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EDITORIAL

BX 56: LIGHT

There is an old Aymara folktale about two thieves, a Fox and a Monkey. Throughout their adventures, the Fox falls prey to the Monkey's many ruses, often leading him close to death. One night a very angry Fox, fed up with his partner's tricks, finds the Monkey on a riverbank, under the moonlight, eating cheese. The Monkey gives the Fox the rest of his cheese, which he quickly eats. When asked where he stole the cheese from, the Monkey points to the moon's reflection in the water and says, 'There's the rest of the cheese, brother.' And the Fox, always taking the Monkey at his word and always hungry for more (SPOILER ALERT!) dives into the river and drowns.

Light is a funny thing. It is often associated with the security and safety of what is known. An illuminated environment is one we can understand, while a lack of light can be menacing – just ask any miner working in the mountains of Oruro and Potosí. But light is also playful, as anyone who has traversed the Salar de Uyuni can attest, particularly when there is a smooth sheen of water covering the white expanse with glitter and glare.

A common use for the word or idea of 'light' is to bring forth something. Perhaps the most prevalent use is in the expression 'to shine a light on', or to reveal details or the truth. And in a much more intimate way, 'dar a luz' is the common way to say 'to give birth' in Spanish.

As in the case of the Fox and the Monkey, light can play tricks. It can provide false truth, it can fool the eye. In our folktale, the Fox believed the moon reflected on the riverbed was not what it was, but that it was a desirable piece of cheese. Disastrous as this was for the Fox, these deceptions are what can make light fun. It is a complex force we both use and contend with, and we know the world would not be possible without it.

In this issue of Bolivian Express, we look at 'light' in a variety of ways, from the literal to the metaphorical. Our journalists took to the streets, cameras in hand, to capture the ways in which light dances with the landscape to create everyday visual spectacles. After all, photography is light, as many photographers told us. The same goes for cinema, whether delivered in a theatre on film or streamed to a laptop – light is the key component in the creation and dissemination of images. We looked at artists who are playing with light to create intense sensory experiences. And we learned from the miners and fishermen who spend unusual amounts of time doing their work in the cover of darkness.

As a metaphor, light is useful in the formation of phrases and the development of ideas (think: 'see the light'). We wrote about various methods of enlightenment, both intellectual and spiritual, and also how convicts in Bolivian prisons are preparing for their lives 'in the light of day'.

In his article *In the Arms of the Moon Goddess,* writer Nikolaus Cox outlines the importance the moon has on both the residents and visitors to **Isla de la Luna**, on Lake Titicaca. This is a place where different cultures for millennia have been finding solace, strength and meaning under the canopy of the moonlight. This island holds on its shores a history of light that is as profound as it is ancient.

Too bad for our friend the Fox that he did not see the moon for what it truly is.

But again, that is what makes light so interesting. In its role to clarify and reveal, sometimes it can only confound, confuse and amaze.

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

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OF MINES AND MEN

TEXT AND PHOTOS: ANNA GRACE & J.Q COOLEY

A world without light: terrifying for all, unimaginable for most, a daily reality for the miners of Potosí. Inside the **bocamina**, there exists a darkness beyond the lack of sunlight. Workers face the threat of deadly stumbles, accidental explosions, and falling rocks. Lung-shrinking carbon monoxide and temperatures that range from boiling hot to freezing cold punish their bodies as they work for hours without rest or food.

Light and dark, night and day, life and death. Reality in the mines is ruled by extreme juxtapositions. Inside the mountain live two deities: **Pachamama**, or Mother Earth; and **Tío**, her "husband-to-be." *Tío* knows many forms, and many faces. According to Antonio, our miner-turned-tour-guide, in every mine there can be 'three, four, five, more,' statuettes that embody this figure. Once the miners descend into the dark, these dualistic deities determine their fate.

As we approach the mouth of the mine, Gustavo, the younger of our tour guides, explains that every job involving the *bocamina* has its dangers and its consequences. The miners take from the mines, just as the mine takes from them. 'That's why we ask permission,' he explains, as he drips 98% pure alcohol from a tiny bottle onto the ground at the entrance. This act, known as a **Ch'alla**, is a request to enter the mine and exit alive. Once for *Pachamama*, once for *Tío*, and once for the god above.

Slowly, boot by boot, we climb down long wooden ladders into the dark, following Antonio and Gustavo. Upon our descent, the world outside – its skies, its clouds, its sunshine – disappears. The low, rocky ceiling of the mine quickly consumes all light besides that of our headlamps. Our lungs writhe in the dusty, stale air. Blades of light catch the craggy, enormous rocks below. There is no way of telling how far we would fall, or if we would ever walk again.

Gustavo describes the mine as a house of ants, '**una casa de hormigas**.' As we scurry behind him through twisting paths, down the narrow holes and up the rickety ladders, the metaphor surrounds us further. An ant is small and vulnerable. Inside the mine, so are we. In profound darkness, in extreme proximity to the rocks, we journey through endless tunnels, feeling like specks of dust in an impossible maze deep within the earth.

'It's time to reenact the movie, to be like Spider-Man', Gustavo says, as he leads us in one direction, while Antonio leads the rest of the group in another. Immediately, we are nearly horizontal, scrambling higher towards another **nivel** of the mine, just like the superhero. As we struggle to keep hold on the rocks, Gustavo brings us to a gaping hole in the ground, a haunting abyss into which past miners have fallen. We peer down the hole, five or six levels into the mine, and light fades into darkness.

We tread on. High ceiling, low ceiling; squeeze past this and that. We arrive to the first *Tío*. The statuette smokes two cigarettes at once. He has bleach-white marbles for eyes, and a nose blackened from deca-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

des of chain-smoking. Littered around him are neon streamers, empty bottles of soda and beer, more coca leaves than one can count. We add more leaves to the pile and an offering of alcohol on top. Gustavo explains the reason for this: 'No one can go into the mine, or take from it – even photos – without asking *Tío* for permission.'

On a normal day, one would see the mine, like an ant colony, crawling with miners. But today is Halloween, and there are few of them. We encounter one miner, who is just a boy. He smiles big, his mouth full of coca, when we hand him a two-litre bottle of cola. After visiting two other *Tíos* and enduring the back-breaking boot-dance through tiny tunnels, we reached the largest, meanest *Tío* in the mine: Tío Jorge.

Red skin, curved horns, a massive erect penis. While the *Tío* resembles a stereotypically evil demon, for the miners, Tio Jorge is more than that. He allows them to remove the ore and grants a safe passage home. Tio is seen as benevolent. In fact, words such as **diablo**, **ouija**, and **brujería** are strictly forbidden inside the mine. A figure of '**dos caras**,' this dualistic spirit is both fatal and salvific for the miners, whose lives he determines.

The next time we see our guides, it is in quite a different environment. Ditching their overalls for sweaters and jeans, Antonio and Gustavo talk to us a world away from the depths they guided us through hours before. In this light, everything is more visible: gaunt faces, tired eyes, human emotions.

'Every day, you think you are going to die,' Antonio says, in brutal honesty. His father, a miner, never forced him or his brother to work in the mine. Yet, as is the reality for many youths of Potosí, necessity prevailed. 'Mining, from my point of view, is a necessary evil.'

'My brother told me, "you can work in the mines, if you're ready to feel pain,"' Gustavo remembers, who is also the son of a miner. He earned a grant to study in Potosí, but the high cost of university forced him underground. At the beginning, Gustavo worked long hours in brutal conditions; returning home in the evening to shower, eat three plates of food, and then go to university.

As tour guides, Antonio and Gustavo lament the psychological and physical impacts of their work. Though the miners may leave the mine, the mine will never leave them. 'I am partially happy, and partially sad,' Antonio reflects. 'Sad for my family members and companions in the mine. And sad for my lungs,' he says, in reference to silicosis: the pulmonary disease that miners contract through the inhalation of toxic particles below ground.

For miners, silicosis is the inevitable **mal de mina** that often shortens their life to no more than 35 or 40 years. 'We eat a lot, we drink a lot and still we can't put on weight,' Gustavo explains. Before gauntness took to his face, it was much fleshier. More youthful.

