

# Nomination form International Memory of the World Register

## *The gaze of the Other* Documentary heritage of the Salesian apostolic Vicariate in the Ecuadorian Amazon, 1890-1930

Nro.2014-72

### 1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, religious missions of Dominicans, Salesians, Carmelites and Josephites were mobilized to the Ecuadorian Amazon in a “peacekeeping and evangelizing” intrusion towards the quichua, napo-quichua, canelo-quichua, shuar, achuar and cofan groups.

There are very few photographic records from that time. Among these, we have found an exceptional collection of 76 original photographic negatives on photographic plates, as well as 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, corresponding to the Salesian missions between 1890 and 1930, which show their work among the most resistant to colonization-Amazonian groups: the Shuar-Achuar and Shuar.

The main functions to be met by the photography were, in this context, to idealize the role of missionaries as civilizing agents, and, in relation to this, document progress in the integration of “the savages” to Western civilization, through the modification of cultural patterns of the indigenous groups.

Considering its historical and cultural specificity, originality, its single document condition- even in the field of Amazonian countries- as well as their interpretive potential of a significant chapter in modern world history, and its contribution to the construction of identity and existing rights of indigenous nationalities, we believe that this visual heritage is of great relevance to the Memory of the World.

---

## 2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

---

Instituto Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural (INPC)/National Institute of Cultural Heritage

---

## 2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

---

The INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE PATRIMONIO CULTURAL (INPC)- (National Institute of Cultural Heritage) is the Ecuadorian Institution created by Supreme Decree No. 2600 of June 9, 1978. By mandate of the Cultural Heritage Act, issued by Supreme Decree No. 3501 of June 19, 1979 and its General Regulations issued by Executive Decree No. 2733 of 9 July 1984, the INPC has among its functions and powers, to research, conserve, preserve, restore, exhibit and promote the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ecuador, as well as to control, according to the Law, all activities of this nature carried out in the country.

The Institute, in this context, strengthens the wishes, knowledge and actions so citizens are able to purposefully partake in their Heritage. It is formed by a specialized technical group, committed to the values and institutional objectives.

In January 2009, Ecuador declared the Photography as an asset pertaining to the documentary cultural heritage of the Country, particularly. “The first photographic prints on metal brackets, glass or other, such as daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes as well as the original paper prints and Photography negatives for the period extending between the disclosure of photography in 1839 and even the second decade of the twentieth century.”<sup>1</sup>

The declaration of cultural heritage also states in Article. 2, that the transfer of domain to any title, change of place, as well as modifications, restorations and repairs of these goods will be prior authorization from the National Institute of Cultural Heritage , pursuant to the provisions of Articles 12 and 13 of the Cultural Heritage Act. Simultaneously, Article. 3 recognizes and guarantees both moral rights as well as proprietary rights of the author, heir or purchaser of the assets subject to this declaration in any capacity under the Law. And Art. 4 states that the National Institute of Cultural Heritage will conduct an inventory of the assets subject to this declaration.

The INPC through this record, is trying to consolidate a new concept by which it will define some cultural assets as heritage as this documentary collection keeps the answers and statements that Ecuadorian societies, especially the Amazon peoples, have delivered as heritage of their history; these responses are multiple, unstable, travel through time and as memories of a multicultural encounter today are a visual heritage of the Ecuadorian society.

Also, the INPC, as a focal point on behalf of Ecuador to the UNESCO, presents this nomination because it considers relevant for Ecuador and the international community, to raise to Documentary World Heritage status in the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, the collection of negatives in dry photographic plates as well as the printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* produced at the encounter of the Salesian missions with the Shuar and Shuar-achuar

---

<sup>1</sup>Official Gazzette, Year III - Quito, Monday February 2, 2009 - N ° 519, pp. 3-5

peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon between 1890 and 1930.

