

Comments from 2021 Photolucida Critical Mass Jurors

"This is such a beautiful investigation of how imperialist/supremacist thinking rewrites histories, especially in the pages of publications that have established themselves as experts on cultures they've purposefully rendered invisible. Your collage choices, redactions and overlays of images are not only visually stunning, but deeply contextual and really force the viewer to engage in this revision of history in an accessible way. Excellent!"

"A quick note to say many congratulations on your project. I have selected as part of my top 20 this year. You explore the subject matter with an innovative perspective, whilst showing outstanding technical skills and a special sensitivity for photography. Looking forward to following your work in the future."

"This is work that claps back at the white dominant narrative in surprising and appropriately critical ways. I love how the frame in "The Framing of Machu Picchu" is the precise yellow of the National Geographic brand. This kind of work holds America and its nationalistic take on its own history accountable in ways that are necessary and important. I look forward to seeing more of this work. Have you considered this as a book?"

"The evolution of your work is a marvel to witness. You confidently explore and boldly juxtapose your discoveries as you reframe your personal, familial and cultural experiences of identity. You visually weave a complex narrative with innovation, curiosity and a determination to unearth the truth. The results are haunting, evocative and beautiful."

Research for La Ciudad en las Nubes

My work on this project was inspired and influenced by several readings including *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* by Ariella Aisha Azoulay, *Framing a Lost City* by Amy Cox Hall, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* by Mary Louise Pratt and *Cradle of Gold* by Christopher Heaney.

In the 19th century, the wave of explorers and travelers to South America were seen as handmaidens to Europe's expansive commercial aspirations. Expeditions mounted in the name of science often went under secret orders to look out for commercial opportunities. (Example: Cook to the South Sea). Exploration aimed not at the discovery of trade routes, but at territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources, and administrative control. Patronage networks funded scientific travels and subsequent writing.

In their travel writings, the landscape is written as uninhabited they portray the native people as unpossessed, unhistorized, unoccupied. The people not as undergoing historical changes in their lifeways, but as having no lifeways at all, as cultureless beings. Their mentions come only in the immediate service of the explorer (servants, peons or slaves). The task is to reinvent America as backward and neglected, to encode its non-capitalist landscapes and societies as manifestly in need, the task is to normalize the rhetoric of inequality.