

Bolivia

x

Metals

x

Craft

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Metal Narratives

Research Booklet

By Carola Simons



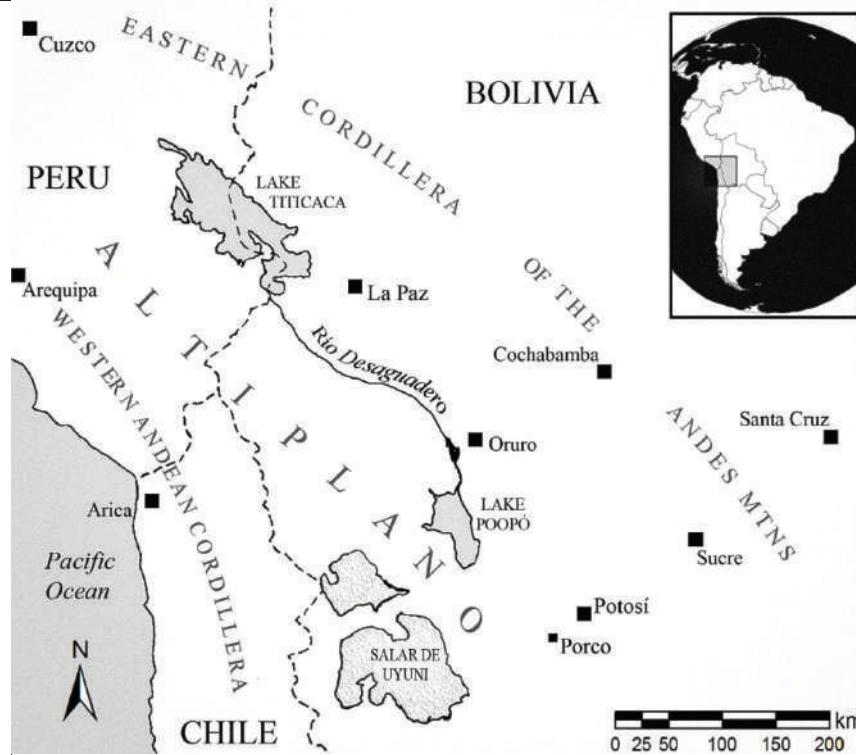
Warawar Wawa 2019–2020 by River Claire. Set in Lake Titicaca, Bolivian Andes

Historical Analysis
Bolivian Heritage
Material Archives

How can physical craft objects
uncover material histories?



Metal-rich Andes



Map of south-central Andes indicating the location of Potosi, Bolivia



South American Andean Region, wealthy in metals in native and mined states. Metals range from copper, silver, zinc, lead, etc.

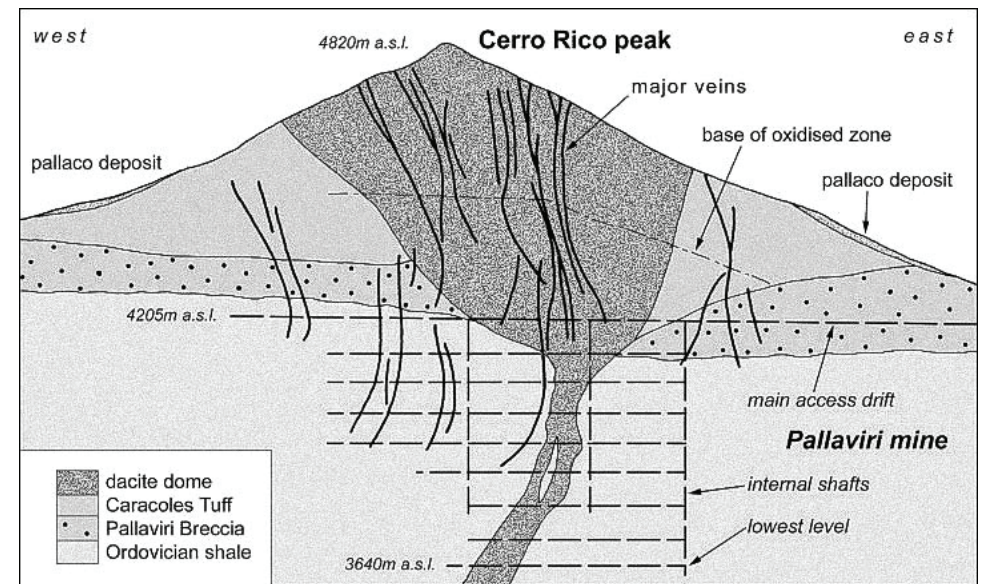
Cerros (Mountains) for Metal Mining around Potosi, Bolivia (Photo by Brendan J.M. Weaver, 2006)



