

Otra Lima. Urban readings of the contemporary city

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Lima is no longer the City of Kings. Our capital has been transformed and that process has yielded a wide variety of versions of itself. The observation, the recording and the representation of these fragmentary views are the way to approach to its contemporary and understand it.

The purpose is to show a real city from one of its fragments. Thus, we rethink how to observe, record and represent contemporary Lima through readings taken from the perspectives of professionals from different disciplines. The record and the survey of a representative area of Lima-*Polvos Azules*, *Agua Dulce*- emphasizes the importance of knowing how to observe, in order to represent and have the approach understanding the contemporary city and the life experience of people from Lima.

AGUA DULCE

[January / February 2010]

In *Peregrinaciones de una Paria*, Flora Tristan describes a small freshwater lake at the foot of *San Pedro de Chorrillos*’ cliffs, formed by streams that flowed from the rock wall. There, Lima people rinsed salt from body after swimming. The place was consolidated as a beach with the implementation of one interurban electric tram connected to Lima. Today, the private club *Regatas Lima* and a popular beach *Agua Dulce*, share the same coast area with a fishing jetty that serves as the boundary between them both.

It is expected that the coastline in a coastal city is used as recreational space. However, around 20 km of coastline are there in just over a half mile is maximized as a beach during

the summer. Thus, in conducting a photographic survey to calculate the densities of *Agua Dulce* on Sunday at noon, we got 1.07 inhab/m² on shore, 1.9 inhab/m² per square meter at the beach, 0.25hab/m² at the boardwalk and 0.017hab/m².in the park area and pools.

Among the crowd, there is a scattered collection of blue boxes that implicitly defines and manages territories and contains the necessary architecture for the construction of the beach: umbrellas, chairs, tables, balls, inflatable swimming pools. On the shore, small stages that run on the sand are photographic studios on wheels providing idyllic settings for portraits of a family outing, cruise liners, tropical waterfalls, mountain passages, wild animals, cartoon characters. Then, as the tide goes out and comes in, this summer city is constructed and deconstructed every day. In winter, everything changes: the ice cream seller studies sewing and the umbrellas' businessman drives a taxi.

Michelle Llona Ridoutt / Sandra Nakamura Lam

Polvos Azules

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Walled City

In 1981, the Mayor of Lima, Eduardo Orrego, managed the relocation of 3.200 hawkers from the Historical Center to a parking lot behind the Government Palace. This area was known as *Polvos Azules* due to the old presence of leather and textile dyeing workshops that used blue colors. Two years later, the Historical Center was declared Cultural Patrimony of Humanity and hawkers were required to leave their new location. However, it was not until 1997, after years of resistance, which left the parking lot and purchased, for \$ 5 million, a plot of 1600m² in the district of La Victoria. Thus, they moved from a marginal area, the edge gradient of the Rimac River, an area of great potential commerce near to the Sheraton, the Palace of Justice and the *Parque de la Exposición*.

At first glance, *Polvos Azules* looks like people and goods crowded, crammed in small stands arranged one after another in a half-built building. However, if we pause a moment, what we see is a small walled city, a small Lima - there are the wall and the doors that welcome, the distinctive neighborhoods and the central square, main avenues and numbered streets. Furthermore, the intense grind is inescapable: money changers, watchmen, candy vendors, delivery men of food and, of course, the ten thousand customers per day.

At *Polvos Azules*, each of the 2074 stands of 2m x 2m has been customized to suit the owner's likes and each of them has a story to tell. These stories added to the buzz of conversation, special offers and music make the outing as routine experience as surreal.

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