---

### 2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

---

Lucía Chiriboga Vega  
National Institute of Cultural Heritage INPC  
Executive Director

---

### 2.4 Contact details

Name	Address	Telephone	Facsimile	Email
Lucía Chiriboga Vega, Directora Ejecutiva del INPC	Av. Colón oe1-93 y Av. 10 de Agosto. La Circasiana	593-2- 2229969	593-2-2220029 Ext. 176	<a href="mailto:lucia.chiriboga@inpc.gob.ec">lucia.chiriboga@inpc.gob.ec</a>

## 3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

### 3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

---

*The gaze of the Other*  
**Documentary heritage of the Salesian apostolic Vicariate in the Ecuadorian Amazon,  
1890-1930**

There are 76 extremely fragile photographic negatives in dry photographic plates<sup>2</sup> defined “as a photographic support consisting of a sheet of glass coated with a light sensitive emulsion”; in a format of cm 15 x 10 cm or 12 x 8.9 cm., and 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* on fiber paper (silver gelatin bromide) that respond to the techniques used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

#### State of Conservation

This collection suffered the ravages of time and brunt of the inclement weather and adverse environmental factors; it remained for decades under a precarious storage in traditional houses of the Ecuadorian Amazon, under a hot and humid weather with an average temperature of 2 ° C and humidity of 90 to 100%. Overall, the collection presented at the time of recovery, lots of dust, grease and dirt and in many cases even fingerprints on the support.

The INPC has undertaken a recovery and conservation process both for the photographic plates as well as for the printed photographs, in order to overcome the solvable problems.

The most common impairments observed in the emulsion of the photographic plates were:

---

<sup>2</sup>76 Photographic negatives in Photographic plates of AGFA ISOCROM Brand (Platten, super Orthochromatic; Completely antihalo) that were in the market by 1880, and that were used in Ecuador until 1940.

silver mirroring, usually at the edges of the image; in short, image fading was shown. In some cases colonies of fungi deposited on the emulsion were also found. Two photographic plates have dents at their edges and only one of them is broken into two fragments.

With regard to the original printed on paper, or printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, they show an average deterioration result of oxidation, which has produced a yellowing mark resulting in the fading of image detail, especially in the highlights. Also photolytic silver, which is a chemical compound applied to the paper, is almost gone causing a blackout in some parts of the photographs.

### **Supporting Statement:**

#### ***The gaze of the Other. Documentary heritage of the Salesian apostolic vicariate in the Ecuadorian Amazon, 1890-1930***

We are facing a collection of photographic negatives in photographic plates and printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* of one of the Catholic missions, which probably is the one with the highest incidence in the region, the Salesian mission. It is irrefutable photographic testimony of missionary intervention and was made by amateur photographers / missionaries.

The photographs of the missions are developed between the ethnographic record of a barbarous and innocent world and the disclosure of policy successes of evangelization, which granted a high quality documentary value.

The photo developing of the pictures taken in the Ecuadorian Amazon between 1890-1930 by the evangelizing missions demonstrates that while most of the pictures that were found were taken by the missionaries themselves, some of them with remarkable abilities for this art, the missions in some cases hired, since the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, professional photographers; photographs that have also been used to visualize differences in evangelistic strategies for each religious order or congregation in particular that can be corroborated in the examination of the corresponding photographic archives. For example, the files of the Dominicans are aimed at describing the traditional lifestyles of indigenous people, in correspondence with the “traditionalist” nature of their interventions and their quest to keep the natives in their existing organization social and economic stage, dismissing schooling, trade and the introduction of new forms of production. Meanwhile, Salesian activity promotes the colonization of land, the productive structure of the economy and strict indoctrination; it stresses the cultural change achieved by the Indigenous as a result of the civilizing action undertaken by this congregation.

Therefore, this record offers a critical reading of this iconography, having in mind its nature of ethnocentric visual representation, which is built on a relationship of social and cultural domain, and overshadows the cultural richness and diversity of the photographed ethnic groups. From this perspective, it is a key objective to document and elucidate how the image of the missionaries and the indigenous peoples is constructed from the visual narrative of the western missions’ photography.

