

Ralf Schmitt "Docu-Soap"

"Expertos/eruditos autóctonos discrepan acerca del grado de belleza y validez de un delicado tejido amerindio hecho en Taiwan..."

This quotation is not coined by [Mr. Jorge Antelo Urdininea](#), who was a senator for agriculture in Bolivia in the 80ies, a position which involved many official journeys around the world and also to Taiwan. No, this is the title of a painting done in 2001 by the Bolivian artist [Roberto Valcárcel](#) (*1951) which I bought in his "Creative Autonomous Zone" in Santa Cruz last year when travelling with my wife Stephanie Jünemann through Bolivia and Peru from March to April 2002.



orig. single-cover

Before starting our travel I auctioned by ebay a single-record "**Ein Indiojunge aus Peru**" (**El niño indio del Perú**) from 1973 by singer and actor Karin Katharina Witkiewicz (*9th of March 1945 in Girlachsdorf/Schlesien) who got famous under her stage name [Katja Ebstein](#) (titled after a street in Berlin where she was once living: Epensteinstrasse, 13409 Berlin). On the backside it plays the song "*und Dein Zug der geht in 5 Minuten*" ("*Tu tren saldra en cinco minutos*").

One year before she was engaged in the Günther-Grass initiative during the election campaign of Willy Brandt for Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The following text of the song was written by Christian Bruhn/Georg Buschor (Label/Nr. United Artists (UA)/35 635 A; Si; GER 1973; 3:02):

*De todas formas su suerte buscó,
mas la fortuna jamás encontró.
Los malos amigos le hicieron dejar
aquel buen camino que quiso empezar.*

*En las montañas un niño nació,
allá en el cielo su estrella brilló.
Y junto a su madre
aprendió a caminar,
después, al crecer
se marchó a la ciudad.*

*El niño indio del Perú
vivía como tú, mas la puerta
de los sueños se cerró
para el niño indio del Perú.
Pero piensa que tanta desgracia
para siempre no puede durar.*

*El niño indio del Perú
vivía como tú, mas la puerta
de los sueños se cerró
para el niño indio del Perú.
Yaidaidaidadaaa*

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Yaidaidaidadaaa*

The original reason to go to Bolivia and Peru was not to prove and verify the form of my thesis which was based on a digital transcription - produced for the Bolivian scientist [Carmen Beatriz Loza](#) in 2001 - of a hand-drawing from 1894 by the German archaeologist [Max Uhle](#) showing the 3 [quipus](#) of a shepherd from Cha'lla, Titicaca-Island. It ended in the conclusion that these three knots probably record the interface of the first international floating metro in world history between the boundaries of present Bolivia and Peru.

So we had to go to Cha'lla on Isla del Sol to experience and update this “**metrothesis**”.

