

KAMAQUEN

Andean Energy

Kamaquen is the name given by the inhabitants of the Andes to the transforming energy that gives life and makes possible the procreation of the species. This *élan vital* animates all living beings, even those that the Western man calls *inert*.

In the pre-hispanic Andean world, the presence of the forefathers made sense of the landscape and facilitated people's understanding of it. It was also assumed that the present is an expression of the past. This Andean world view allowed for a profound relationship between man and the ancestral and sacred forces of nature.

In Quechua the word **Apu** means 'lord' and it is used to name the spirits that inhabit the mountains. Since time immemorial, these spirits have been the basis of cosmologies and mythologies governing life; creating sacred spaces that converge, offering permanent protection and they were, also, the ancients gods of rain, providing water for the valleys and determining the success of their crops by their inseminating power. Lords of their domains, of things and animals, they watch over and take care of their inhabitants, mankind included.

It is in these mountains that the games of memory take place. These are spaces for the reconstruction of Andean memory. Through them cultural spaces are disseminated and re-utilized by each new generation of shepherds, building the paths of memory and in doing so bringing the distant past of the forefathers to the present disrupting the time/space dimension of human life and at the same time articulating the rites of the sacred space, whose boundaries were established using a radial system whereby 41 imaginary visual lines identified the spaces of transit between the worlds of above and below. In the face of those *Apus* I propose to perform these memory exercises in order to find the paths and identify our sacred spaces, keeping them between imaginary lines and once again invoke the Kamaquen, for behind our actions, under our skins, we are our own ancestors.

There is no rock that is not a memory of ourselves; there is no wheat we have not sown.

Keka Ruiz-Tagle.