California Universities Building Amistad
THE UC-CUBA INITIATIVE
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An exhibit in the
UC Irvine Langson Library
Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery

November 2007 - May 2008

Curated by

Philip MacLeod
Research Librarian for
Spanish & Portuguese
and Latin American Studies
Welcome to the UCI Libraries’ fall 2007 exhibit, *California Universities Building Amistad: The UC-Cuba Initiative*. With this exhibit we celebrate the inauguration of a new multi-campus research program established by the University of California in 2006 to “bring together interested academics from all campuses to coordinate and develop UC-Cuba related academic activities.”

One of the project’s initial objectives is to gain visibility throughout the University via library exhibits on each of the ten campuses. The curator of the exhibit, Philip MacLeod, our Research Librarian for Spanish & Portuguese and Latin American Studies, has created an exceptional exhibit that sets the standard for the quality of the UCI Libraries’ participation in this important new collaboration.

I hope that *California Universities Building Amistad* enhances your knowledge of the rich history and culture of Cuba, the complexity of its relationship with our own nation, and the important scholarly research being conducted throughout the University.

On behalf of both the Partners of the UCI Libraries and the entire library staff, welcome to this exhibit, and please return to view others in the future.

Gerald J. Munoff
University Librarian
The UC-Cuba Initiative is a multi-campus research unit established in 2006 that seeks to “bring together interested academics from all campuses to coordinate and develop UC-Cuba related academic activities.” Its initial objectives include intra-campus lecture tours by UC faculty and distinguished national scholars, a major biennial national UC Cuban conference, student workshops on Cuban topics, awards for Cuba-related research and travel, and aid to the UC libraries in developing strong Cuban research collections. This exhibit celebrates the inauguration of the UC-Cuba Initiative. UCI’s exhibit will be followed by exhibits at other UC campus libraries.

UCI faculty from several academic programs have played a leading role in establishing the Initiative: Nohema Fernández, Raul Fernández (Head of UC-Cuba), Lisa García-Bedolla, Ivette Hemández-Torres, Ken Janda, Rodrigo Lazo, Rubén G. Rumbaut, Armin Schwegler, Caesar Sereseres, and Steve Topik. Publications by some of them are featured in the exhibit.

Within the context of the Western Hemisphere, Cuba’s history is unusual. The island was a Spanish colony from 1493 until 1900, well after other Latin American nations had achieved their independence. Slavery remained legal until 1886, long after most nations had abolished the heinous trade. Cuba became one of the world’s major sugar producers and is internationally renowned for the quality of its cigars. Geographic proximity to the United States has shaped Cuba’s destiny. In 1848 the U.S. unsuccessfully tried to purchase Cuba from Spain for $100 million. The sinking of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor in 1898 led to war with Spain and U.S. occupation of the island.

Until the 1959 Revolution, the United States was the dominant economic power in Cuba; after 1959, Cuba allied itself closely with the Soviet Union. This led to U.S. imposition of an economic embargo on Cuba that continues today.
In 1962, during John F. Kennedy’s presidency, the world came to the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Revolution ultimately created a mass exodus of people seeking to escape the government's communist policies, and many have settled in the U.S. as political refugees.

It is within the context of this highly strained relationship that academic research in and about Cuba takes place in the United States.

This exhibit showcases the UCI Libraries’ diverse resources that support research on Cuba and highlights our faculty's research interests. It is in eight sections: pre- and post-Revolutionary Cuba, U.S.-Cuba relations, social sciences, visual arts, performing arts, literature, and artists’ books.

Materials in the exhibit are drawn from both the general collection and Special Collections and Archives of the UCI Libraries. *California Universities Building Amistad* was curated by Philip MacLeod, Research Librarian for Spanish & Portuguese and Latin American Studies.
Pre-Revolutionary Cuba

Cuba was a Spanish colony from its settlement in 1511 until 1900. Havana’s colonial city center and the El Moro fortress stand as tangible legacies of Spanish rule. The island fought an unsuccessful ten-year war (1868-1878) to gain its independence, and the brutal trade in African slavery remained legal until 1886. Freedom from Spain finally came with the military intervention of the United States in 1900. For the next 60 years the U.S. remained a dominant political and economic force on the island. In 1953 Fidel Castro and a group of supporters launched an unsuccessful attack on the Moncada military barracks in Santiago. Castro was tried and delivered his famous “History Will Absolve Me” speech in his own defense. Later freed from prison, Castro launched a revolt that would bring down the dictatorship of Fulgencio Bautista in 1959.

