

BolivianExpress

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Magazine

THE END OF THE WORLD ISSUE



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CARNICERA/O	Market butcher	WILLCAPARU	Corn - based snack
CHARLATANES	Charlatan	TUCUMANA	Fried pastry filled with meat and vegetables
VENDEDORES CALLEJEROS	People who sell on the street	EKEKO	Andean god of abundance and prosperity
DIABLADA	Traditional folkloric Bolivian dance	COMPADRES Y COMADRES	Term used to address the parent of a godchild. More generally, a social traditional bond not based on blood. Often involving patronage
CHAPI	Colloquial slang for something lame, tacky, rubbish or of low quality	TRANCA	Motorway toll booth
DESPROTEGIDOS	not protected by digital rights management software; free to be copied	TRENZA	Plait/braid
CASA	House	QUECHUA	Indigenous language and culture of the people of the central Andes
FAVELAS	Poor neighbourhood in Brazil	TALLER	Workshop
ALASITA	Literally 'buy from me' in Aymara. A fair with pre-hispanic origins fair where miniature goods are sold	PICARDIA	mischievousness
FERIA	Fair/Market		
ALTIPLANO	The high plateau in South America's western and central Andes		
CHOLITA	Andean highland woman, typified by her distinctive bowler hat and wide skirt		
JUEGUITO	A little game		
TIEMPO DEL PACHAKUTI	Cyclical - Time/Space upheaval		
MOCOCHINCHI	Popular drink made out of dried peaches		

GLOSSARY

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THE END OF THE WORLD...

AS WE KNOW IT

HOW BOLIVIA IS GOING TO SURVIVE THE APOCALYPSE

PHOTO: JOEL BALSAM



The world is going to end on December 21, 2012, the Maya warned us. According to their beliefs, on that date we will arrive at the end of the 5,125-year-long cycle in the Long Count calendar, meaning that civilisation is going to change radically due to a series of events and catastrophes such as planetary realignment, magnetic polar shift, meteor strikes, solar storms—all of which will most likely induce a total blackout of the world and general chaos.

This may seem far-fetched, yet over the last years few years haven't we all witnessed the slow blighting of the world? The global financial crisis, thunderous earthquakes in Iran and Haiti, city-crushing tsunamis in Ja-

pan and Sri Lanka, drought and food shortages, the Arab Spring, snowstorms and Hurricane Sandy in New York City—this surely must be evidence that the end is near and that civilisation is about to end. The threat is taken so seriously that even NASA has published information that refutes—or attempts to refute—these doomsday scenarios.

But maybe the world is not actually going to end; maybe it is just the end of the world as we know it. According to the ancestral prehispanic belief that the planetary alignment corresponds to a new age, December 21 will mark the beginning of a new era in which humankind can live in harmony with nature and each other, the era of *el Vivir Bien*.

In this spirit, and following the trend of end-of-the-world parties, the Bolivian government is throwing its own national celebration on the shores of sacred Lake Titicaca to celebrate the coming changes and the beginning of a new epoch in history. Lake Titicaca is a consecrated place where, according to the legends, life first appeared from the union of the father Sun and the mother Moon.

Apparently, the end of the Mayan calendar corresponds to the end of a 5,125-year-long so-called galactic summer in the Northern Hemisphere. This explains the historical North-South inequalities, which favored one side over the other by providing better climate and energy. The winter solstice on December 21 will mark a new beginning for the South, opening up the North to some very difficult times while its antipodean counterpart develops and flourishes.

To celebrate this cosmic dawn, Bolivian President Evo Morales has extended an invitation to the nations of the world to come to Bolivia in order to welcome this new era by 'closing the non-time cycle and receiving the new cycle; a time of balance and harmony for Mother Earth'—the **Tiempo del Pachakuti**. Moreover, this year also marks the end of capitalism, egoism and individualistic values: It's the end of the 'Coca-Cola era', announced Bolivian Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca (but not the end of Coca-Cola, as some people have taken this statement to mean), it's 'the start of a new cosmic era of community spirit and love and the beginning of the **mocoichinchi** and **willcaparu** era'.

It's easy to see how Bolivia could get animated by these Mayan and Aymara predictions. After all, what other country than Bolivia could survive, and thrive after, an apocalypse? The general and utter madness that characterizes La Paz could hardly be affected by a small magnetic polar shift or a solar storm.

And saying that La Paz is a mad city is no understatement—it's a testimony to its uniqueness and possibilities. Here we are surrounded by impossible buildings, frantic traffic, the street cacophony, dancing **tucumanas** on posters, incessant firework activity, **pajpakus**, fake officials, whimsical architecture, **cholitas** adorned with golden teeth, constant strikes, The Strongest fans, pimped-up cars, juice and milk in plastic bags, clogged toilets, jungles of electric cables hanging down the streets, sparkly light nights, and gringos from all over the planet ...

So don't be surprised if, come December 21st, you see an **ekoko** riding a sleigh pulled by flying llamas, trailing across the burning La Paz sky like one of the proverbial horsemen of the apocalypse. Might be something worth writing home about. ■

By Caroline Risacher

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

EXPENSIVE SMILES

TEXT: THEO HAYNES - PHOTO: MICHAEL DUNN CACERES



Cholita fashion is certainly eye catching, thanks to their sequined shawls, multi-layered polleras and distinctive bowler hats. However, once you get talking to many **cholitas** you may notice a special something in their uniquely radiant smiles - their teeth are crowned and adorned with all manner of metallic ornaments. Curious to learn more, I set out to investigate, visiting several dental practices across La Paz's Zona Norte and El Alto.

After speaking with several dentists, it became obvious that there is a great variety both in the design and appearance of this dental work, with prices to suit all budgets. Someone with a slender wallet may only spend something like Bs. 300, and have just one or two acrylic/porcelain teeth implanted and then covered in chrome or silver. A cholita looking to splash out may spend upwards of Bs. 3000 to fill their mouths with gold and platinum crowns.

Gold is certainly the classic choice, and despite being the least durable

and most expensive option available, it continues to enjoy great popularity. A dentist told me "Typically women ask for heart-shaped design, whereas men want something more rectangular".

Back home in the UK, metallic mouths are more often associated with rappers such as Goldie and Juvenile. I somewhat doubt that rap artists and cholitas have too much in common, yet when it comes to this gaudy oral fashion, it's not unthinkable they have similar motives. From grillz to heart-shaped tooth-jewelry, this phenomenon is the lovechild of relative wealth, ostentatiousness, and pride. Indeed, I am told it is often monied **carnicerias** and prominent merchants who can afford the most extravagant smiles.

Despite the fact that they are ever so proud, very few are willing to brandish these beauties for the camera. This was certainly apparent after every single cholita in sight rejected our request for a photograph. We came to realise that the only way of seeing these teeth in all their glory was to en-

gage them in conversation, or even better, make them laugh out loud. Like every well-established fashion, there are slow but constantly evolving innovations in the world of golden smiles. A notable change has been the introduction of economical and durable materials such as chrome, which is said to be the most comfortable when eating. Yet despite the seemingly burgeoning *industry* created around this cosmetic procedure, Dr. Israel Quispe tells us this fashion has seen its day, and that many of his customers who had this done a decade or two ago are now requesting the removal of these teeth, reverting to a somewhat more natural look.

These smiles can also be more expensive than first meets the eye. Dr Quispe also told us of a rather harrowing story of people with gold teeth in El Alto who had been victims of violent attacks: thieves had smashed their teeth out with stones just to steal the gold which, I should add, rarely even adds up to gram. There are certainly moments when you pay the full price of having an expensive smile. ■

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TALL TALES OF LA PAZ

HOW TO AVOID GETTING MUGGED IN THE CITY

Text: Caroline Risacher

Boteros, lanceros, monreros, descuidistas, cuenteros, jaladores, pildoritas, secuestro express, cumbreros, carreros, cogoterros, documenteros... Thus began Lieutenant Llusco's enumeration, upon being asked what types of criminals roam the streets of La Paz. Carefully taxonomised and all-too familiar to the Police's 'Crimes Against Property' department, those are the types

of delinquents you might encounter in the city. Some are your usual pickpockets. Others are physically aggressive, or try to drug you. And the more creative bunch, the 'cuenteros', are good with words, knowing how to extort unholy sums of money from us their unsuspecting victims.

