

In the 1970s, photographer Ann Parker made several trips to Guatemala to observe and document the work of itinerant photographers as they travelled through small towns. These photographers followed fairs from town to town looking for clients willing to pay a modest fee to have their picture taken. Because of their nomadic mode of life, they travelled with basic equipment: a camera and a tripod, a portable darkroom, and painted backdrops and standard props. Their backdrops depicted various scenes, from landscapes and cityscapes to fantasy scenes taken from storybooks. Unlike studio photographers whose patrons came from the middle and upper classes, the clients of the itinerant photographers were mainly Indians and local villagers. Likewise, the itinerant photographers themselves came from a less privileged background than their studio counterparts. That is why I firmly believe that studying itinerant photographers can shed light on questions of subalternity and self-representation. This summer I researched the works of itinerant photographers that travelled across the Andes in the first half of the twentieth century, a time when the question of how to deal with subaltern groups, especially indigenous populations, was at the center of the Peruvian national debate.

My journey began in Lima, at the Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI). Although the photography collection at MALI contains the works of celebrated photographers, such as Martín Chambi, Juan Manuel Figueroa Aznar and Max T. Vargas, it also includes images from more modest studios. At MALI, I accessed the pictures taken by Sebastián Rodríguez, an itinerant photographer that temporarily settled in Morococha, Junin, a mining town at 4,540 meters above sea level. Rodríguez is a fascinating case because he worked both as the mining company's photographer, profiling the new workers, and as the town photographer, making his customers' fantasies come to life in his studio. Rodríguez' customers turn to the portrait to rehearse new roles and social positions, and to reinforce traditional identities in the face of the changes introduced by the mining company. Women wearing traditional clothing, miners displaying the tools of their new jobs, a group of people posing in front of a light aircraft... these photographs show the different ways in which subaltern groups interact with modernity. The library at MALI was also a great resource, since it holds the catalogues of the exhibitions of Andean photography.

Next, I travelled to Cuzco to conduct research at the Fototeca Andina, at the Centro Bartolomé de Las Casas. Founded in 1987, the Fototeca Andina was the first institutional attempt to recover and preserve photographic archives in the Andes. Nowadays it holds more than 32 thousand images taken between 1850 and 1960. At the Fototeca Andina, I focused my research on two photographers known for their work outside the studio: Crisanto Cabrera and Fidel Mora. Cabrera initially served as an apprentice in the studio of Martín Chambi, but then started his own business. Without a studio, Cabrera photographed his customers in hallways and courtyards, and used sheets and blankets as backdrops. However, most of his pictures were taken outdoors, at archeological sites, sports fields, roads and highways. What struck me the most about his work is the many photographs of people posing next to vehicles- cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles-. In the pictures, the vehicles are not only celebrated for their utility, but also for their aesthetic qualities. Nevertheless, Cabrera's photographs are not only a celebration of the power of technology in a time of rapid modernization. I also found pictures of people posing next to an overturned car, a crashed car, and a flooded car. Cabrera's customers are aware of both the potential and the limitations of technology, especially in its encounter with nature. Transportation and mobility

have been and still are important issues in the Andes due to the complicated geography and the interest of corporations in accessing natural resources. While in Cuzco, I also conducted research at the library at the Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco (UNSAAC). I went over newspapers and magazines published in Cuzco between 1901 and 1940, looking for photographers' advertisements. Even though most of the advertisements I found were of renowned photographers, there were a few of lesser-known studios, retouching services and photography equipment. While going over the newspapers, I was struck by the many articles on road building in the Andes and the Amazon, and car accidents. This finding confirmed me the ever-present concern about transportation and mobility in the Andes.

Before returning to Lima, I made a last stop in Arequipa. Professor Zoila Mendoza (UC Davis) had suggested me to visit a private collection there. I could not find much information about this collection online, but fortunately was able to contact the owner, Adelma Benavente. One of the founders of the Fototeca Andina, Benavente started her own photography collection in the early 1990s. Nowadays her private collection contains more than three thousand glass negatives, as well as painted backdrops and photography equipment catalogs from the early twentieth century. In 1990, she and photographer Peter Yenne founded the Photographic Archive Project to recover and preserve Andean photographic archives. From 1999 to 2001, with the financial support of the Earthwatch Institute, they digitalized more than 16 thousand glass negatives from photographic archives in Arequipa, Cuzco and La Paz (Bolivia). When I arrived in Arequipa, I did not know what to expect from my meeting with Benavente, since I was not able to find much information about her or her collection online. However, I was enormously impressed with Benavente's knowledge, enthusiasm and generosity, on the one hand, and with the scale and organization of her collection, on the other. She shared with me the stories of the origins of both the Fototeca Andina and her own private collection. She also told me about her own research on the life and work of Crisanto Cabrera: she found out that Cabrera relocated to Abancay in 1935; however, the pictures taken during his time in Abancay have not been found yet.

In the future, I plan to return to Arequipa and stay there longer to better familiarize myself with Benavente's collection. Because it contains photographic archives found in Arequipa, Cuzco and La Paz (Bolivia), it is a great resource to study the connections between these three cities in the Southern Andes. My trip to Peru motivated me to continue exploring Andean photography: What possibilities of agency does photography offer subaltern groups in the Andes in the first half of the twentieth century? How is the portrait, associated with the bourgeoisie, reinterpreted by marginal social actors? What is the relationship between photography and capitalism expansion in the Andes? How did photography contribute to class consciousness among workers? These are some of the questions that I would like to continue researching in my doctoral studies.