Materials in this case include a history of the Spanish-American War published in 1899, two 19th-century travel accounts, and an edition of “History Will Absolve Me.” A book written about Cuban writers exiled to the U.S. during the mid-19th-century is by Rodrigo Lazo of the Department of English.

1. Fidel Castro.  
_History Will Absolve Me: Fidel Castro’s Self Defense Speech Before the Court in Santiago de Cuba on October 16, 1953._ Havana, Cuba: Comisión de Orientación Revolucionaria de la Dirección Nacional del PURSC, 1960s.

   English translation of the famous speech Castro delivered at his 1953 trial for launching an attack on the Moncada Barracks against the government of Fulgencio Batista.

2. Sam Dlugin.  

   A pamphlet documenting the excesses of the “Mendieta-Batista government” of Cuba, published by a United States labor organization.
*Gan-Eden, or, Pictures of Cuba.* Boston: J.P. Jewett, 1854.  
An example of the genre of travel literature dealing with mid-19th century Cuba, based on the personal observations of the author. The volume provides particularly good descriptions of Havana and Cuban agriculture.


A map of the island of Cuba published in an official history of the Spanish American War.

5. Robert Francis Jameson.  
*Letters From the Havana, During the Year 1820; Containing an Account of the Present State of the Island of Cuba, and Observations on the Slave Trade.* London: Printed for J. Miller, 1821.

A second example of travel literature about Cuba, providing interesting insights on slavery. On display is a map showing routes between the cities of Havana and Matanzas.

6. Rodrigo Lazo.  

A recent book written by a UCI English Professor on Cuban writers living in the United States during the mid-19th-century.
Post-Revolutionary Cuba

After 1959 Cuba became an enduring symbol of the international struggle against imperialism for revolutionaries everywhere. Iconic images of the Cuban Revolution permanently etched into the popular consciousness include Fidel Castro addressing a roaring throng of people in central Havana and the forever-young Che Guevara sporting beard and beret. Castro remains a controversial figure almost fifty years later, inspiring a new generation of leftist leaders. His continuing presence on the world stage has not stopped scholars from considering and re-evaluating the origins and legacy of the Cuban Revolution.

7. *International Week of Solidarity with Viet Nam.*
OSPAAL, ca. 1970s. Poster.

Poster issued by the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa & Latin America commemorating International Week of Solidarity with Vietnam during the Vietnam War:


Booklet of speeches delivered at the 1980 International Labor Day (May Day) celebrations in Havana. The cover shows the crowds gathered for the speeches that day.

*The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered.*

Farber argues that Cuban revolutionary leaders did not just react to United States policy, but were autonomous actors who pursued an independent ideological vision of their island.
10. Ernesto Che Guevara.  

An English translation of a letter to Carlos Quiroga, the editor of *Marcha* (a radical Uruguayan weekly), in which Guevara calls for the need to form a new man within the socialist state.

11. Ernesto Che Guevara.  

An English translation of Guevara’s treatise on the doctrine of guerrilla warfare in which a small group of fighters in the countryside could cause a revolution.

12. Christophe Loviny.  

A pictobiography of Che Guevara. The photos on display show Guevara during the years prior to his revolutionary activities.


An English translation of a song purportedly written by Che Guevara for Fidel Castro. The song, printed on card stock, shows several pictures of Guevara.

*Our Party Reflects Our Country’s Recent History: Report by Commandant Fidel Castro, Closing the Ceremony of Presentation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba; Havana, 3rd October, 1965.*


An English translation of a speech by Fidel Castro. The cover shows him presenting this address.

15. Fidel Castro.

*Es la hora en que todos los países del tercer mundo deben unir sus fuerzas y enfrentar el reto imperialista.* Havana, Cuba: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974.

A speech delivered by Fidel Castro. The title rendered into English would read “This is the Hour That All Third-World Countries Should Join Forces and Face the Imperialist Challenge.”


