

BolivianExpress

Free Distribution — Issue 12

Magazine

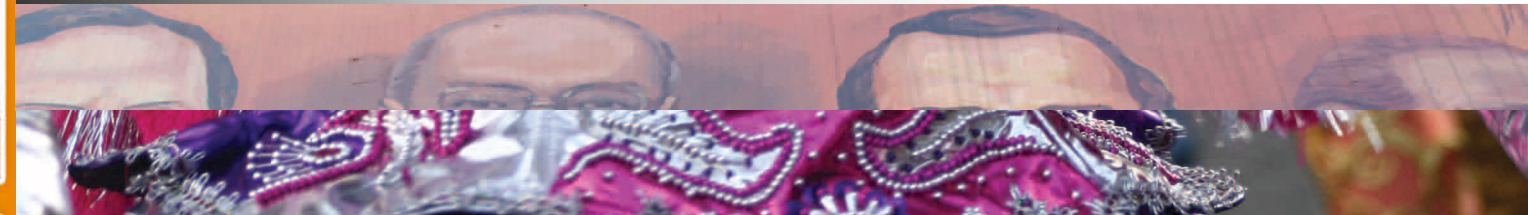


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Address: Express Press, Edificio Quipus, 5to piso, Pasaje Jauregui
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La Paz – Bolivia, September 2011



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EDITORIAL

You don't have to spend long in Bolivia to learn that people mobilise over a huge range of issues including protesting against tax increases, arguing over where the country's capital ought to be, and even marching to disapprove of other mobilisations.* It's hard to overstate the extent to which social movements are the norm rather than the exception around here. This issue of the BX is decidedly about movements (and why not, of a social kind), though not the ones you might expect.

Our article on el clásico (p 10) explores how rivalry between fans can sometimes be far more gripping than a football game between two of Bolivia's greatest teams. A snapshot of cholita wrestling (p 8) takes us to the ringside to give us a taste of what it takes to be a warrior in a pollera. In our piece on graffiti (p 16) we trace the origins of an important urban cultural movement by speaking to one of its main practitioners.

Many key ingredients you might associate with social movements are covered: confrontation, identity, and subversion. Of course, when we think of movements we think of much more than this. To show you why, we uncover the social rituals surrounding the exuberant Caporales dance (p 14), and explain how it lends expression to a tribal sense of belonging sought by sections of Bolivia's elite. In our article on equines (p 6) we take to the outdoors and explore the role horses have played in shaping the country. We also look into climbing scene in Bolivia (p 12) to show that in a country famed for its mountains, this sport has yet many peaks to conquer. To top it off, we descend from these heights down three exhilarating zipline rides (p 18) and finally get a chance to relax down in the jungle.

Sweat-drenched, ruffle-haired and **macurcados**, we've rolled up our sleeves and gotten involved in some serious action to bring you this issue. We hope you enjoy the action.

* Parents have been known to march against teacher strikes, making one wonder where the kids are while all of this unfolds, assuming they are neither at school nor at home. In a protest, presumably?

By Amaru Villanueva
 Rance

N.B. Several Spanish and Aymara words are marked in **bold** throughout this issue. Their meanings can be found in the glossary below our credits

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20 de octubre, frente a la Plaza Avaroa.

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Taming the Bolivian BRONCO

How horses conquered Bolivia and Bolivia conquered the horse

Text: Kirsty Hough

A flourishing equestrian scene is being established in Bolivia, with riding clubs and competitions becoming increasingly widespread. Exclusive clubs like the Club Hípico Los Sargentos have started springing up across the country and competitions at Grand Prix level are in full swing. The reason for this sudden popularity in Bolivia may seem unclear (and begs the question, why does anyone feel the need to climb onto a 1,000lb animal and attempt to control it?) The question is, however, more befuddling in a country where over 60% of the population lives below the poverty line. Horseriding is, after all, an expensive hobby.

Horses are not native to the region, having been brought over by the Spanish during the conquest. It has been speculated that equines were one of the reasons the Spanish were able to conquer the continent, as the strength and agility of the horse proved devastating to indigenous forces. However, they eventually provided a welcome change to the spitting llamas, and soon after the conquest became popular riding creatures, valued for their

hardiness and stamina.

Fast forward 500 odd years; the Bolivian tourist industry, in full swing by the 1990s, had set up rainforest tours on horseback and offered travellers the chance to relax on a saddle on the way up to La **Muela del Diablo**. They are still used today in rural communities for herding cattle and as an efficient mode of transport. This use of using horses to trek is to some extent influenced by North American cowboys, as the Bolivians ride using techniques and equipment from the United States.

The development from this to competitions is a step that nearly every country has taken; perhaps it is inevitable that people should want to start comparing their horses' speed, conformation and jumping ability. Taking the lead from the already prevalent disciplines in Europe and the USA, Bolivia then adapted this to their own country, giving birth to competitive equestrianism.

Fast forward another couple of decades and Bolivian riders were already enjoying success

in international competitions, further encouraging the growth of the sport in the country. Riders such as Daniel Bedoya Sr., who was born in La Paz, was crowned Bolivian National Champion no fewer than seven times, and has even competed in the show-jumping event in Argentina, considered the toughest in South America. The sport is now so popular in the region that it is included in the South American Games, raising its profile and levels of organisation.

In Europe, riding is often seen as a symbol of wealth, and in Bolivia it is no different. With increasing levels of wealth and economic inequality, pastimes such as these are often used as a means for social mobility. One local who attended a local school in the **Zona Sur** tells me that middle class segments keen to set themselves apart join riding clubs to partake in the social scene as much as the sport.

Now that equestrian culture is becoming more popular Bolivia, the country must ensure it retains its successful riders, as most emigrate abroad in

search of better competing circuits and a more established equestrian community (chiefly driven by a better chance to ride in competitions and get better training). However, once Bolivia is able to compete with the American equestrian market, their determined riders will doubtless become a formidable force in the international arena.

