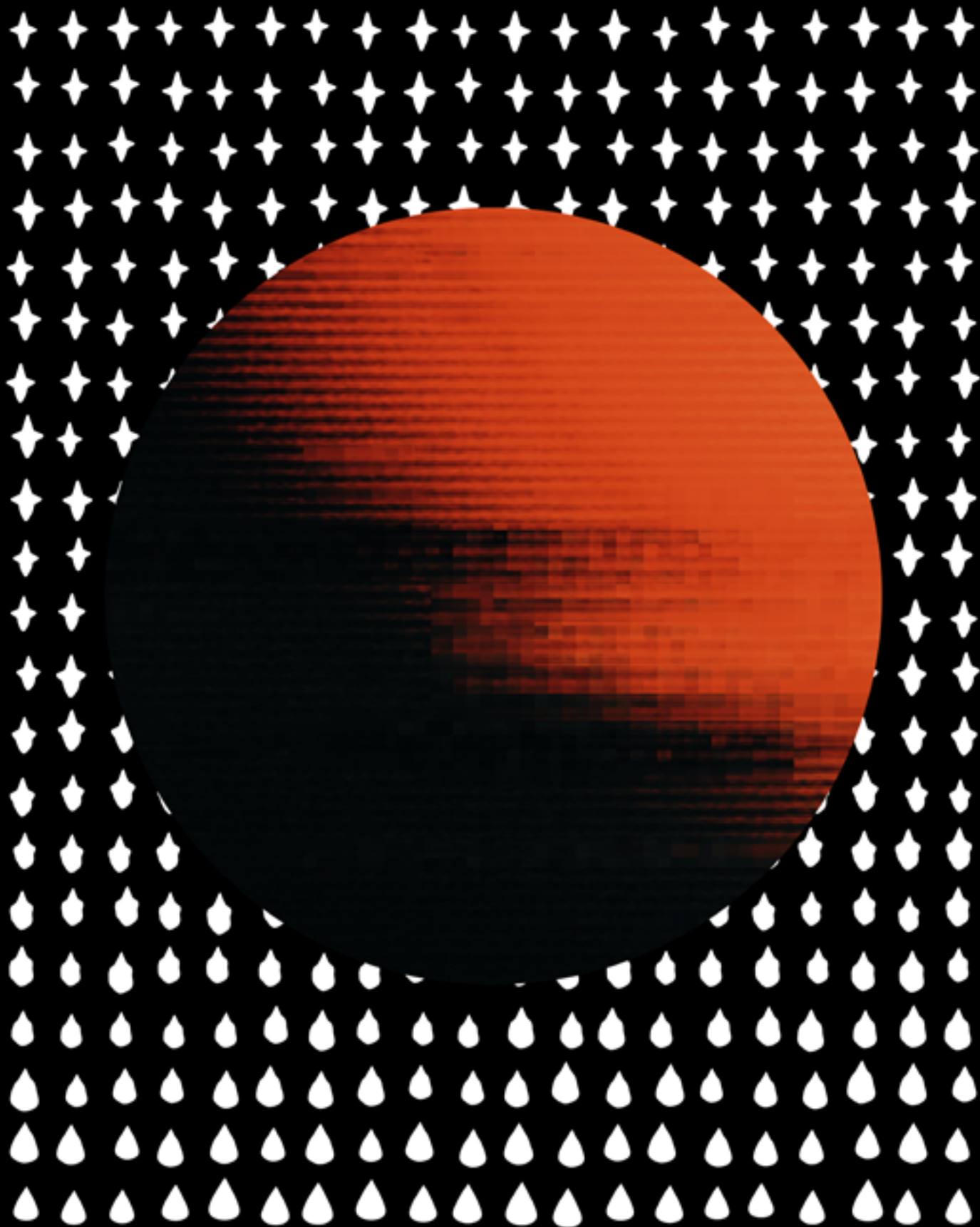


COSMOGRAPHIES



DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY **JUAN FRANCISCO SALAZAR**

WRITTEN BY **JUAN FRANCISCO SALAZAR** AND **VICTORIA HUNT**

PERFORMANCE BY **VICTORIA HUNT** CO-PRODUCED BY **ALEJANDRA CANALES**

EDITED BY **ROWENA CROWE** MUSIC BY **JAMES PETER BROWN**

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY **MAX TINTNER**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Cosmographies is a word that refers to the writing, drawing, and storytelling of the cosmos.

