

Edge of Humanity Magazine

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Witnessing Dissolution Of Constructed Identities & Confronting Human Nature

By Edge of Humanity Magazine (<https://edgeofhumanity.com/author/eoh2014/>), September 6, 2019



Photographer [Mara Sanchez Renero](http://www.marasanchezrenero.com) (<http://www.marasanchezrenero.com>) is the Edge of Humanity Magazine contributor of this photo essay. From the project 'iluikak (<http://www.marasanchezrenero.com/#iluikak>)'. **To see Mara's body of work, click on any image.**



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The Nahuatl word *tlapializtli* refers to the act of keeping or preserving something. This concept reminds us that the Nahua civilization once possessed both a cultural and a spiritual legacy; as the bearers of this heritage, they had to persevere in order to strengthen the most vitally important elements of their existence.

In the wayward Mexico of today, where sociopolitical 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.

In the Nahuatl language, *iluikak* means "in the sky." The Zongolica mountain range in Veracruz is characterized by its high altitude, and clouds are an essential part of its imaginary. The Nahua community living in the sierra is primarily dedicated to agriculture and the practice of religious customs, in which ancestral traditions that keep them connected to nature remain an important part of their particular identity.

In settings constructed from the shadows, geography, and states of concealment, my intention is to photograph the sierra and its inhabitants, using different light sources to create a point of clarity and focus within an uncertain environment. I work with light to trace and depict a certain symbology, one that produces a new way of perceiving each character.

iluiakak is an attempt to breach the conventions of an assumed identity. It is only at the limits of both the evident and the concealed—in isolating men and women from their everyday contexts and instead portraying them within the space of their imaginations, the space of their mythical existence—that we can witness the dissolution of constructed identity and thus confront the true uncertainty of human nature.



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