Many factors can be used to explain the popularity of equestrianism in any country, developed or otherwise. For some people, it's simply the ability of controlling such a large and powerful animal. From fun to companionship, from dedication to freedom; ask any child around the world why they love horse riding and they will give you all manner of explanations. While there's no single reason that explains the popularity of horse riding, it has proven itself capable of flourishing in societies and geographies all over the world. Bolivian riding is notable proof of this.

HORSES IN HISTORY

Horses have played a significant role in the history of Bolivia. There is a popular myth that the President from 1864-71, Mariano Melgarejo, fell in love with a beautiful white horse belonging to a Brazilian diplomat. In return for the equine, he placed his thumb on the Bolivian map, drew a line around it and gave that area of land to Brazil. Sadly, the horse died a few days later, and the land was never returned. Horses are still used in cultural festivals in Bolivia, especially in Tarija on the 15 Ephemeredes, where the Chapaco rodeo and horse riding take place in a traditional gaucho festival. A procession of both male and female riders (Matacos and Cunas) takes place in the town of Santa Fe twice a year.

FAMOUS BOLIVIAN RIDERS

DANIEL BEDOYA SR.

Coming from a family with a strong riding tradition made it likely for Daniel to get into the sport. Less likely was the success he's had since he started. He began at the age of eight, and in just three years he won his first National Title. He continued his successful riding career as an adult, winning six more titles and competing for his country around the world. He now owns Bedoya Training Stables in the USA, where he trains horses and riders for national competitions.

ROBERTO DAZA

Roberto was also born in La Paz, Bolivia, and began riding locally. He was Young Riders Champion and Junior Champion, and went on to win the Bolivian National Grand Prix Champion for 3 years. He now lives and rides in Florida where he also trains riders.

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LÍNEA AÉREA

BRAWLING IN THE BARRIO

**Text: Maeva Gonzalez
Photo: Manuel Seoane**

Seen by many as being the most representative female characters of Andean region, cholitas are as ubiquitous in Bolivia as they are enigmatic. Pretty much everything about them is distinctive: hat, pollera, braids, jewelry (including gold teeth), shoes, and of course their rock-hard character. But when a Cholita enters the ring, she leaves her hat and jewelry backstage and gets ready to entertain a very animated audience.

Sunday afternoon, around 4 PM: the place is a gymnasium in El Alto, but it will be a while before we enter. Hundreds of people are waiting outside for the doors to open; Cholita wrestling is a Sunday habit for most of them. Paco, 32, who lives in the centre, brought his family, even his 4-year-old daughter, and apparently this is very common here. "The local people like this show because it reminds us how entertaining Bolivia can be." In fact, the show brings many locals and gringos, a mixed crowd which organizers and performers like. They won't tell me how much a Cholita earns but, as their smiles and enthusiasm show, the Cholita wrestlers like what they do.

Alicia Flores, a 17-year-old wrestler, is tough but feminine, even when kicking her opponent. As she appears from backstage, wearing her traditional Cholita costume – bright colours, twirling green and orange skirt, and with her bowler hat magically balanced on her head – the audience applauds her entry in

time with the rhythm of a typical Bolivian song, so vigorously that even the gringos get in the mood. The woman entering the ring is transformed: a bright smile but ferocious eyes. Jumps, kicks, laughs, tears, the audience follows Alicia as she is strangled by her rival, dressed as, believe it or not, a zebra. I decide it is time for me to fill my popcorn and as I pass some unoccupied chairs near the corner of the ring, suddenly Alicia throws her rival, who, as she tumbles to the ground, breaks the said two chairs and gives me quite a shock.

The audience laughs, the audience shouts, a woman gives the finger to wrestlers she doesn't like. Everybody is tense when a Cholita is hit by a rival, especially when the referee is on the opponent's side, kicking the poor woman when she turns to wave at her public. Some nearby spectators are asking themselves if it is a vocation to become a Cholita wrestler. Indeed the family could be against it, the heart of the Cholita belongs not to them, but to lucha libre.

Carmen Rojas, a 30-year-old singing teacher and wrestler, told one of our reporters that her family wasn't supporting her at all and was ashamed she chose such activity to fill her free time. Family however do sometimes come to the fight: Gabriella, a visiting wrestler, waves at her family when she enters the ring and

her little daughter comes to pick her hat before she starts warming up. Different stories but the same passion.

The truth is that I will never look at a Cholita the same way again, under the skin of such beauty lives a passionate fighter who summons a faithful cohort of fans every Sunday – often in the dozens every Sunday. Seeing them wrestle is a unique experience, with skirts and hair flying as they lay into each other, or attack a costumed figure dressed as Spiderman or as a wolf, marking the end of the show. In our case, the wolf in question threatened the public and even fought a man in the audience. Fighters are often thrown into the audience as part of the show, but the day I went to see the Cholitas it seemed one of them had hurt herself very badly. It is of course possible this was an instance of first-rate acting; dare I say worthy of an Oscar (or perhaps a **Huascar**, as it might be called around here.)...

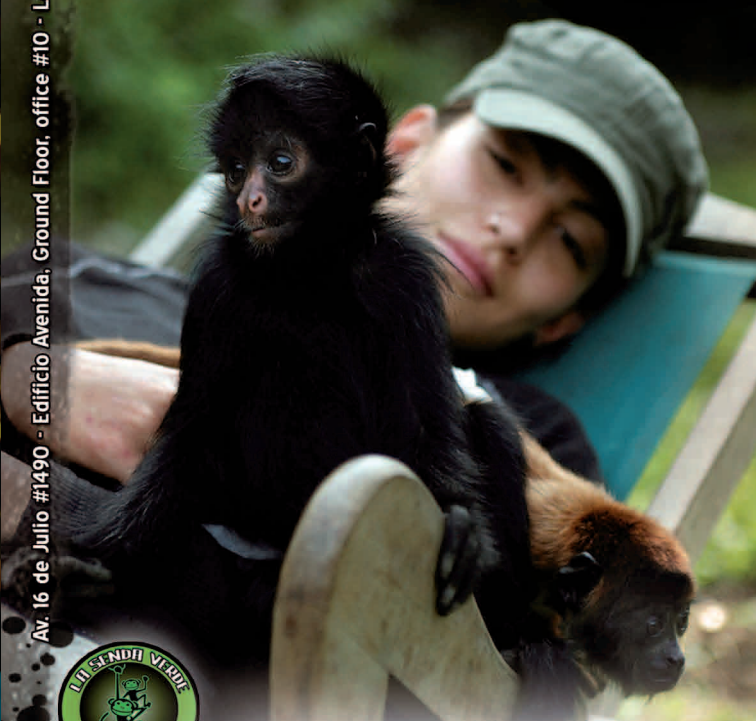
Here, in La Paz, there are many activities on offer for a Sunday afternoon. But the most impressive and unforgettable is the spectacle of the Cholitas. Although they simulate violence (sometimes all too convincingly), they are undoubtedly women brimming with dreams and courage. The proud moment in which they share this with the public is never a simulation, it's as real as wrestling ever gets..