The film was shot between May 2022 and April 2024, Post production took place from February to September 2024.

Between May 2022 and October 2023, we filmed in several sites with communities within the Lickana, Ancestral Atacameño-Lickanantay Territory, in the Comuna de San Pedro de Atacama, and in Toconao, Salar de Atacama, Chile, where Director Juan Francisco Salazar has worked since 1992.

In consultation with the authorities of the Comunidad Lickanantay de Toconao, we filmed in a number of locations in Toconao and in places within the territorial demand of the Toconao Community, including the Tara, Pujsa, Quisquiro, Quepiaco salt lakes, Chajnantor, and Parque Laguna Chaxa. Other scenes were filmed in other communities, including in the Ayllu of Sequitor and Valle de la Luna, San Pedro de Atacama, as well as at Miscanti y Miñiques lagoons (Socaire Community), Salar de Aguas Calientes Sur, (Socaire Community), Yervas Buenas (Machuca community), Cerro Toco (Parque Astronómico Atacama) and El Tatio geysers (Caspana and Toconce communities), which in Ckunza language means 'grandfather that weeps'.

Filming also took place on the coast, in the town of Mejillones, in collaboration with the Sindicato de Pescadores y Buzos Mariscadores de Mejillones (Fishermen and Shellfish Divers Union of Mejillones). Some scenes were filmed in and around Chuquicamata mine and Calama, as well as in Sierra Gorda and surroundings. The speculative fiction scenes were filmed south of Antofagasta, in sites near Oficina Yungay and Oficina Palestina, where Mars rovers are tested.

In this territory, the ancestral spirits of the tutelary hills, mountains and volcanoes are called Malkus, and it is they who guide the Atacameño people who have lived in these lands for 13,000 years. There are several significant tutelary mountains and volcanoes that appear in the film, including Likancabur, Lascar, Kimal, Toco, Corona, Pili, Incahuasi, Vilama, La Pacana, Miscanti, Chajnantor, Chiliques, Putana, Poquis, Tumisa. Following cultural protocols, permission to film was always requested from them.

The film contains many images of southern night skies in Atacama. We acknowledge the deep connections and stories that First Nations around the world have with the stars. We recognise that the images of galaxies and stars included in the film have different stories and meanings in diverse traditional knowledges held and nurtured by First Nations Peoples across the Southern Hemisphere.

Cosmographies was also filmed during December 2023 in Rotorua, Aotearoa New Zealand, specifically within the village of Whakarewarewa, home of the Tūhourangi Ngāti Wāhiao people. Filming also took place in Sydney, Australia, specifically in Hawkesbury (Dharug Country) in May 2023 and in Maroubra (Gadigal and Bidjigal Country) in April 2024. The editing and post-production were done in Bellambi (Dharawal Country) in Wollongong, and in Canterbury and Marrickville (Wangal Country) in Sydney.

We offer our gratitude to all participants for trusting us to share part of their stories. We pay our respects to all land and water defenders on the frontline of ongoing struggles for justice. To cosmographers past, present and future.

COSMOGRAPHIES

Speculative Documentary Fiction

The struggle for environmental justice against ongoing forms of extractivism and ecological ruin in the Atacama Desert is an allegory against ongoing plans to colonize the Moon and Mars, where Māori astrobiologist Xuê Noon finds solace in 2051.

