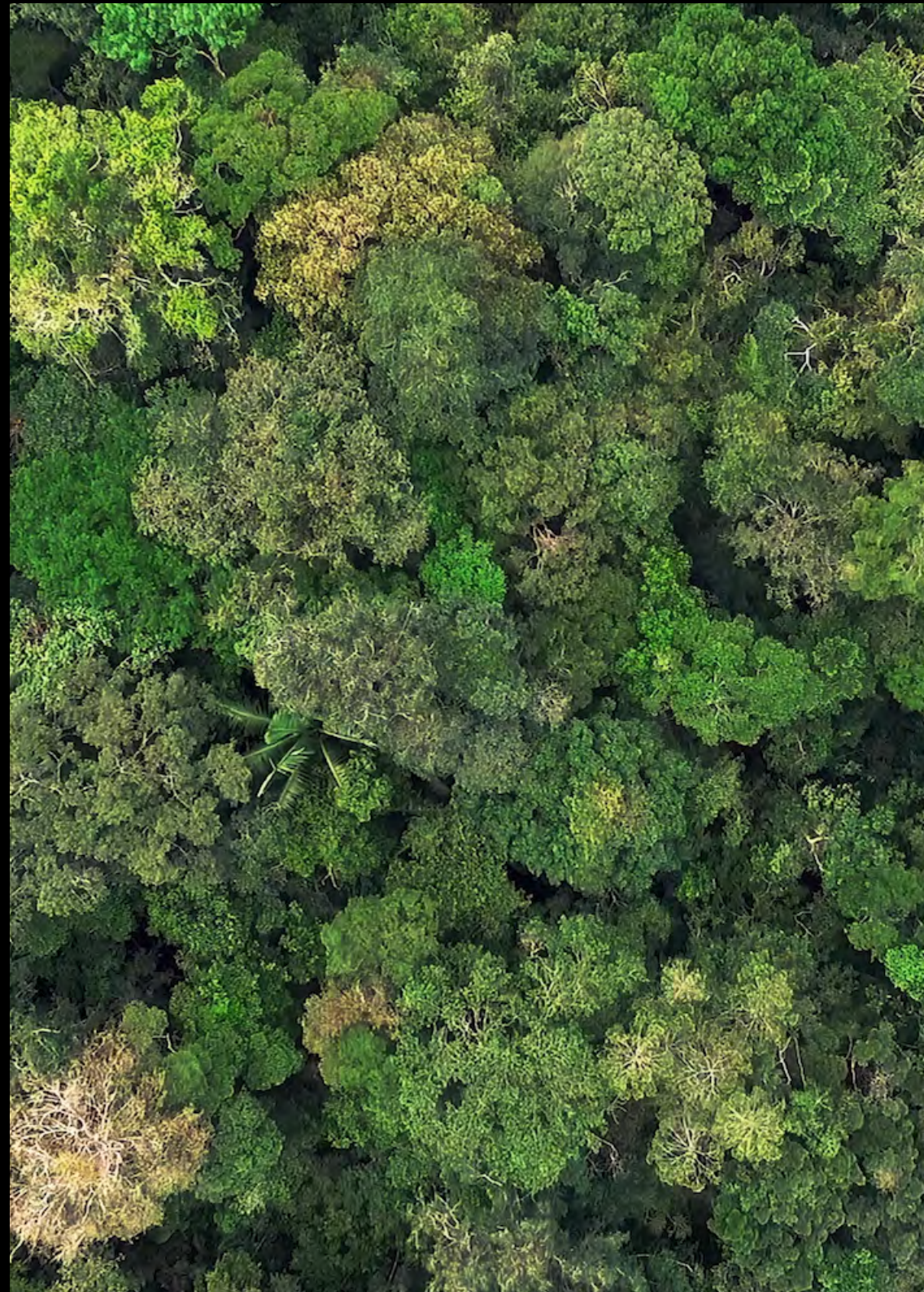


ENVIRONMENT

The Amazon Rainforest is home to more than 80,000 plant species. Of these, more than 40,000 play a critical role in keeping us — all of us — alive by regulating the global climate. As well as being known as “The Lungs of The Planet” the Amazon also receives the title of “The World’s Largest Medicine Cabinet.”

