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## Using hashtags to redefine immigration

A tableaux vivant created by famous Instagrammer-photographer Ryan Schude.

### **Upsidedownmeet, first Instagrammers' encounter in South America, closes today in BA**

Buenos Aires' history of immigration has resulted in one of the world's most cosmopolitan places, where people from all over flood to the city in a sort of constantly evolving melting-pot. This evolution is not only true of the people coming over, but also of the ways in which they do so. Centuries ago, it took a boat and a very long journey to get anywhere and to share personal experiences and local costumes with outsiders, who saw every other culture as foreigners. Now, all it takes is an app.

This is precisely why the Museum of Immigration couldn't be a more appropriate place to host the last day of Upsidedownmeet, the first encounter between Instagrammers ever organized in South America. It all began with a series of pictures Meritxell Soler, a Catalan artist, did once she moved to Buenos Aires. In the photos, she was seen holding a suitcase, but the picture was upside down. "I come from the Northern hemisphere, and it felt like I was living upside down, where even seasons were inverted", she told the Herald. "So I came up with the shoot of the inverted suitcase to illustrate that."

Out of this feeling of inadequacy, Soler thought of another idea to accurately portray it. "A few years later, after having used Instagram as a tool to show my work, it occurred to me that I could invite friends of mine or people I followed on Instagram so that they could have this upside- down living experience as well." And so she did: she went to the Ministry of Culture with the project, and after receiving support from them, she set up a number of different activities for Upsidedownmeet. After three days of exhibits, presentations and workshops on photography — some deal with specific themes, like one taught by Laura Ponts about gastronomy — today is the last day of the meeting, with events open to the public.

"The idea is that the artists involved are interested in the dialogue between the Northern and the Southern hemispheres, and in themes like immigration, the passing of time and the loss of our origins," Soler said. The artists she chose are therefore already involved in said issues or have taken an interest in participating in the event to reflect upon them. Tom Skipp, from London, aims to "take photos about things that make me think, and thus make others think", he told the Herald. "It was exciting to physically meet people who are inspiring to me, like Ryan Schude and Tecklan, who I'd never met but have followed for years. I loved meeting them in person and discussing the reasoning behind their work."

It is Skipp's first time in South America, and he has fallen in love with Buenos Aires' architecture and its vibrant lifestyle, with a special fascination for La Boca. "I lived in Rwanda for eight months and have also taken pictures of refugees, so I enjoy meeting different people and seeing their cultures," he said. "With the refugees, the media reports in a certain way, but I had no agenda and I can tell people what it's like. In Buenos Aires, I'm pushing myself to talk to people and ask them if I can take their photo. It's a moment of mutual respect and acceptance that I love about photography."

It was also Ryan Schude's first time visiting South America, and he shares Skipp's fascination to see how other people live. "We all feel displacement in our own ways, but the event has certainly made it a lot easier to assimilate it," he told the Herald. His Instagram pictures are famous for featuring people and their cars — an interest he shares with Soler — but his photographic work is much broader than that. "In my workshop here, I spoke about tableaux vivants, which is basically attempting to tell fictional stories in one picture, almost like a movie still. You get actors and a location, and create a scene around that." For the workshop he taught at Fundación Telefónica, he created a site-specific work right there, using one of the students as his model. Tomorrow's event will feature works from artists like Spanish photographer Amalia Ulman, who will put on a performance, the creator of Igers, an Instagrammers' community, Phil González, from France, and Ryan Schude. It will also present a chance to go around the Museum of Immigration, take pictures and reflect upon the different meanings "immigrant" and "foreigner" take on nowadays.

### **when & Where**

Today at 2.30pm at Museo de la Inmigración (Av. Antártida Argentina between Dirección Nacional de Migraciones and Buquebús - Enter in Apostadero Naval, Dársena Norte). Free admission. To attend, sign up at [www.upsidedown-meet.travellingmobile.com](http://www.upsidedown-meet.travellingmobile.com)

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