

# lahabana

magazine



## CUBAN MILLENNIALS issue

SEP | 2016

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Welcome to the September Millennial issue of La Habana magazine.

Much has been said and written about the Millennial Generation or Generation Y by both supporters and faultfinders. They say that they are versatile, multifaceted, quick, open-minded, go-getters, but that they lack patience and are self-centered, focusing on their careers and seeking self-happiness, which is why they are also nicknamed the “me generation.” But however critics or backers may wish to label this generation, the truth is that they are collaborative, achievers, entrepreneurs and responsible. They search for and find solutions. They are not pessimistic. They live in a digital world making them more global-minded.

And how does all this fit into Cuban Millennials? From musicians to restaurant owners, from designers to app designers, today’s young Habaneros, the Millennial Generation, are changing the face of the city. There’s a new vibe and energy across Cuba, especially in Havana. There’s no denying: this is an exciting time for Cuba and the Millennial Generation is at the top of it all and dead-set on making their mark in the world.

In this month’s issue you will find a selection of articles about this generation in Cuba. Our thanks to Jauretsi for her contribution on how Millennials on our Island differ from this generation in the US. Other articles focus on different Cuban Millennials—musicians, designers, entrepreneurs...

September 8 is the feast day of Our Lady of Charity—the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre. Religious or not, the procession that takes place every year in the working-class neighborhood of Centro Habana and ends in Nuestra Señora de la Caridad Parrish is not to miss.

Entertainment-wise, there’s a wide selection of music events this month: Habanarte (September 8-18), which involves the participation of artists of all kinds in venues across the city, the Festival of Countertenors of the World (September 30-October 9), and the Baroque September Concert Season (September 2-30).

We especially wish to recommend Rubens y Amberes en blanco y negro (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Edificio de Arte Universal, Sept 1-15), an exhibition of 13 engravings by Flemish and Dutch masters who worked at Ruben’s studio alongside the Master himself.

Pokémon Go has also arrived in Havana. Read all about it in the pieces “Pokémon GO: Running through Havana, skipping from hotspot to hotspot” and “Pokémon Fever.”

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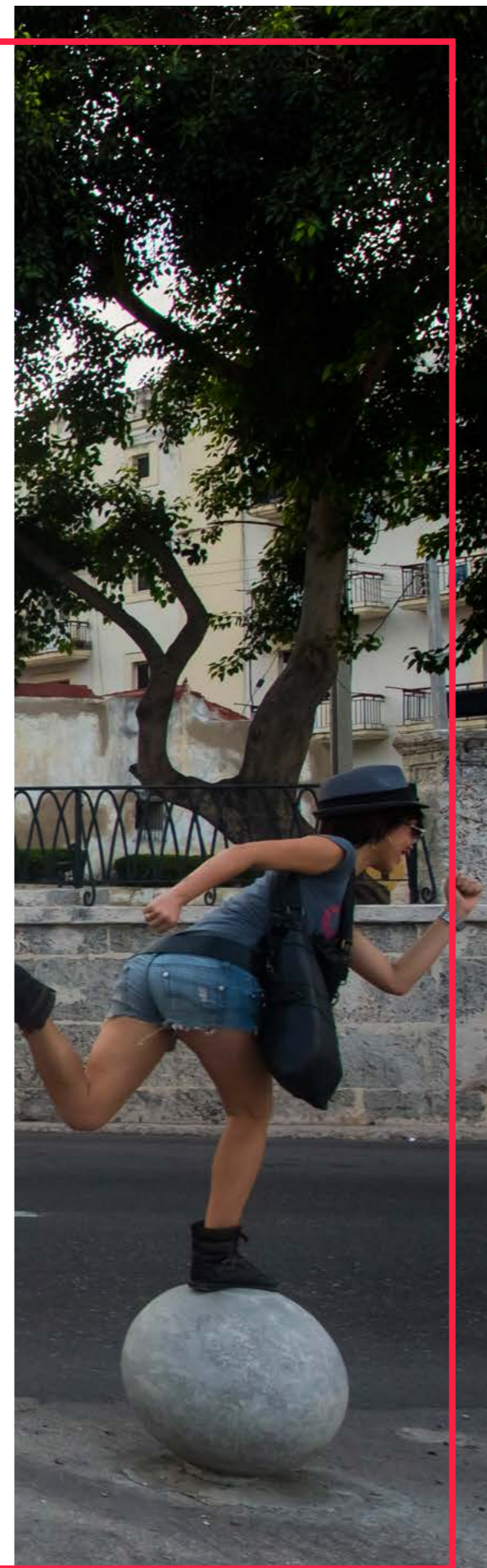
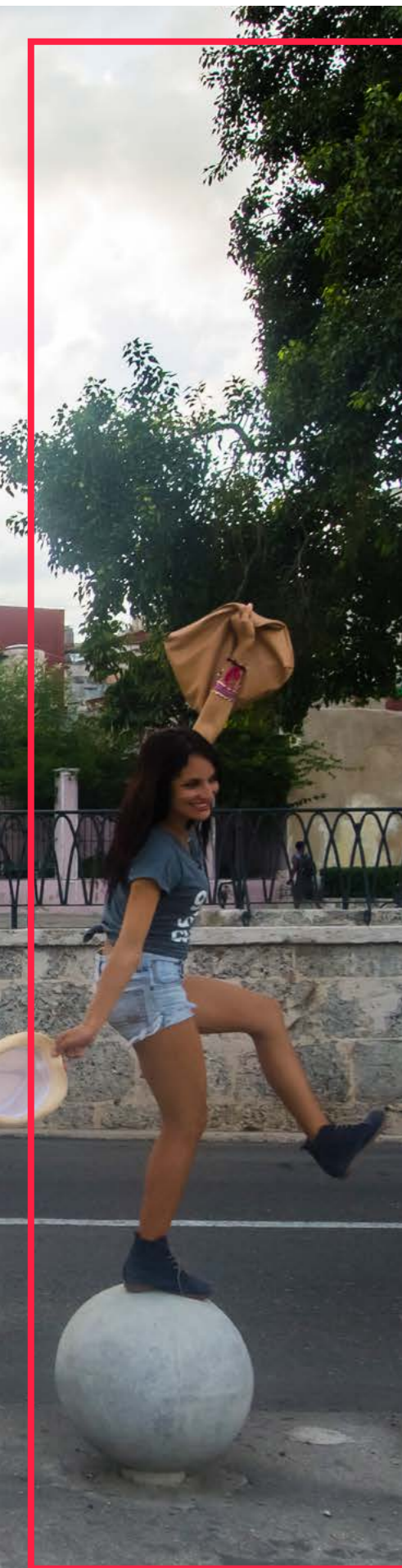
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# BEING A MILLENNIAL IS A STATE OF MIND

photos **Alex Mene**



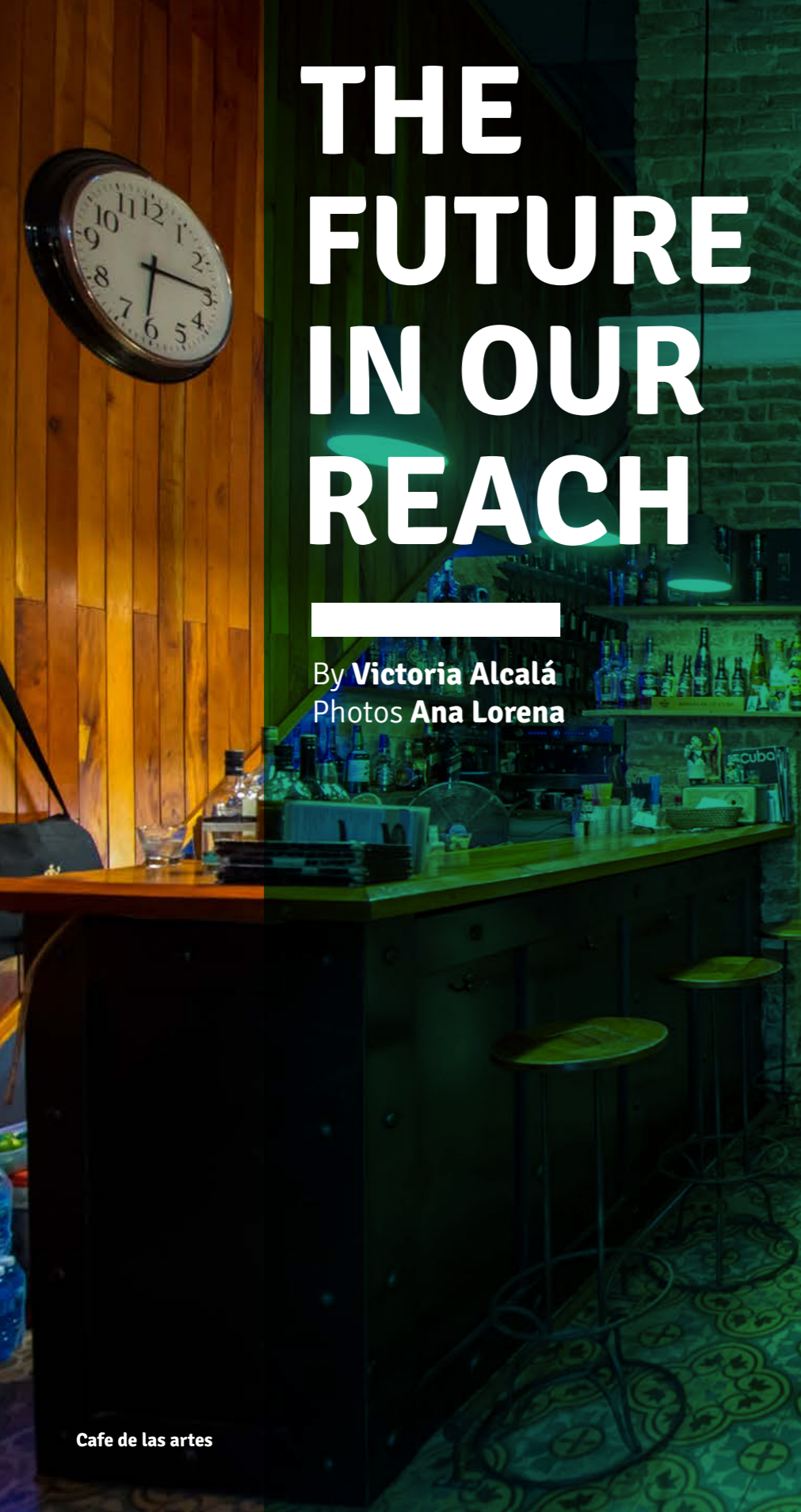
Millennials, also called Generation Y or Generation Peter Pan, are people who were born between 1980 and 2000. For anthropologists who spend their lives studying parental relationships, this is the generation that follows Generation X and the Baby Boomers who were raised in the time slot between wars and economic instability.