Potosi was the wealthiest city in the New World through riches of the spanish mining from mountain “Cerro Rico”

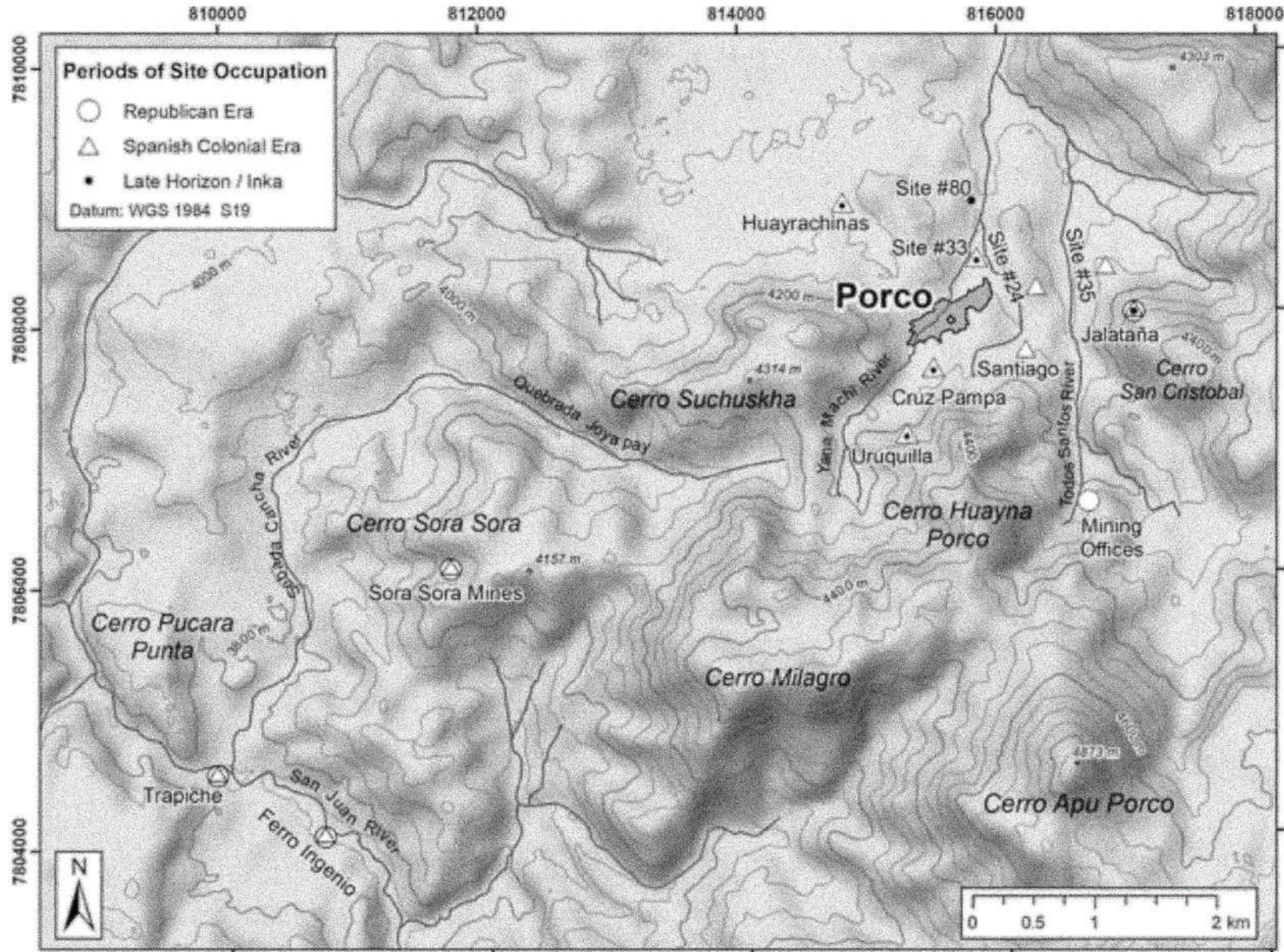


Cerro Rico & Potosi City showing Mining Operations during Spanish Era in 16th century. By Anonymous Painter, 18th century. Casa de a Moneda, Bolivia



