



*¡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 io excerpt of your response in the next newsletter.*

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## **Colombia's Choice: Continuity or Correction?**

The first round of Colombia's presidential election has delivered a result that is both surprising and revealing. **Surprising because the traditional political right, represented by Paloma Valencia, largely collapsed. Revealing** because it confirms that the country remains deeply divided over the legacy of Gustavo Petro and the direction Colombia should take over the next four years.

The runoff between Iván Cepeda and Abelardo de la Espriella is not simply a contest between left and right. It is a choice between two diagnoses of Colombia's challenges and two very different prescriptions for addressing them. Four years ago, Colombians voted for change. Gustavo Petro became the country's first left-wing president, promising to tackle inequality, strengthen the state's role in economic development, expand social protections, and move Colombia toward a new productive model. His administration delivered important reforms and increased support for lower-income sectors of society. Yet it also governed amid growing fiscal constraints, persistent institutional tensions, and a deterioration of security conditions that has become impossible to ignore.

The first-round results suggest that the country remains unconvinced by both the triumphalist and catastrophic interpretations of the Petro years. If Petro's project had been broadly rejected, Cepeda would not have secured more than 40 percent of the vote. If it had been broadly embraced, Colombia would not be preparing for one of the most competitive runoffs in its recent history.

The real story of this election is therefore not the strength of either candidate, but the near-perfect balance between two competing visions of the country.

Cepeda represents continuity. His campaign argues that Colombia's structural problems—inequality, exclusion, poverty, and uneven development—cannot be solved in a single presidential term. His message is that the reforms initiated over the past four years require consolidation rather than reversal.

De la Espriella represents correction. His campaign is built around the belief that security, investor confidence, economic growth, and state effectiveness must once again become the government's top priorities. His appeal lies not only in opposition to Petro, but in the perception that Colombia has become less predictable and less secure than it was four years ago.

From a business perspective, this election is less ideological than it appears.

Investors, entrepreneurs, and employers are ultimately looking for the same fundamentals regardless of who wins: security, legal certainty, macroeconomic stability, regulatory predictability, and a clear path toward growth.

A Cepeda presidency would likely continue prioritizing social investment, labor protections, and a more active state. The challenge would be reassuring markets that Colombia can maintain fiscal discipline, attract investment, and preserve competitiveness while pursuing those objectives.

A De la Espriella presidency would likely seek to restore confidence among investors through deregulation, support for private enterprise, and a more aggressive security strategy. The challenge would be demonstrating that political polarization and confrontational rhetoric can be translated into effective governance and sustainable reforms.

Neither candidate enters the second round with a decisive advantage. The electoral bases are largely consolidated. The election will be decided by moderate voters, independents, and Colombians who are less interested in ideology than in practical outcomes.

That reality may ultimately be good news for Colombia.

The country is not choosing between revolution and restoration. It is choosing between two different approaches to achieving the same objective: greater prosperity, better security, and stronger institutions.

The next three weeks will be dominated by political narratives, endorsements, and campaign tactics. Yet the central question facing voters is remarkably straightforward: after four years of experimentation and change, does Colombia need continuity—or correction?

The answer will determine not only who occupies the Casa de Nariño, but also the economic and political direction of Latin America's third-largest economy for years to come.

**CCLATAM Editorial Board**

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**La Charla**



This week Piero Bonadeo talks to [Claudia Casarino](#), Paraguayan visual artist whose work traces what passes between bodies across generations: inherited violence, unacknowledged labour, forced migration. She has exhibited internationally, from the Venice Biennale to the National Gallery in Amman, and talks about the future of Latin American art.

*Latin America has historically oscillated between being seen as peripheral and being celebrated as a source of radical innovation. From your position, how do you experience that tension today – is the region defining its own terms, or still negotiating with external validation?*

**Being seen and being "celebrated" from the outside is usually out of step with where we actually stand, and it carries a real risk of exoticization. Celebration and dismissal are often the same gesture: both look at us from a distance and decide what we mean. My own trajectory holds the contradiction.**

**I've shown at the Venice Biennale, in the Latin American pavilion, a real platform, and also a reminder of how the region still tends to enter the system as a group, through a thematic door rather than the main one. But my work has also travelled another map: Beijing, Amman, Bahrain, Buenos Aires, Havana, rooms where artists from the global south were in conversation without a Northern authority certifying it.**

That's where I'd locate whatever autonomy we have. So: we set our own terms in the South-to-South conversation, and we're still negotiating in the North-facing one. The risk is to mistake being celebrated for being understood.