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El Clásico

Text: Tim Deeks
Photo: Manuel Seoane

Before I arrived in La Paz, if someone spoke to me about El Clásico, I would have immediately thought of the deep-rooted rivalry between the two giants of Spanish football, Real Madrid and Barcelona, or even the notorious encounter in between Boca Juniors and

FACTS

- After this month's game, Bolívar leads head-to-heads with 72 wins against Strongest's 41 and 57 draws. The first El Clásico in 1927 – ended in a 0-0 draw.
- Although Strongest is generally associated with the richer Zona Sur, Bolívar is by far the richer team - club president Marcelo Claure has poured money into the club rather like a Bolivian Abramovich
- Before Bolívar was founded, the main rivalry in Bolivian football was between Strongest and Colegio Militar and then Strongest and Universitario de Sucre

River Plate in Argentina. Nevertheless, when I was offered tickets to the local derby between the two biggest teams in La Paz, Bolívar and The Strongest, I was hardly going to turn down the opportunity.

Despite a relatively arbitrary choice of allegiance, a Bolívar supporter got us the tickets), we were thrown straight into the hardcore Bolívarista experience. We congregated at **Las Velas near the Parque de Los Monos** to travel with the Bolívar fans to the Strongest's stadium in a convoy of appropriately coloured blue buses. Their stadium is in Achumani, which meant an interesting journey through the wealthy, and predominantly Estronguista Zona Sur. Priorities were clear: before being handed our tickets we were issued with a bag of **lemons** for throwing at opposition players.

Before the buses had even set off, the chanting started. I couldn't tell you all the lyrics, but **'la puta madre que te parió'** and **'tigre... culo'** seemed to feature fairly prominently. The chants weren't led by a bald and tattooed man

who'd spent the entire day drinking **Paceña** (our editorial line dictates we must avoid stereotypes), but a 'cholíta' called María Elena Condori Salgado, also known as la Cholívarista. She was dressed entirely in Bolívar's **albiceleste** colours, and what she lacked in stature, she more than compensated for in voice. As we entered the **Zona Sur**, the houses got bigger, the chants got louder and the lyrics dirtier. We were told to shut the windows and were then escorted by police on motorbikes. I was quite happy taunting my newfound enemies from the relative safety of our bus, but that wasn't enough for some people, who insisted on climbing on the roofs and shouting abuse out of the doors. Again, the invective was largely led by the women.

Having been guided past the Strongest fans, we tentatively alighted amid the sounds of fireworks and vuvuzelas, before being ushered by more police into the queue to enter the stadium. Upon entering the stadium, we were put through the high-tech anti-alcohol check of having to breathe on the

Club The Strongest History:



Considered the oldest team in Bolivia and the only one never to have been relegated from the top division.

- In 1969, the entire team was killed in a plane crash after a match in what has come to be known as the Viloco incident (conspiracy theories abound, since they were in danger of being relegated for the first and only time in their history.)
- It's the only team in the world to have a battle named after them – 'Batalla Cañada de Strongest' was Bolivia's most important victory in the Chaco War against Paraguay – the division made up largely of players and club officials.



"Whereas Bolívaristas often leave before the 90 minutes if they're not winning, Estronguistas will follow their team unconditionally with far more passion."

THE STRONGEST FAN

Club Bolívar History:



- Founded in 1925 by a group of intellectuals and nationalists
- Originally known as Atletico Bolívar Literario Cultural
- Due to roots it has retained the nickname La Academia. Unofficially, the mortarboard symbol associated with it has been replaced with a lion in reaction against Strongest's tiger



"They would like to think that there's a class difference, since they are based in Zona Sur, but it doesn't work like that; the major difference is that we have a winning mentality!"

BOLIVAR FAN

security guards*. Somehow, one of our editors failed this rigorous test, despite not having touched alcohol that day (we take our investigative work very seriously here at Bolivian Express).**

Due to maintenance work at the national stadium, Estadio Hernando Siles, which has a capacity of 42,000, this El Clásico took place at the more intimate Estadio Rafael Mendoza, with a capacity of just 15,000. For those desperate fans who had climbed the surrounding mountains to be able to watch the game, the spectacle didn't perhaps live up to the exhibition of football one associates with the Spanish El Clásico. Bolívar had two goals disallowed, as The Strongest went on to win 1-0. The atmosphere was fantastic though. We found ourselves in a face-off sat amongst the Bolívar fans in the north across the pitch from the Strongest fans in the Curva Sur. The songs just kept coming, my personal favourite being 'Dáale dale dale dale dale dale Bo' to the tune of Karma Chameleon.

We rushed out as soon as the whistle blew to comfort ourselves with anticuchos. We had been warned that things could kick off (metaphorically speaking) if Bolívar won, but I spoke to the police afterwards and there were no problems at the game itself. All in all, I wasn't too disappointed to be getting the bus back with a slightly more subdued cholita.

