BolivianExpress

Gratis

Magazine

Time

#57

WWW.BOLIVIANEXPRESS.ORG
57
Bolivia's Foremost English-language Publication

Directors: Amaru Villanueva Rance and Ivan Rodriguez Petkovic. **Partners:** Jack Kinsella, Xenia Elsaesser, Sharoll Fernandez.
Editorial Team: William Wroblewski, Matthew Grace,Juan Victor Fajardo. **Editorial Coordinator:** Sophia Vahdati
Web and Legal: Jack Kinsella.**Printing and Advertising Manager:** Ivan Rodriguez Petkovic.
Commercial Manager: Rodrigo Barrenechea. **General Coordinator:** Wilmer Machaca. **Head of Production:** Valeria Wilde.
Domestic Coordinator: Virginia Tito Gutierrez. **Head of Design and Photography:** Michael Dunn Caceres
Photography Instructor: Alexandra Meleán A. **Journalists:** Anna Grace, J.Q. Cooley, Nikolaus Hochstein Cox
Our Cover: Model: Nikolaus Hochstein, Ph. Alexandra Meleán A **Bolivian Express would like to thank:** ICÓNICA SRL, Sophia Aitken **Marketing:** Rodrigo Barrenechea **Advertise With Us:** rodrigo@bolivianexpress.org. **Address:** Calle Prolongación Armaza, # 2957, Sopocachi, La Paz. **Phone:** 78862061 - 79658778 - 70672031 **Contact:** info@bolivianexpress.org

La Paz – Bolivia,
December 2015

:BolivianExpress **@Bolivianexpress**
www.bolivianexpress.org

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

BX 57: TIME

In parts of Bolivia and across the Andes in general, one can learn to see time as through a mirror. After spending your life 'looking forward' to the future, or 'thinking back' to the past, taking in the view of some of the locals here just may turn you around.

Rafael Núñez is a professor at the Department of Cognitive Science at the University of California, San Diego. He has spent years studying the languages and gestures of the Aymara – one of the two main ethnic groups in the Andes – in Bolivia, Peru and Chile. In a famous study carried out 10 years ago, he visited regions of rural Chile interviewing monolingual Aymara speakers as well as bilingual Aymara and Spanish speakers. Taking care to note physical gestures as well as use of language, he noticed a few interesting things about the way his interviewees communicated notions of time.

For one, when referencing the past, the Aymara speakers tended to gesture forward, extending their arm further and further in front of them as they moved deeper into the past. As they discussed the future of their children, they flicked their thumbs back, over their shoulders. The same notions are apparent in Aymara vocabulary. **Nayra** is the word for 'past', which can be translated as 'eye', or 'sight'. Conversely, 'future' is written as **q'ipa**, often translated as 'behind' or 'back'.

Nearly all understandings of time are constructed using metaphors of space, in which a person moves forward, with the future approaching. In nearly all cultures, a person is perceived by moving in this way through time, with the past behind him and the future laying ahead. But here, high in the Andes, this may not be the case.

And this approach to understanding time makes a lot of sense. Memory is its own kind of vision, supplying us with a rich (though perhaps flawed) resource to understand and see what has happened in our lives. Meanwhile, the future may seem a dark, mysterious void, a big unknown.

Perhaps we are walking backwards through time after all.

In this issue of Bolivian Express, we thought about 'time', and how it affects ourselves and the places we inhabit. We wrote about people and places that, on the surface, it seems time forgot. We explored deep into Bolivia's history, to a time before humans, to the age of the dinosaurs. And we visited more relatively recent times, writing of the rich history of Bolivia's pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial past. And we wrote about some of the most important histories being written today, as significant changes in the role of women are being forged across the country.

In June 2014, the Bolivian government famously reversed the clock on its congress building on **Plaza Murillo** in La Paz. It's hands now turn in a counterclockwise direction, and its numbers are reversed, with the number 1 to the left of the 12. A political act for certain – serving as a bold statement of southern identity and seen by many as a big symbolic step in Bolivia's process of decolonization. Here in Bolivia, it may just make sense. Time does mean something different here, and we hope this issue helps you see and enjoy this mirrored point of view.

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

By William Wroblewski

CASA fusión

www.casafusion.com.bo

Email: gerencia@casafusion.com.bo
Calle Miguel de Cervantes 2725
Entre Mendez Arcos y Vincenty
Tel.:591 22141372
La Paz – Bolivia

SHAMROCK

Irish pub

20 DE OCTUBRE AV. ACROSS AVAROA SQUARE. LOOK FOR THE SHAMROCK

i.e.

language institute

LEARN SPANISH HERE

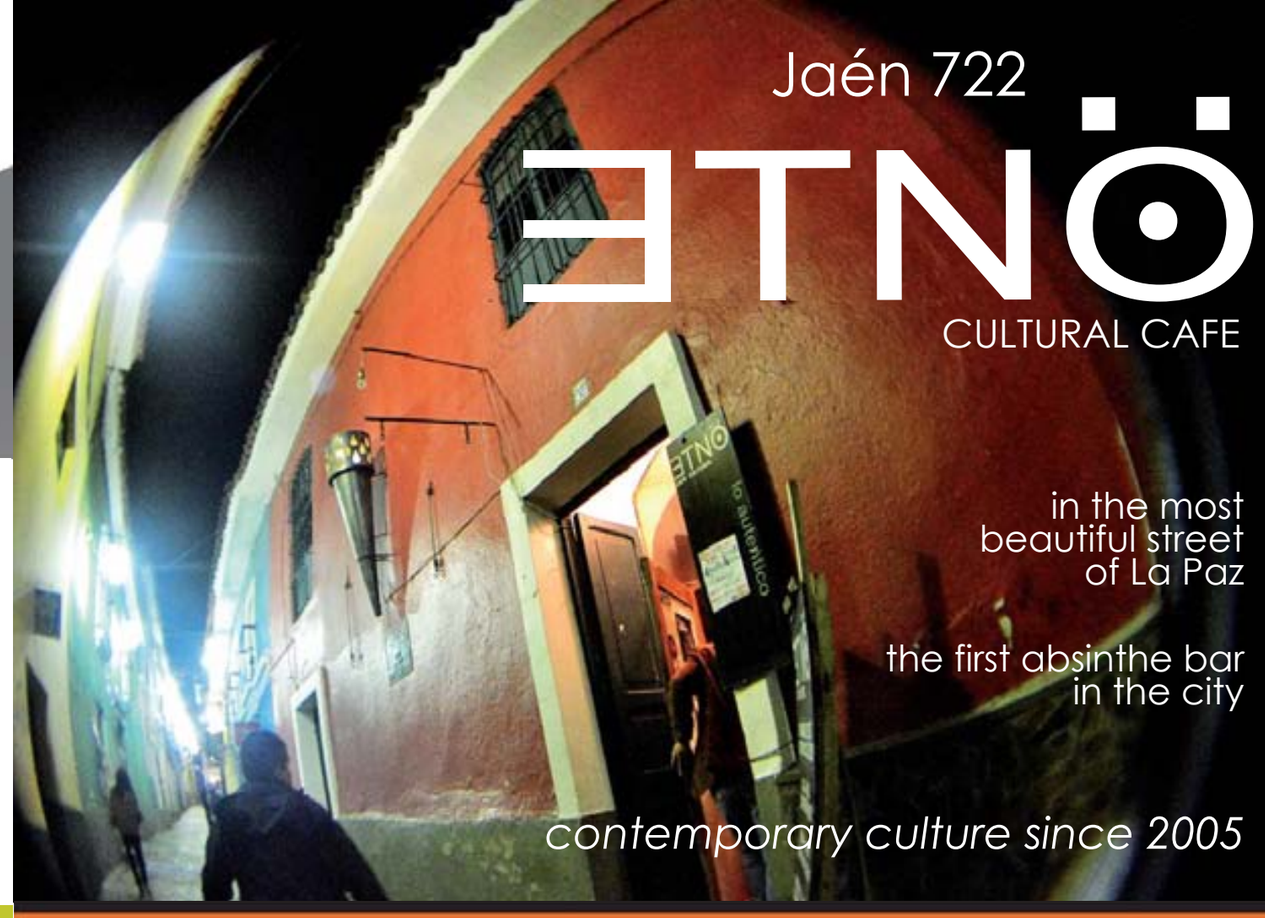
- Personalised classes
- Flexible schedules
- Survival Spanish
- DELE preparation

www.instituto-exclusivo.com

www.facebook.com/institutoexclusivolapaz

info@instituto-exclusivo.com

DELE e



Jaén 722

ƎTNÖ

CULTURAL CAFE

in the most beautiful street of La Paz

the first absinthe bar in the city

contemporary culture since 2005

LAYKA

Restaurant

Bolivian Andean Cuisine

Llama steak

Andean stretched pig

KALA KAITO

would u dare to finish it?