But if we could eliminate the harmful process of putting labels on things, we would see that being a Millennial is not a generational thing, it's a state of mind that leads to a number of behaviors and habits that are not necessarily linked with the year of your birth. Millennial is an attitude, and it doesn't matter what year you were born in.

The following are some of the characteristics shared by the Millennial Generation at the workplace:

- **Persons who combine the verbs “to collaborate” and “to share”** undertaking relationships based on the “win-win” concept.
- **Professionals concerned with their continuous improvement** who are aware that today's knowledge may not be enough tomorrow.
- **Persons who are non-conformists, rebels with a cause**, who question what has been pre-established in order to improve it.
- **Persons having open minds** who incorporate new ideas and embrace divergence.
- **Professionals needing constant and immediate feedback** because they know this will allow them to improve their day-to-day work.
- **Persons who are constantly seeking new challenges** and find the greatest motivation in such challenges.
- **Professionals who are go-getters**, taking on the risks involved in swimming against the current.
- **Persons who are versatile, multi-career individuals** because monotony limits their creative capacities.
- **Persons who include technology** so that they can attain the necessary knowledge to grow, professionally and as people.
- **Persons who need freedom and mobility** (both technological and mental) in order to be productive and efficient.

All these traits can easily be applied to Cuban Millennials. From musicians to restaurant owners, from designers to app designers, today's young habaneros, the Millennial Generation, are changing the face of the city. There's a new vibe and energy across Cuba, especially in Havana. There's no denying: this is an exciting time for Cuba and Millennial Generation is at the top of it all.



# THE FUTURE IN OUR REACH

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By **Victoria Alcalá**  
Photos **Ana Lorena**

Cafe de las artes

By **Victoria Alcalá**  
Photos **Ana Lorena**

## Cafe de las artes



Barack Obama's visit to Cuba made the word "entrepreneur" fashionable, especially when referring to the young, although restricting the meaning to the private sector of our economy. The Real Academia Española defines the adjective as "someone resolutely taking difficult or hazardous action." Merriam-Webster's Dictionary is on the same track with its definition that says: "One who organizes, manages and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise." And so all those young people who are working in the state sector are eliminated from this definition; they have been undaunted by the difficulties inherent in their trades and professions, which have been hurt by the difficult economic conditions in which they operate: scientists, technologists, sportsmen and women, peasants, artists, teachers...

But without a doubt, the opening up of the Cuban economy in recent years towards the private and cooperative sector is a brand new phenomenon. It has attracted a lot of attention and its share of controversy both inside and outside of Cuba. And just like the Millennials who are always ready to experiment, they have decided to take this giant step into the Great Unknown. It is said that they represent 30% of self-employed workers and they have been receiving a lot of attention, and not just from the smiling Mr. Obama.





Bohemia Red Hostal

What is motivating the youth to abandon the comfort of a steady salary (generally insufficient, but sure) and fling themselves into projects for which, at least apparently, they are ill-prepared? Some would immediately reply money. It is the best way to improve your economic situation, of not depending forever on parents who are often working day and night to provide the minimum comforts. But I think there are other necessities such as proving something to themselves completely on their own, to work at something they really like and not just where they have been placed and, of course, the eternal and not always attained illusion of “triumphing.”

A number of obstacles get put in their way: their inexperience and that of the country in not knowing how to run these types of businesses, the restrictions and undefined details that end up putting many plans into a sort of legal limbo, the lack of initial capital.... But they do have the advantages of a high level of education, the economic help of relatives in Cuba and abroad and, sometimes, of the social, intellectual or political capital of their parents—all this may open some doors.

But we are already talking about successful young people who own or run top-quality restaurants like El Cocinero or Le Chansonnier, rental apartments such as Doña Isis, Hostal Bohemia or Casa Vitrales, real estate agencies like Zafiro or Cuba Inmobiliaria, publicity agencies such as ETRES, gyms, beauty salons, spas, photographic studios, design groups, offset printing workshops, audiovisual producers, art galleries, construction and





restoration companies, and many more. They are also in charge of organizing parties and events. They are chefs, masseurs and masseuses, curators, architects, fashion designers. They have started up businesses that would have been unthinkable five years ago such as La Marca where not only can you get a tattoo in the safest, most hygienic conditions but you can also see exhibitions and performances related to the skin arts.

And of course businesses are being set up in the field of computers and digital media. AlaMesa is the Cuban restaurant directory, which has become a respected platform for publicity and promotions; Isladentro is now known as the Cuban “Yelp,” a cell phone app that allows you to use your phone in Cuba without connecting to the Internet and which also gives you a sort of directory of private businesses, museums, banks and hospitals as well as other places of interest; sites such as the pioneer Revolico or the more recent Bachecubano carry classified ads; digital magazines Vistar dedicated to show business, Garbos connecting you to fashion and others like D’Gustando on the culinary arts are all conceived, written and designed by recent computer science graduates and students, just like websites like Cachivache Media or El Toque. And of course there are all the Cell Phone Clinics which will repair any device and are managed by people under the age of thirty.

It is interesting and comforting to know that many of these young people aren’t limiting themselves to reaping personal success—they also aspire to transmit their experiences to their contemporaries and they show a marked social consciousness that extends to their surroundings. For example, we have seen the cases of the Callejón de los Peluqueros and the La Moneda Cubana. Both have been involving hundreds of youngsters who are school and work drop-outs in a school-workshop, the former teaching hairdressing and the latter foodservices under the auspices of the Cuban Culinary Association, the Office of the Historian of the City and several private restaurants, all headed by La Moneda Cubana, hence



its name. Others commit themselves with a passion to non-lucrative projects such as Palomas, Escaramujo, Manglar Vivo or Barrio Habana, dedicated to transforming human beings and their natural and social milieu.

Although they are not too visible at the political level yet (I don't know whether it's because they are not interested in being promoted or because nobody is interested in promoting them), it would not be a bad idea to see them injecting some youthful audacity and impatience to the government "engines" of science, medicine, the economy, sports and the arts, in agriculture and industry, as well as in the broadening spectrum of private sector companies. Our Millennials are gradually, almost silently, imposing their style and their rhythm, certain that the future is within their reach and that it belongs to them.

# The Anatomy of a Millennial

by **Jauretsi**



photos by Alex Mene & Ana Lorena



What exactly is a Millennial? And why have they become so influential? To understand the mindset of this demographic, one must understand the social, political, and cultural climate they were born in. For starters, it is agreed that a Millennial is anyone officially born in the early 1980s through the early 2000s as the final birth years (the dawn of the Millennium, thus the title). I was born in the United States and I personally witnessed how a young generation matured at lightning speed while standing on a downtown street corner in Manhattan on the morning of September 11, 2001. It was the year of the terrorist attacks of 9-11, one of the most shocking events to happen in the US. It was marked by a sharp sense of trauma tinged with enlightenment. On that fateful day, some young Americans seemed to have slipped out of a coma from their everyday lives. Suddenly, the great world power was vulnerable. This birthed a new sense of curiosity and activism. Some would say the historical event is what “awoke the sleeping giant.” Young people began engaging with politics, studying the news more, and seeking to understand the Middle East conflicts and the role of the US government in this whole chess game. As we headed to war, it was not good enough that our US President called the other side “evil” and America “good.” Something didn’t make sense and we didn’t trust our leaders anymore, and so millions of young people got activated politically. It is because of this that some folks have nicknamed the Millennials “Generation 9-11”. For the first time in decades, a massive demographic was mobilized to self educate themselves very fast, and begin engaging with their government, both on a local level and national level. These traits apply to more than Americans. For some, Generation 9-11 is without borders. There are other global youth cultures of the same age group who were equally affected by the attacks, the Iraq war, and terrorism.