The UCI Libraries maintains a subscription to the weekly international English language version of official paper of Cuba’s Communist Party. The cover of the issue on display depicts a meeting between Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.
U.S.-Cuba Relations

It has been said that Cuba is “so close to the United States and so far from God.” Fidel Castro’s triumphal entry into Havana in 1959 launched the Cuban Revolution, which immediately drove a bitter wedge between the two nations. Cuba allied itself with the Soviet Union, leading the United States to impose an economic blockade on the island. In 1961 the U.S. supported an unsuccessful invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs in an attempt to remove Fidel Castro from power. In 1962 Cuba allowed Soviet missiles to be stationed on the island, bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war. Fortunately, a peaceful settlement to the Cuban Missile Crisis was reached, but relations between the two countries have remained strained ever since.

The socialistic policies of the Cuban Revolution have produced an exodus of political refugees, many of whom settled in the United States. The Cuban American community is very politically active and has exerted strong influence over U.S. policy towards Cuba and Latin America.

The items on display generally focus on the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Cuban American community. A recent article on U.S.-Cuban relations by Professor of Sociology Ruben Rumbaut is also shown.

17. Fermín Peinado. 

These five essays argue that the Cuban Revolution is both dictatorial and communistic. The book accuses many Americans of trying to whitewash the revolution.

18. Rius.
English translation of a humorous volume of cartoons drawn by the famous Mexican illustrator Rius, presenting the Latin American view of relations between the U.S. government and Cuba.

19. Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.
   
   A bilingual publication (Spanish and English) examining the first seventeen years of the Cuban Revolution.

20. Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, editors.
   
   A collection of historical documents pertaining to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Shown is a copy of President John F. Kennedy’s November 3, 1962 letter to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev on the naval quarantine of Cuba.

   
   An oral history documenting the group of Cuban exiles that formed the invasion force defeated at the Bay of Pigs in 1961.

   
   The Bay of Pigs invasion from the Cuban perspective. The photos show some of the casualties, including airplanes shot down during the invasion.
23. Carlos Lechuga.
   *Cuba and the Missile Crisis.* Translated by Mary Todd.

   An English translation of the story of the Cuban Missile Crisis as told by Cuba’s
   then-Ambassador to the United Nation.


   The photos in this early volume on the history of the Cuban Missile Crisis show
   the presence of Soviet missiles on Cuban soil.


   A history of Cuban immigration to the United States. The table shown illustrates
   by decade the number of Cubans who arrived between 1941 and 2000.


   A study of the Cuban community in the United States that looks at the history
   of immigration, cultural identity, economic circumstance, and politics of Cuban
   Americans.

27. Luis E. Rumbaut and Rubén G. Rumbaut.
   “‘If That Is Heaven, We Would Rather Go to Hell’: Contextualizing
   US-Cuba Relations.” Published in: *Societies Without Borders* vol. 2,
   no. 1 (2007), pages 131-152.

   A recently published article that considers U.S.-Cuban relations, co-authored by a
   UCI Professor of Sociology.
U.S. and Cuban scholars, organizations, and government agencies are interested in a wide variety of socioeconomic issues. A recurring theme is the effect of the Revolution on social groups such as women, the rural peasantry, and gays. That upheaval has brought extraordinary change to the island since 1959, some of it for the better; health care and education are two areas that have witnessed the most significant advances.

The Revolution also brought interest in the 40% of the island’s population that identifies itself as black or mulatto. A new body of literature also has appeared about the Afro-Cuban religions of Santería and Palo Monte, as well as on the African origins of the languages used while celebrating these rituals. Sports also have emerged as an area of research that considers not only Cuban achievements in Olympic sports, but also Cuba’s long love affair with baseball.


Small booklet published in English by the Cuban government on the history of the Cuban peasantry and the changes they experienced as a result of the revolution.


The table shown details some important statistics about Cuban health care before and after the revolution.

An examination of the history of the university in Cuba, concentrating on the effect of the revolution on higher education.

31. Margaret Randall.

A study of the role of women in Cuban society 20 years after the revolution. The photo on display shows women working in a factory.

32. Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

A small booklet published in Canada containing a report made by a visiting “U.S. scientist” on the Cuban health care system.

33. Roberto González Echevarría.

This book is considered the standard history of baseball in Cuba and concentrates on the period prior to revolution. The picture displayed shows Fidel Castro pitching.

34. Ian Lumsden.
   *Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality.* Philadelphia:

A volume dealing with homosexuality in the context of the Cuban revolutionary process.
35. Jesús Fuentes Guerra and Armin Schwegler. 


A study of the African elements of the Palo Monte Mayombe religions that traces them back to Africa. The co-author is a linguist in UCI’s Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese.


An issue of the Center’s March 1972 newsletter devoted to the role of women in the Cuban Revolution.

37. José de Olivares. 

*Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pencil.*


First of a two-volume set providing detailed accounts and photos of Cuba, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. The photos displayed show Cuban sugar cane cultivation in 1899.
Performing Arts

Thoughts of Cuba easily inspire visions of sultry Caribbean nights enhanced by the tropical rhythms of the mambo, cha-cha, salsa, or the music made famous by the Buena Vista Social Club wafting in the background. Cuba’s large population of people of African descent has had a tremendous impact on the island’s music, and Cuban musicians have had a lasting impact on jazz. Cuba also has a highly regarded national ballet company and has produced a number of significant classical musicians.

The items on display represent only some of the performing arts. Included are works on Cuba’s national ballet and the African influence on Cuban music, as well as a Cuban dance manual and the autobiography of Celia Cruz, “the Queen of Salsa.” Also shown are a book by UCI Professor Raul Fernández dealing with many aspects of Cuban music, and a compact disc recording of Cuban piano music performed by Nohema Fernandez, Dean of the School of the Arts.

38. Raul A. Fernández.  
*From Afro-Cuban Rhythms to Latin Jazz.*  

A study by the head of the UC-Cuba Initiative dealing with the relationship of Cuban dance music to other Caribbean music and to Latin Jazz.

39. Don Byrnes and Alice Swanson.  
*A Text Book of Cuban Cha Cha and Mambo: How to Teach and What to Learn.*  
Brooklyn: Byrnes and Swanson, 1959.

A manual offering instruction on how to perform two popular Cuban dances that swept the United States in the 1950s.
40. Nohema Fernández, pianist.  
Sound recording on CD.  
Nineteenth and 20th-century Cuban music performed on the piano by the Dean of UCI’s Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

41. Miguel Cabrera.  
*Orbita del Ballet Nacional de Cuba, 1948-1978*.  
Volume documenting the internationally renowned Ballet Nacional de Cuba.

42. Tony Évora.  
*Orígenes de la música cubana: los amores de las cuerdas y el tambor*.  
The author examines the African origins of Cuban music.

43. Celia Cruz, with Ana Cristina Reymundo.  
The autobiography of the “Queen of Salsa.” The book traces her early career in Havana, her exile, and later years in the United States and abroad.
Cuban art is a notable blend of African, European, and North American traditions. For example, the work of Wifredo Lam, one of modern Cuba’s most famous painters, is noted for its primitivist style and the influence of Afro-Cuban traditions. Other 20th-century Cuban artists also have achieved international fame and have enjoyed gallery openings around the world.

The Cuban Revolution witnessed the development of a vibrant tradition of poster art. As seen in Item 7 in this exhibit, the posters are often rendered in vivid colors. Posters draw public attention to a wide variety of content, from the Revolution to sports and cultural events.

Also of note at UCI is our collection of Cuban videos and DVDs housed in the Multimedia Resources Center in Langson Library.

The items shown feature art by Wifredo Lam, contemporary Afro-Cuban art, modern art, and poster art.


The catalog for a traveling exhibit on the rich tradition of Afro-Cuban prints and drawings since the revolution. Shown here is work by the artist Diana Balboa dealing with the theme of music.


An exceptional volume that discusses and displays the depth and breadth of the poster art that developed after the Cuban Revolution.
46. Holly Block, Editor. 

A work on the thriving world of contemporary Cuban art, showing works in many different mediums. On display is a work entitled “Espacio ocupado por un Rambler” featuring a restored Rambler station wagon as a work of art.