Last week, for instance, the police disbanded a group of 'pildoreros' operating in nightclubs. Their modus operandi involved drugging their victims unconscious before empty-

ing their pockets.

One can sit and admire the versatility and creativity of petty thieves in Bolivia. They constantly fathom new tricks to deceive and rob their innocent victims. Even though La Paz is hardly as dangerous as other South American capitals; tourists and locals are well advised to avoid falling prey to these crooks by taking the necessary precautions.

Please behold some scams you might experience here in Bolivia:

THE FALSE POLICEMAN



VICTIM: Your usual tourist

WHO AND WHAT: an accomplice 'gringo', a false police station, a policeman impersonator, and a taxi or a car.

MODUS OPERANDI: This is one of the more elaborate scams.

Step one: The innocent tourist - generally alone - is accosted by another such tourist looking for directions or asking to take a picture.

Step two: the victim is quickly befriended by the new tourist when a police officer appears, asking for their papers as a routine check-up. The other tourist complies easily, but when the victim shows his/her papers (passport, immigration sheet) something appears to be wrong.

Step three: the policeman asks both of them to follow him to the station to sort out the situation. The accomplice acts as if it's perfectly normal and follows without hesitation.

Step four: the clueless victim is taken to some remote location where he or she will be lightened of all valuables: credit cards, passport, camera, etc. In some variations the victim is taken to a cash machine where he or she will be prompted to give up their PIN number.

DO: Ask for proper identification and only talk to a police officer in uniform.

DON'T: Ever follow unidentified strangers into a vehicle (or anywhere for that matter).

'CUENTO DEL TIO' (THE UNCLE'S TALE)



VICTIM: The elderly

WHO AND WHAT: a well-spoken and persuasive perpetrator, an accomplice, false documents, counterfeit money

MODUS OPERANDI: These thefts are

quite elaborate and extremely diversified. The name comes from the tale of the far away uncle who just left a considerable inheritance.

In one version of this scam, the con man asks for money for the trip and promises to return a bigger amount - which, of course, never happens.

In another version, someone drops an envelope in sight of you and the perpetrator. He goes to inspect and finds it is filled with cash. He comes up to you and says that, as you are the only ones who saw it happen, you should split the cash. You agree and he takes you to a place away from the public eye. Here his accomplice is waiting. Together they immobilise you and free you of your possessions.

DO: Follow the maxim: 'If it's too good to be true, it probably is.'

DON'T: Ever give money to strangers.

EXPRESS TAXI KIDNAPPING:



VICTIM: Your typical tourist, specially when inebriated

WHO AND WHAT: an ordinary looking taxi, a driver, one or two accomplices, sharp/hard objects and weapons.

MODUS OPERANDI: The innocent and disoriented tourist coming out of the bus terminal hails a taxi, thinking it will lead him to a nice and comfy hotel. However, he is being taken to a cash machine under the threat of a sharp pointed object.

DO: Call for a radio-taxi if possible, check the car's licence plate number is printed on the insides of the doors, engage the driver in conversation before you get on (to negotiate a fare). If you look at his face for long enough he'll be scared of being identified.

DON'T: Ever get into a taxi that gives you a bad feeling. Vague advice, we know...

BLACK MARKET JUNK



VICTIM: Any potential buyer and, of course, the smiling tourist

WHO AND WHAT: black market vendor, electronic equipment box, plastic

MODUS OPERANDI: You think you are buying a proper piece of equipment, a laptop, a camera, speakers, a telephone. You are shown the 'display item' and given a 'brand new box' complete with cellophane wrapper, but when you return home, possibly boasting about the bargain you just got, realise that the interior of your purchase is simply full of plastic and junk.

DO: Check the merchandise if possible

DON'T: Buy electronic equipment from the black market

THE STAIN



VICTIM: Bag-carrying pedestrian

MODUS OPERANDI: A helpful passerby, warns the clueless victim of the (usually mustard) stain on his jacket/bag/shirt that has been subtly placed there by an accomplice. Embarrassed, the victim is offered help to clean the stain with tissues proffered from the passerby. When they place their bags on the floor to remove their stained item of clothing, the accomplice runs past and steals the bags. The 'helpful stranger' offers to chase after the thief, never to be seen again.

DO: Wait until you're somewhere safe and private before wiping off a clothing stain.

DON'T: Accept help from strangers on the street, or leave your bags on the floor for a single second. ■



20 DE OCTUBRE AV. ACROSS AV ARDOA SQUARE. LOOK FOR THE SHAMROCK
WHETHER OR NOT THE WORLD ENDS, WE'LL STILL BE HERE, SO COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US!





SEÑORAS Y SEÑORES

DERIVED FROM THE QUECHUA WORD FOR OWL, PAJPAKU IS THE TERM USED IN BOLIVIA TO DENOTE THE INNOVATIVE SALESPERSONS WHO OPERATE IN BUSTLING CITY SQUARES, INTER-CITY BUSES AND CROWDED MARKET PLACES. THEY RELY ON NOTHING MORE THAN THEIR OWN BUSINESS ACUMEN, RHETORICAL PROWESS AND INVENTIVENESS. THEY ARE ARTISTS AND MASTERS OF ORATORY, YET SEEN BY SOME AS CHARLATANES... NIAL FLINN TALKS US THROUGH HIS EXPERIENCE OF THE PAJPAKUS.

TEXT: NIAL FLINN
PHOTO: JOEL BALSAM

Le ha robado algo? 'Did he rob you?'. The primary assumption as to why I might want to locate one of these public salesmen is petty street theft. This quick fire answer - the response of a kiosk-working Cholita upon my request to discover the whereabouts of a *pajpaku* - speaks volumes about these characters. It explains, quite plainly, that no-one goes looking for *pajpakus*, but rather, one stumbles upon them and often remains entranced against their own conscious will. It explains their societal image: they are con-artists. It explains that they are viewed as people who are toothless when it comes to making money.

As I stood and watched a man in El Alto's Plaza de Autos selling medicine for colon cancer, I was struck by three particularly impressive traits: his ability to attract and retain a crowd, his humour (despite his complete lack of spontaneity), and his apparent confidence in his product. Underneath a parasol by his portable kiosk, the *pajpaku* stands equipped with a bucket of his remedies in eye-drop sized vials, several A3 prop cards with a host of graphic pictures, a microphone headset, and a bucket full of cash. He starts, just like every *pajpaku*, by politely addressing his audience. 'Señoras y señores, estimados amigos...'

From here on in, it is a battle between his persuasive sales technique and your sometimes subconscious desire to leave; a battle frequently lost by the client. He addresses the crowd throughout his pitch, starting every sentence with '*amigos*' or '*estimada gente*', continuously capturing the attention of the stream of potential clients walking by. He boasts confidence in his product by offering a sample to each and every member of the surrounding circle. He lies, I presume, about his product's popularity and common use in Europe and North America, places he can be almost certain the majority of his audience have never visited; places that breathe confidence into his product's effectiveness. The serious matters that have to be confronted are presented with light-hearted humour. 'Si estas embarazada, por favor no tomes, si lo haces, tu bebé va a salir caminando'. 'If you are pregnant, please do not take it, if you do, your baby will walk out'. He doesn't stop talking for longer than a second.

Pajpakus are also known to frequent the seemingly interminable bus journeys, waiting in the congested streets of El Alto to hop onto a flota

- Bolivia's inter-province coaches - where the hard work of attracting a crowd has already been done for them.

On a 12 hour journey from La Paz to Sucre, a man in jeans, polo shirt, denim jacket and baseball cap jumps on board and stands at the front. Just when you thought you had a chance to get away from the chaos and commotion of the city; a chance to escape the frantic hustle and bustle and spend some quality time alone with your iPod. And then you're reminded that you're in Bolivia. A loud, booming voice greets the passengers in identical fashion to the man in El Alto. 'Señoras y Señores, estimados amigos...' Just about to nod off and my much needed slumber is interrupted. I suddenly wished I'd never got on the bus.