It helps that Millennials are now considered the biggest demographic in the US, totaling 83 million people in the United States. It was because of this group’s voting power that the US ushered in its first black president, Mr. Barack Obama. How did he do it? Obama was considered the first Digital President because he ran a smart campaign, full of clever social media language, hired young staffers who made politics approachable, and used digital strategy to speak to his new young voters in a way that had never been done before. The results were a success. Obama has remained the candidate for progressive minds and won a second term as US President, eventually announcing normalization talks with Raul Castro and opening the doors for reconciliation. Clearly, this age group has power.

Nicknamed the “Digital Natives,” the Millennials are the first generation to grow up not only with a computer in their homes, but the younger ones have grown

up with a computer in their hands. If their parents (referred to as “Generation X”) were raised with 25 television channels, the Millennials have always seen 250 TV channels, plus infinite programming on Netflix, Amazon, Hulu and Apple. Grandpa and grandma (known as the “Baby Boom generation”) probably still have a hard time operating a microwave oven, while the youngest Millennials mastered an iPad at 10 years old. The advent of social media sites have also brought the world closer and tighter, therefore the xenophobia of their grandparents generation has vaporized into thin air. Suddenly, the mystery of our neighboring countries now have a face, thoughts, pets, actions, tastes, and cool music. It is these familiar faces we stare at through our Facebook screens in our laptops at home, be it in Cuba or the United States. It is easy to hate faceless people thousands of miles away, but impossible to deny our everyday familiarity once we have socialized online. It is said that the Millennials are less patriotic and more globally minded, and sometimes referred to as the “Global Generation.” Because of social media, it is most likely the first generation to view the world as a smaller place, and thus feel the obligation of making the world a better place. Building a sense of community is a passionate goal for this demographic. It is quite possibly the reason they are also more culturally diverse, a mix of many races and ethnicities. It is this demographic that has also defended the rights of same-sex marriages, racial equality, and even transgender rights. For the modern Millennials, it is a human right to enjoy life in your own skin, no matter what race, creed, or sexual orientation one may have. Come as you are. You will be embraced.



So where does the “Cuban Millennial” fit into this equation? If American youth are seen as “Digital Natives,” then Cuban youth could be seen as “Digital Tourists” with frequent visits to the world wide web, versus the American who is connected 24/7 around the clock. We have only seen the tip of the iceberg with Cuban Millennials. As Barack Obama pointed out in his visit to Cuba, when young minds have access to the Internet, they can change the world. Then he referenced Brian Chesky, a young man who came up with an idea out of his apartment online. His company, AirBnb is now worth 30 billion dollars. In addition to building a successful company, Brian left the world a better place, making world travel a bit less intimidating, and a bit more of an affordable, beautiful experience for his customer. The term “conscious capitalist” is aspired to by this generation

with young CEO's in Silicon Valley having built-in philanthropic models within their successful operations. Once again, the Millennial mind will not rest until they feel instrumental in making the world a better place. If Kurt Cobain (of Nirvana) was a representative of Generation X, then Mark Zuckerberg (of Facebook) is a representative of Millennials. Both changed the world. While Kurt inspired a legion of fans to question authority and drop out of institutions, Mark Zuckerberg instead put his middle finger to the establishment by being constructive and building his own empire. It is a generation of not just questioning authority with a punk rock slant, but instead, finding solutions, be it for communication, or environmental issues, or world problems. There is an absence of pessimism that Generation X held onto. Somehow, from one generation to the next, the angst was replaced with optimism, even in the face of impending doom, such as global warming. Millennials keep it positive.

The Cuban Millennials have less technology, but they are sharper with their devices compared to the average American user (including myself). I tend to live in an automated world of iCloud settings, automatic downloads, and pre-determined settings in my world of Apple products. Cuban Millennials, however, are different and savvier with the little they have. One by one, I have noticed Cell Clinics opening up on every block in Cuba. These newly trained staffers know more about your phone than you do. In an instant, they can transfer all your numbers from one phone





to another. They can unblock your phone, jailbreak your phone, and offer up underground applications to make your existence in Cuba a better place. Capitalism allows for the customer to be accommodated at all times, which requires no extra thinking. Some US smartphones, for example, are programmed to switch to WiFi automatically when there is a WiFi signal in the room, and switch out of your phone plan to save you money. In Cuba, the landscape is opposite. Because the inconvenience of being online is so grand, it has consequently turned the Cuban Millennial into a thrifty scavenger, hawking WiFi signals as meticulously as possible. The challenges turns an everyday Cuban into a hacker of sorts, with knowledge of how to steal signals, locate black-market WiFi, increase broadband, know which towers to stand beside at which specific hour of the day in order to receive the best signal. If you can't figure it out, then your cell clinic friend can help you. A Cuban Millennial knows exactly how many Megabytes of information is uploading and downloading into their computer. Me? As an American, I can be pushing gigabytes in and out of my computer, and I wouldn't even know it. It is precisely this hyper-awareness of technology that I believe will make the Cuban excel in the digital industry once resources become more available. Once the leash is removed, watch out world! We expect the Cuban Millennials to make some great strides in the realms of technology.

In terms of social media, the American Millennial juggles multiple sites—Pinterest, Snapchat, Vine, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and more. The Cuban Millennial is a simple social creature online, mostly opting for Facebook only, for personal or business. When you have such few hours a day online, it is best to keep your social game tight (however I have noticed a rising trend in Cuban Instagrams within the last year). It is important to note that all the social media tools are not necessarily a blessing. Like a powerful weapon, it is necessary to know how to wield the sword for good or bad. On the one side, this has made us all a more globally connected community. On the other hand, too much internet and self-absorption can create a bloated case of narcissism. With the rise of Selfies in the past few years, it looks like the Millennials may have won the prize with most self-obsessed generation—I am speaking of both US and Cuban selfies. Sadly, the Millennials love seeing their own faces (and bodies) more than any other generation. Yes. There is a dark side to this overabundance of self-imagery.

Another double-edged sword is the sense of entitlement that a global Millennial could develop in a world of instant answers, 24 hour customer service, and 1 hour delivery services from the web. Millennials want it fast and they want it now. Look at Instagram launched in 2010. With a few taps on your phone screen, you can follow any world event happening live through the use of hashtags. Who needs newspapers when you can comb through your Instagram feed for immediate images? Millennial Co-founder Kevin Systrom earned \$1 billion dollars when Facebook bought Instagram in 2012. This has created thousands of new App entrepreneurs looking for the same payoff in the same short amount of time. It is a restless generation that has little understanding for patience and waiting, yet at the same time, the world's best inventions have been created by this age group.

The buying power is unparalleled. Officially named the largest demographic in the United States, advertisers and marketers are tripping over themselves trying to get this gargantuan market to buy their products. This has added an extra value to the Millennial mind, thereby making their opinion important due to their consumer value. Because they are advertised to 100 times a day (in the train, on their phones, on TV, at the store, on the street, etc) they have developed a better "bullshit radar" for insincere messaging, and consequently, they demand authenticity. Another repercussion to being bombarded with advertising and entertainment is also the fact that American Millennials have very short attention spans (usually shorter than eight seconds). The Cuban attention span is

longer due to less stimuli bombing of advertising and entertainment all day long. Then again, with less TV channels and hectic videogames, comes boredom. I'm not sure which one is worse, but for now, the Cuban Millennial breed is very different than the American breed in terms of holding focus on one particular thought at a time. The Paquete and all its overwhelming content is challenging this notion right now.

Another characteristic specifically assigned to the Millennial is the ability to find their careers a little later in life. It is important to remember the economic seeds of this phenomenon AKA "The Peter Pan" generation (this is not a reference to Cuba's Peter Pan exodus in the 1960s, instead, it is a reference to the mythological figure of a boy who refused to grow up). Due to "The Great Recession" of the 2000s, both American and European Millennials saw a rise of youth unemployment. It is because of this that Millennials grew a distrust of institutions and corporate companies that let them down, jumping from job to job in a chaotic market. For the first time, this meant more young people in the United States were living longer with their parents. Traditionally, American youth moves out of their home at 18 years old to get their own apartment. For the first time, this new generation experienced alarming college bills, impossible loans to pay back, and unattainable health insurance. For the American Millennial, instead of taking a job they didn't like, it became more acceptable to delay marriage and build a "startup" company from your parents' home. For young Cubans, it is not shameful to remain in your family home at 38 years old, supported by your parents. The New York Times, however, points to another trend in Cuban Millennials, which is their newfound delay in having children in order to follow their career dreams. It seems both demographics are focusing career and self-happiness instead of rushing into the institution of marriage or family. This reinforces the other nickname for Millennials—the "me generation."



