

@twheelzzzzzzzzzzzz

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DIASPORA VIBE CULTURAL ARTS INCUATOR



#DYCAI #DYCAIPANAMA IG:@DYCAI WEB:WWW.DYCAI.ORG



 TRAVELOGUE2021



Leaving Miami March 26, 2021

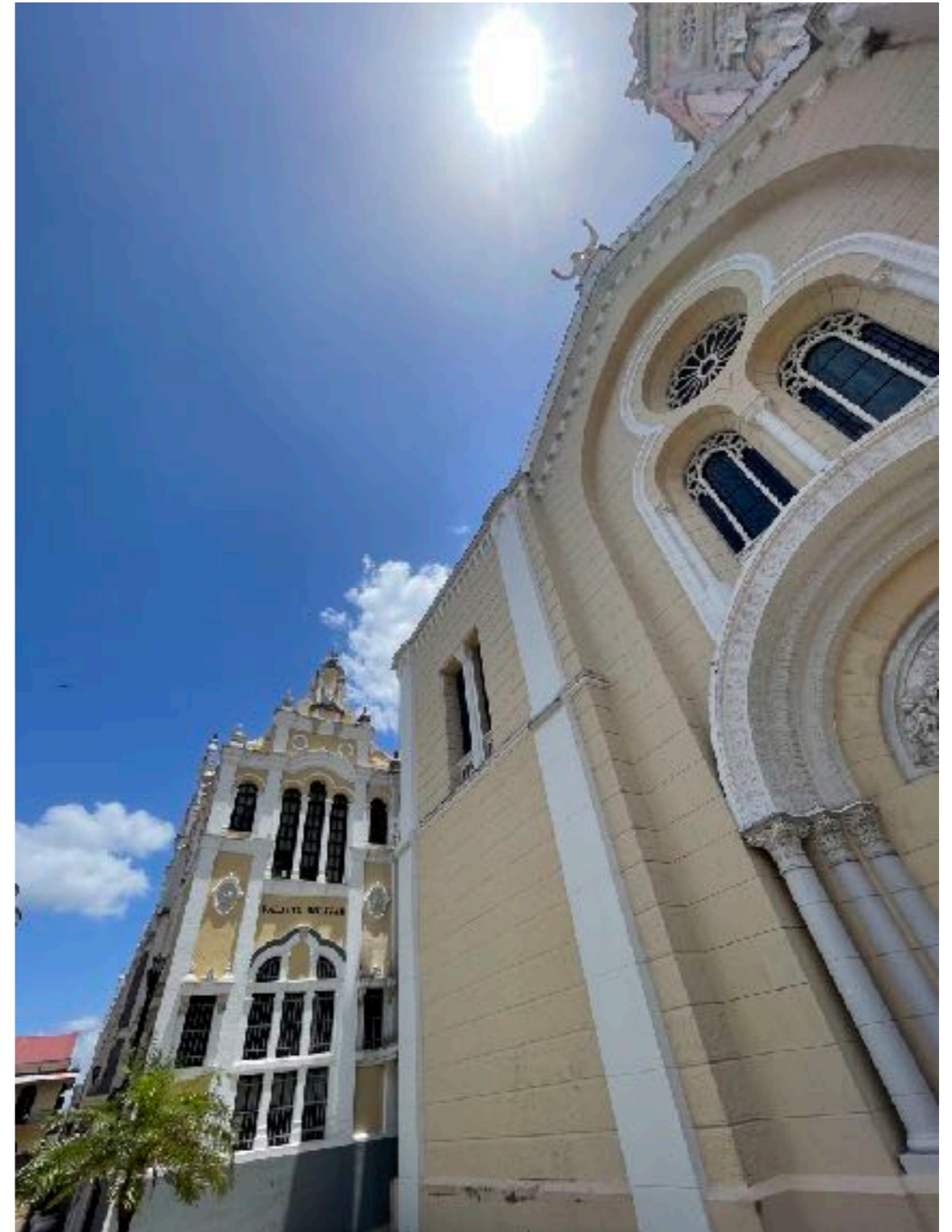
Day 1: Beyond stoked to serve as a cultural ambassador with the International Cultural Exchange to Panamá City. With utmost gratitude, I want to thank my dear friend Rosie Gordon-Wallace who has invited me to explore, learn and serve.

