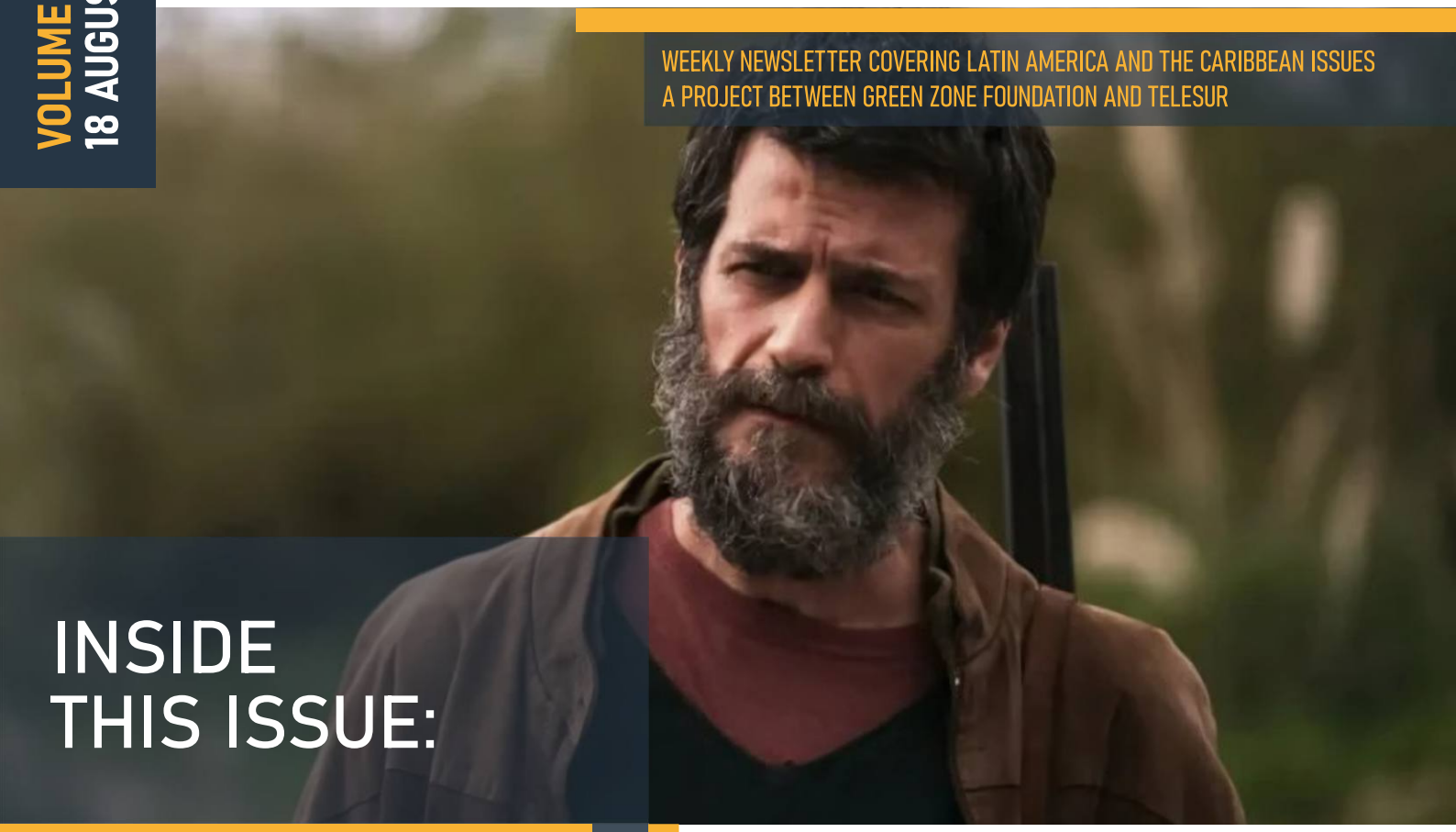
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NEWSLETTER

A VISION OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER COVERING LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ISSUES
A PROJECT BETWEEN GREEN ZONE FOUNDATION AND TELESUR



