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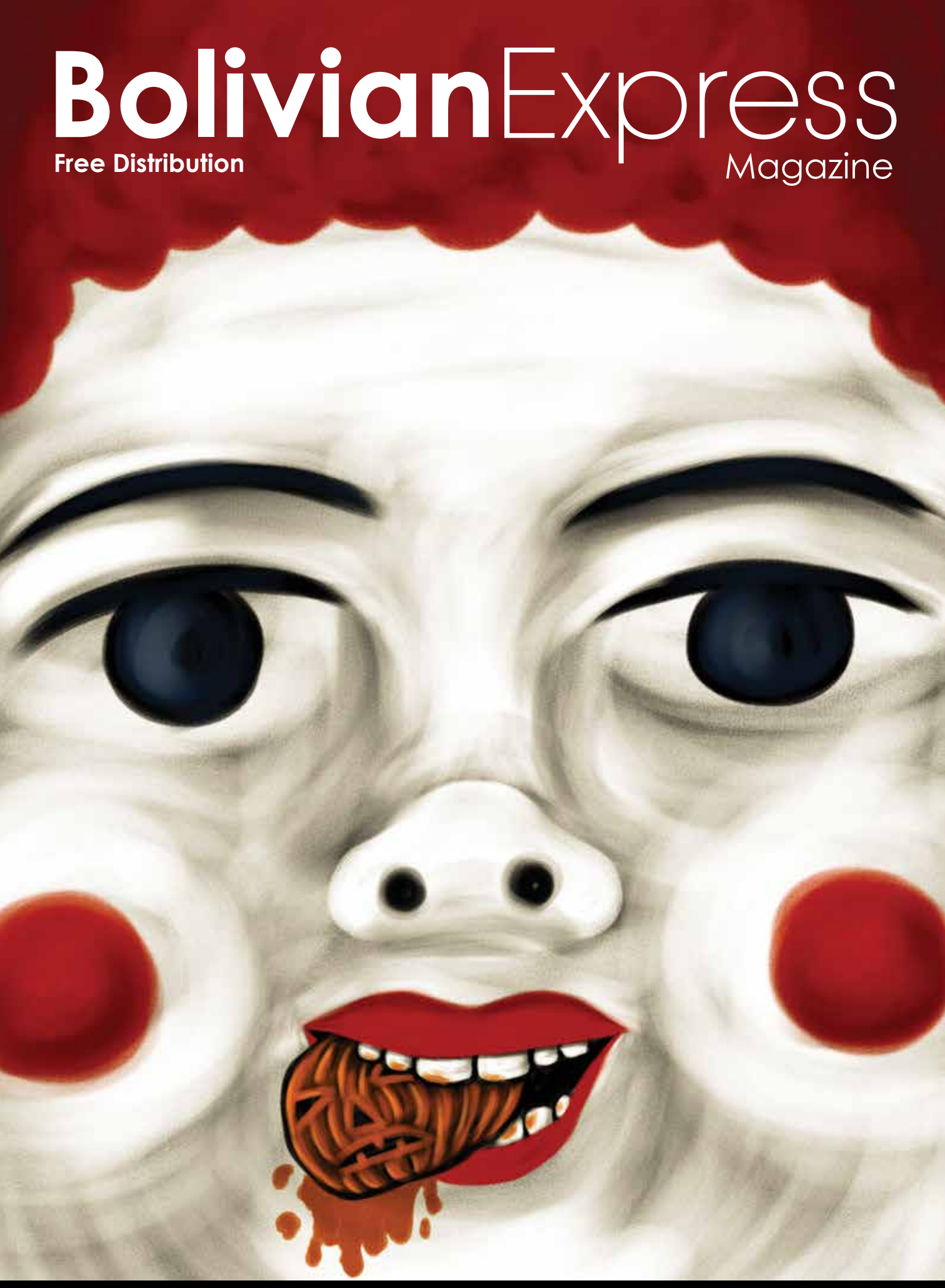

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EDITORIAL

In November 2012 we published an issue titled 'Passing'; a monochrome collection of articles and images on the more solemn aspects of Todos Santos, the day in which the living remember and pay tribute to the dead. Yet it didn't take long for us to realise that death and its associated rites are not necessarily as sombre as we then made out. Or at least that we had only told part of the story.

On the 2nd of November the General Cemetery is filled with thousands of mourners, but also musicians, flowers and laughter. After midday the families take their **mesas** to Chamoco Chico, where the atmosphere becomes more celebratory, amid the sound of **pinquillos**, the taste of beer and the treacherous nectar of Caimán alcohol.

Last year we also witnessed—and OK, partook in—the demonisation of Halloween (which we then facetiously referred to as 'Jailonween'), a tradition still widely seen as alien to Bolivian traditions; a symptom of the growing invasion of American decadence and consumerism. But we noticed the green shoots of some important changes this year. From cholita zombies in haunted houses across the city, to the incorporation of local legends in the production of horror films, there has been a partial appropriation, or nationalisation, of foreign traditions. Some have even called it 'Ajayuween', and have proposed that children be given t'antawawas and fruit instead sweets when they go trick-or-treating.

In choosing 'spirits' as the theme of this issue, we have tried to bring out the explosions of colour, and even intoxication, that often take place in the realm that opens up between the living and the dead during this time of the year. And of course, to talk of 'spirits' also gives us an excuse to take an alcoholic tour through some of the best (and worst) traditional local drinks. But beyond the fiesta, have also wanted to pay tribute to the revolutionary spirit of the Bolivian people on occasion of the 10 year anniversary of Octubre Negro, an event which gave way to historic social uprisings which went on to define the country's present and will continue to mark its future for generations to come.

This is our first-ever fully-illustrated issue in recognition of the fact that spirits, of all things, can't really be photographed.×

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

By Amaru Villanueva Rance

REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY HAS PASSED FOR THE OCTUBRE NEGRO—A DARK MARK REMINDING BOLIVIANS THAT STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF CAN LEAD TO GREAT SACRIFICES. WHETHER IT WAS WORTH IT IS A QUESTION TO BE LEFT UNANSWERED, BUT DIGGING IN TO THIS EVENT LEAVES YOU WONDERING IF THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT STILL LIVES ON IN THE MINDS OF THE BOLIVIAN PEOPLE.

TEXT : AMALIE MERSH

WHAT WAS IT ALL ABOUT?

The dangerous cocktail of corruption, oppression and highly irresponsible politicians was bubbling viciously under the surface of the Bolivian society for years. While being right on the edge of erupting like a dormant volcano for a long time, it all culminated in October of 2003 when the people finally took action. In the midst of a financial crisis, the question on how to handle the natural gas resources spurred the people to take responsibility for their future. 2013 marks the tenth anniversary of the protests that ended in the Bolivian people toppling over a government and causing not only one, but two, presidents to resign.