“America always changing but America never changes.” -J. Baldwin

Caribbean Global Currents: Talking Across Difference

Thank you Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs.

#DVCAI #dvcaipanama



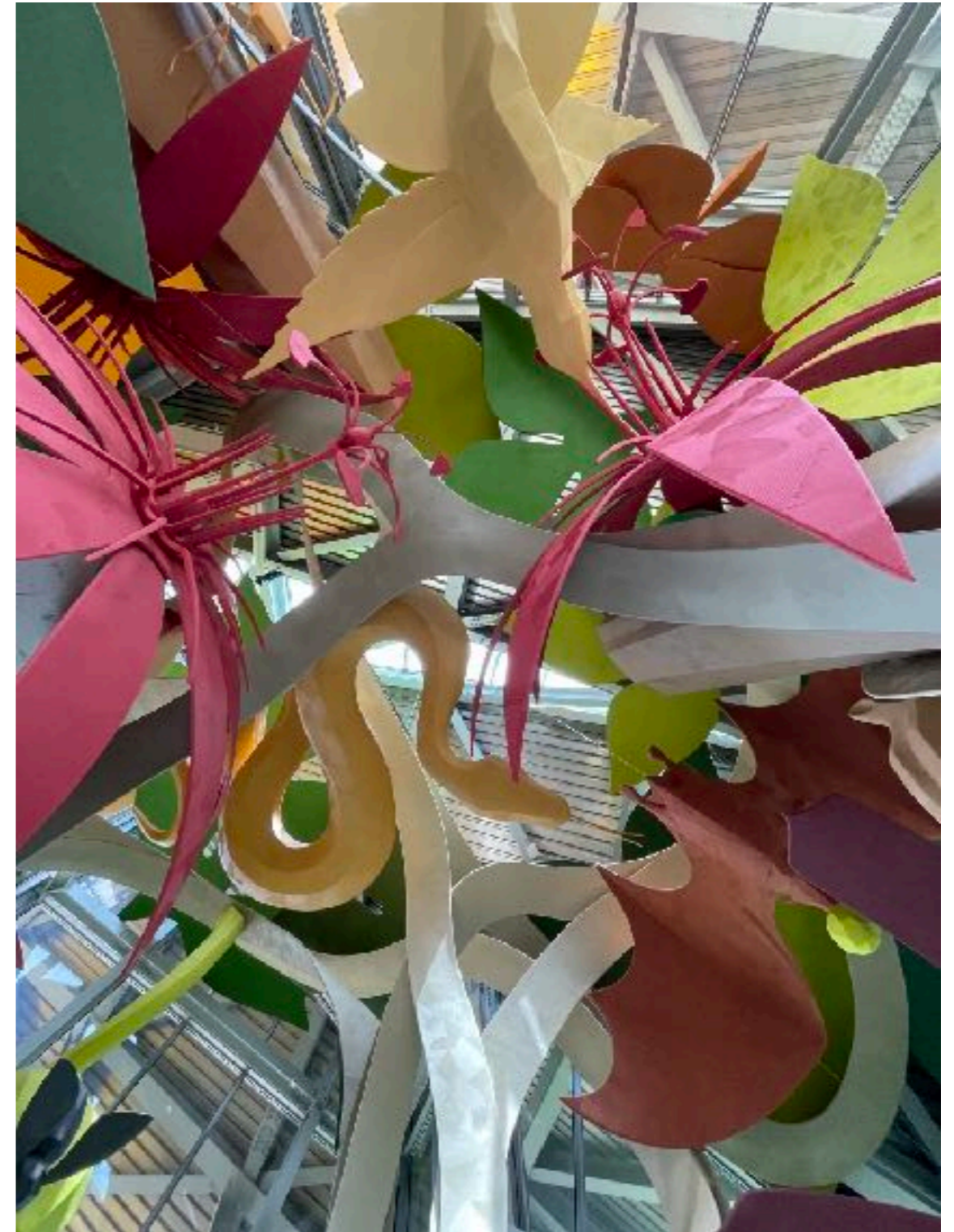
Panama City - Historic District of Panama