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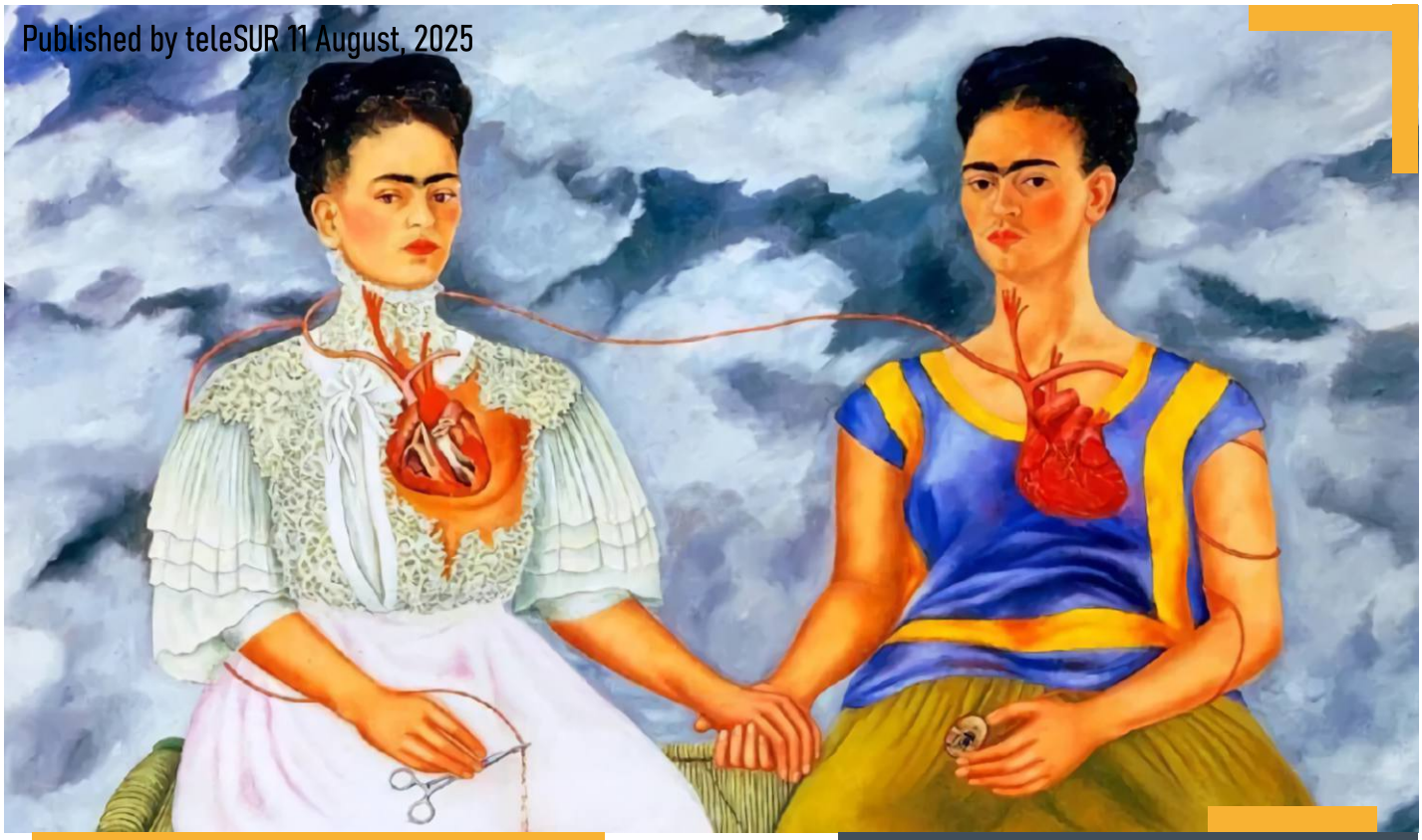
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THE TWO FRIDAS LOVED ONE MAN

The marriage between the outstanding Mexican artist Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera lasted from August 1929 until roughly 10 years later, ending in a brief but intense breakup. This turbulent rift became the spark that ignited Kahlo's creation of one of her most iconic masterpieces: The Two Fridas.

Like an optical illusion, Frida Kahlo divides herself in this painting, revealing the intricate duality within her identity. The married Frida and the single Frida exist side by side in a shared moment, where past and present merge into a surreal, dreamlike realm. Throughout Kahlo's work, psychological depth and symbolism carry profound meaning.

The Two Fridas is a double self-portrait in which two women share the same seat, their duplicated faces shown expressionless. This demeanor of the women contrasts with the background of threatening clouds, a reflection of the physical and emotional pain Frida Kahlo endured throughout most of her life. The dark clouds contrast with the vivid colors in the rest of the composition, confronting the viewer with the painter's mix of conflicting emotions.