47. Helena Benítez. 
*Wifredo and Helena: My Life with Wifredo Lam, 1939-1950.*
Lausanne, Switzerland: Acatos, 1999.

A book by the wife of the noted Cuban painter Wifredo Lam. Shown here is one of Lam’s most famous works, “The Jungle,” painted in 1943.
Literature

Cuba boasts a long and proud literary tradition. This island of eleven million people has produced a number of internationally noted writers that is in disproportion to its small population. Indicative of this is the fact that three Cubans have won the Miguel de Cervantes Prize, a literary honor awarded annually by the Ministry of Culture of Spain to a Spanish-language writer in recognition of a lifetime body of work. Its prestige is such that the Prize is sometimes called the “Nobel Prize” for Spanish literature. Writers from Argentina and Mexico, much more populous nations, also have won the Cervantes Prize three times.

The UCI Libraries maintain a robust collection of Cuban literature in support of the teaching and research missions of the Spanish & Portuguese and Comparative Literature departments. Genres include drama, poetry, prose, fiction, short stories, and literary criticism. The works on exhibit are by some of Cuba’s most famous authors: Alejo Carpentier, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, José Martí, Reinaldo Arenas, and Nicolás Guillén. Also featured is a book by Professor Emeritus Seymour Menton on the fiction of the Cuban Revolution.

48. Reinaldo Arenas.  
A volume of poetry written by the famous exiled author of* Before Night Falls.*

49. Alejo Carpentier.  
The most famous novel by the first Cuban author to win the Cervantes Prize.

50. Seymour Menton.  
A Spanish translation of *Prose Fiction of the Cuban Revolution,* written by the founding chair of UCI’s Department of Spanish & Portuguese.
51. Nicolás Guillén.
   **Cuba libre.** Translated by Langston Hughes and Ben Frederic Carruthers.

   English translation of a poem by the noted Afro-Cuban poet that appeared in
   the author’s first collection, *Motivos de son*.

52. José Martí.
   **Versos sencillos.** Translated by Anne Fountain.

   An English translation of a famous collection of poetry by the most noted leader
   of Cuban independence.

53. Guillermo Cabrera Infante.
   **O.** Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1975.

   Novel by the Cervantes Prize-winning author who is most famous for his book
   the *Three Trapped Tigers (Tres tristes tigres)*.

54. José Martí.
   **Poesía de amor.** Holguín, Cuba: Cuadernos Papiro, ca. 2003.

   Selections from the love poetry of José Martí.
Artists’ Books

Artists’ books often inspire the question “What is a book?” Devising a watertight definition of the term is not feasible, but the purest form of artists’ book would be conceived and produced in toto by the artist, who may compose the text, design the illustrations, devise the sometimes highly innovative format, and execute the physical production. In other cases, the artist plays only some of these roles.

Special Collections and Archives has more than 150 artists’ books from Latin American countries, nearly 100 of which are from Cuba. Most of these are published by Ediciones Vigía, located in Matanzas, east of Havana.

Founded in 1985, Vigía emphasizes the use of “found materials,” such as scrap paper, twine, and cardboard, in the production of its books. The press usually publishes editions of 200 or fewer numbered copies; all copies usually are signed by the artist. Vigía’s books include poetry, short stories, literary criticism, and children’s literature. Some of the books mark the first publication of writings by contemporary Cuban authors, while others contain work previously published by major international figures.

55. Nancy Morejón.  
An example of the unique nature of artists’ books. The book itself is in the form of a tree. The text is a poem written by a well-known Afro-Cuban author and poet.

56. Mabel R. Cuesta.  
The text consists of stories by Mabel Cuesta, with design, drawings, and calligraphy by the artist Rolando Estévez. On the cover is a hand-colored paper sculpture of a bra.

Many Ediciones Vigía books utilize common “found” materials not traditionally associated with the book arts. This book is issued in a muslin sack, shown here. The cover features a collage of burlap, stones, seeds, and paper.
The primary objective of the UC Irvine Libraries Exhibits Program is to support the research and instructional missions of UCI by interpreting and publicizing the richness, diversity, and unique strengths of the resources of the UC Irvine Libraries.

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