

# Almanac of the Future

A STORY OF SUCCESS

Motivational experience No. 19



**mARTadero**  
SETTING UP A BETTER  
FUTURE



# mARTadero

## SETTING UP A BETTER FUTURE



What began with the recovery of the Cochabamba's Municipal Ex-Slaughterhouse, turning a place of death into a distinct cultural center, is now a referential experience for culture and development. Culture not as a distraction but as a contextualizing element and where creative intelligence and collaborative work open the way to the "future we want", constructing our own narratives and getting rid of paths of acquired thought.

## From death to the set up of a better future

As the passage from death to the configuration of the future, describes Fernando García the metamorphosis of the former municipal slaughterhouse and its conversion into the project mARTadero, an innovative cultural center, located in the Villa Coronilla neighborhood, just nine blocks from the main square of Cochabamba. "From the beginning, we wanted this place to be used continuously for the arts, and that is why we named it mARTadero, vivarium of the arts".

It all started in 2004, looking for a suitable place to hold the contemporary art event - CONART. The ex-slaughterhouse, in the middle of the city's "red zone", a physical space of approximately 3,000 square meters, a place where—approximately 7 million animals had been slaughtered, was being used as a deposit of damaged school furniture and was almost totally abandoned. Fernando, together with a group of artists, organizers of the 2004 CONART was given the task of enabling space by making it what is now the mARTadero. The city administration agreed to allow the use of this space as a cultural center for a lapse of thirty years. "With almost no resources, but with the desire to do that for what you are passionate about" says Fernando, the mARTadero was gradually established.



It is about promoting collective living culture, diversity rather than taboos or exclusion.

## From CONART to NADA

After the art event CONART, the idea and conviction to start with the project mARTadero had germinated. With other artists and communicators, Fernando constituted NADA (which translated means “Nothing”, but is an abbreviation of Associative Node for the Development of the Arts). “People get a bit out of place when you tell

them you are a collaborator or a part of NADA”, shares Fernando. This type of creative provocation is characteristic of the mARTadero.

The cultural center defines itself as an incubator and detonator of culture, pushed from the vocation felt by the people who “make” the mARTadero. Its purpose is to generate a living community culture, without exclusion and from diversity, giving space to society (eg LGBT, art, circus,

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youth, neighborhood, among others). Thus, what questioned the established and is marginalized by society, finds its place in the mARTadero, as is the case of break art. “The futuristic messages” explains Fernando, “they leave guidelines to continue constructing the future”.

## Re-inventing the future

There are currently 18 people who dedicate their time to the mARTadero, enabling the realization of more than two hundred activities per year,

between Hip Hop and Breakdance, concerts from Heavy Metal to classical music, cultural events, live virtual spaces, among others. There are countless groups, initiatives, campaigns and collectives of Cochabamba as well as spaces of national character who have chosen mARTadero as their “base”. Artists from other countries stay during their visit in the center. The atmosphere of the center, rather functional than luxurious, together with the work and the open attitude of the team integrating mARTadero, attract many people who feel encouraged to transform the future, working collaboratively and with collective intelligence.

In this way, “Barrio Hacker” has been formed, a collective program of young people working the access and democratization of cyber-technology and information from a digital laboratory (digilab), promoting the use of free software. The neighborhood organization Villa Coronilla, inspired by the center, launched a neighborhood platform, overcoming the inner control struggles. The project has allowed important decisions for this “red” and stigmatized area. Artists and urban planners work on ideas and projects related to urban acupuncture, recovering the public space. KUSKA is another initiative based on the mARTadero.

This women's craft association, produces mosaic ceramics with recycled industrial materials under the slogan “together for creative action”; they have won prizes and are contracted by the city administration for large wall mosaics. KUSKA is an autonomous production unit (abbreviated UPA), just like the “Productora Independiente”, an UPA that produce audiovisuals and other communication formats. The UPAs are self-managed and contribute at the same time to the operation of the center.

