

# VIOLETA AYALA

www.violetaayala.com

Violeta Ayala is an award-winning **filmmaker** and creative **technologist**. In 2020, she became the first **Quechua** member of the **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences**. She is a co-founder of [unitednotions.film](http://unitednotions.film) and [koa.xyz](http://koa.xyz). Her latest project, **Las Awichas**, an XR film experience, in co-production with Kings College London will open as part of a major exhibition at The Strand in March 2024. Previously she created **Prison X** (2021), an interactive **VR animation** that premiered to critical acclaim at the Sundance Film Festival and Cannes XR, and has been showcased at prestigious venues like the Forum Des Images in Paris, Games For Change in NY, SXSW Sydney, Siggraph Asia, as well as galleries and museums in Santiago, Bogota, Prague, Warsaw, and Brisbane, among others. Her **award-winning documentaries**, including **La Lucha** (2023), **Cocaine Prison** (2017), **The Fight** (2017), **The Bolivian Case** (2015), and **Stolen** (2009), have premiered at major film festivals such as Sundance, and Toronto. These films have been broadcasted on various platforms including PBS, World, Amazon Prime, and The Guardian. Her accolades include more than 50 awards and nominations, such as a **Walkley** (Australia's Pulitzer), and nominations for the IDA (Los Angeles), Rory Peck (London), Platino (Panama), and Fenix (Mexico). In 2023, she won the **XR Innovation Award** at the Brain Jam - Games for Change festival for **Weaving Worlds**, a prototype developed in a swift 28-hour Brain Jam that showcases her prowess in rapid ideation and execution within the extended reality (XR) medium. Her creative portfolio includes a **metaverse space** in Voxels, which won the overall honorable mention at the **Indigenous Futurism Model-Making Competition** of Yale University. In 2023, Violeta co-designed **Expylab**, a groundbreaking XR Lab based in Paraguay. This project **won Meta's metaverse community grant**, with Expylab being one of the 10 communities selected as for the Metaverse Communities Challenge. Currently, Violeta is working on a personal documentary on her journey to build a **Feminist AI** (Chicken and Egg/ Netflix), developing a Sci-fiction feature called **Cyberpunk Tinkus** and working on creating films and experiences on immersive worlds with AR/VR and other new technologies, pushing the boundaries of storytelling.

## FILMOGRAPHY

LA LUCHA, doc, 90 min, 2023  
PRISON X, VR Interactive & Immersive Animation, 35 min, 2021  
COCAINE PRISON, doc, 75 min, 2017  
THE FIGHT, doc, 29 min, 2017  
THE BOLIVIAN CASE, doc, 85 min, 2015  
STOLEN, doc, 78 min, 2009

## XR FILM EXPERIENCES & EXHIBITIONS

PRISON X, VR, SXSW Sydney, Australia, 2023  
WEAVING WORLDS, VR film, 15 min, Games For Change, New York, US, 2023  
LAS AWICHAS, AI, Martadero, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 2022  
PRISON X, VR, Forum Des Images, Paris, France, 2022

## AWARDS/HONOURS

Selected for Glow 2024, Kings College London - LAS AWICHAS, UK 2024  
Official Selection 2023, SXSW Sydney - LA LUCHA, Australia 2023  
Official Selection 2023, SXSW Sydney - PRISON X, Australia 2023  
Official Competition 2023, BlackStar Film Festival - LA LUCHA, US 2023  
Winner XR Innovation 2023, Brain Jam, Games For Change - WEAVING WORLDS, NY 2023  
Official Selection New Frontier, Sundance Film Festival - PRISON X, 2021  
Center Piece, Games For Change - PRISON X, NY 2021  
Veer Future Award Finalist, Cannes XR - PRISON X, France 2021  
XR Immersive Arcade, Games For Change - PRISON X, NY 2021  
Member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2020  
Workshop, Puppet.Snake.Mask.Devil.Robot, PRISON X, MIT Co-Creation Studio, 2019  
Official Selection, Toronto Int. Film Festival - COCAINE PRISON, 2017  
Nominated Best Documentary Feature, Camden IFF 2017 - COCAINE PRISON, US  
Best of Fest, IDFA - COCAINE PRISON, Amsterdam, 2017  
Best Cinematography, Walkley Awards (Australian Pulitzer Prize) - THE FIGHT, 2017  
Nominated Best Short, Int. Documentary Awards - THE FIGHT, US 2017