*The art market is often discussed as if it were one thing, but it operates very differently depending on geography and scale. What does "the market" actually mean for an artist based in Paraguay, and what structural changes would make the most difference?*

"The market," in the singular, is mostly a fiction. I work with galleries, in Buenos Aires, Asunción, Kansas City, and São Paulo, so I'm not speaking from outside the system. But I'll say something that more or less defines my relationship with it: I don't live off selling my work, and very few artists in a country like mine do. So the market isn't the engine of a Paraguayan practice; it's an occasional outcome. What sustains the work is closer to private conviction: collectors, family foundations, a great deal of sustained personal commitment.

That's why, when I think about what would make the most difference, I don't reach for "more market." What's missing isn't demand, it's foundation: acquisition budgets, a functioning national collection, the unglamorous machinery that lets work stay in the country and stay visible over time. The market sorts; infrastructure sustains. For a place like Paraguay, building that base matters far more than chasing a market.

*Your work engages deeply with the body, memory, and cultural codes. Do you think Latin American artists carry an obligation to represent their context, or is that expectation itself a form of constraint?*

I'd gently push back on the word "obligation," because it's almost always assigned from outside. No one asks an artist in Berlin to "represent Germany"; they're expected to just make work. The expectation that a Latin American artist must act as a kind of cultural delegate is itself a residue of the periphery position: you're granted entry on the condition that you explain where you come from. That said, I won't pretend my context is incidental to me. I work from a family history of migration, of women who held households alone, of labour that was never named, and that history happens to be shared across much of the global south. But the distinction matters: I work from my context; I'm not obligated to represent it.

The first is a source; the second is an assignment. And refusing the assignment doesn't make you rootless. Some of the most situated work is precisely the kind that won't explain itself to the outside viewer.

*The boundary between art and design is increasingly porous. Where do you position yourself in that conversation, and does the distinction still matter to you creatively?*

I'm an admirer of design, so I won't set it against art; that opposition doesn't really occupy my head. What interests me is something else: design is never innocent. We all live surrounded by it, and behind every designed object there's an intention, crossed by politics, by landscape, by memory. A garment, a tool, a room: none of them are neutral or merely decorative. So I don't position myself on a border between art and design; I'd rather point at what they share, which is that both shape bodies and behaviour whether we notice or not. If anything, my work takes a designed object, clothing, and stops it from functioning, so that the intention hidden inside it becomes visible.

The distinction between art and design matters far less to me than what design hides in plain sight. Think of women's clothing without pockets: it looks natural, it's just "how those clothes are," but it was a decision, and it quietly limited women's autonomy for generations. That's what I'm after, the intention buried inside things that look obvious.

*Many artists from your generation have moved fluidly between mediums – textile, performance, video. How has working with audiovisual formats changed the way you think about an artwork's lifespan and audience?*

Video and photography were there at the origin for me; my first works were photo-performances, my own body recorded and shown on a monitor. So the moving image is where I started. What it taught me, and what still shapes how I work, is that an image's life leaves your hands the moment it circulates. The clearest example: the most reproduced photograph of my work online is an installation of black tulle pieces, and that single image has done more to fix my public identity than any exhibition. It's why people call me "the artist who hangs dresses." I didn't decide that; the network did.

That's the real lesson of audiovisual circulation: a work has two lifespans, the one in the room and the one as a reproduced image, and the second is faster, flatter, and mostly beyond your control. I've stopped fighting it. I make work whose meaning depends on being walked through, on shadow, on accumulation in space, things a thumbnail can't carry.

*Private collections have played an unusual role in preserving and circulating art in Paraguay. How do you think about the relationship between artists, collectors, and institutional memory in contexts where public infrastructure is limited?*

The premise is true, and it's not new. Our Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes itself began with the private collection of Juan Silvano Godoi in the 19th century: even what is "national" here started as someone's private holdings. The contemporary version is the [Museo del Barro](#), one of the most important collections in the region, also born of private initiative rather than the State. I know this terrain from both sides: my own work sits in collections like that, and I spent fifteen years directing one, the [Fundación Migliorisi](#).

