

a fine line.

Alejandro Zapico's stunning photo-essay featuring the Ejército de Liberacion Nacional. page 9





MAG LEGEND

Independent Lifestyle

NEXT LEGENDS 04

With a fantastic new album on the way, and a rockin' live show out, Nonagon powers-up for LEGENDmag!

BRANDED INDEPENDENT 07

Featuring two remarkable companies—the indie publishing mavens Indiebound, and Enclothe's magic fashion voodoo.

A FINE LINE • FEATURE STORY 09

What are you willing to sacrifice for what you believe to be right? LEGENDmag profiles the men and women of ELN.

BENTO! • FEATURE STORY 17

Small, cute, and square—delicious Japanese bento box food art invades America.



I often say that “there are two sides to every story. There is side A and side B and somewhere in the middle is the truth.” That is the case with this month’s cover story, a photographic exploration into a world that few of us can truly grasp or understand. For over a year, Alejandro Zapico, a photographer from Asturias (Spain) worked to negotiate the possibility of spending some time with a guerilla faction in Columbia, the National Liberation Army (ELN – Ejército de Liberación Nacional). In June of 2008, he met with a division of the ELN in the Cauca Mountains. We are privileged to share part of his experience with you.

In the interest of full disclosure, it is vital that we present both sides of this story as best we can. These are people with a cause, with a passion in their hearts, which drives them to take a stand against forces which keep their people and their country in poverty

EDITOR’S NOTE

THE INTERNAL INDIE LIBERATION

and despair. It also drives them to extremes, wherein many of the people they are fighting for (and with) are greatly injured in more than just a physical sense.

We at LEGENDmag understand that thinking independently in a highly charged political and social environment such as Columbia will no doubt lead to controversial and dramatic rebellion. I know that during the Bush administration, there was a lot of talk in America about revolution against the government. Perhaps it is our inherent freedoms of speech and assembly and a certain sense of civility that keep most of our rebellion out of the Timothy McVeigh realm. For those less fortunate, their options for rebellion seem to lend themselves to more extreme action. We do not ask you to support or condone their cause, or even understand it, but we do ask simply, for you to see, for a moment, the world through their eyes. They are men and women, flesh and blood, our brothers and sister and they are killing and living and dying for that which they hold most dear: their definition of Independence.

PEACE.

MAG LEGEND

Independent Lifestyle

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Alejandro Zapico

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Nonagon rocks the boxes @ San Francisco Electronic Music Association's one-year anniversary party.

PHOTOS BY VINAY VENKATESH

NEXT
LEGENDS

NEXT LEGENDS

...introducing Nonagon

Where are you from?

Born and raised in LA, but a Bay Area local since '99.

Where do you look for inspiration?

Inside, to the things I can't forget (the good and the bad). Otherwise: movies, stories, and rainy days.

Where is your favorite spot on earth?

A safe place on a misty morning, with a cup of tea and a view.

Where is the best place to start?

With an open mind. The first few moments of brainstorming a new track are my favorite thing in the world: there are no rules, no obligations, just pure possibility. Ending up with a cohesive and polished musical concept can be an arduous process, but in those first minutes nothing is off-limits.

How did you start?

I discovered MOD tracking in high school, back in the MS-DOS days. I was playing more "real" instruments then, but the musical potential of software, even that relatively primitive variety, had me hooked instantly.

How did you decide on this path/thing?

At the risk of sounding corny, I think it sort of chose me. I unwittingly did everything I could to suppress it- spent all my time stressing about schoolwork, then all my time stressing about work-work. In the end I had to admit to myself that making music was all I really wanted to do. To deny myself that would kill me inside.

How many times have you wanted to quit?

Making music: never. Doing the things that keep me from making music: just about every day. I actually managed to save up and take a year off of work in 2007. Life on a shoestring was never sweeter.

How do you pay your bills?

My secret identity as a software engineer will keep a roof over my head until the Grammy's start rolling in. =)

How do you become legendary?

By doing your own thing. Originality has never been a prerequisite for fame, but it's THE thing that separates the legends from the rest of us. They were the ones who had the confidence to pursue their creative visions when nobody else gave a damn, sometimes for their entire lives. It's a rare breed of

person who's willing to make that kind of sacrifice for something they believe in, and I think we can all learn something from their example.

What makes you good?

The belief that I'm never good enough, coupled with the ability to (begrudgingly) admit when I've created something to be proud of. Hubris can ruin one's musical development, but I think that not recognizing and celebrating things done right, no matter how small, is in some ways just as bad.

What is your end goal?

The ability to support myself financially doing what I love to do. I'm not particularly interested in fame and fortune (not that a yacht wouldn't be nice), but I'd be incredibly happy if I could make music all day and still pay the bills. I know how slim the chances of that happening are, and to an extent the privilege of even a little free time for creative endeavors is more than most will ever have the chance to ask for, but it's not a fight I'm planning on giving up on any time soon.

What is your style?