Andean Buffet

15 bolivian beer choices

Exotic Bolivian Cocktail Bar

daily Live Folk Shows

Happy Hour 6:30 8:30

free shots every hour

Sagárnaga st. & Linares st. corner

2 blocks above Sn. Francisco's church

laykarestaurant@gmail.com (591-2) 246 09 03 - (591) 777 47 247

Quality tradition

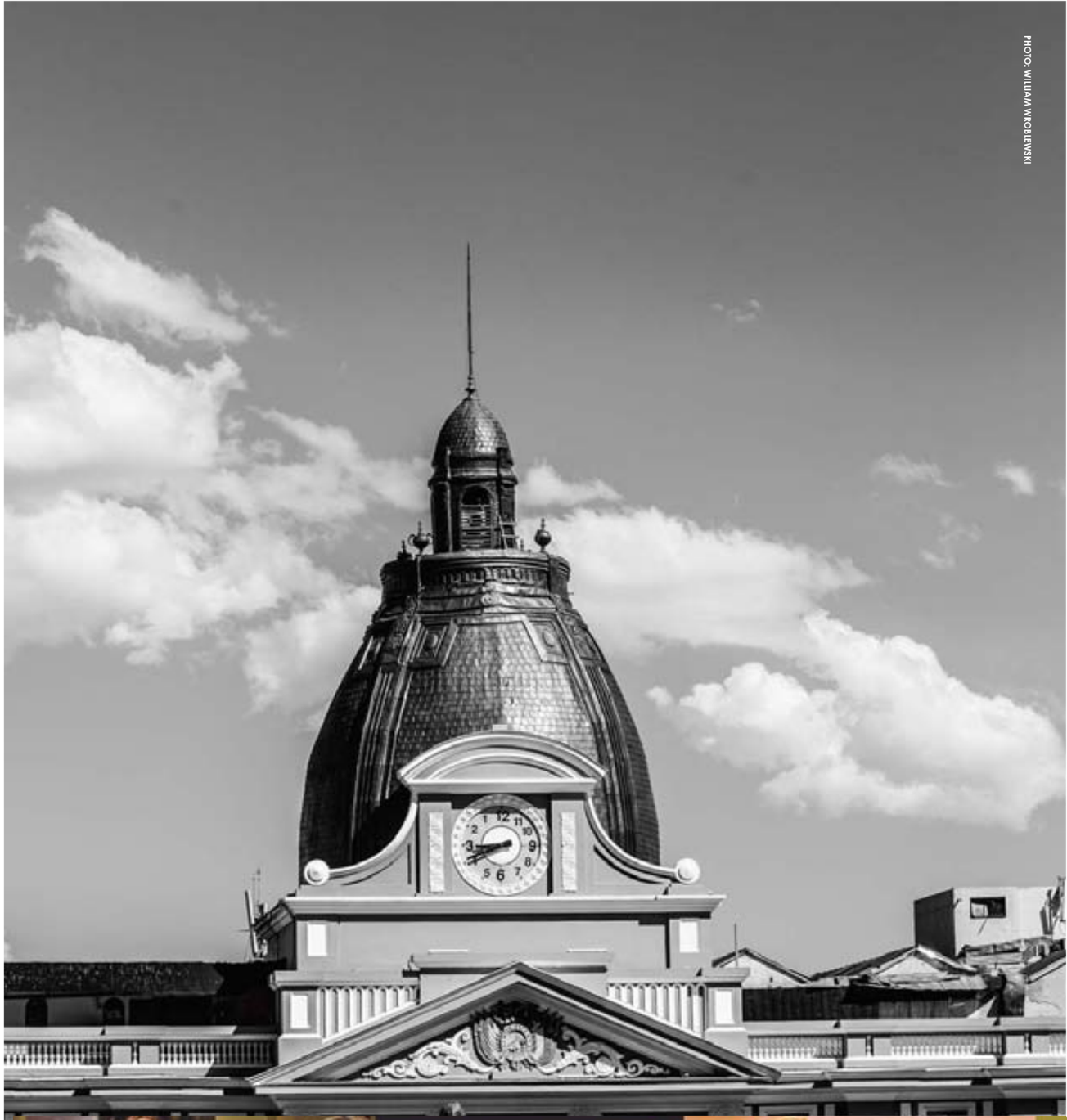
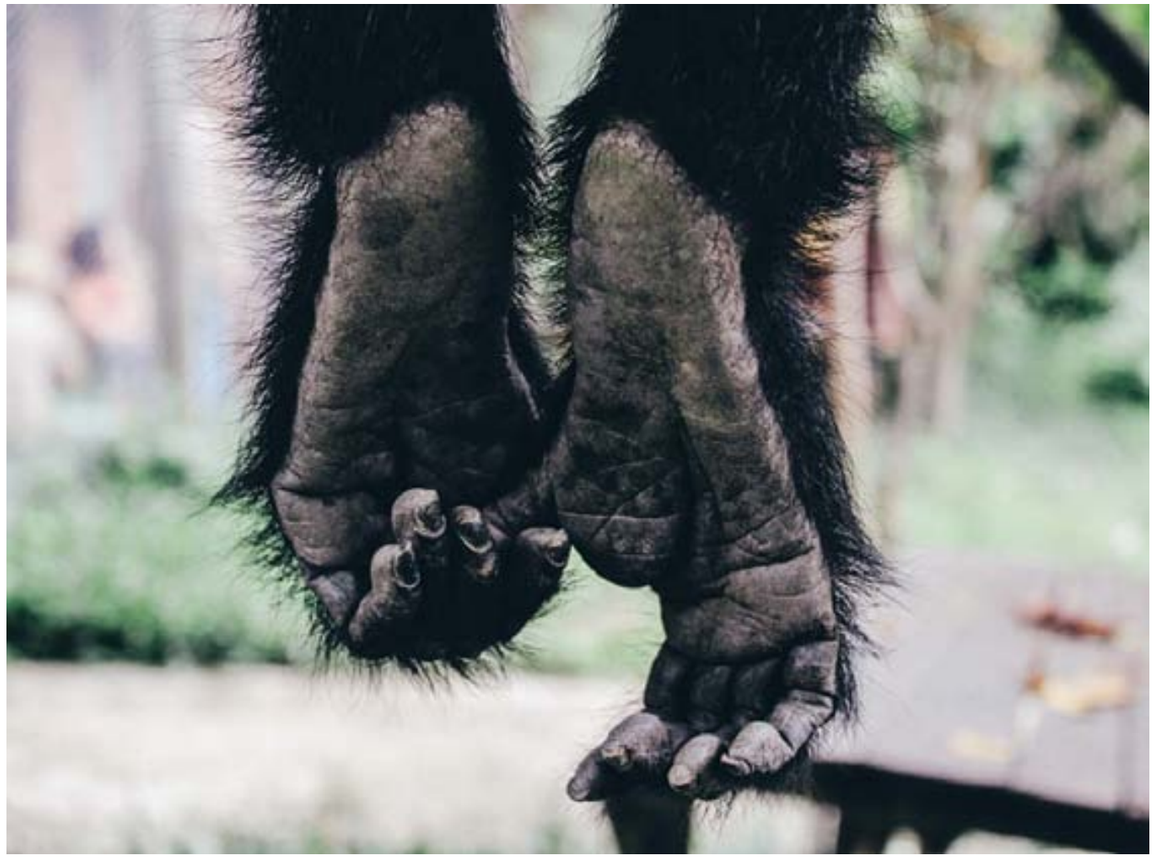


PHOTO: WILLIAM WROBLEWSKI



THE AGE OF THE ANIMALS

ANIMALS AROUND BOLIVIA SUFFER DAILY IN THE BLACK MARKET. BOLIVIAN EXPRESS VISITED ONE PLACE THAT REHABILITATES THESE ORPHANS OF THE JUNGLE.

TEXT AND PHOTOS : NIKOLAUS COX

Author's Note: *Upon entering Sende Verde, a wildlife refuge in the North Yungas, I thought of Rudyard Kipling, who authored numerous stories from the perspective of animals which reflected the positive relationship between wild creatures and mankind. At Sende Verde, I saw the negative side of interaction between humans and animals, and thought to replicate his literary style to illustrate this sometimes devastating relationship.*

* * *

IN the Not-So High and Far-Off Times, O Best Beloved, I was struggling to sleep in a **cabaña** upon the banks of the Yolosa River. I was getting used to the humidity of the Yungas, the alpine cloud forest of Bolivia, and found it profound here at Senda Verde, an animal refuge in the heart of a verdant valley.