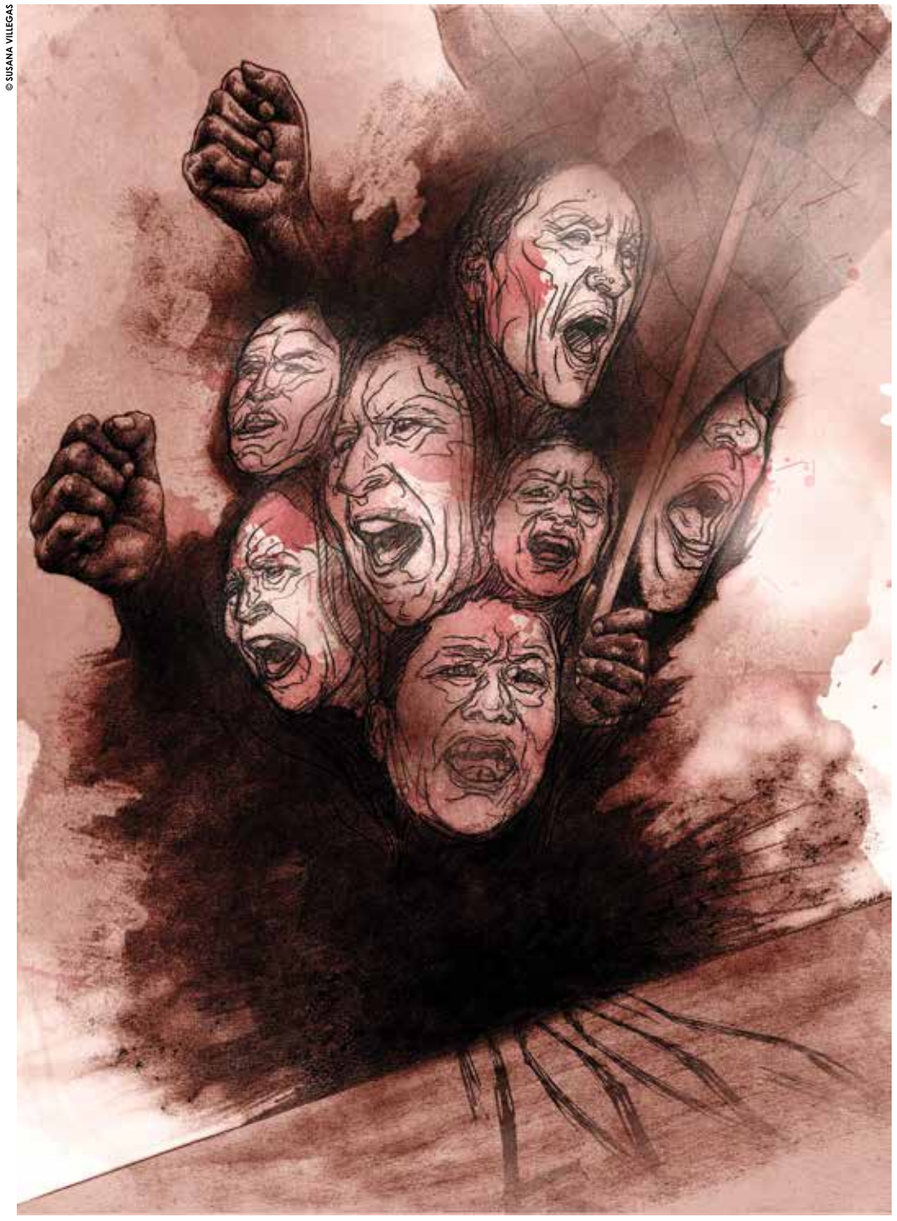
Throughout Bolivian history, hydrocarbon reserves have fluctuated between being in private hands and state-owned. Before the violent uprising of 2003 the reserves were privatised, and many Bolivians didn't feel they benefited enough from what naturally belonged to them.

This key issue, together with the frustration over corruption and economic crisis, all came to its high point in October 2003, when protesters in El Alto charged to the streets demanding a radical change. Unfortunately, under the neo-liberal government of the time, nationalising the gas reserves would have meant going against their own principles.

The protests spiralled into surprising levels of violence, escalating into something no one had ever imagined. A series of events throughout October meant that by the 17th, when the president was forced to resign, up to 70 people had been killed and hundreds more had been injured. The people managed to overthrow two presidents before socialist Evo Morales was elected in 2005. During his first administration in 2006 he did what many Bolivians had dreamed for a long time, and which they were told time and time again would be impossible—he nationalised Bolivia's natural gas reserves.

CHANGING SOCIETY

With a history of turbulent political grounds, Bolivia has only recently experienced economic growth. When it comes to the question of natural resources, Bolivia certainly hasn't enjoyed much luck during its history. Instead it has watched powerlessly while valuable resources such as silver, rubber, **guano**, and tin have been exploited by other countries and private commercial interests. The country has been held back



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in its quest for development and greater wealth.

Switching between a privatisation and a nationalisation of the gas resources has, according to journalist and political analyst Fernando Molina, massively slowed down the development of Bolivia's economy. 'The government only had repression to face the problem. They ended up killing many people and prompting a strong popular reaction. At the end they were in a very tough situation', Molina says. He adds that there has never been much trust in politicians as corruption has been going on for a long time. Recovering faith in politicians is not an easy task, he tells me.

Talking to Tony Lopez, who participated in the protests, it's clear that there is a certain grudge towards the way society changed. 'In reality, the situation of every Bolivian is worse because poverty is growing', Lopez explains. According to Lopez, the only development in the country is for the new elites: drug dealers, cocaine producers, miners and political leaders, who belong to the official party—and not for the everyday Bolivian.
Corruption is still prevalent, even after the 2003 protests, Lopez tells me. The difference, he says, is that it today is hidden behind a mask. 'Before, people just minded their own business', he continues, 'maybe social control has been corrupt since that time. If you denounce anything, most of the social space where you would do so belongs to the government'.

Boris Miranda, who authored a book about the gas protests, *La Última Tarde del Adiós,* has a slightly more positive perspective. 'People have been able to get the confirmation that a social movement can bring down a government', he says. 'They confirmed that the rational way of thinking is not always the best and that politicians aren't always truthful.'

THE SPIRIT OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY

During October this year, I switched on the television numerous times to discover that ***La*** *Guerra Del Gas*, as it is so commonly referred to, was being discussed. I thought that there might have been some sort of blend of a memorial and a celebration to commemorate the anniversary. But this seemed not to be the case. Molina, Miranda and Lopez all tell me how the government is using the protests and the development since then for its own political advantage.

'The government has tried to gain a political profit from it, but the social movements don't recognise them as "the fathers" of what happened in 2003. They are neither heroes nor authors of the protests', Miranda explains. 'Evo Morales and his men weren't in the country at the time of the protests, but they were able to capitalise upon what has happened there and bring it into a political space'.

To me, it all seems slightly strange. In my head, people need a certain amount of trust in the government in order to make society work. It is very understandable that the Bolivian people are sceptical and keep a close eye on politics. Take a look at the country's very recent turbulent political history and you'll understand why. Still, according to Lopez, El Alto, which was the centre of the protests, has experienced no useful change. Instead of El Alto being a democracy, he describes it as more of a syndicalist dictatorship. When I ask what he thinks it will take to turn that around he merely laughs discouragingly. '**No sé**', he says.

Ten years on, Lopez *is* sure of this: El Alto has taken the credit for what happened. There were other events leading up to **La** *Guerra del Gas*, such as ***La*** *Guerra del Agua* in Cochabamba in 2000, but the protests of 2003 became the pinnacle of frustration, and remains the centre of attention.

THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

A lot can happen in ten years. It often doesn't take long for people to forget. But ***La*** *Guerra del Gas* remains an important event in the minds of the Bolivian people. They toppled over a government, and that should not be easily forgotten.

What is, to me, more interesting, though, is if they still possess the revolutionary spirit. As mentioned before, Bolivians are very much sceptical when it comes to politicians and their proposals, but would they actually get up and protest again if the circumstances demanded them to do so?

> I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT OR EXPERIENCE IT – I LIVED IT" - JHONY (TONY) LOPEZ

Molina explains how it has been very beneficial for Bolivians to be revolutionary, but how it is also an obstacle for development. 'We are trapped in this spirit. It's a kind of evil spirit. We need new wars', Molina says. 'It's about what we can do together. Working, creating jobs, opportunities and businesses. That's the engine of the country. I think a good way to go is to make a moderate change.'