Australia – Chile 2024
93 min
4K DCI – 16:9 – colour
Dolby 5.1 sound

DIRECTOR
Juan Francisco Salazar

PERFORMANCE
Victoria Hunt

**ORIGINAL MUSIC/
SOUND DESIGN**
James Peter Brown

COSTUME DESIGN
Flora Vilches
Victoria Hunt
Juan Francisco Salazar

WRITTEN BY
Juan Francisco Salazar
Victoria Hunt

EDITOR
Rowena Crowe

**LOCATION SOUND
RECORDING**
Moe Clark
Juan Francisco Salazar

CULTURAL ADVISORS
Félix Galleguillos
Aymani (Lickanantay)
Rosie Te Rauawhea
Belvie (Māori)

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
Alejandra Canales
Juan Francisco Salazar

CAMERA
Juan Francisco Salazar

FIELD PRODUCER (CHILE)
Valentina Figueroa

**FIELD PRODUCER
(AOTEAROA/NEW
ZEALAND)**
Victoria Hunt

A person in a spacesuit stands on a vast, red, rocky landscape that resembles Mars. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking towards the right. The terrain is uneven with various sized rocks and deep shadows. The overall color palette is a range of reds and browns, from deep maroon to light tan.

SYNOPSIS

Cosmographies is a hybrid film that draws from modes of speculative fiction, observational and poetic documentary, activism, and Indigiqueer approaches. Māori astrobiologist Xuê Noon (played by Australian/Māori artist Victoria Hunt) finds solace in Mars in 2051 as a leader from the Aotearoa Space Agency on an international scientific mission, following the discovery of dormant microorganisms by the NASA Mars Sample Return Mission in 2039. Xuê wanders across this sentient planet and reflects on the newly found lifeforms as she grows plants in a glasshouse. Through the spirit of an ancient taniwha, she slipstreams in spacetime to the Atacama Desert and to Aotearoa.

In Atacama the film engages with numerous ongoing life-and-death struggles for land and water justice led by Indigenous communities, activists, and scientists in this old, vital yet scarred desert. Through interviews and conversations, the film depicts centuries old and ongoing forms of social injustice and ecological degradation to weave a critical allegory against the renewed commercial impulse of a new space age rampaging in the 2020's.

Xuê is not returning to Earth. She reads fragments from a diary she has titled *Cosmographies*. As she contemplates her own death on Mars (becoming stardust) Xuê slipstreams one final time to visit her younger self in Rotorua, Aotearoa, during a cold August night in 2003, when Earth and Mars were at their closest in 60,000 years. The film brings a message urging us to support land and water defenders in the Atacama desert and to rethink the cosmos not as a frontier to conquer, but as a delicate ecology to which our planet is intimately and ancestrally connected.

Produced in consultation with Toconao Indigenous Lickanantay Community, Salar de Atacama, Chile.

Astounding ... builds such an unbreakable moral case to ask us to stop and consider this place before we go elsewhere. It does all this with so much respect and reverence, though - and while there is anger and rage and pain coursing through it, there is also so much love. For the land, for this planet, for the cosmos.
— Ceridwen Dovey, Author of *Only the Astronauts*

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In *Cosmographies I* continue a long-term interest in blending the language of speculative fiction with observational and poetic documentary. This impetus started with its prequel *Nightfall on Gaia* (2015), which was set in Antarctica and was also a collaboration with Australian-Māori performance artist Victoria Hunt who portrays the character of astrobiologist Xuê Noon in both films. *Cosmographies* draws from feminist speculative fiction and Indigenous futurisms, to depict the relational conditions of life in the Atacama Desert and on Mars while simultaneously using the same device of a fictional character in the future (that of Māori astrobiologist Xuê Noon) as an approach to invite audiences to recognise intangible and yet-to-be worlds that are nevertheless always immanent to the present and ingrained with the past.

The idea for a sequel and the collaboration with Victoria Hunt came in a dream I had in 2021 and from the opportunity that emerged in 2022 continue with long term and new collaborations with Indigenous and local communities in the Salar de Atacama who are at the forefront of land and water justice struggles.

Indigenous communities, fishing communities allied scientists, activists are creating novel stories of hope amid enclosure, and encroachment - by lithium mining and extractivist industries, astronomy observatories, and relentless tourism.

The ideation, development and production process of the film are guided by Indigenous Storywork principles: Respect. Responsibility. Reverence. Reciprocity. Holism. Interrelatedness. Synergy.

Filming of both the documentary interviews and the fabulated story have been organised around choreographing situations of induced spontaneity.