---

### **3.4 History/provenance**

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, several religious communities arrived to Ecuador, many of them were brought by President Gabriel Garcia Moreno. Some of these

communities decided to develop their mission or vocation in the eastern Amazon region of Ecuador, this region had been left to fend for itself for decades or even centuries, forsaken by the Government. Thus, cities founded during the colonial period had been abandoned mainly due to the violent indigenous resistance, and where these existed, the forest had recovered its territory.

Eight Salesian missionaries arrived from Italy in 1888, when Pope Leo XIII commissioned them to evangelize the southern part of the Amazon rainforest. In 1893, they began their missionary work in Gualaquiza province of Morona Santiago. As stated above, the missionaries themselves, at the beginning and latter through expressly hired photographers, recorded missionary activities that the community then disseminated.

The Photographic negatives in photographic plates and the 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* remained in the hands of the Salesian community that kept them without intervention and in its place of origin, until the research on historic photography in the 1980s. The documentary mentioned files were later transferred to Quito for registration.

Indeed, the Photo Research Corporation, *Visual Workshop*, a Private entity engaged in the research of photography, together with the Salesian Congregation and the cultural institution of that congregation-ABYA YALA- gathered throughout the 1980s, in rural locations where the missions were located, this photographic collection of photographic negatives and printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* about the representation of the Ecuadorian missionary activity. The negatives in photographic plates and printed pictures on photographic paper were, thus, recovered from those priests who worked in the missionary houses.

The research led to the publication of the book *Retrato de la Amazonía, Ecuador in 1992: 1880-1945*, Production of Lucia Chiriboga and Soledad Cruz Blanca and introductory text by Blanca Muratorio, Librimundi / Enrique Grosse-Luemern Publishing house. Quito.

In the same year, a selection of photos of the missions were included in the exhibition “*Ecuador, Old and New 1925-1986* curated by Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss, and presented in the fourth edition of *FOTOFEST, Houston, United States*. On that same exhibition, the well-known Brazilian researcher Boris Kossoy highlighted the work of *Taller Visual* on its research in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

The collection of these documentary heritage assets is the basis of this record. It is in the custody of ABYA YALA Cultural Center.

#### 4.0 Legal information

##### 4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	
Comunidad salesiana		
Attorney:	Calle Madrid E12-68 y Andalucía. Quito	
Jorge Molina		
<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Facsimile</i>	<i>Email</i>
593-02- 2221506	593-02- 2576436	vicario@salesianos.org.ec

---

#### 4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

---

Name	Address		
Giovanni BotassoBoetti	Centro AbyaYala Av. 12 de Octubre N2762 y Wilson, Bloque A UPS		
Telephone	Facsimile	Email	
(593-2) 3962800 ext. 2638, (593-2) 2506255	593-2-2506267	juanbottasso@yahoo.com	

---

---

#### 4.3 Legal status

---

Under the Law on Intellectual Property, the photographic negatives and the printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, are in the public domain, because the author or authors of the photographic negatives are anonymous. However, in accordance with the authorization issued by Giovanni Bottasso, the highest authority of the Salesian community in Ecuador, the 'moral rights' on the photographs correspond to the Salesian Religious Congregation, owner of ABYA YALA Cultural Center. In this regard there are no legal, contractual or other legal nature circumstances that threaten the integrity or security thereof; consequently, the Salesian priests and the ABYA YALA Cultural Center and its President are directly responsible for the preservation and custody of photographic documentary assets.

Notwithstanding the foregoing and according to the Cultural Heritage Act and its Regulations, the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, the governing as well as the regulatory body as to the cultural heritage of Ecuador, according to the law, exercises control in the preservation of documentary heritage of the country of all activities of this nature carried out in the country, with national jurisdiction; in this case, on the photographic heritage of the photographic negatives and the printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* provides further advice and appropriate means for their preservation.