For the next 30 minutes, he hypnotises his audience, starting with a question (unapparent if it is rhetorical or not) to engage his clients: 'Ladies and Gentlemen, what do you lose when you fall in love?'. The previously uninterested passengers are intrigued and start to yell a series of answers until someone finally brings the charade to an end: 'the heart' is the answer. He has achieved Step One in capturing his audience. Now it is time for him to introduce his product, and a *pajpaku* introduction wouldn't be complete without an impossibly verifiable claim to begin with. 'This is real silver, ladies and gentlemen'.

He unfurls a display of silver chains and necklaces, rhapsodising about their necessity in everyone's life. He explains the quality of his product and the incredible deal on offer. 'This necklace, ladies and gentlemen, sells in jewellery shops for 150 Bolivianos. Ladies and Gentlemen, today, I will be selling it for a mere 50 Bolivianos'. He marches down the central aisle of the bus, handing out a necklace for each passenger to inspect closely, not once breaking his speech, casting a spell of trust between himself and everyone on board.

Then he goes in for the kill. He hits you with an unrefusable offer. He announces that he's willing to reduce his own price, and brings it down to 20 Bolivianos for the chain, plus 10 Bolivianos for each attachable 'charm' or pendant, in the shape of hearts, moons and crucifixes. And that's not all. Having made his initial sales, he cheekily unveils a rack of smaller chain bracelets, which he is willing to sell to those who have already purchased a necklace for the bargain, discounted price of 5 Bolivianos. At this point I asked myself, who, upon boarding the bus, actually wanted, needed or

would think about buying a necklace like this.

Despite initially disregarding the *pajpaku* as no different from the average door to door salesman back home, two friends travelling on the flota fell victim to his ploys and made purchases. And what can I say about the alleged silver: last time I checked, real silver didn't rust that quickly.

Pajpakus are much more than just excellent public speakers. They combine a range of skills that make them scary perfect for their job: public speaking, persuasion, salesmanship, deception, hypnosis, psychology - the vast majority of these entrepreneurs never finished school, and yet they have appropriated the techniques taught at top sales schools around the world.

There is one major difference between the *vendedores callejeros* and *pajpakus*. Their success depends on much more than a client approaching a stall. It depends on their loquacity and ability to put any fear, embarrassment or timidity to one side and manipulate their audience. In their arsenal, they have an ability to deceive with confidence: to talk for hours with enthusiasm, as their crowd stands fixated and hypnotised by the ludicrously inviting techniques used to draw and retain their attention.

Similar to the 'Bid TV' sellers in the Western world, a lot of their language, although cringe-worthy to some, is incredibly effective. At times, their mouth seems to work faster than their brain. Many of them attended oratory classes, obtaining instruction over diction and pronunciation. According to an article in *La Lucíemaga*, José Cahuana, who sells biographies of former Bolivian President Rodríguez Veltzé, not only took oratory classes but practiced for months in front of a mirror before selling his products in public each Sunday. 'Seducing people is an art', he believes. Watching a *pajpaku*, captivated by their charisma and enthusiasm, it seems unlikely that just anyone could master such an art.

Being a *pajpaku* is a rare gift. Apart from being a trade, it is also a personal survival strategy. They have discovered a way to live based on persuasion and opportunism. They are master entrepreneurs, testament to the country's inventiveness and need to adapt to unpredictable marketplaces with both innovative products and differentiated sales pitches. Whether up in La Feria de El Alto on Sundays, amongst the stolen electronics and second hand clothes, or on an inter-city flota, they will stand and reel off their rehearsed speech once again. 'Señoras y señores, estimados amigos...'

HO HO HO AND A PIRATE DVD

Harriet Marsden takes us on a tour of some of the places and players in the pirate industry in Bolivia:



From a pavement in downtown La Paz alongside Eusebio, a street vendor of pirate DVDs.



Through the office of Luis Dorn, a well-respected lawyer with a particular interest in intellectual property,



To the doorway of an established pirate DVD shop with Roger, its owner



To Petrus, the lead singer of one of the most popular bands in the city.

Let's say you're in Bolivia for the first time, and you hear a band you like, or fancy renting a DVD for the night. You soon notice the near-complete absence of original material in the country - no large record shops to speak of

and just one or two video clubs with an impoverished catalogue. And well, the reliably unreliable internet connection - incidentally, one of the slowest in the continent - means that downloading is out of the question. Do not despair though, as the gods of entertainment may be smiling down on you.

Wandering through the streets of La Paz in the cold evening air, you suddenly notice a man on the street with an impressive array of DVDs laid out on the pavement, in proper cases with legitimate-looking covers. He shows

you recent Hollywood blockbusters for just a few *Bolivianos*. You can't believe your luck - you're sorted. Before you know it, you've become a cog in the underworld of Bolivian piracy.

In 2006, the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) reported that 90% of films and music in Bolivia came from pirated sources, with 80% for software - the figures are among the highest in Latin America. It would be grossly inaccurate to say that piracy in Bolivia is a contained, or even containable issue. It is a massive, sprawling, amorphous industry.

This so-called *industry* is an extensive spiderweb of smugglers, lawyers, pirates, musicians, distributors, and many, many consumers - a network to which a vast majority of Bolivians are in some way connected. I wonder, does

this spiderweb give people access to universal culture, or does it damage the country's creative industries? From the legal to the illegal, and creator to distributor - this web sprawls across every echelon of society. One thing that is clear from the start is that it is impossible to stand inflexibly on one side of the argument.

Luis Dorn, a highly educated and specialised lawyer, looks at me across his mahogany desk and stresses that the case is far from simple. He calls piracy 'an informal, living economy', towards which the government 'turns a blind eye'. 'They're not really interested in fighting against piracy', he tells me disdainfully.

In theory, video and music piracy of this sort is totally outlawed and a punishable offence. However, Luis explains that the 1322 Law of 1992, designed to protect intellectual property, sets out

punishments too lenient to act as a deterrent to pirates. He also mentions the creation of a national intellectual property entity, following the IIPA'S calls for revision of copyright laws - the snappily named SENAPI.

However, this organisation is underfunded, and is lacking in both trained personnel and the means with which to enforce intellectual property rights. Although the Worldwide Organisation of Intellectual Property (OMPI) exists to protect the rights of the author, in reality it allows for countries to self-regulate. In short, any Bolivian attempts to bring piracy under control are hamstrung by failings in their own legal system and its corresponding enforcement.

We must also consider the corruption that is rife in the police force. Standing on the street by Plaza Avaroa, I ask

Eusebio, our local DVD street vendor, what he would do if a police car drove past. Would he quickly pack up and hide his wares? 'A policeman is one of my best customers!' he grins.

Even if the correct laws and means of enforcement were in place, carrying out the punishment is harder than it sounds. There actually exists legislation that states that all preparatory proceedings, such as *inspections*, must be carried out with prior notification of the defendant. Of course, in this way the police lose the element of surprise. Even more strangely, the target is entitled to object to the search - and a judge must rule on this objection, wasting more time and money.

Lawsuits can take up to five years of court proceedings just to determine if there even was a copyright infringement. And even if the court finds that the software was indeed pirated, there

has to be a damages trial - yet more money, time and bureaucracy. Luis explains wryly (and unsurprisingly) that 'musicians do not like entering into legal proceedings'.

In other cases, street vendors have attacked the police as anti-piracy actions were taking place. To date, there has never been a final civil judgment for copyright infringement in Bolivia.

Luis goes on to name a legal intellectual property issue which he finds particularly comical - and disappointing. When the *diablada*, a typical Bolivian dance, began to appear in Peru, Bolivia made a formal, legal complaint against the country for infringement of copyright. They did this in the name of folklore protection. So, Peru, in retribution, decided to initiate proceedings in Bolivia, relying on the failings of the

legal system and the light potential punishments.

Luis calls for stronger punishments for pirates. But this seems logistically unfeasible.

Mauricio Ruiz, another lawyer from La Paz, estimates in a press statement in 2012 that without piracy there would be 10,000 people out of a job. Luis Dorn's estimates are even higher - he believes 30,000 people's livelihoods are dependent on piracy. 'It is ridiculous that they would try to fine me,' declares Eusebio from his roadside vigil. 'I could never pay that fine - it wouldn't work. If they put me in prison, I don't know what my wife and children would do'.