Mine veins of Cerro Rico, that in 2024 account for 113 large mining veins, structurally causing the Cerro Rico to fall in itself. By Brendan J. Weaver

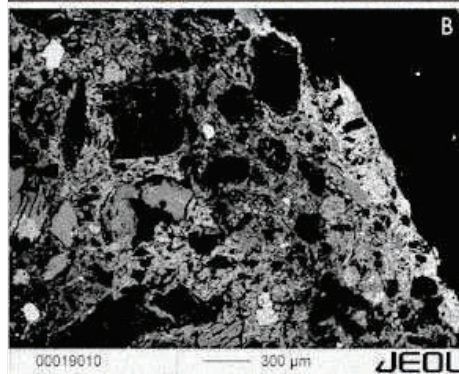
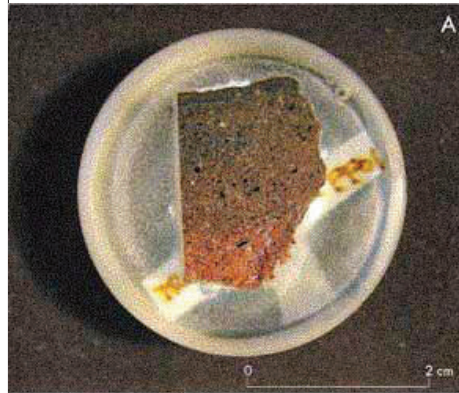
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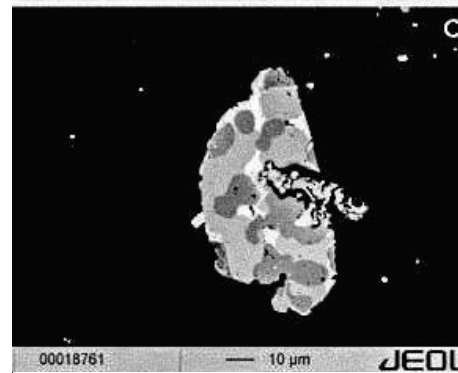
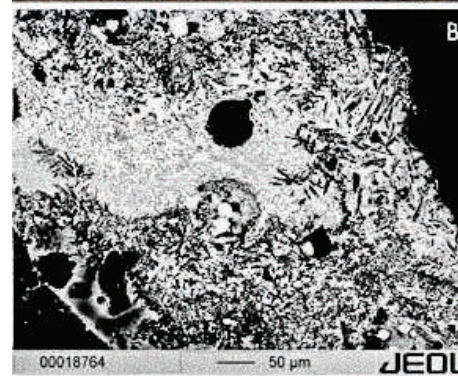
Map of Porco (near Potosi) and it's Surrounding Archeological & Mine Sites. Divided into periods of late Inca, Spanish Colonial Era, to Republican Era. By Brendan J. Weaver

Native Copper.
Pre-columbian.

Occurs naturally as mineral through large Andean Deposits. Where earliest copper work is dated in 1432 BCE together with smelting copper technologies.



Sample mounted lead-bearing slag. (Photos by P. Tropper)



Sample mounted lead-rich slag with droplets of metal. Copper (light grey) iron (dark grey) tin (interwoven). Photos by P. Tropper)

Silver, Zinc, Iron, Tin.
Spanish Era.

Spanish conquest of Bolivia also brought technologies for mining andean mountains. Where metals, were also processed in silver mints, making Potosi one of the wealthiest cities in the New World of the 16th century.

Traditional Smelting of the Andes



Modern Huayrachina used by Carlos Cuiza for lead metal.



Possible Toco chimbo located in excavation of an early colonial structure.



Modern cupellation hearth used by Carlos Cuiza to refine silver.

Traditional Smelting techniques native to Andean Region that would be located in homes. Before Spanish silver ore refinement through mercury amalgamation in 1572 through advanced technologies.



Hair Accessories for Females of Pre-precolumbian society. Hair, metal, & textiles main forms of indicating status for women.