Miranda doesn't doubt that a part of the revolutionary spirit is still alive. 'The social forces in Bolivia are always looking at what's happening and they are going to take action when necessary.'

It seems that this is an uncertain topic. While agreeing on the fact that the revolutionary spirit is continuously present, the possibility of another uprising doesn't seem to please all parties. Like Molina, Lopez also thinks it could be an obstacle for development. He is more focused on El Alto, whose network of syndicates, along with corruption, stand in the way of development. 'If you've got something that gets on your nerves, you go to a syndicate and say, "I want to block a street", and it's blocked. The corruption has entered the syndicates.'

WHAT COMES NEXT?

People are still sceptical, especially when it comes to the gas question. Having shifted between privatisation and nationalisation, Molina is pretty sure that a future privatisation is not out of the question.

One thing is certain at the moment, though: Bolivia's political scene isn't squeaky clean. While the upcoming election gives way for exploiting **La** *Guerra del Gas* for personal political advantage, the development of the Bolivian society hasn't gone in the direction many people want. Corruption still exists. Maybe it's good that the revolutionary spirit still remains, and maybe Molina and Lopez are correct about the revolutionary spirit slowing down the country's development.

The seeds of the Bolivian revolutionary spirit leads back to the first indigenous uprisings during the Spanish conquest, eventually leading to the country's independence. This spirit has remained dormant over the centuries, erupting at key moments in Bolivian history. Having undergone some of its most important transformations over the past 10 years, Bolivia is currently seeing daily protests over anything and everything. The social movement has lost it's edge through sheer repetition. Through the participation of middle classes in key protests (for example, against the construction of a motorway through the TIPNIS in the northeast of the country), revolutionary methods have become domesticated. With Evo Morales's rise to power with the MAS, it would appear the party of social movements is now governing the country. Still, there's something dodgy about the idea of a social movement becoming institutionalised. It seems the next generations will need to find new ways to reinvent the revolutionary spirit in order for it to live on.

LESSONS FROM THE CAVE

YOKO CORZON GETS CLOSE TO OUR WINGED MAMMALIAN COUSINS TO DISCOVER THEY ARE NOT AS DANGEROUS, EVIL, OR UGLY AS SOME MAKE THEM OUT TO BE.

It's 4:00 am, I'm sitting on a cold rock outside of the San Pedro cave huddled against 3 other sleepy and shivering volunteers of the PCMB (Program for the Conservation of Bolivian Bats). Our radio transmitter suddenly goes—beep, long pause, beep, long pause, and then the beeps start occurring at shorter intervals. We shake off the cold and sleepiness, get up and search for the signal until we hear—beep beepbeepbeep. A bat soars above our heads, we turn off the radio transmitter and head toward our bat trap. Raquel Galeón, checks the trap, she smiles; the bat with the radio collar is inside. She carefully removes it out of the bag and it shows us its long and slender tongue. It's a nectarivorous bat, Anoura geoffroyi, and its snout is covered with yellow pollen.

Ugly And Blind - Not Really!

Generally people perceive bats as evil, blind, ugly, dangerous, blood-drinking flying mice (thanks, Dracula). Blood-drinking bat species do exist, but most people don't know that nectar-drinking bat species outnumber them, that they are pollinators like bees, and are important to keep the forests alive and healthy. As for the ugly part, most bats are actually really cute, tiny with soft fur and beautiful black beady eyes. Down the evolutionary line, bats are closer to humans than to mice. However they have gone through an amazing adaptation process which enables them to fly (the only mammals to do so) and use an ultrasonic echolocation system to get around, even though their eyesight isn't that terrible.

Bats make up the second most diverse group of mammals. In Bolivia, there are currently 133 recorded species, all of them of great importance to the ecosystem, and many of them extremely beneficial to humans. A medium-sized colony of insect-eating bats can do away with 25 tons of insects in one year. That's 25 fewer tons of bugs such as mosquitoes (dengue, malaria) and moths (crop pests), with no need of pesticides. And if Tequila is a favorite of yours, thank the les-

ser long nosed bat, who for thousands of years has pollinated Agave plants, helping it thrive in Mexico's deserts. Bats are also known to pollinate wild varieties of mango, banana, cocoa, balsa wood and guava (as part of their repertoire of more than 500 plant species). Fruit-eating bats are essential for the seed dispersion of many forest plants, dropping tiny (yet potent) seed and **guano** bombs as they fly away from their food source. These seed bombs have been found to be of great importance for the recovery of fragmented forests. Carnivorous bats help keep fish, toad, and other small animal populations in check. Similarly vampire bats, although not lethal, can be seen as a population control mechanism. Two of the three species drink bird blood, and the third, Desmodus rotundus, drinks mammal blood.

Back in San Pedro, it's now noon. From inside our cabin we can hear kids shouting, people laughing, cars, music thumping, and dogs barking. The tourists have arrived to visit the famous San Pedro Cave. We head out, there's a line of people going up the trail to the entrance. As we walk past them, we see candy wrappers, soda bottles, leftover food, plastic plates and cups strewn on the floor. Outside the entrance, painted on a small wall, some simple rules—no littering, no shouting, no getting into the water (there is a small lake inside the cave). We duck at the mouth of the cave and walk inside, we don't need lanterns as the sun's light still reaches us. Before it dies out, lights from the inside guide our path.

DOWN THE EVOLUTIONARY LINE, BATS ARE CLOSER TO HUMANS THAN TO MICE

In the past few years, this cave, known for the bats that inhabit it, has been improved with lights, steps, a wider entrance, and small boats. The several colonies of bats living here have had to adapt to this 'progress' and the influx of tourists. This adaptation process has resulted in their numbers dwindling. The improved access to the cave also brings with it an increase in 'bat hunters'. When a woman learned we worked with bats she asked if we could grab one for her, offering to pay us. She wasn't the only person we met hoping to catch a bat. Bat blood is sought for its 'curative' powers in the treatment of epilepsy. Dead bats are also used in traditional black magic or for school projects, and live bats are forced to smoke as a lucky ritual, causing their lungs to explode. On the other hand, we also met people hoping never to come across a bat, 'they say bats get tangled in your hair and then bite you', a girl told us in a squeaky, scared voice.

Why So Scared?

The threats bats face are often a consequence of fear and the widespread perception of them being 'evil'. A few months ago, while asking around for bat roosts as part of an ongoing project to survey the species in the Valley of La Paz, a Mecapaca local explained to bat researchers Oswaldo Palabral and Adalid Alfaro how his community decided to burn a cave where bats were known to roost. To the locals who own cattle, donkeys and other livestock, such a move is seen as a way of protecting their animals so they can continue supplying the cities with milk, vegetables, and meat. But the reality is that they displaced several different species of bats, not only the targeted vampire bat. Setting caves on fire, blocking the entrances, spraying different types of chemicals, and poisoning, are some of the different methods used by people to get rid of them. With other animals, they are also vulnerable to the threats posed by urbanisation and deforestation.

The extent to which vampire bats threaten livestock (or the corresponding economic damage they are responsible for) is undetermined. Even so, most farmers and cattle owners don't hesitate in killing any bat they find. The widespread idea that bats transmit rabies is probably the biggest reason for this intolerance. Studies show that the percentage of bats infected with rabies is actually low (a study by PCMB's Isabel Moya in a Potosí community that complained about vampire bats found 0 rabid specimens), and researchers have found that rabies and other diseases are much more likely to show up in a stressed colony (i.e. a colony displaced by fire or urbanisation). So it would seem that the intolerance towards bats is actually a consequence of how little people know about them.