Jaime Escalante Medal for Extraordinary Talent in Filmmaking, 2018  
Audience Award, Toulouse Latin America FF - COCAINE PRISON, France 2018  
DW Doc Dispatch Award, Sheffield Int Documentary Fest - THE FIGHT, UK 2017  
Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival - STOLEN, Canada 2009  
Official Competition 2009, IDFA - STOLEN, Amsterdam 2009  
Nominated for Premios Platino - THE BOLIVIAN CASE, Spain 2016  
Nominated for Premios Fenix - THE BOLIVIAN CASE, Mexico, 2015  
Audience Award, Sydney Film Festival - THE BOLIVIAN CASE, Australia 2015  
Special Presentation, Hot Docs - THE BOLIVIAN CASE, Canada 2015  
Best Short Film, The Right Cut - THE FIGHT, Venezuela 2020  
Grand Jury Prize, London International Film Festival - THE FIGHT, UK 2018  
Best Short Documentary, Sose Int. Film Festival - THE FIGHT, Armenia 2018  
Best Short Documentary, Inclus Film Festival - THE FIGHT, Spain 2018  
Best International Short, Overcome Film Festival - THE FIGHT, Brazil 2018  
Best Short, Articulo 31 Film Festival - THE FIGHT, Spain 2018  
Nom Stefan Jarl Award, Tempo Doc Festival - COCAINE PRISON, Sweden 2018  
Finalist Sony Impact Award, Rory Peck Awards - THE FIGHT, UK, 2017  
Best Short, Int. Human Rights Festival in Sucre - THE FIGHT, Bolivia, 2017  
Bertha Britdoc Journalism Award, Good Pitch NY - COCAINE PRISON, US, 2013  
Puma Creative Catalyst Award, Britdoc Found. - THE BOLIVIAN CASE, UK, 2012  
Special Award for Excellence, Amazigh Int Film Festival - STOLEN, Morocco, 2012  
Best Feature Documentary, Pan African Film Festival - STOLEN, LA, US, 2010  
Grand Prix, Art of the Document Film Festival - STOLEN, Warsaw, Poland, 2010  
Best Documentary, Anchorage Int. Film Festival - STOLEN, US, 2010  
Best Film, Festival Internacional de Cine de Cuenca - STOLEN, Ecuador, 2010  
Best Documentary, Africa Film Festival - STOLEN, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, 2010  
Best Film, River's Edge Int. Film Festival - STOLEN, US, 2010  
Best Editing, Documentary Edge Film Festival - STOLEN, NZ, 2010  
Special Jury Mention, Documentary Edge Film Festival - STOLEN, NZ, 2010  
Best Feature, Rincon Int. Film Festival - STOLEN, Puerto Rico, 2010  
Silver Olive, XV Int. TV Festival Bar - STOLEN, Montenegro, 2010  
Special Mention, Ojai Film Festival - STOLEN, California, US, 2010  
Audience Award, Amnesty Int. Film Festival - STOLEN, Canada, 2010  
Audience Award, One World Human Right Film Festival - STOLEN, 2010

## **EXPERIENCE**

### **2023 - LAS AWICHAS, XR Film Experience (In Production)**

Director, Creative Technologist, UX Designer

A Co-Production with KCL including Kings Institute for AI, AHRC, National Gallery X.

### **2023 - FEMINIST AI, Feature Documentary (In Development)**

Writer, Director

Development: Chicken & Egg Pictures Research & Development Grant, Supported by Netflix.

### **2019 - 2023 LA LUCHA, Feature Documentary.**

Writer, Director, Producer, Editor

Web: <https://lalucha.red/>

Funders: ITVS Open Call Production Fund, Screen Australia, Sundance Documentary Fund, Screen NSW, AXS.