Metal, was a privileged means of indicating status, communication hierarchies, ideologies & rituals. Similarly to that of textiles.



Copper used in ornaments & adornment, valued as status objects and for ceremonial practices from rituals to burials. Most elaborate metallurgical styles and technologies were reserved for the production of ornaments on the body.



Pleated Cherus (Vessel) not used for drinking but as a wealth object

Half-Moon Ceremonial Knife



Copper Masks used for Burial Ceremony





Bell Shapes for Ceremonies.

Metallurgists prived the governing classes through material manidestations that perpetuated their dominant place in society.





Adornment from Earrings, Arm Cuffs,
used by men and women.



“Mine that Eats Men”



Indigenous people working in the silver mine at Potosí, New Spain (present day Bolivia). Line Engraving by Theodor De Bry, 1590. Depicting the Exploitation of People During Spanish Era.

Crossovers



Depiction of The Virgin from Spanish Christianity as Cerro Rico of Potosi, with subtle hints and motifs of pre/columbian belief system of La Pachamama (Mother Earth). By Anonymous Painter, 18th century.

Christianity of the Spanish and native Bolivian belief systems of Mother Earth, subtly merge through Mining & Wealth Imageries.



Christianity of the Spanish and native Bolivian belief systems of Mother Earth, subtly merge through Mining & Wealth Imageries.



Warawara. 2019-2020. Photograph by River Claire. Modern Take of crossover. Pachamama and Cerro Rico still very active pillars of society and culture in Bolivia to this day.



Archeoacoustic value of the bull horn.



Traditional Bull-horn used in Pre-columbian rituals.



Silver Ornamented Bull Horn for Spanish use in ceremonies. 17th century. Casa de La Moneda Potosi, Bolivia.

Objects in natural forms used for ceremonial purpose, were re-created in more elaborate forms of metal processing techniques, to exaggerate displays of wealth. Advancements in any objects created in silver, was primarily due to the technology brought to Potosi, through the Spanish Empire & Mint.

Crossovers

Silver & Zinc used for status objects as well as Wearable Armour for Ceremonial Occasions. Christian motifs & symbols are explicit in engravings. Most elaborate technologies were used in Spanish Era, such as metal spinning.





"El Pavo" Vessel.



Virgin Mary Triptych.



Folkloric Metal Mask of the Devil Deity.

Only subtle hints of pre-columbian zoomorphic motifs created by native Bolivian craftsmen, as they were banned from expressing bold claims of their own culture as minorities to the Spanish.



Dance of the Miners. Metal masks, instruments.

Folkloric Festival exaggerate their forms of expressing wealth through metal masks, shoes, instruments, embellishments, bags and more adornment. Emphasizing the deep rooted value system with metals.

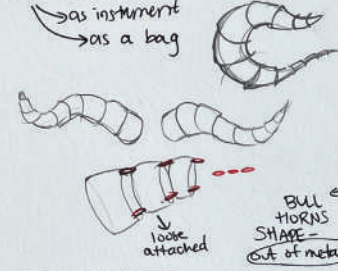
AERÓFONOS



From TARABUCO, BOLIVIA
ANDEAN VALLEYS



BULL HORNS
→ as instrument
→ as a bag



BULL HORNS
SHAPE =
out of metal



PUJLLAY "PINKILLOS"



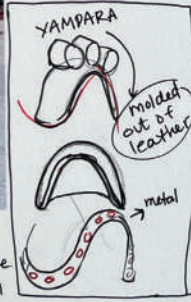
"YAMPARA"
MONTEA leather
- hardened with
brine
- decorated
with flowers

siqui-unku
colochki woven



bells
attached to
leather belt

large coins "unkus"
woven "chumpi"



YAMPARA
molded
out of
leather

metal

LAS OJOTAS



spurs made
out of iron
sheets

10cm high/thick
bulky shoes



make it moveable?



more engravings
- motifs of sun/moon pachamama (mother earth)