However frightened people are, through being a volunteer for the PCMB I have witnessed how their attitudes can change. After learning about bats, kids end up fascinated by them, grownups want more information, and farmers and cattle owners open up to different possibilities of dealing with bats. Some other people were never frightened to begin with, and others like the Tsimane hold them with appreciation in their tradition.

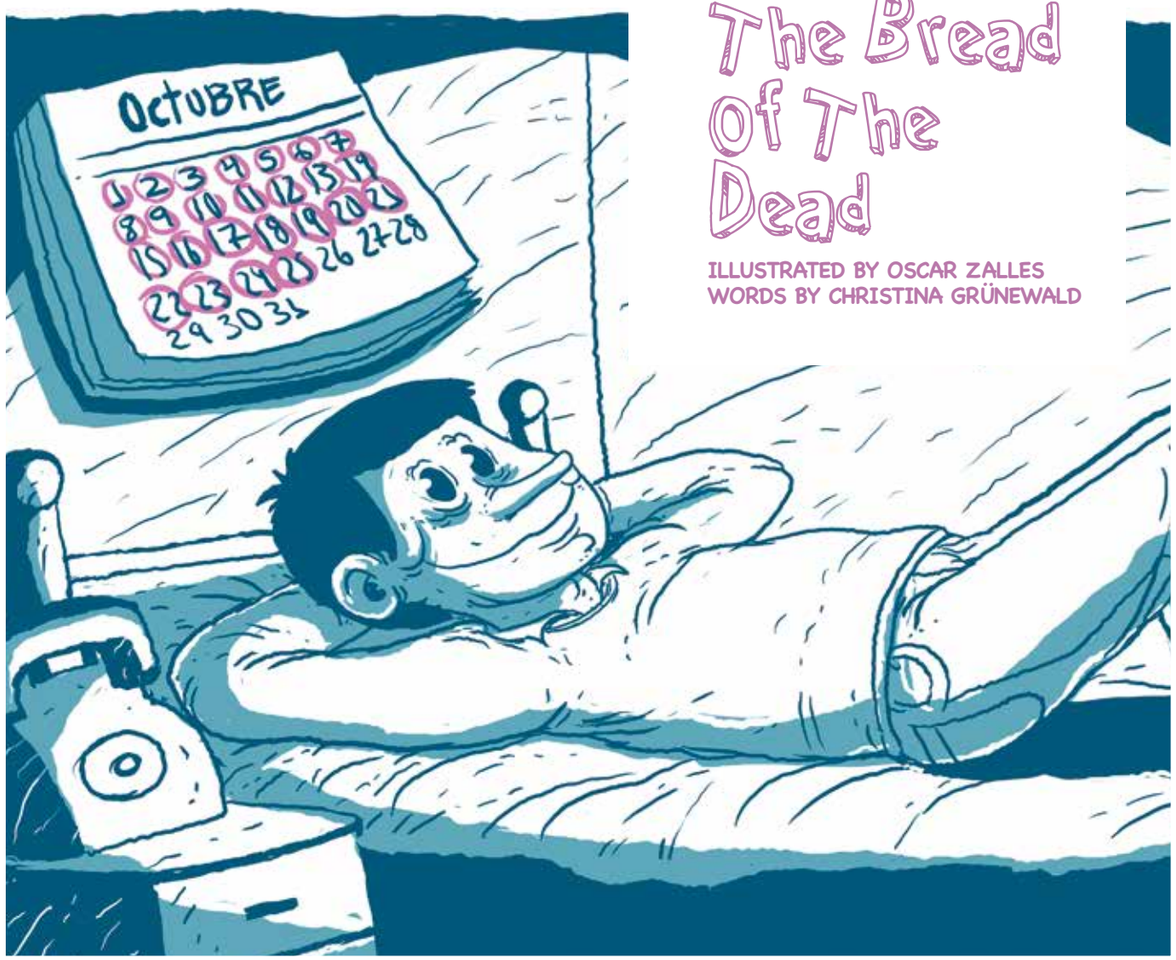
They say long ago, the men went out to hunt at night and women stayed in their village. The hunters came back at dawn amazed to find plentiful baskets of fruit. In their absence they learned that young flying men brought these baskets for the women, and stayed with them all night.

There are more than 1200 bat species living across the world, in such unimaginable places as Alaska or the Bolivian altiplano—in caves, roofs, under bridges or leaf tents they build themselves. Be it a physicist trying to understand echolocation, a biologist researching communication, or a housewife bothered by mosquitoes, bats still have much to teach us.×

ILLUSTRATION: MARCO ANTONIO GUZMAN ROCABADO (MARCO TÓXICO)

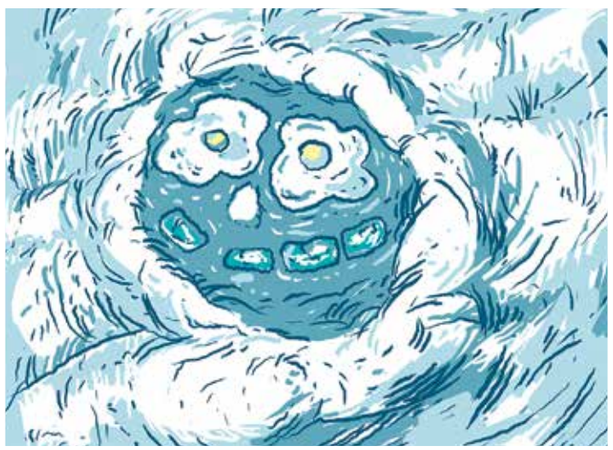
The Bread Of The Dead

ILLUSTRATED BY OSCAR ZALLES
WORDS BY CHRISTINA GRÜNEWALD



1. Wait for the last week of October to have your t'antawawas ready in time for Todos Santos on the 2nd of November—DON'T FORGET to book an appointment at your local brick oven.

2. Buy ingredients for the dough. Don't forget, the masks, you will be able to find them at Calle Max Paredes (avoid the Homer Simpson ones, stick to the traditional faces!). Also get hold of sugar canes, fruit, quispiña and traditional sweets if you're planning a full-blown **mesa**.