Outreach: Perspective Fund

Festivals: BlackStar Film Festival 2023, SXSW Sydney 2023, ReelAbilities 2024, Salem Film Festival 2024.

### **Selected Reviews**

"This is a hell of a tale. It's a magnificent tale about the fight for what is right. I was moved." Steve Kopian - UNSEEN FILMS

"The heroes featured here show the full swath of how a fight like this can both elevate and break down the human spirit, and makes "The Fight" be a title with two meanings; the fight against the system, and the fight to not give up." Juan.J Arroyo - ROLLINGSTONE

"Ayala's films always feel raw and scrappy, but she has a sixth sense for capturing the unreal" Stephen Saito - MOVEABLE FEST

### **2017 - 2021 Prison X, VR Interactive Animation**

Writer, Director, Lead Artist, Technologist & Producer

Web: <https://linktr.ee/prisonx>

Festivals: Official Selection, Sundance Film Festival 2021, World Premiere

Veer Future Award, Cannes XR, France, 2021 + 14 festivals worldwide.

#### **Selected Reviews**

"The Best Non-Linear Narrative...The most ambitious interactive narrative piece this year (2021)." VOICES OF VR

"Violeta Ayala's Prison X – Chapter 1: The Devil and The Sun, stunned us at Sundance this year." NO PROSCENIUM

"Captured a state of dream logic that I so often want in VR." FORBES

"Asserts Indigenous aesthetics and cosmologies that not only were erased and devalued by colonial Spanish rule, but are woefully underrepresented in digital media today." ART IN AMERICA

\*The experience is entirely created by BIPOC creators from 3D illustrators, technologists to programmers to sound designers and composers. 2016 – 2017 THE FIGHT, short documentary.

Writer, Director & Producer

Web: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2017/may/05/fighting-for-a-pension-disability-rights-protesters-in-bolivia-face-barricades>

#### **Selected Reviews**

"Extraordinary, just hits you in the face" CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR CNN

"The most politically explosive documentary of 2017" NO FILM SCHOOL

"This is committed, compelling observational documentary-making at its best, with super-beautiful characters at its core." RORY PECK AWARDS JURY

"A deeply humane and moving documentary" AUDIENCE AWARD, SHEFFIELD DOC FEST

"A brilliant, shocking and moving film" BBC

"The real big achievement is, they've woken up Bolivian society...you hear people talking about it on the bus" AMERICAS QUARTERLY

#### **2010 – 2017 COCAINE PRISON, feature documentary**

Writer, Director & Producer

Produced by Daniel Fallshaw, Australia.

Co-Produced by Cedric Bonin, France and Redelia Shaw, US.

Broadcaster: Doc World, PBS

SVOD Worldwide: Amazon Prime

French Distributor: Juste Doc, Opened in Cinemas in all France in November

2019 Festivals: Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival

2017, World Premiere

Best of Fest, IDFA 2017, European Premiere.

Official Competition, Habana International Film Festival, Cuba, 2017 + 40 festivals worldwide.

Web: [www.cocaineprison.com](http://www.cocaineprison.com)

#### **Selected Reviews**

"Truly Unique" VICE

"Compellingly Kafkaesque" FILMMAKER MAGAZINE

"One of this year's most striking testimonial films" THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"Heartbreaking and Indicting" CINEMA TROPICAL

"Passionate, compelling and fascinating documentary that will push audiences to explore the idea of a legalized drug industry" SHE DOES THE CITY

"Ayala has achieved something extraordinary in the realm of docu-fiction."

STRAIGHT "Truly jawdropping story of injustice" THE MOVEABLE FEST

"Fascinating and heartbreaking" IN REVIEW

"One of the 12 best films from Latin America of 2017" EL PAIS

"Far from stereotypes like Narcos, Cocaine Prison is intense, a real feminist film" MOUSTIQUE

#### **2011 – 2015 THE BOLIVIAN CASE, feature documentary.**

Writer, Director & Producer

Produced by: Daniel Fallshaw.