So, in theory, the government is tackling this problem, yet in reality the *industry* is thriving. Supply and demand - if the only possible way for the average

Bolivian to purchase music or videos is through illegal means, then that is what will occur, laws notwithstanding. Piracy is morally and, to a certain extent, legally tolerated, as it makes available resources from around the world that otherwise would be closed off.

Consider the case of Roger, the owner of a legal-ish shop selling DVDs. It looks like any normal DVD rental shop, except you actually buy the films, and they are all copied from originals. He is quick to point out that what he does has a 'social function' and therefore, he claims, is not strictly illegal (see the Bolivian Constitution for an understanding on how the illegal can become legal if it's in the interests of society). He also explains that his films are used by NGOs, cinema clubs, and even seven Bolivian universities.

As a customer of Eusebio tells me,

smiling, 'If it weren't for these men, my dates would be *chapi!*' And when I ask her how often she buys a pirate DVD, she answers plainly: 'whenever I have a date'.

'Look at this street', Eusebio points out. 'It is full of people like me, and it's only one street. If they arrest me, they arrest everybody. And all those families would have no money'.

An important factor to consider is the poverty of the average Bolivian, an estimated half of whom are living on less than \$2 USD per day. In one of the poorest countries in South America, buying a full price DVD or CD at 20 dollars would seem ludicrous to most - even if they were available. As Roger points out, 'my customers would not buy original price DVDs. They can't afford to'.

What we have is an access issue. There simply are not sufficient distribution outlets to get your hands on music or films in their original, legal forms - or, the originals are far too expensive. If piracy did not exist, only a small elite of the country would have access to this media. The estimated trade losses due to musical piracy was around 15\$ million at the turn of the millenium, primarily due to lack of action from the Bolivian government, high levels of police corruption, and lack of commitment of SENAPI and Bolivian judiciary - but who is losing?

Not Eusebio, who earns just a few *Bolivianos* for every DVD sale. Luis explains that the real money in piracy goes to the ones recording or copying, not those who are on the front line selling.

Bolivia has not traditionally been a

source of pirated music and film. Until recently, most of the pirated goods sold in Bolivia were imported from Peru and Colombia. Interestingly, Petrus, who records his music in Bolivia, must send it to Peru to be copied onto CDs. These come back to Bolivia and are sold, legally. Some of these are taken back to Peru to be copied, illegally, and these come back across the border to Bolivia as pirate copies, expanding his reach. Although he scorns the Peruvian pirates, he admits that this situation amuses him greatly.

Petrus, incidentally, is not losing out either. He explains that for a Bolivian musician, a pirate copy of their music is a huge compliment. 'It's the only way to get our music out there', he says, 'and most of the money a musician earns comes from gig ticket sales'. The more people that hear their music, the more people come to their concerts. 'It's part of our lives and cultural *mindset*'.

Roger, too, is sceptical about losses, because he maintains that without the pirate *industry* 'nobody would buy these films; nobody would see them'.

So, who is really losing out?

The underlying concern in international discussions of this problem? The US market. While the US (in theory) acknowledges that Bolivia's government does not prioritize American concerns for intellectual property law enforcement, they continue to press their own stance upon the nation, disregarding the unique situation of piracy in Bolivia. The approach taken by the US Embassy in La Paz is changing the *mindset* of the Bolivian public. They're trying to persuade Bolivians to pay much higher prices and acknowledge that piracy is 'stealing' and 'wrong'. However, while there is considerable sympathy

among Bolivians for domestic production and local artists, there is very little for wealthy transnational companies. Basically, few people care if the Americans are losing money. People do not see how this affects Bolivians.

While the lawyer Max Orellana declares that 'piracy impedes innovation', Roger disagrees entirely. In addition to selling pirated DVDs, his business allows him to spread original Bolivian material, which would otherwise be lost. Indeed, he declares his business a 'cultural project', stressing the importance of access to films, literature and music for cultural growth. He also encourages his customers to copy their DVDs amongst themselves, and pass them on. He ironically names his DVDs '*desprotegidos*'.

Even Luis - although he declares him-

self morally against piracy - recognises the important role it plays in conserving traditional Bolivian music and independent films. However, he also warns of a state of 'intellectual drain', and explains that, with the legal failings concerned with intellectual property, local intellectuals prefer to publish their work abroad. He estimates that 80% of musicians have their music registered in Europe, particularly Germany and France, while photographers are publishing photos of Bolivia in Italy. So, Bolivian cultural output begins to belong to other countries. This, he emphasises, is a 'sad paradox'.

So, it is clear that there is a strange dichotomy when it comes to piracy in Bolivia. People need it, people love it, and although the government consistently makes shows of tackling it, in reality they are forced to let it lie. Some believe it destroys industries and damages the idea of intellectual property,

and yet our musician declares otherwise. Our lawyer calls for stronger punishments - and yet acknowledges the intrinsic difficulties in the prospect. Our street seller claims that without this livelihood, he, alongside countless other families, would starve. Our shop owner names his pirated DVD business a 'cultural undertaking'.

It is also clear that evicting video and DVD piracy in Bolivia remains a far-flung possibility. While the poverty levels and access issues remain the way they are, this *industry* cannot be eradicated - notwithstanding the 30,000 people who depend upon it. Eusebio sums it up: 'I don't know about the laws or the punishments. I can't tell you where my movies come from. But I get them and I sell them and this is my life. And there will always be people like me'.



PHOTO: JOEL BALSAM

**'FOR, BEHOLD, I CREATE NEW HEAVENS
AND A NEW EARTH: AND THE FORMER
SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED, NOR
COME INTO MIND.'**

ISAIAH 65:17

ENCHULAME LA MAQUINA

PIMP MY RIDE, BOLIVIA

Neon lights more evocative of the Christmas season than high-performance motoring; oversized exhausts with noises so strange they suggest engine malfunction rather than power; unsightly spoilers so hyperbolic it's only possible to think they make cars less aerodynamic, not more. These are some of the sights I encountered when I first arrived in La Paz, usually on inner-city taxis driven by heavily hair-gelled young drivers. I wanted to find where these cars were, erm, pimped out. My investigations led me to **talleres** scattered across various parts of town: from Cota Cota to San Pedro.

One day, while walking up the calle Landaeta I spotted a yellow Subaru which actually looked good. The car's owner, Romer Fernandez Martinez, was a man on a mission with a serious passion for driving. He was happy to explain to me how he went about tuning his car, its sound system and, of course, the costs associated with turning an average car into one that wins competitions. Just like the movie series *The Fast and the Furious*, Martinez and around 20 of his friends compete against other drivers from around Bolivia on empty roads. They call themselves STR, Street Team Racing. In contrast to the **chapi** looking taxis found all over La Paz, these guys certainly sounded (and looked) like the real deal. So, I arranged to meet them and learn more about the Bolivian high-performance car scene.

TEXT: THEO HAYNES

PHOTOS: MICHAEL DUNN, JOEL BALSAM, GUSTAVO VERDUGUEZ, AND NIALL FLYNN





FACT FILE

THE RACE

Late at night on select empty streets of El Alto or La Paz, cars line up for a quarter mile race, revving their engines and giving it their all in order for a chance to win the big prize. The winner gets money for tuning or a brand new sound system. Four times a year, major events take place around Bolivia that can bring in massive crowds.



ing, Japan Tuning, 1/4 Mile Club, Stallions, and Hot Wheels. The competition grew and grew across Bolivia, on street corners and in special tracks where four major country-wide events take place annually. These drag races can draw massive crowds.

THE GAME

There are three kinds of racers: those in it for the audio, those in it for the tuning, and those in it purely for the race. Street Team Racing's red Mitsubishi Evo is a pure racing car with the ability to go 0-100 km/h in less than six seconds. Meanwhile, Martinez's yellow Subaru, albeit extremely fast, is more dedicated to audio and tuning with an earth-thumping and trunk-filling subwoofer. Some teams like Japan Tuning are, as their name suggests, more in it for the tuning than the racing. Racecar or not, part of the game is looking good. Decals, stickers and neon lights all add to the effect and make these cars stand out even among the shoddily tuned up taxis.