Panama City - Historic District of Panama

Day 2: We started our day focusing on ourselves under the guidance of [@nataliavasquezvision](#). Our guide Ruben took us on a tour of the old, colonial city. I encountered a school that reminded me of my kindergarten. It's probably not it but I can't help remember recess in the school's square. Colonial ruins under construction beside signs profaning gentrification. The highlight of our day was a busker from Peru. He sang songs by Chayanne and Los Lobos. The video installations at the Gehry-designed [@Biomuseo](#) were pretty 🔥.

We returned home for lunch and a virtual meeting with our cultural heritage partner [@samaapanama](#). Still processing all of the stories and memories that revealed themselves in a quantum millisecond. The weight of history is weighing heavy. Talking through difference.

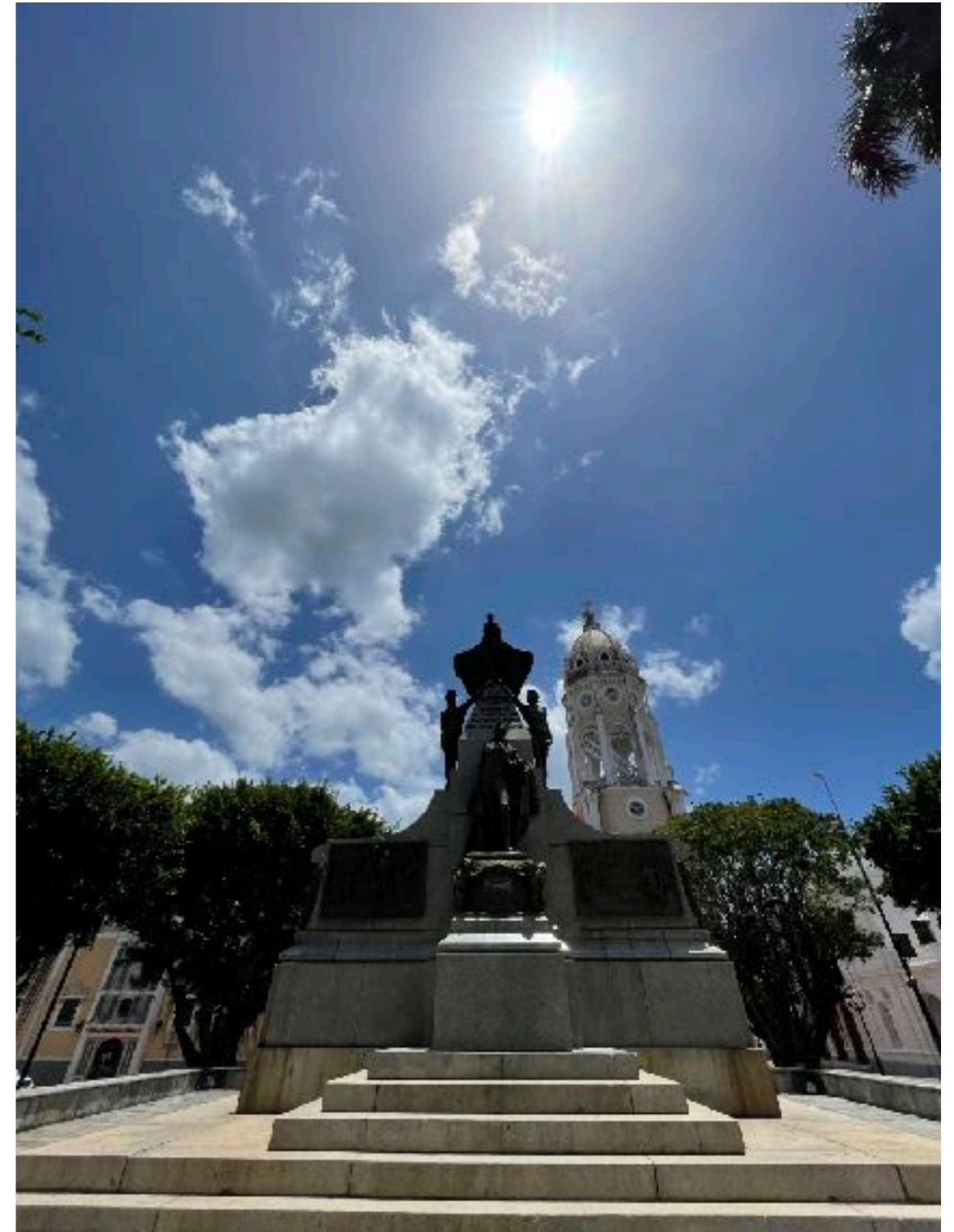


Biomuseo



(Above) A local school

(Below) Virtual visit with SAMAAPANAMA



Plaza Bolivar



Chilibre

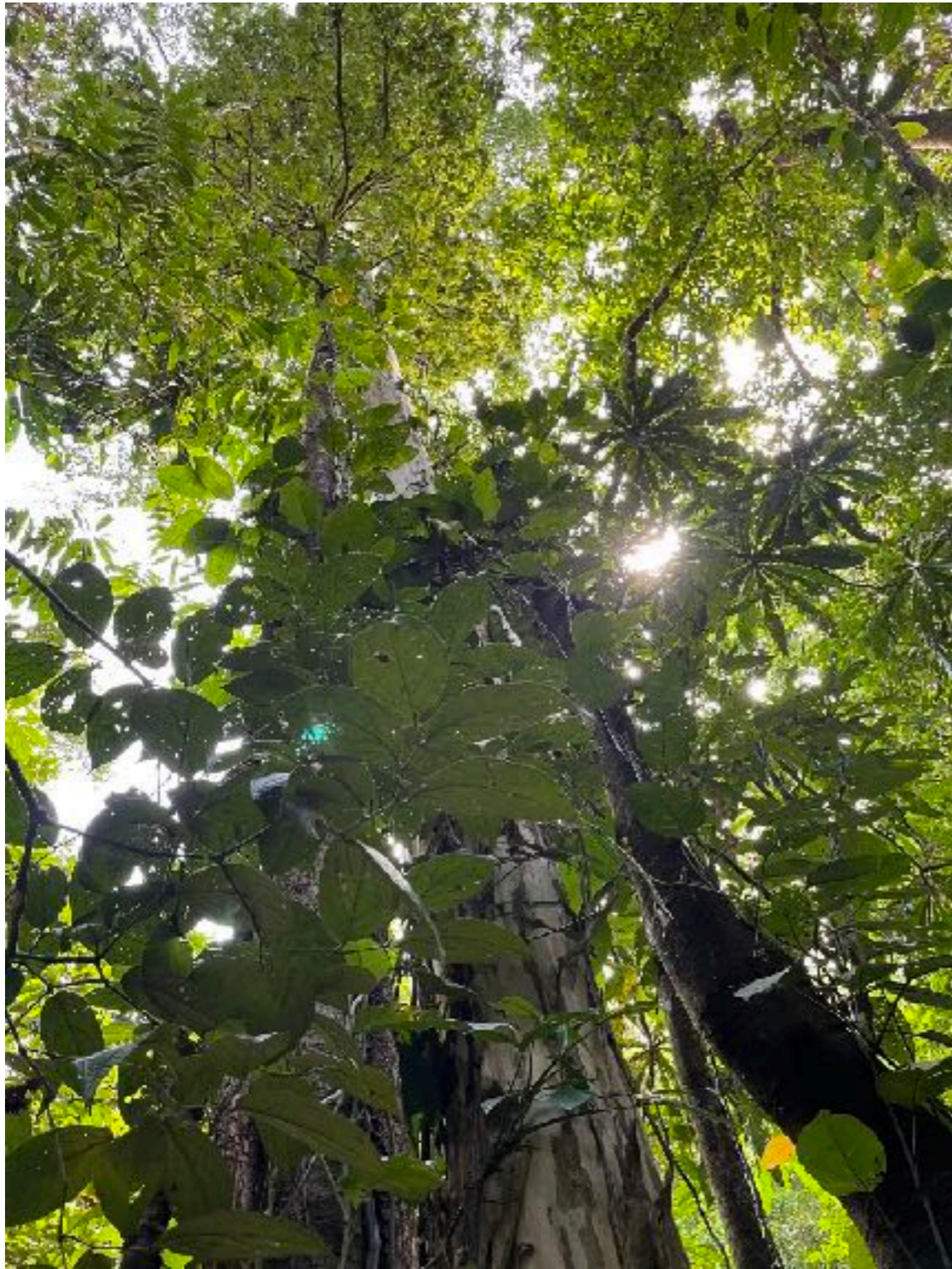
Day 3: We acknowledge the Bokota, the Embera, the Guaymí (including the Movere and Murire peoples), the Guna, the Buglé, the Talamanca, the Teribe, the Wounaan. We know we tread on their lands; their histories and conflicts are in our hearts as we navigate our exchange.

