

Strange shapes, mystic land explored

Battle Creek, Michigan—

When most people think of Peru, the vague images that they conjure up may have vaguely to do with llamas and the Andes Mountains.

When the Kingman Museum of Natural History officially opened, "Planet Peru—An Aerial Journey Through a Timeless Land," a photographic exhibit produced by aerial photographer, Marilyn Bridges, at Riverwalk Centre in downtown Battle Creek, the way most people perceive Peru radically altered.

The exhibit will run through July as part of Kingman Museum's community outreach program.

"Planet Peru—An Aerial Journey Through a Timeless Land" combines the powerful black and white images of strange formations and huge shapes with the haunting landscapes of this South American nation, seen from 10,000 feet in the air. Light and shadow play across the valleys and volcanoes that dot the scenery, sometimes producing optical illusions on an immense scale.

Bridges' studies of the Incan empire, and the structures they have left behind, have yielded photographs of the remains of a once mighty group of people. Magnificent architecture

and the remains of agricultural endeavors jump out at the viewer as signs of a complex culture that managed to tame the wild mountains and lands of Peru.

As lost cities unveil themselves to the camera's eye, and strange geological formations show intricate natural patterns, modern manmade installations are found to be just as unique. Desert military installations, highways trekking through the sand dunes, and life-giving oases look just as mysterious as the ancient and natural compositions when they are seen from high in the sky.

Perhaps the most mystical however, are the strange shapes, forms, and lines found in the area of Nazca. Trapezoids, perfectly straight lines, figures of humans and monkeys, and strange spiral patterns hundreds of feet long become apparent to viewers only when seen from the air.

Bridges' photographs let viewers determine for themselves the origins of these strange shapes. Were they put there out of reverence for the gods? Were they drawn to contact other life forms, perhaps from other planets? Is the how and why so important to us now? Bridges' wants us to look at the images and feel, not in our minds, but

in our hearts.

"Part of my reason for shooting ancient sites is to use the imagery to reflect upon the sacred knowledge of the past — truths that remain locked in stone and earth. In my work, I hope to unlock some of the messages, not through the intellect, where they are indecipherable, but rather through the spirit, where they can be recognized," says Bridges.

The lengths that Bridges goes to to capture the perfect moment are attested to when she admitted to

taking some shots while hanging out of the plane as a friend gripped her ankles! This kind of dedication to her art is one of the things that landed her in the prestigious Explorer's Club in 1988.

She has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1982, a National Endowment for the Arts Grant in 1984, and a Fulbright Fellowship in 1988, in addition to numerous other awards and honors.

For more information, call 616-965-5117.

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POWERFUL IMAGE— "Valley of the Volcanoes," Andagua, Peru, is one of the haunting landscapes which make up the "Planet Peru" photographic exhibit.

Summer brings Fernwood garden tours

Niles, Michigan—

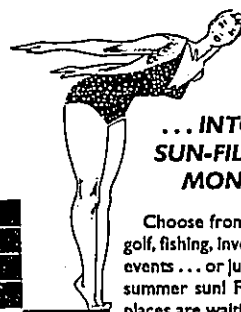
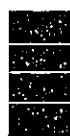
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11—Aquatic Garden.

All tours begin at 2 p.m., Michigan Time.

Individuals should register for each event. Call Fernwood at 616-683-8653 or 616-695-6491.

Fernwood Botanic Garden is a 105-acre facility located at 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, MI 49120. Fernwood features classes in horticulture, natural sciences, and the arts and crafts.



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