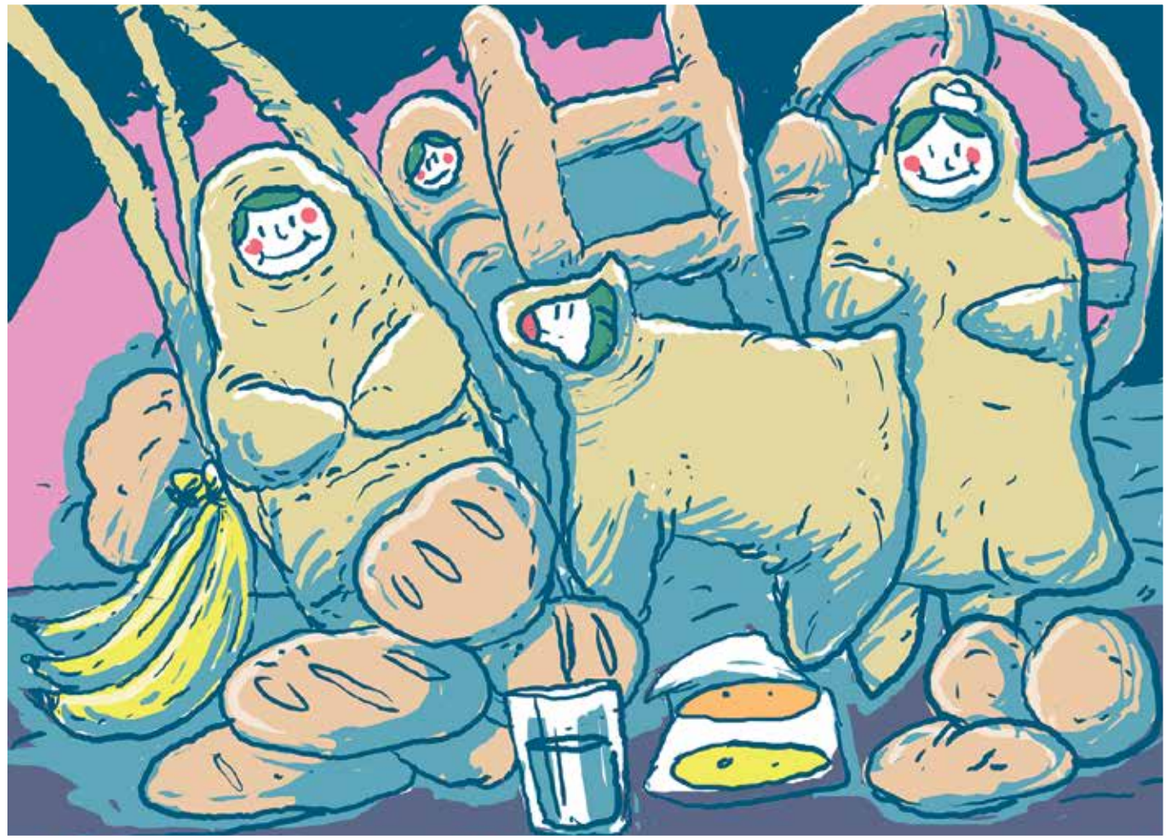


3. Go to the oven 2-5 days before Todos Santos. To make the dough, form a crater out of flour and place all ingredients in the middle. Mix using your hands. If you need help you can ask an assistant at the oven. A bottle of Papaya Salvietti works as a bribe/incentive.

4. Make ladders, llamas, horses, eagles—all sym bolizing transfer to heaven—and of course **t'antawawas,** the bread babies. Place them on trays and leave the dough to rise.

5. Mark your trays to identify them later (you can use a small vegetable like a carrot). Put your creations in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on their size.

6. At noon on the 1st of November set a **mesa** at your home in honor of the family members that have passed away. Cover it with bread, fruit, beer and anything else you think the spirits might enjoy. Thank the relatives that have stopped by to pray by giving them bread and sweets. If you see flies or other insects, don't swat them away. It might be the spirits coming to enjoy your offerings.



7. Go to the cemetery on the 2nd of November, ideally before midday. Cross two sugar canes near the grave and set up your **mesa** underneath. Young and old **reciris** from the countryside will offer prayers and songs for your spirits in exchange for bread and fruit.

SIRENAS, ANCHANCHOS, ANTAWALLAS

FINN O'NEILL LISTENS IN ON THE FLEETING WHISPERS OF BOLIVIA'S ORAL LITERATURE TRADITION AND ENCOUNTERS THREE RECURRING SPIRITS.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ROMÁN NINA

SIRENA

The Sirena is a spirit native to Lake Titicaca, in particular *Isla Suriqui*, which appears as a normal Cholita dressed in vibrant, coloured clothes. An encounter with a sirena occurs at the threshold moments around dawn and dusk, when it is neither night nor day. The sirena, although not linked with the traditional Western mermaid, is neither from the lake nor the land. An inherently ambiguous figure, it is never clear whether encounters with her occur during dreaming or wakefulness. The sirena is perceived with fear and apprehension, not because they are seen as dangerous beings, but because the places which these sirenas can take one of their subjects —both physically and mentally— are unknown and can leave the 'victim' in a whirl of confusion following their encounter. Sirenas often appear in vacant areas. One must not venture to these places, especially during the evening, for fear of encountering a sirena and being taken on a mystical journey.

CÁCERES WITNESSED A GROUP OF SIRENAS DANCING IN THE NIGHT, PLAYING MUSIC WITH GUITARS AND ZAMPOÑAS

I am told of a man called Don Valentín Cáceres who encountered a group of sirenas one night on *Isla Suriqui*. Cáceres witnessed a group of them dancing in the night, playing music with guitars and **zampoñas**. Allured by the haze of serenity in front of his eyes, he joined them. Without his knowing Cáceres was taken by a sirena and placed amongst the group where he dreamt he was wearing a poncho and dancing with a sirena who was playing a **pinquillo**. The following morning Cáceres woke up on the beach drenched in seaweed instead of a poncho, while a stick lay next to him— what he thought had been the **pinquillo**.

ANCHANCHO

Similarly to the Sirena, the Anchancho also appears during these uncertain periods of the day and in empty spaces. The Anchancho is often found in high formations such as mountains and cliff edges, and it appears as a small, rotund and playful man. The Quechuan word '*sajra*', meaning 'evil', is often associated with the Anchancho. This imp-like figure is playful in its nature and has a tendency to play tricks on its subject.

It is said that the echo one hears in the mountains is in fact the reply of the Anchancho, and should be taken as a warning of its presence. As a result it is important not to play with the echo; not to keep calling out to the Anchancho as this can provoke it and lead it to want to play with your mind.

IT IS SAID THAT THE ECHO ONE HEARS IN THE MOUNTAINS IS IN FACT THE REPLY OF THE ANCHANCHO

This perception of the echo is not dissimilar to the Greek myth of Echo, a nymph who lived in the woods and fell in love with a young man called Narcissus. Echo would always have the last word in their exchanges and this drove Narcissus mad, leading him to him flee from her. Echo died having never experienced love and has ever since continued repeating what other people say. The Anchancho shares many characteristics with Echo, yet its appearance goes beyond the sound itself and has a physical dimension. An encounter with the Anchancho can leave the person very confused and as a result it is best to stay clear from the highlands during twilight and dawn.

ANTAWALLA

The Antawalla is also a nocturnal spirit which has the ability to take on a number of different appearances such as a bird, a snake, and a cat.

The *Lari Lari Felino* is the most common embodiment of the Antawalla near Lake Titicaca, where it is feared due to its power .The *Lari Lari Felino* appears as the face of a cat which is on fire. Its vivid flames make it stand out as it appears high up in the trees against the dark foliage.

THERE IS NO KNOWN CURE TO THE ILLNESS WHICH IS INFLICTED UPON THEM, AND THE 'VICTIM' OF THE LARI LARI EVENTUALLY DIES.

Unlike the Sirena and the Anchancho, the Lari Lari has the ability of appearing out of nowhere; someone may be standing near the woods during the evening and the *Lari Lari Felino* can suddenly appear. The spirit sweeps down from the trees and goes through the body of the person. The Lari Lari can actually burn its subject, leaving traces of its impact.

The Lari Lari often targets people who have lied or been rude to others, and attacks them as they are walking alone during the evening. However, everyone must take caution when walking at night around Lake Titicaca and the surrounding islands.

An encounter with the Lari Lari Felino leaves the person gravely ill. There is no known cure to the illness which is inflicted upon them, and the 'victim' of the Lari Lari eventually dies.

DE TERROR

ASIA HART-EASON LOCKS THE DOOR, GRABS A BLANKET, AND TAKES A TOUR THROUGH SOME OF BOLIVIA'S BEST -AND WORST- HORROR FILMS.