In Western modern medicine, around 25% of all medicine is derived from rainforest plants. That’s an impressive statistic, especially considering that less than 5% of Amazon plant species have been studied for their potential medicinal benefits.

The Shipibo have been using medicinal plants for the history of their existence, knowledge passed down from generation to generation. With more 200,000 acres of the Amazon rainforest burned on a daily basis, it’s no coincidence the decline of their knowledge and the decline of the rainforest are inherently linked.





MEDICINE

In indigenous communities worldwide, the medicine men, shamans, healers, are the gatekeepers to vitality and the welfare of the community. They have been revered throughout the ages.

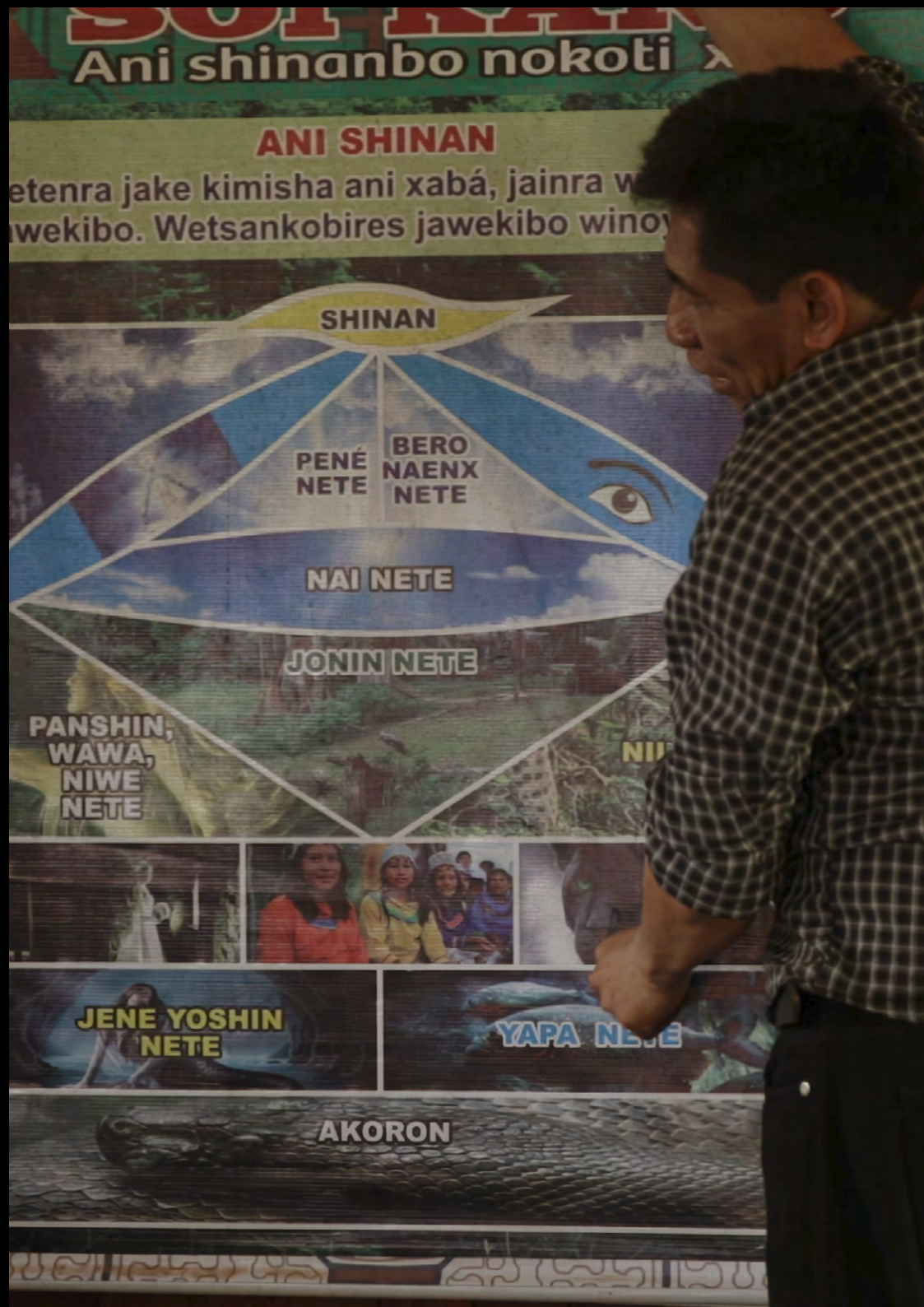
One of the most popular plants used to heal by the Shipibo is Ayahuasca, a sacred mixture of plants known to heal mental and physical illnesses through altered states of consciousness.