So I hold two things at once. First, realism and gratitude: without private conviction, much of Paraguayan art would have no archive, nowhere to be held, no memory at all. Second, a caution: when memory depends on private will, it inherits the fragility of that will. A collection reflects a taste, a class, and it can be sold or dispersed, with nothing obliging it to remember what's inconvenient. That's not an argument against collectors; they've been indispensable. It's an argument for not mistaking their generosity for public memory. A country needs an archive it doesn't have to thank anyone for.

*What is the one thing you wish someone had told you at the beginning of your career, and what do you think the current generation of Paraguayan artists needs most – mentorship, markets, platforms, or something else entirely?*

What I wish someone had told me: you don't get to decide whether you're an artist, and the work is slow. The meaning of a piece often arrives years after you've made it, so stop demanding to understand it right away. I worked instinctively for a long time before I trusted that. As for the current generation, and I say this as someone who teaches and mentors, it's not mainly markets or platforms; those are downstream. It's mentorship, yes, but above all the horizontal kind: peers looking at each other's work seriously, collaboration, the patient consolidation of networks.

Our scene tends to be spasmodic, a lot of work made in reaction to the next open call, a lot of people producing who never show. And one thing we lack almost entirely: a healthy art criticism. Without serious, generous, rigorous criticism, work floats; it gets celebrated or ignored, but rarely read. That's the infrastructure we can actually build ourselves, without waiting for a ministry or a market: we can look at each other well, and we can write about each other honestly.


*If you could redesign one thing about how art is supported, circulated, or taught in Latin America, what would it be – and what gives you optimism that it might actually change?*


Let me start by resisting the question a little. Proposing one fix for all of Latin America is either naive or violent; I'd rather assume it's the first. There isn't one Latin America, and there isn't even one Paraguay: the conditions in Asunción are not those of Ciudad del Este, let alone Cuenca or Caracas.


So the one thing I'd redesign is precisely that reflex, the search for a single model, a single centre, a single correct way of doing things. I'd support the plural instead: many small, situated infrastructures rather than one grand solution, and the lateral routes that let regions speak to each other directly instead of always routing through a capital or a Northern hub. What gives me optimism is that this isn't a proposal. It's already happening, just improvised and underfunded. The architecture exists. Optimism, for me, isn't believing something new will be invented; it's noticing that what we need is already alive, and choosing to feed it.

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## Elsewhere in Latam

 [Foreign residency applications in Paraguay surged 85% in Q1 2026](#), reaching over 18,000 – up from 9,760 in the same period last year. Temporary residency requests jumped 105%, reflecting Paraguay’s growing reputation as one of the region’s most stable, business-friendly environments


 **Bolivia is experiencing heightened political and economic instability**, with more than 150 roadblocks disrupting the movement of people, food, fuel, and medicines across the country, causing significant losses for productive sectors and operational challenges for telecommunications companies by restricting access to critical infrastructure and delaying maintenance activities. At the same time, Bloomberg reports that Bolivia’s country risk has risen sharply, with the EMBI exceeding 605 basis points after more than 20 days of social unrest, reinforcing concerns over political uncertainty and weakening investor confidence.


 **Ecuador President Daniel Noboa used his State of the Nation address to highlight progress in healthcare, education, public works, housing, security, and economic indicators**, reaffirming his commitment to combating criminal organizations. He reported a significant reduction in country risk from 1,000 to 400 basis points, a decline in poverty from 26% to 21%, a reduction in extreme poverty from 10% to 8%, and a 4% increase in employment. While the President presented a broadly positive assessment of the country’s economic and social performance, he made only limited reference to electricity generation challenges, despite ongoing concerns surrounding the sector.


 **Panama and China have launched high-level diplomatic talks to ease maritime tensions and discuss the renewal of their bilateral Maritime Transport Agreement, which expires this year.** The discussions focus on concerns over inspections and detentions of Panama-flagged vessels in Chinese ports and seek to preserve key commercial benefits currently granted under the agreement, including Most Favored Nation treatment, preferential port tariffs, and streamlined administrative procedures. While no concrete commitments have been announced, the reopening of formal dialogue lowers the immediate risk of further deterioration in bilateral maritime relations and could help safeguard strategic interests for Panama’s maritime registry, logistics sector, and broader trade connectivity with China.