HOW KAHLO'S RELATIONSHIP INFLUENCED HER WORK

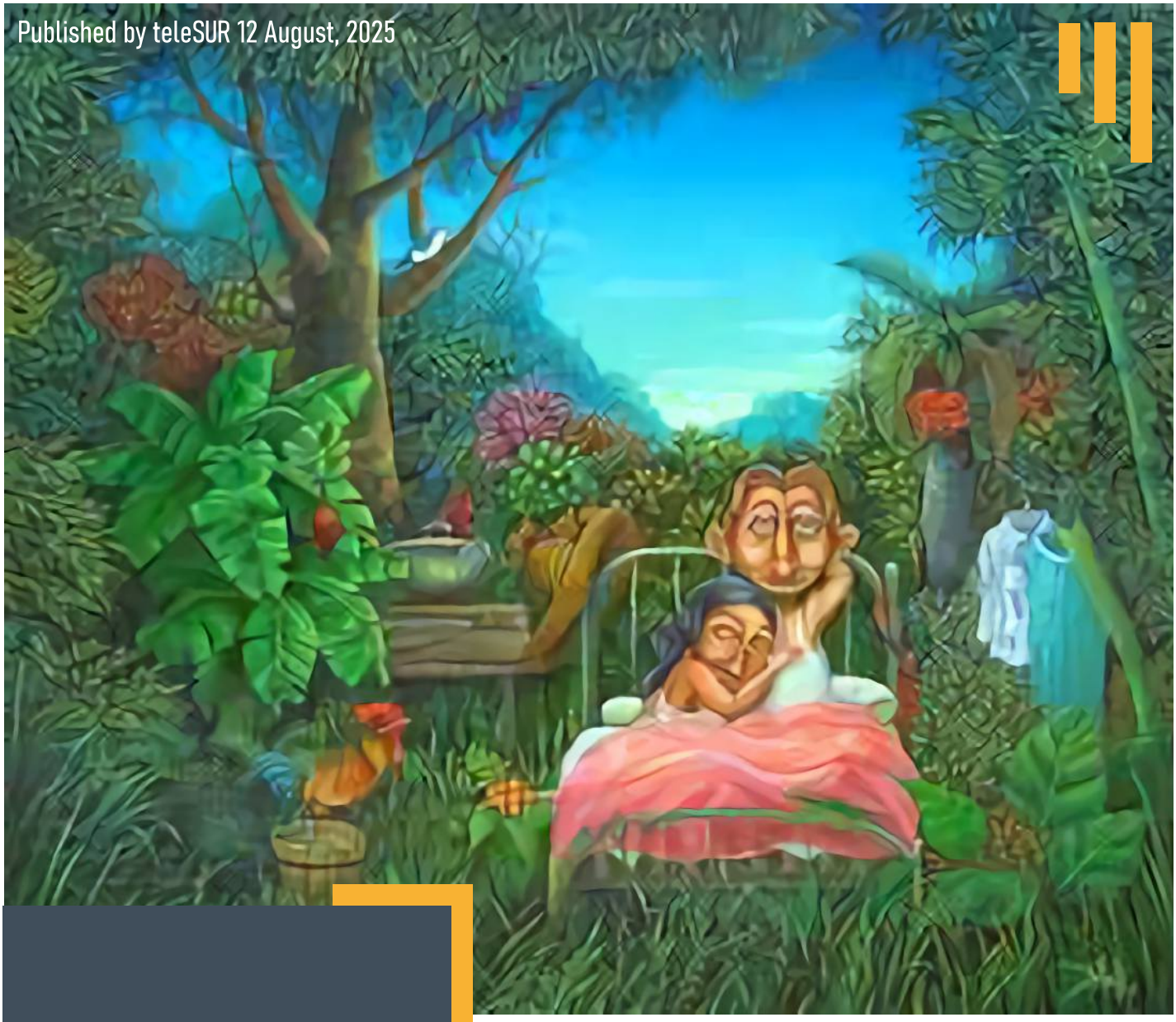


In the piece, one Frida dressed in European clothing represents her wounded and rejected version, while the other, wearing traditional Mexican clothing, symbolizes the Frida who still loves Diego. One he appreciated and one he left.The exposed and cut heart, as well as the connection between the two figures through an artery, express the emotional pain caused by their breakup and her struggle to maintain her identity.