In *Cosmographies*, I wished to imagine outer space beyond a narrow set of market values in which space is a resource frontier to fully shift away from understandings of space as a place to be 'conquered', as a quest for finding other planets to 'settle', as a 'hunt' for life in the universe.

Earth is also the cosmos. Earth's predicaments are also cosmic problems. We all live and die as part of the cosmos as we are all cosmic stardust.

In the hope this film might be a call to action to support land and water defenders in the Atacama Desert, the expectation is also for the film to intervene in the current debates about outer space, to bring to the fore the urgency of questioning how the hegemonic formations of outer space might be broken apart and be given new meanings and political directions by re-storying and counter-imagining how humans might end up dwelling in the expanse of the cosmos. Or not.



PROFILE

DIRECTOR

JUAN FRANCISCO SALAZAR was born in Santiago, Chile, and migrated to Sydney in 1998. He is an interdisciplinary researcher, author and documentary filmmaker whose academic and creative work explore the coupled dynamics of social-ecological change and is underpinned by a collaborative ethos across the arts, science and activism.. During the early 2000's he produced pioneering work on Indigenous media in Latin America including the political documentary *De la Tierra a la Pantalla* (Chile, 37 minutes, 2004) in collaboration with Mapuche filmmaker and activist Jeannette Paillan. For 30 years he led and collaborated in participatory projects with migrant and refugee youth in Western Sydney; with First Nations practitioners and knowledge keepers in Central Australia, in the Salar de Atacama Chile and in Vanuatu, as well as work with rural organizations in Colombia, and scientists in Antarctica.

His collaborations with arts and culture organizations include, The Australian Museum, The Powerhouse Museum, The Biennale of Sydney, Arts + Cultural Exchange, Proboscis Studio (UK), Live & Learn (Vanuatu), and INACH (Instituto Antártico Chileno). Other films and video installations he has directed include: *Anatomía Monumental* (Installation, Museum of Fine Arts, Chile 1999 with Ismael Frigerio and Felipe Zavala); *33° South* (Interactive Installation, Casula Powerhouse, 2008 with Sarah Waterson); *Nightfall on Gaia* (Australia/Chile, 92 minutes, 2015); *The Bamboo Bridge* (Australia/Cambodia, 65 minutes 2019) and *Cosmographies* (2024). These works have screened at prestigious venues and festivals including Serpentine Galleries (London 2022); Biennale of Sydney (2022); London International Documentary Film Festival (2021); *Vision du Réel* (Nyon 2020); CPHDOX (Copenhagen 2015); Antenna Film Festival (Sydney 2015 and 2019); Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (Sydney 2008); Museo de las Américas (Denver 2005); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Santiago 1999). Juan has collaborated with producer Alejandra Canales since 1998 across numerous projects in Australia and Chile, as well as with performance artist Victoria Hunt since 2004 in two previous films, including *Nightfall on Gaia* (2015) and with editor Rowena Crowe since 2017 also in two previous films including *The Bamboo Bridge* (2019).

Juan is currently Professor of Media and Environment Studies at Western Sydney University where he has taught documentary film for close to two decades and where he has developed pioneering research projects in Antarctica and on outer space.



PROFILE

Writer & Performance

VICTORIA HUNT is a multidisciplinary artist with ancestral affiliations to Te Arawa, Rongowhaakata, Kahungunu (Māori) and Pakeha Irish, English, Finnish heritages. Born on Kombumerri Country (Surfers Paradise, Australia), their work as a dancer, choreographer, director, dramaturg and photographer delves into Indigenous epistemologies within diasporic concepts of identity formation and belonging. Grounded in Mātauranga Māori, Body Weather practice and IndigiQueer revitalization within creation practices, they traverse the politics of Rematriation – inserting bodies into frameworks of power, for future ancestors. Their award-winning works, *Copper Promises: Hinemihi Haka* and *Tangi Wai...the cry of water* have toured nationally and internationally to critical acclaim. Her short film *TAKE* won the Mana Whenua award and has screened across six continents. Their recent work *KŌIWI* was commissioned by the Art Gallery of NSW and premiered at Sydney Modern in July 2023. She is a member of De Quincey Co. Australia's leading Body Weather dance company (Eora/Sydney), and co-founder of *Weather Beings* with 2Spirit Metis artist Moe Clark (tio'tia:ke/Montreal). She has collaborated with Juan Francisco Salazar in the short film *No Cold Feet* (2004) and *Nightfall on Gaia* (2015).



