



**Bolivian**Express  
Grupo Express Press

# LIVING LA PAZ

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## Editorial by Lorange Dao and Jack Brooker

Experiencing La Paz is to encounter the pandemonium and chaos of its traffic. However messy it may seem, some tacit laws do regulate it, principally: 'follow the flow', a rule which applies not only to the traffic but to life in general: metal music, swimming or comics, which ever might be your passion. Nevertheless, to survive financially all these artists and sportsmen are still obliged to follow a less glamorous occupation, whether that is studying or having a 'normal' job to pay the bills. So here we are with our fourth issue, bursting with La Paz's buzzing, traffic filled ambience. This issue's diverse collection of articles represents to us what the city is all about: an eclectic hub that arouses both locals' and foreigners' enthusiasm, and where people live, not necessarily from their passion, but for it. Get on board and experience living La Paz.

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

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'The artist' emanates an exclusive aura. We kneel and revere, expecting him to exude a kind of spirituality, and 'the artist' responds by first cultivating the enigma and then finally getting lost behind a pretentiousness coat of paint. But today we are meeting someone who has not been lured down this path. Gabriel Barceló tells us he does not in fact consider himself an artist at all, he appreciates simple things and simple talents, like his ability to prepare a delicious Moroccan meal. We made a visit to find out more about this simple Spaniard, with a piece of La Paz in his heart, and Fez on his hearth.



Photo: Anonymous

# GABRIEL BARCELÓ

## Simple Mind

text: Andrew Cummings and Sharoll Fernandez

**BX:** How is La Paz different from the other cities you've lived in?

**GB:** Well I come from Palma, in Mallorca... La Paz is possibly one of the most unique cities anyone could ever live in. It's very different from Mallorca: there are lots of beaches there and we eat lots of fish, but here in Bolivia there are mountains, not beaches, and no sea at all. But this is why I like it: it's helped me to get to know things I'm not used to. I like being in a city this unique.

**BX:** Do you consider yourself a Spanish photographer working in Bolivia?

**GB:** When I first arrived here, I would just photograph typical tourist things – cholitas, their polleras, etc – or rather, I'd look at things with a tourist's eye. But gradually – after two months or so – my vision started to change and these things became part of my daily life. I started to see these things not as touristy artefacts, but objects that represented something deeper and more universal. I see the people as human beings, and not as indigenous 'others'; in terms of my gaze, I feel like a person from this country,

although my techniques might be a little more foreign. I studied in Spain, after all. After three months here, the series of images I'd collected became a project.

**BX:** Tell us about your project.

**GB:** It's quite personal. It's called 'Ajayu', which is more or less the Aymara word for 'soul'. Sometimes, you see someone's face, a 'lost' expression, and you ask yourself: what's the story behind that expression? It could be melancholy, hope, uncertainty – these are all states of the soul, universal emotions that I wanted to communicate through the expressions of others. This is the basis of the project, really. The important thing here is to avoid clichés, as these days traditional or folkloric themes are often viewed with the kind of eye that stereotypes. With Ajayu I've tried to look at these types of things with a contemporary eye, and I've tried to make them universal.

**BX:** How does the artistic process work for you?

**GB:** The most important part is your

own gaze – what kind of things call your attention and how you interpret them – as well as what you want to say, above your technique, the way you photograph, I think. It's also really important to leave the photographs 'cold' – that is, to give yourself time to separate yourself from what you've created so you can view it with a fresh eye, as if you were a third party. Then you can be truly critical.

**BX:** What does photography mean to you?

**GB:** Photography is a way of discovering yourself, that sleeping part of your being which focuses itself in your art. It's like, you 're-read' your photos after they've been developed and you see what you wanted, what was there subconsciously, before you took the photos. Above all, though, art is a verb. It's about communication, actions, and emotions.

**BX:** Do you like llamas?

**GB:** Yes, I like them a lot. They seem quite strange to me... They pique my curiosity. They're camels of the Bolivian desert, of the Bolivian altiplano.



“ Photography is a way of discovering yourself, that sleeping part of your being which focuses itself in your art. ”



# A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

# TONY SUAREZ

Text and Photo: Lorange Dao

Tony Suarez. A name most people in La Paz know and associate with his eclectic photographic corpus. But did you know that this man had a life as eclectic as his pics?

Born in Cochabamba, Tony moved to New York when he was twelve and lived there for about 30 years before coming back to Bolivia. Despite having moved at such a young age, he confesses that he always felt like a migrant, 'not really from there, neither from here'. After quitting *Time*, he decided to go back to Bolivia, a country he thought he knew too little about. When asked if he finally felt at home in Bolivia, he evasively answers: 'I've been here for almost twenty years now and I've got my family and my networks. Moreover, I'm getting old and it would be harder to move and settle somewhere else. (...) Bolivia is a really amazing country, there's so much to see.' Tony's chaotic career path first took shape during his time at university. He had enrolled for engineering, but quit after a year. These studies didn't give him a 'global vision of things', it was much too restricted for his taste. He only really enjoyed English literature. After his mother gave him the choice to either go on with his engineering studies – which she would pay for –

or to work, he went for the second option and began as a mail clerk at *Time Life* while also attending night classes. He tried a bit of everything before ending up in architecture, which he studied for about 18 months after which he finally found out what he really wanted to do with his life: photography. At that point he still had a part-time job at *Time*: he worked there in picture follow-up, developing and making safety copies of the flurries of the photographs converging upon their office from the whole world, before sending them on to Chicago. 'I think it's good to do other things than just what you studied to do. It gives you more possibilities and you learn a lot from it', Tony adds.