'We have a human vision of tourism, not an economic one,' Antonio asserts. The goal is to tell the story of the mines through the lives of the people who work in them. 'The miner's hope,' Gustavo adds, 'is to leave the mine alive and be with his family.' For the miners of Potosí, entering the darkness is the best way to bring light to their communities and families. Their work demands faith, endurance, and a willingness to die young. That is the measure of their sacrifice.

UP BEFORE FIRST LIGHT

LAKE TITICACA'S MILLENNIA-OLD FISHING GROUNDS

TEXT: HAZEL BROWNE
PHOTO: WILLIAM WROBLEWSKI

The sun has just risen, the sky is covered with a thin layer of clouds and Demetrio Maite Ramos is motioning for me to join him in his small rowing boat for the day's fishing. Having emptied the boat of last night's rainwater and cut back the **totora** reeds with a long knife-tipped stick in order to clear the way, we are ready to begin. Observing from the shore, my **taxista** is waiting patiently as we enter the lake.

The fisherfolk of Lake Titicaca are up before the sun, on the lake while the sky is still dark. For Ramos and his neighbours in the community of Sahuiña, a village near Copacabana, the workday begins around 5am, in order to provide the markets with a fresh supply of fish.

Each afternoon nets are put out, attached to floating plastic bottles. A day or two later the fishermen return and pull them out from the dark depths of the lake, revealing small fish such as **ispi** trapped in the net. Different nets have different-sized holes, each designed to catch a certain type of fish.

However, the most reliable source of income comes from trout, which are farmed in small netted enclosures, covered to protect them from greedy seagulls and wild storms which would otherwise release the trout into the lake. The netting has to be replaced approximately each month, as algae can build up and starve the fish of oxygen. Many of the small fish are fed to the trout after being blended with maize and flour.

Ramos has always been a fisherman, and tells me about the changes he has seen.

Ramos has always been a fisherman, and tells me about the changes he has seen. 'There aren't many fish in the lake anymore', he says, explaining that overfishing and climate change are partly responsible. Over the years the lake's water has slightly warmed up due to climate change. As a result the water cannot hold as much dissolved oxygen, resulting in a decreased fish population. Both Bolivia and Peru have regulations to prevent overfishing, but they are not always respected.

'It's a loss for us,' Ramos adds. He says that trout farms are now a more reliable source of income than free fishing. It means a shorter workday, leaving time to work on the land as well. For Ramos, afternoons are spent farming, and each of the 20 families in the village has a plot of land to grow potatoes, broad beans, maize and quinoa.

Pollution, which also affects Lake Titicaca's fish population, is a complex problem with a variety of causes. These include industrial waste flowing in from the rivers, use of harmful pesticides and large quantities of mercury entering the lake, which originate from mining operations. Francisco Osorio, from the Institute of Ecology at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, explains that the pollution causes certain species of plant by the shore to grow much faster than others, reducing available light for other plants such as the *totora* reeds. These reeds provide an essential reproduction site for all the species of fish in the lake apart from trout which breed in rivers. 'The natural coastal plants die, and so the reproductive habitat is lost', Osorio explains. Recovering the lake, he says, is a long process which could take 30 years.

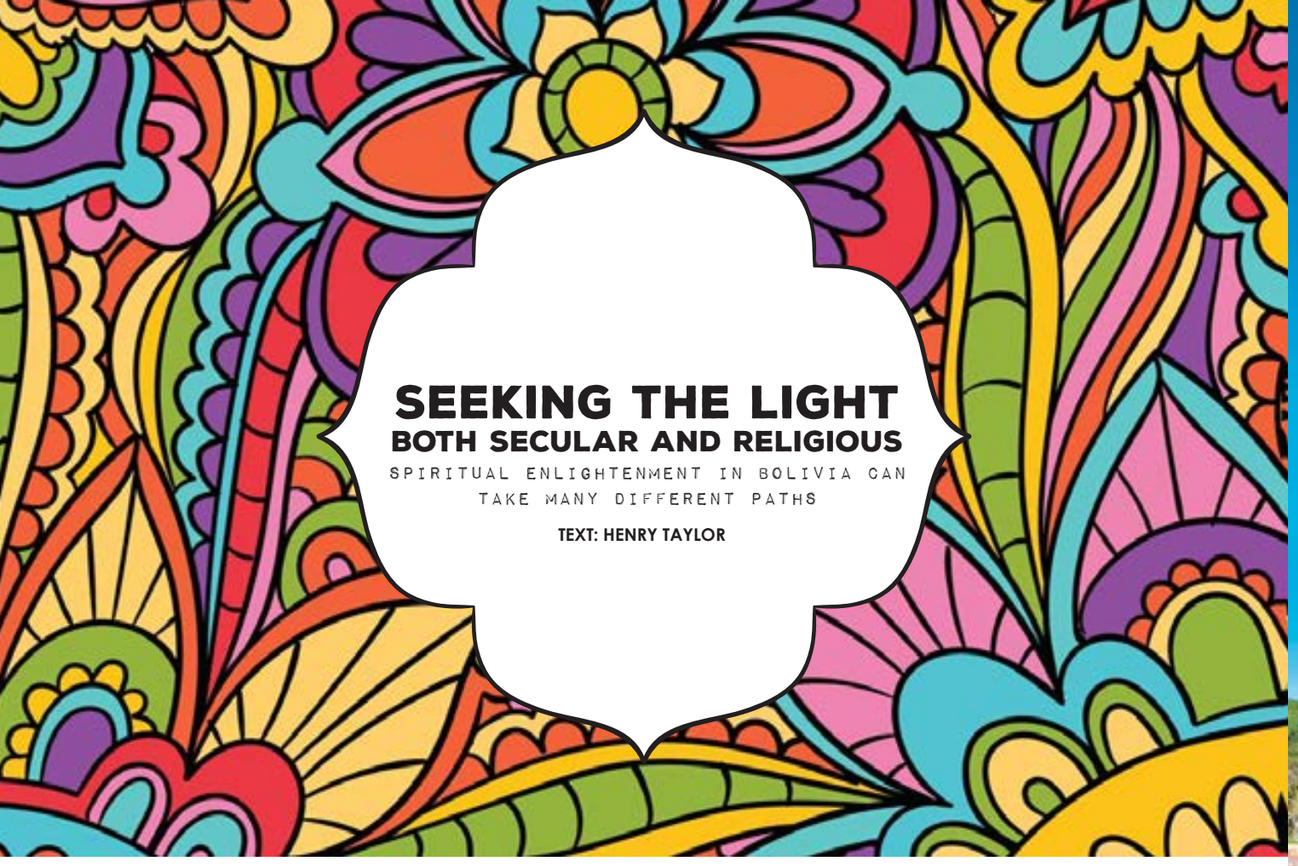
Litter is also a growing problem on the lake, much of it left by tourists and spread by the wind. This problem, however, is easier to tackle at a local level. Indeed, the community of Sahuiña cleans up the area each month, and all the village's children are taught about the importance of not throwing litter on the ground.

For the community, the health of the lake is very important, and the people have a great respect for **Pachamama**, who keeps the balance of nature. Before the villagers begin to sow or fish, they always ask *Pachamama* for permission and make offerings of sweets and coca leaves.

As we row back towards the shore, the sun peeps out from behind the clouds, illuminating the beautiful fishing scene I have just experienced. I hope that in years to come this sun will light a healthy, non-polluted lake.

'It's a really beautiful lake', Osorio says fondly, and as I look out over the shimmering waters, I would find it hard to disagree.

Thank you to our taxista Señor Javier Quispe Yavi, who took us to Sahuiña, and is available to provide minibus transport around Copacabana: 76251212 - 73550472



SEEKING THE LIGHT

BOTH SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS

SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT IN BOLIVIA CAN TAKE MANY DIFFERENT PATHS

TEXT: HENRY TAYLOR

ILLUSTRATION: FREEPIK.COM

For centuries, people have sought spiritual enlightenment, yet finding a single definition of the term is difficult: finding a powerful light in life, becoming aware of a greater truth, or freeing oneself from an egocentric view of the world. Here in La Paz I have investigated three very different schools of thought and how they may – or may not – be paths to this holy grail.