The Cafe-Restaurant “Mosquita Muerta” or the simple “Prana” hotel are directly managed by the mARTadero team. The various programs as well as all the events follow a thematic guideline: to recover and develop the ability to conceive and shape the future.

## Betting on the emotivity of people

Instead of hierarchy, the organigram reflects the logic of the center: collective intelligence allows collaborative work and places the common good in the center. Fernando explains that: “The mARTadero is based on the emotivity of the people to shape the future. We are pragmatists and, above all, Utopia dreamers”

The maintenance of the center is organized according to a system that distinguishes between different capitals: physical capital (surface, equipment, UPA's), human capital (services, networks, relationships) and symbolic capital (vision, synergy, alliances). A skeptical lucidity prevails in the mARTadero as both, individual success and leaderships can quickly become threats. So far, the team of the mARTadero has managed to maintain a relative independence of support and external resources. Various embassies (such as Spain, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany) granted assistance at the beginning in the restoration of the center. Oxfam and Misereor support specific projects.

The mARTadero is questioning paradigms in different fields of life: in the economic, in the communicational, etc. “In this way, we have recovered the capacity to generate our own perspectives,” says Fernando.



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## Projection, connection and networking: mARTadero 3.0

In the Proyecto mARTadero 2.0 brochure, the core concept of the center is catapulted into the future. The so-called scenario is called mARTadero 3.0 and "where important topics such as the necessary reciprocal social responsibility, links with the local living environment, ideas are discussed and formulated in strategies, which is an artistically enriched work in progress".

MARTadero has been recognized by the Organization of American States - OAS as a center of culture and referential development, at the same time is a fundamental piece of the network of cultural spaces "telArtes" that brings together more than 200 spaces and cultural managers in Bolivia, as well as being part of the continental platform "JUNTXS". The collaborative logic is also impregnated in these spaces; the mARTadero proposed to the centers and cultural spaces of the city to share existing technical equipment, generating a bank of resources, making the collaborative logic prevail where instead of renting equipment, they lend it each other.

For many, the political position of the mARTadero is indefinite, since the center has thrown

Name	mARTadero 1.0	mARTadero 2.0	mARTadero 3.0
Phase	Installation	Inter(media)	C(reactivity)
Greatest Load	Management	Communication	Creation
Suspects involved	ARTists	ARTiculators	ARquitects
Culture	Products	Social reality and incidence	Future construction and transcendence
Technology	a "Digilab" at mARTadero	The mARTadero is a "Digilab"	The society is a "Digilab"
Conscious decision	Working from the periphery	The periphery advances and radiates	There is no periphery and no center

(Source: Fragment of the document mARTadero 3.0)

the ideological doctrines away to focus in building future. In this way, the center has taken the decision to participate in the elaboration of a framework law of cultures in Bolivia. At the same time, it does not abandon its position of DAKAR NO, CULTURE YES, in reference to the public disbursements in favor of the spectacle of the rally Dakar and the few public budgets destined to culture.

At the end of the visit, Fernando recalls: "We are dreaming of a more cultural future, with good legislation, and conditions that allow people to live their creativity, and where the mARTadero is just one of hundreds of hotspots in a country of art, culture and social transformation"



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proyecto  
mART 2.0  
adereo  
inter-media-acción

# Messages to the future

- The mARTadero projects its work out of culture - culture is understood here not as entertainment, but as a contextualizing element with respect to time and space - managing to lead to its own readings and to focus its own agenda in the middle.
- The distinctive elements that reinforce each other: creative intelligence (unmarking from the common) and collaborative (instead of competitive) work towards the “future that we want”.
- Recover the ability to build a proper speech and get rid of the paths of acquired thinking.

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The text, which is based on visits and conversations on site, was created by Marcela Montan (network on climate change and justice Bolivia) and Jorge Krekeler (advisor Misereor), but initially made consensual with the people visited. Special thanks go to Fernando García of the mARTadero.





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[www.almanaquedelfuturo.wordpress.com](http://www.almanaquedelfuturo.wordpress.com)

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