

*¡Bienvenidas y bienvenidos to El CC, CCLATAM's newsletter!. Every other week you'll find the main events shaking up Latin America, from Ushuaia in the south to Los Algodones in the north. Sign up [here](#) to stay updated on the region. Get [in touch](#) with us, we may feature an excerpt of your response in the next newsletter.*

## La Invitación



21 May 2025 (4.15pm – 5.30pm), Ciudad de las Artes, Panama

### “Latin American Art as a Driver of Development and Cultural Diplomacy.”

The event will be held at [Ciudad de las Artes](#) in Panama, a newly inaugurated venue that aspires to become a regional reference point for music, dance, theatre, and the visual arts. The panel forms part of the inaugural edition of [Pinta Panamá Art Week](#) (21 – 25 May 2025), a week that will position Panama as a must-visit destination on the international art calendar. Write to us on [contact@cc-latam.org](mailto:contact@cc-latam.org) if you want to join us.

Confirmed speakers are [Alejandra Claros](#) – Secretary General, CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean; [Izabela Matusz](#) – Ambassador of the European

Union to Panama; [Billy Herron](#) – Vice President, Danilo Pérez Foundation; [Terry K. Harvey](#) – Vice President for Cultural Diplomacy, Meridian International Center

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## The Continuity Issue



The past week has closed an era and opened another: on May 8 the College of Cardinals chose Chicago-born **Robert F. Prevost** as [Pope Leo XIV](#), the first pontiff from the United States. Leo XIV is hardly a stranger to the wider Americas; decades of pastoral work in Peru and Mexico have given him an instinctive feel for the hemisphere's hopes and hurts. Five days later, Uruguay bid farewell to former president [José "Pepe" Mujica](#), who died at 89. At first glance the white vaults of the Vatican and the windy fields of a Uruguayan chacra seem worlds apart, yet these two moments echo each other in revealing ways.

On the trade front, Latin America finds itself ever more central to shifting global dynamics. At the [China-CELAC Forum](#)'s fourth ministerial meeting, China unveiled a major new credit line and pledged expanded infrastructure investment across the region. Meanwhile, [Mexico](#) and [Canada](#) moved to reinforce their partnership under the [USMCA](#), agreeing to streamline agricultural worker programs and to coordinate on energy and digital-economy standards—an acknowledgment that North American competitiveness still depends on a continental unity. In [Ecuador](#), the [National Assembly](#) elected Niels Olsen—an ally of President Daniel Noboa—as its new speaker, clearing the way for anti-crime measures and market-friendly policies to advance.

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La Charla



This week **Piero Bonadeo** chats with **Pablo Scotellaro**. Pablo is a Uruguayan communications executive from Montevideo who's spent over a decade leading the [Centro de Estudios en Regulación y Telecomunicaciones \(CERTAL\)](#) and [UCL Televisión](#), driving innovation and regulatory dialogue across Latin America's telecom and media sectors. As a true Uruguayan he visited Pepe Mujica regularly even a few weeks before his passing.

*Pablo you mention in a recent editorial piece that on one of your recent visits you shared a bottle of wine that had been gifted to Pepe. What reflections or moments from that intimate encounter best capture the "simple luminosity" you attribute to him?*

**When I sit with Pepe over a glass of wine, I feel a wave of sensations I can only call mystical. He's a captivating man who draws you in and leaves behind a kind of glow. I believe that glow comes fundamentally from his heart and his life—his life, which is already becoming mythic, a legend showing that many of the hopes and dreams we project onto the men and heroes we admire can truly reside in a single person: a living symbol who presents himself exactly as he is. A soul of absolute humility, a being of light, for lack of a better term, who forges a path, a trail. And I think that's essentially what it means to share a glass with Pepe.**

*You wrote that Mujica "made us more human." From your perspective, what concrete changes in Uruguay's social fabric can be attributed to his example of humility and austerity?*

**Mujica, as the emblem of a movement that rises from chaos, finds its order, transforms itself, and reaches toward a universal dimension, embodies a genuine shift in our social fabric—one that seeks a path to a society willing to listen to and understand itself. To me, Mujica's true legacy is the legacy of understanding: the legacy of the wise leader, of a community that learns to hear one another, of a nation striving to become deeply more**

equitable and egalitarian. During his presidency, his policies—both their successes and their missteps—were designed to strike a balance and foster development without losing sight of the rightful role of both market and society. In this way, Mujica envisioned a coherent world, grounded in his own humility and austerity: a leader who guided, empowered, and charted his country's course while living like St. Francis of Assisi. That, to me, is the path of Mujica.