It is this "me, me, me" approach to life that makes this generation a bit of a conflicted one internally. On the one-hand, it is very civic-minded, and the other, it can border on narcissism—from Brian Chesky to Justin Bieber, it is a mixed bunch. Like any demographic, they will need to soul search and find their best selves in the continuum of generations to leave their footprint. So far, the positive role models have made enormous strides in world history. To continue the theory of the shrinking universe, it has been reported that 46% of American Millennials are looking to visit Cuba (according to Fox Business News). That's almost 40 million US Millennials seeking to merge and befriend the Island's demographic for a bit of a cultural tango. One of the strongest qualities of a Millennial spirit is their nomadic hunger for travel and adventure. What better place for an adventure than Cuba, a place where anything can happen and usually does? Viva the Millennials and the global group hug they all so desire. It's a small [and better] world, after all.

# WHEN THE BOX IS EMPTY

by Andreas Clark

photos by Ana Lorena



Let's say you are 30 years old. OK, 30 something. Or maybe a little less, and you are still navigating in the waters of the twenties. Now sociologists, psychologists and even anthropologists are starting to look at you with their magnifying glass, as if you were some weird insect. They start poking at you with their rubber-fingered gloves, that is, whenever they dare poke at you at all. They attempt the impossible task of trying to classify you because everything you do, every minimum detail of your life, appears to them as if it was a changeable anomaly, something extraordinary or, even worse, something totally unintelligible.

So what is it that interests the scientists so much? It's because you are provocatively acting very near the edge or definitely on the other side of that statistical red line, which they have taken so many years, so many hours, sitting in their exact laboratories to put together.

Fighting anything that is expected, you have been busy stretching the boundaries of anything you can during the short span of your teenage years, in fact you have been even enjoying it. You have also been immersed in taking very lightly that thing everyone else calls "work." If your parents viewed work as "sacred," "a sacrifice" or a sort of altar upon which they should lay down their premature adulthood during long, hard hours every day, then you, in contrast, see work as something that shouldn't tire you out so much. Or at least it should barely tire you out; in fact, you should like doing it. And if you don't like doing it you should abandon it immediately, fluttering away without a second thought: no guilt, no regrets.

And you also leave home to live on your own, or with your partner without even getting married. Marriage doesn't concern you too much, not now.

You feel far removed from the imperious and primordial necessity of starting a family that your parents felt, much like it was the be-all and end-all to everything on this earth. That is just one example of how you find solutions “outside of the box.”

Unsatisfied with all those signs, add the fact that you live surrounded by devices. Your parents managed with hammers and nails, saws and pliers, set squares and their calloused hands; but you want nothing to do with that. You wander around with your ubiquitous laptop slung over your shoulder and your right hand poised on your cell phone that never ceases to call for your attention. And that’s not even mentioning the iPod, Tablet, ear-phones and any other tactile novelty that has appeared as if by magic on the market. For everyone else, you are called by the name of Millennials. And here comes the crunch: do we really have any Cuban Millennials?

It’s complicated: there has to be a different measuring tape for Cubans. How on earth can you leave home on an island where there is a housing shortage? It’s a miracle when Cubans manage to do this. How can you update all the apps for your devices when the Internet is hard to get, and when you get it, it’s slow and also expensive? But it can be done. Yes, it can be done and all you need is the rare quality of being Cuban. We even have all those iPods, Tablets and Macintosh marvels even without having the market that sells them.

I would dare to say more: I have heard of a very Cuban architect who lives in London, surprising her young British colleagues when she opened her laptop and started to work. They were all amazed at her very up-to-date



photo by Ana Lorena



programs because it was all too expensive for them to have something like that. Of course our Cuban hadn't paid a cent for it all. All the stuff had been pirated, gotten on the black market. As devastating as the US blockade on Cuba is, there are some twists and turns and shortcuts to be had. When markets and their laws are so distant, the penalties for violating them are also distant and even impossible.

And that's how it is. The gaping technological breach, as deep and as wide as it is, becomes much smaller when you have the desire and the need to leap over it. Cuban artists, entrepreneurs and young people are a little like hungry dogs: they sniff around as much as they want, wherever they want, going through the back doors, anywhere where others may find it to be too much.

If seeking out solutions "outside of the box" seems to be the common factor linking all Millennials no matter where they are, it is the trademark of Cubans. It is their denomination of origin, their genetic map and the light of their souls.

We all know that Cubans are practically beings from another galaxy, another dimension or another race. It couldn't be any other way because more than half a century of shortages, Cold War (that has really not ended for us), blockade, difficulties and having to invent solutions on a daily basis has not only taught us, it has forced us to live outside of the box.

# THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION IN CUBAN ART

By Ricardo Alberto Pérez





## Das ewige Gesetz

Reinier Leyva Novo

Within the different Cuban artistic media these days, we can talk about the presence of a generation of people made up of those who were born in the 1980s through the early 2000s, the universally identified Millennials, or Generation Y. Other alternative names are being attributed to them, like Generation We, Global Generation, Generation next, Echo Boomers, the Net Generation or Digital Natives.

These Cuban artists are aware that everything they do is placed within the context that was marked by the disappearance of the USSR and Socialist Europe. Therefore, their experience of having to grow up in a Cuba which has had to reorganize itself in the world in order to maintain its social system has indubitably affected their behavior, the nature of their aspirations and the quality of their concepts.

In order to put our finger on this phenomenon, we will start by citing several examples in the visual arts. In Cuba this field has acquired a sort of thermometer for our reality. The names of Mauricio Abad, Reinier Leyva Novo, Mabel Poblet and Grethell Rasúa immediately come to mind as clear examples of what could be called new creative sensibilities capable of overcoming barriers and limitations with great spontaneity and liveness.

In Mauricio Abad's most well-known work, he attempts to legitimize spaces for the community in this new millennium. In some cases he turns to his peers to take part in his projects. Reinier Leyva Novo confronts history free of any prejudices or taboos and minus all solemnity, offering the possibility of a more sincere and attractive relationship with it.



Michel Herrera  
photo by Ana Lorena



Mabel Poblet's charm rests in her associating herself with the capacity to deal with such time-tested topics as emigration and memory, using a new, enriching viewpoint that contributes exciting ideas. Grethell Rasúa is an audacious artist who presents us with pieces that invite viewers to have a more normal relationship with their bodies, especially with the fluids emanating from them.

Looking at the photography being created by this young Cuban generation of artists, we are struck by the radical demystification of subject matter and scenarios, even of their very own bodies that often provide them with subjects. It is a growing obsession to emphasize the transformations becoming visible on the urban scene. Just one example is the work of Rodney Batista (born in Havana in 1988)—he has a unique manner of approaching the complex and ancient subject of death.

When we sift through literature and the theater, we observe that there have been many new authors in both of these fields. Notable cases are those of Rogelio Orizondo in theater and Legna Rodríguez in literature. Orizondo's work shows moving depth as he examines new problems with a gift of being able to universalize conflicts which have previously seemed to be somewhat local. Legna Rodríguez's poetry and narratives deal with sexuality in a totally new way within our literary tradition. Her boldness ends up seeming to be as innocent as it is intense, completely charming her readers.

Within the varied and at times contradictory realm of Cuban music, I am impressed with how young performers have taken the lead in spreading and popularizing a genre such as jazz. It is surprising to see how quickly they grow and become established figures. The list of musical artists is almost endless but we have to mention a few: Jorge Luis Pacheco, Harold López-Nussa, Michel Herrera, Ariel Brínguez, Emir Santa Cruz and Janio Abreu.



Mabel Poblet

In the case of the National Ballet of Cuba, pervaded with extraordinary professionalism and the willingness for sacrifice, dancers are exhibiting their ability to insert themselves into foreign dance companies after some very satisfactory adaptation processes. We can cite the particular cases of Hayna Gutiérrez, Romel Frómeta, Yolanda Correa and Víctor Gilí.

And in the audiovisual world, Cuba's Millennials are already leaving their mark. The subjects broached and the manner in which the problems are approached form the basis of their new esthetic arguments. Without any doubt, Carlos Lechuga is a genuine representative of this group of filmmakers. Despite his youth, he has received numerous awards at international

film festivals. His work is indicative of a cinema which is genuinely renewing in spirit. If there is anything I am absolutely sure of, it's that the forward thrust being given by these young creators is contributing to create and develop new spaces that will give the unceasing dialogue of Cuban culture the opportunity to stay alive and healthy and continue into the future

Michel Herrera y Alejandro Falcón



# COLOSSUS AT DAWN

By **Sebastian Caniveille**  
Photos **Y. del Monte**





Some distance after you cross the Almendares River and just before you leave Playa municipality, in that part of Playa that most people think is Marianao, you can see a series of portraits of children painted on some high walls that belong to nobody in particular. The residents of the area have been impressed by them, and I include myself among them.

These faces of girls and boys seemed to appear overnight. Painted in a monochromatic scheme of black and white, they are gigantic, colossal images occupying space on old walls which have lost their original colors. For a while now these walls have been discolored. Grey on grey: not that old hackneyed white on white which is more aged and decadent than those greying walls.

Pure and simple life, not a single drop of color, no over-the-top shininess...just that. It is pure life that surges from the eyes of those humble children, smiling shyly. It surprises the unsuspecting passers-by and erases the emptiness of those walls. Grey on grey. Grey which, for once, illuminates.