*Although not perhaps the most fool-proof method in the world, it is a relief to see the prevention of excessive drunkenness at football matches, as it is a recipe for violence. In England, many derby games are moved to 12.15pm kick-offs, simply to minimise the time fans can spend in the pub beforehand. This 'El Clásico' began at the normal time of 3pm, but the security were taking no nonsense. Since the Cholívarista seemed to have quite a reputation, I was given her big bag of limes to take into the stadium. When asked why I was carrying about one hundred limes with me to a football game, I managed to muster the phrase, **'son para chupar'** in my most innocent-sounding English accent, but they were having none of it. **He did eventually manage to get in after the Cholívarista exerted her influence with one of the senior guards.



CLIMBING WITH THE GODS

IN BOLIVIA ROCK CLIMBING IS NOT A SPORT WIDELY KNOWN ABOUT OR PRACTICED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. HOWEVER, TO THE EYE OF A CONNOISSEUR, THE COUNTRY'S POTENTIAL IS AS EVIDENT AS A TIWANAKU MONOLITH.

Bolivia, and in particular, the Aymara and Quechua indigenous cultures have always had a sacred bond with La Pachamama, with Mother Earth and therefore with the mountains. The Illimani, Huayna Potosí, Mururata and Illampu are only a few examples of mountain-gods who have inspired legends, like that of La leyenda del Sajama. So it is not surprising that an activity that involves exploring and evolving alongside these sacred mountains should appeal.

The origins of climbing in Bolivia can only be traced back to the 1980s, and as a result the discipline is still developing today. Based in La Paz, Daniel Aramayo is one of the pioneers of rock climbing in Bolivia. The sport includes two variations: 'rock climbing' can refer to sports climbing, which involves equipping routes to facilitate the climb, but it can also mean traditional climbing up a virgin route. This is the truly scary option, it requires the climber to be very confident, follow nature's path and to have a thorough knowledge of the rock. According to Daniel, two factors would enable the sport to grow: information and funding. First, serious and ample information is necessary, not dramatic films based on a pseudo-heroic climber who,

generally, never makes it to the end of the film. A shared myth here is that rock climbing = death. This presumption is far from reality as in the past 15 years, one death has been recorded, one french climber, who died in Aranjuez, south of La Paz. The risk is in reality quite minimal.

However, informing people is all very well but without sufficient funding the effort seems unsustainable. The Bolivian government supports the Federacion Boliviana de Ski y Andinismo (FEBSA) but this federation doesn't represent sports climbing. Therefore, the discipline has no official funding.

Despite this lack of support, change is on its way. Climbers are getting organised. The Asociación Pacena de Escalada Deportiva (APED) is seeking to unite sport climbers and to eventually become a member of the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC). The festival Bloqueando which has taken place annually for five years now is one of the most important gathering of climbers in Latin America and attracts increasing numbers of foreigners. Bloc is a discipline of climbing which involves very tactical and skillful climbing moves on a relatively low rock formation, with crashpads as the only protection. This means once you've started you go for it or you fall, no time to gaze at the condors!

Perhaps with a solid national organisation and international participation, in the future we can hope to see sports climbing receiving some further recognition.

Daniel estimates that less than 5% of Bolivia's climbing capacity is exploited which gives incredible margin of exploration for the adventurous! Aranjuez is one of the most reputed sites in Bolivia. Located in Zona Sur it has some 120 routes equipped for all levels of climbing from grade 4 to grade 8 and with very accessible 10m to 40m climbs. One of the most promising spots is said to be the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz. It has earned itself a reputation in traditional climbing even though it is still almost completely virgin.

PUT YOUR NEW KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE!

You can go to two clubs in La Paz to practice rock climbing :

Club Vertigo.
Contact Daniel Aramayo - 76205172

Club Gekos
www.gekos.tk

If you're looking to rent gear, check out the travel agencies but make sure they have a safety record, you really don't want to find yourself on a route and realise that your harness is ripped...

If you're looking to buy gear you can go to Tatoo Adventure Gear or contact Adventure Planet Store.

ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS LEGENDS OF THE ALTIPLANO IS 'LA LEYENDA DEL SAJAMA'

Once upon a time, a war broke out between the mountains. The Huayna Potosí, the Condoriri, the Ancohuma and the Illampu fought for the title of the greatest mountain. 'Pacha', the creator, called for a truce, and declared that the Illimani, who had not been belligerent, had earned the title.

A querulous neighbour contested this decision, causing Pacha to break out in a most terrible fury. Once the storm was over, a terrible sight appeared in the mist. The querulous neighbour had been beheaded, his head lay far away in the Altiplano. Men called the executioner **Sajama**, which in Aymara means 'he who is far'. The beheaded mountain earned the name **Mururata**, 'the decapitated'

Text: Alizée Marceau
Photo: Juanga Estellano



CAPORALES

Our Journalist takes us through the history and significance of caporales; from the dance's roots in slavery during the colonial era, to how it has recently become an activity at the centre of the social drinking lives of Bolivians, especially those with pockets deep enough to afford taking part in the rituals that surround it.

TEXT: ELEANOR POTTER
PHOTO: MICHAEL DUNNC.



Of the dozens of traditional dances currently practiced in Bolivia, caporales is arguably the one which has enjoyed the greatest success both in terms of popularity and long-lasting appeal. It originates from the colonial era when black slaves were brought to the country by the Spaniards. Despite making up just 2% of the Bolivian population, the influence of the Afro-Bolivian community in popular culture is astounding. The **caporales** dance is based on the character of the same name. Whip in hand, the caporal was the foreman who tyrannised the slaves in mines and plantations.

Most sources suggest the dance was created in 1969 by the Estrada brothers. Its popularity is intriguing to say the least, especially given that it seems to glorify an unlikely (and unlikeable) historical figure. Perhaps its appeal derives from its energetic bravado, or because it epitomizes a people confronting its difficult past with joy and exuberance (though the short skirts and

skin-to-clothing ratio might also play an important role).

Today, caporales is extremely widespread and definitely part of the local mainstream, making it easy to overlook the religious side to the dance. It is said that caporales dedicate the dancing and surrounding festivities to the Virgen del Sacavón – the patroness of miners – to whom they pledge three years of dancing in return for being blessed with riches from the mines.