It also states that, for better management and monitoring of all documentary heritages in Ecuador, there is an in ad hoc designed inventory in the information management system about the cultural heritage called ABACO/SIBCE, this specific digital tool supports the INCP management for heritage safeguarding.

---

#### 4.4 Accessibility

---

The INPC through the project known as "*National Archive of Patrimonial Photography for the information, knowledge and entertainment of the Ecuadorian population*" approved by the Ecuadorian State, has taken on the challenge of developing a permanent program in digital broadcast channels. To this end, a multipurpose modular technological platform that contains the information and inventories relating to the photographic heritage and specifically "*En la mirada del Otro, Acervo documental del Vicariato Apostólico Salesiano en la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, 1890-193*" (*The gaze of the Other, documentary heritage of the Salesian apostolic vicariate in the Ecuadorian Amazon, 1890-1930*), will be disseminated in streaming. The above mentioned material is subject of this proposal to be included in Memory of the World Programme.

The digitization of 76 photographic negatives in photographic plates and 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, it is available to researchers, students, artists and the general public as well as the integration of the technological platform on social networks as an active outreach and communication resource and the creation of a community in "the cloud" that will provide a

---

---

continually updated on line - accessible file of patrimonial photography, which will ensure a comprehensive and permanent general accessibility to photographic documentary heritage. As is customary in similar situations, reference sources will be required for appropriate use.

With respect to the original / negatives in photographic plates and printed pictures vintage (of the period) will be accessible with corresponding restrictions. They will be available to researchers under scheduled appointment and information about the purpose of consultation. Access to these originals will continue restricted for reasons of preservation and security of documents.

---

#### 4.5 Copyright status

---

As noted in a previous section, ABYA YALA Cultural Center is in charge of the moral rights (paternity and integrity) and custody of this anonymous author material. This is an organization of private law, adopted through Resolution N.0265 of December 18, 2013, by the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion. ABYA YALA is run by the Salesian religious congregation, which has preserved the photographic negatives in photographic plates as well as the printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*. They have preserved both, the anonymous material as well as those whose author is named, for over seventy years in accordance with the Ecuadorian Legislation. The President and legal representative of the Cultural Center is currently the priest Giovanni Bottasso Boetti.

The above is based on Ecuadorian Legislation regarding Copyright and legal basis for the protection of works of art, which determines:

Article 80 of the Law on Intellectual Property: “Patrimonial rights shall last for the lifetime of the author and for 70 years following his death, regardless of the country of origin of the work.”

This article of the Law states that “Where the author of an anonymous work does not make himself known in the course of the 70 years following the date of first publication, the work shall pass into the public domain. If, before that period expires, the name of the author is revealed, the provisions of the first paragraph of this Article shall apply.”

Article 82 of the same Law: “On expiry of the terms of protection provided for in this Section, the works concerned shall pass into the public domain and consequently may be exploited by any person, subject to respect for the moral rights therein.”

Article 18 of Decision 351 of the Common Provisions on Copyright and Neighboring Rights of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) states: “Without prejudice to the provisions of Article 59, the term of protection of the rights provided for in this Decision shall be not less than the life of the author and 50 years after his death. When the ownership of rights is appropriate.”

Article 7, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, signed and ratified by Ecuador, shows:

“1) The term of protection granted by this Convention shall be the life of the author and fifty years after his death.

... 3) In the case of anonymous or pseudonymous works, the term of protection granted by this Convention shall expire fifty years after the work has been lawfully made available to the

---

---

public"... If the author of an anonymous or pseudonymous work discloses his identity during the above-mentioned period, the term of protection applicable shall be that provided in paragraph1)"... "The countries of the Union shall not be required to protect anonymous or pseudonymous works in respect of which it is reasonable to presume that their author has been dead for fifty years."