FALUN DAFA

Truthfulness, compassion and forbearance – these qualities are the foundation of the practice of Falun Dafa.

Also known as Falun Gong, Falun Dafa was first taught publicly in China in 1992 by Li Hongzhi. It combines ideas from Buddhist and Daoist beliefs with slow body movements, moderated breathing and meditation. Originally promoted simply as a set of exercises with no religious connotations so as not to provoke the Chinese authorities, the movement soon gained widespread popularity as people realised the power it had to change them as a person.

'From the moment I started to practise, I had lots of energy', recalls Glora Amparo Ambia Rebatta. 'I could wash clothes until 12, one or two in the morning, willingly.' Rebatta began the practice 10 years ago, and now runs the only group Falun Dafa sessions in Bolivia, at the vegetarian restaurant Armonía in Sopocachi, which attracts around eight people each week. Rebatta is convinced that it is possible to achieve spiritual enlightenment through the practice of Falun Dafa, and believes that there would be a tremendous tranquility and peace in society if everyone took it up.

Philosophy allows us to find our spirit, which is timeless, unmovable and transcendent.

The Chinese government would beg to differ. Threatened by the immense number of followers, it outlawed Falun Dafa in 1999. Since then, Rebatta tells me that practitioners have been arrested and even tortured and murdered for their organs to be sold, though Chinese officials have denied the latter.

Yet Rebatta remains undeterred in her practice, and is keen to leave Bolivian Express readers with a parting piece of advice: to observe ourselves truthfully and sincerely and not ignore our defects.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

When the first Adventist missionaries arrived in Bolivia from the United States in 1897, they were few and far between. Pioneers in teaching literacy and health to indigenous communities, the newly arrived Adventists were determined to live their lives in a way that would please Jesus who, they believe, did everything possible for our salvation.

Yet through these benevolent works, Adventists do not aspire to achieve spiritual enlightenment.

'We believe that the only enlightenment is in the Bible', explains Giovanny Izquierdo, president of the West Bolivia Mission, which covers the departments of La Paz and Pando. He goes on to tell me that only through faith, rather than the works we perform, can we achieve salvation.

From its humble beginnings in the 19th century, the Adventist Church in Bolivia became official around 1922, and since then has expanded across the country, now with 191 churches in the western section of the country and 97 in the cities of La Paz and El Alto alone.

The church has six doctrines separated into 28 beliefs. These cover the fundamental Adventist ideas, such as the belief in the imminent return of Christ, as well as encouraging Adventists to live healthy and wholesome lives, abstaining from alcohol and drugs. Each belief is backed by copious references to the Bible passages in which the ideas are expressed.

'I've never drunk, never smoked', Izquierdo tells me, 'because my body belongs to God, so I care for my body.' He explains that because of his healthy lifestyle he has only been ill twice in his life.

When asked what advice he would give to Bolivian Express readers, Izquierdo gives three: to believe in the Bible, to accept Jesus as our saviour and to live the lifestyle promoted by the Bible.

Only through faith, rather than the works we perform, can we achieve salvation.

PHILOSOPHY

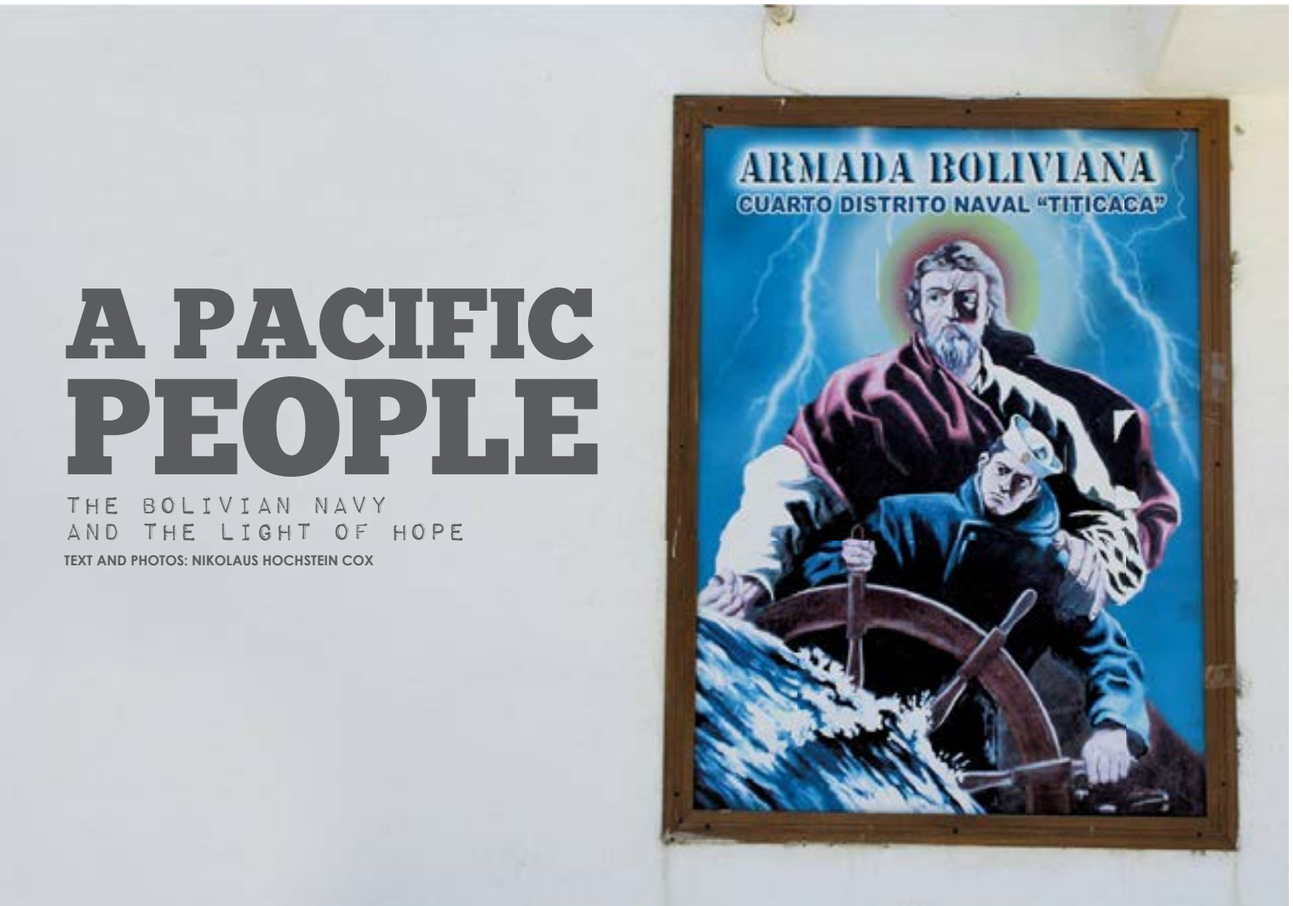
'It changes your whole perspective of the world', explains Dayme Paymal, a philosophy teacher at the Nueva Acrópolis Institute in Sopocachi. 'It changes your perspective of your priorities, of who you are.' She tells me that once you start asking questions and looking for answers, you change, because you can no longer ignore the things you used to ignore.

Nueva Acrópolis is a cultural, philosophical and social organisation founded in Argentina in 1957 that now hosts philosophy classes in over 50 different countries worldwide. It was introduced in Bolivia in 1981, with sites in La Paz and Santa Cruz, and offers philosophy courses at both beginners' and advanced levels. Nueva Acrópolis is based on three principles: fraternity, knowledge and development.

Paymal believes that through philosophy we can reach spiritual enlightenment, though not in a religious sense. Philosophy allows us to find our spirit, which is timeless, unmovable and transcendent.