The name of the artist is Maisel López. Born in Havana in 1985 and a graduate of the San Alejandro National Academy of Fine Arts, he has said: "Many things may still be expressed through the representation of a face. The face of every individual bears a specific layout which makes it unique and unrepeatable. I do what I must to be able to capture these individual essences and translate them into art."

When I talked to the residents of the area they gave me the exact indications for where each portrait is located. They tell me that the macabre myth going around that they have been inspired by children who suffered traffic accidents isn't true. In fact, I am given the precise addresses of the children who appear on the walls.

There is one more detail they tell me about, something I wouldn't even have imagined. These portraits have been retouched! From time to time some of them have become damaged; the paint has been scraped off here and there. And then they reappear perfectly new, as if nothing had ever happened to them.

In other words, behind these portraits there is an artist who is like no other. Not only does he paint and propose new works, he also determinedly looks after the task of maintenance, of looking after what has been painted, of sustaining the light with which he gave new life to these walls and to the neighborhood.

In his own words: "These images are a constant reminder of the courage of children involved in building a nation. Cuba is passing through a phase when we are trying to build a better future and children are one of the fundamental pillars holding up the dream we are aiming for."

As I look around at any street or street corner in this city, the gesture (or rather the exploit) of Máisel López, the creator of these portraits, seems to be a cry, an alarm or an urgent call for the beauty that is so lacking in our lives.





LESS IS MORE

text by **Patricia Font**



That was the year the artist exhibited the piece called “Grease, Soap and Banana” in a gallery at the Santa Clara Convent. Once again, only crude reality composed his creation: a banana, a bar of soap and grease spilling out over the floor. Nothing else, except for the comings and goings of the waiters as they carried in the delicious buffet to the numerous guests.

This artist, born in 1978 in Zaza del Medio, Sancti Spíritus Province, has defined himself as a “realist” since he aims to find contents which are already contained in reality. He works with unadulterated reality, thereby avoiding the possibility of some trademark identifying the creations as his own. Perhaps that’s where one of his critics’ weakest arguments come from: the notion that “anyone could have done it.” Of course, they are forgetting something obvious: maybe anyone could have done it, but it was not just anyone, it was simply Wilfredo Prieto.

The bad press his glass of water received dissolves in an instant when, returning to what his detractors have written about him, we realize that nine times out of ten the criticism centered not on the idea or form or concept being formulated by Prieto with that half-filled glass but on the sale price. Reducing Prieto’s concept to just a glass containing water,

When the artist Wilfredo Prieto exhibited his by now unforgettable half full or half empty glass of water in Madrid, he managed to leave fifty percent of his viewers astounded and the other fifty percent thirsty. This happened a bit more than a year ago and it will be talked about for a long time. The reason why it will continue to generate public opinion is that more than a daring or provocative proposition, it was primarily a very simple one, which was as transparent as the glass or the water it contained, elementary like most of his work.

Tagged with a price of 20,000 Euros, it was initially about to be bought by someone who reserved the piece and at the last minute reneged on their enthusiasm. What could have caused that potential buyer to get cold feet about their desire to take home a half-filled glass of water? I guess we shall never know the answer to that question, but at least once, since its conception in 2006, a buyer has been seriously interested in acquiring it.

stripping it of any idea or reflection about it, would be akin to trying to reduce Wifredo Lam's *The Jungle* to mere kraft paper and charcoal.

Prieto belongs to a generation that uses everything, whatever he has close at hand, and that's not much, other than the sudden discovery that the world is a wide, foreign space. A generation born between two centuries and raised in an era where walls were falling and symbols became banalities and who have this viewpoint about everything. Nothing is that important and nothing lasts. Only the here and now counts in a world that is changing at the rate of over twenty-four times per second, and they seem to be doing well with it.

His work—perhaps even in spite of himself—present us with a portrait of such a world and seem to be made to measure. They are like those selfies where the protagonists lose their value, dissolving and becoming nothing in the sight of all the generalized disaster that seeps into the picture.

Neither good nor bad—criteria that are useless when applied to such a phenomenon—it is a sure thing that the marks Prieto is leaving in his wake will remain there, bearing witness to an era and a lifestyle where a glass half-filled with water can cost 20,000 Euros, although nobody has bought it.



Photos **Ana Lorena**

# X ALFONSO

## A MILLENNIAL AT HEART

By **Margaret Atkins**  
Photos **Alex Mene**

*Although X Alfonso was born nine years before the usual beginning birth year—1981—for the Millennial Generation, he is a Millennial at heart: nonconformist, collaborator, sharer, go-getter, multi-tasker, multifaceted, inclusive, unbiased, doer.*



For X Alfonso, art is as natural as life itself. He was born in Havana on September 13, 1972 into a family founded by Carlos Alfonso and Ele Valdes, the creators and leaders of the legendary band Síntesis. Between the influences of the family environment and his own talent, X Alfonso's life has always revolved around creative processes. His first musical foundations were laid at the Manuel Saumell Conservatory and he then went on to study at ENA, the national arts school, where he trained as a classical pianist. At the school he also had the opportunity to work with students in other specialties such as the visual arts, dance and theater thereby forming his idea that music and art should interrelate as one art form, something that would mark his future work. Right from his student days he was composing music for exhibitions, graduation ceremonies and plays.

He graduated from ENA in 1990 and his first professional job was with his parents' band. He also was a member of the rock band Havana with Iván Latour and Osamu Menéndez, extremely popular with young people at that time. The economic difficulties of the 90s were also a deciding factor on the artist's trajectory: from that point he worked with the belief that one should do everything possible with what was at hand instead of complaining about shortages.

He and his father Carlos Alfonso composed the score for the Sergio Giral film Maria Antonia, which in 2000 won the Coral Award for the Best Soundtrack at the New Latin American Film Festival. His success as composer for film scores continued into 2001 when along with Esteban Puebla and his father Carlos, he composed the soundtrack for Humberto Solas' Miel para Ochún; he also received the Goya Award in 2005 for Best Original Music for the Habana Blues soundtrack.

X is a bass player, arranger, singer and musical producer. He collaborates with musicians such as Santiago Feliú, Amaury Pérez, Carlos Varela, Roberto Carcassés, Cecilia Noel, Montell Jordan, Mi Shell Nge O'Cello, Asian Dub Foundation, and others.





In November 1999 he recorded his first solo album entitled *Mundo Real* with Brazilian Velas Records, writing and arranging all the numbers. This album was followed by others that have been characterized for their variety in terms of genres and musical styles. “I record whatever comes out of me. Sometimes it is symphonic, other times it is more fusion; there is rock’n’roll and sometimes it is more techno,” he tells us. “One day, in Spain, I started to listen to a recording of Beny Moré’s greatest hits. I learned all the numbers and then I started “crazying them up.” What was bound to happen happened. But you can’t imagine everything that went on before that,” he tells us as he talks about *X Moré*, his tribute album to singer Beny Moré.\* When we asked him about his formula for success, X said that in his opinion it is the subject matter of his music that really holds an attraction for people. “Whatever I do has to excite me, so that it can turn on people.”

With *Havana*, X produced his first music video as editor and producer of audio visual material. He has produced videos for *Síntesis*, for his sister M Alfonso, for himself and for other musicians. Along such lines, he made *Sin título*, an Italian-produced documentary which opened at the Mella Theater in Havana with musicians, theater people, dancers and visual artists brought together by X to interact amongst each other and with the audience. The theme of the documentary was to show artists as human beings, beyond their public images. This vision of working on the same event and with the same purpose with artists from different media was the spark that saw the birth of *Fábrica de Arte Cubano* (Cuban Art Factory), a project that was headquartered in the PABEXPO Exhibition Center from mid-2010 and carried on its activities there for almost two years. Known also by its initials “FAC,” the “factory” is a family-run cultural business. According to X, it aims to give Cubans a meeting place where the best of the Island’s avant-garde arts can be enjoyed, with all the artistic manifestations under the same roof and with prices making it accessible to the majority of Cubans.

In 2011, under the FAC label, X released the album *Reverse*, which was offered free of charge to anyone with a flash memory. Since that same year, X had been involved in finding a new physical location for FAC, some place that would truly belong to it and that did not have to depend on others to schedule its artistic calendar. Finally they found the perfect spot in the former El Cocinero cooking oil factory on the corner of 11th and

26th streets in El Vedado. It is there that we find X kindly waiting for us for this interview. He doesn't speak much. I'm surprised to find him rather shy. He talks passionately about FAC and how they have managed to turn it into a project that involves the entire community, bringing together not only professional artists but those who have to become artists every day in order to earn

their living, the self-employed, children and the elderly. Just as we are finishing, he gets a phone call. He has to leave early to pick up one of his daughters. X is also the proud father of two girls, one ten and the other sixteen. So our last glimpse of the singer is of a man running out the door while turning to answer our last question: How do you manage to do so many things all at the same time? "By doing it," he says.



\* Beny Moré (1919-1963). One of the most transcendental Cuban musicians. His huge interpretive range and innate capacity for musical composition places him at the summit of Cuban cultural phenomena. His records continue to be enjoyed and his life is the stuff of legend.