COSTUME

The male costume consists of baggy Argentinean-style trousers and a loose-sleeved shirt, the style of which is based on the clothes of a Spanish military guard. The accessories consist of a wide belt similar to a cummerbund, military boots with bells on, known as 'cascabeles', a wide-brimmed hat held in one hand and sometimes a whip in the other.

The women wear dresses with large puffy shoulders, the pattern

and colours matching the male outfit. The key to the female costume is the length of the skirt. Originally the women danced in **pollera** skirts, but be it fashion, inflation or global warming, more and more leg crept into view. The skirt is multi-layered and looks somewhat like a tutu. It is however loose enough to allow the dancer to shake her hips Beyoncé-style, and send the skirt flying upwards to reveal her matching underwear. The outfit is completed by skin coloured tights, high-heeled shoes, and a round hat worn pinned to the back of the hair.

SAN SIMÓN

If you are after the ultimate Caporal experience, then look no further than the San Simón fraternity, the most famed and celebrated in Bolivia. Five different groups known as bloques constitute San Simón, one corresponding to each department – La Paz, Oruro, Santa Cruz, Sucre and Cochabamba. Should you ever have the fortune of watching all five bloques parade to-

gether, you would be witness to a thousand finest dancers leaping to the rhythm of **Saya** amid an ocean of sequins and bells.

Every year each member of San Simón buys a new costume, ornately designed by the finest artisans in the trade. Each of the five cities puts forward a design, and the leaders of the different bloques have a meeting to select the best. The motif can be any design but the colours are chosen in accordance with the city from which the outfit comes. Possibly the most incredible aspect of the costume is the price: the dress will set them back over \$120, the shoes costing another \$40. That is fairly expensive by all accounts, but by Bolivian standards it is bordering on the absurd, coming in at over twice the national minimum monthly wage.

And the expenses don't stop at costumes. Yearly membership fees of \$250 must also be paid, and for your money you get some travel expenses here and there, but chiefly the prestige

of being part of the greatest caporales dance troupe in the country. These hefty sums make dancing in one of these groups well out of reach of most Bolivian citizens. Go back just 50 years however, and you would find caporales dancing associated with poorer people, and the wealthy taking little interest in it. When Bolivia saw a resurgence in the popularity of traditions – in music as well as dance – caporales gradually became absorbed into the culture of the rich.

DRINKING

A pivotal part of caporales dancing is the drinking culture. Three 'C's go in hand in hand here: carnival, caporales and crapulence. In a three hour coach journey to Oruro (where the largest carnival celebrations take place every February) I am told that nothing would be thought of polishing off twelve or more bottles of spirits by a bus full of dancers. And all down the hatch in time to dance in sombre religious

devotion.

NEVER TOO LATE?

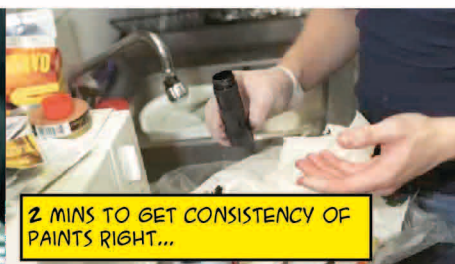
There exists a sort of sub-group known as "Mi Viejo San Simón" for the more 'mature' dancers. Though the disapproval remains unspoken, it is not considered very dignified for those in their senior years – and especially women – to be dancing caporales, not only because of the revealing costumes but also due to the physical demands of the dance. Perhaps they would be better suited to the job of 'aguatero' (see below).

AGUATERO

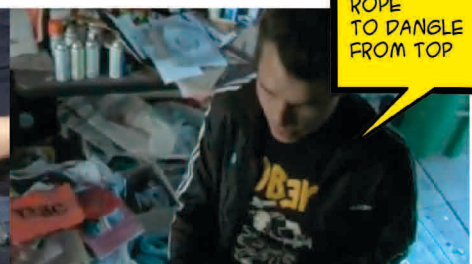
Probably best described as the roadies of a caporales group, the aguateros may be family members or friends, and as their name suggests they bring water (at least in theory) to the dancers, and also take on the role of general helper. They accompany the troupe on their travels, and are as much at the heart of the club as the dancers.



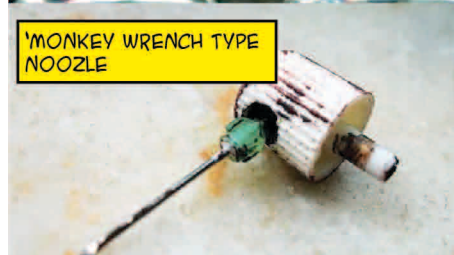
SPRAY CANS OF DIFFERENT COLORS



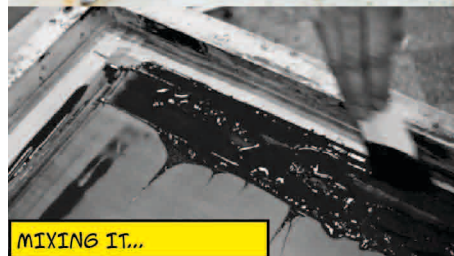
2 MINS TO GET CONSISTENCY OF PAINTS RIGHT...



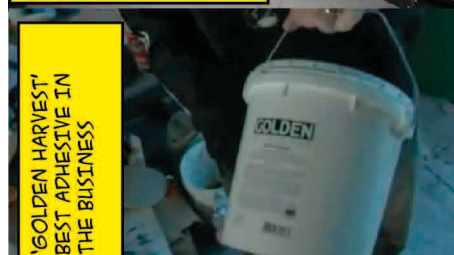
ROPE TO DANGLE FROM TOP



'MONKEY WRENCH' TYPE NOZZLE



MIXING IT...



'GOLDEN HARVEST' BEST ADHESIVE IN THE BUSINESS

TAGGING

LA PAZ

TEXT AND PHOTO: GABRIEL KUMONTOY

The walls are sterile, casas remain blank and slabs of cement are orphaned and nameless: until as recently as 2000 Bolivian buildings and walls were mostly mute. Silences can be unbearable, and in a city filled to the brim with a multitude of voices, the pioneers of street art needed to give these walls their own sound: a shrill scream. Roughly ten years ago five crews native to the country started owning territories, tagging, and giving a splash of colour to not only La Paz, but also to Sucre, Cochabamba, Copacabana and Santa Cruz, where, according to veteran street artist K, time seems to have frozen since in the 1800s.