Frida admitted in her diary that the painting expressed her desperation and loneliness with the separation from Diego.

The relationship between Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera was intense, passionate, and deeply conflicted. Despite the deep love they had for each other, their marriage was marked by multiple infidelities, political and emotional tensions, and an unequal dynamic that deeply affected Frida. Diego was a dominant figure in her life, both personally and artistically, and although they admired each other as artists, their bond was filled with pain and contradictions. This toxic and passionate relationship greatly influenced Frida's life and work.

Published by teleSUR 12 August, 2025



THE CAGÜEIRO

A SHAPESHIFTING LEGEND OF EASTERN CUBA

The Cagüeiro is a mythical figure deeply rooted in the folklore of eastern Cuba, particularly in rural communities of provinces like Santiago de Cuba and Granma. Known for his uncanny ability to transform into animals or objects, the Cagüeiro is portrayed as a cunning outlaw who uses magic to evade capture and survive in the wild.

According to legend, the Cagüeiro can become any animal—pig, goat, cow, rabbit, bird, or even a fallen tree trunk—by reciting a magical ensalmo (incantation). This transformation is not meant to harm but to escape the Guardia Rural, as the Cagüeiro is often described as a thief and trickster, raiding shops and stealing livestock. His magic is said to be a tool for survival, allowing him to blend into herds or forage in the forest.

Samuel Feijóo's Mitología Cubana documents several oral traditions about Cagüeiros:

- In Palma Soriano, a man suspected of being a Cagüeiro was shot with salt while escaping as a pig. The next day, a villager was found with a salt wound on his arm and arrested.
- In Palmarito de Cauto, Rafael Quiala, known as Felungo, was believed to be a Cagüeiro who recited La oración de la Santa Camisa. He lived alone, hunted silently, and returned from the forest with food during times of scarcity. He was known for wearing only one shirt, which he replaced only when it fell apart.

The Cagüeiro is considered one of Cuba's "major myths," alongside figures like El Güije and La Madre de Aguas. While Feijóo does not classify it as aboriginal, scholars suggest the myth may stem from pre-Columbian agro-pottery societies of the Antilles, where metamorphosis was a common theme in indigenous belief systems.

The Cagüeiro remains a powerful symbol of resistance, transformation, and rural mysticism, embodying Cuba's rich tapestry of indigenous, African, and European cultural influences.



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WHEN EVIL LURKS

A LANDMARK VICTORY FOR LATIN AMERICAN HORROR FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

For the first time in its 56-year history, the Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival—the world's most prestigious showcase for horror and fantasy cinema—awarded its top prize to a film from Latin America: When Evil Lurks, directed by Argentine filmmaker Demián Rugna.

This historic win marks not only a breakthrough for regional genre filmmaking, but a powerful moment of recognition for the Global South's cinematic voice in a space long dominated by North American and European productions.

Following its triumph at Sitges, the film has continued to make waves at Toronto, Los Angeles, and across streaming platforms. It is currently the most-watched film on Netflix Argentina, outperforming Hollywood blockbusters like Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning, and ranks eighth globally on the platform—an extraordinary feat for a Spanish-language horror film rooted in rural mythologies and local trauma.

When Evil Lurks is a distinctly Latin American horror story, set in the Argentine countryside and steeped in folklore, oral traditions, and ancestral fears. It rejects the sanitized tropes of "elevated horror" and the religious iconography of Western possession films, opting instead for a brutal, unrelenting narrative centered on "el encarnado"—a grotesquely infected man whose condition signals the arrival of demonic forces.

"I wanted to make a film about exorcisms without exorcisms," Rugna told La Nación. "No holy water, no crosses—just the raw terror of ancestral evil."

This is horror that speaks from and to the Global South: its violence is not stylized but visceral, its setting not urban but rural and neglected, its themes not universalized but deeply local. It channels the literary cruelty of Horacio Quiroga, the social despair of post-crisis Argentina, and the genre instincts of a filmmaker who grew up watching 1980s VHS horror in a country where such cinema was rarely legitimized.

Rugna's rise reflects the broader struggle of Latin American genre filmmakers to carve space in national industries often resistant to horror. From his early shorts and direct-to-DVD debut The Last Gateway (2007), to his breakout Terrified (Aterrados, 2017), Rugna has consistently pushed against the margins. When Evil Lurks is his most ambitious work yet—technically daring, narratively uncompromising, and culturally rooted.