TV Distribution: IBERMEDIA to all public broadcasters in Latin America and Spain Festivals: Special Presentation 2015: Hot Docs, Canada – World Premiere

Doc Competition 2015: Sydney Film Festival, Australia (Audience Award)

Nominated for Premios Fenix 2015: Mexico.

Nominated for Premios Platino 2016: Spain.

Web: [www.theboliviancase.com](http://www.theboliviancase.com)

#### **Selected Reviews**

"Instead of asking us to question the guilt or innocence of these women, Ayala asks us to confront how gender—and also race and class—affects how we

assign guilt.” VICE “An eye-opening criminal exposé” INDIEWIRE  
“Very entertaining film and it’s just jaw-dropping... It’s a kind of film that you couldn’t write as fiction” ABC  
“This is reality TV meets true crime in a grand criminal exposé that sheds light on modern crime and punishment.” SHE DOES THE CITY  
“A cleverly constructed piece of cinema that’s ultimately very effective. It actively lures its audience in with a promise of a ‘suspense-thriller’ narrative but doesn’t limit itself to popcorn entertainment.” 4:3  
“The most notable film of 2015, The Bolivian Case is a brave film that follows the thematic narrative line of it’s creator; the drug war” EL DEBER  
“The best of 2015, Violeta Ayala is showing that is one of the most gifted investigative filmmakers of our times” CARMATTOS

## **2006 - 2009 STOLEN, feature documentary.**

Writer, Director & Producer.

Broadcaster: PBS World, US Nationwide, 26th Feb 2013, within a 2-hour special report that includes an interview with the directors and a panel discussion.

Festival Screenings: Official Selection 2009 – Toronto International Film Festival Official Competition 2009 – International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (Finalist) + 80 prestigious festivals worldwide and winner of 15 awards including Best Feature Doc at the 2010 Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles, Grand Prix at the 2010 Art of the Document Film Festival in Warsaw, Golden Oosikar Best Doc at the 2010 Anchorage International Film Festival, Best Film at the 2010 Festival Internacional de Cine de Cuenca in Ecuador and many more.

Web: [www.stolenthedocu.com](http://www.stolenthedocu.com)

Selected Reviews: “Suspenseful, scary, and displaying personal bravery by Ayala and Fallshaw, this exceptional film is a searing testimony to man’s continued inhumanity to man.” SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

“The existence of modern slavery has been detailed in books like Kevin Bales’s Disposable People, but rarely has it been covered on film as intimately as in Stolen.” Thom Powers, TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL  
“Pacy, exciting and hugely engrossing. Guaranteed to spark intense debate about the relationship between documakers and their subjects wherever it’s shown.” Richard Kuipers, VARIETY

“Riveting stuff.” Greg Quill, THE TORONTO STAR

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

2023, Ethics, Anonymity & Deep Fakes: A Conversation, IDA, LA.

2023, AI as Alchemy: Transforming Codes into Social and Cultural Narratives, Keynote, New Dimensions Lab, South Africa.

2023, Film, Fashion and AI, Keynote, Design Futures Lab, Cape Town, SA.

2023, Technological Revolution and AI, Experiential Keynote, at a Medical Congress, UMSS, Cochabamba, Bolivia

2023, Selected for XR Development Market, New Images Festival, Paris.

2023, Film Futurism, Live Cinema Keynote, AIDC, Melbourne.

2023, Panelist, Decolonising virtual spaces, Electric Dreams, Adelaide Fringe

2023 Community Leader “Film, Futurism and Blockchain”, at the Fiction Toolbox Programme, Berlinale.

2023 Teacher “Futurism, AI, XR, Data Science, and new forms of Social Elimination” at the Diplomado del Pensamiento Feminista y Luchas Sociales del Sur organized by Mujeres Creando together with luminaries such as Maria Galindo, Rita Segato, Paul Preciado, amongst others. UMSA, La Paz, Bolivia.

2022 Design & Mentor “Expylab 2022”, a visionary experiment in Latin American futurism, Asuncion, Paraguay.

2022 Masterclass “Building El Cholaverso”, VR Fest MX 2022, Mexico DF. 2022

Panelist “Metaverso Latinoamericano”, Sanfic, Santiago, Chile,

2022 Masterclass “Prison X & Building the Neo Andean Metaverse”, Forum Des Images. Paris, France.

2022 Keynote “Film Futurism” at the William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar by Black Star Film Festival. Philadelphia, US.