THE LIFE

Street racing is a hobby and not a full time job. Speeding up and down Bolivia's mountains may be enjoyable, but it costs quite a lot to maintain. However, despite occasionally being pestered by the pacos, the team don't seem too worried about police trouble. In fact, the driver of the white Honda is a police officer (though he doesn't work in the city).

THE PRICE

Car prices are not much better in Bolivia than they are abroad as they have to be imported, which involves high shipping and customs costs. Riders spend several thousand dollars souping up their cars for the race or simply to show off on the narrow La Paz streets. Bolivian drivers do save on gas, which costs over five times more in the UK. ■

THE TEAM

Just four years after The Fast and the Furious told the world - just like in '30's advertisements - that cool cars can get you fame and girls, in 2005 La Paz's oldest and most famous street racing team was born. R-Evolution started it all in only two years later that more teams joined the fold, among them were Street Team Rac-



CONSTELLATION SACABA

THE CH'ASKITAS, NAMED AFTER THE QUECHUA WORD FOR STAR, ARE SACABA'S LATEST GIRL-BAND EXPORT. AMARU VILLANUEVA RANCE WENT TO MEET THESE FOLK STARLETS TO LEARN THEIR STORY, AND LEFT WITH THREE GODDAUGHTERS; THREE MORE THAN HE HAD BARGAINED FOR.

TEXT AND PHOTOS: AMARU VILLANUEVA RANCE

I first met the Ch'askitas and their entourage on a Sunday afternoon in the Plaza Murillo. Vigorously waving their sequined green **polleras** to the rhythm of a **zapateo**, the three girls sung, smiled and danced to a huayño rasping out of a tinny handheld speaker. The Palacio de Gobierno served as a curious backdrop, and the innumerable pigeons which overcrowd the plaza seemed characteristically unfazed - if anyone was paying attention, it certainly wasn't them. A crowd, which I soon discovered I was a part of, gathered around them with a certain uncertainty. This was no ordinary street performance. Camouflaged among the crowd, wearing a khaki utility vest, was a man holding a large video camera. Meet Jhonny, manager and **padrino** to the Ch'askitas.

I don't remember how or why but my friend Esmeralda and I soon started talking to a lady with a big warm smile and gold crowns around her teeth (see p.6). 'We're filming the girls' first music video. That is my daughter Araceli', she said, pointing to the smallest one of the three. Meet Benita, an unmistakably Cochabambina chola.

The girls finished dancing and came over, ice-creams and juices in hand. Seemingly accustomed to media attention, they courteously introduced themselves to Esme and me. 'Me sacas una foto?' - 'will you take my picture?' Meet Araceli. It goes without saying she is not camera-shy. The rest of the afternoon is somewhat

of a blur. A pigeon stood on Jhonny's head. We laughed. They asked us to recommend a place with a good view, and an hour later we found ourselves taking them to the mirador Killi Killi, which offers some of the most panoptic views the city has to offer. Bricks, clouds, erosion and chaos - the improbably majestic Illimani dominating the backdrop. Nothing out of the ordinary. All I know for certain is that by the end of the afternoon Esme and I had agreed to be godparents to the Ch'askitas.

Two weeks later I found myself some 400 kilometres south of La Paz, in their hometown of Sacaba, the second largest city in the department of Cochabamba and home to over 100,000 people. No sooner had I arrived, I was being served unfinishable amounts of food by Benita, and drinking beer with Jhonny, Dally and her husband Juan. Meet my new **compadres and comadres**.

That was in August 2011. I returned to visit the girls a few weeks ago, and got a chance to catch up with them and learn a bit more about how they came into existence and where they're heading.

Dally and her husband welcomed me into their home and sent their youngest daughter Danielita to the shop to buy a bottle of Coca-Cola, the Bolivian equivalent of putting the kettle on and offering their guests a cup of tea. To my surprise, out of the three girls I only found Lilita there. 'The other girls are coming

over soon, I just phoned Benita', Dally told me. She then picked up the phone, dialed a number and said 'Doña Cristina, can you please send Daniela over in her orange pollera?' She hung up. 'She's coming right over'. Suddenly my phone rang. It was Doña Benita with some strange news: 'Araceli doesn't



JHONNY

want to come and see you'. 'What's wrong?' I asked. 'I'll put her on the phone'. A quivering voice greeted me on the other end. 'Padrino?' I'm em-

barrased'. I could hear her sniffing. It turns out that, taking advantage of the end of the school year, Benita had gotten Araceli's hair shaved off. Last time I saw her she proudly posed her striking **trenza**. 'Her hair was too thin and didn't grow much' Benita would later explain, 'shaving it all off makes it grow back stronger and thicker'. Two things suddenly made a lot more sense. Firstly, the logic behind a seemingly unspeakable act of cruelty. Secondly, Araceli's reluctance to come and meet me. Jhonny helped me to talk her over 'don't be embarrassed Chelita, we won't think any less of you'. We went to pick her up at her house in Jhonny's car. As a curious aside, while ch'aska means star in Quechua, it is also used in the Andean region to denote someone's hair, especially if it's ruffled. Ch'askosa is the kind of thing you'd say to a girl who had morning hair, with that non-deliberate just-woken-up look. Hardly what I encountered when Araceli came to greet us. She was wearing a cozy hand-

Las Estrellitas, the Spanish word for 'starlets', but soon learned the name had already been taken. So they called them Las Ch'askitas, instead, which is the **Quechua** expression.

She soon invited Araceli, Doña Benita's daughter to the band. 'But we couldn't have a band with just two girls, we had to find one more', Dally tells me. Conveniently, she and her husband own the local television channel, Canal 31, so they decided to call for a televised audition for the third Ch'askita. 'Over 30 girls turned up but many of them left crying after they didn't make it through the successive audition rounds'. In the end, Daniela was the one who shone through after three attempts.

Weeks after forming they made their first public appearance at the festival of La Virgen de Amparo (Our Lady of Refuge), one of the largest cultural events

by the river. I was leaving the house and crossing the street, when a car hit me on the shoulder. To get away the driver then ran over my leg'. Daniela was hospitalized for over a month. 'I cried a lot but the doctor told me "be thankful you still have a leg - you almost lost it". After a while I was still sad, not because of my accident, but because I thought I would no longer be part of the Ch'askitas. That was the hardest part of it all'. The hit-and-run (and possibly drunken) driver was thankfully caught at the **tranca** further up the road. However, Daniela's mum Cristina tells me that the man responsible barely paid \$1000 'but the bills came to over \$6000. I am now in debt, but what can I do. When your daughter is hurt, you do whatever it takes to find the money'.

While Daniela was in hospital the other Ch'askitas went to visit her. Even after she came out, she was still in the recovery process and could barely walk, let alone dance. The group had to carry on so they found two replacements. Dally tells me 'I would speak to Daniela on the phone. She would ask "will I still be able to be part of Las Chaskitas?" and I would tell her that she would always be a part of the group, but the most important thing was for her leg to heal and for her to get better". Dally quickly points out that 'none of the other girls we tried fitted in as well as Daniela. The three girls just get along. They're there for each other when they're going through a hard time'. She was out of action for a whole year, and in the past two months she recovered enough and was able to come back. Cristina states firmly that 'because of her accident I wanted her to move forward no matter what. I wanted to give her that support because it's what my mother was never able to give me'.

ARACELI



in Cochabamba. They performed alongside the 'Cholitos', their male-character dancing counterparts. Interestingly, one of them was performed by Danielita, Liliana's younger sister. Without a hint of embarrassment she tells me 'when I wear a chullo I look like a little boy!' The girls' self-assuredness shines across, not through arrogance and boastfulness, but through a distinct lack of self-consciousness.

Like shooting starlets, their trajectory launched them to places far and wide, leaving behind them a trail of admirers and stolen hearts. One day, disaster struck.