ILLUSTRATION: PABLO RUIZ

I'm sitting on a couch watching a woman take a hearty bite out of a man's neck. There is a splatter of blood on the floor by my feet. Luckily, there's no cause for alarm, as I am on the set of *Olalla*, a horror film by director-producer-actor team Jac Avila and Amy Hesketh. Avila and Hesketh, of Pachamama Films, met at a film festival in 2005 and have been collaborating ever since, producing controversial works like *Barbazul* and *Maleficarum*. In their Miraflores studio, I feel the energy, their determination to get a scene shot while the light is still ideal. This is the face of Bolivian horror.

Just to make it clear, *Olalla* is a vampire movie. I am told it is only the second feature length film of its genre ever to be made in Bolivia. The first one, Dead but Dreaming, was also created by the pair and released in July 2013. It is a time-hopping drama that contemplates femininity, religion, purity, sexuality, violence, and, of course, death. It also features dramatic, prominently Bolivian landscapes; areas in Potosí and around Lake Titicaca. Interestingly enough, its soundtrack has a decidedly Old West American vibe to it, as do the scenery and costumes. This is quite baffling, considering its story jumps from 57 BC to 1800s La Paz. 'It's intentional', Avila tells me, explaining he meant for it to be reminiscent of a spaghetti western.

Avila recounts his first movie experience as a child, seeing *Bambi* at the movies. Although this animated film intended for children may seem to be the opposite of what he produces now, he points out that on a deeper level, Bambi is terrifying—what with the guns, dead mother, and general violence.

But why do people watch horror movies at all? I ask. 'Fear', Jac replies blankly. While viewers are intrigued by the unknown, they still like to see what's scaring them. I then ask what attracts a Bolivian audience to horror. 'Bolivian audience?' The pair laugh while considering the very idea. An audience for Bolivian horror films is apparently close to nonexistent.

I couldn't help but notice nudity features prominently in their films, almost as much as blood and guts. I ask them about any related local taboos, which I assume would exist in a predominantly Catholic country like Bolivia. Surprisingly, the duo has received more complaints about violence, particularly toward women, than the somewhat overly-generous helpings of nudity throughout their films. Avila even mentions a woman who walked out of his movie at a festival, stating that it was incredible, but too intense.

The rest of the Bolivian horror industry is dominated by short films, usually produced by university students. I watch a few, each one lasting between one and twenty minutes. Apart from one involving zombies, most use lighting, color, soundtrack, limited dialogue, and camera viewpoint to produce a unique sense of psychological fear—quite different from the gore and physical violence of *Dead but Dreaming*. Almost all in black and white, they evoke a common sense of isolation—the excruciatingly universal fear of being alone.

I THEN ASK WHAT ATTRACTS A BOLIVIAN AUDIENCE TO HORROR. 'BOLIVIAN AUDIENCE?' THE PAIR LAUGH WHILE CONSIDERING THE VERY IDEA

Ningún Lado by Alberto Guerra speaks directly to fear of the unknown. The plot: a man hears a couple arguing. It seems simple enough, but when he searches for them, they are nowhere to be found. Their voices escalate, and the protagonist becomes overwhelmed. The pulsating beat of the soundtrack only contributes to the feelings of stress and urgency that, by this point, the man and his audience share. There is no peace and no escape—fear is achieved.

Closer to Avila's style is young producer Mirko Alvarez's zombie short, *Requiem para una noche de farra*. Yet, even this one comes armed with a darkly humorous social statement, drawing comparisons between the undead and those who are inebriated. There is quite a bit of spurting blood involved, some of which ends up on the camera lens. My favorite part is the scene in which the main character dramatically smacks a zombie attacker with a guitar, then falls over and gets bitten anyway. Sound effects play an important part in this one—the blend of screaming, moaning, and heavy metal overpowers watchers, ultimately the goal of any successful terror flick.

I ask Alvarez what he thinks of the industry. He shares Avila and Hesketh's opinion—the horror genre is simply not popular among both Bolivian consumers and producers. He also bemoans the lack of governmental support pointing to the absence of laws that favour filmmakers as well as the corresponding financial incentives. Considering the question of why people watch frightening films, Alvarez asserts that movie viewers are always eager to explore 'topics that go beyond the comprehension, logic, and normal behavior of the human being'.

This brings us back to the widespread fascination with the unknown.

It is precisely 'the unknown' that dominates *El silencio maldito*, the new film I go to see at the lovely Cinemateca Boliviana. Teenage moviegoers are trapped in a parallel universe filled with zombie-like villains who can't die. Although it is clearly low budget and the acting leaves something to be desired, there is something undeniably frightening about being locked in a completely dark room, unable to see one's assailant. The scariest character is a murderous little girl (children in horror movies never fail to be creepy). Overall, it manages to make viewers vaguely afraid to be in a cinema. Especially when you're one of only two people in the room, like I was.

It seems strange to me, after seeing these movies and talking to the producers, that there isn't a bigger market for horror in Bolivia. There is an incredible amount of potential. So many local legends are floating around, just waiting to be converted into movie scripts. This is precisely what happens in the United States, where urban myths are adapted into moderately successful horror films like *Candyman, The Exorcist, Sleepy Hollow, The Mothman Prophecies,* and so on. For example, why couldn't there be a blockbuster film about the **Kari Kari**, the sinister figure who wanders rural Bolivia taking body fat from unsuspecting victims? Perhaps these urban myths are still too real and present to reach the local audience as entertainment. So in the meantime all we must do is wait, under the blankets, with the door locked, until the next chapter in Bolivian horror film comes a'knocking.

HALLOW SOULS

TEXT : DANIELA PÉREZ
ILLUSTRATION: SHAROLL FERNANDEZ

IN THE RESIDENTIAL ZONA SUR DISTRICT, CHILDREN GO FROM DOOR TO DOOR DEMANDING SWEETS IN EXCHANGE FOR NOTHING, OR PERHAPS A LAUGH OR A FRIGHT. ELSEWHERE, CHILDREN FROM THE CAMPO APPROACH MOURNERS IN THE CEMETERY AND OFFER PRAYERS IN EXCHANGE FOR BREAD AND FRUIT TO TAKE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITIES. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THESE TRADITIONS HAVE A COMMON ORIGIN, OR MORE SO, BECOME COMBINED?

ORIGINS

There is something very special, yet intense about Halloween. In the United States, children leave their homes, their safe havens, wandering around in masks and makeup, surrounding themselves with complete strangers. Despite this, it is one of the most enjoyable holidays of the year because of the dressing up, visiting houses of horror, and best of all—trick-or-treating. But when did thousands of people begin to disguise themselves and knock on the doors of their neighbors in hope of receiving some delicious treats?

Hallowmas is the term in which the three days spent honoring saints and recently departed souls can be collectively referred to. These three days include Halloween or All Hallows' Eve, All Saints' Day, and to keep it fair, All Souls' Day. Some believed that All Hallows' Eve was the last chance the dead had to gain vengeance before they moved forward to the next world the next day—All Saints' Day. The living would disguise themselves with makeup, masks, and costumes to avoid being avenged by the dead. But the living couldn't bear sitting at home all night, so 'Souling' was introduced. Beginning in the 15th century the custom of baking and sharing soul cakes grew immensely. Back in the day large groups of people, mostly poor, instead of trick-or-treating for candy, exchanged their prayers for souls in purgatory for soul cakes. The families of those who passed away believed that for every cake eaten, a soul was relinquished from the horrifying grip of purgatory. This custom has floated around various countries, over an extensive period of time, and has developed into what most people now refer to as trick-or-treating on Halloween. The tradition of Souling has instead moved to All Souls' Day, the day that has become most widely known as the day of departure of the souls of the dead. Instead of going from house to house in search of bread, many go from grave to grave in the local cemetery to pray for the dead in exchange for 'treats'. Have you noticed any similarities yet?