DANAY  
SUAREZ

a Millennial Musician

*Thirty-year-old Danay Suárez Fernández's first performance took place when she was 15, having been invited to join other renowned hip-hop artists in a concert held at the Nacional Theater. That day, self-taught Danay, overwhelmed by the amount of people in the theater, sang with her back to the audience, hoping no one would realize how nervous she was. Nerves got the best of her in her first appearance, but she wasn't about to give up her dream.*

It all began when she was in high-school and a classmate introduced her to hip-hop, rap and reggae. Influenced by that kind of music, after graduating as an IT technician, she began to go to rap concerts. Because it was ideal to express what she wanted to say, as it gave her “freedom of speech and consistency between her words and her attitude,” Danay started rapping ‘by accident,’ as she rhymed about the things that mattered the most to her. Rap also gave her the opportunity to meet, work and share with people who still believe in love and art, including Aldo Rodríguez—one of the most celebrated underground rappers and member of Los Aldeanos—who helped her produce and record her own songs. She also appeared on the documentary Calle Real 70 together with many other underground Cuban hip-hop artists with whom she has also collaborated, like Papá Humbertico, Raudel, Explosión Suprema, Anónimo Consejo, Krudas, Magyorie Epg and El Lápiz. She still fondly remembers their sleepless nights together, rapping, rhyming and improvising, and acknowledges that rap is more like her habitat, her element, where she can be herself.

In 2007, fearless Danay gathered her demos and showed up at the house of Cuban fusion superstar X Alfonso for “he was the only person in Cuba who I thought would understand what I wanted to do” and said to him, “You don't know me, here's my music, listen to it. If you need a backup singer, give me a call.” A few days later she received a call from X and they have been working together ever since.



Under X's wing she met many musicians, did her first tours, experimented with new sounds, improved her technique and became acquainted with the concept of “show,” but most of all, she improved her stage presence, which helped launch her solo career.

Danay, who is still surprised to have shared the stage with renowned artists such as Hernán López Nussa, Omara Portuondo and Roberto Carcassés, has pointed out, “I've never said I'm a rapper,” and defines herself as a regular person who expresses what she's feeling through her songs. But despite her statements, she's been described as being more a rapper than an R&B singer and is considered by many as “the Queen of Latin Rap.” Additionally, her fans have referred to her



as “the representative of conscious female Cuban hip-hop with the most exquisite voice and the most intelligent lyrics,” as well as, “being on a par with the greatest Spanish-speaking urban poets.” However, she feels very passionate about jazz and has made it clear that she’d love to be a jazz singer, “I can rap and sing, but the truth is I wish I was a jazz singer and could develop that style. I haven’t done it because I don’t have the musical skills, but I’ll get there some day. I’ve got it inside of me.”

Her love for jazz took her to Havana Cultura Sessions, an album that was the product of improvisation, in the style of the 1960’s jam sessions in Cuba, and was recorded together with British DJ Jack Peterson and renowned jazz pianist Roberto Fonseca, who said when he first heard her sing in the studio: “How come I didn’t know about the best singer in Cuba?!” After their tour of Europe with Danay singing and Fonseca at the piano, they have continued to work together, as evidenced by her most recent album, *Palabras Manuales*, produced by Fonseca. This record is, in her own words, “a mix of both” hip-hop and jazz.

A Cuerda Viva Award Winner for Best Alternative Music Group, Danay Suárez is partially happy with the media exposure she and other alternative music artists have had in Cuba. She cares more, however, about people being able to feel what she’s trying to convey. “What I’d like is to have the strength so that my work can go hand in hand with my ideals of love, honesty, modesty and values, and to make people reflect on and feel moved by what I have to say.”



# A Belated Playlist for CUBAN MILLENNIALS

by Ana Fernández

Putting together a playlist of Cuban music is never an easy task. It's harder when you're dealing with music that has invaded my generation's list for years. And it's even harder if we take into account the fact that we don't all have the same taste. Therefore, the playlist that follows is not one that will make everyone happy. In a nutshell, this is merely a suggested playlist. If you can recognize yourself in it or it takes you by surprises, great.



### SON IGUALES. Habana Abierta

For people in my generation, Habana Abierta began being a legend. This group had revolutionized more than one concept since its peñas on 3rd 8th streets. Then they took off for Madrid and we only heard echoes of what was being played across the Pond. Some of us were lucky enough to see them in 2003 and others saw them in 2012. Both concerts took place at La Tropical. It's rock 'n' roll with spine-tingling drums. "Son iguales" is one of the tracks on the album called Boomerang



### CALLEJÓN SIN LUZ. Carlos Varela

The gnome of Cuban trova. Always dressed in black from head to toes, Carlos Varela is famous for taking the fears, passions and dreams of an entire generation and turning them into songs. This number in particular strikes me as a "silent" paean to all the lost loves in the world.

### CURANDERA. Kelvis Ochoa

Although many of Kelvis Ochoa's more popular numbers were born out of the Habana Abierta repertoire, others became viral when they hit the streets. "Curandera" from the album Inflamación Kélvica is one of these. It's de rigueur at every one of his concerts and is clearly ensconced on this list. #TheGreatestThingsInLife.





### CHICA CUBANA. Interactivo

Interactivo is not exactly a band in the true sense of the word, and yet it is all the bands put together. Led by Robertico Carcassés it has included artists like Yusa, Telmary, Francis del Río, William Vivanco, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, ad infinitum. The highly contagious music takes you from jazz to rumba, fused with rock 'n' roll, in any rhythm they can possibly imagine.



### SUEÑO BRUJO. Telmary

Rap with rumba and son. Rap with Afro-Cuban roots. All that and more. That's what Telmary Díaz's first album, *A diario*, is all about. We could have selected other numbers for this List (maybe "Ves" featuring Kumar, or "Pa' que vuelva"), but "Sueño" injects a modicum of flamenco into the album and shows us the necessity of dreams.



### INVENTARIO. David Torrens

David Torrens' presence on this Playlist is no surprise. There is something in his voice that encapsulates unbridled passion as much as it does melancholy. But the surprise could well be the choice of "Inventario," one of the lesser known numbers on the *Mi poquita fe* CD. The David we hear begins by enumerating what he has lost and he keeps building up the tone and the sadness and, perhaps, the guilt is here to take apart our dreams.



### PARA BÁRBARA. Santiago Feliú

Santy Feliú, the enormous southpaw of Cuban Nueva Trova, just has to be on the List. As if he had never left us (it's been a little over two years since he passed away), the songs "Futuro inmediato," "Ay, la vida" or "Vida" reverberate through several generations. "Para Bárbara" is unquestionably one of the most beautiful songs of all time in Cuban music.



### ANA. Trío Enserie

From the heartland of our Island, the Trío Enserie (now defunct) composed of trovador s Roly Berrío, Levis Aliaga and Raúl Cabrera, made this song into a hymn that is still being sung by many trovador s at their peñas in the city of Santa Clara. In the voices of singer-songwriters who perform at that city's cultural center El Mejunje, "Ana" has been played and sung in countless versions.



### SÉ FELIZ. Gema & Pável

One day in 1990, Gema Correda and Pável Urkiza started singing together. They went on to write songs and record together. Songs in which traditional Cuban music, filin, the Brazilian beat, rumba or the blues, in their pure state or fused together, gave nostalgia an extraordinary dimension. Just in case loneliness embitters their soul.



### **BUCANERO. Ray Fernández**

A chef by trade and self-employed trovador, Ray Fernández holds mass every Thursday at the Diablo Tun Tun piano-bar at the Miramar Casa de la Música. Whoever has been there can attest to the fact that this is the best jam-session anywhere in Havana. “Bucanero” is an urgent chronicle about the economic and social changes in Cuba, practically written into the program at every peña.

