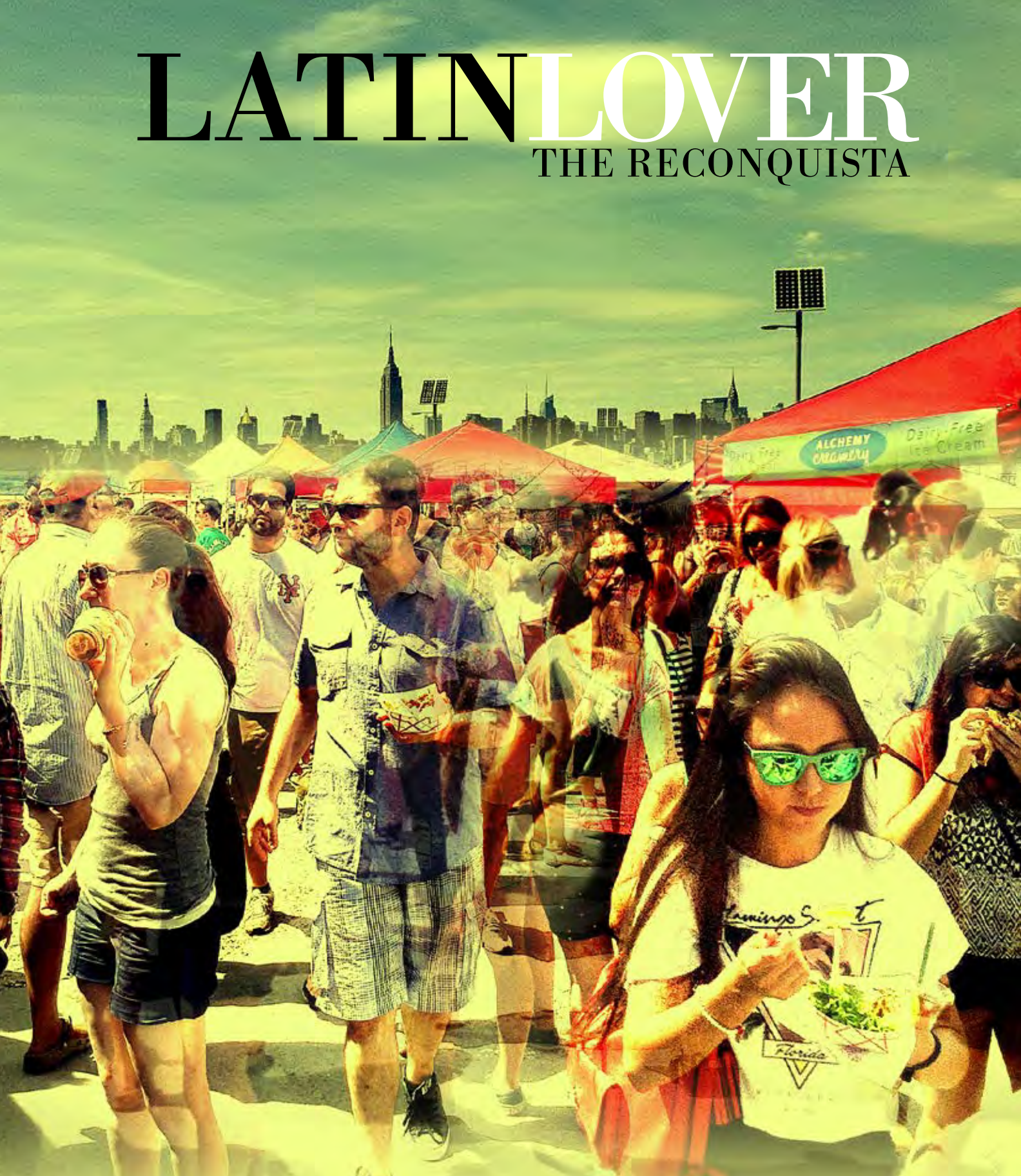
LATIN LOVER
THE RECONQUISTA



STREET! ISSUE 8 – AUGUST 2014

ESPN'S MARTÍN AINSTEIN REFLECTS ON LAST MONTH'S WORLD CUP IN BRAZIL | NEW YORK CITY, STREET FOOD MECCA AND MUST-TRYS THIS SUMMER | 100 KISSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD | RADIO EN ESPAÑOL GETS AN UPDATE | THE CUMBIA EXPLOSION | PUBLIC ART IN MEXICO CITY | A POSTCARD FROM RIO AND MUCH MORE

Illustration by Lucy Roleff ©

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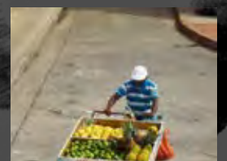
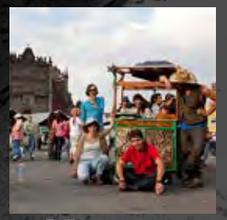
STREET!





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LATIN LOVER
THE RECONQUISTA

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EN LA CALLE

Dear Latin lover,

We've taken to the streets to explore that preeminently equalizing public space, the heart and soul of community life in so many of the world's Latin capitals. In this issue, we're giving you a map to the top Latino street vendors and food trucks in New York City. We connected with ESPN's Martin Ainstein for his reflections on Brazil and the recent World Cup. We're bringing you Carolina Guerrero and novelist Daniel Alarcón, who, with their project Radio Ambulante, are remaking Spanish-language radio, taking it out of the studio and into the streets. There's a new kind of public art in Mexico City. A worldwide cumbia explosion, centered in New York. A postcard from that marvelous city, Rio de Janeiro. And public love: selections from 100 kisses from around the world.

A big thanks to all our editors, contributors, sponsors, advertisers, event partners and, of course, the LatinLover community, which continues to grow. You make all of this possible, and we are so grateful for your support.

We intend this issue to be an invitation. And we hope you'll join us, as summer heats up, and get out of your place, wherever it might be, to plug into the beautiful hot messy melting pot of the streets we share. See you there!

Un abrazo,
The LatinLover Team

CONTRIBUTORS

1. Andrzej Bialuski
Born in communist Poland, and having lived many years in Germany and the U.S., Andrzej is a globe trotter, permanent student at the University of Life and enthusiastic photographer. His travels have made him understand that roots can be anywhere.

2. Kaethe Butcher
Kaethe Butcher is a young illustrator in Germany with an attraction to provocative, erotic renderings. Many of her black and white drawings incorporate words, providing a little bit of a dialogue for her audience. Kaethe was born in Leipzig and now lives in Berlin, where she studies fashion design. She wants to go to London some day soon—and Disney World, of course!

3. Sem Devillart
Sem is a cultural trend analyst based in New York City and Rio de Janeiro. She works through Popular Operations, a company she co-founded. Throughout her career, Sem has supported clients like Christian Dior, Camper, Daimler, L'Oreal, Johnson & Johnson, Pepsico, Philips Design, the BBC and Deepak Chopra. She is a founding faculty member of the Masters in Branding program at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, where she teaches cultural analysis.

4. Pako Dominguez
Pako is a photographer specializing in event documentation. He takes enormous pleasure in being part of weddings and other special events, in order to produce candid, lively, artfully-crafted images.

5. Michelle Christina Larsen
Michelle Christina Larsen is a freelance music, lifestyle and fashion writer from Brooklyn. Active in NYC's global music scene, she has organized events and booked bands at the infamous Mehanata Bulgarian Bar since 2009, including an after party for Peruvian chicha-revival group *Bareto* and Chile's *Chico Trujillo*. Her cumbia obsession led her to Peru in 2013, where she bought up a suitcase full of fabric and put on an "electro-cholita" runway show for a charity organization upon returning to NYC.

6. Maria McFarland Sanchez-Moreno
Maria is a human rights activist, lawyer, and writer who grew up in Lima, Peru. Now based in Brooklyn, she has spent a decade working in Latin America and the U.S. for Human Rights Watch, where she is now deputy US program director. Maria is working on a book about Colombians' struggle for truth and justice in the midst of war.

7. Nicky Neiman
Nicky Neiman is a multi-lingual marketing professional from Argentina. She is the co-founder of Sprouted Creative, a boutique marketing and design firm specializing in small businesses. Nicky has lived in 3 different countries over the last couple of years and currently lives in Harlem in New York. Nicky loves photography, music and tech.

8. María Elena Ortiz
María Elena Ortiz works as a Curatorial Assistant at the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM). She has worked as the Curator of Contemporary Arts at the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros in Mexico City. And she has collaborated with institutions such as New Langton Arts, San Francisco; Teorética, San Jose, Costa Rica; the Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco; and Tate Modern, London. In 2012, she curated *Wherever You Roam* at the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach.

9. Lucy Roleff
Lucy Roleff is an illustrator and musician from Melbourne, Australia. She is obsessed with realism, human intimacy, the nuances of modern culture, pencil rendering and cats.

10. Brian Waniewski
Brian is a social entrepreneur. Most recently, as Managing Director at Institute of Play, Brian explored play as a powerful creative force and context for learning and engagement, with young people, adults and communities. Brian was trained as a poet and has worked as a management consultant, a literature professor, a cook and a gardener. He divides his time between New York City and Rio de Janeiro.

11. Chris Yong-Garcia
Chris is a designer and a producer from Lima, Peru. As a designer, he has overseen campaigns from HBO, Miramax Films, Spike TV, IFC Films, the Weinstein Company and others. He has his own New York City-based design studio, called Eyestorm Design, which works with a variety of companies and cultural institutions. He created LatinLover magazine in 2011 to bring together Latinos and non-Latinos around a love of Latin culture.