Silver Urns



clutch bag



plates



OFFERINGS / DISPLAY OF WEALTH

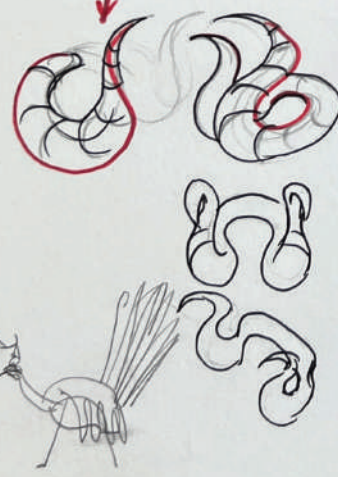


all have colonial influence
→ offering to La Virgen del Socavón: to receive blessings
Arches
→ draped with woven cloth

Coins as offerings



coins



CH'ALLAS



ritual offerings
mantes de ch'alla
private family affair - offerings for business & homes
prayers & requests

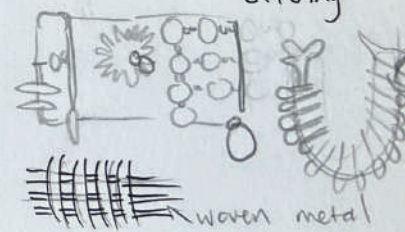
contemporary design



abstract engraving

zoe Moh

Combination of metal + offering



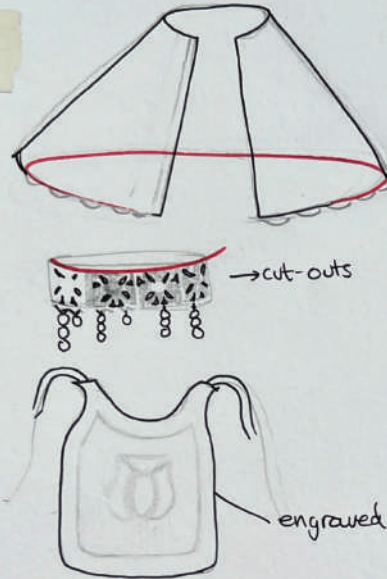
woven metal

CONQUISTADOR

All silver armour
↓
from silver mining in the Andean region

re-enactment of fighting conquistadores

wealth displays in silver



Deity mainly for Miners
due to Catholicism from colonial conquest - called the "devil"



TIO SUPA



The 4 Plagues
Frogs, Snails, Armadillos, Ants

Andean Symbol related to the witchcraft

SURI - SIKURI

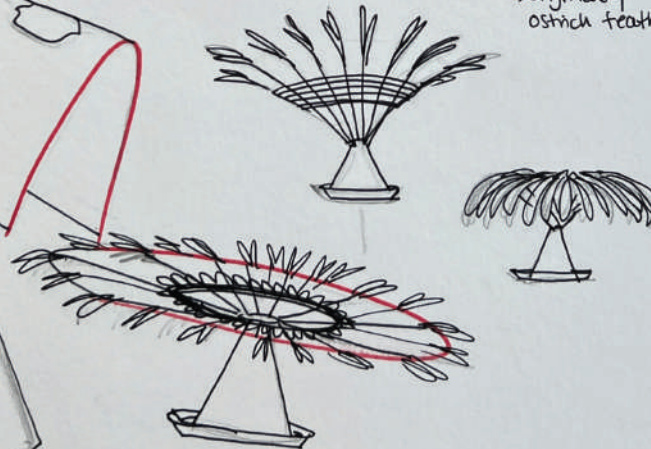
Dance of "los Grandes"
Ostriches in Andean region