Thousands of people each year travel to the Amazon, on a pilgrimage of self-discovery and healing. The Onanya provide information seldom told about the world of medicinal plants. As the popularity of Ayahuasca expands, so does the use of it around the world. Ceremonies and centres are taking place all over the world.

LANGUAGE

The Shipibo community is expanding, currently there are approximately 40,000 within the community. Although they grow, a small percentage use the language as their first language. The last generation of people whose mother tongue is Shipibo are dying out. Mama Rosa, the eldest family member, is one of the last to speak to Shipibo as their first language.

In today's culture, the disparity between languages is very apparent. 80% of the language spoken by the Shipibo is in Spanish and 20% in Shipibo. When the elders pass away, the linguistic codes that have been passed down over generations will become forgotten by the youth.





DESIGN

Art across all cultures has been a way to tell stories, to mark a point in history through creative expression. The Shipibo have a uniquely woven form of art that translates the patterns, visions, and songs they experience into hand painted or embroidered textiles, pottery and jewellery.

Today, the majority of the Shipibo community disregards the designs and clothing, choosing not to embrace those aspects of their culture and history. Most people wear clothing made by 'mestizos' (westerners), which has permeated the indigenous communities and unique indigenous designs are declining rapidly.

Shipibo designs represent sacred spiritual patterns which permeate creation. These designs are the identity of the Shipibo and have been for centuries.

So how important are ceremonies?
What value do healers like Onanya hold?