On our way to meet with an Embera village in Chagres National Park, we drove by Chilibre. Ismael and Edwin drove us by boat to their village after we hiked through the rainforest to swim under a waterfall. Butterflies 🦋 everywhere. We met with Yarelis, she told us about their lives and answered questions about their reality. We we're very thankful for their hospitality.

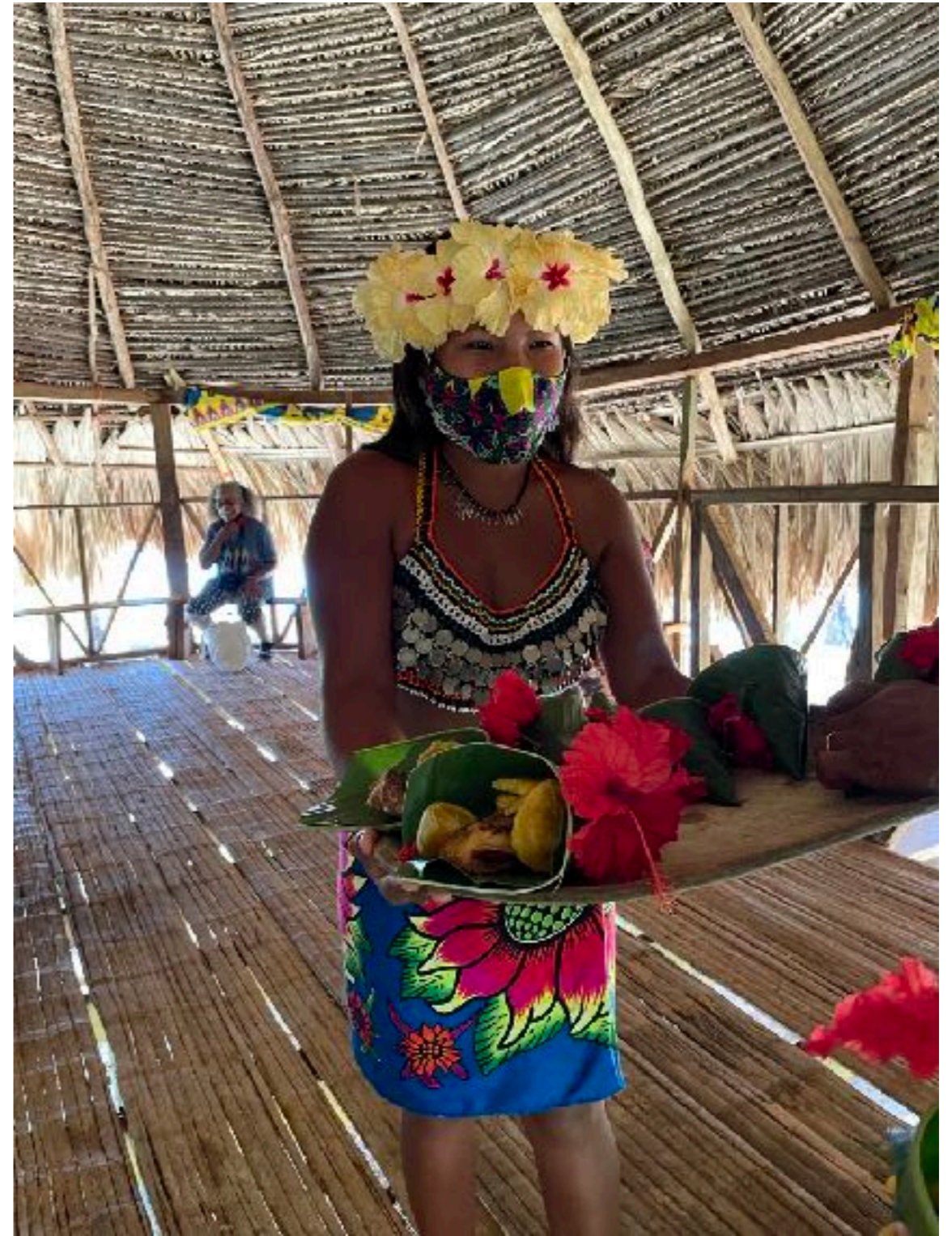
We ended our day with a group zoom visit, family dinner, and a gossip over a fire for the full moon. Maybe an episode of the amazing [@smallaxeseries](#).