Photo courtesy of Martín Ainstein

Q&A

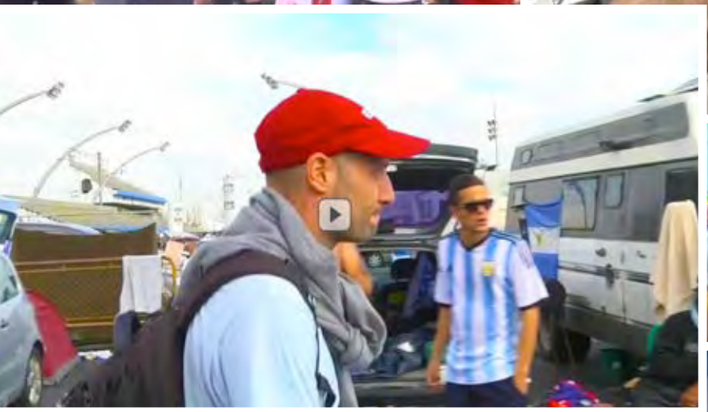
Martín Ainstein

Martin Ainstein is a journalist, seasoned traveler, foodie and soccer expert, with a passion for discovering simple stories that reveal the soul of a people or a culture. Martin has two segments on ESPN Deportes “El Diario de Martin” and “Destino Futbol,” and he covers top world soccer events, for both Spanish and English media. Last month, Martin was in Brazil covering the World Cup: thirty-three days on every street in every city, in search of the perfect story to tell with his signature coolness and big smile. We, at LatinLover, had the privilege of catching up with him there.










What are your thoughts about the final game?

Objectively, Germany had an advantage. They were the team with the best players, and they risked more and gave a better spectacle. Argentine came with their arguments, with a very good defensive strategy, but the goal was missing. Argentina could have won. On the three occasions they had to score, their top players weren't at their best level.

How did you feel as an Argentine amongst all these thousands of Brazilians rooting for Germany?

It's what soccer in South America is all about: provocation. Rivalry is part of the game. In fact, winning is also about enjoying it in your adversary's face. It has to be understood in that sense, and everyone has to accept it and deal with it. It's obvious that Brazilians didn't want Argentina to win the cup in the Maracana, after what happened here, *and* obviously the Argentines came to Rio with the desire to express loud and clear that they are Brazil's biggest rival on the soccer arena.

However, beyond soccer, Argentina and Brazil are friends, brothers. There is a very good relationship between them. I, at least, feel a lot like a Brazilian, given the way they understand life, culture, music, etc. I love Brazil. I also love soccer. And I am Argentine. If they play against each other, I will cheer for Argentina. It's just a game, and it shouldn't go beyond that.

Often World Cup teams have particular strengths or weaknesses that we associate with a nation's culture. Is there something in the way Germany, Argentina, and Brazil play that sheds light on their national characters?

Every country plays as they are. Brazil wasn't truthful to themselves, to what they are supposed to be. I mean playing soccer as the expression of culture. And that's why they failed. Brazil has to be fun, has to be creativity, and has to have players with the characteristics that historically have represented Brazilian soccer. Argentina played the same way they always play in a World Cup: a team with a lot of nerve and character, very well organized from the defensive lines to the attack, and with 3 or 4 players that make the difference on the attack. Germany is a team that prioritizes the collective over the individual: aggressive, fast and strong. Specifically, they had matured and improved their winning mentality.

Is the play of soccer evolving? How did you see that in this year's World Cup? And where do you see it going in the future?

I do not think this tournament showed us anything about evolution. The last three World Cups had been won by European countries, and that has to do with the fact that, in Europe, it is easier to implement philosophies or styles or changes that can last for several years, whereas, in South America, it is much more difficult. Look at the last two world champions. Spain was built on the Barcelona team, Germany is built on the Bayern Munich. Both were already teams accustomed to playing well together. That is something that can not happen in South America, because its players are all over Europe. They don't play together on their own local teams, and that is a great advantage that the European teams have.

Also, European countries have the ability of create a structure to promote and maintain players through their local tournaments. In South America, players leave at a very young age. So in that sense, there is an evolution of the European soccer over South American soccer. These are the two main columns of soccer worldwide.

Brazil's defeat against Germany may be one of most humiliating events in World Cup history. In your opinion, what happened? Have you ever seen something similar to the"Mineirazo"?

It was a shock! Brazilians didn't expect to lose in such way. There was too much pressure on the players. I believe what happened that day was the result of a brutal pressure and an extreme expectation that Brazil built for themselves: they were the host of the tournament and the only acceptable result was to win the World Cup. That is simply preposterous, because there are a lot of teams playing very well, very well prepared. At the end, this is just a game. There was too much pressure on the Brazilian players, and everything exploded during the game against Germany. Their only responsibility should have been to play well and defend the Brazilian style, not to win the cup.

The Brazilian people took the lead up to the World Cup as an opportunity to express anger and frustration with their government. It seemed like for them football was more than just a beautiful game, right?

That was expected. Every country, including Brazil, that suffers from poverty and inequality would use an event such the

Images from "El epílogo del Diario de Martín en Brasil"
Published on July 12, 2014 © ESPN Deportes: **goo.gl/m5nAwV**

World Cup to get the world's attention. There were several groups that tried to show to the world that there wasn't a party going on in Brazil, and that there were more important issues to convey.

I think that Brazilians were okay hosting the World Cup, but that it was wrong to waste so much money building stadiums in places that would never be used on that scale again. There was a shift in the priorities of the country, which has to do a lot of work in areas like health, education, housing and income distribution. Brazil is the fifth richest country in the world, and you don't see people meeting their basic needs in large parts of the country. A lot of Brazilians believe that would be the way to grow and evolve as a country, rather than spending huge amounts of money on events like the World Cup.

For some people food lies at the heart of a culture. Have you discovered any memorable place or edible in Brazil?

Bahia is a place that mixes a lot African traditions and customs in its music and food. There was a dish that I really loved, called *Moqueca*. You can have it with shrimp or fish. It is a stew, with coconut milk, onions, garlic, tomatoes, cilantro, pepper, cooked in a clay pot. The secret is the dendê oil that gives it a very unique taste. If I had to choose a dish in Brazil, I'd pick the Moqueca. It's just delicious!

If someone special asked you to cook them something special in your home, what dish would you make?

Without a doubt, *el Asado*, Argentinean BBQ. This is the way I like to entertain my friends. The problem is that you can't make *Asados* everyday, as it involves a lot of prep time, and you need to get the right meat and coal. But I also love the food of Spain, and you can just put on the table a good ham, olive oil, cheese, foie gras, olives . . . and, of course, a good wine. That will do the job also!

You're always traveling, hungry for new experiences. Is there any special place that you have to go every year, or you'll just die? And is there any place you'd like to go before you die?

Yes, my home! I travel so much, home is my special place. You know, it's just about getting back to your simple routine and habits: go to the market and get something delicious to eat. Those simple things give me a lot of pleasure. I've been living in Madrid for 9 years already. Before that I lived in Miami for 5 years. But I would like to visit China and India, places I've never been before. I would like to visit Africa again. Because I travel a lot for work, what I like to choose when I'm off is the most simple and basic: a beach, a good bed, something comfortable.

Several of your ESPN colleagues have said that they want your job. How do you explain your good fortune? What's your secret for finding awesome stories?

I'm very lucky. But there is a part of my work that nobody sees. There's a tremendous amount of work involved on every story, on every trip. For instance, during the World Cup, I delivered 33 stories, 1 story per day that I had to produce, record, edit and put on the air. That's a major challenge. So yes, it is true when people see me on TV having a good time. I do have a lot of fun. But behind that, there's also a lot of work and a huge responsibility involved.

One country, several cities, tons of fans, all the emotional ups and downs of what is perhaps the biggest global spectacle. What are your final thoughts about your days in Brazil covering the World Cup? Which moment will live in your heart forever?

I would say several moments. But what I loved the most is that Brazil organized a World Cup. Brazil is a very special country. They posses soccer's DNA, the fingerprint of soccer. If it's true that England invented soccer, the happiness, the true life blood of soccer is Brazilian. The art of soccer is Brazilian.

South America really needs the World Cup to return to its soil. It has been so many years since 1978, since South America has had the chance to organize a World Cup. Now it has shown that it is a region that really loves soccer. Its fans came in great numbers: Colombians, Chileans, Argentineans, Uruguayans, Ecuadorians and Mexicans. They all gave this World Cup a very special color, and that has put more attention on Latin America as a region that defines soccer. That is the lesson we learned. We did a lot of interviews with people involved in soccer, and they told us that all the World Cups should happen in Brazil. Brazil is the land for soccer.

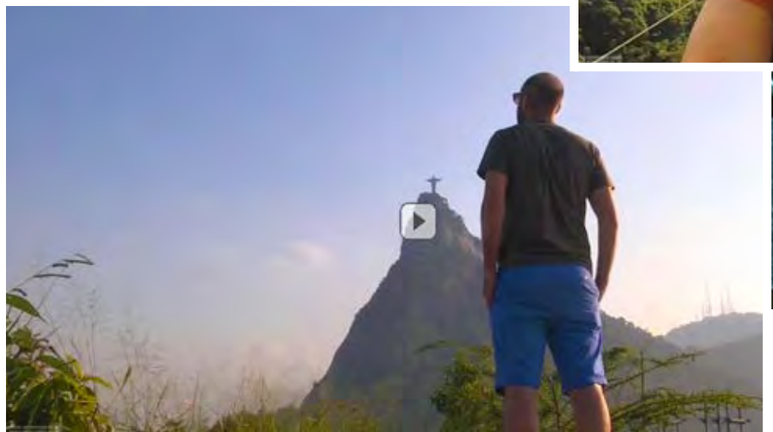
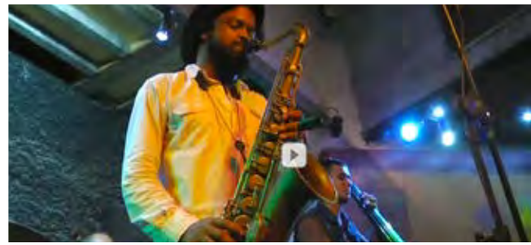
Images from "El epílogo del Diario de Martín en Brasil"
Published on July 12, 2014 © ESPN Deportes: **goo.gl/m5nAwV**









A New Sensibility for *Radio en Español*

By Maria McFarland Sanchez-Moreno

Top: Radio Ambulante producers / Below: Carolina Guerrero & Daniel Alarcon

All photos courtesy of Radio Ambulante

A woman sings, mourning the loss of her daughter, after playing a twisted game of truth on Peruvian television. A once powerful president of Honduras laughs about being deposed and deposited on a Costa Rican airstrip in his pajamas. Musicians remember how they created space for their heavy metal subculture in 1980s Cuba. Two writers—one Colombian and one Argentine, who share the same name—finally meet and discover they are also bound by their looks, and their past. A Colombian community describes its relationship to the nameless dead that regularly float down a river. These are the voices that Radio Ambulante has started to bring to listeners across Latin America and the U.S., usually in their native Spanish. In the process, the project is slowly transforming Latin Americans' understanding of what radio journalism can be.