After about a year working at the news center, he was appointed assistant photographer and later, photographer. All in all, his big adventure at *Time* lasted from 1968 till 1990 when he decided to quit because at that point it was becoming too restricted. The magazine didn't give him enough opportunities anymore. Nowadays, he collaborates with various magazines such as *Pie Izquierdo*, *Datos* and *Metro* in La Paz, and *In* and *Ve* in Santa Cruz. On a Monday afternoon, I went to his

studio to interview him. He ushered me in his office, a small room crammed with hundreds of books and unusual objects – from a superman doll encased in its plastic box, to sinister masks and wooden crosses on the walls, dispersed among photos and paintings.

**BX:** Are there places, events or experiences you particularly remember?

**TS:** There are so many! I had the opportunity to attend the first spacial launches, five Olympics games, football cups, I travelled so much... and I enjoyed it all. Even though sometimes, I did so many different things, went to so many different places and everything was going so fast I didn't really have time to sort of digest it all.

**BX:** So it was like an overdose of images and experiences...?

**TS:** No, I enjoyed as much as I could. It felt so good to experience so many things and have the feeling I was totally free. I remember once being on a bus abroad and thinking 'I am so free that if I died tomorrow, it wouldn't matter'. I love the variety and discovering new things. In this aspect, Bolivia has a lot to offer, since you have so many different things in

just one country and you don't have to go far to see a quite different type of landscape.

**BX:** Do you dedicate yourself to a specific kind of photographs - portraits, landscapes...?

**TS:** In Bolivia, the market is so small that you have to do a bit of everything. Otherwise, it's not possible to live from it.

**BX:** Do you work more with Black & White or colour pictures?

**TS:** Black & white and colour pictures are two different ways of thinking but they're both really interesting. I used to work a lot in Black & White but it's better to work in colours for the archive. When you archive pictures, it's always better to have them in colour. And then, you can do whatever you want with them, you can edit them and turn them Black & White. On the other hand, the process to develop B/W pictures is more complicated and it's harder to get good B/W pics. For example, in books, it's much easier to print a good colour picture than a B/W. The colour also helps a lot, it catches the eye before the spectator pays attention to the composition. While with

B/W, if the composition is not good enough, there's nothing appealing to the picture.

**BX:** What do you think about digital photography? Do you prefer film cameras? Do you use editing programs such as Photoshop?

**TS:** Photoshop is a program which integrates really well the logic of the photolab. Nowadays, I work with a digital camera because here, it's not possible to find the chemicals to develop the pictures and consequently, there are no lab to develop them. It's hard to import chemicals because of drug import issues. But both ways of taking pictures have their charms and advantages. Digital photography is more accessible and quicker while film photography is a bit magic: you see the image reveal on the paper, spring to life. But it's also an art; many photographers do not have the technique to develop the pictures themselves so they have to work with someone who does in the lab. In this case, they have to each know what they want in order to collaborate and get good results. I've always developed my pictures myself because I had the opportunity to use a lab from the beginning:

when I was studying, I also worked at *Time*, where I could use a professional lab for free and I also frequented people who gave me advice. I learnt a lot from it.

As for Photoshop, I don't know enough to do more than just editing my pictures, i.e. correct the brightness, contrast... I don't have the skills to really 'create' a picture with such programs. But I believe that it is a great thing to have to opportunity to do it. However, when you use such a tool, you have to mention that you've used it, that the picture has been modified; maybe I'm old-school, but you have to keep some professional ethics. You cannot use Photoshop in journalism, to modify the content of a picture. As for the artistic point of view, a photoshopped picture can be as good as an instant pic. But you have to differentiate the documentary value and the plastic/aesthetic value of a shot.

**BX:** Do you have some specific projects in the near future?

**TS:** To work on a book. The truth is that I did many things and I haven't had time to just go back to them. So I'd like to see what I've done and then, see what could be done out of it, try to bring out a main theme. But a book is something which has its own life. It starts developing it's own character as soon as you start writing. Even if you have ideas in the beginning, it doesn't always end up the way you thought it would.

"I am so free that if I died tomorrow, it wouldn't matter"

# PAINTING THE TOWN MAS: Street art and political propaganda on paceño streets

Text: Jack Brooker and Sarah Lund

Photo: Sarah Lund



As has been discussed in previous Bolivian Express issues, the city of La Paz is not short on artistic creativity and expression. This can be witnessed first hand all over the city: every spare bit of wall, building or lamp post has been decorated. We see murals, street art, advertisements selling absolutely anything, and even banners and posters spreading political ideas.

As Bolivia's capital, La Paz is the central hub of the country's commerce, and this is evident in the clamour for advertising space on every available inch of the hectic streets. However, perhaps the most interesting and unusual form of advertising (from my European perspective) is the almost photographic paintings, used to advertise anything from bottled water to an electronics business.

As a European, I notice and appreciate the street art advertisements for their unique artistic value above their obvious marketing purpose.

For me they provide a refreshing change from the huge billboards that jump out at me when cruising the motorway.

Do Bolivians however, feel the same way? We asked some random passers by, who were surprised that we had even given it thought.

Hector from El Alto said: I have always liked the painted advertisements more than big plastic posters or things like this, as they are more natural, and it is much cheaper for businesses to advertise in this way.

This view was echoed throughout the half a dozen people who we spoke to and generally it seemed that most people were now so used to advertising in this format that they were simply surprised we were drawing any attention to it at all.

One of the most striking characteristics of the works we find are their detail and intricacy. „Graffiti“ in Europe is generally less respected and

usually less meaningful, (with a few marked exceptions like Britain's rebel „Banksy“, a lauded Graffiti artist).

The grandest of Bolivian mural we have come across sits along 'El Prado'. In Europe this type of 'art' is more usually described as vandalism (which is why Britain's „Banksy“ remains staunchly anonymous) but once again this could not be further from the outlook of most Bolivians.