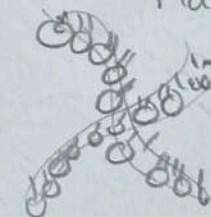
usually furnished in leather



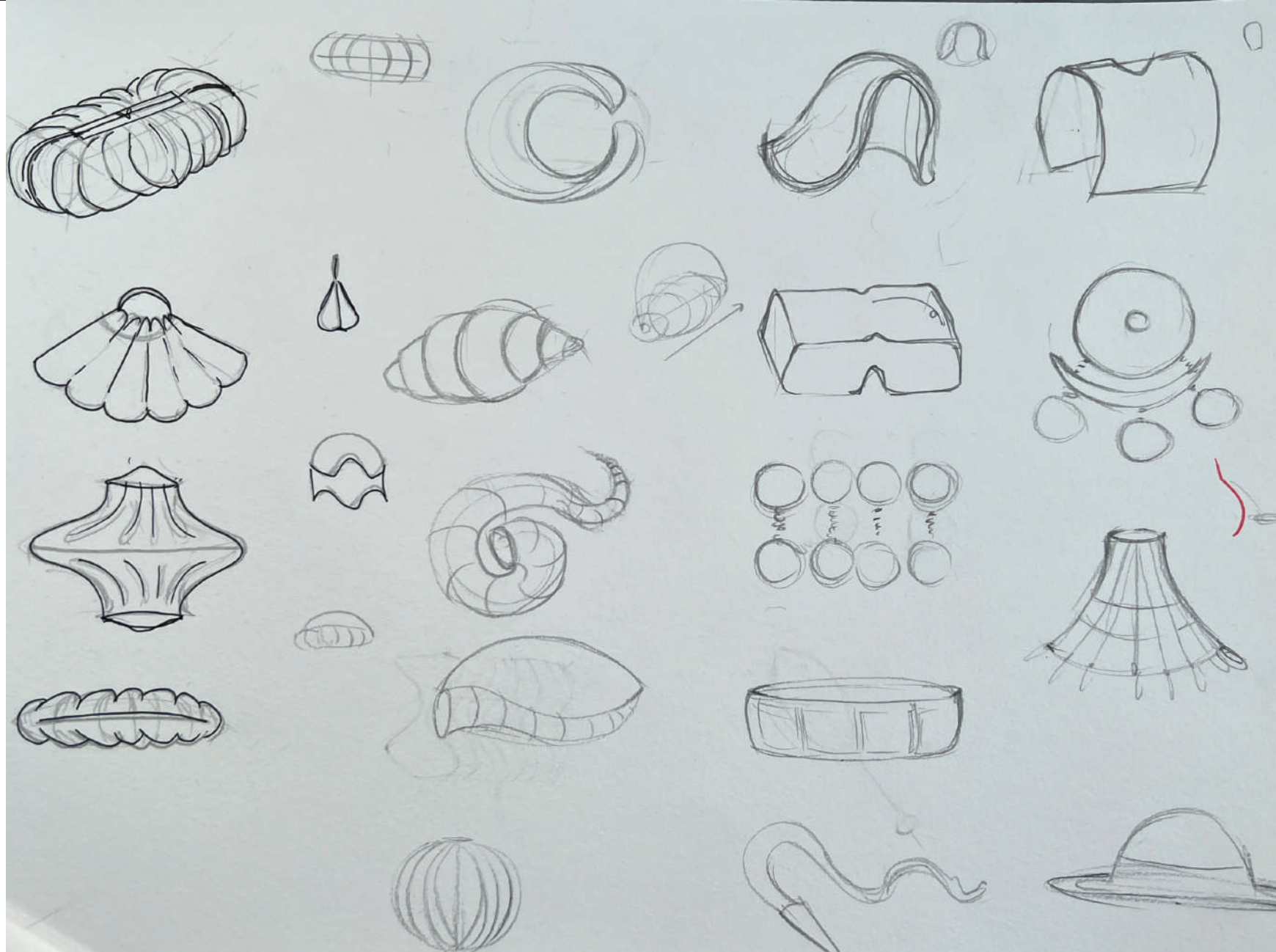
Variations of the Headdress
→ originally ostrich feathers



Matracas
Instrument



wearing bell dance



“El Casco del Minero” Miner Helmet Monument in Oruro Bolivia.



Metal Sculptures, or armoured figures of Bolivian folklore of archangels.



Metal Painted Folkloric Masks of Devil Deities native to Bolivia. A deity that was prayed to by miners.

Mining helmet as a symbol of security, resistance and solidarity in the context of the industry. As a historically important object that leads to the discussion of workers' struggle around the world of resource exploitation.



Cerro Rico Mines, depicting from the Inside.

While thousands of native Bolivians died during the harsh forced labour conditions during the Spanish Era. Many still die today due to structurally unsafe illegal mining, and harsh conditions leading to socolosis (intoxication of dust) or mercury intoxication of using ancient silver refining processes.

Mining of the mountain exist to this day, where livelihoods of generations have been dependent on mining. Lack of government protect of mountain and mining is leading to the Mountain to collapse in itself in the near future, despite being UNES- CO protected.



Crater at the Top of Cerro Rico in Potosi. With 133 veins confirmed by COMIBOL (Bolivia's Mining Corporation). Photographed in 2022.

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