 [The Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor](#) – one of South America’s most ambitious infrastructure projects – reached its final stretch this week, with just **21 metres remaining to complete the Bioceanic Bridge over the Paraguay River** connecting Carmelo Peralta (Paraguay) and Puerto Murtinho (Brazil). The full corridor stretches over **3,200km across Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile**, ending at the Pacific ports of [Antofagasta](#) and Iquique. Preliminary estimates suggest it could cut shipping times to

China, Japan, and South Korea by 10–15 days versus current Atlantic routes. It is also being positioned as a strategic alternative to the Panama Canal, which has faced drought-related draft restrictions and chronic delays.

 Uruguay's Ministry of Economy and Finance signed a memorandum of understanding with the [UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) to advance cooperation in aerospace, infrastructure, and digital innovation. The agreement is valid for at least four years and builds on Economy Minister [Gabriel Oddone](#)'s visit to London in February. The signing represents Uruguay's active push to diversify its international economic partnerships beyond its immediate neighbors.

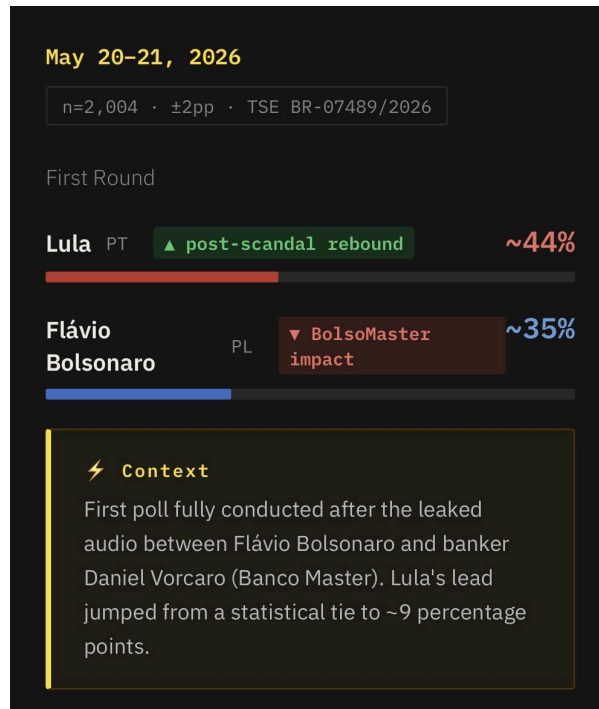
 Western automakers – whose supply chains run deep through Mexico – are under severe pressure from Chinese manufacturers who have consolidated leadership in EVs, batteries, and software. At [Auto China 2026](#), Honda's president said his company has “no chance against” Chinese automation, while Ford's CEO warned they are “in a fight for our lives.” Foreign brands' market share in China collapsed from 64% in 2020 to just 32% this year. BYD can add 400km of range in 5-minute charges; a Xiaomi car rolls off the line every 76 seconds.

 In [Q1 2026, Mexico posted record FDI](#) inflows driven largely by reinvestments from multinationals already operating in the country. Vehicle manufacturing investment jumped from \$3.35 billion in Q1 2025 to \$4.03 billion in Q1 2026. Reinvested earnings rose 33.5% year-on-year to \$22.2 billion.

 Representaives from the governments of Chile, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia [signed a new regional cooperation agreement in Santiago to jointly combat transnational organised crime and drug trafficking.](#)

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*El Gráfico*



*Flávio Bolsonaro remains the only challenger who can match Lula in a runoff, while other simulated second-round matchups show Lula comfortably ahead: 46%–40% against Zem (NOVO) and 46%–39% against Caiado (PSD).*

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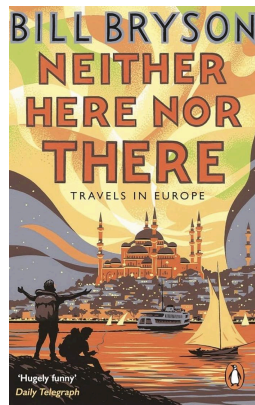
### La Cita

*In the era of artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human.*

Pope Leo XIV, spiritual leader, head of the Catholic Church, Sovereign of the Vatican State, in Encyclical [Magnifica Humanitas](#) ,

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### La Lectura



Neither Here Nor There is worth reading simply because [Bill Bryson](#) makes you laugh while making you want to book a flight — he stumbles through Europe’s great cities (Paris, Naples, Copenhagen and more) with such cheerful incompetence that travel feels both glamorous and gloriously ridiculous, and his sharp eye for the absurd means you’ll never look at a hotel breakfast buffet or a confused tourist the same way again.



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