Ana said: 'The street art is fantastic; it brightens up our streets and covers over some of the dirt anyway. The artists who do them are very well respected and for me they add to the beauty of La Paz. However, I think that it is always best when people ask for permission to do the murals, this is always better than art that just comes from nowhere, I still like them though!' Finally, and perhaps the most interesting form of street art, found not only in La Paz but all over Bolivia, are the political messages shouting for

votes. Usually the principle aim of the propaganda posters is to reassure people of the current government. Classic messages such as "MAS" or "Desarrollo" or "Todo va a cambiar", line the main traffic thoroughfares. For a European this is again a fairly alien concept. In that far off continent the vast majority of political advertising only surfaces around election time. Parties try to keep themselves out of the firing line as much as possible in a meantime. In contrast, a painting here can stay on the wall for up to 20 years. We were obviously curious as to what the Bolivian people think of these political propaganda paintings and posters, and wanted to see if they actually had any effect of the public psyche. As with all things like this, opinion was hugely divided, and this, it appears, is a reflection of the general political situation in Bolivia: "The paintings are everywhere you go so I almost never notice them anymore. Of course you see the blue paint of 'la MAS', but I guess to me

it does not have an effect, as you see so many paintings. Maybe it has something to do with which way I vote as well."

Keen to voice their opinions, some people were more than happy to go into depth about the Morales government: "Evo Morales has done so much for the Bolivian people and I believe he will do a lot more in the future unifying the nation. With the blue paintings I think it is important to get the political message out to the people, as for the paintings themselves, I always notice them".

Evo Morales has been the great hope for the poorer sections of Bolivian society since his election in 2006 when he won the presidency with a 60% majority, and became the first indigenous president. However, as Alistair Smout's article (Bolivian Express, August issue) has commented on, not all of Bolivia is united behind some of the policies that have been introduced.

The propaganda is intended to reassure those doubtful followers that the current government is fulfilling its promises. The 'masista' group called 'Los Satucos' are the group responsible for the blue 'MAS' propaganda around the city and one reoccurring theme is the face of el 'Che' Guevara, the revolutionary best known for his work in Cuba. His face recognisable all over Latin America, associated with revolution and change, and is thus the implicit message pumped to the Bolivian population through street art. Whilst the methods are different in Bolivia to those I am used to in Europe, there is no doubt that similar things do occur, simply in a different format and volume. The streets of La Paz are consequently a thriving space of activity, where no space remains silent for long. If all those painted faces could speak, it would no doubt drown out even the traffic of La Paz, and that is an achievement. (See article on p10)

# TRAFFIC JAM

Text: Sarah Lund

When arriving in La Paz the general chaos everywhere is one of the first things you notice. The city of La Paz is a pioneer for a traffic safety project. For the tourist new to Bolivia, the traffic is possibly the first cultural shock: the disarray of the traffic can look like a complete maze of confusion without rules or guidelines, but it is in fact a little more complicated than that.

As a spectator it is hard to see how the traffic can flow smoothly without traffic collisions and whilst they do occur they are nowhere near as common as one would expect. The traffic, and drivers seem to govern themselves despite the best attempts of the whistling police officers no government laws or regulations seem to have any impact on the way people drive. Whilst law 3988 does exist in attempt to control drivers and regulate the traffic it does not appear to have much affect on drivers jumping red lights or blocking intersections. All the noise and chaos of the traffic, and the police whistling, as well as the constant drone coming from minibuses of 'Prado, Perez, San Francisco, un boliviano!' make up the La Paz urban and 'acoustic' landscape.

We went out in the streets of La Paz to learn more about what the people actually think of the traffic:

'The traffic is complicated here, it is a big mess and there is no respect among the motorists. I think one of the reasons is that the drivers have no education in driving. The chaos may also be a consequence of the disorganisation. Every bus or truck is doing the same, driving in the same directions in the same roads. We need clear lines with different destinations to organise the traffic.'

The hectic traffic flow is fascinating in the way it can dominate the city. As there are no official bus stops, and there are so many ways to get from A to B, waiting at the side of street every passing vehicle competes for

your custom. There seem to be far too many Radio taxis for the number of people who actually use private transport, and to increase the numbers of taxis on the street still people walk around selling black and yellow taxi signs so that unofficial taxi drivers now also run the streets. The old U.S. style school buses defy the laws of physics as they struggle up and down hills through the narrow streets. They comfortably fit approximately 30 people in, but this roughly translates to if you can breathe then hop on! Probably the most popular and common form of public transport in La Paz are the minibuses. They run to all corners of the city and will stop anywhere for just about anyone. The minibuses are distinguishable by their colourful signs with their next stops in the windscreens. In theory therefore, all very easy and straightforward. Each minibus is run by a driver and co-driver, or *voceador*. The *voceador*'s primary objective is to drum up business for the bus, calling out endless names of places in the hope that eventually a passer by will be tempted. Their task then is to somehow get 1 Boliviano off every person, and hop on and off every couple of minutes making way for new passengers. The *voceador* can take the form of anyone, from fully adorned elderly *cholitas* to a young boy of eight years old! An ice cream man explained the role of the *voceadores* to us: 'The *voceadores* are shouting out the destination and also the prices for the trips to get attention. That is because of the competition between all the buses – they need to attract passengers and to announce themselves so people will get on their bus.'

The general approach towards traffic lights is that they are a guide. At peak times, in places like Plaza del Estudiante the traffic lights have been abandoned all together in favour of officious police with whistles. Another government measure brought to control the mayhem are the unique Zebra traffic wardens, which apart

from bringing a smile to your face, form human Zebra crossings as they stop oncoming traffic.

These 'zebra wardens' encourage drivers and pedestrians to respect, or at least acknowledge the laws and they are particularly beneficial for young children. These *cebras* are often students between the ages of 16 and 23 who, as well as studying spend 4 hours a day working with the traffic. Across the city there are around 120 *cebras* working every day. As well as their work on the streets, the *cebras* also go into schools, teaching future drivers the rules of the road, dressed of course in their 'paso de cebra outfits'! The outfits are basically a reflection of the paso de cebra, or zebra crossings colour scheme, and are thus the black and white suits that are around the whole city.

