



TISHMAN CENTER · APRIL 13, 2017

# Earth Week Spotlight: Maya Lazzaro

As [Earth Week at The New School](#) approaches, it is time to explore some of our special guests that will be a part of this event-filled week. Maya Lazzaro will be one of multiple individuals that will be a part of a panel focusing on Native Sovereignty during Earth Week.

Maya is currently a [Senior Culture & Media Studies](#) major at [Eugene Lang College \(The New School\)](#), and she has developed a strong interest in journalism and design over the years. As she prepares for life after The New School, the [Tishman Center](#) has invited her to participate in the Earth Week event: [Ecology and](#)

## Sovereignty: Native and Indigenous Perspectives Transcending

Boundaries. Maya, a Native American herself, has seen firsthand the issues facing the Native American community.

Currently, Maya is finishing up her internship with the Human Rights Watch, where she has worked on various human rights issues and has been active in environmental organizing. We asked Maya a few questions regarding her career, and here's what she had to say:

### **Q. Where did your passion for journalism originate?**

I began to have an interest in journalism around the 11th grade. My passion originated from photography initially. I started taking photos on the street as a way to record people's stories and the different paths we all face and walk through. I think growing up in New York City has shown me that there are incredible stories that have personally taught me what resilience looks like. I have also used writing as a tool to communicate what I couldn't say. When I started to write about my photos I realized I was actually doing journalism in some ways, and knew that's what I wanted to study.

### **Q. What are a few things you would like the everyday person to know**

**about your Tribe?**

My father is Quechua, Inca from Altiplano and growing up I didn't understand that this was special. As a child, being indigenous was just a way of living. My father taught us as much as he could, but without those exact intentions. My father's way of living has always been to take care of Pachamama, Mother Earth, to be grateful for the harvest, and to look out for the land and the food that's come from that land. What I would want people to know about Quechua people is what I would want people to know of all indigenous people around the world – the communication with Mother Earth and with spirit is something that has been true for our ways of living, and the destruction of land and the exploitation of resources affects everybody, but has always affected indigenous people the most.

**Q. How has your internship with the Human Rights Watch impacted your life?**

Interning for Human Rights Watch has been interesting for me because it is my first time being at a non-profit organization. I now have a clearer understanding of what career path I would like to follow later in life, and what kind of organization I would like to work for.

**Q. What are a few traditional ceremonies that you've been a part of that you would be willing to tell the public about?**

I really do believe life is a ceremony, in a big sense we are all constantly sitting in a ceremony. Sweat lodges have been a big part of my life, and I will say that sweating with Mother Earth is healing for both her and us. I believe if one wants to decolonize themselves, being with Mother Earth and praying to her and for her is a big place we need to start. She doesn't ask more from us than to love her.

However becoming less of a part of western society goes in so many ways, not just practicing ceremonial ways but decolonize our minds; knocking down the borders both physical and mental. Using less plastic, consuming less, growing our own food, these ways are also ceremonial because they detach us from consuming and from abusing the earth and each other.

Want to learn more about what Maya Lazzaro is fighting for? Don't miss the [Earth Week event: Ecology and Sovereignty – Native and Indigenous Perspectives](#) [Transcending Boundaries \(4/18/17\)](#). Please RSVP.