It was with just five pioneering crews of street artists that La Paz shed its monochromatic garb, namely S.L.A.P, the LATIN KINGS, Dynasty, M.A.R.S.H and K.D.S (the disciple of one of the aforementioned crews itself). They were not armed with the materials that street artists from other bigger cities possess,

but merely mediocre stationary -shop markers and aerosol spray-cans. With a limited range of 'cap' sizes -which refers to the size-specific openings of a spray-can nozzle, akin to the sizes of a paintbrush - these artists incorporated and emulated the art of larger cities. The scene started off slowly but surely in the form of tags. Incorporating street art into their lifestyle as a way of life rather than a hobby, they were always on the lookout for a prominent and relevant spot, collating other artists' tags and style of graffiti, and most importantly, 'sealing the deal' by taking photographic evidence (to be reproduced in the form of film development, as Internet had not lent its hand as of yet). Tags were naturally one of the first styles to grow strong and rampant in Bolivia due to its speed, direct representation of the artists' names, and its potential to garner recognition. Other elaborate styles of street art and graffiti to be fostered early on were 'blockblustering' and the 'wildstyle', correspond-

ingly to the stages of street art that a city usually goes through, and also in accordance with what these early pioneers were exposed to in terms of styles in neighboring regions and the street art capitals of the world, New York City, London and Madrid.

"It was PILOT markers", that boosted street art, says K (a veteran street artist who wishes to remain anonymous). "It was also what gave me the upper hand, since it was the exact and most appropriate tool for the style that was trendy at the moment: the 'y' style". Tucked away in Ciudad La Paz's Veinte de Octubre street, the stationary shop Libreditas Miguela was K's secret arsenal, for it housed those precious 'Super Colour Jumbo PILOT' markers, perfect for his trade.

This was the only resource open to him, as other materials necessary for street art were scarce. Stencil rollers, canvases, other varieties of spray paint caps (for example 'German Fats',

'Banana Skinnys', and '24 Karat Fats'), marker nibs and inks were not supplied in stores: as there was no market, there was no avenue for their sale.

So, it was time to morph household items into guerilla art-tools:

toring and imparting their knowledge of street art to whoever wanted to know, and perform. "There is no point otherwise," and indeed, this selflessness and a genuine intention to bolster the street art in Bolivia laid the foundation for La Paz's current

introduced social commentary such as these. Speaking of foreign influences, there is plenty with regards to the development of street art in Bolivia. In a continent as mosaic as South America, street artists from all over guest-star in the



respirators for protection, the paper towels, sponges, grocery bags, bowls, buckets, lids, cans and circular objects from their mothers' kitchens. In spray paint art, a lot of blocking is predetermined using household stencils like lids and bowls in order to create the desired layer and texture. Spatulas or mostly effectively, one's fingers can affect gradients and ambiance. And never forget the faithful kitchen towelettes! They imbue a wall with the much-needed porous effect.

Watering the seeds of future generations of enthused artists, K.D.S and a few other crews were also simultaneously men-

state of chromatographic patterns amidst its ochre-red brick landscape. With these young 'disciples' under their wing, mentors often imparted their knowledge of sourcing materials as well as techniques of stenciling, spray-painting and incubating their talent by encouraging emulation of each others' styles. They did not need suppliers, the world was their oyster. Borrowing tools from other trades would do. Art is art after all. Oil painters use of palette knives to carve the 'canvas' (walls or any non-porous surface) is just one example.

Wandering through the streets of La Paz, you will see that street art is not limited to commercial (and thus lucrative) enterprises or anarchic vandalism: they are also individual creative statements. With something worthwhile to say and gaining nothing in return except just the barely tangible fame and respect from people forgoing ownership of spaces to foster aesthetics or activism, it forgoes the permanence that art pieces in Avenue 16 de Julio (Museo de Arte Contemporaneo) have the privilege of. Cholitas coexist with pseudo Lindsay Lohans, llamas with Jaguars as locomotives in this city, and the street art here in La Paz emphasizes this. Bowler hats branded by luxury brand Louis Vuitton exist, but only in spray and cement form: a wry remark upon the wide disparity between the rich and the poor in Bolivia. An x-rayed painting of a llama stands comically shell-shocked along Edificio Los Angeles: perhaps a comment upon their own exploitation of the indigenous animal? 'Nasty Huang', who originates from Buenos Aires, Argentina, first

constantly fluxing series that is Bolivia. SENT is a street artist from Chile who visited La Paz's walls; he is also the epitome of the crossing over of subcultures, more so the strong tie between hip-hop music, emceeing and street art; it is free-styling in its broadest sense. Artists from as far as down under have blessed some walls in Bolivia: K had been in cahoots with Sumo, a prominent street artist from New Zealand. The police caught them, and the piece was undone but the point still stands. Some of the biggest influences for local artists include Daddyk from Madrid, Spain and M42 for his mod, 'old-skool' style of art splashes.

Contrary to popular belief, engaging in street art entails a great deal of danger and taboo in South America as well. K has been at gunpoint after getting caught spraying the walls of a government building. The incensed Sucre police had also once subjected him and his friend to a five-hour ordeal. "It is still someone else's property, you know. Walls."

Be it phenomenology, repetition, attention seeking, culture jamming, direct action, guerilla messaging, propaganda, subvertising, decoration or territory claims, street art here is first and foremost a window into the transient flux that is La Paz's city life and culture. Sure it shouts for more urbanization, and sure, much of it is political propaganda, shouting for more votes. But it also nudges you to notice the presence of the other, another being who cares enough about the country to illustrate it.