"This is horror that doesn't ask for permission," wrote Cinergia Online. "It's a genre film that restores balance to gore and splatter without relying on excess—it uses brutality as a narrative tool, not a gimmick."

The film's success at Sitges—where it was incubated through the Fanpitch program— represents a watershed moment for Global South genre cinema. It affirms that horror from Latin America is not just viable, but essential, offering perspectives and aesthetics that challenge the dominance of Western narratives and



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FANIA ALL STARS

THE GLOBAL RISE OF SALSA'S MOST ICONIC ENSEMBLE

The formation of the Fania All Stars in 1968 marked a turning point in Latin music history. Conceived by Fania Records founders Jerry Masucci and Johnny Pacheco, the ensemble brought together the label's most celebrated artists into a single powerhouse group. What began as a promotional experiment quickly evolved into a cultural phenomenon that would redefine salsa and project it onto the global stage.

Their first concert, "Live at the Red Garter", was held in New York's Greenwich Village and featured legends such as Tito Puente, Eddie Palmieri, Ricardo Ray, and Bobby Cruz. The resulting live double album was a resounding success, proving that salsa could thrive in a concert format and attract diverse audiences.

In 1971, the group recorded "Fania All Stars at the Cheetah", a landmark performance that was both filmed and recorded live. This concert is widely credited with revolutionizing salsa as a genre, showcasing its energy, complexity, and mass appeal. The ensemble's chemistry and virtuosity captivated fans and critics alike.



By 1973, the Fania All Stars had become a household name. Their legendary performance at Yankee Stadium drew tens of thousands of fans and featured a lineup that included Willie Colón, Johnny Pacheco, Ray Barretto, Mongo Santamaría, and Bobby Valentín. The concert was immortalized in film and set a new standard for Latin music events.



To celebrate their 20th anniversary, Fania Records re-released “Live in Africa” and “Live in Japan”, launching a successful tour across five continents. These concerts underscored the ensemble's role as cultural ambassadors, spreading salsa's message of unity, resilience, and joy.

The Fania All Stars were more than a band—they were a movement. They fused Afro-Caribbean rhythms with jazz, soul, and funk, creating a sound that was both rooted and revolutionary. Their concerts were communal experiences, where music became a vehicle for identity, pride, and resistance.

Today, the legacy of the Fania All Stars continues to inspire new generations of musicians and fans. Their recordings remain essential listening, and their story is a testament to the power of collaboration, vision, and cultural affirmation.

The group's international reach expanded rapidly. In 1974, they performed at the Stade du Hai in Kinshasa, Zaire, in conjunction with the historic Ali–Foreman boxing match. The concert was documented in the film Fania All Stars Live in Africa, further cementing their global influence.

Their 1975 return to Yankee Stadium featured an even more star-studded cast, including Celia Cruz, Héctor Lavoe, Cheo Feliciano, Ismael Miranda, Pete “El Conde” Rodríguez, and Santos Colón. These performances showcased the ensemble's evolution and its ability to integrate new voices while maintaining its core identity.

The All Stars continued to tour and record prolifically. Highlights include “Live in Japan” (1976), “Tribute to Tito Rodríguez”, which introduced Rubén Blades to the group, and crossover projects like “Social Change” (1981) featuring Steel Pulse and Gato Barbieri. Their discography reflects both innovation and homage to tradition.