Each year, on the third Thursday of November, World Philosophy Day is observed, celebrating what Paymal describes as a human necessity, something that people will always search for. Whilst led by UNESCO, it belongs to anyone with an interest in philosophy. Paymal believes that if everyone in society learned philosophy, people would be happier and society much more efficient, as people would question traditions and practices.

Sincerely and with no elaboration, Paymal gives her one piece of advice for readers: to discover philosophy. ×



A PACIFIC PEOPLE

THE BOLIVIAN NAVY AND THE LIGHT OF HOPE

TEXT AND PHOTOS: NIKOLAUS HOCHSTEIN COX

'We don't need a sea and we don't need a navy', my bartender assures me. 'The bid for access to the Pacific is ancient history.' I am surprised by his reaction – within Bolivia the perceived right to the Pacific coast and pride in the **Fuerza Naval Boliviana** appears universally upheld. '[The navy] is important now, sure,' he continues, in reference to the current political climate, 'but it shouldn't be.'

The relationship between Bolivia and the sea has been at the heart of Bolivian identity for over 100 years. Indeed, Bolivia has never truly admitted its 19th-century territorial defeat to Chile. With the recent ruling of the International Court of Justice decreeing that Chile must open negotiations with Bolivia, the cause is again at the forefront of the national consciousness.

I had been looking for a nightcap around Plaza Avaroa when my view was arrested by the monumental bronze statue of a man. Lying in agony, one hand clutching his rifle and the other pointing heavenwards, his face was contorted in a defiant sneer. The plaque below his visage identified him as Eduardo Avaroa, the nation's greatest hero of the 1879 War of the Pacific. It was a conflict over a coastal stretch of the Atacama Desert between a Bolivian-Peruvian alliance and Chile, and one that concluded in Bolivia losing access to the Pacific Ocean. But I would discover that the loss of the sea means more to Bolivia than one imposing statue.

Nothing visibly represents the nation's desire for the ocean more than the Bolivian Navy. Confined to the rivers of the Upper Amazon and Lake Titicaca, the Bolivian Navy is the sometimes-recipient of mockery from Chile and confusion from oceangoing navies. But the Bolivian Navy does not exist for these detractors but for the Bolivian people. My interest was first piqued by a bronze statue, and now by the discovery of the navy. I was determined to uncover what this organisation meant to the people, as a symbolic and physical entity. My first port of call was the bar where I would at last imbibe that nightcap.

The bartender, pouring **Huari** a few blocks away from the plaza, had nothing but disdain for the Fuerza Naval. He objected to the greater Bolivian military for the implementation of compulsory service, but held particular dislike for the navy. With no ocean, he sees no need for Bolivia to maintain a navy. After all, the force is too small to wage war; it's a force created out of nationalist sentiment rather than practical security concerns. Yet my bartender believes the navy was at its strongest as an emblematic power – the plea for the sea transcends political parties, and operates as a symbol of national pride to form a lynchpin around which Bolivia gathers.

Others I spoke to seemed similarly conflicted on the navy's practical use. A taxi driver stated, 'It's a little late for a navy, right?' He supports the claim to the sea, but thinks a navy confined to interior lakes and rivers a tardy response to historical slights. But he believes the navy exists as an assurance that one day Bolivians shall regain the ocean. Such a sentiment was echoed by Wendy, my Spanish teacher, who declared, 'It is the right of every nation to have a navy, but with Bolivia it's a little different.' In her eyes, the navy exists not as a military but as a wish to 'reclaim what we have lost.' The navy is too small to forcefully take back the sea but warrants its existence upon the promise that the sea shall be

The Fuerza Naval Boliviana is a navy more powerful in implication than intimidation.

recovered. 'As an army it is not strong, but as a symbol it is **más fuerte**', Wendy said.

Of all the people I spoke to, few could justify a military cause for the organisation to exist. Andrés Guzmán, a former diplomat and expert on the Bolivian Case for the Sea, was among the few who could: 5,000 kilometres of navigable rivers intersect the Brazilian border. Combating narcotic smugglers on these waterways gives ground for the practical use of the navy, he said. 'But it is a very important symbol for us too, because we have never lost hope to recover the sea', Guzmán added.

Indeed, everyone I interviewed agreed that the navy was as strong, if not stronger, as a symbol. It has to endure as a reminder to Bolivians that the sea has not been lost forever. 'Bolivians are a pacific people', Guzmán says, meaning that they will reclaim their land not through force but through diplomacy. The navy does not exist as a threat, but an assurance.

Despite being deprived of a coast for 130 years, it is part of the Bolivian identity that there is a right to border the Pacific Ocean – that Bolivians are a Pacific people. This national will is manifested in the **Fuerza Naval Boliviana**, a navy more powerful in implication than intimidation. It is a visible promise, a light of hope, for the people of Bolivia that one day they will return to their sea. ×

SHEDDING LIGHT ON PHOTOGRAPHY

The faces behind the camera

TEXT AND PHOTOS: ANNA BELLETTATO

Photography is all about light. The meaning of the term itself, 'drawing with light', reveals the importance of light in this artform. Light is what makes a photo.

Cristina Machicado, an amateur photographer who lives in La Paz, unearths a cardboard box the size of a microwave from a pile of objects stored in her darkroom. The box has a small hole punctured on the bottom. Cristina and her photographer friends used to take it around streets in the city to teach people how a camera functions.

'The interior of this cardboard box is like the interior of a camera,' Cristina explained, as I put the box on my head, making sure the outside light doesn't filter in. I looked in front of me and I started to see shadows of a house. I was not, as I suspected, seeing through it. What I was seeing was upside down and it wasn't the image of something I had in front of me, but of the house right behind me.

'On the back of your head there is a tiny, almost invisible, hole through which light can enter,' Cristina continues. 'It's like the lens of a camera. Light comes in through this aperture and projects an upside down image of what the camera is pointing at. This image is then impressed on the film or the digital sensor of the camera and what we call a photograph is the end result'. Voila!

But the role of light in photography cannot be reduced to the simple mechanism of taking a photo. Light is something a photographer always has in mind while shooting. Tony Suarez is a photographer based in La Paz, who worked for 22 years for Time Inc. He talks about light as a component that captures someone's attention all of a sudden. 'One day you find yourself walking down a familiar road, when suddenly you notice something you had never seen before,' he explains. 'A particular light illuminates you.' For him, light is inspirational.

For the last five years, Tony has been waking up every morning to take photos of Illimani from his bedroom window. 'Illimani is our guardian, a protector that keeps an eye on us all the time,' he says. Despite its constant presence, every single shot Tony has captured of the peak is different from the others because of the ever-changing game between lights and clouds around it. When the sky is crystal clear, Tony thinks it is less interesting.

China Martinez, who gives photography classes in La Paz, talks about light with a different focus. She used to work as a photojournalist, whereas now she only works in her studio. 'Shooting in the street is completely different from shooting with artificial lighting,' China says, 'and a photographer has to learn how to deal with light in different scenarios.'

With street photography, before shooting you have to consider what time of the day it is and what kind of light you are working with. In La Paz, for example, because of the altitude, light is really bright and sharp mostly at midday and photographers have to work bearing this in mind. In order to capture a moment, the photographer has to adjust the camera according to the available light of that instant. The light becomes a subject as much as anything else.

In a studio, photographers have full control over the illumination. They can present their subjects and play with the light in as many ways as they want. 'It is crazy," China tells me, 'but light in a studio also changes the behaviour of a person.' As soon as people are in the setting of the shoot, she explains, they start to act less spontaneous – unless they are professional models and feel comfortable in the spotlight; or children, who are not much affected by the change of light or setting.

Even though photographers work with light, they find it challenging to explain the importance of light in their artwork. When I asked Camila Molina, who studied photography in Santiago, Chile, she exclaimed, 'What a difficult question!' Light is at the heart of a picture, but Camila cannot think of light without thinking about composition.

Working as a photographer in Bolivia has its advantages and disadvantages. There are fewer resources available for training professional photographers. However, creativity and determination are key to success as a photographer here.