Daniela remembers it as follows: 'it was a Monday. I got home and left the house to go and look for my sister who was washing clothes down



DANIELA

Despite the difficulties the band have continued to work hard and move from strength to strength. Highlights over the past year include appearing in front of a crowd of 2,500 people, as well as performing

to write in saying what they wanted for Christmas. One boy wrote in 'all I really want are the Ch'askitas'. Liliana has also broadened her artistic horizons by taking part in an action film about gangs and the drug trade in Sacaba's neighbouring regions.

later learn that Dally is the stage name of the girls' mother, a compound formed by the first syllables of each of their names (Daniela and Liliana). Her real name is Margarita, and she is an occasional actress as well as a TV producer. Jhonny later adds: 'We

CHOLITO BANDIDO

*Cholito bandido
eres culpable
Para que llorando
te cante*

*Te añoro en la noche
Te canto en el día
No me hagas reproches
Volveré algún día*

*Cholito bonito
Ch'askañawicito*

What lies ahead for the girls? They continue expanding their musical repertoire, though their parents and Jhonny (their manager/godfather), are adamant about keeping the content of their songs relevant to their age group. 'We don't want them to sing the Chuculún or El Negro Está Rabioso. The Sirentas [another folk girl band from Tarata] sing songs such as these. It's not appropriate'. They've planned a music video for next year for the song Colesterol. Dally explains: 'we want to relate the content of the video with what the songs lyrics are about. In this song a woman and a man sing to each other. He says he doesn't want to get fat, yet she keeps offering him fattening foods'. I asked the girls to sing me some of the lyrics: 'do you want me to prepare you a chicharrón, or a slice of ham, or do you prefer fried chicken my love?' 'None of that for now my dear'.

Dally is aware of the tensions inherent in managing a girlband and raising a child. 'We keep moving forward but we don't demand too much from them because they're still young and they are in school. But if they are still interested in this later down the line we're going to support them to continue making music'. The girls have no shortage of artistic role models. Jhonny himself has played in several folk bands, and I



LILIANA

always tell them that what's most important is humility. To greet politely, express themselves naturally in front of people, treat everyone with respect. The girls understand this'. After a short pause he adds: 'I thank God because I've always wanted to have a daughter. He gave me three'.



knitted pink hat over her head, which her friends helped her use to conceal a pair of artificial **trenzas**. The Ch'askitas were primed for the cameras, and the three girls led me into one of the sets in Canal 31. 'Can you take some pictures of us here?' Liliana half-asked and half-ordered.

Jhonny tells me there used to be a group called Las Chismositas (the little gossip queens), originally conformed by two sisters. Liliana was invited to take part, but things quickly turned sour. 'They made her feel bad. She sang better than the other two girls but they still turned the volume of her microphone down during performances'. Enough was enough. Doña Dally soon took her daughter Liliana out of the group and decided to start a new group from scratch. They considered calling them

GRAND DESIGNS

APOCALYPTIC ARCHITECTURE

TEXT: JOEL BALSAM
PHOTO: AMARU VILLANUEVA



AT THE END OF DAYS

'It's been a historical dilemma for Andean cities', said Bolivian architect Mijael Bumuller. 'An increase in demographics causes thousands to move to, and build on, the side of mountains'. You see it in Rio de Janeiro in the world famous **favelas**, you see it in Peru, in Chile and of course in the picturesque sky-high city of La Paz, Bolivia.

Makeshift, unfinished, windowless and with enough stories to fit generations to come, homes litter the interior of La Paz's crater valley and along the sides of the cloud-scraping mountainside. Many of them built illegally. Technically, every new home or add-on requires an architect or geologist for consultation, but in reality, they

are rarely hired. Building unsafely can earn the builder little more than a slap on the wrist from government regulators. Instead, Mother Nature provides her backlash. Annual landslides have swept hundreds of homes off the mountain-side, leaving only rubble in their wake. After the end of the world, expect La Paz to be reborn.

POST-APOCALYPTIC DREAM HOMES

Bright, tall, new, and uniquely Bolivian, the new style of homes in El Alto and La Paz is eccentric - to say the least.

Some 20 years ago, nouveaux riches started erecting colourful monstrosities right beside the precarious homes of their neighbours. These aren't your average modern day stock market young, urban professionals (YUPPIEs) or insurance moguls. Instead, these members of Bolivia's popular class who mostly earned their money as merchants or traders.

As a chest-beating sign of status, these owners build their homes as large and as bright as possible. They

also try to make the homes completely different from anything you have seen in Bolivia - or in the global West for that matter.

Upper levels are added simply for parties, family gatherings or as a legacy for future generations. Bottom floors are often used for businesses, restaurants or shops.

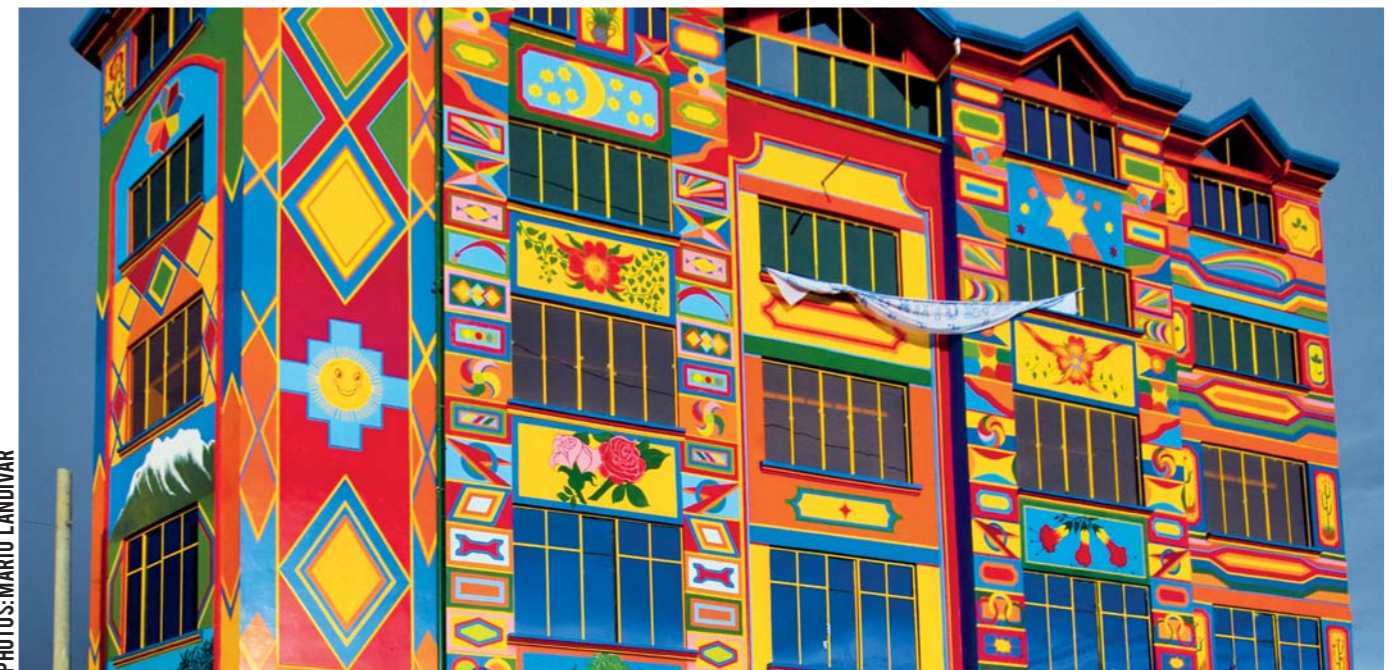
One theory is that the houses are based off of the miniature styrofoam homes found at **Alasita** Market. The toys are traditionally used to represent what someone wants or dreams of. In this theory, some people realized their dreams and made their own Bolivian Barbie DreamHouse.

And they don't come cheap. Some houses can be worth over a million USD, and many owners are forced into debt after making this enormous status statement. While many of these new homeowners use architects, some people cut costs by doing the architecture work themselves.