"Ambulante" can mean traveling or itinerant, but is also a reference to the street vendors, or "ambulantes," who hawk anything from ceviche or juice to t-shirts and toy cars in many Latin American cities. It's an apt name for a radio project that—perhaps for the first time—is offering innovative material not to any one audience in any one country, but to multiple audiences in multiple countries, over many different radio stations, and online via podcasts.

When wife-husband duo Carolina Guerrero and Daniel Alarcón conceived of Radio Ambulante in 2012, it wasn't obvious that it would work. Their goal was to bring long-form true-to-life narratives, in the style of *This American Life* or *Radio Lab*, to Spanish speakers in the Americas. But someone from a major Spanish-language news outlet warned Guerrero that their project was doomed to fail, because at least in the US, Mexicans are only interested in Mexican stories, Peruvians only in Peruvian stories, and so on. "We always thought that was a myth," Guerrero said. Guerrero is Colombian, and Alarcón is Peruvian-American, and their friends come from many different countries, including Argentina, Chile and the United States. They were constantly swapping stories, and couldn't care less what country they happened in. Radio Ambulante is "like having someone in your house telling you a story," Carolina added. "The fact that the story came from another country or in another accent shouldn't make it any less valid." If anything, Guerrero and Alarcón thought it would make the stories more, not less, interesting.

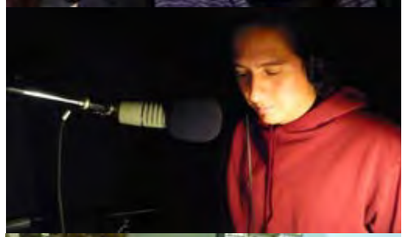
But there was a lot of work ahead before Guerrero and Alarcón could put their idea to the test. At the most basic level, they needed to learn how to do radio. Guerrero's background was as a promoter for cultural and social projects. Alarcón was increasingly known as

a brilliant young novelist, featured by *The New Yorker* as a promising writer under 40. Neither of them had significant radio experience. But friends and journalists they asked for advice replied with encouragement, and answers to such basic questions as: "ok, now what equipment do we use? What microphones and recorders?" They discovered Transom.org, a website aimed at channeling new voices and work to public radio, which offered them tools and a community. Leaning on friendly and online advice, Alarcón supervised production of Radio Ambulante's first few stories. And soon, they were able to recruit Martina Castro, a Uruguayan journalist and managing editor at KALW News in San Francisco, to help them out as a senior producer, even while she kept her day job.

A May 2012 Kickstarter campaign got 600 backers and the funding to support Radio Ambulante for a year, and to pay producers for their stories. If you don't pay in journalism, people don't take you seriously, and given the amount of time and work it takes to produce these stories, Guerrero said, they were always clear on the need to pay for them. But almost immediately they ran into another wrinkle. Latin America has a long tradition of written non-fiction narrative, known as *crónica*—think Gabriel Garcia, Elena Poniatowska or, more recently, *Gatopardo* and *Etiqueta Negra* magazines—but that tradition has never made the leap to radio. Radio journalism is wildly popular, but it mainly consists of short segments about the news, humor or running commentary. "Producers are not used to stories longer than 2 to 3 minutes. This isn't hot news, and if you tell them that you're going to spend 6 months producing a story, they think it's ridiculous," Guerrero said of her first interactions with some radio outlets.

The lack of familiarity with this style of journalism in the region also made it hard for Radio Ambulante to find people who knew how to pitch and produce the types of pieces they wanted. Journalism schools in Latin America teach radio journalism, without focusing on the long-form, personal, vivid storytelling that Radio Ambulante was after. That means that, especially at the beginning, they had to spend enormous amounts of time editing scripts submitted usually by print journalists who were, of course, very attached to their writing. But many of them were eager to learn. Peruvian writer Gabriela Wiener, one of the first to run a piece (*Everyone Returns*) in Radio Ambulante, later described the process fondly in a column in *La República* (Peru): "And there I was in front of a microphone of a rented studio in Barcelona, with an original script that over radio would have taken some 15 hours. I recorded thousands of hours, and we edited savagely." She was delighted with the experience.

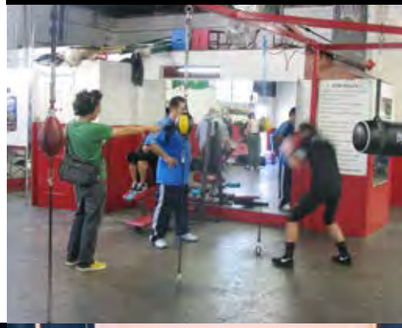
Guerrero and Alarcón invested an inordinate amount of energy in training their producers, one by one. They put together a handbook for producers who wanted to make a pitch. They talked to producers about how they needed good voices to narrate the stories, and a narrative arc—not just a subject or a news item. It makes no sense to pitch a story if the producer hasn't

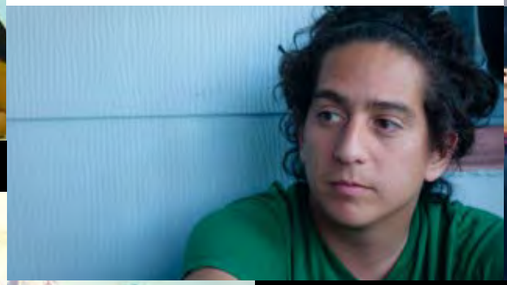


Dimiter Kenarov supporting Pussy Riot in a Radio Ambulante t-shirt

Latin America has a long tradition of written non-fiction narrative, known as *crónica*—think Gabriel Garcia, Elena Poniatowska or, more recently, *Gatopardo* and *Etiqueta Negra* magazines—but that tradition has never made the leap to radio.

Carolina Guerrero interviews composer Guillermo Galindo





Bake sale fundraiser Kickstarter Campaign

Junot Diaz

"Radio keeps you company during your commute, while you make coffee, while you bathe, or if you're driving a long distance at night."

Francisco Goldman

even spoken to the main character, Guerrero recalls explaining, because everything turns on the character's voice and ability to tell a good story. That's just how radio works.

But remarkably quickly, Guerrero says, the idea is catching on. Producers and writers in the region are increasingly curious and interested in submitting pitches, and each time the pitches are better.

Guerrero and Alarcón have also grown their team. Full-time Colombia-based project manager and editor Camila Segura has joined the San Francisco-based Guerrero and Alarcón. They have additional editors in Chile and Puerto Rico; Martina Castro helping part-time in San Francisco; a program coordinator and a community manager based out of New York; and the support of experienced consultants like Mandalit del Barco and others. They're now up to one episode a week, alternating stories with interviews on topics as diverse as the World Cup, drug-related violence in Mexico, and a blogger's journey from chemically straightening her hair to learning to love her natural curls.

Not that it's been easy. Guerrero remembers the first few months of last year as particularly grueling. In February 2013, they hosted a fundraising event for Radio Ambulante in New York, selling a few hundred tickets to a live radio conversation by Alarcón, along with authors Francisco Goldman and Junot Diaz. At the time, Guerrero was heavily pregnant and bedridden, so she organized the whole event from the couple's San Francisco home. A little over a month later, at 11:00 p.m. the night of March 21, Alarcón sent in the final correction to his latest critically acclaimed novel, *At Night We Walk in Circles*. The next day, Guerrero gave birth to their son Eliseo and went on maternity leave. Throughout, Radio Ambulante continued its regular production schedule.

Funding is also an ongoing challenge. Through a partnership with Public Radio International's *The World*, Guerrero and Alarcón have a budget to cover some of their programming, and they have some foundation support. They're considering running another Kickstarter campaign next year, though getting support from Latin America, which doesn't have the same tradition of philanthropy that exists in the US, and where people aren't as familiar with online giving, has been difficult. For the first Kickstarter drive, for example, they had to send messengers to Peru and Colombia to collect funds, with the bulk of the support coming from the United States. They're looking at a variety of options for more stable funding: finding underwriting and sponsors, or possibly creating a subscription service.

Still, so far, their hard work seems to be paying off. In addition to Public Radio International, they've built partnerships with BBC Mundo, and a network of Spanish-language radio stations in the U.S., known as Radio Bilingüe, which often run their material. *The Night Walk*, a story they produced in Spanish, with reporter James Spring, about the simulated border crossings conducted in a small town in Hidalgo, Mexico, ran in English in *This American Life* in March.

But what about the original challenge? Are Latin Americans really interested in hearing stories from other countries? There's no definitive answer yet, but initial signs are positive. Radio Ambulante now counts a total of about 100,000 listeners on all platforms. Of those, 75 percent are in the U.S.—which, with more than 37 million Spanish speakers, according to the Pew Research Center, rivals many Latin American countries in the size of its Spanish-speaking population. Guerrero says they were surprised to find that a lot of their U.S. listeners are using Radio Ambulante's podcasts as educational tools, as they offer challenging, culturally intriguing stories to English-speakers learning Spanish. Radio Ambulante is also developing substantial audiences in Mexico, followed by Colombia and then—to everyone's surprise, since Radio Ambulante doesn't offer Portuguese content—Brazil. There are certainly gaps in reach in Latin America. Guerrero points out with a laugh that they have more listeners in Egypt than in Guatemala. But the real test of their audience will come over time, as they start to invest more resources in distribution with local stations.