Edwin of the Embera Village, Alajuela Lake in Chagres National Park



Chagres National Park



Young Embera woman



Afroantillan Canal Workers Museum

Day 4: Collectively we couldn't shake our visit with the Embera yesterday, it came up during breakfast and dominated the conversation over dinner. The goal is to exchange, we're still working out how to do that without imposing ourselves.

Its Monday and all the cultural institutions are closed. We visited @samaapanama anyways, taking in the city and its bustle. We visited Vanessa Greene's high school and the former US army base when the US occupied Panama, Fort Clayton. As a kid, I played in the pool on the base, saw E.T., the Karate Kid at its theater and heard Dionne Warwick's 'That's What Friends Are For' for the first time there. I barely understood what that space meant at the time.

Rosie keeps reminding us of our mission, to talk across difference. We're not taking this visit lightly, this is not a vacation. It's clear Panama is no different in its disparities when compared to the US. We live in the shadow of history.

I expect our visit to Colón on Friday will further reinforce these truths.



Day 5: I'm sleeping so deeply here in Arraiján, even with the cacophony of birds chatter at dawn. We started the day with gentle yoga, thanks to Natalia.

Today was dedicated to exchanging with the collectors and galleries, like @weil_art. After getting a little lost, we arrived and met with Marmie Walker, our hostess. Quite a packed gallery of carved objects, documents, and paintings. I chatted with Jorge, the gallery assistant about the graffiti/skater scene and found Vanessa a tattoo artist. After a light lunch under a Panamanian rain, we went to visit with Dr. Sinclair.

Dr. Sinclair is the son of Alfredo Sinclair. Sinclair learned abstraction from Pollock himself and practiced all-over, action painting through the 70s. The man painted through the 21st century. Oh yeah, the Obregón woodcut was the first thing that caught my eye in Dr. Sinclair's private collection. *fingers crossed* We have time to visit the museum dedicated to his legacy.

Many thanks to the artists who presented tonite during our nearly 3 hr zoom studio visits. I shared some images of my time in Panama, including my pet rooster Papito pictured with me and my sis on our first day of school in Chilibre.

A bird is calling in the night, bout to drink soursop leaf tea.



(Above) Woodcut print by A. Obregón

(Below) Huellas Alfredo Sinclair B.