Atmospheric, evocative electronic music with a slice of the funk. I come from a drum 'n bass / dub background, but most of my tracks don't fall easily



into any particular genre (that I'm aware of) so I made up my own: "Step Core". The ambiguity and inherent meaninglessness of that phrase really appeals to me. If it ends up taking off, though, you heard it here first!

What is your formula?

If I knew, I'd probably get tracks finished a lot quicker ⇒. In general though, I always try to create a palpable atmosphere with my songs, a sense of time and place that frames the thoughts and feelings I'm hoping to express.

Who influences you?

I have to acknowledge Trent Reznor as my all-time musical hero. Twenty years later, and more relevant now than ever. Otherwise, though, the usual suspects: Boards of Canada, Orbital, Squarepusher, Aphex Twin, Four Tet... like any music lover I could name drop 'til the cows come home. Ultimately, any artist that can give me the tingles is right up there in my book.

Who is on your team?

I'm particularly fortunate to have an incredible group of friends and family who'd pat me on the back and buy me a drink no matter what kind of shit I came up with.

Who have you enlisted for help?

For a long time I treated music making as a strictly solitary thing. Fairly recently though, I've started branching out and meeting with other musicians to jam, compose, and talk shop. I think a part of me is still very possessive of "the process" and doesn't want to let anyone else in, but I have to admit that working with others has opened my eyes to a whole new world of possibilities. It's good to know that I'm finally ready for the third grade.

Who do you call family?

My family, of course! I lucked out on that front, can't say enough good things about each and every one of them.

Why are you independent?

Because I get to make up the rules. Being independent isn't about who's paying you, it's about having the freedom to make your own decisions no matter what anyone says. If a major label wanted to pay me to do what I want to do then hell, I'd take their money in a second! I'm just not willing to compromise my ideas for collateral benefits like popularity and money, and that's the true spirit of independent music.

Why do you do what you do?

Because it makes me whole. And, Hallmark as it sounds, because when I'm on my deathbed I'd rather have tried and failed miserably than spent my whole life dreaming about the things that could have been.

Why should we care?

I'm not the best at what I do, not by a long shot. But I put all of myself into the music that I make, and in the end that's what I most hope comes through to listeners. No matter what you ultimately think of the tunes, my heart is in them, and that's a pretty good reason to care.

Why don't most people make it?

That depends on what you mean by "make it." Most musicians will never hit the charts, never hear their tracks on the radio, never sell out Madison Square Garden- but that doesn't mean they haven't "made it." If you're doing what you love to do, then in my mind you've already made it. There will always more to achieve, and it's a worthwhile fight, but ultimately the real reward isn't money or fame, it's the opportunity to express yourself and to affect others with your work. But ask me again when Radiohead is my opening act- perspectives change. ⇒

BRANDED
INDEPENDENT

Some people still make great tee's with great art using quality materials. Enclothe is one such company. The artists and visionaries at Enclothe have come together to create a line that is inspiring, whimsical and poignant. If you can't be naked all the time, be sure to wear clothes that make a statement. Enclothe can help you do just that.

Brand philosophy: Enclothe believes in creating great art that is smart and looks good on t-shirts but that can also tell a story or communicate a feeling. We are not interested in plastering our name or logo on the clothes we produce.

Target consumer: People who love to dress.

Plans for the future: Since our move to San Diego we want to really establish ourselves in the local art community. We started back in '03 when there was not much in the way of shirts on the internet. But we always felt there was something lacking in what was being offered out there. There was an abundance of jokey punny shirts, and Threadless.com was really into the illustrator looking stuff but we just couldn't really find anything we liked. We'll be doing more cut n sew hoodies and expanding our line as much as possible.

“If you can't be naked all the time, let Enclothe help you wear clothes that make a statement.”



Year Founded: 2008

Location: San Diego

Category:
Retail, Fashion

Leadership:
Derek Myers, Sven Palmowski, Adam Rosenlund and Jeremy Hanlin

Products:
Art-inspired shirts and hoodies

Web site:
www.enclothe.com



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The movement was started by the American Booksellers Association (the independent bookstore national trade group) and launched in its member stores through spirited, eye-catching marketing pieces. IndieBound is a bookseller, a consumer-focused website (IndieBound.org), and DIY resources for booksellers to spread the movement throughout their communities.

Brand philosophy: Supporting local, indie businesses means dollars, jobs, taxes, choice, and diversity stay local, creating strong, unique communities and happy citizens!

Target consumer: Anyone, anywhere, any way.

Plans for the future: Become the go-to place to find indie businesses and the online destination to purchase books through an indie bookseller. Folks can join the IndieBound.org community and share and find their favorites. The on-going goal is to advance awareness of the importance of supporting local, independent businesses. Even a modest shift in buying habits, shopping indie 10% more can result in millions in positive, economic impact. We all share in that result.