At once I heard voices beyond the mosquito mesh, and I set forth to investigate, for I knew I would not sleep this night. It was with surprise that I found Senda Verde's animals in deep conversation not far from where I lay.

Colonel the parrot was protesting that when he had been poached from his rainforest to be sold as a pet, they had broken his wings to prevent him from flying. It would never be the same, he squawked indignantly. And I saw how indeed his right wing pointed unnaturally heavenwards, at right angles over his left.

Balu the howler monkey spoke. When poachers had taken him he had still been an infant upon his mother's back. But the way Man acquires baby monkeys for the black market is to shoot the mother. He had clung so desperately to her body when people attempted to pry him loose he had broken two fingers, and he now shewed the mangled digits to all assembled.

Tipnis the manic, spectacled bear stirred and all eyes fell onto her. Her tale all knew but she would regardless repeat it. Her mother, brother and herself had once walked into a part of the forest that was no longer forest, and had been chased by Man and his dogs. Man had killed her brother and kept Tipnis as a pet.

At last Maruka, the spider monkey with broken jaw and nose, entered the circle carrying an infant monkey in her arms. Maruka did not talk of personal ills but held the sleeping baby aloft. She softly explained – so as to not wake the baby – that when poachers had killed its mother, she had fallen from the tree onto the infant, leaving her legs immobile.

All animals hung their heads, for they mourned every arrival at Senda Verde. But Maruka concluded on a note strangely ebullient. Since coming to Senda Verde the baby was starting to regain some control over her legs – these animals' lives may never be the same, but at least it was better than out there, in the Age of Man.

* * *

THE rest of Bolivia is found upon the Yolosa River's opposite shore. Since the country is one of South America's poorest, the government is invested in revitalising the economy: through forestry, road building or land clearing for plantations. These actions deprive many animals of their homes, but whilst the government morally supports refuges that rehabilitate animals displaced by industry and poaching, commercial exploitation of the natural environment continues – there is no economic benefit in preserving animals. For this reason, the government provides no funding to the few places across Bolivia that care for the orphans of the jungle.

The tragedy of this epoch of exploitation is that the black market persists unabated. Senda Verde's animals nominally belong to the government, and there are organisations that scour **El Alto** markets for smuggled creatures, yet all action is after the fact. There exist no institutions to prevent poachers from stripping the rainforest of wildlife.

The majority of animals taken become household pets. But pet owners do not know the events surrounding these animals' acquisition – indeed, for every baby monkey brought in, a mother is left dead in the forest. And, as is often the case with high-maintenance pets, owners can tire of them, subjecting them to abuse, keeping them in ill-fitting cages and feeding them improperly.

All animals hung their heads, for they mourned every arrival at Senda Verde.

Senda Verde cares for a constant influx of animals, currently numbering 530, and the black market is as strong as ever. Only 10 percent of poached animals survive captivity, making the orphans of Senda Verde lucky representatives of thousands of dead creatures. Add into the equation those animals in other refuges, kept as pets or still languishing in the black market, and the scope of the problem becomes evident: Tens of thousands of animals vanished from their native environment, unable to reproduce and sustain the wild population.

The reintroduction of captured animals into the wild is illegal. They could spread foreign bacteria into the ecosystem, if they are not killed by their own kind, and they are too human-dependant to survive on their own. For them, their best hope is to end up in a natural habitat like Senda Verde, under the dedicated care of the refuge's owners, Vicky and Marcello, and their team of vets, caretakers and volunteers. For while it is the exploitative Age of Man in greater Bolivia, it remains the Age of the Animal at Senda Verde.

* * *

HERE, the animals have a level of power foreign elsewhere in Bolivia. The first thing one sees in Senda Verde is the 'human cage' – an enclosed walkway. It is from within this that tourists may see the animals, in order to limit human interaction with them. Most of the animals are free to roam the entire length of Senda Verde. The old eco-lodge's swimming pool, along with a house, has been given over to the monkeys. Here, humans are second-class citizens, servants to a multi-species leisure class, making sure the creatures are warm by night and fed by day, and helping new arrivals – like the crippled baby spider monkey – regain some semblance of their wild lives.

These animals would not have lived naturally this way, but it is better than out in the Age of Man. At Senda Verde, in the Age of the Animal, they can be free from fear and want – they can be safe.

PROTECTING BOLIVIA'S RESOURCES

BIOCENTRO GÜEMBÉ OFFERS A PEEK INTO WILD BOLIVIA WHILE SECURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

TEXT : BX TEAM
PHOTO: RODRIGO SEBASTIÁN URZAGASTI

In the wild, time can stop. Being in nature offers a much-needed respite the modern person. Güembé Biocenter and Resort, located just 20 minutes from the city center of Santa Cruz, offers visitors a Bolivian experience beyond the cities and away from the footprints of modernity. In this place, one can take in natural wonders in comfort, while supporting programs to both protect the wild and to economically support local communities.

Bolivian Express caught up with Güembé founder and owner Carlos Reznicek to learn more about what this place has to offer. He was eager to share the important work the centre is doing to protect wildlife and local communities, and encouraged any interested visitors to come to Güembé to experience places and creatures that modern times often leave aside, and to help in the quest to give the natural wonders of Bolivia a brighter future.

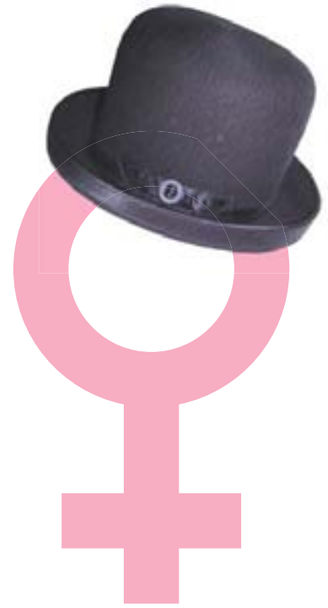
What is the Güembé Biocenter and Resort?
Biocentro Güembé is a 24-hectare bio-park surrounded by exotic plants, lush forests and native animals of the region. It is a place of complete harmony between man and nature. Our mission at the park is to preserve Bolivia's natural and cultural riches, improve the social environment and develop local human resources by promoting healthy recreation and responsible interaction with, and conservation of, nature.

The Biocenter has a focus on biodiversity. What do you believe sets you apart from other initiatives?
There are ten main attractions here at Güembé. We have an aviary, a turtle nursery, a monkey island, a swamp, an organic garden, an insectarium, a butterfly sanctuary, a meliponary, a terrarium and our Evoluseum, where visitors can learn about the natural history of the region. I want to talk about two of them. Not because they are the most important, but because I think they really reflect our day-to-day work, and where I think we really stand out.

Our turtle nursery is nestled in a natural ravine. The turtles are not always easy to spot, but that is because they are living in semi-captivity. We try to keep our animals in these wild environments to guarantee a better life. Güembé is home to more than 100 turtles, mostly recovered by the General Directorate of Biodiversity, Bolivia's highest authority on issues surrounding flora and fauna. In an area of 2800 square meters we have created a habitat where many species of birds thrive. We supply them with a balanced diet based on the local natural ecosystem. We compliment this with an environmental enrichment program that limits the amount of stress on the animals. In the aviary we keep about 120 birds of 25 different species, which aren't in a condition which would allow us to reintroduce them into the wild. Last year, the Environmental Unit of the departmental government recognised our work and commitment in taking care of wildlife seized and rescued from illegal trafficking.

In recent years there has been an increase in tourism in Bolivia, as more travelers come here as a destination. How do you see this benefiting the natural spaces of Bolivia, and what role does Güembé have in this process?
In our efforts to develop alternative forms of tourism that are harmonious with nature, and working towards the operation and diversification of the enjoyment of natural resources in a responsible way, we have set out to create a model of economic, social and cultural progress. We believe it is possible to generate tangible and intangible benefits to local communities and to society as a whole on our work by integrating not only the people who visit us, but also the people from neighbouring communities. And I think we are succeeding.