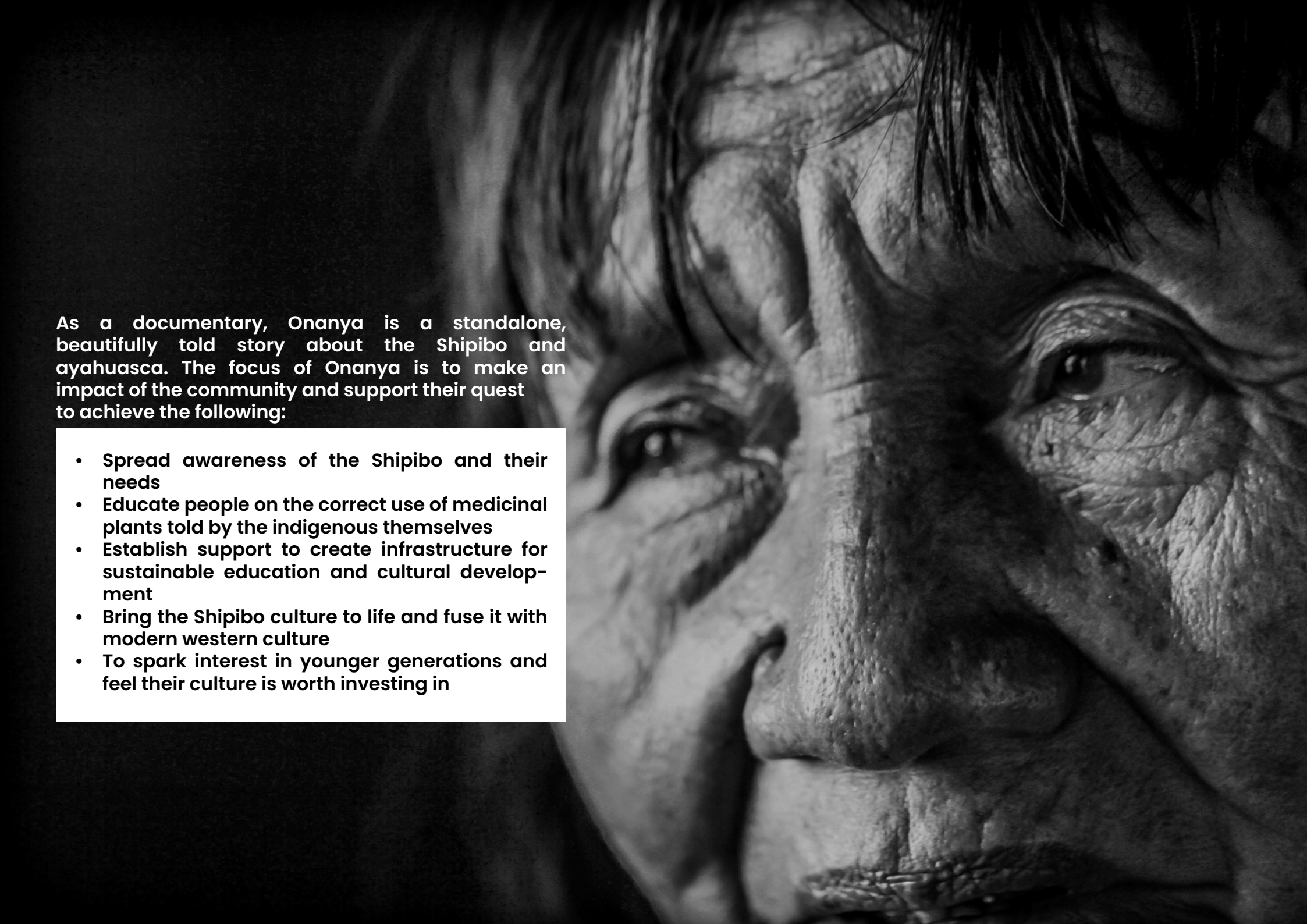
What's interesting in observation of indigenous communities is there is continuous growth and exposure from the western world, which is juxtaposed with the decline of interest from native people, particularly the younger generations.

Young people are more interested in popular culture than their own fashion and art. The rapid decline of the native language has meant that it could be a thing of the past within 2 generations. Whereas western enthusiasts are seeking products that contain indigenous styles, music that has shamanic chanting and embedding indigenous phrases into their own language.

The traditional medicines that have been passed down for generations are neglected by people who don't believe in their 'grandmother's potions'; they seek tablets (derived from Amazonian plants) to cure ailments. Whereas westerners go on pilgrimages around the world to seek the wisdom of indigenous medicine.

Due to the fact that the Shipibo have been removed from their original homes, they sought settlement, which formed into jungle cities. These cities create slums and poverty stricken families. They become detached from their land and subsequently detached from their culture.





As a documentary, *Onanya* is a standalone, beautifully told story about the Shipibo and ayahuasca. The focus of *Onanya* is to make an impact of the community and support their quest to achieve the following:

- Spread awareness of the Shipibo and their needs
- Educate people on the correct use of medicinal plants told by the indigenous themselves
- Establish support to create infrastructure for sustainable education and cultural development
- Bring the Shipibo culture to life and fuse it with modern western culture
- To spark interest in younger generations and feel their culture is worth investing in



PRODUCTS

DOCUMENTARY

Onanya - 86 minute feature-length documentary

Stuck In Peru - 45 minute doc - behind the scenes whilst stuck Peru during COVID-19

ART

Unique and personalised art for supporters of the documentary which will be animated, in collaboration with Shipibo visionary artists. With an emerging and expanding market which offers exclusive products to create in-demand products.