We managed to catch a couple of stray *cebras* in one of the most chaotic traffic spots in La Paz, plaza San Francisco:

'The job can sometimes be hard, and a lot of people have no gratitude or respect for our work, and still drive the way they drive, but at least it is warm in the outfit!'

'It can be rewarding and fun, and we try to be as happy as possible jumping around waving our stop, go signs about. We helps kids the most, and try to have as much fun with people as we can.'

Organising the La Paz traffic is one of the Gobierno Autónomo Municipal's primary objectives. The idea is to connect the city of La Paz with different bus lines and public buses to cut down on the sheer volume of traffic, and also to some extent control it. People have generally adapted to the traffic situation in La Paz, and whilst *paceños* aren't necessarily entirely happy with the chaos they appear to tolerate it!

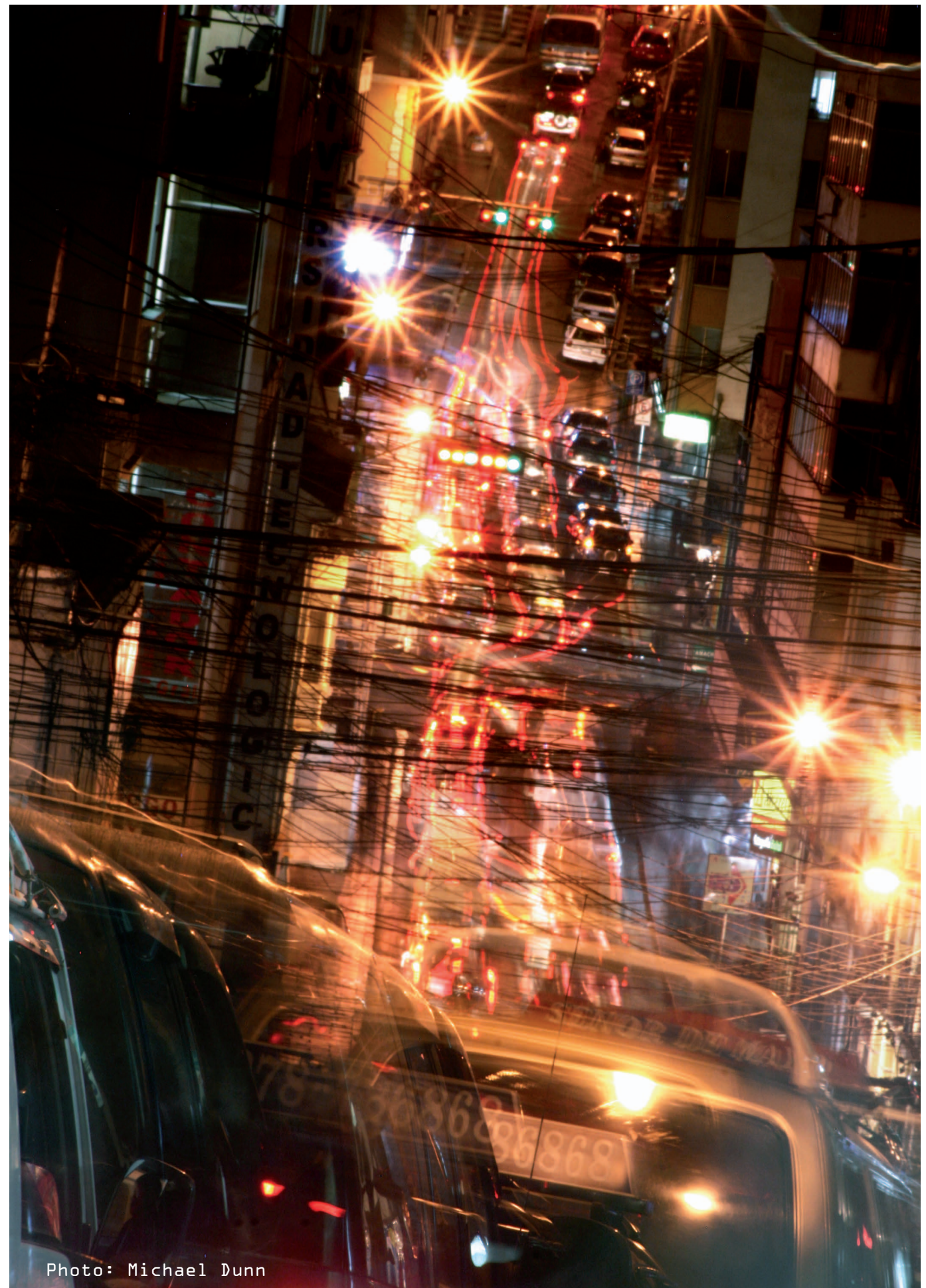


Photo: Michael Dunn



# STROKE OF GENIUS: HECTOR ANDRES NAVIGATES CHOPPY WATERS

Text: Jack Brooker  
Photos: Lorange Dao

AS a date with Bolivia's number one swimmer, Hector Andres, loomed, I naturally tried everything I could to find out as much as possible about him. Unfortunately 'Google' couldn't come up with the goods, and neither could 'Wikipedia'; in fact online there was next to nothing about Bolivian swimming, or even swimming in Latin America whatsoever. Thinking this was slightly strange for one of South America's top swimmers, I was starting to get rather sceptical about the man that I had been reliably informed was 'one of Bolivia's best'.