How has the resort changed over the years? What is available for visitors to enjoy?
Apart from its natural attractions (based on the sustainable enjoyment of flora and fauna through the use of sustainable energy and waste recycling), we also offer amenities such as a spa, lodging and food, all aimed at fostering a culture of conservation through the promotion of knowledge and appreciation. To this effect, we carry out educational and social responsibility programmes which set us apart as a company committed not only with nature and tourism, but with society as a whole. ×



TIME FOR CHANGE

THE STRIVE FOR GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE PLURINATIONAL STATE

TEXT : ANNA GRACE

From documents demanding change to **señoras** selling cheese: the fight for equality can be undertaken in many ways. I explore two very different approaches to empowering women in Bolivia.

I am standing in a small tranquil garden in the **Sopocachi** neighbourhood of La Paz, surrounded by chattering, music and laughter. This is **La Casa de los ningunos**, and today is market day. Stalls of freshly grown herbs, recently dug-up potatoes, marvellously organic vegetables and dangerously tempting cheeses make up the **feria**. Shiny, a deep purple in colour and fresh as anything, the aubergine I hold in my hand is far superior to any I have found so far in the local supermarket. I tell this to the woman who sells it to me. She smiles. 'We're here every Saturday. Come back next week for more.' The pride she takes in the product is understandable, having grown it herself. Yet for the mostly female vendors of the *feria*, this is much more than a mere weekend hobby.

Patriarchy, sexism, machismo – however you wish to call it, the underlying sentiment is the same: gender inequality.

'We want them to recognise themselves as women, to see how valuable they really are.' Joey Astorga and Lorena de la Torre of International Citizen Service (ICS), the organisation behind the project, talk to me about their work with the women of **El Alto**. 'We try to empower women through urban agriculture, ' Joey says, explaining how they build the vegetable gardens, which enable these women to earn a living. Isolated, poor and often raising their children single-handedly, the women the project helps can rely on their own products to feed their families, generating an income at the same time. Each weekend, the sellers earn around 600 bolivianos each. Additionally, the project runs workshops dealing with violence against women and sexual harassment, as well as teaching the women about their rights and the importance of contraception. The project educates and supports individual women, leaving a very positive impact on their lives. On a personal scale, the project works wonders; yet to tackle gender inequality in society as a whole, a different approach is required.

'The biggest obstacle which Bolivian women face,' Elizabeth Salguero, an expert strategist at UN Women Bolivia, tells me, 'is the patriarchal society.' Patriarchy, sexism, **machismo** – however you wish to call it, the underlying sentiment is the same: gender inequality. Salguero's group have helped draft a document that recommends policies and laws to help better the situation of women living in Bolivia. It was recently presented to the government.

A positive step is made towards a brighter, more equal future, a future in which gender discrimination – in all its forms – can be ousted from the Bolivian way of life.

Salguero sums up the work of her organisation: '[UN Women] tries to be a bridge between the state and civil society. It tries to establish a dialogue, to find out how we can work to empower women and, therefore, to achieve gender equality.'

A bridge – this is exactly what is needed, a way of uniting strategy and the people it is destined to help. The document recently presented to the government looks to facilitate this union, to improve the everyday lives of women in all parts of Bolivia. Yet, I ask myself, how feasible is it to convert strategy into action and how far can policy go towards achieving the goal of a truly gender-equal society?

Female empowerment – that is undoubtedly the aim of both projects, but the difference lies in the approach. A practical supply of aid, hands-on interaction and an emphasis on communication and education: the work of ICS produces a visible change in the lives of the women they deal with. Inevitably, though, they cannot reach out to all those who need their help. The national agenda of UN Women attempts to include all women, to empower all women. Its demands are well presented, rigorously researched; yet, with a scale so large, it is difficult to tell whether anyone is being helped at all.

Projects such as those by ICS and UN Women are making important steps towards the ending of discrimination, towards changing sexist attitudes and norms, towards achieving a safer society for all Bolivian women. Salguero spoke about a 'triple discrimination' which occurs due to 'being poor, being indigenous and being a woman.' In Bolivia, where nearly half the population lives below the poverty line and almost two-thirds of inhabitants are indigenous, the struggle is real. However, progress is being made in every policy changed, in every person educated and in every aubergine sold in that market; a positive step is made towards a brighter, more equal future, a future in which gender discrimination – in all its forms – can be ousted from the Bolivian way of life. It seems that it is time for change, and that time is now.

HISTORY IN HATS

HISTORY CAN BE TOLD IN MANY WAYS: THROUGH STORIES, PHOTOS, AND EVEN HATS. A HAT CAN SPEAK FATHOMS ABOUT THE HEAD IT COVERED AND THE WORLD-CHANGING EVENTS THAT IT WITNESSED.

TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS: NIKOLAUS COX

BOLIVIAN INDEPENDENCE

After a series of independence wars across South America, the revolutionary army of Gran Colombia, under the command of Antonio José de Sucre, defeated the last royalist forces in Upper Peru - modern day Bolivia. The independence of Bolivia marked the end of Spanish rule in South America.

Shako of Gran Colombian Infantry soldiers, who served under Sucre during the war for Upper Peru.

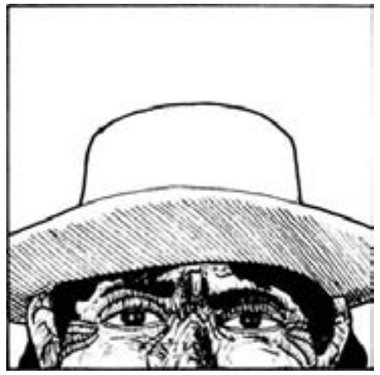
1825

THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC

Disputes over territorial claims and mining rights in the Atacama desert provoked a four-year war between a Bolivian-Peruvian alliance and Chile. The war concluded in Bolivia losing the department of Litoral and access to the sea. Bitterness over this loss of land still informs relations between Chile and Bolivia today.

Kepi of Bolivia's Colorado Battalion, involved in many of the greatest battles of the war.

1879-83



THE CIVIL/ FEDERAL WAR

Due to the social marginalisation of indigenous people and the loss of their land to the expansion of white and **mestizos haciendas**, Bolivian Army Colonel Pablo Zárate Wilka led the largest indigenous uprising up till that point. Whilst frightening the ruling class, it ultimately resulted in the further isolation of indigenous people from national life.

The iconic sun hat of Pablo Zárate Wilka, which he wore during the insurrection.

1898-99

THE CHACO WAR

The conflict for control of the Chaco Boreal territory, fought between Bolivia and Paraguay, was the bloodiest South American war of the twentieth century. Bolivia suspected the region was oil-rich and invaded the land, which was claimed by both nations, with the financial backing of Standard Oil and European commanders. Despite having a fighting force superior in numbers and technology, the guerilla strategy of the Paraguayans and the low morale of Bolivia's indigenous conscripts saw the latter's defeat and loss of territory in 1935.

Field cap of the Bolivian infantry, based on the German feldmütze, for much of the Bolivian armament was bought from Germany.

1932-35

THE NATIONAL REVOLUTION

After the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) came to power, it moved against former conservative policies and practises of previous autocratic regimes. MNR established universal suffrage, which increased the number of eligible voters from 200,000 to nearly one million, including indigenous populations. The movement implemented agricultural reforms and nationalised the tin mines, putting them into the hands of the Bolivian state.

Helmet of the tin miners, a powerful symbol of The National Revolution.