CUTTING THROUGH TIME

THE SPECTACULAR QUECHUA SCISSORS DANCE CELEBRATED BY UNESCO

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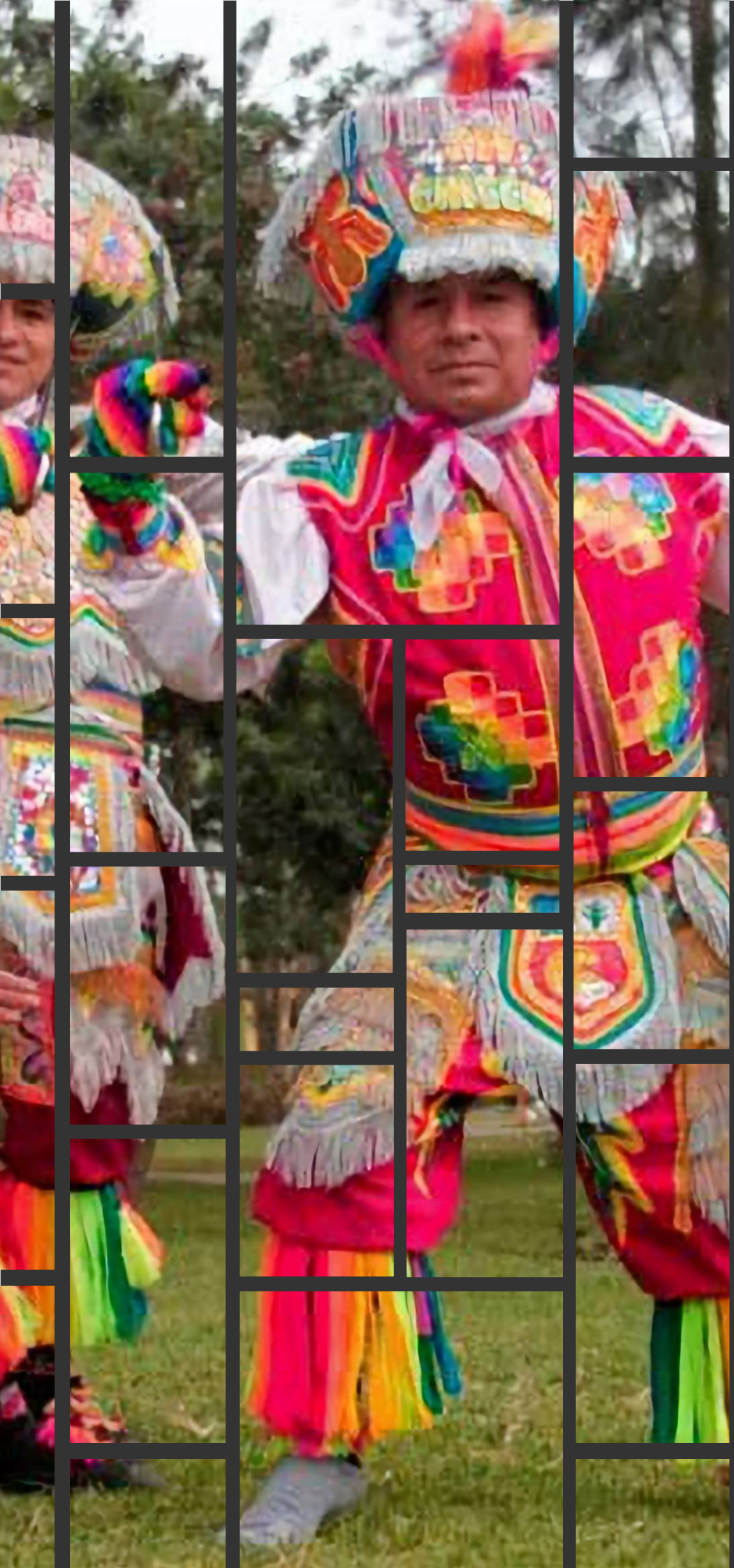
The Scissors Dance is a vibrant and extraordinary ritual dance that originates from the Quechua communities of the southern highlands in the central Andes of Peru. This dance has its roots in the culture of the Chanka people and is recognized today not only as one of the most distinctive expressions of Indigenous Andean heritage but also as a powerful symbol of cultural resilience and continuity. In 2010, UNESCO officially designated the Scissors Dance as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The dance is performed by groups formed by a dancer, a harpist, and a violinist, each group representing a specific community. The name comes from the polished metal scissors—two independent blades about 25 cm long—that the dancers skillfully wield in their right hands, clashing them rhythmically during their performance.

The show unfolds as a choreographed duel between at least two groups, where dancers face off in demanding displays of agility, strength, acrobatics, and increasingly complex dance steps, in a contest known in Quechua as "Atipanakuy."

These contests may last up to ten hours, emphasizing stamina and skill.