*You wrote that Mujica often spoke of forging “the new man,” and that he did so after years of imprisonment and defeat. How did his passage from armed struggle to a politics of reconciliation influence your own understanding of resilience and transformation?*

Mujica is born into the light alongside the New Man, alongside the currents of May '68 and the Continental Revolution. At first, Mujica is a revolutionary inspired by the New Man, with a background in Uruguay's traditional Blanco Party—the party that shaped the country's last five years. He emerges from those established sectors and, through a deep, rebellious evolution, commits himself to the New Man. He embraces this ideal within the society he inhabits, a society whose intellectuals were heavily influenced by Latin Americanism, by the tide of change, by the era of Liberation Theology.

When Mujica fell into the pit—literally, over seven years of imprisonment—he reflected in solitude and sought the company of imaginary beings and creatures that came to life in his mind, like the ant. His transmutation unfolded step by step: from full action—what the alchemists would call mastery over the base metals—to deep, human reflection in absolute confinement. His captivity passed through stages, from the most torturous to the slightly less so, punctuated only by a book or the possibility of a whispered dialogue. As Huidobro says, “We invented a Morse code to communicate,” a new code in which Huidobro and the Russian Rosenkof—comrades in life—composed their poems in dots and dashes, or some similar cipher.

Thus, Mujica's New Man is one who transforms, who rises from defeat—the verse of Daniel Viglietti, “to make springs out of defeat”—that is Mujica. At the moment of his greatness, Mujica is the New Man: the New Man who sheds rancor, who abandons all that might have been in the past, and focuses on building a future—and gives us so much. This path of change begins with an absolute metamorphosis: from a man of action to a man of wisdom, of teaching, of knowledge. Today, we behold that as a historic legacy.

*Looking beyond Uruguay's borders, what aspects of Mujica's philosophy resonate most powerfully on today's global stage, and where do you already see that influence in action?*

Pepe manages to reflect the dreams of so many. He takes flight from Uruguay as a tangible concept—a pure demonstration that it's possible. Pepe speaks, acts, and lives in austerity, yet he wields all the tools he needs to build the future he envisions for himself—and, in turn, for society. In doing so, he shatters traditional molds, drawing on the unblemished honesty of Uruguay's great reformers—José Artigas, José Batlle y Ordóñez—what we jokingly call “the three Pepes.”

A “Pepe” appears only once a century, and Mujica belongs to that lineage: a culture forged by liberal thinkers, secularists, and even the Church itself. That strength, that message—amplified in our era of social media and instantaneous communication—offers society a beacon of hope. His global legacy is enormous. Travel to Africa, China, or the United States, and regardless of people’s political leanings, you’ll find they know and admire Pepe as an extraordinary figure.

That’s the phenomenon we must honor: the reminder that humanity isn’t as dark as we often portray. People yearn for purity, for fairer paths, for better lives. Not everything is bleak. We need to look past symbols and ask: What are people truly searching for? Hundreds of thousands turned out to bid him farewell—there wasn’t a single partisan banner, only a banner of hope.

What Pepe leaves behind—the legacy he forges—is a steadfast affirmation of the core principles embodied by the heroes we’ve lost. Our society needs heroes, yet today’s figures often lack love and conviction. Pepe Mujica’s enduring relevance lies in the space he carved out for tolerance, for love, for peace, and for the fundamental values of everyday life.

*If you had to define José “Pepe” Mujica in just three words, which would you choose and why?*

Simple, stoic, immortal. These words stand as the symbol of the kind of hero we need and chart an essential path toward recovering our values. José “Pepe” Mujica is—and will forever remain—a journey, an eternal flame that never dies because it transcends death, transcends life, and builds hope. He forges a lifeline to cling to in the fiercest storms and sets a true north where humanity—the human being, the infinite one who returns in an eternal cycle to its roots—is reunited with its purest essence: austere stoicism and immortality.

If I had to capture José “Pepe” Mujica in just three words, I would describe him as humble, because he renounced all pomp and power to stay grounded among the people; resilient, because he turned years of imprisonment and suffering into wisdom and empathy; and visionary, because he dared to imagine—and then embody—a more equitable and compassionate world, inspiring countless others to follow his example.

