

Brazil by NOOR

Nikon Europe supports the agency's latest group project, portraying one of the world's rising powers.

There is a lot more to Brazil than Caipirinhas, carnival and football. Its ethnic and cultural mix has created a truly diverse and vibrant culture and the stable government whose focus on fiscal reform and welfare, has encouraged economic growth and social change. It is a dynamic and powerful country and with the world's sixth largest labour force, it's turning into a major economic player – on a par with India and China. Despite its recent prosperity, Brazil still has its problems – a third of the population remain in poverty – so when picture agency NOOR were planning their 2012 ensemble project, they decided Brazil would make a compelling subject. Claudia Hinterseer, NOOR Image's managing director, explains, 'We thought it would be interesting to look at a whole region, because Brazil is a nation in fast transition. The country will be hosting the World Cup 2014 and the Olympics 2016 so the eyes of the world will be watching.'

The result is an evocative series of assignments, showing different facets of this fascinating country, from the recent empowerment of women to the construction of the Belo Monte Dam, built to meet the ever-rising energy needs.

This is Brazil through the eyes of the brightest contemporary photojournalists around and shows a country on the move. Here is a taster with three of the seven stories, all of which are available in their entirety at: www.noorimages.com



FRANCESCO ZIZOLA

on Brazil's new middle class.

Since 2005, about 40 million people, or a fifth of Brazil's population have entered what is now termed as the new middle class. Many are from groups that traditionally had little prospects, such as residents of the favelas, women and ethnic minorities, which reveals the magnitude of this societal shift.

'The welfare policies have shown the world their effectiveness in shrinking the gap between the rich and the poor,' says Francesco, who set out to document this new layer of society. A combination of the opportunities created by the government's welfare programme and a desire for a better future have been instrumental in its creation.

Francesco highlights the case of a 40-year-old nanny from Rio de Janeiro, who came from a family that was too poor to send her to school. 'A generation later, all of her children have an education and are in gainful employment,' he says. 'Her grandchildren even take swimming lessons and many of her neighbours go to university.'

However, this new layer of society is regarded

'The welfare policies have shown their effectiveness in shrinking the gap between the rich and the poor.'



OPPOSITE PAGE: A family watches a film in a former slum, reclaimed from drug lords by military police, marines and armoured vehicles. Francesco chose the lighter D800 for this travel assignment. It's the best quality combined with reduced bulk and weight. I was also very happy with its video mode.' D800, AF-S NIKKOR 35mm f/1.4G, ISO 4000, 1/40s, f/1.4

LEFT: A couple enjoys the sunshine by an artificial saltwater lake. D800, AF-S NIKKOR 35mm f/1.4G, ISO 400, 1/1000s, f/8

BELOW: Military and police helped to gentrify slums. D800, AF-S NIKKOR 28mm f/1.8G, ISO 400, 1/500s, f/11



with suspicion and sometimes contempt by people higher up, as well as lower down the social ladder. One upper-class Brazilian told Francesco, 'The country is going to the dogs, they're everywhere. They think they count for something just because they have a credit card in their wallet. No matter what, they are nobodys.'

Those lower down are just as scathing. 'Until a few days ago, they were just like us. Now they think they matter.'

As for Francesco, his impression is far less judgemental. 'I found that they are very hard-working people who care about their children's education, buy nice clothes and have short holidays now and again.' And who doesn't want that. ▶



PEP BONET

on Brazil's transsexuals

How a society treats its minorities, is often considered to be a barometer of social development and reveals a lot about a nation's attitudes and fears.

Brazil's transgender community are the country's most marginalised group and suffer from considerable discrimination. Ostracised by family and excluded from the job market, they are often forced into prostitution. Most of their clients are men, often married, who will give the impression of being straight in their everyday lives.

'It's a big social issue,' says Pep, whose work often focuses on people on the fringes of society and who has already completed a project on transsexuals in Honduras. This is a story about human rights violations and happens all over the world on a large scale. When I came to Brazil, I was surprised how many transsexuals there were.'

Good contacts were crucial for this assignment, so he contacted transgender support and activist groups. 'It was very important to have a good introduction and somebody to explain the purpose of the project,' he says. 'It's not a scene you can just walk into and a lot of the places where they work are very dangerous.'

Although activist groups are fighting for their rights, the acceptance of transgender people is lagging far behind the recognition



'This is a story about human rights violations and happens all over the world'

Brazil's gay and lesbian population have managed to gain. Attitudes are slowly shifting however, which is reflected in the rise of some transsexual celebrities, such as the supermodel Lea T, but as Pep shows, they still have a long struggle to be accepted for who they are. ▶

The images show transvestite performers and sex workers' daily life and their environment. Pep worked with the D3S. The performance of the camera is absolutely outstanding, especially in low light, which was of course essential for this assignment. All images were shot on the AF NIKKOR 28mm f/1.4D at at high ISO and wide apertures.





OPPOSITE PAGE: São Paulo's skyline from the Terraço Italia restaurant. For his Brazil assignment, Jon used the D800. The files are amazing and the pictures fantastic. I used only prime lenses and took the 28mm f/1.8G, the 35mm f/1.4G and the 50mm f/1.4G

LEFT: Party goes in the heart of downtown São Paulo. The D800's low light sensitivity was essential for these kind of reportage shots. D800, AF Nikkor 50mm f/1.4D



JON LOWENSTEIN
on the rise of São Paulo

The Forbes Rich List now features 37 Brazilian billionaires, which has increased by seven in the last year. Nineteen people every day break through the one million (about 300.000 GBP) Brazilian Real barrier. With capital increasing so quickly and being of such pivotal importance to the country and its people, Jon

'The old rich from São Paulo don't want to show that they have money, because they are worried about being robbed or kidnapped and held for ransom.'

decided to look at the concept of wealth in the society. A colleague put him in touch with some of Brazil's wealthiest people, who invited him into their homes. 'The old rich from São Paulo

don't want to show that they have money,' he says, 'because they are worried about being robbed or kidnapped and held for ransom. They invest a lot of money in securing their homes, building walls around them and keeping a low profile as much as they can. However, the 'nouveau riche' are more about showing it off.'

Jon was really taken by this dynamic country and was amazed by its extremes, which he plans to explore more. His work is normally associated with the other end of the spectrum of social injustice, such as documenting the lives of illegal immigrants or people from

very poor neighbourhoods. Jon believes that photography can bring about social change through promoting understanding and his photographing wealth is all part of this.

'I really think it's important to look at all aspects of a community', he explains. 'We have to examine different models of society and how they relate to each other to find the solution that works best.'

 Visit www.noor-images.com for more information about the Brazil project. Download the iPad Edition for additional content.