Camila believes that using an analogue camera teaches you how to control light better than using a digital one. Of course, without the possibility of seeing your photos immediately after you have taken them, it is impossible to know if you captured the right exposure. 'After making mistakes, you learn to play with the settings,' she says.

Katyussa Veiga is a self-taught Brazilian photographer, who learned how to use a camera when she arrived in Bolivia 4 years ago. 'I love the materiality of things,' she admits. 'For this reason, I only work with analogue photography'. Katyussa's camera does not have a photometer (the instrument that measures light and helps to adjust the three commands of a camera – speed, aperture and ISO). Without the photometer, Katyussa studies the light around her to mentally calculate which settings she has to change. 'When I am holding my camera, I am thinking all the time,' she explains.

Rather than simply capturing moments with her camera, Katyussa wants to tell a story. She likes to work with double exposures, a technique that allows you to shoot twice, but obtain only one photo. This is how she manages to create 'micro-narratives' that are contained in a single image. There is a lot going on in her shots, thanks to this peculiar technique that is usually associated with analogue photography. 'Photography,' Katyussa believes, 'is the discovery of one's own sight, one's own way to tell stories.'

Over the past few years, photography has been made accessible to almost anyone with a smart phone. Does this mean almost anyone can become a photographer? All of the artists I interviewed said the same thing about this phenomenon: 'It's awesome.' Still, professional photographers are easily recognisable, not because of the equipment they use – after all, it is not the camera that makes the photographer – but because of the twinkle in their eyes whenever they say that, for them, photography is a lifestyle. ×

vanilla vendor, hither thither morning time, strangers shuffle past.

LIGHTS AND SHADOW

A PHOTOPOEM
BY J.Q COOLEY
AND ANNA GRACE

geometric rule, crooked kingdom made for two — shadow cast, it falls.

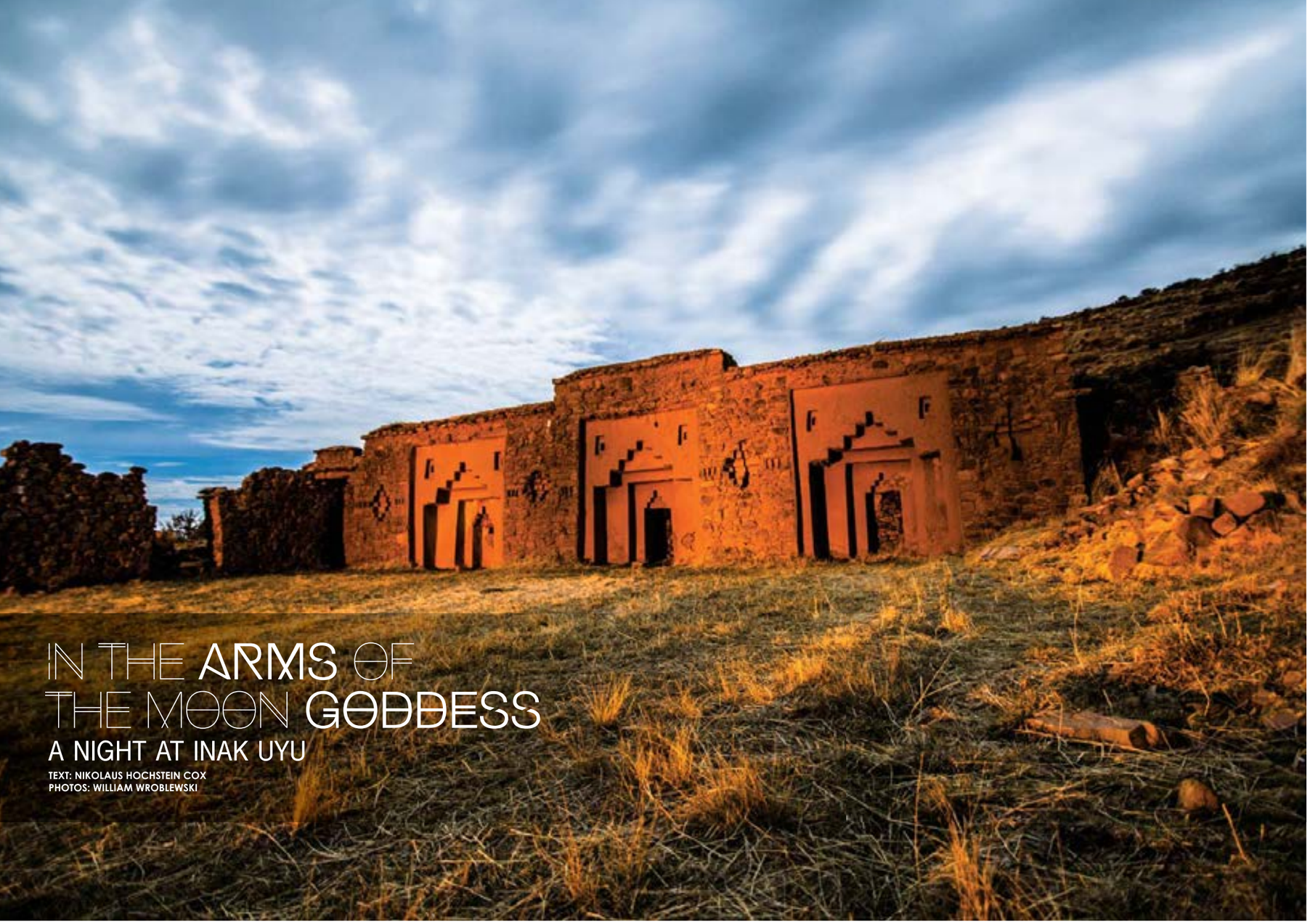
hats one two three four. buildings, people, watchful men: brothers for today.

urban art smattered, oblivious he passes. the ink fades with him.

give flight to the day! tiny hunter play play play!

laughter of the small.

hark! she fjords the square, a walking revolution. she's almost there.



IN THE ARMS OF THE MOON GODDESS

A NIGHT AT INAK UYU

TEXT: NIKOLAUS HOCHSTEIN COX
PHOTOS: WILLIAM WROBLEWSKI

The elderly Aymaran woman runs about the circle with almost supernatural vigour, touching each of our bowed heads with the wrapped sacrifice. She whispers a breathless incantation, and all I hear is one word feverishly repeated: **Pachamama**. She places the bundle upon the central fire – it goes up in flames with a roar. The orange glow flickers upon the ruined temple walls, casting strange and fearsome images with its light. Carlos tugs at my arm. 'It's a good sign when it burns so quickly,' he intones. '*Pachamama* will be pleased with the sacrifice.'

We rise, hand in hand, and begin to dance to a piping flute in a circle around the fire. The flames lick higher and the moon above breaks free from the lightning-streaked storm clouds, bathing the whole spectacle, the entire **Isla de la Luna**, in white light. The light of **Mama Killa** descends to the earth below, infusing the ceremony with her divine power. It is a good night to offer a sacrifice to the Earth Mother. *Pachamama* will be pleased.

La *Isla de la Luna* (the Island of the Moon), in the heart of Lake Titicaca, has been a place attuned with the spiritual world for millennia. On its eastern shore stands **Inak Uyu** – the Temple of the Virgins. This was a place of Moon-worship and a convent for Inca women before they were married off to local lords. But the significance of this temple and its relationship with the Moon precedes the Inca, dating back to and beyond the pre-Inca empire of Tiahuanaco. All that remains are three Cyclopean façades punctuated with the trapezoidal doors of iconic Inca design. I had been sceptical of the divine energy that allegedly infused the island when I arrived, and especially skeptical of the power contained in moonlight. But after a night in the temple ruins I question no more.