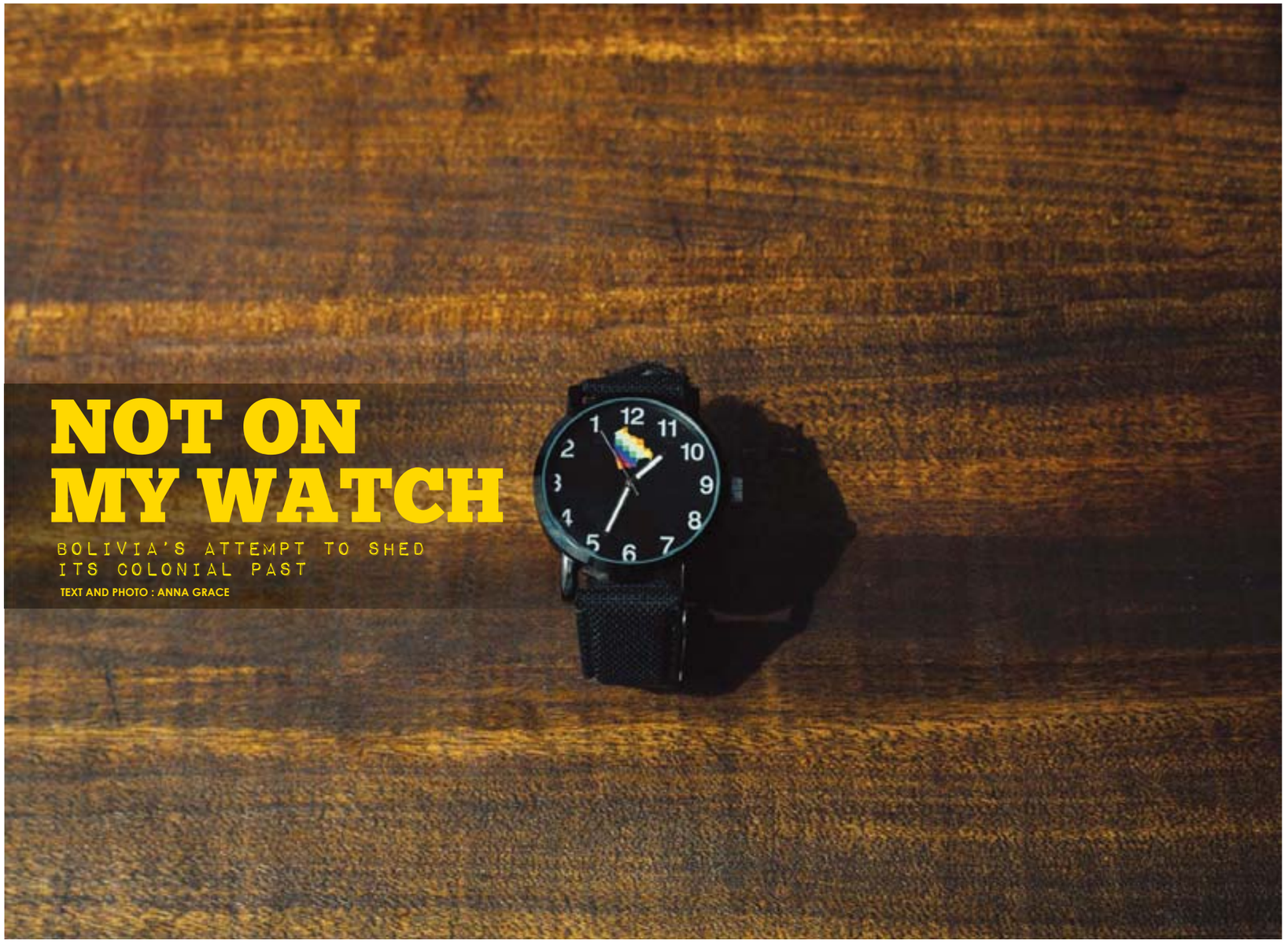
1952

THE RISE OF THE INDIGENOUS PROFILE

Since the **Marcha por el Territorio y la Dignidad** in 1990, there have been many marches demanding respect for indigenous land, identity, culture and the indigenous nation in Bolivia. These movements demand recognition for the people who lived in Bolivia before the land was ever known as Bolivia - before it was even Upper Peru. This process has continued with the election of the first indigenous president, Evo Morales, in 2006, and the constitutional change from a Republic to a Plurinational State in 2009. Whilst true equality between the 36 recognised Bolivian nationalities is yet to be realised, the process has been ongoing throughout Bolivia's history and has at last come to the forefront of the national consciousness.

The bowler hat of the Aymaran woman has become a fashion statement for indigenous people of the Bolivian Altiplano, whereas it was previously a cause for discrimination.

1990-Today



NOT ON MY WATCH

BOLIVIA'S ATTEMPT TO SHED ITS COLONIAL PAST

TEXT AND PHOTO : ANNA GRACE

Time: the universal truth, a constant system across nations. Definite, concrete, unquestionable?

The wrist watch I am wearing begs to differ. It has a black leather strap, a large black face and white numbers from 1 to 12. It is normal in many respects, until you notice that the numbers appear in reverse order. The number 1 is to the left of the 12, instead of the typical 11. The reason? This is a watch that tells time in an anti-clockwise direction. This is a watch that challenges temporal convention.

Ramiro Ulloa's interest in designing such time-tellers came after a trip to Asia. Happening upon a factory that produced similar specimens for an international crowd, he asked for a copy of their design and so was born his craft. For Ramiro, however, the backwards nature of the watches goes far beyond a quirky aesthetic.

'Technical matters have always been imposed by dominant systems,' he tells me, describing his bewilderment when he was taught at school that water boils at 100 degrees Celsius. 'This isn't true in my reality,' he declares. In La Paz, water boils at 72 degrees. 'If we want to go against dominant systems, we need to create situations that can change the mentality of the population.'

These dominant systems, of course, are those of the hegemonic 'north.' They are the social, cultural, and political modes of superiority established by European and U.S. powers in Latin American countries for centuries. 'They imposed a colonial logic, their manner of reasoning. In short, they wanted us to be like Europe,' says Cecilio Ilasaca, a member of the Vice Ministry of Decolonisation.

Ramiro is not alone in believing watches can subvert this prevalent logic. In June 2014, a similar clock was installed on the **Asamblea Legislativa** in **Plaza Murillo**. It received a mixture of praise, criticism and indifference, but it is meant to serve as a constant rejection of the country's colonial heritage. It is meant to mark Bolivia's independence and defiance as a nation.

This year, from the 11th to the 14th of November, the Vice Ministry organised a summit to discuss the ways in which Bolivia aims to revert its legacies of colonialism. The summit looked at tackling all forms of discrimination and racism in the country. 'The main objective was to establish alliances between political entities at an international level,' explains Cecilio, 'and to examine the theme of decolonisation from the viewpoint of Fausto Reinaga', an influential **Quechuan-Aymaran** intellectual.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Reinaga asserted the superiority of indigenous thought and generated a theory of social revolution rooted in the Andean region. In the twenty-first century, the Bolivian government has translated this radical approach to a pragmatic "process of change," undertaken through building strategic alliances, governmental programs, and international awareness. It seems the reversal of clockwise time is only one way to demonstrate a change in logic.

What lacks, it seems to me, is the all-essential unity, a mutual consensus of the direction in which the country is to move.

For Ramiro, however, change is a simple and more personal process. 'It's not going to stick if it's not something banal, something that you've already seen,' he explains. 'With this watch, when you look at the time in the morning, you realise that the world is changing. I want people to realise that the world is changing.'

According to Cecilio, just as the hands on Ramiro's watch move steadily towards the left, rather than to the normative right, Bolivian society also wants to move in a different direction; one he hopes will lead to independence from colonial impositions. 'Now, with the government of our President, we're following a different course to that implemented by neoliberal governments,' he says, speaking of Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous leader.

But initiatives such as the summit and the watch have more symbolic, rather than material implications. They symbolize the optimism of those who have created them, the fervent belief that improvement is around the corner. Change, in the eyes of Ramiro, is already underway: 'When a snowball is set into motion,' he says, 'it's very difficult to stop it. Our snowball has been set into motion.'

Gathering momentum, force and company as it goes, a snowball is perhaps an apt image for what these initiatives strive for: effective action and unity. Under Evo Morales, Bolivia has been officially named a Plurinational State due to the quantity of different – mainly indigenous – ethnic groups found within it. The idea is to find unity in the country's plurality and bring the different groups together. Cecilio may well praise the President, but there are many who doubt Morales's commitment to the plight of the indigenous and question the effectiveness of his government.

Ramiro, for all his optimism, concedes that there is still much work to be done: 'I insist that this is still not the right time. It is probable that we will encounter setbacks.' What is lacking then? The willpower certainly seems to be present, the ideas and the strategy. What lacks, it seems to me, is the all-essential unity, a mutual consensus on the direction in which the country is to move.

The full implications of decolonisation may still lie far from being accomplished. Changing the national mentality, overcoming years of subjection, unifying numerous ethnicities: no small feat. But the attempt to normalise an understanding of time that runs backwards is for some the symbol of a nation that is on the cusp of moving forward.

'What's important is that, at some point, we obtain a flag of cohesion,' Ramiro tells me, 'a banner, and that we work towards it.' With these words, the watchmaker points out the **Wiphala** flag beneath the 12 on my wristwatch. It is an indigenous symbol that was adopted by the current government as the second official flag of Bolivia. Perhaps, this is the unifying symbol that Ramiro believes Bolivians are after. For Ramiro, this watch is so much more than a teller of time or a piece of jewellery. For his hopes to be realised, though, what the object symbolizes must become reality. A flag, a watch: is this what it takes to change a national mindset? ×

The LOST WORLD

A TRIP BACK IN TIME THROUGH THE FOOTPRINTS OF TOROTORO

TEXT AND PHOTOS: NIKOLAUS COX

To best illustrate the terrain of Torotoro, my guide finds a small paperback book and lays it flat upon the bench. Then with one swift move he crumples it, leaving it a bumpy undulating sheet.