*Finally, if Pepe were here today to advise the next generation tasked with guiding Uruguay’s future, what do you think would be his most urgent warning and his greatest hope?*

He would challenge us, at the deepest level, to confront a society that’s literally falling apart in its affections and its values—one that urgently needs a profound reconstruction, a new social pact. Pepe would leave us with the responsibility to build something great, the responsibility to live life as he did: carving out time to be happy, to laugh, to love, to run. Not living to possess, nor buying happiness through acts of consumption, but consuming in order to live—and not living just to consume. The legacy—and the challenge—that Pepe has bequeathed is the elevation of the spirit toward life, toward happiness. Transcending all ideologies, he reminds us that humanity is one. Pepe Mujica

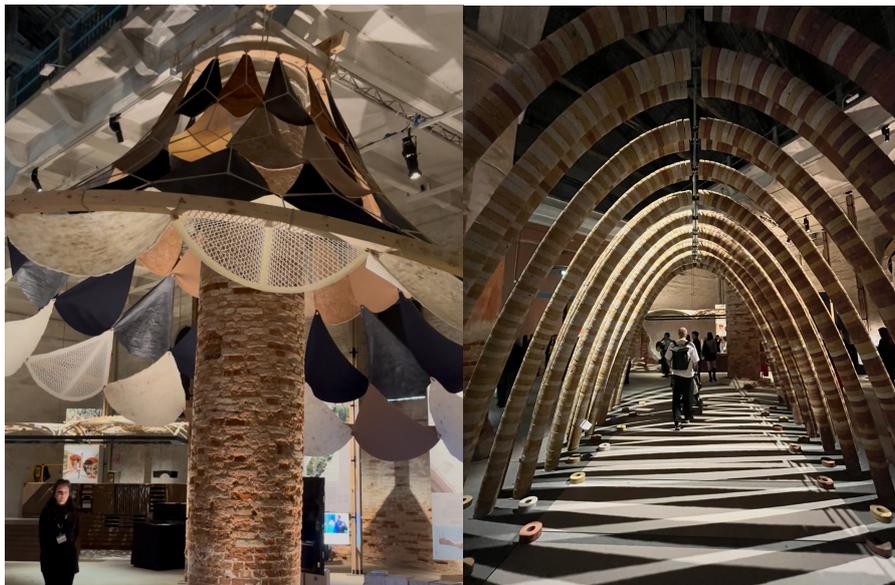
speaks of our species. Pepe Mujica speaks of self-realization. I believe his message—and his greatest hope—is that we learn how to live

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## El State of Affair

### Ancestral Innovation: Latin America architecture shines at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2025

This year's [Venice Architecture Biennale](#) -- themed "**Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective.**" is based on the idea that climate change is here, irreversible and architects must cope with it. I thought it was quite depressing. Over lunch in Venice, curator Carlo Ratti, gave a rather refreshing perspective. While sharing a risotto, he came up with the line "**when everybody is talking about Artificial Intelligence, we are talking about Natural Intelligence**". insisting that human craft, plant biology, and digital feedback loops must work together to meet a fast-warming planet.



Looking at **Latin America's presence** at the Biennale, the continent seems to "get it right": ancestral innovations offer tomorrow's answers.

Inside the vast brick nave of the Corderie, a structure of tamped hemp blocks slots together like children's toys. Created by the [Humanitas360 Institute](#) and architect **Pedro Mendes da Rocha**, the installation highlights industrial hemp used to form a room that is light, fire-safe and—because hemp sequesters carbon in the field and continues to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>.

A short walk away, **Mexico** has moored a living [chinampa](#)—a floating farm modeled on Xochimilco's ancient gardens—directly in the lagoon. Willow-root walls hold lake mud while vegetable beds rise and fall with the tide; a sister island drifting off the Zattere

shows food security, flood control, and carbon capture can coexist on a single, self-contained platform.

**Brazil's** pavilion, “(RE)INVENTION,” translates newly mapped Amazonian earthworks into a scaffold of pine poles and knotted rope. Counterweights make whole walls breathe—rising and settling with river-like rhythm—arguing that infrastructure should flex with water instead of resisting it.

**Peru** completes the sequence with “[Living Scaffolding](#),” a soaring timber lattice cradling a 20-ton totora-reed raft. Visitors clamber through the frames while films show Titicaca islanders harvesting, drying, and patching reeds season after season, reframing architecture as something cultivated, renewed, and ultimately composted.