As we enter the End of the World, these homes represent a new gold sequin jacket for Bolivia's mountain-capital region. Instead of building windowless, unsafe buildings there is now an attention to aesthetics (**chapi** or not) and a desire to be unique from both colonial past and Western influences. ■



PHOTO: DIEGO MAXI POSADAS



PHOTOS: MARIO LANDIVAR

'GUESS WHO' FACES OF EL ALTO MARKET

THE GAME

DESDE UN ALFILER HASTA UN TRACTOR AGRÍCOLA
FROM A SAFETY PIN TO A FARM TRACTOR-

Text and photos: Niall Flynn, Joel Balsam

If the end of the world arrives on December 21, as the Mayans predicted, two things will survive: cockroaches and the *Feria de El Alto*. Every Sunday and Thursday, thousands flock to one of South America's largest flea markets and encounter everything: from pigs and '80s retro American football jackets to snakes and minibuses, all for a fraction of the price that they'd be in the US or UK.

Walking down the streets of La Paz, the pasty white face of a gringo can turn more than a few heads. So, when we

walked through Bolivia's largest and most chaotic market, a place where many Pacenos themselves say they would never go, we felt like circus freaks.

The *feria* predates the formal founding of the city of El Alto, which was merely a suburb of La Paz until its incorporation in 1987. But in 1960, the feria was nothing more than a simple apple market, home to a handful of stalls in a quiet town on the *altiplano*. It has since expanded to an estimated 10,000 vendors across dozens of city blocks, covering a vast twenty-five square kilometres.

Thieves run rampant through the busy market, so hold on tight to your belongings, unless you want to involuntarily donate an iPod to the feria fund like we did. In fact, it is probably safer if you stay home and play 'Guess Who' Faces de El Alto—The Game. To play, simply read about five vendors we met on our recent outing and try to match them with their products. Stumped? Follow the trusty hints at the bottom of each vendor bio.

Happy El Alto Games! May the odds be ever in your favour!

Q-U
Q-U
F-V
J-S
V-S
D-T

SEEMSNV

PHOTO:HARRIETMARSDEN



A



B



C

PICK YOUR MATCH



D



E



F

Cecilia has worked at the *feria* for thirty years, even before the city of El Alto existed. Back then the feria, she claims, was no more than ten stalls. Now look at it. Cecilia quickly fast-tracked to becoming our Bolivian mother. Instead of us asking her the questions, she was the interrogator: 'Where are you from?' 'Did you arrive here by boat?' 'Where have you been in Bolivia?' And on. Her questions came with a genuine sense of curiosity, accompanied by a nervous giggle. As if worried about our view of Bolivia from what we saw at the feria, she proclaimed, 'Bolivia is not like Africa, you know.' That was her way of defending the country she loves.

HINT: HER PRODUCTS WERE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR IN THE MARKET. AND AFTER DOING SOME RESEARCH, HER STUFF LOOKED LIKE IT PASSED THE QUALITY—AND AFFORDABILITY—TEST.

In a muddy patch on the side of the feria, a stern and serious old cholita, reluctant to give her name, does not mince words for small talk or descriptions. 'How is the product?' we ask. 'Normal', she replies. 'Is it hard to work in the Feria?' 'Normal', she responds again while quickly ushering us away. Her hard-working suppliers are only employed for two or three years before she gets rid of them, but they don't really seem to mind.

HINT: AT 5 BOLIVIANOS A POP, HER PRODUCT BOASTS POSITIVE EFFECTS FOR MANY ASPECTS OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, INCLUDING CURING PNEUMONIA. YOU NEVER KNOW UNTIL YOU TRY IT. WE DID.

'I want to be a doctor', says the confident 11-year-old who is manning a stall alone. That ambition makes his parents proud. Every Sunday (and Thursdays, if he doesn't have to go to school), Eduardo works at the feria while his parents sell the same products on the other side of the market. So you think 11 is too young to work in the feria? Well, Eduardo has worked there since he was 5.

HINT: YOU'LL FIND HIS PRODUCTS, BUT YOU WON'T FIND A SHOP LIKE EDUARDO'S ANYWHERE IN THE GLOBAL NORTH. AND, IN SUCH AN IMPOVERISHED CITY, MOST MIGHT FIND THAT EDUARDO'S PRODUCTS ARE RATHER USELESS. STILL, EDUARDO CLAIMS HE MAKES AROUND 300 BOLIVIANOS A WEEK, WITH HIS MOST POPULAR PRODUCT GOING FOR 25 BOLIVIANOS.

A 70 year old man sits on a chair in front of a heap of . . . unusual antiques. You would be a miracle worker if you could get any of these products to work. Still, Guzman urged us to move on quickly to allow for more potential buyers—as if anybody was buying anything at Guzman's stall. Guzman is rather new to the feria, having only worked there for five years. He used to be a construction worker, but too many years on the job ruined his back and forced him to change his occupation. The result? He now sits by the old abandoned railway line in El Alto with his dusty collection of..

HINT: JUNK.

We stumble upon three young girls. One is small, quiet and afraid. The second is shy, but does the talking. The last is cheeky and mischievous. 'What is it for?' we ask while pointing at the product. Making a whistling sound and an explosion with their mouths, they said 'Jueguitos!' Clearly, we weren't going to buy the product for cooking like many of the *cholita* homemakers were. The girls immediately picked up on this and made the new sales pitch, just for us gringos. There is something scarily entrepreneurial about three young girls having a better marketing strategy than most adults. Embellishing on the quality of their product, the cheeky girl claimed that they personally travelled to Brazil to pick up the goods, even when the box clearly stated the product was not legal to sell in that country.

HINT: THE PRODUCT IS USED FOR COOKING.

Even beneath her heavy hat, Tiffania's face and piercing brown eyes are hypnotising. At just 16 years old, there is something about her innocence that makes us uneasy. Tiffania was one of very few vendors happy to talk to us. Six months working in the feria hasn't depleted her enthusiasm, something can't be said for many of the older vendors. Every single day, she and her mother trek to a different market—a job Tiffania sees herself doing for the rest of her life. Their products arrive in South America from Germany and China. Due to Bolivia's landlocked status, their products are obtained from the Chilean port of Iquique—in addition to a monthly trip to the Peruvian-Bolivian border.

HINT: TIFFANIA'S PRODUCTS ARE PROBABLY THE MOST PRACTICAL AND RELIABLE OF ALL.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