HALLOWEEN

Halloween is celebrated in the most common way here in Bolivia. I took to Zona Sur to find out exactly how children and adults celebrate this holiday and was pleasantly surprised. Toddlers, children, teens, and adults were dressed up, holding goodie bags, walking around the entire neighborhood looking for doors to knock on in hopes to top off their bags and sugar levels. It was a day of pure enjoyment. All of the kids I ran into had nothing but smiles on their faces, and their parents were more than happy to speak to me and have their children and their costumes photographed.

Over time people began to associate negative things, mainly satanic ideas and rituals, with Halloween, which led many to stop celebrating it. Despite this many people still take part in the day for the candy and tradition, like one of the various families that I encountered. Even though their children attend a Catholic school, and they do not believe in Halloween, they still go out, enjoying the parties and the tricky search for treats. Despite the hundreds of families that flooded the streets of Zona Sur, there actually wasn't as much candy as I thought there would be.

BACK IN THE DAY LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE, MOSTLY POOR, INSTEAD OF TRICK-OR-TREATING FOR CANDY, EXCHANGED THEIR PRAYERS FOR SOULS IN PURGATORY FOR SOUL CAKES.

This brings me to ask why teens celebrate Halloween. After meeting and talking to a couple of few, it became aware that they use Halloween as an excuse to go out. Instead of seeing it as a cultural activity, they view it as a social one. Because they do not associate the holiday with anything but friends and fun, they dress up to for enjoyment, to look cute, and to attract attention. Adults are really open to the holiday as well, even if they do not believe in it. Many were dressed up themselves, and mostly all were more than happy to debut the costumes of their children and their own for the camera. Altogether, the 31st of October was filled with scary monsters, lovely princesses, famous movie characters, scares, and laughs.

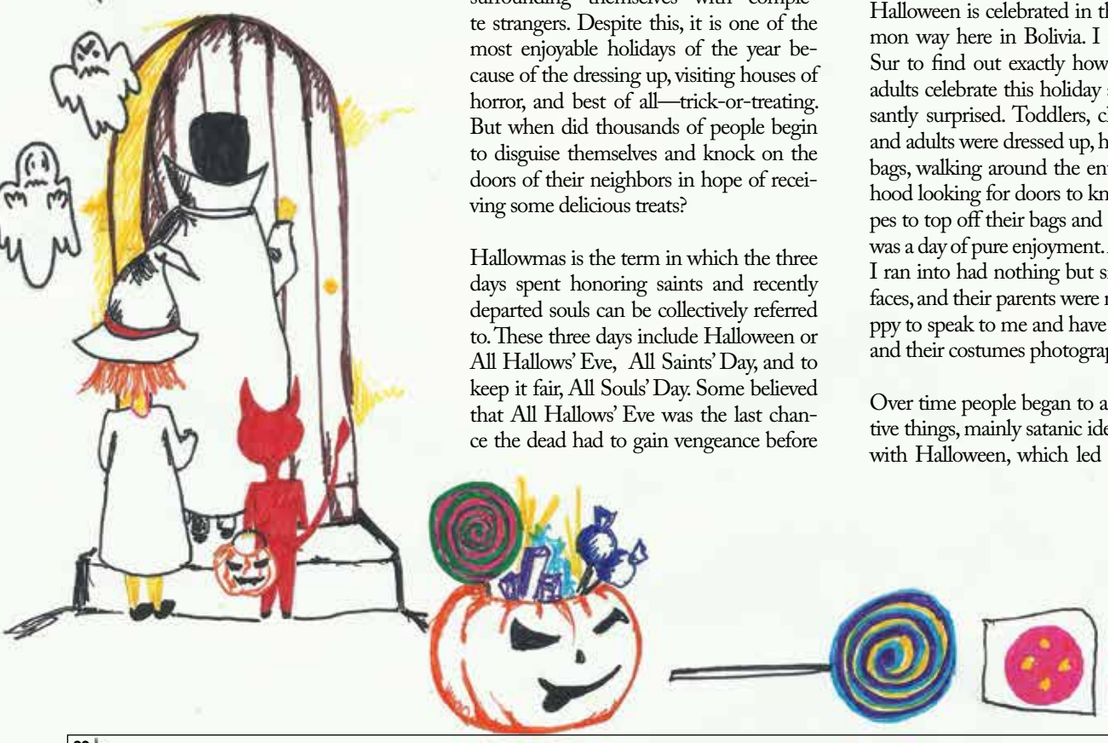
TODOS SANTOS

Two days later and All Souls' Day has arrived. This memorable day is spent in the local cemetery, with family, to both remember and say goodbye to the dead. Although many families go to the cemetery to offer a final meal to their loved ones, a sort of trick or treating does occur here too.

Like with the custom of Souling, **recíris** come down from the countryside to exchange their prayers for food, most commonly bread. So as I took a walk around the cemetery, I observed adults mourn for their loved ones, families put together buffets for their lost ones, children retrieving clean water for decorative flowers, and many other little details.

Not only do families 'hire' children to share their prayers, but they also hire musicians to play songs for the dead. This day is not about the entertainment, but rather the bonds that the living share with the dead. It is a day for remembering, thanking, and paying one's respects. The children that come down from the countryside spend the day, in a sense, working. So this holiday shares something with Halloween, and what the children do can be seen as a form of trick-or-treating. Despite the differences, children on Halloween and children on All Saints' Day are essentially leaving their homes and making an effort to retrieve non-monetary treats.

Throughout the years these two holidays have been modified, but have for the most part stayed relatively the same. Trick-or-treating was a rather large part of Hallowmas in the 15th century and still is today. Despite the negative ideas that have been associated with Halloween, many people still enjoy the holiday, even in Bolivia. One question that has arisen is how can a Bolivians continue to hold onto their main tradition, All Souls' Day, without closing themselves off to these tempting foreign influences. Some people have made it their top priorities to do just that—bring these two holidays together and celebrate them as one. At several haunted houses across La Paz this year, organisers have emphasised their intention of drawing from local horror stories and legends to combine them with the more cosmopolitan and hip Halloween. Rather than copying customs from the US, many have stated that they have taken their own myths and legends from parts like El Alto and La Paz and have turned them into something new and terrifying. Although these two holidays seem vastly different, maybe even contradictory, they do share some of the same characteristics: family, friends, enjoyment, future memories, and the good ol' trick-or-treating. Don't be surprised if next year, 2014, cholita zombies, **kari karis,** and famous local ghosts take to roaming the streets of La Paz on the 31st of October.



SALUD, SECO!

JOHN DOWNES ROAMS THE STREETS AND BARS OF THE COUNTRY IN A QUEST TO DISCOVER BOLIVIA'S MOST TRADITIONAL TRAGOS

ILLUSTRATIONS: JOAQUIN CUEVAS

SINGANI

WHAT:

Singani is Bolivia's national drink. It is made using Muscat of Alexandria grapes which go through a distillation process (unlike in the making of wine, for which they must undergo a fermentation process). The outcome is a clear, distilled spirit classified as a type of brandy. There are a lot of well-known *singani* based drinks in Bolivia, with chuflay and té con té being two of the most popular.