Like many other people in the UK,

pressive facility and sports complex in the 'Zona Sur', La Paz's richest suburb, and with Hector crammed in the boot she proudly showed us some of the silverware he had amassed in his young career. A considerable highlight was a wooden paddle which he had been given recently for winning a race on Lake Titicaca. As if to prove that swimming was more than just a very efficient way of not drowning, Hector changed and had a splash around in the pool, posing for some photos in the front crawl position with proficiency and panache befitting one of South America's finest. He eventually settled into position on the side of the pool,

knew who he was, or whether the press or media ever took any notice of what he was up to. He laughed this one off, simply saying 'I'm not a footballer!' In Bolivia it seems that to gain any kind of sporting fame you have to be a footballer, simply because it is the only sport which has regular television coverage and mass appeal. The same can be said in Europe, as football tends to be the only the sport which has year round media coverage, and thus the biggest most famous faces. But did he begrudge the media attention and wealth that footballers command? Despite the fact that he is arguably more successful, no Bolivian football player

At the same time as being a near enough full time athlete, he is also studying a gruelling engineering degree. Along with his coach, they build his schedule around his studies and his examination periods.

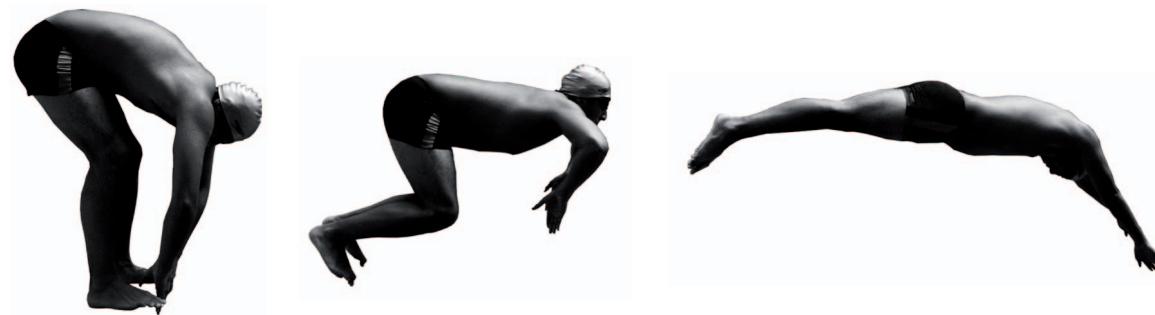
swimming only really appears on my radar once every four years, since for the first few days of the wall-to-wall Olympic coverage, swimming seems to be just about the only sport the Brits excel in, and thus gets ample BBC footage. Consequently, these four to five days are pretty much where my knowledge of swimming starts and ends, so in an attempt to sound clued-up to Bolivia's most famous water dweller, I called upon a very reliable source from back home to give me the low down on the world of swimming. Hector's mother drove us to the im-

and the interrogation began.

Unfortunately, what soon became clear was that the avid research I had conducted beforehand would be completely useless; as it turns out he is in fact an 'open water' swimmer, meaning that all the complex swim suit technology engineered to take milliseconds off times didn't apply to him at all, and all the research I had conducted about altitude training in the pool was completely redundant. Undeterred, I pressed him on what it was like to be a swimmer in Bolivia, whether anybody

could lay claim to being the third best on the continent! 'No, football is very competitive and difficult to become an important player, and also it is much easier to train and study when the media are not calling you for information.'

This level headed and reasoned approach revealed that at the same time as being a near enough full time athlete, he is also studying a gruelling engineering degree. He went on to explain the difficulty in balancing the student lifestyle with being an elite sportsman. Going out with his friends



was cited as the main sacrifice, since with early morning training sessions and regular competitions it was vital not to waste all the good work he has been putting in. So surely when you compete and train you have to miss classes from time to time? His response was that in reality studies come first, and along with his Cuban coach Orlando Valdez, they build his schedule around his studies and his examination periods. His basic schedule revolved around eating a lot and training around 2000-4000 metres per day in the pool. But surely this is completely different from your competitions? Answer: 'yes!' However, clearly the main difference is the water temperatures involved. During a race on Lake Titicaca a few weeks ago Hector swam in temperatures of 7°C, whereas the normal temperatures for competitors in Europe and elsewhere in the world are from 16-17°C. To combat these temperatures you have 'to swim very fast!' and also on a more practical level, lather your body up with Vaseline and a menthol solution, as well as again taking on vast amounts of food to keep the fat content up in your body. Astonished at how he could possibly function in these water temperatures without cramping I felt inexplicably compelled to tell him about my problems with my feet cramping every

time I went swimming...Needless to say this was not a problem he had ever experienced, but still seemed to have some sympathy for my curtailed career.

Knowing very little about open water swimming I wanted to find out more about the races themselves, so asked him whether there was much in the way of 'tactics' in the water, in other words 'fighting'. His eyes lit up as he then went into great detail about how 'holding your space' at the beginning was one of the most important parts of the race. 'There are judges but it is extremely difficult for them to see what happens under the water, so kicking someone who is just behind you can be made to look very accidental. To be honest the advice of my coach is to get ahead early and then get away from the pack, and then it is more about the swimming.' And it appears this tactic has brought him much success, judging not only by the weight of his medals basket, but also by the news that he has recently become the Bolivian record holder at 10km, swimming in a time of 1 hour 22 minutes in Tarija. Whilst this is nearly half an hour off the world times of the top athletes from Europe and the U.S.A. a Bolivian record is a Bolivian record, and when you consider

that he is essentially part time athlete, this is an impressive feat. I then quizzed him on the impact of the altitude on his times and also, crucially, on his competition, as people from the low lands come to compete in places like Tarija. He was keen to play down the impact of the altitude, saying that the water made for a slight altitude leveller, as for the science in this theory neither I nor he was sure, but he felt that he was at little to no advantage when competing in coastal races.