Meanwhile, this fall, Guerrero will be starting a Knight International Journalism Fellowship at Stanford, to create an online toolkit for independent radio producers in Latin America, in the hopes of stimulating Spanish speakers to create their own podcasts in Radio Ambulante's style. "You open I-Tunes and see so many podcasts in English, but in Spanish there are so many human resources, and so much talent. . . ." There's no reason we shouldn't be seeing the same level of production in Latin America, too. Especially, Guerrero stresses, when radio is such an important, pervasive medium. "Radio keeps you company during your commute, while you make coffee, while you bathe, or if you're driving a long distance at night." While news radio can keep you informed, the type of stories Radio Ambulante puts together have a different kind of meaning. "This type of radio offers you a lovely form of companionship," Guerrero says. "In Latin America, we need more of that."

CONTRIBUTOR CONTEST WINNER!

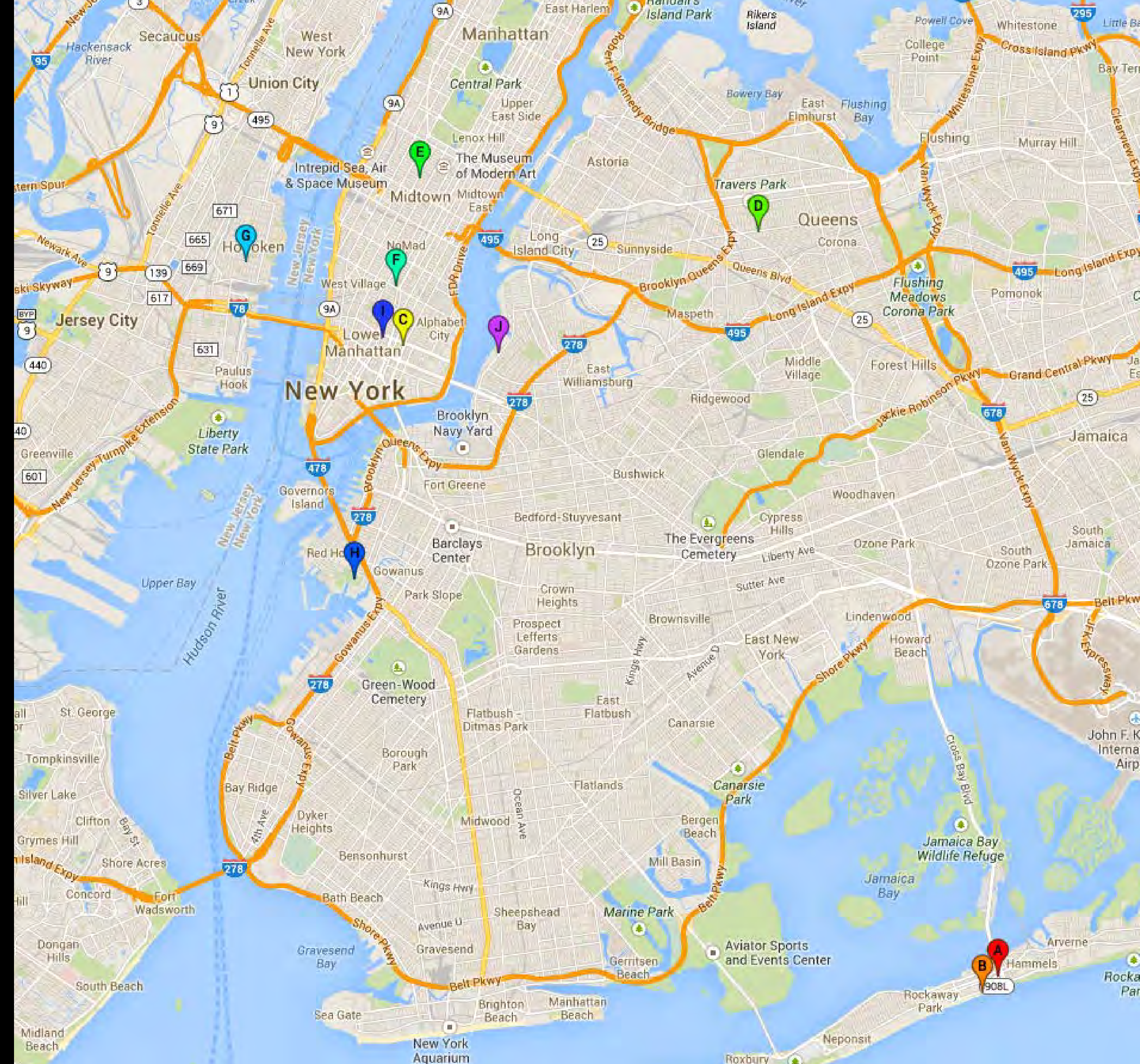
As a contest winner, Maria will be flying anywhere she likes in Mexico or to a select destination in Latin America. Look for an article about Maria's journey in LatinLover's upcoming issues. Contest sponsored by Aeromexico.

STREET FOOD

Queens and Kings of New York City

By Chris Yong-García // Photos by Andrzej Bialuski

You can find everything in New York City, every kind of music, every kind of art, every kind of food. It can be a little overwhelming. With so much available, where does one start? We've decided to simplify one aspect of New York City's endless offering, an aspect that is especially near and dear to our hearts: street food. We've spent the last month scouring the five boroughs and beyond for the very best Latin America has to offer, in search of New York's Street Food Queens and Kings. It was a delicious dizzy-making journey, and the results are in. Ten vendors, nine neighborhoods, eight countries' native cuisines as inspiration. Pupusas, salteñas, churros, tacos, tamales, perros, ceviche, empanadas. There's plenty of food on the table, so please hop on the subway or in a cab and start serving yourself!



Map data © 2014 Google

A Rockaway Taco	B La Cevicheria	C Los Perros Locos	D Arepa's Lady	E Nuchas
F Morocho	G Zafra	H El Olomega	I La Churreria	J Bolivian Llama Party

Andrew Fields'
Rockaway Taco
Rockaway Beach, Queens

Tacos

A taco is a Mexican staple: a warm corn tortilla stuffed with meat, topped with cilantro, raw vegetables and assorted hot sauces.

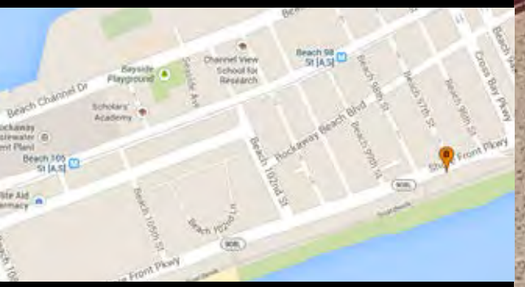
I'm a native New Yorker, and, after spending four and a half years owning and operating a restaurant on the west coast of México, I returned and settled down in Rockaway, a beautiful place just a fifty-minute train ride from the city. We wanted to make great food by the ocean, and this seemed just right. At the time, there was a lack of fresh food.

Tacos in New York are an interesting thing. Most of the Mexican places try and change the flavor to fit the American palette, and something ends up getting lost in translation. (There is a place in Sunset Park, El Tenampa, that makes really amazing authentic food.) We have avoided changing anything at all costs. The only thing we do that I would love to avoid is "take out." The lifespan of a fish taco is four minutes, and two of them can be consumed in eight bites. The idea is that the whole experience is fast, fluid, satisfying, meant to be enjoyed on the spot.

In Mexico, you don't really ask, "What do you want to eat tonight?" It's more like: "Let's go eat tacos, okay?" It's such a quick and easy meal, with no super production attached to it. You can be in and out with a full stomach in ten minutes, so you can enjoy the rest of your day on the beach.

The most intriguing thing about street food to me is the experience and atmosphere, where and how it takes place. As a customer, I love being put in touch with how the food is made. That's the feeling I get when I eat on the street.

Ximena Yrala's
La Cevicheria
Rockaway Beach,
Queens

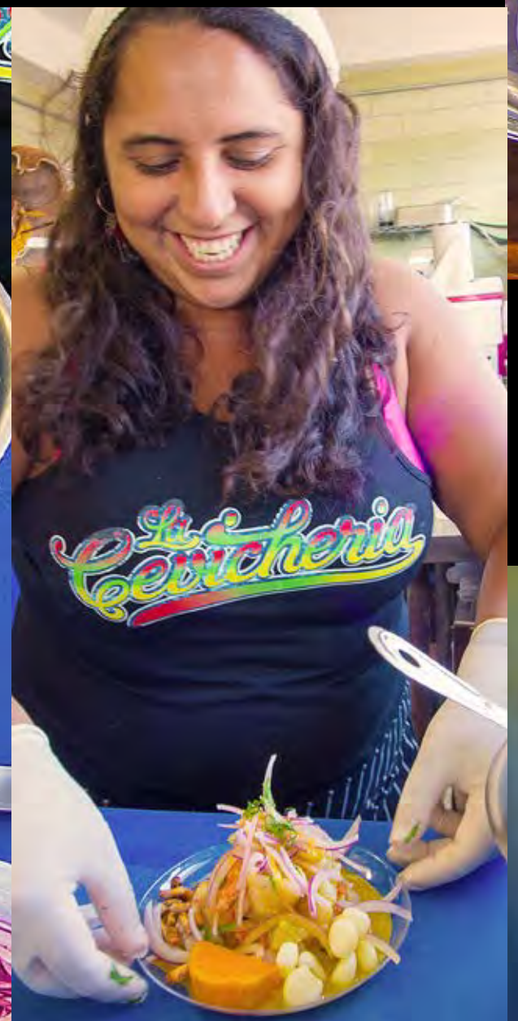


Ceviches

Ceviche is a perfect blend of fish marinated in citrus juices. There are many theories about the origin of ceviche, but all we know is: it was a dish created by the gods to give us a taste of heaven.