La *Isla de la Luna* signifies different things to different people. Many visit the island seeking a spiritual awakening. These people have detected an antediluvian power within the land and have transformed the island into a conduit for New Age ceremonies. One such person is Samai, a Chilean woman living in La Paz who feels an affinity with the island and the light of the Moon upon it. She speaks with me in her **Zona Sur** apartment about the revelation she had within the temple a decade ago, and how it informs her spiritual movement. She was transported back in time to the era of the Inca. Here she trained with the virgins of the island in their esoteric art – though she believes they were not simply virgins kept for Inca nobility but priestesses who drew their power from the light of the Moon. The empowering connection between women and the Moon has been recorded throughout antiquity, and through ceremony and ritual Samai leads a group of all-female Moon-worshippers, combining the traditions of the local Aymara and Inca with the occult practises of cultures from across the world. It is her goal to promote female empowerment and positive thinking, and to facilitate a spiritual revolution that encourages an end to patriarchal religion and politics and a return to nature. For her the island is a place of magic that assists in these ceremonies.

After my arrival at the island I trek over the Inca terraces and track down Don Felix and his brother Porfirio – the men are community leaders for the island's 25 families, working tirelessly to promote tourism for their sandy sliver of land. For them the entire island is sacred. On the *Isla de la Luna* the ways of the old gods still hold sway, and the Sun and Moon are deities with considerable power over human lives. The islanders frequently perform sacrifices to ensure healthy crops and prosperity. The light of the Moon is important here for the whole island, her luminous powers extending to men and even agriculture. Felix explains that the site of *Inak Uyu* is most important for the community as a spiritual place, but they do not mind tourists visiting the sacred site. For the delicate island economy, tourism forms a financial staple.

The strange contract between spirituality and tourism at *Inak Uyu* was made starkly prescient on my first night on the island. A field trip of students from the Universidad de Aquino Bolivia arrived to take part in a ritual sacrifice. As they were led through the dusk to the temple they understood they were watching a ritual put on for them – but many believed the ceremony itself still contained great power. The Aymaran

It is a good night to offer a sacrifice to the Earth Mother. Pachamama will be pleased.

woman was preparing a **mesa** for *Pachamama*. Sheet-lightning lit the hills but we heard no thunder as *Mama Killa* soared overhead, illuminating the temple as brightly as if it were day. Amidst the coca leaves of the *mesa* were placed tokens of sacred significance – clay images of llamas, currency, and houses representing good luck, wealth, and future salubrious accommodation – and the students laughed and joked with each other casually. But apprehension hung over the assembly too. Carlos approached me and quietly enquired if I believed in what was happening. I asked him if he did. 'I am a student of tourism', he said. I am here to watch the ritual as part of that. But of course I believe in the ceremony.'

For many students this was more than a school trip – this sacrifice was spiritually very real. The *mesa* was an offering to the gods and a blessing for those gathered. I was invited into the circle and ceased to be a spectator, becoming part of the ceremony. I chanted when they did, I followed when they danced, and under the light of the Moon I paid homage to *Pachamama*. Carlos was my translator. He explained it was very auspicious that the sacrifice was taking place under moonlight. *Pachamama* may be a goddess but she is still a woman, and as such the rays of *Mama Killa* made the offering all the more powerful. The flames of the fire leapt high and the dancing circle tired, the melancholy flute dying away. We all gave thanks and chanted '*Pachamama* **Jallalla**!' once more, and the ceremony concluded.

Whether a tool for tourism or an outlet of the occult, there is definitely something infused in the ruins of the Inca temple – something that only becomes manifest when the Moon holds the island in her luminous arms.

LIGHT FLIGHT

TEXT: LILA ANDREA MONASTERIOS ESTEVES
PHOTOS: RODRIGO URZAGASTI

Have you ever seen a colony of butterflies travelling? Or more specifically, have you witnessed their journey through the trees covering the lowlands of eastern Bolivia, filling the lush green canopy with all shades of contrasting colors? A fluttering mass of butterflies travelling together can flood the landscape with slight movements, making it seem to dance like nature's most perfect flash mob. With the whistling wind as music, pollination in the wild can be one of the most sublime scenes Mother Earth can offer.

Chiquitania, in the eastern plains of Bolivia, is one of the most beautiful places to see butterflies, and if travelling by train you can see them up close. Or, if you visit the mountains of Tucabaca, you can take in butterflies that resemble flying flowers, reminding us of the power of nature.

Closer to the creature comforts of the city of Santa Cruz, however, the Güembé Biocenter is home to the largest **mariposario** in Bolivia. There you can experience the evolution of the butterfly, from egg to death, and witness different species in their natural habitat. Inside this huge natural space, colourful flowers enhance the view and fill the ambience with a sense of life. Above soar the butterflies, big and small, solid coloured and multicoloured, some flying as if hunting pollen, some in silence upon meeting with flowers. It is a place where one easily forgets about the good or bad things. Here, one is filled with the natural feeling of love for so much beauty in the air.

There are more than 3,000 species of butterflies in Bolivia. Among them is one of the most exotic and beautiful – and therefore the most expensive – in the world: the prepona. The xenágora, a member of the prepona family, is most beloved for its spots in the form of eyes that look like a three-dimensional picture. A prepona male in the European market can cost about US $400.00 while the female reaches $ 2,000.00. Although the most expensive butterflies are from India, Bolivian butterflies are among the best paid in the entomological world.

A trip to the *mariposario* is a quick reminder that a butterfly can inspire in many ways. The flapping of its wings, according to chaos theory, can cause a storm across the world, in what is called the butterfly effect. The Greeks thought that butterflies carried the soul between life and death, representing the last breath taken on earth. Others believe black butterflies are harbingers of death. And across cultures, butterflies remain near-mythical creatures serving as symbols of beauty for their light flight.

> 'It is a place where one easily forgets about the good or bad things. Here, one is filled with the natural feeling of love for so much beauty in the air.'

The butterfly is also a very strong spiritual symbol; it represents the need to accept death to be reborn. A butterfly is a caterpillar first, and then becomes a cocoon, locking itself in its world to finally release itself as a beautiful butterfly with wings to fly away. This is the representation of the resignation of one world, being reborn into another, a representation of freedom, of liberation, of rebirth.

> '...across cultures, butterflies remain near-mythical creatures serving as symbols of beauty for their light flight.'

One of the characteristics of life in Santa Cruz is how relaxed everything can be. Waking up early is just fine, as long as you do not neglect the late-afternoon coffee. A light life, in the sense of knowing how to enjoy the moment without arguments to argue, people take their chairs to the streets, gathering with neighbours for a bit of lazy fraternisation. Being in the *mariposario* at the Güembé Biocenter can offer the same sensibility. It provides an opportunity to maintain a state of being in harmony with the world.

The butterflies here, flying gracefully and showing beauty in their colours and shapes, no matter how strange, exotic, expensive, small or large, provide spiritual inspiration, a condition closely related to love. And that is what life is about, to love and heal oneself, to live in harmony, with friendship, with courage to leave the past and to dare to live a more powerful life.

Resting at the west of the city on the road to Porongo, Güembé Biocenter also provides pools, walking, lakes, islands, an orchid nursery, an aviary and a beautiful gazebo where one can feel the power of the wind and become part of the landscape. This place, built with the right energy, invites you to enjoy a special kind of life represented by the butterflies – one in harmony with oneself, and with others. ×

NOT THE SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE

The Rise of the Video Jockey

TEXT: ANNA GRACE
PHOTO: WILLIAM WROBLEWSKI

Clubs have traditionally been a predominantly auditory experience. With their eyes half-shut, dancers move around dark dance floors with no sensory distractions other than the overpowering beats that fill their ears. Yet, couldn't light, images and other visual stimulation enhance, rather than detract from, a DJ set?

Video Jockeys (or simply, "VJs") certainly think so. They use names like Heidacraft and Screensaver to inhabit the magical world of the DJ's lesser-known sidekick. 'People like to make a visual journey', Heidacraft tells me, who goes by the name Heidi Valda Lanza in the daylight. I take her word for it and decide to embark on my own journey one muggy night in La Paz, to enlighten my VJ-deprived eyes.

Roots Reggae House, located in the centre of La Paz, was a predictably dimly lit affair. Yet a large white screen behind the DJ decks filled the space with a constant flow of visual delights. Psychedelic patterns, fluorescent colours, moving images depicting tribal figures and sprouting flowers, were perfectly combined with the ebb and flow of the music. This was more than a normal night-out. I had come to see a real spectacle.