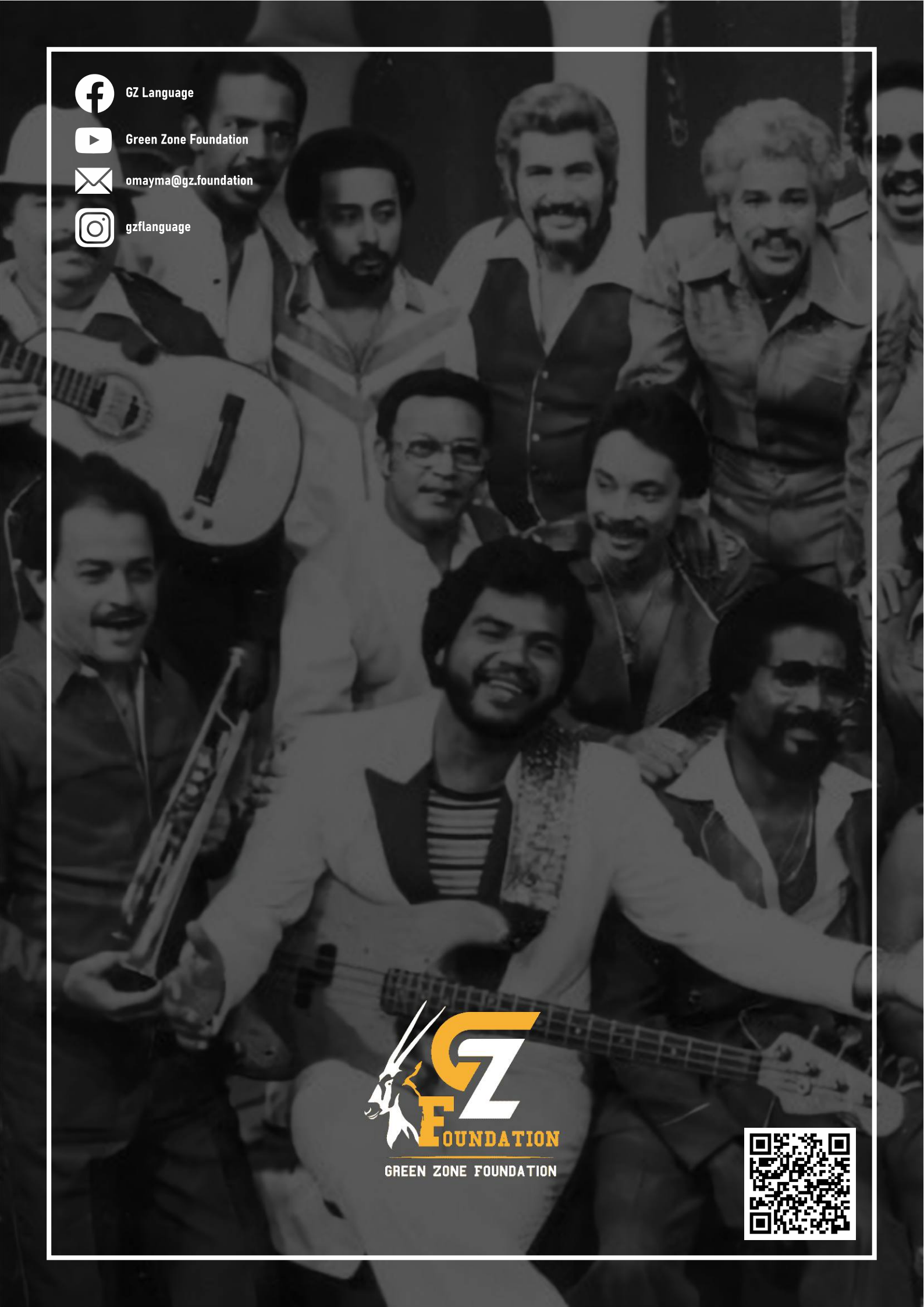
Historically, Scissors Dancers descend from the ancient "tusuq laykas," who were priests, shamans, and healers in pre-Hispanic times.



During the colonial era, they were persecuted and believed to have supernatural powers linked to pacts with the devil, a misconception that led to restrictions such as prohibiting dancers from entering church buildings with their traditional costumes. Despite such challenges, the dance is nowadays an integral part of various Catholic festivities.

Beyond its breathtaking physicality and artistry, the Scissors Dance embodies profound cultural narratives: it reflects the Andean cosmology, invoking sacred spirits of Pachamama (Mother Earth), Yacumama (water spirit), and elements of the natural and supernatural world, bridging material and spiritual realms through movement and music.

Today, the Scissors Dance not only survives but thrives as a cultural emblem. It is a breathtaking manifestation of physical valor, cultural pride, and spiritual depth—a dance that truly cuts through time preserving ancient traditions while engaging with the present.



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