### **TE DOY UNA CANCIÓN. Silvio Rodríguez**

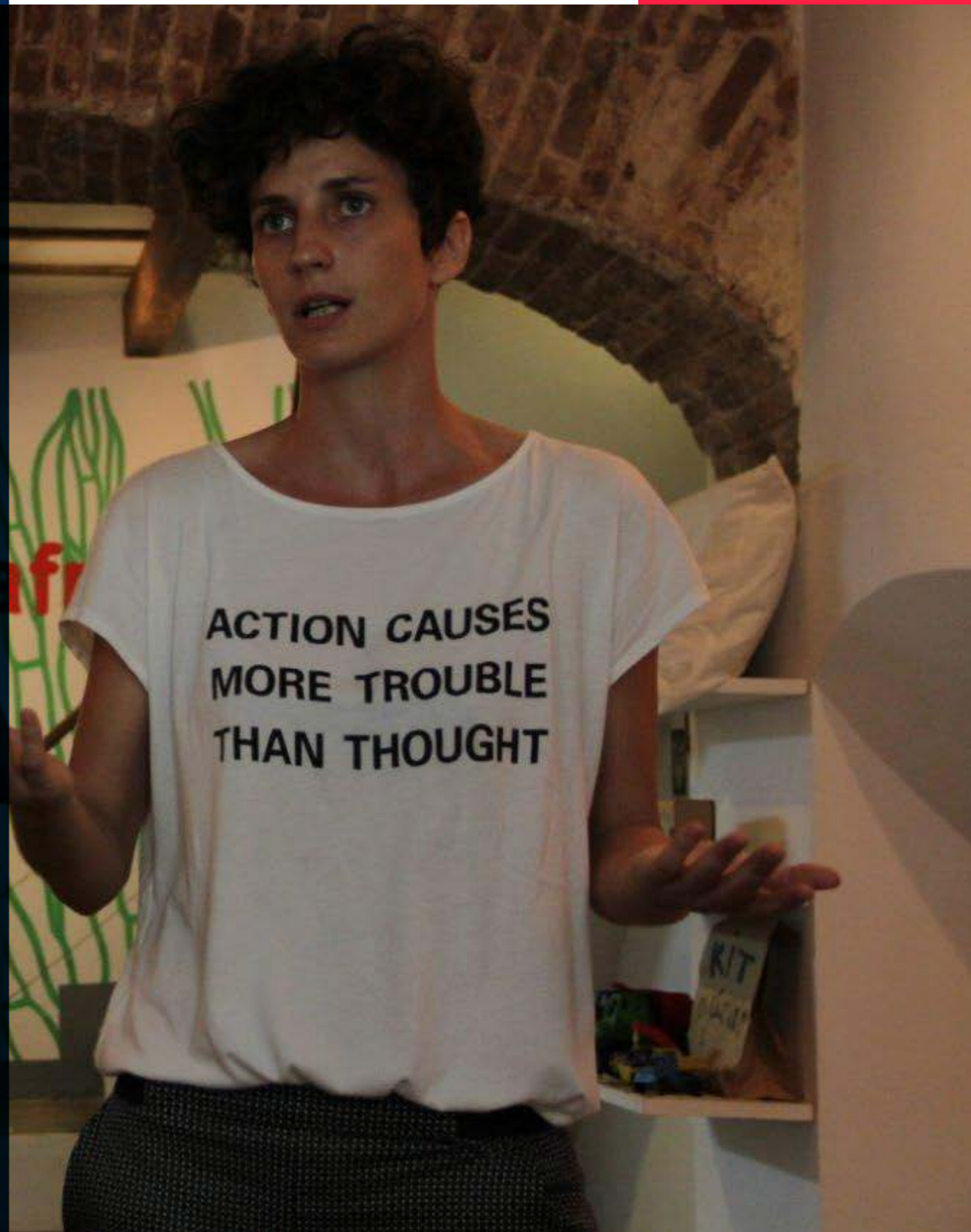
Silvio is a pioneer, a painter, a philosophy of life, a wild rose, a corner penetrated by a single ray of sunlight, a seashell, a happy day, the homeland. A playlist without Silvio is not really a playlist and concluding with him is like ending up with the bittersweet taste of things that end too soon. “Te doy una canción” is nothing more than an excuse to add all of his other songs.



# IDANIA DEL RÍO: A TRUE-BLUE MILLENNIAL DESIGNER

By **Ricardo Alberto Pérez**  
Photos **Y. del Monte**

*Thirty-four-year-old Idania del Río captured the limelight during President Obama's visit to the Island in March 2016 when he met with young Cuban entrepreneurs. Not only because the President wanted to buy a couple of t-shirts for daughters Malia and Sasha, but because in little over a year, what started out as a two-woman t-shirt shop has become a project with 14 employees and it is now creating over 25 different products.*



I once ventured the opinion that design has become the prime mover in our lives. On this occasion, it is fitting to mention the work of a unique designer by the name of Idania del Río. Despite her youth, she has achieved a fair amount of notoriety in the design field—her knowledge-seeking nature, enthusiasm and perseverance have resulted in the birth of a number of ideas and projects that become remarkably useful within the context of our times.

I met Idania about four years ago at the Eleventh Havana Art Biennale. I immediately was struck by her extraordinary sensibility for the arts, the lucidity of her views and especially her desire to involve herself in these kinds of activities. We hadn't seen each other since that time, but have some friends in common and they talked to me a bit about a part of her work. I became convinced that she was one of those artists who created from the gut, going from the most inner part of the individual and surfacing with novel ideas.

As I went over her trajectory I learned that she graduated from Graphic Design and Visual Communication from Havana's Higher Institute of Industrial Design, ISDi for short, in 2004. Then she wound her way through other fields, diverse and controversial ones, such as the Nuevos Fieras painting workshop run by Rocío García at the San Alejandro Academy in 2012, an art direction course at the International School of Cinema and TV (EICTV) at San Antonio de los Baños in 2009 and Piedra, papel o tijera, a design workshop promoted by Isidro Ferrer at the Cultural Center of Spain in 2003. Immersing herself in these areas confirms her fascination for a plurality of languages that she can incorporate into her projects to give them a touch of contemporaneity.

In order to understand her art, all we have to do is look at the posters she has been creating recently. They provide us with the ideal entry into her world. These posters carry a heavy dose of subjectivity, giving viewers the chance to reach a variety of interpretations and in this way participate in her work—it is a dialogue with a multitude of symbols.

These posters have given Idania her current recognition level in the circuits of Cuban design. She has concentrated on the theater and music being made in Cuba today. In both cases, she has chosen to deal with alternative projects, or maybe it is those projects that have chosen her



Photo **Ana Lorena**

because they know she is top-notch. The theater of Rogelio Orizondo, one of Cuba's most talented and audacious young directors and playwrights, has become one of her most striking subjects.

Given her visible capacity of approaching several topics, her posters also deal with the cinema, promotional campaigns for the defense of gender rights, and art events. But there is also an entire body of work where she divorces herself from the task of promotion and lets the posters speak for themselves. Here, she usually makes use of parody, of a subtly ironic language that

explores areas concerning popular speech. In my opinion, her posters become inserted in a graphic art with notable political connotation and social impact.

It is important to note that Idania del Río has reached this position thanks to her intellectual consistency and theoretical training. In this context, she has lectured both in Cuba and abroad: "Invisible Lines" at Cubanica Studio in New York, 2014; "Mi historia esa," at the Tether inc. offices in Seattle in 2014; and "Cuba Gráfica" together with some other Cuban designers at an event at the École d'Art Maryse Eloy / Gobelins, L'Ecole de l'Image, Paris, 2012.

Her talent and productivity have now been inserted into a location that we are able to visit on calle Villegas No. 403, a stone's throw away from Plaza del Cristo, in Havana's Historical Center. Idania del Río has created a design shop called Clandestina. It has granted tangible physical presence to her vision of design and to the role it should be playing in society, incorporating as many designers as possible. Specialist in cultural management and creative industries, Leire Fernández, accompanies her in this adventure as production manager of Clandestina. Initiatives of this sort are projects with creative processes having remarkable esthetic and conceptual merit.

They are enterprises that will surely breathe life into a jaded commercial scenario generally only responding to necessity.

After wandering around Clandestina for a while and taking in the clothing and other objects available, I understood the spirit of the place. It is an invitation for reflection, providing good taste and unique designs in a positive and somewhat whimsical vein and at the same time functions as a factory-workshop for the products being offered.

Idania told me that the solitude of a designer disappeared a bit with this enterprise and thanks to it she had been able to exteriorize so many ideas she had had inside, to see design fulfilling its true functions and objectives. She said: "Standing between fine art and semi-industrialized mass production, Clandestina - 99% Cuban design, promotes an intelligent, modern, super-advanced image, which is committed to the Cuban social project, making quality, competitive and avant-garde products available for both Cubans and non-Cubans."

Clandestina was an active participant in the 12th Havana Art Biennale, decorating the balconies of this section of Villegas Street with clothing recovered and revitalized by the Vintrashe project, one



of the most attractive initiatives of the shop. This is an exclusive collection inspired by the daily activity Cubans have of coming up with solutions, "resolviendo" as they say. These are reinvented objects and clothing, taking on new use values. For example, everyone can bring a discarded T-shirt and it will be redesigned and given back to the original owner. This project was carried out together with Fábrica de Arte.

# MAKING PEOPLE UNEASY

## Interview with Ernesto Piña



by **Marcela Cuza**

*Sin pelos en la lengua* [Outspoken] (2010) has been one of the phenomena of Cuban independent audiovisual productions in the last few years. This short film deals with a complicated aspect of our immediate reality with wit and charm: the manner we have of communicating with each other. Ernesto Piña started his career as an independent producer and today he works at the Animation Studios of the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC). When we peruse his creative trajectory, we are struck by his consistency of intent, that of making visible the ways today's Cuban youth are acting and thinking. He doesn't have any one preferred animation style because the TV cartoons he was raised on in the 1980s came in all shapes and colors.

"I consumed many animation styles and I think this has created the hybrid which is my work. Some people detect traces of Japanese films in my work because of the way I draw (*Todo por Carlitos*) or because of some subject matter I may be dealing with (*M-5*, *Wajiros*). Others associate *La visita...* with the style used by Pixar in their shorts, because of their language. I couldn't choose just one single style."

Added to this is the fact that you studied Visual Arts, not filmmaking...

Ever since I was a child, I was curious about how the cartoons I was seeing on TV were made: the Russian, Japanese and Cuban cartoons—even the few American ones produced by Disney, Warner Bros. and Hanna Barbera. Those were the cartoons we, the generation of the 1980s, used to watch. At some point I began to draw my first sketches of the characters I was watching

and I developed a talent for painting. My mother used to take me a lot to cinema courses and workshops. I began to realize that I needed to improve in content because the drawing part was something that was turning out pretty well. In 1966, I enrolled in Camagüey's Art School and I ended up graduating from the University of the Arts (ISA).