---

## **5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria**

---

### **5.1 Authenticity.**

---

The documents -76 photographic negatives on photographic plates and 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, are original and authentic-both, on its materiality and its content. Therefore, its most significant attribute is that they are irreplaceable and invaluable, as are the unique photographic records existing in original, of the performance, in the Amazon, of these congregations, in that period, especially among the toughest Amazonian resistant groups to colonization: the Shuar and Shuar-achuar.

These photographic negatives in photographic plates in formats 15 x 10 cm. or 12 x 8.9 cm, AGFA ISOCROM brand (Platten, super Orthochromatic; Completely Antihalo) were in the global market by 1880, and Ecuador were used until 1940, for "contact" printing on photographic paper, respecting its Original format.

Printed pictures vintage (of the period), are authentic proof of a specific moment in history. They portray a society, within a cultural context that recognizes its iconic value and specific nature as a source of accurate and verifiable information.

---

### **5.2 World significance**

---

Among the peoples of the world's tropical forests, we should highlight the Amazonian indigenous, whose lifestyle based on nature and social order constitute an enduring and wealthy link. Their intangible heritage thrives on interpretation, stories, myths and the use of ecosystems, plants and animals.

Cultural processes changed forever in the Amazon Basin since missionary contact and the arrival of haciendas, oil companies, mining companies and other agents. Claude Lévi -Strauss in his ethnographic work "Tristes Tropiques"(1955 ), introduced to the world the distress caused by Cultural civilizational upheaval.

For the Shuar, members of the linguistic jibaroanajunto, achuar, aguaruna and huambisa family, all groups recognized by their extraordinary traditions such as shrunken heads (tzantzas), feared for decades by their warrior attitude and known by their rejection to civilizing contacts through their spears, the twentieth century arrived with teachers, barracks, classrooms and creeds. Ecuador, like many other states of the Global System needed to incorporate the territories of indigenous peoples for security and expansion of the home standing and extractive accumulation of natural resources model.

These images show the "colonization" tests undertaken by the Western on indigenous peoples who, nonetheless, have defended the features and substantial elements of their culture and history, and who have been globally recognized as ancestral peoples with the right to "stop being subjected to compulsory assimilation or destruction of their culture"

---

---

However, the collection of negatives in photographic plates and the 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, are perhaps the only graphic documents that enhance the social memory of the Peoples of the World by showing a significant part of the history of one of its most eminent peoples: the Shuar and their passing from indigenous isolated tribes to assimilated indigenous peoples of tropical forests in the world. It is a current reality, urgent to be retrieved, studied and appreciated by all of humanity.

---

### **5.3 Comparative criteria:**

---

***Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)***

#### **1. Time**

Considering the three time points of colonization of peoples and of the Ecuadorian Amazon: the exploitation of rubber from 1880 to around 1924, the “peacekeeping and evangelizing” intrusion of religious missions and current mining and oil exploitation- this heritage in “*En la Mirada del Otro, Acervo documental del Vicariato Apostólico Salesiano en la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, 1890-1930*”, ”(*The gaze of the Other, documentary heritage of the Salesian apostolic vicariate in the Ecuadorian Amazon, 1890-1930*) it is visually established for the first time, as public property, photographic portrait of colonizing incursion of the religious missions in Ecuador between 1890-1930.

#### **2. Place**

These photographic records of the encounter of the salesian missionaries with the Shuar and Achuar peoples from Gualaquiza, Sevilla de Oro, Limón Indanza and others in the province of Morona Santiago, contains relevant information about colonization on a specific place: the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle.

#### **3. People**

This small but significant heritage seized significant aspects of human, social and political relationship between missionaries and indigenous peoples. It is composed of pictures that combine religious presence from distant and quite strange places to Amazonian cultures; visual evidence of a relationship of social and cultural domination over the peoples, but at the same time it contains significant features of cultural resistance of the Ecuadorian Amazonian peoples.

#### **4. Subject and theme**

These Salesian mission photographs fulfilled at that time, functions such as idealizing the role of missionaries and document the progress of the task of integrating “the savages” to civilization. This proposal and registration offers a critical scrutiny of this iconography, considering its ethnocentric nature of visual representation.