2022 Masterclass “Envision and Materialise your own Digital Identity” at Electric South, Cape Twon, SA.

2021 Panelist “Making the Metaverse” at Double Exposure Symposium.

2021 Featured Speaker at Games For Change, a worldwide leading XR, tech and games

conferences. New York.

2021 Named a trailblazer by Screen NSW, Sydney, Australia.

2021 Amongst 20 Australian Creatives for IWD 2021, Sydney, Australia. 2020

Established the Community Board, a representative body of filmmakers and professionals from BIPOC-led collectives and organizations.

2020 Luminaries Panel for "Editing History" together with Eve L. Ewing, Assia Boundaoui, Aymar Jean Christian, and Gene Luen Yang, Sundance Film Festival

2020. 2019 Keynote address "Intersection between journalism, art and freedom of expression", IFEX, Berlin

2018 Masterclass "The impact of journalism and storytelling", Tempo Impact Conference, Stockholm.

2018 Guest Filmmaker at Journalism Plus (AIDC Australia 2018) discussing the role of filmmakers and journalists in the fast changing media landscape.

2017 Guest Filmmaker featured in a conversation with the Deputy Foreign Director at CBS News Tony Calvin during the Double Exposure Investigative Film Festival, DC 2017.

2012 Case study of THE BOLIVIAN CASE at the Norwegian International Short Film Festival, Grimstad, Norway.

2010 Guest Jury at the Norwegian International Short Film Festival, Norway 2010

Masterclass on 'Writing for documentary' at the National Film and Television School in London, UK.

2010 Masterclass on 'From idea to doc' at the Edinburgh College of Arts as part of the "Bridging the Gap" series; organised by the Scottish Documentary Institute. 2009 - 2010 Guest at various film festival panels such as IDFA TV, Frontline Club, Stranger than Fiction in NY, etc.

## **PUBLISHED WRITINGS**

Jan 2022, Foundation, Ta Queans, NFT Poetry Book, <https://www.koa.xyz/projects/queans-nft>

July 2020, Filmmakers Magazine, Plan of Action: BIPOC Documentary Professionals Respond to the Pandemic and Protest Movement.

Feb 2017, The Huffington Post, Recognition is for white Australia

Feb 2017, The Huffington Post, Advance Australia White

Jan 2017, The Huffington Post, #WhyIMarch

Dec 2016, The Huffington Post, Prisoner #B57661

Nov 2016, The Huffington Post, The Water War

Sep 2016, The Huffington Post, Liberté, égalité, fraternité?

June 2016, The Huffington Post, The Wicked Granny

May 2016, The Huffington Post, Water Canons Used On Disabled Protestors in

Bolivia May 2016, The Huffington Post, My Right to Live with Dignity

Feb 2016, The Huffington Post, Fair Trade Cocaine

Jan 2016, The Huffington Post, White People on Patrol

Aug 2015, The Huffington Post, The Firsthand Racism I Experienced in

Australia Nov 2013, The Huffington Post, Is Bolivia the New Afghanistan, or Is O'Grady From The WSJ Delusional?

August 2013, The Huffington Post, The Whistleblowers and Latin America

July 2013, The Huffington Post, What If Snowden Was on Board the Bolivian President's Jet?

June 2013, The Huffington Post, Cocaine: Just a Commodity?

Feb 2013, Indiewire, First Person: The 'Stolen' Filmmakers Explain How a Doc About Refugees Became a Controversial Film About Reported Slavery

Oct 2006, The Age, Police Start Woodside Probe Over Bribery Claim

June 2006, Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, Slick Operator - It was the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald. This article was the catalyst for the Australian Federal Police to open an investigation into Woodside's bribing of a Mauritanian Government official.

## **EDUCATION**

2006 Bachelor of Arts, Charles Sturt University, Australia.

1995 High School Diploma, Aleman Santa Maria, Bolivia.