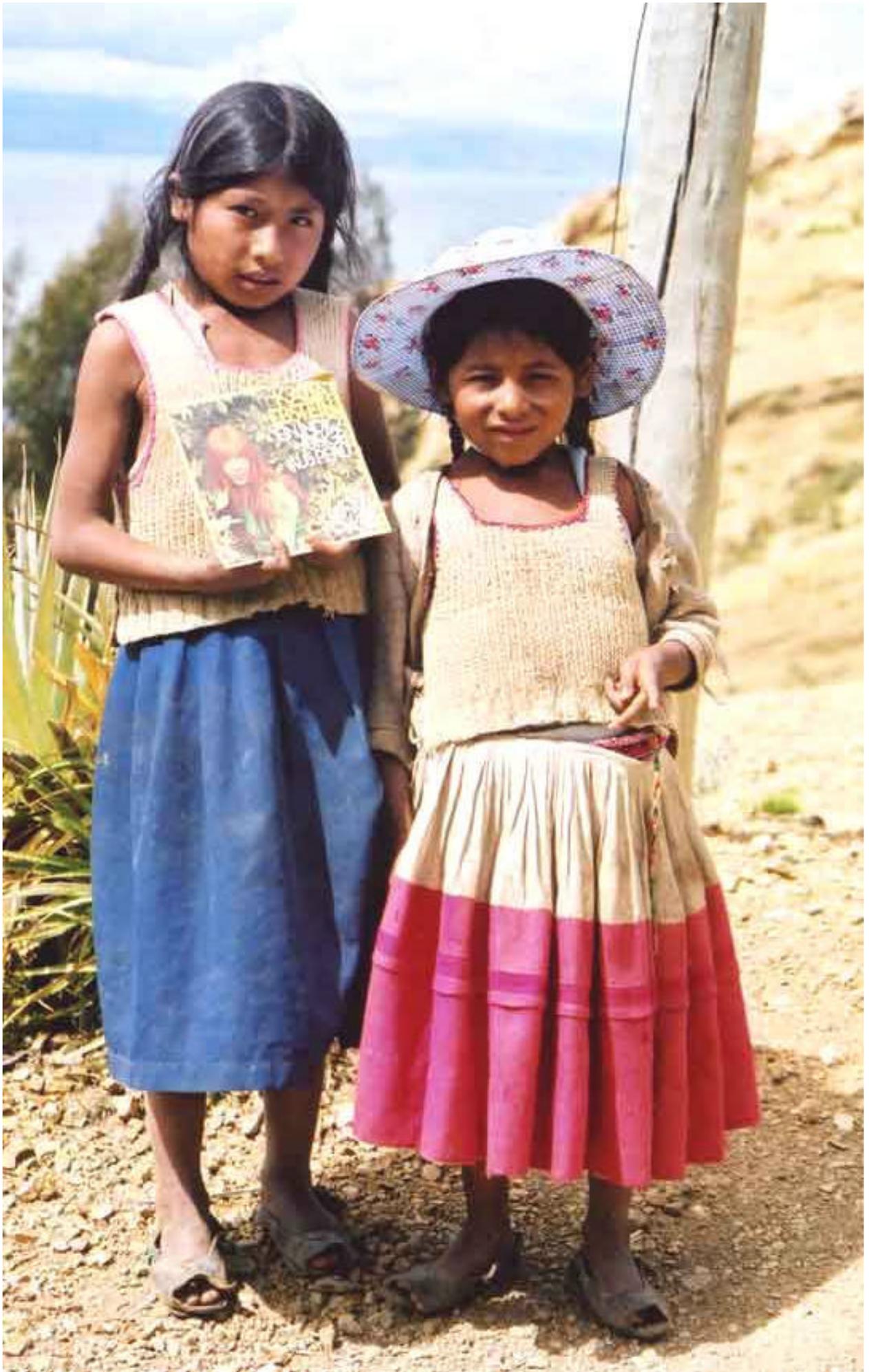


Semana Santa in Cochabamba 2002

On 30th of March early in the morning we left our hotel in Copacabana and took a boat to the northern tip of the island to Cha'llapampa where we started hiking towards the beach of Cha'lla; on this trip going up and down at an average height of 4.000 metres with fabulous views over the water and the island we met a few children on the Inka trail. I asked the Indians whether I might take some photos of them posing with my single-recorder which I was carrying in my backpack all the time without really knowing what for.

They agreed if being payed; I promised to give them a few Bolivianos; and so we started...





Just besides the beach of Cha'lla we tried to get a room in the hostel "Posada del Inca" also called Alojamiento Juan Mamani which was recommended by the recent [Lonely Planet](#) guide; unfortunately, the owner who was promised to be an excellent source of information was not at home. So we entered the small village of Cha'lla, the site of the island's secondary school; just opposite the church there was a public telephone cabin. The strange thing was that its cable leading to the telephone receiver



was knotted with a figure 8 knot.

Already in 1965 [Konrad Klapheck's](#) painting "The Voice of Conscience" told us something about the existence of a knotted telephone cable. Keeping in mind [Leland Locke](#) this figure-8-knot is also one of the typical knots used in the quipus. In 1994 the anthropologist [Gary Urton](#) published his article "A New Twist in an Old Yarn: Variation in Knot Directionality in the Inka khipus", proving that there are two types of spin: S- and Z-shaped knots. By tying the figure-8-knot into the telephone cable friction losses are generated during the transmission of the information; i.e. the user will need some more time in case of constant amount of information: *he has to make longer phone calls, thus the stock of the telecommunication service provider [ENTEL](#) (Empresa Nacional de Telecomunicaciones) associated since 1995 with Telecom Italia will rise.*