We finished our discussion with his eventual goals and ambitions in swimming. Next up are the Pan-American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico, which he hopes to qualify for. He does not hold high hopes for the London Olympics in 2012, as they are both a long way in the future, and daunting qualifying times loom. He then went on to describe how ultimately his studies in engineering, and getting a good job as a result of this degree would be what secures his financial security in the long run, not the swimming. It seems that this is the reality of most sports in Bolivia, unless you are a footballer it seems there always has to be a back up. In the fortunate case of Hector Andres, he has the chance to live the dream, before settling on a prestigious career as an engineer.

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## TALKING HEAT AT THE TOP

TEXT: LORANGE DAO

As the Copenhagen Climate Summit drew to an end in November 2009, among a growing sense of disillusionment, many countries, such as Bolivia and Venezuela, refused to sign the final agreement. A few months later, Evo Morales decided to organize an alternative climate summit set in Cochabamba – Conferencia Mundial de los Pueblos sobre el Cambio Climático y los Derechos de la Madre Tierra\*, CMPCC – to discuss and try to establish new objectives to save la Madre Tierra. Although some saw it as an alternative and more productive version of the Copenhagen summit, others just consider it as a somewhat commercial attempt to raise climate change awareness while neglecting other more social and economic issues related to the environment. For many, a certain dissatisfaction grew like mould around what was discussed not only during, but before the summit.

Several countries that dismissed the Copenhagen Agreement as a failure (Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba among them) came together in the Cochabamba to create a strong opposition movement against those who'd signed the agreement. More specifically though, their common adversaries were rich capitalist countries and what they represented. Amongst the many leaders Morales had invited, only Chávez was there to support him in his crusade against what they agreed lied at the root of all evil: capitalism. Why the other heads of state didn't show up is not entirely clear. While political unrest in his home country was the likely cause for Ortega's (the Nicaraguan President) absence, it seems other leaders were reluctant to attend a meeting where the capitalist system is singled out as the big bad wolf; especially after financial agreements these countries struck with the USA had recently helped them recover from economic crises.

As a product of these absences, the conference lost momentum on the international stage, and a degree of moderation (or the amount of it required to be taken seriously) was also lost among attendees. Try and picture this: one of the two international leaders attending the summit heads a state whose economy is almost

entirely reliant on oil-extraction. The other is a leader who infamously (ehm) opened a recent conference by claiming that eating chickens makes men gay, and on some other occasion announced that Coca Cola can make you go bald.

Another issue that arose during the conference was the creation of the unexpected 'mesa 18'. Seventeen working groups were planned in advance and the topics to be discussed were published on the net. However, many national and local issues had been sidelined from this programme and that's how the mesa 18 was born: groups of individuals and associations assembled to discuss said issues – such as the preservation of the Madidi National Park and the environmental impact of mining. Morales reprimanded them by claiming that they were in "an international event, it is not a debate about national issues [and you] are trying to make a parallel event out of it". In short, the event was marred by internal and external problems, perhaps highlighting the inherent complexity involved in tackling global issues when so many interests are at stake.

Despite all the above, it cannot be denied that Evo Morales's initiative makes a clear point about raising awareness not only for environmental issues, but for the urgency with which they need to be addressed. His environmental discourse is characteristically grounded in social issues, which he is well known for being sensitive to. For example, he has repeatedly emphasised the point that the people who most suffer from these issues have not been those responsible for bringing them about in the first place.

The World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth is perhaps more symbolic than pragmatic, as the proposals made are not attainable any time soon. We can only hope it will add force and a new flavour to the growing movement against climate-change scepticism.

\* World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth

*In Evo Comic contra el Calentamiento Global (Evo Comic against Global Warming), Juan Manuel Avilés\*\*, its author, shares his mixed opinion regarding the Cochabamba summit.*

**BX:** After reading your comic, it's not that obvious what your opinion is on the Cochabamba Climate Summit.

**JMA:** At the beginning, I thought it was a good thing that there should be an alternative summit because at Copenhagen they favoured a lot the big companies and the decisions taken mainly depended on the economic interests of those companies. But in the end, even if Cochabamba was supposed to be an alternative, no real proposals were made to change the situation; although they pointed at the capitalism system as being the responsible for the climate change they don't really differentiate themselves from it. For instance, nothing was said to solve typical and recurrent Bolivian issues such as the fires which take place every year in El Oriente: those fires happen because of the way the soil is cultivated and if it's so, it's because they want to exploit it as much as they can, regardless of the fact that this way of cultivating destroys all kind of protection against catastrophes such as fires.

**BX:** The comic you wrote and which Edson Viorel illustrated was produced before the summit. Does this mean that you already had an unfavorable opinion before even knowing what would result from it?

**JMA:** We already knew what was going to happen there, the matters which were going to be discussed as well as the final agreement because it was published on the internet. The only thing which was not known previously was the "mesa 18". We met several times here in La Paz with people who wanted to go to Cochabamba in order to introduce other matters which were not planned like, for instance, recycling or cleaning the Madeira river, or to expose some artistic points of view regarding the environment. That's why I wanted the comic to be ready before the summit, so that I could go and distribute it there. That's also why I didn't draw it myself - because I didn't have enough time.

**BX:** Do you think that Cancún is going to be different from Copenhagen?

**JMA:** I believe that the only way things can change is through lobbying and mass mobilization - although in Copenhagen, there already were a lot of protestors demonstrating. I don't expect anything from the politicians. The summit is something guided by politics and economics rather than the environment.

\*\*Juan Manuel Avilés is a painter and illustrator. He works as a freelance for NGOs and is illustrator for the magazine 'Pie Izquierdo'. He also is editor of 'El Estrobo'. <[www.migrantesclimaticos.blogspot.com](http://www.migrantesclimaticos.blogspot.com)>

IN AUGUST, 13 OF THE PROPOSALS WHICH CAME OUT OF COCHABAMBA - SUCH AS THE REJECTION OF THE CARBON MARKET AND THE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES BY 50% BY 2020 - WERE INCORPORATED INTO THE UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENT TO BE DISCUSSED IN CANCUN IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE SUMMIT'S OUTCOME.