WHO:

According to Edmar, 25, a bartender at Diesel, one of La Paz's trendiest bars, *singani* is popular predominantly amongst older adults. Nonetheless, *singani* still has some popularity among younger generations, not least Emiliano Rojas. A big fan of *singani* sour, he soon intends to open a restaurant in Zona Sur called El Fenómeno where he will serve various *singani*-based cocktails.

WHERE:

Production of *Singani* in Bolivia dates back to the mid 1500's, when the first muscatel grape vines were introduced in the valleys of Mizque, Cochabamba, later extending to Camargo, Chuquisaca. *Singani* is now distilled from a type of grape that only grows at high altitude (between 5,250 and 9,200 feet) in Southern Bolivia, which results in a distinct flavour and higher levels of antioxidants. The Bolivian government has ruled that *Singani* must only come from this region, in the same way that true champagne can only come from France's Champagne Valley.

TIPS AND TRIVIA

For Emiliano Rojas, the best *singani* sour is prepared using egg whites, sugar, lemon juice, two ounces of *singani*, and a wedge of lime. His pro-tip is adding blended strawberries to give the drink a more appealing texture and colour.

Diesel's Chuflay is made with a couple of ice cubes in a tall glass, a quarter of *singani*, and three quarters of Sprite, 7Up or ginger ale. It's then served with a slice of lemon, and an optional touch of lemon juice.

Té con té is said to be good for colds.

BALDE

WHAT:

The drink derives its name from the way in which it is distributed and administered. *Balde* (literally meaning 'pail') is made by filling a large bucket with one part vodka to four parts orange juice. Or generally, any spirit and mixer in roughly the same proportions. What's important is the bucket.

WHO:

In 21st Century Britain, a teenager's rite of passage into binge drinking generally involves consuming copious amounts of fizzy alcopops. For me, these blurry occasions occurred at house parties or in the park with my friends, under the illusion that the likes of WKD and Smirnoff Ice gave substance to our efflorescent adolescence. For many young Bolivians, *balde* is the most influential drink of their formative drinking years.

WHERE:

While the constituent items of the *balde* experience can be bought separately, in select markets, such as La Paz's Mercado Achumani in Zona Sur, *balde* can be purchased in its entirety as a combo, with market sellers offering its constituent parts at a discount.

TIPS AND TRIVIA

It is largely consumed at house parties and festivals, not least during La Paz's annual Bacanes carnival party in February. Billed as 'a party organised by friends and for friends' by one of my sources, this four-day festival is aimed at chicos and chicas between 18 and 25 years old. Once the $150-$200 ticket is purchased, pretty much everything is free for the partygoer. Huge barrels of *balde* are prepared by the organisers and it is drunk during barbeques (which start at midday), at drinking games, and during the live music acts. It is consumed through beer-bongs at the bar. Seemingly neverending, it is guaranteed to keep on coming no matter how many cries of '**seco**!' are offered by one's "friends".

CHICHA

WHAT:

Chicha is a sparkling alcoholic beverage which can be clear or cloudy, and which comes in a variety of colours (typically white, yellow or brown, or even purple). Modern production methods involve grinding the corn into flour and then mixing it with water in order to create a paste that is left to dry in the sun. It is subsequently placed in jars before being ready for consumption.

WHO:

Chicha, meaning "liqueur" in Quechua, is drunk all over the country, though is especially popular in peri-urban and rural communities due to its affordability and the fact that it can be homemade. Famously popular among **Tinku** fighters.

WHERE:

Chicha originates in the valleys near Cochabamba though is also made in Chuquisaca, Oruro and La Paz. The people of Torotoro are famously very proud of their *chicha*, and in Aiquile it is drunk at open-door wakes and cemeteries on Todos Santos, the Day of the Dead.

TIPS AND TRIVIA

Chicha originates in the Inca Empire, and has been made and consumed in the plains and valleys of South America for several centuries.

The alcoholic content of *chicha* varies between 2 and 12%. The alcohol composition depends on how long the mixture is left in the jar. *Chicha* is traditionally prepared by chewing corn. An enzyme in saliva turns the corn into sugar, which will then ferment with help from the bacteria. This mixture is then stored for around a month in airtight clay jars.

Chicha is traditionally drunk out of **tutumas**, bowls made from the shells of the fruit from the eponymous plant. Foreigners often remark it tastes similar to cider.

ALCOHOL

TEXT: AMARU VILLANUEVA RANCE

WHAT:

Precisely that. Plain, old alcohol distilled from potatoes, elsewhere used to dress wounds and sold for medicinal purposes. A small Bs 1 bottle can be mixed in with a 2L bottle of juice to produce an incredibly cheap concoction guaranteed to do more than 'just the trick'. Borrachos with etiquette and experience customarily burn off the excess ethanol, only drinking it when it goes out (apparently this makes it OK). It is also a key ingredient in *misiles*, Bs 1 clear plastic bags filled with alcohol and some sort of juice, tied at the top and sold with a straw included for the drinker's convenience. And we'll just go ahead and point out that the most determined drinkers just take it straight, like swallowing cold fire.

WHO:

Of course, alcohol in Bolivia is sold as a disinfectant and also bought as a vital element in the ch´alla, but it is no secret it is consumed by the city's most determined and impoverished drinkers. It is also drunk by teenagers during their first alcoholic experiences, usually on account of its price.

During his experience of the legendary **tinku** spectacle in 1972, photographer Alain Mesili recounts how the 'lethal nectars' of Caimán were the true winners of the fighting perimeter, knocking out any warriors who didn't fall in combat.

WHERE:

Small bottles of Ceibo are sold for Bs 1 at corner shops across the city, paradoxically making alcohol at once the most hardcore and most accessible of drinks. Pre-prepared *Misiles* can be found near the calle Los Andes just off Avenida Buenos Aires.
ruled that **Singani** must only come from this region, in the same way that true champagne can only come from France's Champagne Valley.

TIPS AND TRIVIA

In Bolivia, brands such as Caimán are labelled as 'potable' despite being 96% pure. Tied first with *Spirytus Rektyfikowany* Vodka from Poland, it lays claim to being the world's most alcoholic beverage. In comparison, the strongest bohemian-style absinthes are bottled at 89.9%.

Ceibo branded alcohol even promises 'buen gusto', or a good flavour.×

GLOSSARY

SECO	Literally meaning 'dry', it is a command to chug (or down) a drink until the glass is empty.
SINGANI	Clear, distilled spirit recognized as the national drink of Bolivia.
CHICHA	Fermented, corn-based drink served in tutumas, first consumed by the Incas
TUTUMA	Communal bowl passed back and forth, usually containing chicha, made from the shells of the fruit of the eponymous plant.
TINKU	Tradition of dancing, drinking and fighting, meaning 'encounter' in Quechua
NO SÉ	"I don't know""
MESA	Literally meaning 'table', term used to refer to the traditional arrangement of fruit, bread, and offerings for the dead on Todos Santos
KARI KARI	A sinister figure who wanders rural Bolivia taking body fat from unsuspecting victims. Also known as 'karisiri'.
TANTAWAWA	Quechua for 'bread baby', baked for Todos Santos in remembrance of those who passed away
ZAMPOÑA	Wind instrument, also known as a pan flute or panpipe
PINQUILLO	Recorder-like andean flute
BORRACHO	Drunk, or drunkard
GUANO	Bat and bird poo, a highly effective fertiliser and once used to make gunpowder
RECIRI	from the word 'rezar', meaning 'to pray': name used to refer to people (mainly from the countryside) who pray in exchange for bread, sweets and fruit

ILLUSTRATION: SHAROLL FERNANDEZ

PHOTO: MILA ARAOZ

ILLUSTRATION: ROMÁN NINA