Commentary

Paul Martin Lester, Editor

A Mazione woman speaks in tongues while praying on Triunfo Beach during low tide. The area which is a site of considerable erosion is thought to be sacred by the religious group who worship and perform various rituals there.

Mazione_Pray101.jpg
Copyright Michael Barrientos

I blame Rob Heller.

Check out this e-mail from him sent in 1993:

> Have you tried Mosaic yet? They alluded to it at AEJMC and I finally downloaded it and got a beta version which works on my Mac. I've also subscribed to GNN (Global Network Navigator)—a network "magazine" which is beginning to use graphics and design in an interesting way. It's fascinating to watch a growing medium—the internet—begin to pay attention to design.

> Have you been successful at sending and receiving photographs over the net? My versaterm program seems to automate the compression and binhexing functions. I'd like to try some exchanges. Let me know if you have those capabilities.

> I hope this rambling message makes sense. YOU WILL RESPOND.

How could you not? Way back in the last century when we all were just starting to use the web with the Mosaic browser, we conducted an

Former student Michael Barrientos ponders a question about his work from a visual reporting student. Skype, the web, and a lab's projector allowed a seamless conversation and portfolio review between Mozambique and Fullerton. PML

experiment with our respective visual reporting classes—Rob in Tennessee and me in California—in which we shared our students' work through a website and saw and talked to each other through the early, free video conferencing software from Cornell University known as CU-SeeMe.

Fast forward 17 years and for my visual reporting class I use Skype for video conferences with photographers anywhere in the world: Michael Barrientos from Mozambique, Greg Constantine from Bangkok, Carla Hotvedt of Silver Image Photography from Florida, and Moises Saman from New York City. With their work to the left and their image to the right on my desktop, I point my Mac's camera to the screen so my guest can see the picture being shown. Students from the back of the lab can ask a question. In the future I want to record the entire session using UStream.tv and broadcast the chat live for the web plus do a session on "Fullerton Island" on Second Life. Naturally, I also have live "critters" who come to class, show their work, and help critique the student pictures, but I'm convinced they get as much out of the live as the virtual meetings. As Aldous Huxley never said, welcome to the brave new visual world.