*Victor Ariel Rivera Córdova studied Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts at the Escuela de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales of La Paz. He worked for Bolivian TV channels. He's currently finishing a degree in petroleum engineering. He went to the summit to film it for the CM-PCC.*

**BX:** What's your opinion after the summit?

**VARC:** There was a lack of real freedom because they tried to repress what was happening at the mesa 18 and also a lot of propagandizing for things which were not even related to the environment such as military recruitment... However, one good outcome was that people from different backgrounds and with different ideas and solutions met and shared their points of view - this is going to help change.

**BX:** What is your opinion about the summit in Cancun?

**VARC:** I don't believe anything is going to change at the time of putting proposals forward. However, let's hope that there's a good exchange of ideas between those who attend.

**BX:** What do you think about the 13 proposals introduced during the discussion?

**VARC:** Although these objectives are a bit unrealistic, I don't think they're overly exaggerated. It's only fair that poorer countries should demand such things since they suffer a lot from something they didn't contribute to creating.



# METALTURA

Text: Erick Trillo

Photo: Lorange Dao

Something that may slap you in the face when you arrive in La Paz is the seemingly impossible combination of western modernity and its various local antidotes. In a society where half the people retain many of their Aymara customs, and where most people still partake in pre-Columbine rituals, there is scant room for deviance from these powerful influences - both ancestral and contemporary. Moreover, due to a strong Catholic influence in the city's social and moral fabric, locals often exhibit a marked conservatism in their behaviour and tendencies, despite the seeming exuberance of traditional festivities (such as the entradas and carnival). One notable transgression can be found in 'los Metaleros'..

Metal arrived to La Paz in the early 80s, a likely product of the rebelliousness brought about by the demise of oppressive military dictatorships. **Paceños** were likely drawn to it through the violently powerful volume of its music, as well as by the cataclysmic spirit of destruction it brought with it. Besides, back in the day when black was the new black, it was important to be seen to be doing your thing for fashion. Perhaps even a hint of Latin American tough machismo needs to be summoned to explain the rise of this movement. The most influential bands of this decade were 'Sacrilegio' and 'Track' which proved to be icons for 'Metaleros' in La Paz at the time.

In an attempt to get closer to metal in La Paz we wanted to go to a live concert. One dark and lugubrious Friday evening we made our way to 'La Gri-feria' only to find, rather disappointingly, a completely empty bar. The owner explained that the municipality made him cancel all the gigs until November due to complaints from the party-pooing neighbours. The fatality of this venue meant that 'La Oveja Negra' (in El Alto) is probably the only true Metal pub still open with regular performances. Disappointed not to see a live metal concert, we contacted the local metal band 'Undead' for an interview. Founded in 2000, they've recently released a ten-track album 'Beyond the Soul', and even played a few songs for

us during the interview.

**BX:** What kind of metal do you play?

**UD:** There are many kinds of metal: heavy metal is the root but there are many other sub-genres. We play Dead Metal and Melodic Dead Metal and one of the main features of this style beyond the aggressive guitars is the guttural vocals.

**BX:** How did you decide to create the band?

**Jaime:** Marcelo and I met when we were young and we had the idea of forming a band. At the beginning, it was just us, and Marcelo didn't even have a drum so he played with a keyboard and assigned a different beat to each key. People kept on asking him if he played the keyboard in the band and he would say 'No, I'm the drummer!' After one of our first performances, at "La Kalaka", in 2001, we disbanded for a while: we had discussed which songs to play beforehand but on the night Marcelo was so nervous he kept on playing the wrong ones. After the third 'erroneous' song, I lost it and we fought in front of the whole audience! After that we decided it was time to split. In 2007 we got together again and found three guys who wanted to play with us. We then played at "Sur Metal Fest" and shortly afterwards we lost our guitar player, and met Boris who's been in the band ever since.

**BX:** What do you think about the status of metal in Bolivia?

**UD:** It's growing. A few years ago, you always met the same people at metal gigs but nowadays, there are more and more people who like metal. However, it's still mostly an underground scene and still logistically difficult to organise. For example at the 'Illimani Metal' concert the organiser had to fill in loads of forms for just a 5 hour set, but if a 'Cumbia' or 'Reggaeton' group performs, it's considered less of a problem. Bolivian society is still not open to metal but I believe that it's the only kind of music which goes beyond time. I mean, if today people listen to Hanna Montana, tomorrow they'll listen to

Selena Gomez but Metal never dates, if 15 years ago you listened to 'AC/DC' or 'Sepultura' in 20 years time people will still appreciate the music.

**BX:** So how did you each start in Metal?

**Marcelo:** I began playing the keyboard and the bass and then I fell in love with the drums when I was 14. The first song I played on the drums was 'Mutilación'. But as Jaime said, I began 'drumming' with a keyboard. I bought my first drum kit 8 years ago for \$500 and I'm still playing it.

**Jaime:** At the age of 6 I was interested in the saxophone but then saw my first metal video and knew I wanted to be a rocker with long hair! The first song I played on the guitar was Nirvana's 'Come as you are'. My parents weren't keen on me playing the guitar so, at 13, I began saving money: I used to pretend I was going out so they would give me money and I spent the whole evening sitting on a bench until it was late enough to go back home. After a few months, I'd saved \$80. I asked my father to take me to the guitar shop and after he saw \$80 was just enough to buy the cheapest guitar, he gave in and bought me a \$280 Washburn. To begin with we played at friends' parties, then friends' of friends, and we progressed. In the end, my parents accepted it but I still studied because

of them. Nowadays, I like my job but my real passion is music.