'Eso. Eso es Torotoro.'

This is Torotoro. And he is right. Torotoro, a rugged upland region in the heart of Bolivia, appears almost preternatural in its jagged contours. It is a hot, dry land of plunging canyons, vast subterranean caverns and serrated mountains. The scrub-dotted hills here are not gentle mounds, but sharp, splintered escarpments. Slopes jut irregularly out of valley floors like the **tierra** itself has buckled and broken, vast slabs protruding at 45-degree angles from the plains. The land of Torotoro appears to be shattered and crumpled, with **pueblos** and **granjas** eking out an existence in the hollows of a broken, frightening world.

The presence of pre-Inca cave paintings, along with towering stalactites, all nestled into hoary canyons 300 meters deep, implies this startling land is ancient – that it has looked this way since time immemorial. It is only the footprints, petrified into the rock of sharply sloping hillsides, that speak of a time when the book that is Torotoro laid flat upon the bench. These fossilised footprints, at their impossible angles and bizarre locations, are of dinosaurs, and they offer a portal into the fascinating prehistory of Bolivia.

THE FOOTPRINTS OF TOROTORO MAY BE A SNAPSHOT OF THE FINAL DAY OF THE DINOSAURS.

The plaza in the sleepy centre of the modern Torotoro township pays homage to the region's extinct inhabitants. Where some plazas would sport a central fountain or monument to a military martyr, here a towering turquoise bull-horned carnotaurus, flanked by swooping pterodactyls and warily watched by a feathered velociraptor, dominates the view. From hidden speakers, deep growls and hoots of a prehistoric world reverberate off the ramshackle adobe tenements that ring the square. These creatures, and many more as captivating and fearsome, once called the **playa** that was Torotoro their home.

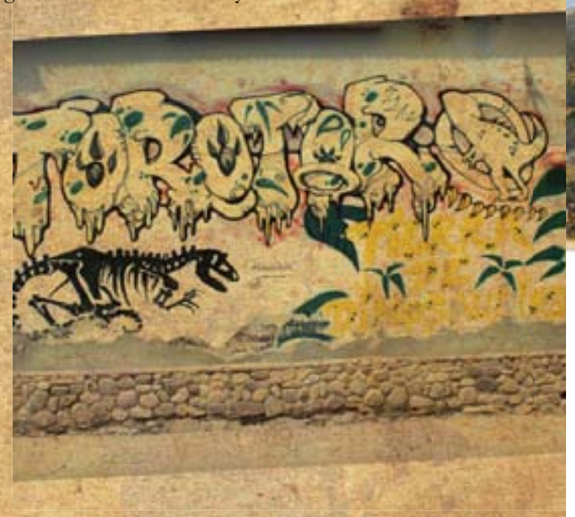
Sixty-five million years ago, the region that is Torotoro was not the dry, shattered land one sees now. This inland agricultural territory was once a vast beach upon the shore of southern America. It was a coast bordered by verdant jungles, steaming deltas and thick-flowing rivers and inhabited by the denizens of a Cretaceous world.

My guide Benedicto and I trek for hours across farmland, through dried rivers and up canyons in our search for traces of this lost world. And if one knows where to look, the stone footprints of ancient life can be found. Amidst the fractured slabs of rock, one can perceive great prints where once a herd of long-necked sauropods, tails whipping 35 metres behind their heads, would have waded through the tropical shallows. Close by, the deep-set tracks of an ankylosaurus show where long ago a heavy reptile with an armoured back and a studded tail would have lumbered across the beach, ignoring the small predatory dromaeosaurs that flocked about it. These feathered raptors would have been seeking out ornithopods, the duck-billed hadrosaurs which gathered upon the shores in huge herds to feed upon lush aquatic vegetation. These dinosaurs did not find protection in physical armour, but in sheer numbers.

Whilst numbers may have daunted the sickle-clawed dromaeosaurs, it had little effect upon the huge carnosaurs that stalked the seaside jungles and deltas seeking out prey, scattering the smaller predators before their advance. For the towering carnivores, potentially related to the carnotaurus that stands vigil in Torotoro plaza, the ornithopod herds made easy meals.

In other parts of the world, one can perceive the fossils of extinct animals and behold their fearsome, skeletal visages. Yet these remains of dead things speak little of how the dinosaurs lived. But upon the sharply ascending hills of Torotoro, through the petrified footprints, one is offered a veritable photo of prehistoric life. One can see through the tracks, now wind-swept and dust-covered, the dramas that played out daily in the lives of the extinct inhabitants of Bolivia.

My guide informs me that these fossilised tracks all stem from one day in Cretaceous Bolivia, whereupon certain conditions facilitated the incredibly rare process of footprint fossilisation. But what happened? A sudden deposit of sediment must have covered the beach and the ocean shallows and swiftly hardened, preserving the tracks beneath. An engorged river? A landslide? Ash fallout from a volcanic eruption? Benedicto and the other guides have a different theory.



'Un **cataclismo**.' – a cataclysm.

The footprints of Torotoro may be a snapshot of the final day of the dinosaurs. Sixty-five million years ago, a meteorite impacted with the Earth where the Yucatan Peninsula stands today, throwing debris into the atmosphere and triggering worldwide volcanic eruptions that would ultimately end the reign of the dinosaurs. Here at Torotoro, my guide believes one can see how the dinosaurs, oblivious to their impending fate, lived their final day, hunting and drinking upon a tropical beach, moments before a rock dropped from space. This extra-terrestrial impact erased the dinosaurs

from existence, but miraculously preserved their footprints – the stories of that ultimate day in the world of the dinosaurs not lost but preserved for millennia below sediment thrown up by the very asteroid that destroyed them.

Whatever the cause for the preservation of the footprints, they offer today's travellers a unique snapshot of a time in Torotoro before the land was dry and high, broken and mountainous. A time when dinosaurs were not found in sleepy plazas as fibreglass figures, but upon a long-ago vibrant beach where they hunted, fed and lived.

LA HORA BOLIVIANA

A MEDITATION ON TIMELINESS IN BOLIVIA

TEXT AND PHOTOS: J.Q COOLEY

I come from a place of harsh deadlines and harsher sentiments on tardiness. School, the workplace, the dating scene: in many North American circles, tardiness is forbidden. This is a lesson I learned over many years of being late to catch the bus, which always came at the same minute, every day, for three years. After all, it was an American who coined the phrase 'time is money.'

Since arriving in La Paz nearly three months ago, I have certainly done many things, but I've missed many others. I've missed Skype calls with my mother, dinner plans, classes: things I normally know how to make time for. The strange thing about punctuality is that everyone has the same amount of time in a day. We cannot control how fast the clock ticks (even if it ticks in the opposite direction), but we can control how we obey its rhythm.

Sociologist Hernán Pruden, who has lived and taught in La Paz for nearly nine years, says the human need for timeliness originated in agrarian societies. Many years ago, he explains, 'food was money.' The ability to grow, harvest, and feed one's family was the only way to make a living. Seasonal harvests paid the rent and determined social status, meaning no one was lower than the miscalculating farmer. Gradually, everyone began to pay more attention to the rotation of the earth. Everyone learned how to tell time.

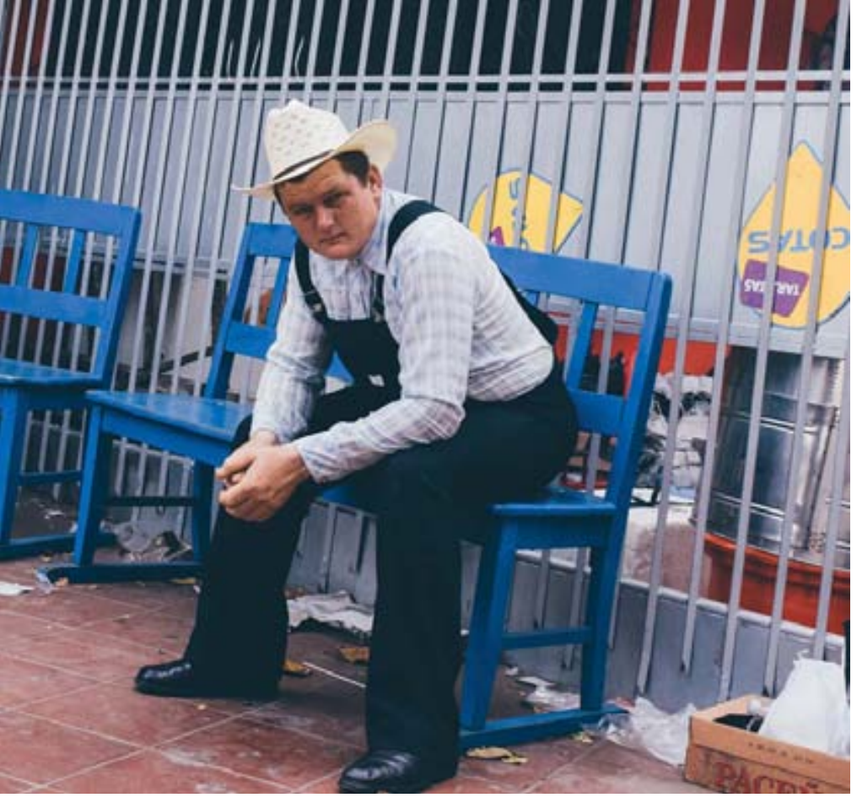
Many Bolivians I have met, however, insist that timeliness is overrated. I am inclined to agree; in my experience, the lax '**hora boliviana**' encourages tranquility amidst the many forms of chaos in La Paz. More than thrice, I have heard **taxistas** reference their job – which often involves inordinate road rage – as **tranquilo**.

