

In 1973 Crawford left California for South America with a sixteen-millimeter Bolex camera and a few thousand feet of film. Over the following three years in Ecuador and Peru, he created films he refers to as “moving paintings.” Crawford discarded notions of documentary and narrative filmmaking and instead endeavored to capture nature’s smallest details with his camera, encouraging the audience to sit in quiet communion with the natural world.

Viewed from a contemporary perspective, these works ask us to consider the impossibility of extracting the climate crisis from depictions of the earth’s beauty. The exploitation of land and human labor by colonial forces, which incurred our present-day ecological disaster, is present in *Banana Leaves* and *Lago Agrio Gas Burn*. The quietude of banana leaves in the breeze belies the abuse of workers and the negative environmental impact of the mass cultivation of the world’s most popular fruit by American companies. The extraction of gas in Ecuador’s Lago Agrio, first drilled in 1967 by Texaco, transformed the area into a “rainforest Chernobyl.” Decades of burn-off, billions of gallons of toxic waste dumped, and deforestation have threatened the very existence of local Indigenous communities.

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Film locations:

Titus 1 Gallery

**Laredo Sugar Mill.** 1976. Silent. 2 min.

**Ship Side Steel Plate Lights.** 1974. Silent. 2 min.

**Banana Leaves.** Ecuador. 1977. Silent. 5 min.

**KMK Cane.** USA. 1977. Silent. 4 min.

**Lago Agrio Gas Burn.** 1977. 4 min.

**La Selva.** 1974. Silent. 11 min.