VJs draw their images from a variety of sources, but their visual sets are never pre-planned. The exact music that the DJ will play is often unknown and the images are meant to follow the music. Daunting? VJ Screensaver doesn't seem to think so. 'The fun bit - the most fun bit - is that everything is obviously mixed in real time', she tells me. The surprise element means that versatility is key: 'You need to be like a chameleon, at least a little bit.'

For Heidacraft, however, blending in is the last thing on her mind. 'I always try to take people out of their comfort zone', she says, which is why she often works with psychedelic and surreal designs. The point is to be spontaneous and to flow with night in order to reach the audience. 'If a person is untouched by the set, then it hasn't worked', Screensaver tells me.

But the work of a VJ can go beyond the screen behind a DJ set. Heidacraft tells me that she has projected images onto mountains, moving vehicles and trees. She shows me a video of LED-covered dancers on a completely black stage. The dancers disappear and spring back into light, in sync with the music. 'The function of light is important. It has to be like a moving tide,' she says, 'Light and then darkness.'

Light, colours, movement: these are the basic tools that VJs work with. Visual games, visual art, visual music. However you choose to describe their work, the adjective will always remain the same. After all, as Heidacraft posits, 'The visual world is infinite, isn't it?'

With the rise of the digital era, VJs have emerged across the world, which means their visual experience is now reaching a wider audience. Their work is only meant to complement the music, but their talents might soon outshine the main event. DJs may need to watch their backs, because their visionary counterparts are beginning to steal the limelight.

LA PAZ , CITY OF LIGHTS

A PHOTOESSAY
BY ANNA BELLETTATO

"San Pedro" BY FLIKR USER Danielle Pereira USED UNDER CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION 2.0 LICENSE

IGNITING HOPE

THERE ARE PROGRAMMES TO HELP EX-CONVICTS AVOID A LIFE OF CRIME ONCE THEY SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY - BUT DO THEY OFFER THE SKILLS AND TRAINING TO STAY ON THE OUTSIDE?

TEXT: EDWARD DOWN

In Bolivia, a single prison – San Pedro, in La Paz – has gained so much international infamy that it briefly became a tourist attraction and then the subject of a book (*Marching Powder*, by Rusty Young, which is now being adapted into a Hollywood film). But the realities of life within that prison and other detention centres around the country remain hidden in the shadows.

For the thousands of incarcerated members of the Bolivian prison system and their families, daily survival and an unknown future can be frightening. Combined with the self-governing system that many Bolivian prisons use – in which inmates run the day-to-day operations of the facilities – the dangers of a criminal life can be tempting, sometimes making rehabilitation and the transition into the outside world difficult.

The self-governing system of prison administration, in which each inmate occupies a position in the facility's hierarchy, reinforces a status quo amongst inmates that makes rehabilitation problematic. Frequently, a prisoner's only option is from the outside, when organisations provide training and a modicum of income for the inmates. By providing hope and a vision of the future, they can help convicts commit to improving their personal and employment prospects, even when imprisoned and separated from the society of the outside world.

One of these organisations is CEDESOL (the Centre for Development with Solar Energy), a Cochabamba-based nonprofit organization that trains inmates to build ecological cooking stoves. I met with CEDESOL's president, David Whitfield, in Cochabamba one afternoon. Humble and unassuming, Whitfield says that prisoners benefit not only by gaining valuable skills, but also by learning to cooperate with one another. 'The effect started to rub off,' Whitfield says. 'They realised the interconnectedness, that they didn't have to be divided.' This process, says Whitfield, creates a domino effect within a prison's walls and helps create a more harmonious community.

Indeed, it only takes one success story to affect the larger prison population. One participant in CEDESOL's programme committed himself to the course immediately, Whitfield says, which meant a steady job throughout his time in prison. Upon release, he took up a position with CEDESOL and became a valued member of the company, regularly returning to the prison where he once served his time. This example was hugely beneficial to the other prisoners. 'His former fellow inmates saw him arrive in prison, saw him leave prison and saw him come back as a free individual with a job', Whitman points out. 'It gave them hope.'

But inmate rehabilitation requires long-

term investment and persistence, and cannot be dipped in and out of. Providing consistent physical and material support is simply not enough unless combined with spiritual and emotional support, and the government often falls short of this ideal.

Labels such as 'untrustworthy', 'dangerous' and 'lazy' stigmatise ex-convicts, and employers are reluctant to hire them. The director of the Centre for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities After Disasters, Adenrele Awotona, in his book *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities*, emphasises education and training as key factors in rehabilitation. 'Approximately 90 percent of prisoners in Cochabamba have no experience of formal education before they come to prison,' he writes. Thus, training programmes are extremely important for inmates, but ex-inmates still need to gain the trust of future employers once they are released from prison.

CEDESOL's success shows the importance of organisations that work within the prison system. It provides a template for partnerships that can provide legitimate sources of training and employment for prisoners. But because the Bolivian government provides little in funding for these endeavours, any group seeking to rehabilitate prisoners must do so through either charitable donations or through a business (whether profitable or not).

'Prisoners realise the interconnectedness, that they don't have to be divided.'
—David Whitfield, president of CEDESOL

Cases of ex-convicts finding consistent employment should be celebrated, yet these cases are rare, and more and more petty criminals driven into crime by poverty are struggling to find work. And this lack of work will often lead back to a path of familiarity in the world of crime… and we're back to where we started.

Lack of work will often lead back to a path of familiarity in the world of crime.

Many organisations that help to rehabilitate prisoners have closed down, and others are struggling to continue without financial support. The few that do continue are small, personal organisations dealing with tiny numbers of convicts. Yet the problem of rehabilitating prisoners remains. With depleting numbers of rehabilitation programmes and the increasing prison populations, the problem is becoming more significant, and will soon be impossible to ignore. ×

Build your own pinhole camera

TEXT AND PHOTO: ANNA BELLETTATO

A pinhole camera is a camera that works without a lens. Light simply enters a small aperture, projecting the image you are trying to capture on the film inside. The resulting image is an upside down negative. It is the simplest camera you can make, using objects you can easily find at home.

There are many ways to build a pinhole camera. Here are instructions for how to build one using a match box:

Materials:

- a small matchbox
- a pin
- black paint
- a brush
- black tape
- a small - completely flat - square from an aluminium can (2x2cm)
- a small tongue of paper painted black on one side
- a new film roll
- an empty film roll canister

Instructions:

1. Paint the interior of the matchbox completely black.
2. Cut a 1x1cm square in the middle of the top of the box (draw the diagonals of the rectangle to help you find the exact centre).
3. Using the pin, puncture the aluminium square. The hole has to be as tiny as possible, but make sure it allows light to enter.
4. Using black tape, paste the aluminium square over the square aperture cut on top of the box.
5. Place the new canister on one side of the box and insert the film inside the matchbox. Close the box and use the black tape to link the canister and the box.
6. Make the film exit the other side of the box and insert it in the other empty canister. You will need this second canister to roll the film after you have exposed a part of it to light (normally you roll it twice to have enough space for a new image).
7. When placing the empty canister on the opposite side of the matchbox, put the roll inside upside down so that the two canisters are flat on the same side. Place the camera on a flat surface when taking a photo.
8. Stick the second canister to the matchbox with black tape.
9. On top of the box remember to place a movable tongue that will work as the camera shutter.
   Once the camera has all its pieces joined together with black tape you can expose the film to light by moving the flap of paper which covers the pinhole. ×

Special Thanks to Cristina Machicado for introducing me to the pinhole camera and Katyussa Veiga for helping me to build one