We started selling ceviche two summers ago, where we lived in the Rockaways. On a hot day, a fresh *cebichito* served to the right temperature will refresh your being; and after a night of drinking, a very spicy *cebichito* will return your body and soul to the right place. I don't think we made any changes to the kind of ceviche we're making for New Yorkers. We tried to keep the simplicity of the dish. And we work with local fishermen, which allows us to provide a high-quality product.

I love watching the body language of my clients, from the first bite, till the last sip of *leche de tigre*, "tiger's milk," which leaves them for a few seconds in a hilarious trance. It's best with an extremely cold beer.



The last time I was in Peru I stayed at Punta Negra, the beach of my childhood. My visit coincided with the opening of "El Milagro," a new cevicheria created with the sole purpose of driving beach goers mad about ceviches.

Nowadays, we're also serving *causa*, quinoa salad and some daily specials. There's nothing better than bringing our own beloved beach staples to the community here.

Alex Mitow's
Los Perros Locos
Lower East Side, Manhattan

Perros

A *perro* is a super-loaded Colombian hot dog, with everything under the sink on top of it.

Typical toppings include pineapple sauce, crushed potato chips, and *salsa rosada*, but we have varieties with everything from *pico de gallo* to crushed *fritos* and smoked ham. There's an idea of a perfect traditional Colombian hot dog, and then there are hot dogs in the spirit of the true *perro* that are really limited only by your imagination.

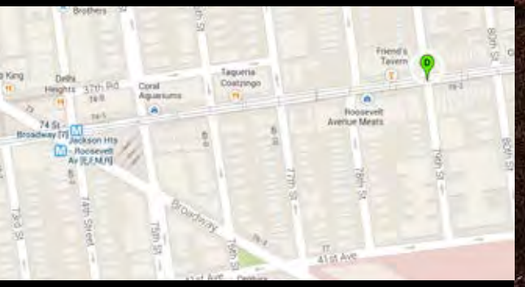
I'm a neighborhood guy and live about seven blocks away from our Allen Street storefront space in the East Village. I wanted my first New York venture to be in my own neighborhood. Also, the Lower East Side is a known culinary destination, with lots of great spots like The Meatball Shop and Russ and Daughters within walking distance. We've been open now for a year and a half.

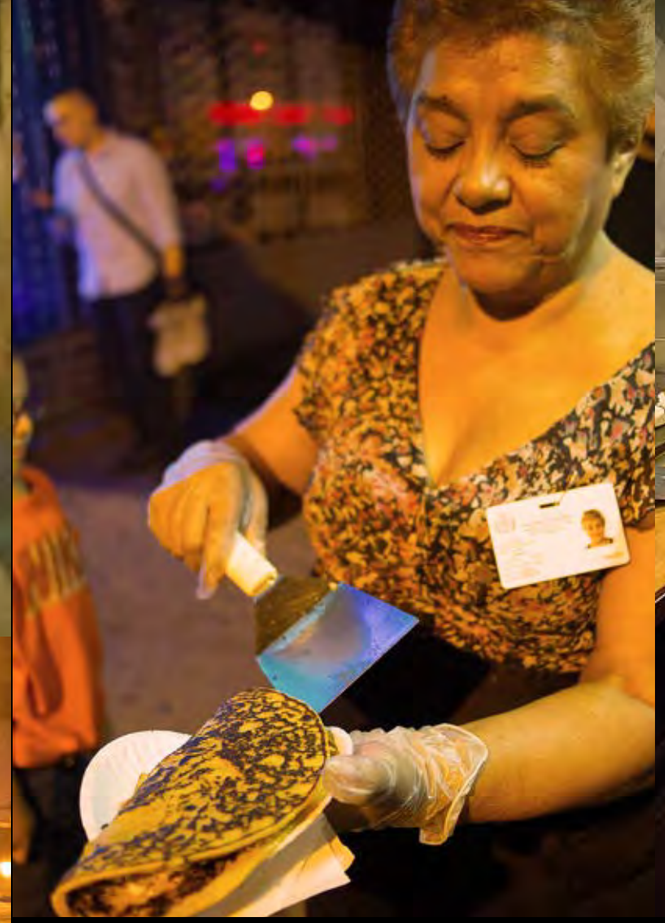
I first encountered Colombian-style hot dogs in Miami while I was living there for school. We would stumble into these crazy all-night places in suburban strip malls that were cranking house music and filled with Latin club kids wearing sunglasses at 5 a.m. It felt like perfection, and I really wanted to re-create that here in New York, with my own special spin.

Some of my customers have become great friends and even business partners. One customer, Danny Baez, has introduced countless people from the Dominican and Latin communities to Los Perros Locos. And a couple months back, we partnered with him and his partner, Chris Rodriguez-Bautista, and their Dominican social collective "DipSters," to put on a really amazing Dominican style feast/dance party, called *Comedera Jevy*, at a location in the Lower East Side that we took over for a weekend. We had a real Dominican mama cooking *sancocho* in the back, and I roasted two baby pigs for *pernil*.

Arepas

Maria Piedad Cano's
Arepa Lady
Jackson Heights, Queens





Arepas are made with corn and come in many varieties: *pelao*, *de huevo*, *de mote*, etc. I started selling arepas thirty years ago. It was the only way for me to survive in New York City and feed my kids.

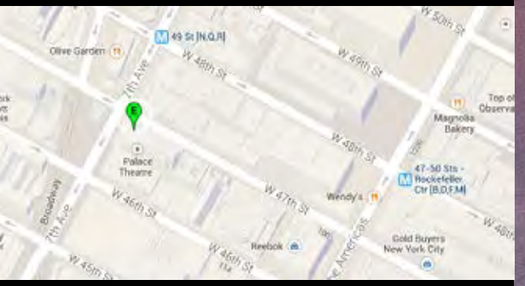
In my country, Colombia, and in Medellin, the city where I am from, arepas are sold in small carts at the doors of certain coffee shops. They are a very traditional dish, eaten for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The arepas I sell are the same as the arepas sold in my country.

I have one customer who has been coming to me since he was a child. He used to come with his parents, then with his friends, and now comes with his wife.

Empanadas

Photo courtesy of Nuchas

Ariel Barbouth's
Nuchas
Times Square, Manhattan



The question of where empanadas come from is bound to generate debate! Some people trace their origin back to the ancient Middle East. We were inspired by the Argentine version of the empanada, which arrived in South America via Spain. To me, the empanada is the quintessential hand-held food: a great delivery vehicle for amazing dish.

My wife and I opened the first location of Nuchas in 2011. Empanadas are something as ubiquitous as a pizza where we come from, and we did not understand why it was not so in the U.S. We figured New York was the best place to start changing that.

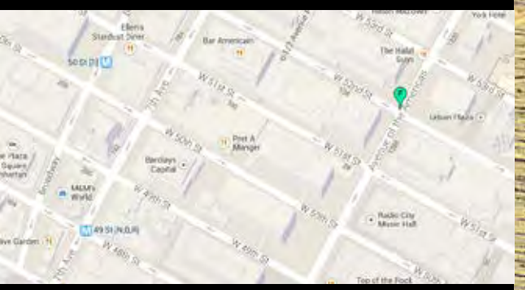
When we first started, we had nine empanada flavors, all essentially Argentine. After a few months, we did a 180 and started from scratch. We worked with Argentine Chef, German Lucarelli, who had been in the U.S. for a decade, and had a strong understanding of the flavor profiles and point of view we needed to really reach New Yorkers. We added more spices and more depth of flavor.

Back in Buenos Aires, empanadas are what people order for parties at home. They can be a full meal or an appetizer. My favorite two places in Buenos Aires are La Cocina and La Tucumanita, in Barrio Norte, two blocks away from where I used to live.

I love meeting our customers, though I must admit I am not doing it as much as I used to.

It was particularly moving to be able to bring empanadas to the thousands of people affected by Hurricane Sandy. Hearing their stories, and giving them a warm meal made our food truck into much more than I had ever hoped for.

Rafael Samanez's
Morocho
Union Square, Manhattan



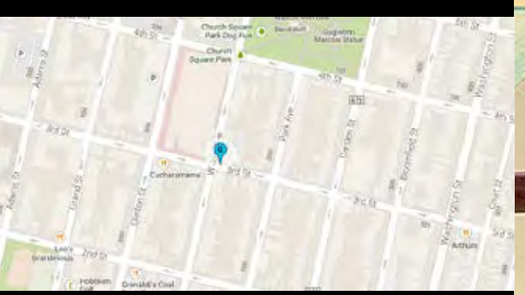
Sandwich de Chicharrón

A traditional *Sandwich de Chicharron Peruano* is made with pork shoulder brazed for a long time. The pork is then sliced and served on a roll, with mayo, *salsa criolla*—onions, cilantro, lime—and sliced sweet potatoes. In Peru, the sandwich is eaten for breakfast or Sunday brunch.

We started selling the sandwich this year from a mobile food cart. We spend a lot of time at Union Square, but we move around the city and post our location on Facebook and Twitter. We made a slight variation on the traditional sandwich. We started using a different cut of meat—pork belly—which we braze in fish stock to give a more umami flavor. We then glaze it in a sweet passion fruit glaze, slice it and serve it in a brioche bun, with spicy *rocoto* mayo, *salsa criolla*, and sweet potatoes, which we fry until very crispy. Our goal is to have every single flavor profile, from sweet to savory, sour to salty, and all the textures, from soft to crunchy, in one sandwich.