MERCHANDISE

The unique Shipibo artwork is popular and expands across multidisciplinary artforms. Clothing is one of the most popular, with local tribes creating their own clothing designs. Using designs from the family and pinnacle imagery from the documentary to make modern clothing styles to ignite the interest of the younger generations.

DISTRIBUTION

FILM FESTIVALS

Winner of 'Best Documentary' for the Psychedelic Film Festival, 'Best Climate Doc' at the Lulea International Film Festival and selected for 4 other international film festivals around the world.

STREAMING PLATFORMS

As the leading means of audience reach and opportunity to create a movement, streaming platforms reach the masses to educate and inform.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Available for academic studies and offer a digital archive of the Shipibo culture.





IMPACT

BUILD A SCHOOL

The Shipibo need a dedicated education centre where they can educate all generations on the history, the culture, the language and the medicines. A centre for research and community to celebrate their heritage.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Develop an educational curriculum that can travel around schools across Peru to educate the younger generations and preserve the knowledge of the Shipibo.

COLLABORATION

Support grassroots programmes that are doing the groundwork to support the Shipibo culture.

CROSS-CULTURAL INITIATIVES

SOUNDTRACK

Using the original soundtrack composed by Nick Smith and the field recordings of ikaros by the Shipibo, we will create an electronic remix soundtrack that will fuse the modern with the traditional.

VR/AR EXPERIENCE

Develop an immersive VR/AR experience that takes audiences on an immersive journey through the Shipibo and ayahuasca history. Fusing the original film soundtrack with Shipibo ikaros and modern electronic music to create a cutting edge spatial audio experience, truly fusing innovative technological and cultural art.





LEGACY

There is no question that indigenous people need support in order to fulfill the primary need most communities have; autonomy.

It's becoming clear that in order for humanity to survive globally, we have to listen and learn from the ancient wisdom of indigenous tribes and learn to live more in harmony with nature.

As the discovery and growth of ayahuasca spreads to every corner of the world, important discussions need to be had with indigenous communities and scientific communities about the use and regulation of ayahuasca and other medicinal plants.

In order for the Shipibo to thrive, the priority is to build infrastructure to harness their knowledge. Education and development of cultural practices need to be taught to the future generations for the culture to sustain.

The Shipibo need to be at the table, their voices heard and their needs met.



INFRASTRUCTURE

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

With an educational curriculum and centres that can support the development of the history, traditions and medicinal knowledge that are held within the minds of many elders; to be passed down to future generations.

POLICY CHANGE

Understanding the best use of medicinal plants such as ayahuasca, for medical and science-based studies. In collaboration with Onanya healers, research organisations and NGOs.



SUSTAINABILITY

RECLAIMED LAND

Developing education centres, using land available in local areas to build centres dedicated to supporting the local people and local environment.

ONE STEP CLOSER TO AUTONOMY

All these initiatives support the primary driver of the Shipibo mission, autonomy. Using this as an example for other indigenous communities to witness.





As we reflect on the rich tapestry of Shipibo culture, it's evident that their traditions and knowledge hold a profound significance. However, the challenges they face in preserving their heritage amidst modernization and external influences call for immediate action.

It's time for us to unite, to collaborate with the Shipibo community, and to amplify their voices. Together, we can protect their cultural legacy, foster sustainable development, and ensure that the Shipibo people continue to thrive for generations to come. Let's embark on this journey of cultural preservation and empowerment, honoring the beauty of the Shipibo heritage and ensuring its rightful place in the world.