

## CLAS Events – Easter Term 2026

Wednesday 20 May - 5:30pm | Film screening (with subtitles Spanish / English)

McDonald Seminar Room, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Downing Street, CB2 3ER

### *Yo Soy El Bosque / I Am the Forest*

Director: [Inés Ruiz Alvarado](#) (Universidad Científica del Sur / UNESCO Chair)

Chair: [Françoise Barbira Freedman](#) (University of Cambridge)

#### Film Description:

*I Am the Forest* is a feature-length documentary set in the Peruvian Amazon, Madre de Dios that explores the intimate and political relationship between Indigenous women and the territory they inhabit from the native community Ese-Eja, Infierno. Through the voices of women from the Ese Eja people of Madre de Dios, the film reveals how the defense of the forest is inseparable from the defense of the body, memory, and life itself.

As extractivism, illegal mining, deforestation, and institutional neglect threaten both land and community, these women emerge as leaders who protect their territory through ancestral knowledge, spirituality, and collective action. Moving away from narratives of victimhood, *I Am the Forest* centers resistance, care, and female leadership rooted in reciprocity with the natural world.

More than a testimony, the film offers a decolonial reflection on the interdependence between bodies and territories, challenging dominant development models that separate nature from society. It is an invitation to listen to the forest through those who defend it, and to rethink environmental justice, gender, and human rights from the Amazon.

#### About the Director:



**Inés Ruiz Alvarado** is a Peruvian filmmaker and researcher whose work focuses on gender, and Indigenous resistance in Peru. Her practice is rooted in long-term, community-based processes that privilege listening, care, and collaboration over extractive forms of storytelling. Through documentary cinema, she explores the intersections between body, territory, and memory, with a strong commitment to decolonial and feminist perspectives. *I Am the Forest* is part of her ongoing work with Amazonian communities in Madre de Dios, Peru.

## Director's Statement

We made *I Am the Forest* out of a need to listen—deeply and patiently—to the women who are sustaining life in one of the most threatened regions of the Amazon. In Madre de Dios, the violence inflicted on the land is mirrored in the violence imposed on Indigenous bodies, especially those of women. This film was born from the understanding that territory is not a backdrop, but a living body with memory, spirit, and agency.

Together, we wanted to move away from narratives that portray Indigenous communities solely through loss or victimhood. Instead, we focused on the everyday practices of care, resistance, and leadership that these women embody. Their ways of defending the forest—through spirituality, collective organization, and ancestral knowledge—offer alternatives to dominant development models that continue to separate humans from nature.

*I Am the Forest* is both an act of witnessing and a political gesture. It is an invitation to rethink our relationship with the land, to recognize Indigenous women as knowledge holders and leaders, and to imagine futures grounded in interdependence, dignity, and respect.



[\*I Am the Forest\* in La República \(Peru\)](#)