We think the sandwich is accompanied very well by Chicha Morada, a purple corn drink we serve. One of the most wonderful things is when you see a customer who has never tasted something you serve fall in love with it, then continue coming back day after day.

Photo courtesy of Maricel Presilla



Maricel Presilla's
Zafra
Hoboken, New Jersey

Tamales

Tamal is the generic term for foods made out of vegetable doughs—fresh corn, dried corn treated with lime, or a combination of starchy vegetables—steamed, boiled or grilled, wrapped in leaves. The term tamal comes from the Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. The Spaniards took the name everywhere they settled in the Americas, and it came to replace many local terms for leaf-wrapped foods resembling Mesoamerican tamales and made with different types of dough.

I started selling Cuban-style, fresh corn tamales at Zafra, when we opened our restaurant in 2000. Today we make about five different types from different parts of Latin America. We felt that tamales were an essential part of the Latin American diet, and one of the most spectacular foods from our part of the world. It was inconceivable to open a Cuban-Latino restaurant without tamales.

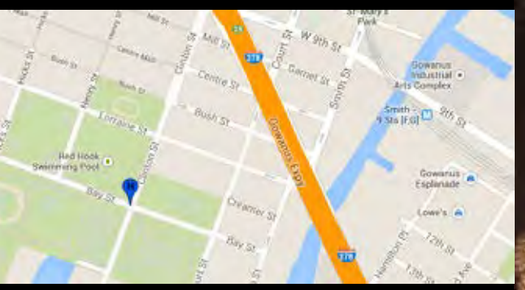
Traditionally, tamales are festive foods, prepared at home by whole families for important occasions and feast days. They are serious ritual foods. Savvy street food vendors have incorporated the making and selling of tamales into their repertoire, but they are not necessarily considered street foods per se. But in Latin America, there is a tenuous line between street food and home cooking. I do remember a particular tamal vendor from my hometown Santiago de Cuba, a wiry black man, with skin like onyx, who sold piping hot fresh corn tamales from two large cans balanced at both ends of a long wooden pole.

I never change my recipes to suit costumers' taste. But sometimes it is necessary because key ingredients, like corn, have different tastes or textures here in the U.S. Cuban fresh corn is starchy, with very little sweetness. North American corn tends to be more watery and way sweeter. I decided not to work against the sweetness of the corn, but rather use it as an element of flavor. The end result is Cuban-style tamales, not exact copies of the tamales typical of my hometown, called *ayacas*.

Below: My Fresh Corn Tamales (GranCocina Latina)
Photo courtesy of Maricel Presilla

Among my favorite customers is a couple who started coming to Zafra at least three times a week since we first opened our doors in 2000. He is a musician, and she is a talented artist, who gave us three paintings of Zafra as a gift for being her favorite restaurant of all times. Another loyal customer whom we love is Natalie Morales of NBC's *The Today Show*. Her husband took our rice and beans to her at the Hoboken hospital, where she gave birth to her youngest son. Recently she invited me on to the show.

Marcos Lainez's
El Olomega
Red Hook, Brooklyn



Pupusas

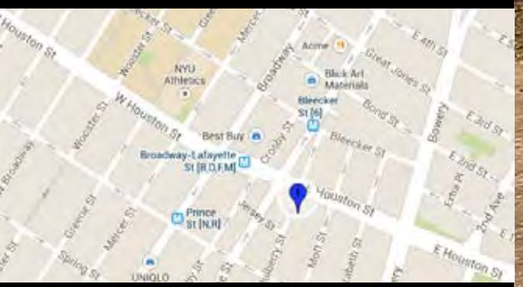
A *pupusa* is a corn tortilla shape stuffed with various types of filling, typically pork, beans and cheese. It comes from El Salvador, where it is the national dish. The second Sunday in November is national *pupusa* day.

My mother and father started selling pupusas in Red Hook Park back in the 80's to people playing soccer. My mother had lost her job at a restaurant, then my father lost his restaurant job, too.

In my country, *pupusas* are sold just like here, with pickled cabbage—*curtido*—and tomato sauce. We've made some changes to the flavors. We have about fourteen different flavors now. Plus, the *curtido* we make is pink. We add jalapeño for our Mexican brothers, and sour cream. Americans love it with sour cream.

Some of our customers have been with us for twenty years. They still ask for my mother. This is very nice and very loyal on their part to keep coming back summer after summer.

Jesus (Lolo) Manso's
La Churreria
Nolita, Manhattan



Churros

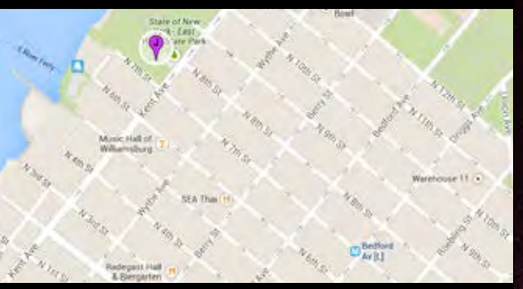
Churros are an ancient food invented by Egyptians: water and wheat mixed and fried in the shape of cinnamon stick. But most people know them as a traditional dessert from Spain.

For the last three years we've been selling churros, maintaining a traditional recipe and presentation. We sell *churros con chocolate a la taza*—churros with a dip in chocolate in a cup—and *churros rellenos* filled with con dulce de leche, crema, chocolate, strawberry or lemon.

We like to eat them any time of day. But in Spain they're served for breakfast, for dessert or as a snack late at night.

Salteñas

Oropeza brothers'
Bolivian Llama Party
Williamsburg, Brooklyn



First of all, a salteña is *not* an empanada. Salteñas are savory pastries filled with sliced beef or chicken, mixed in a sweet, slightly spicy sauce. They also contain a hardboiled egg.

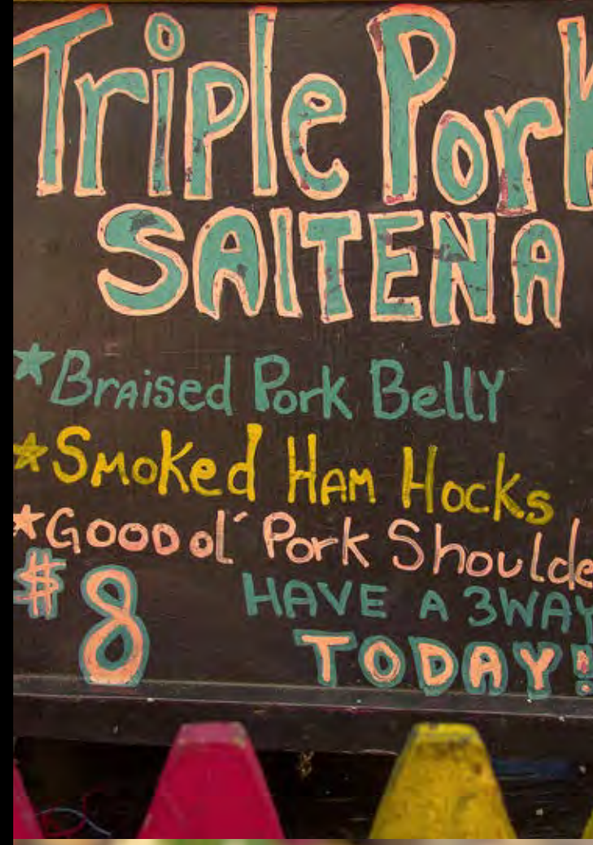
We make an awesome vegetarian version with quinoa, smoked mushrooms and squash, too. Each region of Bolivia has its own variation. The salteñas in La Paz are less juicy than their Cochabamba counterparts, while Potosi's salteñas are flaky and delicious.

My brothers and I wanted to bring the Bolivian experience to the masses and put Bolivian cuisine on the map in New York. My brother was laid off from his marketing job, and I was just getting out of school with an English degree. My brother had an idea to sell roasted corn and salteñas at street fairs. So that's how we started three years ago.

We're striving to maintain the authenticity of the salteña. But we're open to variations. One of our customers was getting married in New Orleans and wanted salteñas at his wedding. So we did a specialty "Down South" Cajun salteña, with Louisiana jumbo shrimp and leeks, and a fricase interpretation with pork belly and anise. He took the salteñas as carry on and sat them on some dry ice. It was a hit, and we were happy!

We've since started making Chola sandwiches, too. It is a typical street food you find in Bolivia: a pulled meat sandwich—in our case triple pork and brisket—topped with pickled vegetables, aioli and crumbly white cheese on a toasted roll. It's like culinary napalm, it's so good!

Back in Bolivia, in Cochabamba, there is a busy avenue, called El Prado, with a strip of restaurants, bars and chicherias. It's where everyone goes to take out a date or family. There's a beautiful promenade at the end of the avenue, but right before it, you'll see Oogi. It's a modest looking salteña shop, which boasts, I think, the best salteñas in Bolivia. Don Facundo, the owner, has a wall of salteña accolades, competitions he has dominated for years. He's the equivalent of a Michelin starred chef in the world of salteñas.



Infinite Frenetic and Dream-like Situations: Mexico City Street Art

by María Elena Ortiz

Imprenta Movil, Zona Maco. Fonca

Tape, María Cerdá's event

Ofrenda muertos, LGdC

LOVERS KISSING and aggressive street hustling. Cumbia musicians playing late at night. Crowds coursing along pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern streets, with endless food stands. Welcome to Mexico City. For its over 20 million inhabitants, the streets offer infinite frenetic and dream-like situations, where in one day you can see both the beauty of an ancient Aztec ruin and impoverished children selling candy at high-end restaurants. On the same streets, some contemporary artists are offering an alternative to traditional public art. In tune with the everyday, initiatives such as La Galería de Comercio and works such as *La imprenta móvil* aim to give walking audiences a more immediate experience of art.

