

# THE ARTS



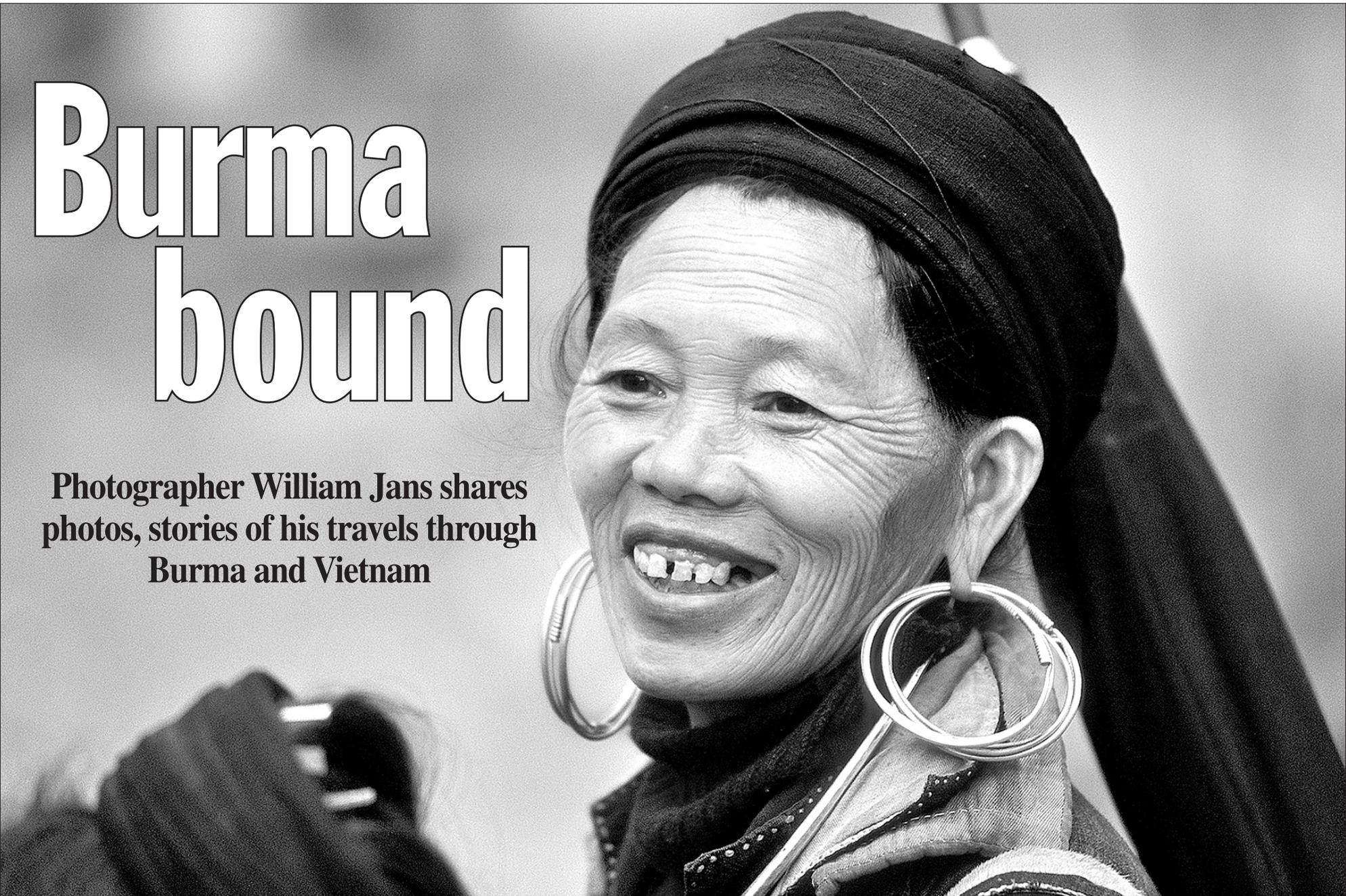
## PUNK

The Subhumans  
play the Palace.

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# Burma bound

Photographer William Jans shares  
photos, stories of his travels through  
Burma and Vietnam



BY MELISSA FRYER  
THE NEWS BULLETIN

William Jans would have been happy with a bowl of Cheerios.

Instead, he was offered the honour of an elder during a visit to an African village – goat spinal cord.

“It’s awful,” Jans said. “[But] it was quite a kind offer.”

Eating goat spinal cord is just one of many surprises Jans encountered during his frequent travels around the world, his latest to Africa.

But it’s his trip to Burma that he’ll share during a presentation of photos and videos at the Malaspina University-

College Theatre Oct. 5.

Upon hearing his stories of the perilous travel in south Asian countries, people might think Jans would just like to forget his misadventures, but for Jans, that’s the fun of travelling.

“I have a plan but it never usually works, which makes it amusing,” Jans said.

His travels took him through Burma by way of Vietnam and Cambodia.

Some of the travel was by train, but not anything like the “human way to travel” touted by Canada’s transportation companies. Returning from northern Vietnam, Jans found himself among 175 people squished into a rail car designed for 69.

To gain some breathing room, Jans laid on the car floor, with food and ash falling from the passengers above. When he got up at his stop, he saw two large centipedes scurry away.

“It was hell on wheels,” Jans said.

But the hardships often make for the best stories. So do cultural differences.

It’s a common sight to see a sofa – and sometimes more than one – carried on a bicycle. Traffic in Vietnam is a nightmare but Jans rarely saw a road rage incident of the level common in North America. He once left a taxi driver waiting for more than 45 minutes while he ate breakfast in his hotel. Jans didn’t know the driver was waiting and apologized profusely, eliciting little more than bewil-

derment from the driver.

“There was nothing to apologize for,” Jans said.

It’s the interactions with people that Jans enjoys most. He could travel to Egypt and see the pyramids, but he’d much rather talk to the people.

During his Burma trip, he tried to ask a waitress for his food “without onions” – and inadvertently called her a prostitute.

“She pretended she was really offended,” Jans said.

During a trip to Mount Everest, he complimented a local for his grasp of the English language. Bashful, the man tried to say Jans was flattering him but mistakenly used another F-word – fondle.

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