After a grueling 6-hour bike ride down Bolivia's 'Death-road', one could think that the last thing we wanted to do was zipline across three plunging valleys. However, with our adrenaline running high, and our sense of mortality running low, eight of us 'invincibles' gleefully took the bait. This joie de vivre abruptly ended once we got to the zipline. Vivre became the more pertinent word from that expression



ZIP LINE

TEXT: CHLOE MORRIS
PHOTO: ALIZEE MARCEAU

After a grueling 6-hour bike ride down Bolivia's 'Deathroad', one could think that the last thing we wanted to do was zipline across three plunging valleys. However, with our adrenaline running high, and our sense of mortality running low, eight of us 'invincibles' gleefully took the bait. This joie de vivre abruptly ended once we got to the zipline. Vivre became the more pertinent word from that expression

fall. Nevertheless, I got gloved up, strapped in and crossed my legs like a good trooper. With one last doubtful look at my fellow zippers-off I went!

The first thing you notice, once your initial screaming is done, is the sound of the zipline. As you crossbar rips along the wire your journey is serenaded by a screeching, sneering, and after some analysis, stable, sound. By now you have taken a look around and finally begin to appreciate your beautiful surroundings. And of course, the sensation of soaring. R-Kelly's 'I believe I can fly' will spring to mind. It's all quite wonderful really. That is, until you first encounter the 'flag system'. A man will appear with what looks like a giant green lollipop. You will be hurtling towards him, apparently not slowing down at all, and yet, it stays green. You see the marker that appears to signify the end of your zip, and no, it stays green. By now you can see the man clearly. You note his comparative calm and only fuels your panic. You begin to think: Oh Lord, did he forget something? Unless you have the discipline of steel, I bet you will pull the brake while this lollipop still looms green. This means stopping a few metres before base, receiving a slightly disappointed but understanding grin from the guide, before he pulls you back onto nice solid earth. Don't get too comfortable- there are

still two more wires to go!

Mr Zip's wires all boast different features. The first is the highest. The second is the fastest. The third is the longest. Even if you zip alone, and are not particularly large, your speed on the second one reaches 85 km/h. That sounds fast, and it is fast. I don't think I stopped screaming the whole way. Apart from my slightly dodgy breaking (I was trying to redeem my favour with the guide from zip number 1) I felt incredible. Your body knows you are moving ridiculously fast.

I can't stress enough how much fun this was. Judging from the grins on my friend's faces, they felt the same. Mr Zip will allow you to sit two at a time, teach you how to film the whole journey without dropping your camera, and for the braver ones of you out there you can fly feet first, backwards or woop woop, superman. I even heard that they let five people go at the same time once. Do not fear- the line can take 50 people's weight at a time. If you are still scared about safety, let me just mention that hero number two Gaby, who had injured herself on 'Deathroad', also sailed down the zip line, bandages and all! So come on adrenaline junkies, you've already survived the 'Deathroad', a little more crazy will surely hit the spot! Get to Mr Zip and have a nice zip (soz)!

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CROSSFEST

2011

TEXT: MAEVA GONZALEZ
PHOTO: ROBBIE MACDONALD

I wake up in my hotel room and the time is approximately 3PM. My two friends who agreed to come along with me to the biggest electro music festival in Bolivia, the CrossFest, are still asleep and I can hear people outside having lunch on a windy day in Santa Cruz. Still hanging around my wrist is our blue VIP bracelet, which from last night allowed me to sit on a table with friends and enjoy the good music a few steps up to the main dancefloor. Cameras, TV, lights were on for the first minutes on Saturday 20 August, a trio of local Djs, Gonzalo Melean, Lecter & Marco Cuba, warmed the place up and gathered electronic music lovers near the stage.

It takes me some time to remember what happened last night. My ankle feels sore and my body is hurting. I learn that we danced for seven hours, then

rocked by the music of English Dj Seb Fontaine and the intense voice of singing Second Sun (USA). The blue and purple lights come back to me and I remember going down to the main dancefloor to join the people and share our passion for music. We kept on smiling and laughing while dancing while in the Sonilum, where the Crossfest was taking place, was filling with even more music lovers.

When the turn of Christopher Lawrence, from America, came about, we were already on another planet. It is fascinating how music can transport you so far for so long. The talent of the Djs made this night unforgettable and the organization was as perfect as I've ever seen. The music played all night long, without a false note, until early morning, when we watched the sun rise.

People came from local towns but also from abroad: America, Europe... I met an Australian traveler who had come because the reputation of the Crossfest is now well established even beyond Bolivian borders. This event is easily compared to Berlin electro music stages but what makes it special is that it is a national Bolivian music festival and that it grew faster than expected, allowing famous international Djs to fight to have the chance to play for the event, here in Santa Cruz, in the middle of South America.

This music surpasses borders. The 2011 edition of the Crossfest was a huge success and a snub to people that thought Bolivia has no hope to compete with Europe in terms of electro music. I surely will come back and remember: never judge a book by its cover.

The MONTHLY REVIEW

CHALET

La Suisse

This month Robbie Macdonald takes a look at the high end Zona Sur eatery *Chalet La Suisse*. La Paz's finest gastronomic establishment or an over priced gimmick? Read on...

First impressions instantly transported me from Bolivia and placed me in the warm, rich environment of a mountain cottage. Polished wood and Germanic decoration gives the right blend of alpine comfort. As someone who enjoys a friendly 'pub' feeling with plenty of cluttered brass work, I found this a reassuring pocket of culture that strangely made me feel at home despite the Swiss theme, however if you are someone who enjoys a minimally furnished eatery then the assortment of brass bells and traditional flags could come across

as somewhat clichéd. The experience was an intimate affair, four friends enjoying and sharing food. The service was rapid and attentive, but with a discreet quality that meant you never felt you were being watched. Wine tasting was offered before service and orders were taken swiftly and correctly. My choice of food for the first sitting was onion soup (Bs 34.00) to start. A hearty broth that came with the traditional breaded dome, brushed with cheese inflated over the bowl. The combination was enjoyable; however the delicately

flavoured onion soup may have become firesome on its own. For mains I had the cheese fondue (Bs. 150) (shared with a friend). The rich winey cheese with bread was initially delightful, but towards the end of the dish my stomach swelled with the fact that I had repetitively eaten nothing but fat and carbs. Lastly the dessert was white chocolate mousse with blackberry sauce (Bs 28.00). It was exquisite, so much so that I simply had to finish it. The fact that it was so light and fluffy meant this was not too much of a difficult task.