In 2009, during Mexico's war against narcotráfico—a war that has already cost thousands of civilian lives—several artists were inspired. Take Nuria Montiel, a leading voice in the local emerging art scene. Montiel started a mobile printing press—*La imprenta móvil* (2010-2013)—that could travel across Mexico City as a space for reflection, social action and public collaboration. When people realized what the press could do, they used it to create their own banners for public protest march materials. Montiel would bring paper, but also CD's and other raw material for printing. One time she even took *La imprenta móvil* to a march in the countryside. *La imprenta móvil* became a living record of the different histories emerging in an ongoing episode of unrest.

Once a month in Mexico City, La Galería de Comercio presents a project that promotes public encounters on a corner of Calle Comercio and Calle Martí in the Colonia Escandón. Unlike typical white-cube galleries, La Galería de Comercio embraces the street, with its everyday

When people realized what the press could do, they used it to create their own banners for public protest march materials.

Imprenta movil

La Galería de Comercio challenges conventional notions of gallery space and public works, but it also stresses the potential of artistic practice that occurs outside of traditional monetary exchanges.

activities, and produces events that adhere to the streets' structural and social conditions. Projects are initiated by invitation and are made with low or no budgets and must engage the public in some way. Each project is documented and broadcasted, extending audience beyond physical limitations. The gallery does not profit directly from the projects, thereby challenging conventional notions of gallery space and public works, and proving the potential of an artistic practice outside traditional monetary exchange. Collaborators have included Nuria Montiel, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Jimena Mendoza, José Luis Cortés-Santander, Alejandra España, and María Cerdá Acebrón, producing a broad range of work, including events for children, karaoke on bicycles, street soccer matches and free postal services. María Cerdá Acebrón, for example, created *Tapete*, an installation comprised of different publicity materials gathered from the vendors of Calle Comercio and Martí, which covered the street like a carpet. La Galería de Comercio recently had an exhibition at Casa del Lago in Mexico City showing selections from their archive.

Interested in social engagement, temporality and nomadism, artists in the streets of Mexico City are proposing a socially engaged approach towards art-making, enhancing the scenic qualities of urban space in their city and challenging passing audiences to examine the political conditions, social experience and crude realities of the moment.

R-Tronika / Renzo. Photo courtesy of Brennan Cavanaugh

Cumbia Loves New York

By Michelle Christina Larsen

DJ Cristo's dance floor, Mehanata. Photo by Michelle Christina Larsen

It's just after 5:00 a.m. on an August morning. Barranco's low lying fog is parting for crowds of tipsy concert-goers, as they pour into the streets of what I affectionately refer to as "Lower East Lima." Barranco is, in fact, situated on the west side of Peru's capital city, but the vibe is parallel to that of NYC's Lower East Side—a gritty platform for music and art culture. I've side-stepped my way out of sweaty, crowded *Sargento Pimienta*, the CBGBs of Lima, after seeing Peruvian cumbia band Bareto for the third time in a year. The first two occasions?

Rewind five months and seven hours north by plane to the frigid streets of New York City in March. Bareto is performing for hundreds of grinning fans crammed into Stage 48, a large venue frozen to the skirts of the Hudson River Piers. Concert-goers in their 20s and 30s are frantically waving their arms in the frost, singing along to modern renditions of classic Peruvian cumbia, or chicha, a genre which, until recently, carried a lower class stigma that many Peruvians turned their backs on. I caught Bareto again at B.B. Kings, in both places: ecstatic crowds. Something aside from a twist cone of nostalgia and patriotism was being devoured here. A cumbia explosion was underway.

A well-placed cumbia track from just about anywhere can ignite a waning dance floor within seconds. A live band performing cumbia—or any of the NYC-cultivated variations of this viral genre—can propel a crowd of straight-faced hipsters into forgetting their egos and shaking their heels right into the ground. I've seen it happen, and it's beautiful. New York's cumbia roots stretch far and wide, and while the international origins of different sub-genres are fascinating to trace, the more immediate thrill is how cumbia has been adapted and reborn in the melting pot of immigrant culture that is NYC.

"There are so many different kinds of cumbia that have arrived here and maintain in different hoods," explains DJ Cristo, a.k.a. Chico Selektah, a resident DJ at Mehanata and drummer for self-branded psycho-tropical punk band Escarioka. "From Colombian cumbia to Mexican Sonidera, Chilean Chilombiana, Argentinean Villera, Peruvian Chicha. There's even Arabic cumbia. The evolution has more to do with the new electro-cumbia and tropical bass movement, remixed by producers like the Cumba Mela crew, Uproot Andy, Sonido Chichadelico. They're taking this sound to a new level in New York. My bands, Escarioka and Chicholina Sound Machine, grew up with cumbia. We heard it at every BBQ or Christmas party in our countries, so it's always been there. When we came to the U.S., it was the obvious genre to play around with and discover new interpretations of."

A fierce perpetrator of genre-meshing, DJ Cristo threw together a last minute studio session for friends a few years ago, after joking about recording a cumbia version of a Romanian gypsy song on the back porch of a summer house party. Colombian Ska band, Skampida, happened to be hanging out there too, so they joined in. Before long, a collective of friends from the U.S., Russia, Chile, Colombia, and France was sitting in a recording studio with Romanian lyrics scribbled phonetically on a scrap of paper. Experimentation, not end result, is the point, which ties right into the philosophy of the New York cumbia scene. New Yorkers do with cumbia what they do with everything else: make it work for them, make it more exciting, see how far they can push it, whether they can build a new community around it. It's a little bit of everything, inspired by New York's fleeting, random, cross-hatched culture.

"As far as I know, before the appearance of what you could call 'new cumbia' in New York, there was a well-established cumbia scene in the Mexican community in Queens, Brooklyn, and New Jersey," comments Uproot Andy, a pioneer in NYC's electro-cumbia and tropical bass movement, and founder of the monthly dance party *Que Bajo?!* "That was, and still is, a more or less strictly Mexican thing: *cumbia sonidera* with DJs and live bands playing for, more or less, an all Mexican audience. Artists like Estrellas de la Kumbia came out of this. When we started the *Que Bajo?!* party there weren't any other cumbia nights outside of those Mexican communities. At least nothing that brought together the wider world of cumbia from Colombia, Argentina, Peru and so on. The New York scene is super diverse, just like New York itself. I started making cumbia remixes that brought in heavy synthesizer bass and different elements from electronic music. And at the same time artists in all these different countries were interpreting cumbia in all different ways: the more

Uproot Andy. Photo courtesy of Uproot Andy

R-Tronika / Renzo. Photo courtesy of Ana Lía Orézzoli

DJ Cristo. Photo by Michelle Christina Larsen

Karikatura, @ Bowery Electric. Photo by Raffael Flores-Contreras

Karikatura, @ Bowery Electric - Photo by Raffael Flores-Contreras

minimal and digital cumbia of ZZK in Argentina; the more rock and hip hop cumbia of Bomba Estereo in Colombia; Toy Selectah in Mexico. I think our party's role was to create a space in New York to bring all of these iterations together. It was the first night dedicated to the diversity of new Latin electronic dance music."

Morgan Greenstreet, drummer and backup vocalist for the high-energy alternative world music band Karikatura, maintains that cumbia in New York is too varied to be gathered up into one hypothetical scene, though it has infiltrated a wide array of new music movements and projects. "Karikatura is part of a music scene that I would tentatively describe as 'New World Music' or 'Alternative World Music'," Greenstreet elaborates. "It's full of bands who are ready to smash the musical and cultural stereotypes inherent in the idea of World Music. We are inauthentic, and proud of it. This scene has been very receptive to cumbia, and we've been picking up on all the different styles of cumbia that can be heard here, working with the rhythms and the sentiment to create original music."

Dima Kay, founder and lead guitarist of Karikatura, agrees: "I think the appeal of Cumbia, for those of us who didn't grow up listening to it, is that it has so much that is familiar to listeners of ska, reggae, Balkan or Eastern European music. Growing up in a Russian-Jewish household, the sounds of accordions, violins and clarinets were omni-present. So hearing those old Colombian big band cumbias from the 60's and 70's connected right away."

Swaying in the crowd at a Karikatura show, you'd probably have a hard time figuring out where band members hail from. The mood of the evening quickly transitions from a sultry jazz den to a rabid ska mosh pit, and then—surprise!—an addictive cover of an old Peruvian chicha hit, *Colegiala*, cleverly renamed *Profesora*. "When I first put this band together," says Kay. "I had a few tunes in a flamenco style, but the first drummer I worked with was Peruvian, and he instantly interpreted the rumba-flamenca stroke as a cumbia. And that was our first experience fusing Cumbia with other styles. Where else but NYC would a Russian playing flamenco meet up with a Peruvian and make a rumba cumbia?"

Renzo Ortega is a Lima-born electronic and visual artist who founded R-Tronika, a music project blending cumbia, reggae, and rock with electro sensibilities. For Renzo, cumbia is less about a New York scene, and more about a worldwide phenomenon. "The evolution and success of cumbia in New York and globally is the result of immigration," Renzo says. "The *sonido immigrante* or *musica mestiza* is a bridge between our music background—in my case Peruvian Cumbia—and other people's music in the cosmopolitan context of cities. In New York, our music scene is open and diverse. For example, Chicha Libre and the Barbes record label from Brooklyn are advocates of promoting Peruvian *cumbia Amazonica*, the project of a European immigrant. At the same time, I'm Peruvian, and I'm playing cumbia in New York with punk and reggae bands."

When asked who they favored in terms of globally recognized cumbia, I heard everything from Colombia's Los Corraleros de Majagual and Pacho Galan to Argentina's Los Palmeras and Chile's Chico Trujillo. Despite a diverse list of favorites, there was a common thread: everyone is doing their own thing, and collectively giving birth to something completely new. DJ Cristo sums it up nicely: "Cumbia represents Latin Americans and our culture, and it's a great way to promote our identity here in New York, but the musicians themselves are now the influence, rather than the influence being exclusively roots. We're constantly exposed to different styles of music. You've got Dominicans blasting merengue at the corner deli, the Jamaicans down the street blasting dance hall, or the Indian guy driving my taxi playing bhangra. If you pay attention to what's going on, you'll see that the laboratory is out there on the streets."