**Boris:** My family has always been really into music, so I began studying it when I was 8. At the beginning I was a pianist, a real one not a fake one, and I have used many keyboards in my life! My first band was 'Nordic Wolves.' Now I play the guitar with these guys and I feel very comfortable playing with them because they are very spontaneous and we completely understand each other.

**BX:** What does metal mean to you?

**UD:** Our lives are based on metal, of course we have to have something else beyond music, but the main thing in our everyday life is music, so sooner or later we hope to be able to make a living from it but we know that here in Bolivia it is nearly impossible so we have our professions for financial stability.

**BX:** One controversy surrounding metal is 'Mosh', can you explain it?

**UD:** 'Mosh' is the most elemental expression of 'Metalero' feeling, it is basically having fun listening to the music but it can get pretty aggressive and the 'moshing' depends on the type of band and music.

**BX:** You sing in English. Do you worry that people won't understand?

**UD:** It's easier to write and sing in English. In Spanish, it's more difficult to find the right words and the lyrics are always secondary anyway, and it is more about the sound, so no!

**BX:** Is music a way of life in Bolivia?

**UD:** Music here is always just going to be a hobby. Money is the biggest problem for Bolivian artists and unfortunately musicians will always need a back up income until they go 'international'.

## The Undead:

- \* Diego Machicao (30) Vocals and Anthropologist
- \* Marcelo Escobar (29) Drummer and Psychologist
- \* Jaime Zambrana (29) Lead Guitar and a Systems Engineer
- \* Boris Algrañas (30) Second Guitar and Industrial Engineer
- \* Mario Castro (30) Bass guitar and Psychologist

## Contact information:

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undeadbolivia@gmail.com

## Online links:

animaprod.blogspot.com  
myspace.com/animaband3

## YAAAAY! OR RATHER, BOOOOOO! HALLOWEEN IS COMING.

Let's dress up and eat nasty sweets until our teeth fall out to celebrate this popular event rooted in a mixture of traditional celebrations from around the world such as the Celtic festival of Samhain and the Christian holiday All Saints' Day (otherwise known in Mexico as the Day of the Dead). Depending on where you are\*, here in Bolivia you can find the same sort of stuff you'd see in other countries: although barely any kids will be out trick-or-treating, a lot of parties will be held around town and one of the requirements is obviously for you to come dressed as zombies, witches, werewolves, or anything else which strikes that curious imbalance between scary/sexy/expensive-looking. Wherever you are, Halloween is usually a lot of fun and this year is going to be even better: THE zombie walk will be held here in Bolivia.

For those who don't know, the zombie walk is an organized public gathering where people dress up as zombies. Usually the participants make their way around

the city streets scaring/amusing anyone foolish enough to cross paths with them. The first zombie walk was held on August



19, 2001 in Sacramento, California. This 31 October, it's going to take place here in

La Paz and at the end of the walk some local bands will perform live. This is going to be an unforgettable Halloween.

To join the walk you just need to be at the Plaza Bicentenario at 4pm all dressed up as a zombie (loo-paper/ketchup improvisation welcome - witches unwelcome). If you need help with your make-up just come an hour before and someone will infect you. Also, charity fundraising is the common denominator of zombie walks and this one is no different, if you want to join the walk don't forget to bring some food and/or clothing to donate to a charitable institution.

\* As an alternative, venture up to the Cementerio General to watch processions of people mourning their deceased loved ones. Expect anthropomorphic bread with clay masks (Tantawawas) and lots of wailing.

Text: Catarine Silveira Pinheiro

# LOMO BORRACHO

Text: Camile Reltien



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ kilos of beef filet without grease or nerves
- 4 spoonfuls of oil
- 1 bottle of beer or 4 teacups of dry red wine
- 2 onions finely chopped longitudinally
- 1 ½ cups of tomatoes chopped in slivers
- Salt and ground pepper (as much as you feel is necessary)
- 1 teaspoon of finely chopped oregano
- 2 tablespoons of chopped parsley
- 4 or 5 peppers (red, yellow or green) cut in slivers
- 2 bouillon cubes (Maggi) meat flavor, diluted in ½ cups of water
- 2 tablespoons of chopped mint
- 2 tablespoons of chopped celery leaves

## PREPARATION

Cut the meat into thick slices in medallion form. Butter them a bit. In a frying pan put some oil to fry the meat, when it starts letting out juice turn the piece over and add salt and pepper. Put the fried meat in a large pot. Do not throw out the oil in which you have just fried the meat!! In this oil, put the onion, tomato, peppers and parsley. When everything is browned, add it to the meat. Then add the beer, and the diluted bouillon cubes. Let it cook for another 10 to 20 minutes. You can serve this dish accompanied with rice or potatoes.

## GLOSSARY

- Borracho** Drunk
- Cumbia** Latin American musical style that originated in Colombia's Caribbean region
- Desarrollo** Development
- Lomo** Filet steak
- Madre Tierra** Mother Earth
- Más** More, but here MAS is Morales' party: el Movimiento Al Socialismo
- Masista** Follower of the MAS
- Mesa** Table
- Paceño** Citizen of La Paz/relating to La Paz
- Pollera** Skirt but mostly the typical Cholita skirt
- Reggaeton** Form of predominantly Latin urban music
- Salud** Cheers!
- Satuco** Quick-witted
- Todo va a cambiar** Everything is going to change

Photo: Lorange Dao

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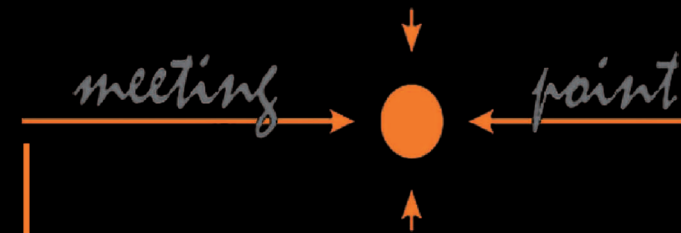
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