GLOSSARY

BOCAMINA - Entrance to a mine, **BRUJERÍA** - Witchcraft, **CAPITALISTAS** - Capitalists, used politically to connote negative Western influence, **CASA DE CULTURA** - A cultural center, **CASA DE HORMIGAS** - Ant hill, **CH'ALLA** - The sprinkling of the earth with alcohol as a gift to Pachamama, **DIABLO** - Devil, **DOS CARAS** - Two faces, **FUERZA NAVAL BOLIVIANA** - The Bolivian Naval Force, **HUARI** - A Bolivian pilsner, **INAK UYU** - Literally the 'Pure Women', it is the Aymaran name for the Temple of the Virgins on the Island of the Moon, **ISLA DE LA LUNA** - Island of the Moon, **ISPI** - A small fish of the Cyprinodontidae family found in Lake Titicaca, commonly fried and eaten whole, **JALLALLA** - An Aymaran celebratory phrase, translated to mean 'Blessings from the Earth and Above'; considered most powerful when said by a group, **MAL DE MINA** - Literally 'evil of the mine'; the name given to the pulmonary disease contracted by miners, **MAMA KILLA** - The benevolent Inca Moon goddess, sister of Inti the Sun god; the goddess of marriage, the menstrual cycle, and the protector of women, **MARIPOSARIO** - Butterfly sanctuary, **MÁS FUERTE** - Very strong, **MESA** - 'Table' in Spanish; in the context of the lunar ritual it represents the sacrifice of food, cocoa leaves and tokens for Pachamama, **NIVEL** - Level/story of a structure, **OUIJA** - Ouija, **PACHAMAMA** - The 'Earth Mother', revered by numerous Andean cultures, including the Inca and Aymara, she is a goddess of fertility both in crops and humans, with an indelible connection with the land; the mother of both Inti and Mama Killa in Quechua mythology,**SIN GUÍA** - Without genre or artistic limitations, **TAXISTA** - Taxi driver, **TELEFÉRICO** - La Paz's airborne cable car, **TIENDA** - Store **TÍO** - Variation on the word for god (dios); used to describe the ambivalent masculine spirit within the mine, **TOTORA** - Large reeds of straw used to make boats, **ZONA SUR** - A wealthy neighbourhood in southern La Paz

VAMOS A LA SALA

A THREE-PRONGED EXPLORATION OF CONTEMPORARY BOLIVIAN CINEMA, IN BRIEF

TEXT AND PHOTOS: JQ COOLEY

It is a Tuesday afternoon and I am at La Paz's opulent five-level shopping mall, Mega Center, complete with bowling alley and ice skating rink. I enter through the living room – ground-floor entrance, a showroom of leather and glass – and pace across the tiles through to the main atrium, past the Cadillac on display, past the ball pit, into the elevator. To the top floor, lightning-fast. Too high. Kiddy pool and Japanese steakhouse. One floor lower: food court. Pollos Copacabana, Subway, Burger King – **¡capitalistas!** – and I find myself hustling past a labyrinth of metal dining sets to make it to my movie on time.

Where am I? A carpet of dizzying patterns but nobody's walking on it. I feel a fiendish hunger for popcorn. Buttered or grape? I choose the norm, but the cashier throws a few grape kernels on top. Free sample. Glad she did.

Entering the theater, I step into a parallel dimension, far from brickhouse **tiendas,** wild dogs and car exhaust, into a gargantuan hall filled with pillow-soft, throne-like seats. The surround-sound system nearly explodes my eardrums as the doldrum American film, *Escalofrios*, starts up. One hour and 39 minutes later, I re-emerge, eyes blinded by the fluorescent lights. Entertained, but mostly confused at myself for piddling my life away in this big-budget excuse for product placement. Only later do I find out that *Escalofrios* – known in the US as *Goosebumps* – is being played in more Bolivian theaters than any other movie. Even any Bolivian movie.

From the **teleférico,** I see the whole of this city, situated in its bowl-shaped valley. I peer down on *Cinemateca Boliviana,* which is showing Bolivia's own big-budget films, such as *Boqueron*, *El Cuarto* and *Norte Estrecho*. I see that this city is infinitely more important than its 25bs, empty-theater-going, American blockbuster experience.

Cinemateca Boliviana, *Sopocachi*. Sinking into large, regal seats of deep red, we await the picture. As the first previews start to roll in our modern amphitheater, I catapult the first fistful of popcorn into my mouth and strap in for the spectating.

Here, I bear witness to award-winning Bolivian cinema. Set primarily in the US state of Virginia, the Bolivian-cast, Bolivian-directed film *Norte Estrecho* represents the direction that Bolivian cinema has moved toward in the past few years. With its heart-tugging, orchestral soundtrack and linear, emotional plot, the film echoes a Western filmmaking tradition, but its message – the strife and success of Latin American immigrants living in the United States – is presented as uniquely Bolivian. In this way it is a quintessential reflection of *Cinemateca Boliviana's* foremost goal: the presentation and preservation of Bolivian cinema.

With equipment and facilities funded, surprisingly, in large part by China, *Cinemateca Boliviana* supports contemporary Bolivian cinema. It also showcases films from across Latin America, as seen with its recent *Muestra de Cine Latinamericano. Cinemateca Boliviana* aims to be una **casa de cultura**: It also offers creative workshops, a library, and a lecture series.

I am utterly unprepared for the visual and audial madhouse that awaits me.

In the words of Claudio Sanchez, director of programming at *Cinemateca*, 'Cinema is a production of messages.' In effect, *Escalofrios* and *Boqueron* – a historic drama set during the time of Bolivia's *Chaco War* – provide the viewer with vastly different messages. A historically knowledgeable Bolivian watching *Boqueron,* and a foreigner watching it without understanding its cultural context, will see the film – and thus receive its message – differently. Differently, too, will the American tourist who sees *Escalofrios* – based on an American book series – relate to it than a Bolivian of the same age sitting next to them in MegaCenter.

I have been told that Sergio Pinedo Grillo's *Procrastinación* is 'a weird film.' But I am utterly unprepared for the visual and audial madhouse that awaits me: shrieking laughing crashing, quietude calm, running destruction dancing.
'I played around', Pinedo, the film's director, tells me. 'I played with the actors, I played with the footage – edited it randomly, putting this here, this there.' He adds: 'I wanted this film to be **sin guía**' – without precedent and or conventional filmmaking techniques. Similarly experimental, albeit directed with an emphasis on social, rather than artistic, change is Diego Mondaca's *Ciudadela,* which explores the lives of inmates in La Paz's San Pedro prison.

About the themes in his documentary/visual poem, Mondaca declares: 'Any poetic work is a social work, and any social work is a poetic work.' Such films, by Mondaca and his contemporaries, are currently on display in Buenos Aires, in a festival dedicated specifically to showcase innovative, contemporary Bolivian film.

For this markedly rural country, the Bolivian film industry exists as a result of urban socio-economic growth and the influence of Western media. But, for *Cinemateca Boliviana* and the many Bolivian directors in constant pursuit of new filmmaking techniques and uniquely Bolivian messages, the world of Bolivian film is a rapidly expanding artistic community.

I can only hope that the trend of grape-flavored popcorn continues.

It is now up to the next generation of Bolivian filmmakers to address the questions and problems that Bolivians face, one of which can be seen in the five-story capitalistic multiplex so expensive that many cannot afford it, so Westernized that all of the films shown there are from the US. Yet, through Mega Center, *Cinemateca Boliviana*, the Internet, and Bolivia's own film festivals, the filmmaking industry in this country will only continue to grow. I can only hope that the trend of grape-flavored popcorn does the same. ×

Thanks to Cinemateca Boliviana for permitting the featured photograph: scene credit to the bolivian film, norte estrecho

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MIRA QUIENES
GANARON ESTE AÑO

ÁREA NATURAL DE MANEJO INTEGRAL APOLOBAMBA
AUTOR: MARCELO ARZE

TARUCA
AUTOR: RADOSLAW CZAJKOWSKI

ÁGUILA DE AZARA
AUTOR: STEFFEN REICHLE

CAIMÁN NEGRO
AUTOR: CÉSAR COAVOY

DELFÍN DE RÍO
AUTOR: MARA ARIAS

Ganadores del 5to Concurso
Nacional de Fotografía de Especies Bolivianas en Peligro de Extinción