The photographic negatives in photographic plates and printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, try to become part of an event where historical research of photography connects with the history of the visual representations. It is also related to the mentality of missionaries and photographers in their encounter with the “excluded” peoples from the official history of our Latin American countries.

The photographic negatives in photographic plates and the printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* provide as well, a historical support of differentiated and contextual discussions of ethnic and gender issues that occupy the country's contemporary intellectual thought.

Most of these negatives in photographic plates, and positive photographs “from that time”- are portraits of the “daily practice of visual representation” or that sort of pretended innocence behind missionary activity and colonization.

---

We believe that the indexical nature of these portraits has captured the wealth of ethnographic information as a policy of the missionary activity among Amazonian peoples; the social fabric of missionary activity; simultaneously gestural policies imposed by the socio-cultural order in the Amazon society in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century; even among the violence of colonization-missionaries as agents of power- and on the other hand, the rejection, or even better, the forced compliance of the latter: Shuar and Achuar men and women.

## **5. Form and style**

The photographic art and portrait technique are an extraordinary testimony of a historical moment, the expansion of science and technology, as well as the visual representations.

Both negatives in photographic plates and printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* are an example of a photographic technique patented in the late nineteenth century. These are the last vestiges of the previous photographic endeavors prior to digital and virtual technology.

Several of the objects of this nomination proposal have also an aesthetic value beyond its exceptional value as a document.

## **6. Social/ spiritual/ community significance:**

Despite the desire of photographers / missionaries to portray the cultural change achieved by the indigenous, a close look will at the pictures will reveal , in a gesture, the pain and humiliation caused by domination; something that indigenous nationalities meet today with the defense of their ancestral rights and respect of mestizo society towards them. Precisely, in the days near to the presentation of this nomination, in an area located slightly north of where the archive was formed, the Amazonian communities, including Shuar and Achuar are looking to enforce a right that was enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador issued in 2008, which recognizes Amazon cultural diversity and multi-ethnicity, a right that is practiced under the Territorial District that is as determined by the Constitution to territories delimited as territorial heritage of these nationalities. The social, political and human meanings support the rights of peoples that consolidate themselves as historical evidence, in this case of exceptional and outstanding value, as is the quality of the set of photographic negatives on photographic plates.

From this consideration, it is possible to walk into a dialogue between the national society and indigenous peoples supported by documentation and visual testimony of the cultures that formed the history of the Americas, particularly in the Amazon.

---

## **6.0 Contextual information**

### **6.1 Rarity**

---

Photography, in the period in which the negative photographs in photographic plates as well as the printed photographs were produced, was limited to individuals or social elite groups, which makes it more valuable due to its limited use to portray subordinated social sectors; if we add to this fact that this support it is extremely fragile, more so if it is affected by adverse weather conditions and neglect in their conservation, their existence itself is currently scarce and rare. The recorded subject and the place where the images were captured provide them indeed with

---

an extreme rarity, which results in extraordinary and unrepeatably photographs.

Furthermore, and under existing publications in the Amazon countries, we can say that this Ecuadorian collection is undoubtedly one of the most important, if not the only, of its kind and in the region.

---

## 6.2 Integrity

---

The initial number of components of the archives of the negatives in photographic plates is unknown. However, those who have lasted to the present days and are presented as a set of documents candidates for nomination as well as the 192 printed pictures *vintage (of the period)* have remained as part of a single and unique collection for at least thirty years, gathered in one space, guarded by a person and with advice from the National Institute of Cultural Heritage.

Unfortunately the photographic plates corresponding to the positive photographs we are incorporating have not been well preserved in the Salesian archives. We have only record of the 76 plates that are included in the nomination; however we have included them in this new shipment considering that the printed pictures *vintage (of the period)*, have a value of their own because they are also unpublished and original documents that justify their inclusion.

---