Day 6: We're getting to know the city and its peoples, in all its complexities, more and more with each day. Rosie Gordon-Wallace has brought a lot of heart and sensitivity to her life's work with [@dvcai](#); we're all humbled and bewildered by our experience and this work's legacy.

We received a private tour of the [@museodelamola](#) which had only opened its doors for 4 months before the pandemic closed down the world. Docent Leonardo gave an enthusiastic tour of the art form of the Mola. Molas are a hand-made textile that forms part of the traditional women's clothing of the Guna people from Panama/ Colombia. Abstraction is not solely a modern art, these works are pretty cosmic. I met a Guna artist later on and bought some beads from her.

We walked around the old city and encountered a deco style building dated back to about the same year Miami was founded. The walls around these streets were filled with art: murals, graffiti, wheat-pasting.

We spent the evening with Collector Marnie Walker who invited us to dinner. She showed off her art collection which included art works from all over the world, truly a labor of love. She invited her friend Arturo for dinner who was very candid about our questions about life in Panama. It was clear he brought us a perspective we were missing here on our cultural exchange.

Throughout this entire trip, despite long car rides in crazy traffic, uncertainty because of the realities of the pandemic, there has been quite a bit of laughter.



(Above) Museo De La Mola

(Below) Guna Artist selling Molas and Beads



Day 7: Today was planned as an unscheduled day but it turned into one of our most productive: three museums, new relationships, and more lively artist presentations with those who could not be with us in Panama.

We started with [@samaapanama](#), rushing to get there after two failed attempts at a visit. The museum chronicles the lives of migrants from the west indies who moved to Panama to help build the canal.

We were headed home but decided to stop at the curious building we've passed daily with the word 'libertad' on it.

The [@museodelalibertad](#) is a beautiful haven dedicated to human rights. I've never visited a museum with such a direct sense of mission. We were all in awe at the passionate exhibitions detailing what work we all have left to do for a better, equitable world. The staff and director made us feel welcomed. We think we've found kindred spirits here in Panama! Shout out to [@maragonch](#), couldn't tag her in the pic because of limitations but her artwork on view 'Lavar Es Amar', where she washed 18 red-stained handkerchiefs in honor of victims of femicide in Panama, is 🔥.

[@aidaclement](#) told us about amazing Jamaican fish tacos and urged us to visit the [@museodelcanal](#). After said deliciousness, we went to the museum. We were overwhelmed at the amount of information, artifacts, and ephemera. Im limited to ten pics per post but could easily have shared 30.

We ended the night with presentations by artists associated with [@dvcai](#) from all over the Americas. In awe of the creativity and heart presented tonite. Art is the balm that soothes.

Tomorrow: Colón.



(Above) Inside the Afroantillan Canal Workers Museum

(Below) Museo De La Libertad



Day 8: From the Pacific to the Atlantic, from dry to humid, we drove to Colón, Panama.