While it may seem – and they will tell you this – that all Bolivians arrive late to everything, this stereotype can be a source of frustration for people like René Viadez Colmena, owner of the place where I go to get coffee, Mountain Coffee. 'I keep a tight schedule,' he says, 'and I've got many engagements. Every time somebody shows up late to one of them, I can't make it to the rest.'

Yet, in other ways, time – as a categorical, rather than chronological, concept – is important to La Paz. For example, if anyone says '**buenas noches**' in the small hours of the morning, they have made a mistake, almost as grave as missing **la siesta**.

Where I grew up, 'if you're on time, you're late'. But countless individuals in my country can't seem to show up on time to anything. Meanwhile, in La Paz, I have nearly missed multiple **flotas** because they left exactly on time, despite what the ticket-sellers told me. I try to be somewhere in the middle – somewhere between taking my time to leave, and arriving on time.

As I sit at a gelato joint – because my breakfast place is closed on a Sunday – I contemplate the deadlines I have missed in my life (including that of this very article). I wonder how *la hora boliviana* might live on in my upcoming academic semester. Then, I realize I've deluded myself. I'm not in the middle. I've always been late. And there's nothing wrong with that.



MENNONITES? IN BOLIVIA? MENNONITES! IN BOLIVIA!

A RECLUSIVE RELIGIOUS SECT THAT AVOIDS THE REST OF THIS COUNTRY

TEXT AND PHOTOS: J.Q COOLEY

'**Mala gente**, **mala gente**!' a Bolivian peach vendor shouts at a tall, pug-faced, cocky man trying to buy things from her whilst speaking in a Germanic language. Near her, with another man not so tall, I speak in slow Spanish about Christmas. I hear them mumbling. Eventually, a shout: 'You're not Bolivians,' the vendor catapults at us from an awkward distance, 'and you shouldn't be talking about Christmas!' Sure as the summer sky is blue, we stop. But for all the things Bolivian that these Mennonites should not and do not participate in, Christmas doesn't seem to be one of them. In fact, it might be the only thing these two people have in common.

With their holidays, their cows, and their fashion sense, this group of Mennonites came to Mexico not long ago from well-established communities in their European homeland. Though they are German in ancestry, language, and custom, these Mennonites immigrated from the Russian Empire and West Prussia to Canada in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, political disagreements soon saw 6,000 of them relocate to northern Mexico in the 1920s. Pedro Stein Salamanca, a middle-aged man of small words and big boots, tells me that his grandparents emigrated from Canada in the 1920s, and that many have since followed. It's a sequence: from Europe or Canada to Mexico by boat or train; from Mexico, slowly, eventually, to Bolivia across the land and through the many years. Primarily, the 1970s.

As in antiquity, Mennonites practice community-based agriculture with a Christian agenda. Bolivian Mennonites are hardly different than their European, American or, for that matter, South American, counterparts. 'I'd say 97 percent of all the world's Mennonites rely on their cows,' Pedro cackles. 'The same number probably uses their kids, too. For work, of course.'

Perhaps that's why the kids scowl the hardest.

Though the majority of Bolivian Mennonites are, in fact, born in Bolivia, the question of their citizenship is complicated. And it doesn't seem to interest many Mennonites. 'I would estimate that there are at least 75 Mennonite communities here in Bolivia. They're all over, but mostly here in Santa Cruz,' Pedro informs me. 'I don't give a damn about my citizenship. We give birth at home, we work at home. We only come here to buy what we can't grow in the field.'

Walking through the market, I hear the familiar twang of my home, the American South. But it speaks a vocabulary I do not comprehend; this language, guttural and full of heavy inflection, is what Pedro calls **alemán bajo**. That is, an antiquated dialect of German from Saxony and the Netherlands. Twangy and slow, like iced tea. Or bratwurst. 'It's different from what those folks in the city speak. We're different from Germans.' Certainly different from Bolivians. Or anybody I've ever met, for that matter.

In my frenzy of trying to chat with these reticent individuals and taking unwanted photos of them, I get lost. So I take a taxi. The driver, amidst many warm-hearted **bienvenidos** and broad grins, tells me how keen he is on the Mennonites. 'There's plenty of Europeans in Santa Cruz, as you can see.' He motions with his non-steering hand, and I see the pale complexions, the Western dress. 'That's not a problem. These ones just don't even try to communicate with us.'

I ask him if he has Mennonite friends. He laughs. 'Of course. They're interesting people. They always laugh at my jokes.' He pulls over and nearly punches the hazard button. He shakes with fervor, settles down and cracks a deep smile. 'We believe in the same God. We walk the same road. I only wish more of them knew how to speak Spanish.'

PHOTO: ANNA GRACE

LO OCURRIDO

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

TEXT : J.Q COOLEY - PHOTO: BX TEAM

She climbs toward the light. The elder **cholita** drags her legs, weeping willows as heavy as the memory of her grandchildren. Snow dances on **Illimani**'s three peaks. Another woman appears, apologizing for seventy years of absence. Delirious regrets of bygone motherhood. She trudges into the past and her mother disappears, now and forever absent. She sees the face of her child in the snow. Her wrinkles begin to recede.

She reaches the first peak. Old bones try to jump for joy. She stumbles down the other side. Her **aguayo** loosens as she falls. Her hands, suddenly youthful, quick like a mid-afternoon lightning storm, catch hold of the knot her father taught her to tie long ago. She collapses at the base of the second peak. The hunch in her back has receded; her chronic cough is long gone. The mountain smiles at her. She proceeds.

Now her body can run again. Past the cry of a rooster, the whistling of the good-morning teapot. The music of her daughter's **quinceanera**. The smell of her husband's cologne for the first time. Just as quickly as it passed when she lived it, she has passed adulthood.

A tune from her teenage years. A joke. Adolescence summated in one sound: **jaaaaaaaaa!** She charges on, further into the days of her childhood. Then the screams begin. Glass breaking, fire roaring. She smells the smoke, the varnish on his shoes. She barks profanity, the first words he taught her. The flames recede slowly, a VHS rewinding. She reaches the silhouette of a man's corpse; she has not seen him in many years. His face and body spring to life. She gets closer. She hears his laugh for the first time since she was too old to remember what it sounded like.

Across the ravine, he waits for her. She jumps and clouds carry her to the other side. The warmth of his embrace. The weightlessness of infancy. Emotions she cannot comprehend. She cries out, a wretched cooing. He extends a finger. She grasps it with a tiny hand and holds on.

Her father carries her onward, toward a vortex at the final peak. She watches her mother leave without saying goodbye, then her face reappears at the top. It squeals in pain, cursing at the gods for implanting this child sideways inside of her. Machines beeping, muttered chatter of doctors in mint-green uniforms. Her father's hands let go, and the baby floats towards the void. The silence of becoming engulfs her.

She reemerges and flaps her wings. The hunter's bullet exits her broad, feathered body. A condor in the wind, sweeping the valley. Hunting for her next meal.

A Town Without Time

SAMAIPATA'S FONDNESS FOR PERPETUAL RELAXATION

TEXT AND PHOTOS: J.Q COOLEY

Samaipata is a town without time. It has a square with enormous sagging willow trees, held upright by jagged, erect palms. A sundial without any shadows. Adobe houses and cobblestones streets. Children on tricycles. Waterfalls. Ruins. It is a town of songs and poems unwritten.