Threaded through these four projects is a shared conviction: the materials and **techniques that sustained pre-colonial cultures—hemp walls designed for graceful decay**, floating farms that cleanse their own water, timber frames that sway not snap, reed rafts meant to be patched forever—still hold the keys to **climate resilience**. They reject the static monument and embrace change, even celebrate it.

If hemp vaults, chinampas, breathing scaffolds, and reed rafts can team up with sensors, reusable molds, and algorithms, the planet's oldest materials may yet shape its safest future.

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## Elsewhere in LATAM

 On May 16, 2025, President [Javier Milei's](#) administration lifted most restrictions on buying and selling U.S. dollars, effectively ending the black-market “**arbolitos**” currency trade. By opening legal channels for foreign exchange, the move aims to stabilize the peso, boost investor confidence, and ease conditions in negotiations with the IMF. While formal businesses have welcomed the change, many small traders and informal workers lament the loss of a once-reliable avenue for dollar access.

 [Ecopetrol](#) Colombia's state-controlled oil company reported a 22 percent drop in first-quarter net income on May 6, 2025, blaming fluctuating global prices driven by renewed Middle East tensions and unpredictable OPEC output. Management signaled more disciplined capital spending for the rest of the year and cautioned that any further geopolitical flare-ups could challenge exploration plans and margin recovery.

 In its May 15 meeting, [Mexico's central bank](#) lowered its key interest rate by 50 basis points to 8.50 percent, marking the third consecutive cut as domestic growth remains sluggish (just 0.2 percent GDP expansion in Q1). The unanimous decision underscores the bank's priority of supporting weak demand amid uncertainties over U.S. trade policy, even as inflation stays within its tolerance band.

🇨🇳 At the [China-CELAC](#) Forum in Beijing on May 13, 2025, President Xi Jinping announced nearly \$10 billion in new yuan-denominated credit lines to support development projects across Latin America and the Caribbean. The move aims to boost infrastructure and clean-energy cooperation and expand the international use of the yuan, underscoring China’s growing influence in the region.

🇨🇴🇵🇦 On May 10, 2025, former Panamanian [President Ricardo Martinelli](#)—who had taken refuge in the Nicaraguan embassy since February 2024 after a money-laundering conviction—was granted political asylum by Colombia and safely escorted from Panama City to Bogotá. Martinelli, in power from 2009–2014, claims the charges against him are politically motivated

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## El Estudio



CCLATAM and Duke University are partnering to better understand the barriers women face in advancing their cybersecurity careers across Latin America. We are excited to share the [Bridging the Gender Gap in Cybersecurity: Addressing Barriers and Expanding Workforce Participation in Latin America Survey](#)—a research initiative led by Duke University’s Sanford School of Public Policy. This study explores the experiences, challenges, and opportunities of women in cybersecurity to inform meaningful and actionable policy recommendations.

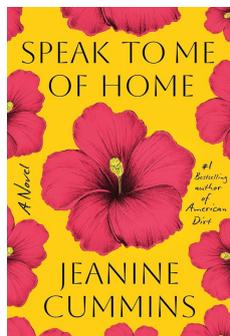
Are you currently working in—or aspiring to join—the cybersecurity field? We want to hear from you! Your insights are essential to building a more inclusive and equitable future in tech.

🎯 Whether you're an early-career professional or an industry leader, your voice matters.

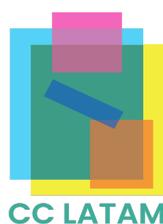
🕒 The survey is confidential and takes just a few minutes to complete.

🔗 Take the survey here: [https://duke.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bCOJq1z7QPbBBKm](https://duke.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bCOJq1z7QPbBBKm)

## La Lectura



In **Speak to Me of Home**, [Jeanine Cummins](#) follows three generations of a Puerto Rican family—Rafaela, her daughter Ruth, and granddaughter Daisy—from sun-drenched San Juan in the 1960s to the chaotic streets of present-day New York. When a devastating hurricane sweeps through their island, each woman must reckon with the loss of home and the weight of memory as they forge new lives thousands of miles away. Cummins’s prose is both tender and unflinching, drawing you into kitchens filled with laughter and living rooms stained by grief, all the while tracing the threads of colonial history and modern exile. By the final page, you’ll feel the ache of homesickness, the fierce pride of heritage, and the stubborn hope that binds mothers to daughters—even when everything they know has been washed away.



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*Thank you for reading, nos vemos en la próxima.*