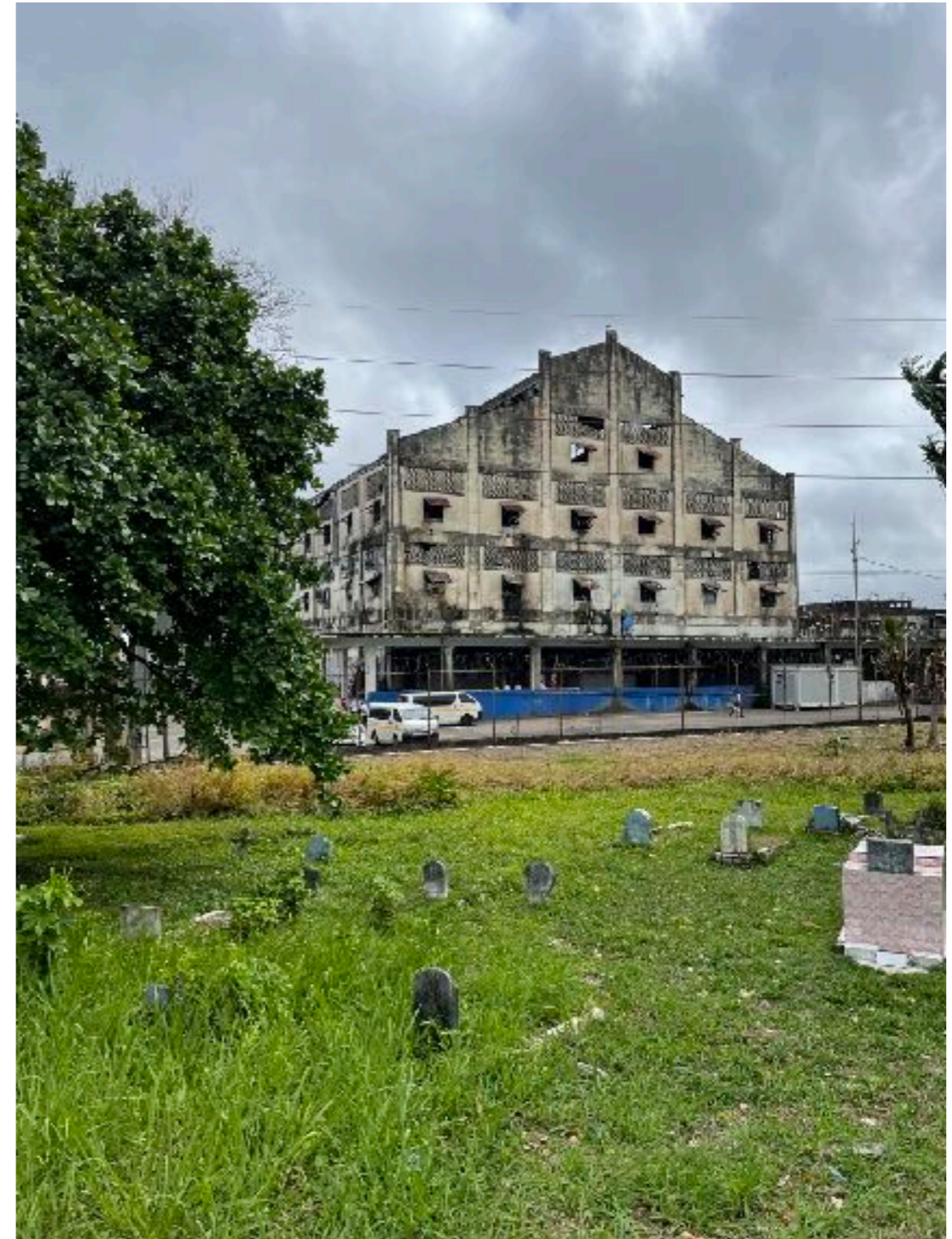
We started an early drive through a forest to reach our destination. Colón sits on the Caribbean coast, at the entrance to the Panama Canal. The city was founded by the US and many peoples from the West Indies and the Americas flocked to the city to work on the canal, many never to return because of the perilous nature of work.

Our first stop was the cemetery, accidentally going to the back entrance that shared its path with the city's prison. The back entrance and its graves seemed very different from the main entrance.

We drove the puente Atlantico on our way to the city center. The city doesn't seem to have the same resources as the capital although both cities histories seem to be completely intertwined.

We needed to put our feet in water so we decided to drive through Sabanitas to get to La Angosta, a beautiful tropical beach. We ate fish fry con patacones and poured a little rum out for the ancestors. We wanted our last day to complete a journey that started for many in Colón. I've never understood Panama better.

Our last meal was spent under the tutelage of ms. [@camcfarlane](#), giving us a wealth of knowledge on enhancing our social media presence, something every artist should be vested in to amplify audience and success. Thank you, Carol-Anne!



Colón Cemetery and Prison

Day 9: Travel day HOME

Arrived not too long ago after a very exhausting travel day.

Despite all the troubles, there were still moments of reflection and gratitude.

Caribbean Global Currents: Talking Across Difference

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(Above) Iglesia De Santo Domingo

(Below) Playa La Angosta



Alajuela Lake