To follow a small, dusty mountain road 125 km east from Santa Cruz is to lean backwards softly into history. It is a three-hour ride from the city, through a hot and humid pocket of southeast Bolivia. Samaipata offers an escape from the fearsome doldrums of alarm clocks, schedules, and any sense of timeliness whatsoever.

We arrive past lunch, at 2:04 PM. All the doors in town are closed and the streets are silent, save for the chirping of birds in heat. The plaza is empty save for a shoeless, slide guitar-strumming Argentine man named Rico. No taxis, no need to go anywhere.

In the afternoon, the pre-and-post-**siesta** slumber lingers. You get the ain't-nothin-gonna-happen-here-for-a-long-time feeling and it makes you smile. So you take off your shoes and hope for a long and sunny life.

The mud bricks melt in this infernal heat. I wonder where everyone has gone; I wonder, too, when the restaurants will open again. I look around for advertised hours and conclude that on a day like today, an inconspicuous Tuesday, they should be open. But they aren't. I don't hold it against them.

Then I realize: they're resting, just like I am. Of course, once you've missed lunch, you've missed the whole day. And dinner can't make up for it. Especially not here. Especially not now, in the summer. For some reason, it's not high season, but it's not low season either. Some travelers blow through, as they have for years. Every hostel offers camping. Most bed-and-breakfasts have shady porches. All that's missing is the **limonada**.

Samaipata offers much, and asks for very little. In Quechua, the name means an elevated place of rest (**samay**: to rest; **pata**: elevated place). The town neighbors a wealth of natural beauty and boasts history and diversity at its center. Cobblestone streets and colonial houses stretch out in four directions from the main square. 4,500 people live here, most of whom are of mixed Spanish and **Guaraní** descent. Others have Arab, Croatian, or Italian heritage.

By taxi, some 30 minutes outside the city, one can find a majestic family of three waterfalls nestled inside the Las Cuevas ecological center. It takes plenty of trail-walking and stair-climbing, but the third and biggest waterfall becomes a mighty fine lagoon of river water **que vale la pena** for only 15 Bolivianos.

Not far lie the ruins known as **El Fuerte**, which are not the remains of an ancient fort. Instead, they are the ruins of a ritualistic site of the pre-Incan Chané people. Most of the buildings on the historical walking tour were made by the Chané, but others are of Spanish and Incan times. Surrounding the weathered structures are curvy trails through thick foliage and magnificent mountain vistas. Along the way I get lost in an ancient labyrinth, and I shout from a mountaintop into an echoing abyss. Fun.

Upon return to my shire-like hostel, I meet a fleet of international backpackers who have nothing to do but rest in this tranquil town. We are from all across the world: ten countries in total. At least half of us are from South America. We laugh, drink and dance around the fire, sharing jug after jug of **caipirinha**. By the third jug, we're shouting the names of our countries, just to keep the count straight.

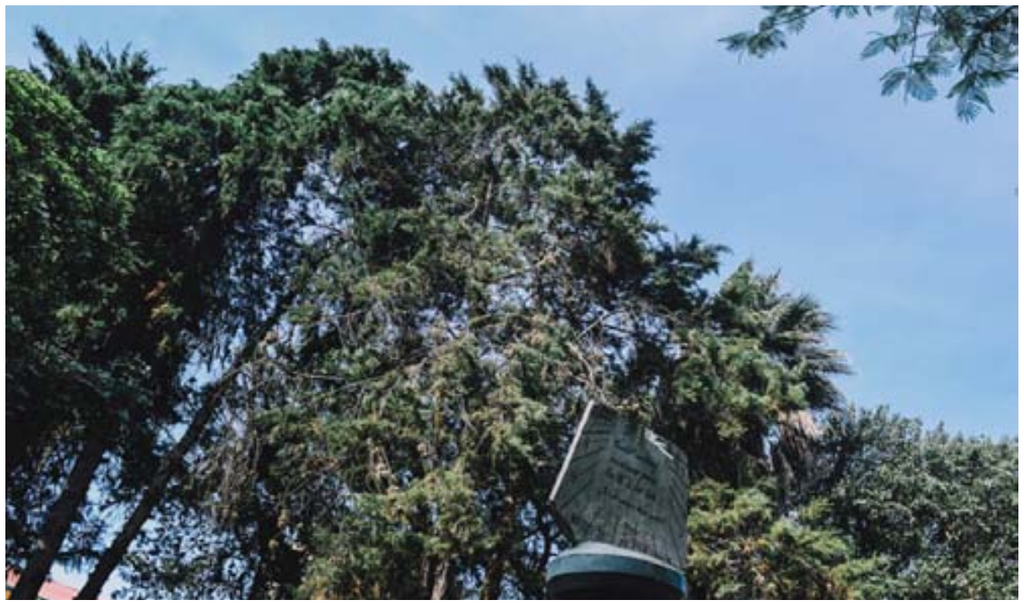
None of us has ever seen a town like this. Friendly, green, smiling. We sing songs about growing old and wonder where the time has gone. Where did it begin? Probably like this, many years ago, when someone wanted to make sure they had enough firewood before the sun set.

You get the ain't-nothin-gonna-happen-here-for-a-long-time feeling and it makes you smile.

Morning begins a good while later. A calm and mighty sun dumps heat on everything. I must return to Santa Cruz, the land of designer clothing and white-uniformed plaza-coffee vendors. Subsequently, after a hellish 19-hour bus ride, I reach La Paz, the land of altitude sickness, strong breeze and strong personalities.

I briefly considered spending the rest of my life in Samaipata. Then again, did I ever leave? Time, you and and all your bad moods, leave me alone and forget about me.

. . . Ah, to never wear a watch again. ×



GLOSSARY

AGUAYO: A colourful Andean fabric used to carry everything, **ALEMƃN BAJO:** 'Low German', in contrast to the 'High German' spoken in German cities, **ASAMBLEA LEGISLATIVA:** Legislative Assembly, **BIENVENIDOS:** Literally means Welcome, **BUENAS NOCHES:** 'Good night', used both as a farewell and greeting, **CABACA:** A cabin, hut or shelter, often for recreational use, **CAIPIRINHA:** Brazil's national cocktail; made from cachaça, sugar and lime, **CATACLISMO:** Cataclysm, **CHOLITA:** Endearing term for a Bolivian woman of indigenous descent, **EL ALTO:** The sister city of La Paz, located above the city, **EL FUERTE:** Literally, 'the fort'; a group of Chané, Inca, and Spanish ruins outside of Samaipata, **FERIA:** Market, **FLOTA:** Long-distance double-decker bus, **GRANJAS:** Farms, **GUARANH:** A vast group of indigenous people from central South America (Brazil, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay), **HACIENDAS:** An estate (could be a plantation, mine or factory), **HORA BOLIVIANA:** A term which references the well-regarded Bolivian tendency toward tardiness, **ILLIMANI:** La Paz's distinct, three-peaked, snow-covered mountain, **JAAAAAAA:** Loud, merry reaction to anything humorous; immensely popular among youth in La Paz, **LA CASA DE LOS NINGUNOS:** Literally, 'nobody's house'; a cultural, eco-friendly centre in Sopocachi, La Paz where everyone is welcome to visit or live, **LIMONADA:** Lemonade, **MACHISMO:** Sexism as a result of a patriarchal society, **MALA GENTE:** Bad people, **MARCHA POR EL TERRITORIO Y LA DIGNIDAD:** March for Territory and Dignity, **MESTIZOS:** Mixed, as in individuals of mixed caucasian and indigenous heritage, **NAYRA:** 'Past' in Aymara; also means 'eye' or 'sight', **PATA:** 'Elevated place' in Quechua; also means 'at the top', **PLAYA:** Beach, **PLAZA MURILLO:** A square in the centre of La Paz, which contains many government buildings, **PUEBLOS:** Villages, **Q'IPA:** 'Future' in Aymara; also means 'behind' or 'back', **QUE VALE LA PENA:** 'It's worth it', **QUECHUAN-AYMARAN**: Two indigenous groups in Bolivia, **QUINCEANERA**: Latin American coming-of-age ceremony, held when a girl turns 15, **SAMAY:** 'To rest' in Quechua, **SECORA:** Woman, **SIESTA:** The custom of taking a short nap in the mid-to-late afternoon, always after lunch, **SOPOCACHI:** A neighbourhood in La Paz, generally populated by middle class Bolivians and foreigners, **TAXISTA:** Taxi driver, **TIERRA:** Earth, **TRANQUILO:** Tranquil, **WIPHALA:** Flag made up of different coloured squares, arranged diagonally; a symbol of indigenous identity in the Andes region