

CEIA SUMMER of 2007 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
July 17 & 18, 2007
University of New England Gallery of Art
Précis and Schedule

Cuba: Hearts and Minds Past and Present is an exhibition of historical and contemporary art by Cuban, Cuban-American and American artists about “the island.” On exhibit from May 22 through July 22, 2007 at the Gallery of the University of New England in Portland, Maine, the exhibition incorporates a commentary on the United States and its policies toward Cuba over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The exhibition is an opportunity for reviewing the past and looking forward both through art and the insights of a group of professors who have studied the island. The Cuba exhibition is a unique venue in which to develop a public program that addresses issues of creativity, history and policy. The role of creativity expressed through a variety of media both sets and reflects ideas that have an equally powerful expression in public policy.

Before the Civil War, Cubans sent their children north to preparatory schools in Maine. One of the state’s most successful entrepreneurs, J.B. Brown made his fortune in sugar manufacturing in Cuba, and then proceeded to develop much of Portland, Maine’s real estate market, including Congress Street, the Waterfront and the West End. The lucrative trade was, at best, morally ambiguous, at least by the standards of the 21st century.

It is interesting to raise questions about the received interpretations of the past in light of the present. Not only is it an exercise that opens the way to engagement with additional or marginalized voices from the past, but it also fosters a more rigorous examination of assumptions about the present. Trade in slaves and addictive substances like sugar and rum, which made New Englanders rich, challenged the historical teachings of Christianity against slavery, no less the pious teachings of Protestant sects to which the New Englanders belonged. The historical justification for participation in the three-cornered trade was simultaneously blindness to its inherent evil and a righteous self confidence. Issues of class, race and ethnicity played a part. The transformation of 19th century trade and morality to the late 20th century invasion at the Bay of Pigs deserves careful exploration for their similarities and differences which the exhibit and accompanying programs offer through art as well as scholarship.

The Gallery has a special commitment to women’s art and the history of women artists. With a large representation in the exhibition, the story of women’s roles -- from slave to guerilla warrior and state minister-- provides a visual landscape for the scholarship of the women’s movement from the mid-19th century onward. The largely unfamiliar role of Cuba in the development of the women’s commission of the Organization of American States in the decades between the first and second World Wars, highlights a Cuban-United States coalition of early feminists that led directly to

the incorporation of the human rights commission at the 1945 meeting in San Francisco to establish the United Nations.

We propose to use the occasion of the exhibit to develop a public program that explores the history and culture of Cuba and the United States, and that also raises issues about the future. In a series of educational seminars that will be taped for broadcast on the local Community Access Channel, artists, Cuba and Latin American experts will discuss issues as various as commerce in sugar, rum and slaves over the past 200 years, the Bay of Pigs Invasion, contemporary Cuban Art and what it portends for the future in artistic terms, as well as possible post-Fidel Castro political scenarios. More specifically, we propose to host a two-day series of seminars, open to the public, that will bring together scholars to discuss United States policy toward Cuba – past, present and future -- and to explore the art and music of Cuba and its relationship with contemporary movements in the United States.

We believe this to be an important series. Rarely is the history of Cuba and especially the history of the Cuban women's movement ever introduced to United States audiences as a part of the country's intellectual and artistic life. At this moment when change is happening in both Cuba and the United States, information is key to future policy and creativity is key to future life.

On **Tuesday, July 17**, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.: a series of Films and Documentaries on Cuba. These will include: *I am Cuba* 10 a.m., *Before Night Falls* 12:30 p.m., *Motorcycle Diaries* 2:30 p.m., *Memories of Under Development* 4:30 p.m., *Shadow of Doubt* 6 p.m., *Balseros* 7:30 p.m., *Buena Vista Social Club* 9 p.m. They will address cultural, historical, economic and political themes, and serve as a backdrop to our discussions the following day. Snacks & drinks will be served.

Wednesday, July 18:

10 a.m. **David Carey**, Professor of History, University of Southern Maine, will explore the commercial, social and political ties between Cuba and Maine during the nineteenth century, with a particular emphasis on Portland.

11 a.m. **Marjorie Lightman**, Senior Fellow, Women's Education and Research Institute and a partner in QED Associates LLC, will address the role of women in Cuba's history, including the little known leadership roles played by Cuban women in the inter-war period at the formative meetings of the OAS in Havana that led to important Pan American treaties. Dr. Lightman will focus on the evolution of the 21st century human rights agenda from the work of the early feminists and the institutionalization, through late 20th century law and international conventions, of these rights for women.

12:30 p.m. Luncheon

1:30 p.m. **Allen Wells**, Professor of History, Bowdoin College, will give a talk on "Cuba's Favorite Pastimes: Baseball and Politics." He will show how Cuban leaders from Gerardo Machado in the 1920s through Batista to Fidel have attempted to use baseball to bolster their legitimacy.

2:30 p.m. **Dick Cluster**, co-author (with Rafael Hernández) of *History of Havana*, translator of Cuban fiction, and Associate Director of the Honors Program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, will discuss the five centuries of the Cuban capital including its role in the invention of Cuban culture, its attractiveness to foreign powers and tourists, and its images and challenges today.

3:30 – 5 p.m. A Roundtable discussion on Cuba post-Castro Scenarios. **Anne B. Zill**, Director of the University of New England Gallery of Art will serve as Moderator.

5 – 6:30 Wine and cheese Reception featuring contemporary Cuban music and several of the artists featured in the exhibition.

Both days will be open to the public free of charge. The Gallery and the University will use its public relations venues to spread word of the events.