PROFILE

Editor

ROWENA CROWE is a time-based artist who works within animation, photochemical practices and independent documentary. She is drawn to constructing films amongst independent voices with experimental resolve. Rowena holds a Master of Arts in Documentary Editing (AU) and a Master of Arts in Animation (NL). She is a member of the artist-run film labs the Workshop For Potential Cinema and Artist Film Workshop. Rowena's experimental films and animations have screened at international film festivals such as International Film Festival Rotterdam, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival and DOK Leipzig. She has undertaken artist and researcher residencies at National Film and Sound Archives, PhotoAccess, Kaus Australis (NL) and the Byron School of Art. She is a PhD candidate, currently undertaking practice-based research focused on embodied analogue film practices at the University of Wollongong.

PROFILE

Composer & Sound Designer

JAMES PETER BROWN is a composer and sound designer known for his evocative and diverse music scores. His practice investigates emotive experiences that explore character and aid storytelling. He has worked across a range of forms, from film to theater and contemporary dance to documentary, animation, video games and virtual reality. His processes often involve creating music and sound simultaneously with the development of a project, building connections between performance material and sound. He holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Sydney College of the Arts, in which his focus was on composition and sound design for animation. He also holds a Masters of Acoustic Physics from The University of Sydney, for which his thesis was on the impacts of low frequency sound on the body and mind.



PROFILE

Executive Producer

ALEJANDRA CANALES is a Chilean award-winning documentary filmmaker with an extensive career in directing, producing, curating and programming. She has been an artist in residence at numerous prestigious international programmes and awarded multiple art scholarships and prestigious grants. As a grounded community educator, Alejandra is grateful and honoured to have had the opportunity to design and lead short training courses with First Nations communities in Australia, remote communities in Chile, and refugee background youth in Western Sydney, Australia. She has been mentoring in programs such as Leading Lights for the Australian International Documentary Conference, MentorHer for Women in Film and Television (WIFT) and Curious Women for Curious Works. Alejandra is the Head of Research at the Australian Film Television and Radio School, AFTRS. Her documentary work as both director and producer has been broadcast on ABC and screened at several festivals worldwide, including IDFA, Sheffield DocFest, CPHDOX, Cinema del Donne, Vision du Réel, The International Documentary Association in Los Angeles; Melbourne and Sydney Film Festivals.

PROFILE

Location Sound & Script Advisor

MOE CLARK âpihtawikosisâniskwêw (Métis/ mixed-settler) is a multidisciplinary artist and a 2Spirit singing thunderbird. She works across disciplines of vocal improvisation, sound design, land-based oskapêwis (Elder) support, and performance creation, to create work that centres embodied knowledge, 2Spirit Indigenous resurgence, and creative kinship. Originally from Treaty 7 in Turtle Island (Calgary, AB, Canada), Moe has resided in Tio'tiá:ke/ Mooniyang/ Montréal for more than a decade. As a composer, Moe's music and voice have appeared in documentaries, films, theatre and dance performances alike. Her last solo album "Within" toured across North America and her collaborative video poem "nitahkôtân" won best Indigenous language music video at the ImagiNative film festival. www.moeclark.ca



PROFILE

Voice Artist & Cultural Advisor

ROSIE TE RAUAWHEA BELVIE is a talented musician and rising star in the music industry. With her unique blend of RnB, Soul, Pop, Hip hop, and Jazz, Rosie captivates audiences with her powerful vocals and heartfelt lyrics. Influenced by legends such as Beyonce, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, and Celine Dion, Rosie's music is a testament to her exceptional talent and passion for the craft. Rosie has a long list of accomplishments under her belt, including international performances in the arts and serving as an International Rehearsal Director and Cultural Performance Ambassador. Rosie is also an exceptional stage performer. She takes the stage at local and national events, captivating audiences with her magnetic presence and undeniable talent.