All photos by Ignacio Lehmann © **www.facebook.com/100WorldKisses**

BESAME MUCHO

by Nicky Neiman

Gay Pride Parade / New York, New York

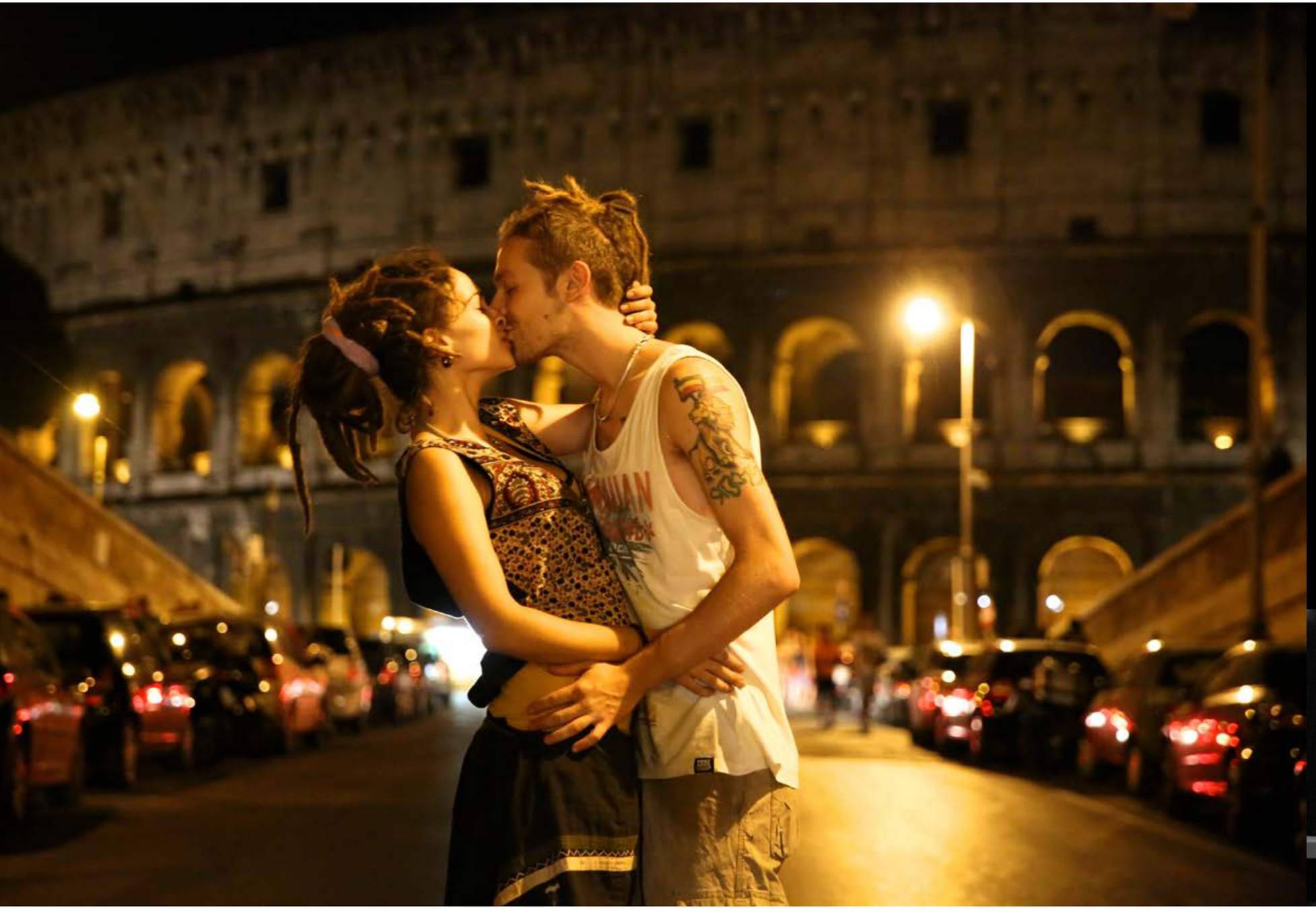
Argentinean photographer, Ignacio Lehmann, has traveled all over the world "catching kisses." His project began a couple years ago in New York City, where he photographed his first 100 kisses in one city. Since then, he has traveled through Europe, South America and Asia searching for more kisses.

Machu Picchu / Cusco, Perú

"The origin of this project was out of an impulse," says Lehmann. "I feel like there is a lack of connection between people these days, and this is exactly what this project is all about: to get back to square one and reconnect with one another."

Hiroshima, Japan

Rome, Italy



The most challenging city so far? Tokyo. But that hasn't stopped Lehmann, and he intends to keep on shining a light on these acts of love with his camera. "I believe a kiss is an act of universal peace and love," Lehmann says. "This act of love, the kiss, through different cultures, is a beautiful message that spreads a feeling of universality and peace. And this is what I love. I am very passionate about this."

New York, New York

POSTCARD FROM RIO

by Brian Waniewski

In the air above the beach at Ipanema, there was a mist. The sun—low and setting—illuminated it, a gold endless glow. People glided past one another. The deeply tanned old man, all belly, legs turned out, shuffling home. The little girl playing secret games with the mosaic stone sidewalks and a stick. American teens giddily nibbling what they had been instructed to avoid: street vendors' corn on the cob, *churros*, coconut *cuz cuz*. The sea surf, softly chuffing. The sea surface, metallic, many colored. Further out, paddle boarders carried on its swell. Rounded rock islands. Distant palms in silhouette. A container ship spotlit pink. And the horizon, finally, the flat line within which the scene unfolded, timeless and in time. In this way, too, I took it in. Which is to say, I felt myself mostly taken in by it, perceived, enveloped. Into slow starring reverie I sank, a stream that warmed and carried me along. For the first time, I felt part of Rio. At last I understood. Months after arriving from New York, I had arrived in the inward city inhabited by the native inhabitant, the *carioca*.

Before this, only the outward signs of that inward city had been apparent. They were: people on the street moving slowly, oh so very slowly. And it wasn't just the tempo that was starting to get to me, when I had to get to the hardware store fast, before it closed, again, for another holiday in the middle of another work week. There was an obliviousness that went along with it, an imperviousness to alternate notions of time and space proposed by other nearby bodies in motion. Like the man in the grocery store standing between you and the ketchup you need to reach, whom you orbit for some time, closer and closer, expecting him to yield, once you breach a critical distance. But whom you end up pressing your whole body against hard, and who stands there still, planted like a rock. No "pardon me" expected. Things were not helped by the fact that my wife and I had moved to Copacabana, a neighborhood in Rio where one in three residents is over sixty-five years old, and wealthy enough to afford help. Which means, in space-sucking pairs, joined by an unshakable, jewel-studded death grip, granny and maid inch along the already narrow, pocked sidewalks.

This would never happen in New York. And not just because the aged are warehoused out of the way of faster moving youth. New Yorkers progress with utmost efficiency toward where they need to get, all the time maintaining personal space with machine-like precision. The grid of the city supports it, even requires it of pedestrians, as the green crosswalk signal instantly gives way to a long, blinking red rejoinder to hurry. It is a mode of being so deeply engrained, so totally cherished, that the New Yorker will sooner spring for a cab than have to pass on foot through the gawking crowds of tourists that clot Times Square, for instance. Whole areas of the already small area New Yorkers share are considered off limits, because they have come to be frequented by people whose bodily gestures do not silently proclaim the same gospel of space-time. That gospel consists of a fierce goal-directedness, yes. At its core though is a kind of distance-taking, a first instinct to avoid encounter, to preserve the shield of self-imagery one constructs to cope in a place where everything is felt to be always possible. Which makes what actually *is* feel like a proto-disappointment, a perpetual diminishment, a betrayal of a million different soon-to-unfold fancy futures.

In Rio, on the other hand, between two bodies moving down the street, there is attraction. The subtle pull between them manifests physically, inexorably, like the gravity between two planets. When I come up behind someone, moving at a quick clip and looking to overtake, he or she will list in my direction, rather than make way. Two people walking down opposite sides of the street, when they pass, will brush shoulders at least. Equally likely is that they walk into each other, so that they must stop, look deeply into one another's eyes and start a conversation. I've seen it happen. And the mobile phone in Rio is no less an agent of attraction. The distraction into which the ambulant multi-tasker slips is the best possible blank slate to work out the unconscious impulse to bump into some encounter. That impulse is at the heart of the city's operating system, its people, and maybe deeper, at the origin of human community.

There are apps and games that prompt users to break out of habitual patterns. I know people in New York who use them and have been known to "Go kiss the nearest stranger" or "Tell a friend a scary secret." In this way, encounters can be manufactured, and we may recover something of the frank exchange with our surroundings that we have given up in order to pursue our goals, to get stuff done with greater efficiency. But the something we recover is never quite the equal, nor the better, of what we have relinquished. What is worse, a division has arisen. The line between people who have traded encounter for efficiency and people who have not is the line between two worlds, two parallel dimensions. Each is unknowable to the other, except through outward signs and other occasions for misunderstanding. And there is no going back.

So, if you're ever in Rio, and see me rounding the bend from Ipanema to Copacabana, walking slowly, oh so very slowly, past the vestiges of the fishermen's village, looking at you and smiling, I invite you not to edge to the other side of the sidewalk. We are both strangers here, fugitives from the future. Come. For once, let the future wait, while we get on with life and get together here, now. Let's see what happens.

You are here!

(eat ceviche like a local)

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Keeping it hot as the weather cools—green at sea, chiles, climate change, tequila, samba and much more