CINE TEATRO MUNICIPAL "6 DE AGOSTO".
Av. 6 de Agosto almost on the corner of Rosendo Gutiérrez

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th – 19.30hrs
The beauty of our dance

The national art and culture workshop 'Expresiones' presents the seventh version of the show "Oh Danza La Paz". This performance is part of the National Circuit of Bolivian Dance and dancers from across the country will be participating.

Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th – 19.30hrs
Classical Guitar Festival

During the course of the third International Guitar Festival and Competition, there will be performances from the most distinguished players from across the globe.

Wednesday 7 – hrs. 19:00 - 21:00
Audiovisual Awards

To mark the completion of the Film Festival for Adolescents "Ikeya", organised by the "Montessori" school,

will present the awards for the best works presented this year.

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 – hrs. 19:30
Choir Festival

The Asociación Cultural Nueva Acrópolis will present a new version of the National Choir Festival "Concordia 2011", which emerged 19 years ago with the aim of promoting learning choral skills in children and youths.

Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 – hrs. 19:30
Performing Arts Festival

As part of its educational activities, the "Gregorio Reynolds" school will show off the talents of its students on the tables throughout the Performing Arts Festival.

Viernes 23 – hrs. 19:30

Homage to the Day of Love
The quartet, Al Alba pays homage to the most sublime sentiment in existence: love, through the medium of the bolero, romantic genre par excellence. They will interpret the themes of Los Panchos, Los Tres Reyes, Los Tres Diamantes and Los Tres Ases, amongst others.

Cultural Calendar

Cultural Calendar September 2011

TEATRO MUNICIPAL "ALBERTO SAAVEDRA PÉREZ"
Jenaro Sanjinés corner w Indaburo

LA PAZ FESTIJAZZ INTERNACIONAL 2011

Wednesday 7th

50 years of Bossa (Bolivia)
Marcelo Pretto (Brazil) (22:00)
Hotel Torino
50 years of Bossa (Bolivia) (22:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)

Thursday 8th

Jackets Jazz Project (Bolivia) (20:00)
Melanie Dahan – Franck Amsalem (France) (21:00)
Hotel Torino
Marcelo Pretto (Brazil) (22:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)

Friday 9th

Danilo Rojas (Bolivia) (20:00)
Xacobe Martínez Quartet (Spain) (21:00)
Hotel Torino
Melanie Dahan – Franck Amsalem (France) (22:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)

Saturday 10th

Mandarina Effect (Bolivia) (20:00)
Anders t. Andersen (Denmark) (21:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)

Sunday 11th

Sunday Festival of Cultures (Paseo El Prado)
Anders t. Andersen (Denmark) (11:00)
Jon Cuenca Quintet (USA) (11:45)
Mandarina Effect (Bolivia) (12:30)

Monday 12th

Bolivian Jazz (Bolivia) (20:00)
Jon Cuenca Quintet (USA) (21:00)
Hotel Torino
Xacobe Martínez Quartet (Spain) (22:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)

Tuesday 13th

Camus Jazz (Bolivia) (20:00)

Tango en Tres (Argentina) (21:00)
Hotel Torino
Jon Cuenca Quintet (USA) (22:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)

Wednesday 14th

Andesol (Bolivia) (20:00)
Mangue (Chile) (21:00)
Hotel Torino
Tango en Tres (Argentina) (22:00)
Thelonious
International Jam Session (23:00)
Compa – El Alto

Friday 16 - Sunday 18 - hrs. 19:30

A Little comedy

The National Production Company "La Familia" presents Pastor Aguilar Peña's oeuvre "The Healer". The piece is a comedy made up of three acts directed by Lucy Tapia de Zamorano.

Thursday 22 and Friday 23 - hrs. 19:30

International dance

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea is pleased to present a dance show unique in the world thanks to the "Byuksa Dance Company" troupe, which will show the cultural wealth and beauty of that country. Entry is free.

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 - hrs. 19:30

Ballet Ave María

Under the direction of Miguel Mérida Fernández, the Folk Ballet "Ave María" will present various tableaux of national dances as they reach their 17th anniversary performing together.

TEATRO DE CÁMARA, Calle Jenaro Sanjinés, corner w Calle Indaburo (next to the Teatro Municipal)

Tuesday 13th – Thursday 15th – 19.30hrs

Ikiru Teatro group on stage
The Ikiru Teatro group is staging 'El Ponche de los De-seos', an adaption of Michael Ende's novel.

Friday 16th – Sunday 18th - 19.30hrs

Monologue II

Francés Hubert Colas' drama, "Texto M" returns to the stage thanks to Director Diego Aramburo and Argentinian actor Agustín Vásquez.

GLOSSARY

Las Velas near el Parque de los Monos

Formerly the Zoo (now in Mallasa). Currently a social space of sorts which incidentally is famed for its anticuchos

Lemons

Called 'limones' in Bolivia but look more like small limes

Paceña

The leading brand of beer in Bolivia

La Zona Sur

A district in La Paz, supposedly one of the most wealthy

La puta madre que te parió

a frequently used obscenity in Bolivia, referring to the fact that one's mother may be engaged in the world's oldest profession and has animalistic characteristics!

Albiceleste

a nickname for Bolivar, referring to their colours of sky blue and white

Anticuchos

a common street food in La Paz, consisting of beef heart and potatoes with a spicy sauce

Son para chupar

'They're for sucking on'

Caporales

Plural noun for dancers of Caporales

Pollera

Large multi-layered skirts worn by cholitas

Saya

traditional Afro-Bolivian dance which originates from the colonial period, predecessor of caporales

Pachamama

Aymara word for Mother earth more exactly translated as Mother world.

Pacha, Sajama, Mururata

Andean mountains surrounding La Paz city.




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"LOS CAMINOS DE LA VIDA
NO SON COMO
YO PENSABA"
by Pablo Portegua

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