Konrad Klapheck "The Voice of Conscience", 1965

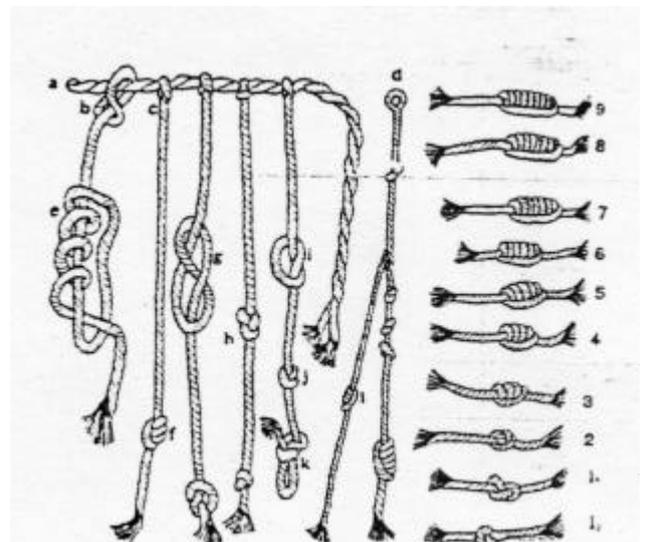
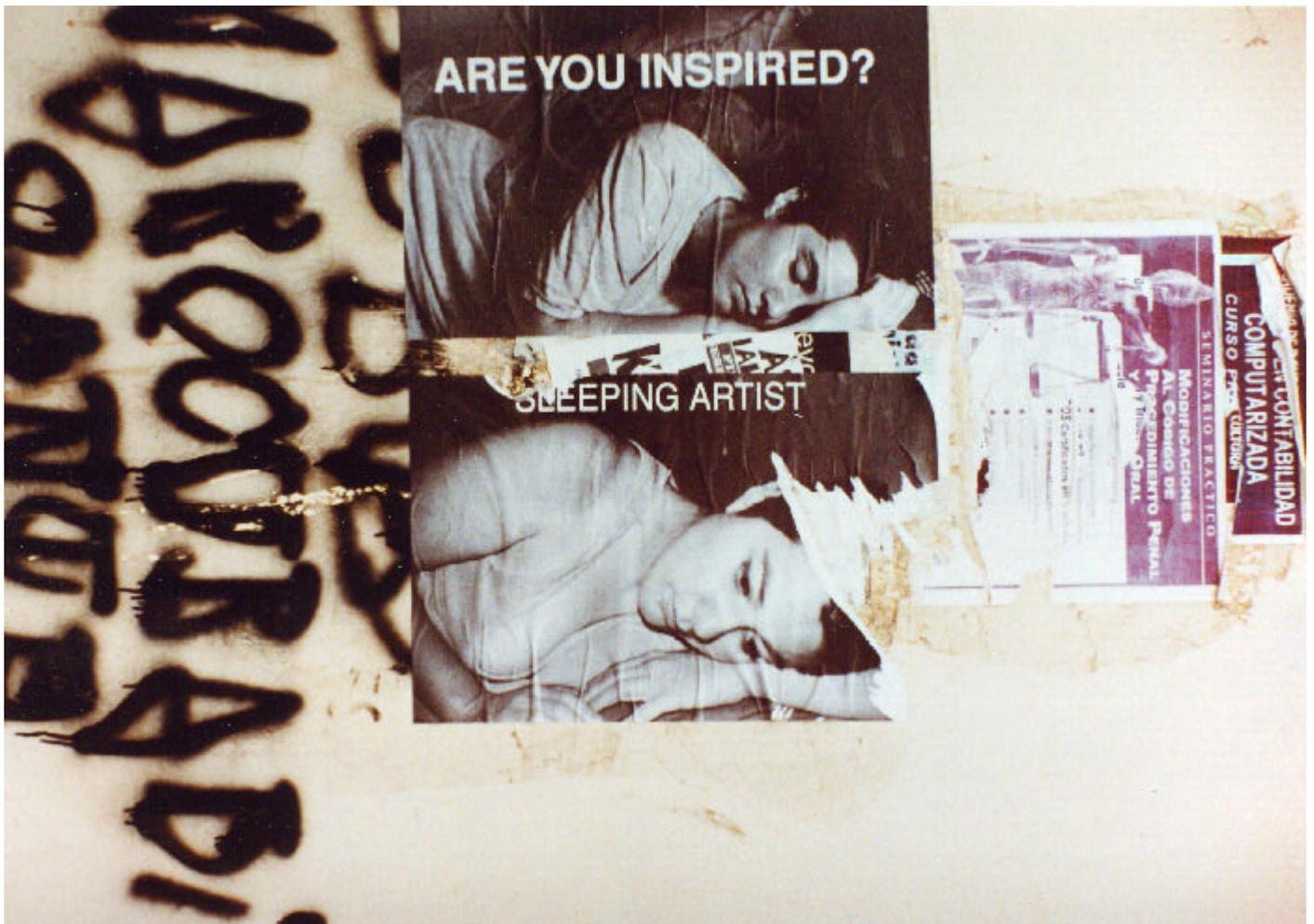


illustration of quipu knot types by Leslie Leland Locke, 1923

So going to Cha'lla did not verify our *metrothesis*; instead of this we heard *another voice of conscience*:

After the former national telephone company **Entel** had held the monopoly over long distance, domestic and international telephony services for a long time, it was privatized by the deregulation of the Bolivian market in November 2001; the global management consultants discussed the new situation and decided to use the knowledge of the scientists, archaeologists, anthropologists, artists, ethnomathematicians etc. They chose a local quipu-knot going to be tied into each public telephone cable of their company all over the country which keeps a low profile in order to make more money out of each call. Therefore a special team of mostly indigenous workers has been trained in crash courses for the ease of assembly since early 2002. They are low-paid and forbidden to talk about their job. Conspicuously Entel was also one of the major **sponsors** of the Akakor Atahualpa 2000 Expedition which strengthened the belief in a Bolivian Atlantis called “La Ciudad Submergida” north of Isla del Sol...

We left Cha'lla and hiked southwards to Yumani where we spent the night.



In 2001 the Bolivian artist Valeria Carvalho mounted 2000 of these posters in a neighborhood of La Paz called Sopocachi.

Virgen María Como Desatadora de Nudos



say for a forthcoming war against Iraq in 2003 ?

It was already in 1998 when the German artist Carsten Höller tried to solve knotty situations with the help of the “*Mother of Knots*” as he instructed the players in [game no. 5.5](#) in his pocket book. And if you enter the church *St. Peter am Perlach* in Augsburg in Germany, you will find an unusual illustration of the Virgin Mary in the right aisle. The oil painting on canvas was done about 1700 A.D. by Johann Melchior Schmidtneris titled “*Mary Untier of Knots*”. And in China gentlemen of the Chou Dynasty (1112-256 B.C.) carried an often jade-made tool tied to their waste sashes which is called a “*hsi*” for loosening knots. The Shuo Wen, one



Carsten Höller Game 5.5.

When coming back to Copacabana we took the next bus to La Paz, the city where once Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra vainly tried to become mayor; instead of that the rejected candidate stayed in Spain and wrote *Don Quixote*. At Café Alexander in La Paz on 2nd of April 2002 the British anthropologist [Denise Arnold](#) and the Bolivian linguist [Juan de Dios Yapita](#) introduced the Aymaran artist [Elvira Espejo Ayka](#) to us; Elvira was born on 10th of December, 1981, in ayllu Qaqachaka (prov. Abaroa, depto. of Oruro), Bolivia. Surprisingly she brought with her a self-made quipu. Elvira said it is a *Kipu (or Quipo) of War*. She made it in 2001 for a forthcoming exhibition of her work...or should I

of the earliest Chinese dictionaries, describes it as “a device to untie knots, part of adult attire”.



"Mary Untier of Knots" 1,10 x 1,88 ms.



People who don't believe in God and the Holy Virgin Mary can instead believe in the report of [Mirko Lauer](#):

On 10th of April 2000 the **Civil Society Collective** (CSC), a group of visual artists and art critics gathered around the fountain in the center of the Plaza de Armas in Lima, Peru. They started an artistic action called “*Wash the Flag*”. The ritual consisted of scrubbing the nation’s flag in a washtub (the recommended soap brand was *Bolívar*, named after one of the country’s 19th-century liberators) and then hanging it out to dry on a clothesline. The “*Lava La Bandera*”-Fridays were born when people queued up to soap from 1 to 3 pm. This public action spread to other squares throughout Peru and also took place abroad. It lasted for seven months until November 2000, when dictator Alberto Fujimori escaped from the country.



Sumerian soap recipe, ca. 2500 B.C.

Historically the oldest soap recipe we know was carved in Sumerian cuneiform writing in a shale plate dated back to the 3rd millennium B.C.; it was found in the small city of Tello in Mesopotamia; this habitat is located in the south of present-day Iraq.

The “Multicultural Power of **Soap Operas**” as described by [Kimi Eisele](#) in the Pacific News Service on November 25, 2002 has been proved.

30 years after *Frank Traveller's First Flight Tokyo-Lima* it was Friday 12th of April 2002 at 9.20 p.m. when we both had to depart from Jorge Chávez Lima-Callao International Airport...