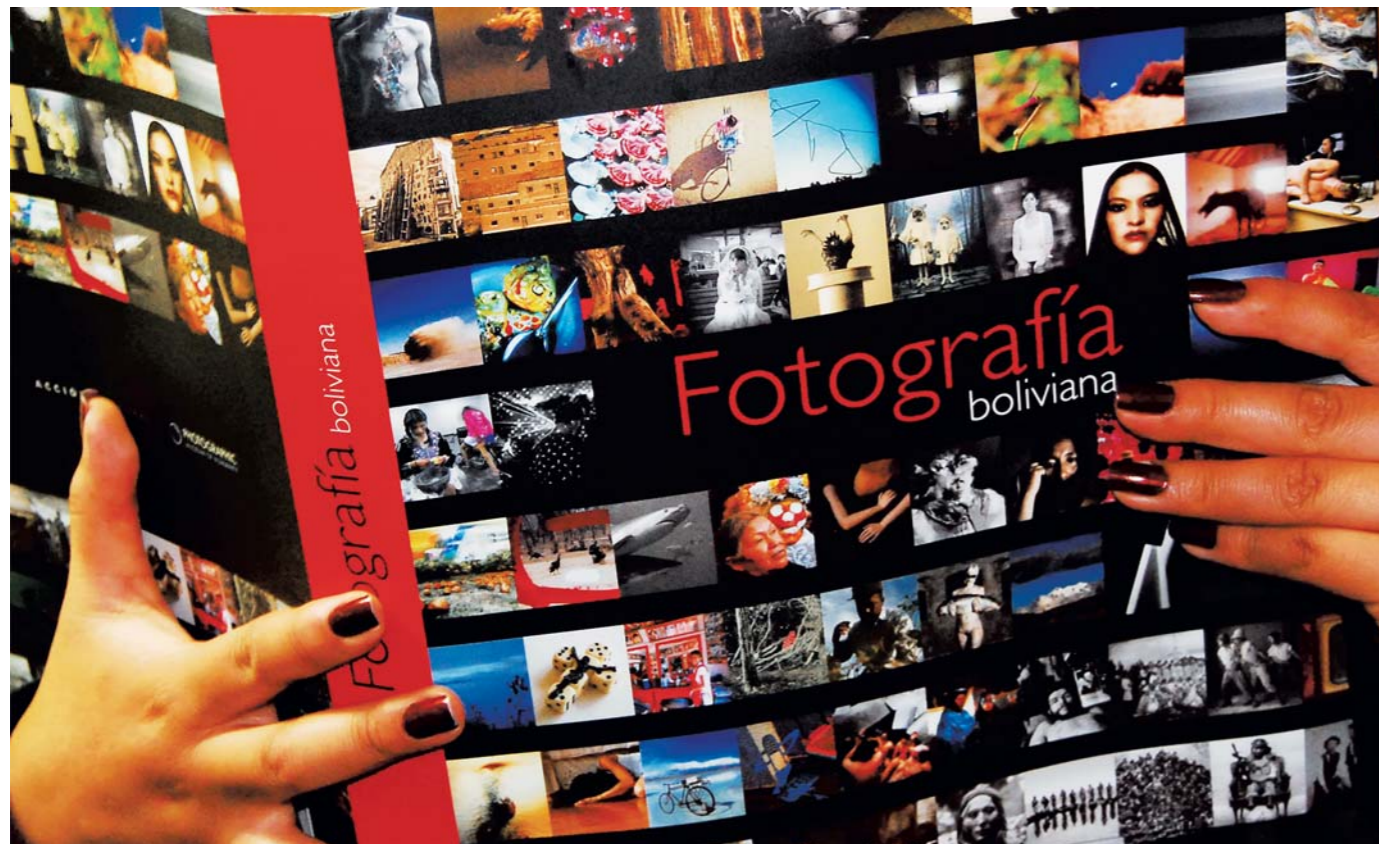


6.



FOTOGRAFÍA BOLIVIANA

EDITOR: SANDRA BOULANGER
REVIEW: SHAROLL FERNANDEZ



**'PHOTOGRAPHY IS NOT ABOUT THE THING PHOTOGRAPHED.
IT IS ABOUT HOW THAT THING LOOKS PHOTOGRAPHED'**

Garry Winogrand

Experiencing Bolivia is inexplicable. Descriptions are almost invariably wanting, and can leave us with a lingering sense of narrative injustice. In this book, Sandra Boulanger invites us to shed our preconceived notions before reading, and in that spirit, to look at the country anew. Most remarkable is the monumental effort involved in bringing together one of the most comprehensive collections of Bolivian photography to date. At nearly 400 pages, this megalith of contemporary local photography is

the freshest possible snapshot of Bolivia's perennially innovative photography scene.

Fotografía Boliviana is a communion of images, an earnest homage, a dialogue even. It features a vastly diverse group of 65 local photographers, who project an equally diverse presentation of 460 photographs. The journey through Bolivia takes the reader through its colours, textures, faces, rhythms, concerns, riches, pains, stories, solemnity, vigour and **picardia**. This collection gives us the rare chance to travel alongside artists who have the patience to spend

hours looking for the most rigorous composition (Herbert Müller) and to travel with those who take an interest in the apparent simplicity of some people's lives in a single shutter (Michael Dunn). Furthermore, this book provides you with the opportunity to appreciate the chromatic hues in a set of rusted tin roofs (Tony Suarez) and to experience the inebriating grace of a shark (Wolfgang Leander). It is through these manifold eyes that the book invites us to access a Bolivia that we may or may not have seen. On this journey, we will most certainly discover as to why Bolivia is as inexplicable as it is. ■



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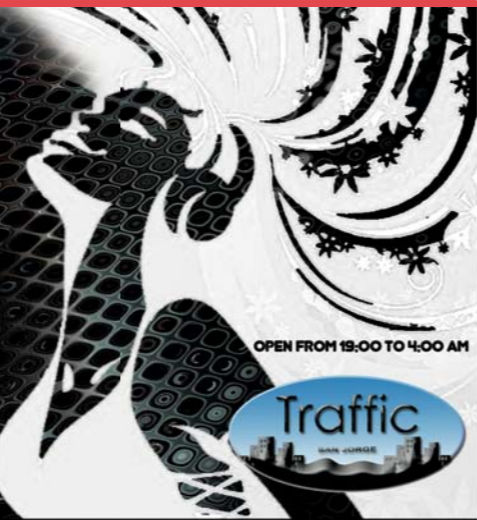
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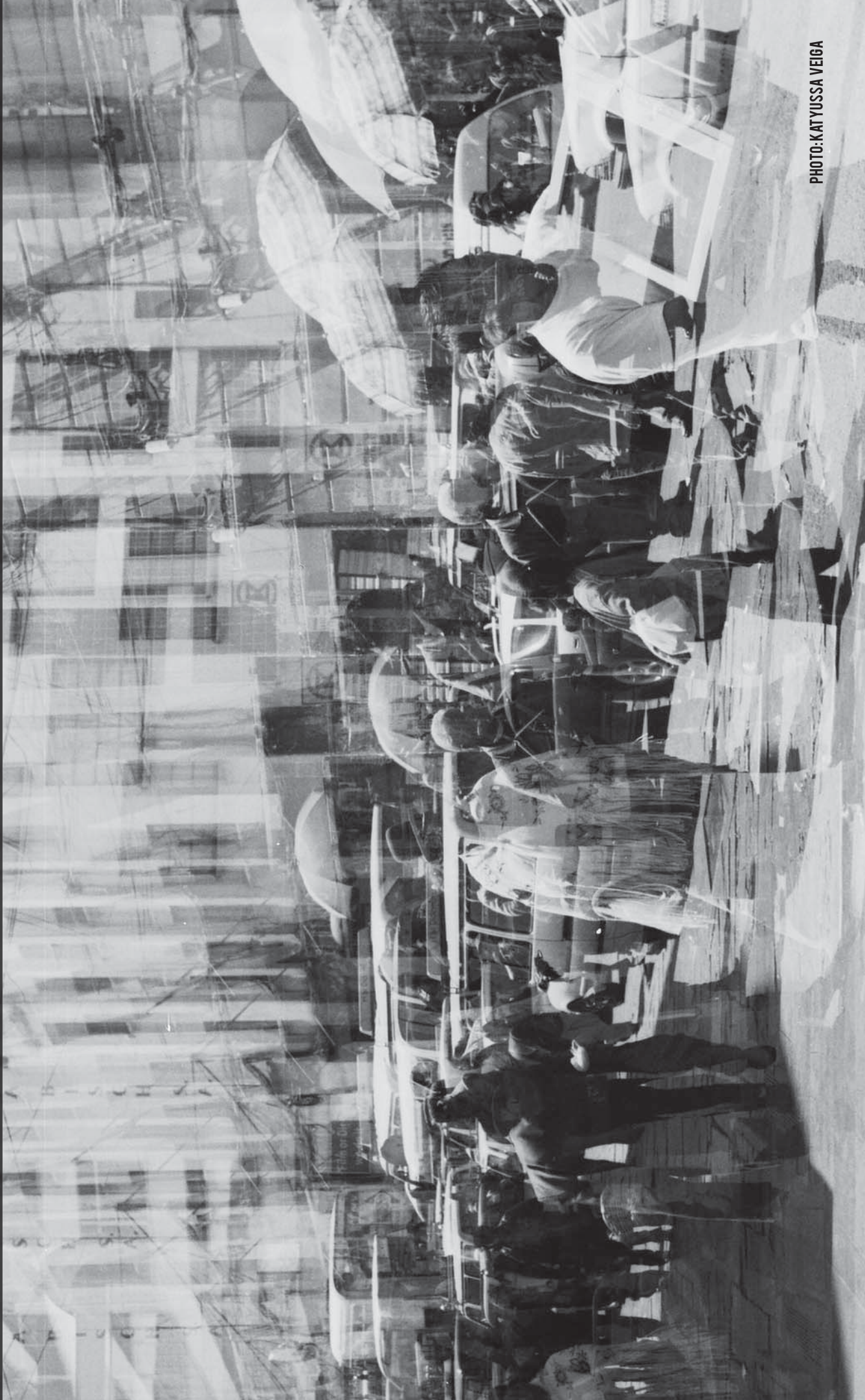


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