“Calling attention to the value of independent businesses, IndieBound provides the necessary tools”

Year Founded: 2008

Location: Nationwide

Category: Retail

Leadership: Meg Z. Smith, American Booksellers Association chief marketing officer, and Paige Poe, IndieBound Outreach Liaison

Products: Printed and electronic promotional materials. The Indie Next List; the Indie Bestseller List; DIY designs, plus the community at IndieBound.org.


Web site:
www.IndieBound.org



a fine line.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEJANDRO ZAPICO

In 1963, after a decade of turmoil, violence and political upheaval, a group of intellectuals, students, Catholic radicals, and left-wing citizens, formed the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN).

A person in military gear, wearing a cap and a vest, is shown from the back with their hands behind their head. They are holding a rifle. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting an outdoor setting.

They hoped to recreate a rebellion based on the ideals of Cuban revolutionary theory and extreme liberation theology. This ideology sought to establish both a Christian and Communist solution to Colombia's widespread social and political problems such as corruption, poverty and political exclusion. The solution to these problems can be met, according to the ELN, through the use of guerrilla activity, conventional warfare and also what has been termed as terrorist action.

This particular squad of the ELN (featured in these photos) was formed by 24 men and women, under the command of "El Viejo" (The old man) and are determined to protect their rebel camps from the

National Army of Columbia as well as from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). Alejandro Zapico lived for two weeks with men and women that are part of the ELN. He shared his convictions and hopes—his way of seeing and understanding the world. This is the same world that the ELN claim to aspire to change and make better.

While the ELN claim to be a group fighting for the freedoms and rights of the people of Columbia, these same people are oftentimes the victims of the violence inherent in this type of rebellion. The US State Department has listed the ELN as a Foreign Terrorist Organization because of its nefarious reputation for

ransom kidnappings and armed attacks on Colombia's infrastructure and civilian population.

It begs the question, "What are you willing to sacrifice for what you believe to be right?" There is an amazing and inspirational strength in these faces. Their world is not one that any of us fortunate to grow up in America can even begin to comprehend. The circumstances which have led them to this life are unimaginable as are the circumstances they now find themselves in. We can only take a moment to open our eyes to a reality so far removed from our own that it is easy to pretend that it does not exist and that it does not affect us and that we would make different choices in their shoes. Open your eyes and see their Columbia.















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A GOOD SQUARE MEAL:

Americans eat up Japanese bento philosophy

by Jay Carlson • photos 'n bentos by Maki Ogawa



Some people eat for nourishment, but others eat for artistry. Thanks to Japanese fundamentals and the Internet, homemade lunches have evolved from a good square meal to a creative and competitive outlet.

Bento boxes emerged in Japan during the 16th century as a means of transporting a complete meal. The wooden boxes were divided into sections that traditionally included meat, rice, and pickled vegetables. Five centuries later, the United States finally caught on to the Eastern concept, and a surging population of Americans is learning that their meals are healthier and more enjoyable when they think inside the box.

The bento goal of a balanced diet still holds true today, but contemporary bento enthusiasts consider their output to be a mixture of form and function. Online communities, such as flickr.com/groups/bentoboxes, allow culinary artists to show off their food creations while onlookers digest the composition to sharpen their own skills.

There are key differences between bento boxes and boring ol' sack lunches. The most obvious distinction is the container itself. Contemporary bento boxes are constructed out of durable materials like plastic and metal and can be found in a variety of shapes. The one true constant is that the compartments should all be

housed together, whether stackable or resting within a larger portable box. A typical bento compartment doesn't offer much room, so portion control is crucial. Vegetable sticks and cheese cubes are staples of American bento lunches, since their size can be customized.

Another significant contrast compared to sack lunches is a design aesthetic. Empty boxes are blank canvases waiting to display the rich palette of food art. In other words, a bologna sandwich and chips just won't do. Meal creations should be a challenging and a creative endeavor worthy of saving in a photo album for posterity. Think of the pursuit like *Iron Chef* for the common man where a

peanut butter and jelly sandwich can transform into a car with banana discs for wheels. Seaweed cut with an Exacto knife can create silhouettes of trees on top of rice dyed blue to simulate the sky. Sculpting food items into animal or floral shapes is known as *kyaraben*, and it will definitely earn you bragging rights. In fact, devoted followers go to great lengths to acquire bento apparatuses found only in Japanese shops. These accessories can mold rice into spheres or shape eggs into stars. It's a technique that separates amateurs from experts, and each successful design acts as another notch on your bedpost.

Just as a chef wouldn't attempt a recipe without the ingredients, bento box artists need to choose which foods

they want to use and then figure how to best utilize them. Some preparers even plan ahead by drawing what they intend to make. The most dedicated bento artists spend thirty minutes to an hour preparing one meal. It's a painstaking process that is clearly not just for the maker's enjoyment.

But appearance isn't everything. The food must also taste good. There are few things more disappointing than designing a beautiful meal only to have a flavorless outcome. To work so hard without striking the proper balance of design and taste is a losing battle. Sure, everyone else judges your bento box solely on appearance, but lackluster taste affects the opinion that matters the most: your own.