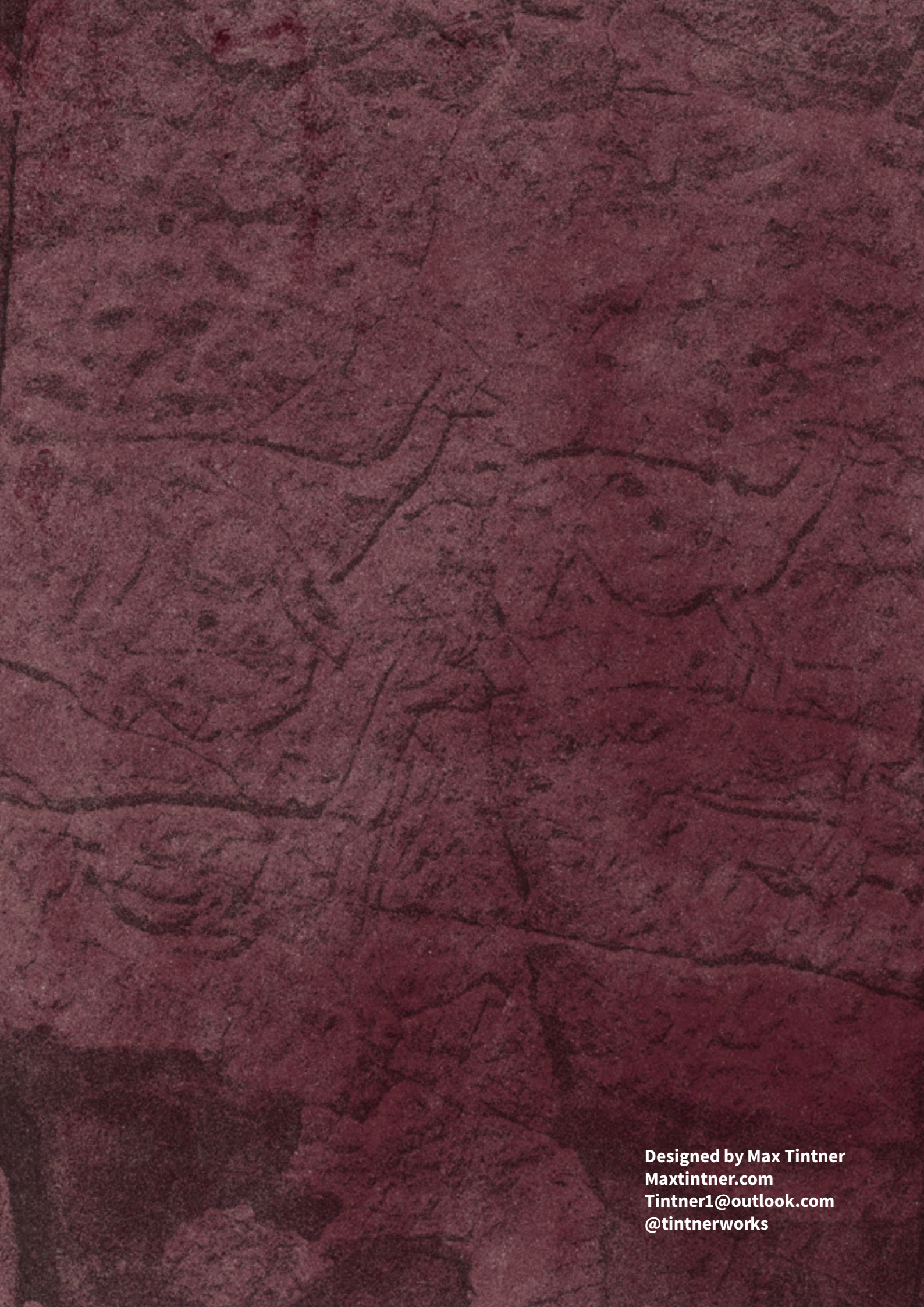
CONTACT

www.cosmographies.info

@cosmographies_film

Alejandra Canales (Executive
Producer)+61 433 848 291
alecanalesm@gmail.com





Designed by Max Tintner
Maxtintner.com
Tintner1@outlook.com
@tintnerworks