From the second year of college, I began to link audiovisuals with painting, but they seemed to me to be very flat works and so I experimented with different software and animation. I had some run-ins with teachers who would tell me that my work was not painting—I think in the end they only wanted to irritate me and to force me to see how big the animation world really is.

Erpiromundo (2006) was, somehow, the end of that phase...

Yes, it was my graduation thesis and I included in it much of what I had learned in school. In fact, I used a technique that is very popular in visual art: the self-portrait. In my case, I took it into the realm of the audiovisual and I told a story that was my story at ISA. Afterwards, this work became a point of reference for other students who like myself were heading for audiovisual work within the visual arts. That is very rewarding for me.

Many of your films are considered to be geared at children and teenagers. When you create, do you aim for any specific audience? I was trained as an artist and so I learned to work very much apart from the audience. Nevertheless, I always have the goal to make people uneasy, to make them think. That was the case with Sin pelos en la lengua (2010) and Todo por Carlitos (2005). I am very concerned with my context, especially the youth. Our times are different. I feel that many 15 or 16-year-olds today don't think the same way I did when I was their age. I think it's because of the speed we are living at these days. The consumption of culture has changed. They are a generation greatly marked by technology. This isn't happening only in Cuba; in the rest of the world young people have cell phones and tablets which are like extensions of their bodies.

Other elements influencing them are the Internet, which is getting to Cuba little by little, and the "Weekly Package," a sort of provider of TV channels but done in an "underground" manner. They also have access to software updates, magazines, photos, music...all this up-to-date information has had the result that Cuban youth think differently





because they have access to the official government vision on TV and in the press and then they also have the weekly underground package and so they can choose what they like from both of them, according to their taste.

Generally speaking, when context changes so do the cultural products. To what degree have these new manners of consumption influenced your work?

In the case of my work, I think that, yes, it does get influenced, but it depends on what you want to communicate in each project. Personally, I like talking about young people and technology, but in a humorous tone, trying to make sure the audience sees themselves in it. Getting back to visual art, in the past painters would show the reality of their times in their paintings. I try to do the same thing in my work. After travelling to several other countries, I set myself the

goal of connecting Cuba to the rest of the world through art, to make films that work with both Cuban and foreign audiences. For example, an animated film like *La visita del moscón* (2012) arose out of my necessity to make a film that looked like those I used to see as a child, those Polish, Czech or Russian films that didn't have any dialogue, just music and sounds. At the same time, I based myself on our local legend that tells us if you see a big fly in your home you are soon going to get a visit. That's a very Cuban belief, it doesn't exist in other countries and so I tried to give the film a universal setting. I have shown it in places as different as Spain, Bulgaria and the United States and audiences have managed to connect the dots in the story and understand what's going on.

Technology is a recurring subject in your work and it looks like it's going to continue in your upcoming projects, the short film

*Close* and the feature-length *Superjeva* and *Anticiclón*. How far along are both of these? *Close* is a story about long-distance love between two young people who have found a different way of getting together physically. Their solution is connected to technology. I am very happy with that work because it is my first 3D film and I really like its visuality. It is being produced by the ICAIC Animation Studios.

*Anticiclón* is crazy and it also talks about youth and technology, but it goes farther than that. It attempts to reflect on brotherliness, faithfulness to common ideals and human values. It is an adventure cum science fiction story.

*Superjeva* is also a script which is in the adventure story vein. Why is that? Because the super hero genre makes a quick connection with young and adult audiences.



Recently, I have been trying to have children understand my work because thanks to the idea that animation is for them, it is practically impossible for little kids to see a film like that.

I'd like to stress that every one of these films has a very positive message. I believe we are living in such a hostile reality that it's important to show another manner of living, of seeing the world. I'd like my feature-length films to have that flavor, that humor. Young people are just beginning to learn about life; we should be giving them a slightly more encouraging view than the one they get from the communication media.

One of the most discussed topics among cinematographers is the Cinema Law. What is your slant on this?

I think that a Cinema Law is super important for any country to have. Ever since I started in the world of audiovisual creation I have had the dream of setting up my own production company, Erpiro Studio. That would allow me to look for funding and other types of help. At this time, you cannot do this in Cuba. I don't have any real possibility of legalizing that dream and I am not the only Cuban filmmaker who would like to do that. By making technology democratic we have seen that the old established production companies are not the only ones who can make audiovisuals. Many young filmmakers and others who have established reputations such as Fernando Pérez have made incursions into the medium with their own resources and they have managed to make films that work with the public and have even won prizes at national and international film festivals. Let's hope they don't take too long to solidify our Cinema Law because, unless they do, they are going to keep on losing talent. It's true that Cuba has a pool of brilliant persons. But if they don't see any results soon they will end up going somewhere else and we shall be the poorer for it. And as far as I know, we still have to wait a while for our dream to come true.





# GOODBYE TAMAGOTCHI welcome Cosplayers

Photos **Ana Lorena**

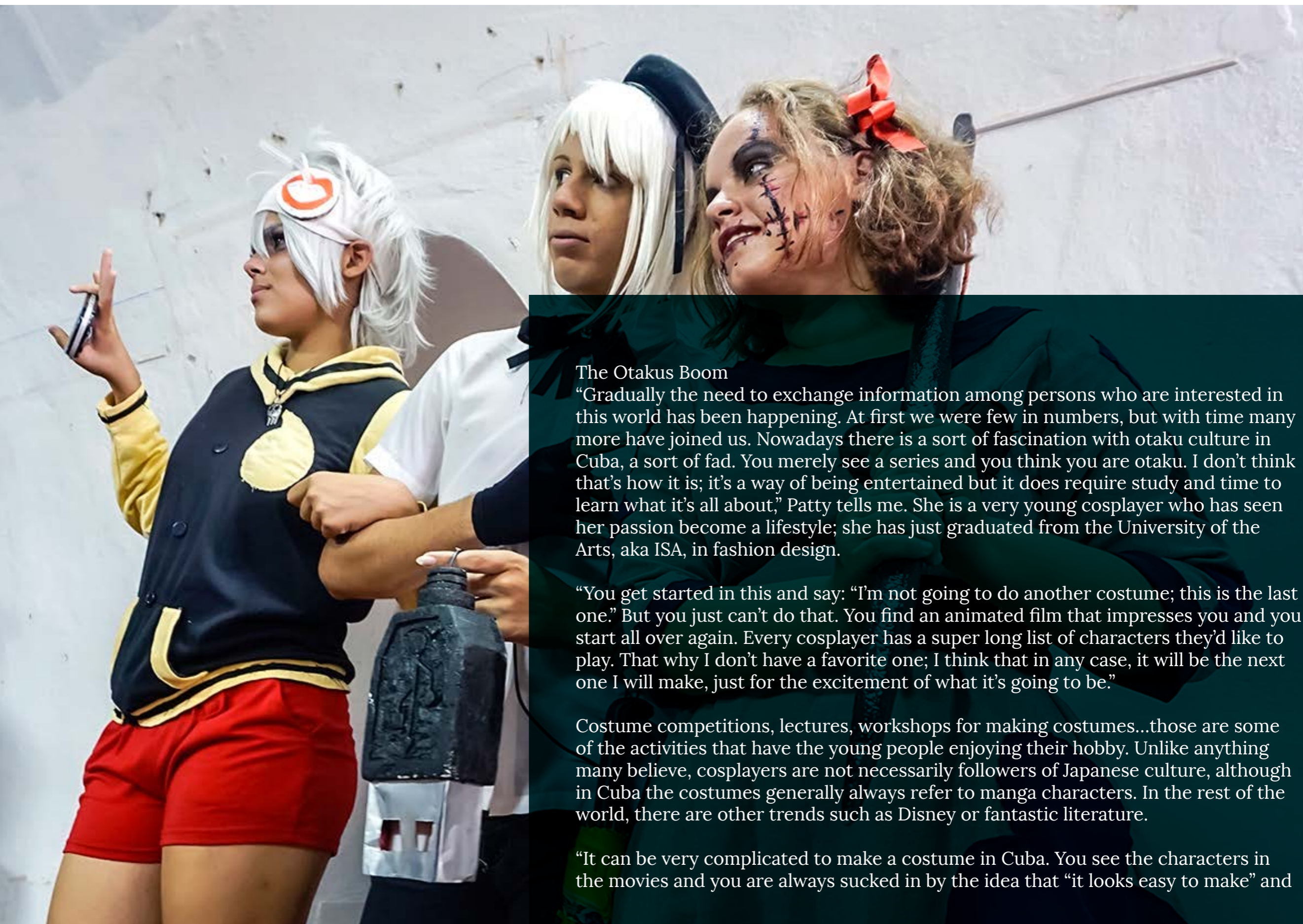
by **Luciana Díaz**

The kids of my generation had an odd hobby that I don't think existed in any other country. We would collect the wrappings from different products, like candies, cereal and such. Most important, they had to have pretty, eye-catching colors. Now, as I am remembering all this, I find it funny but also somewhat sad because many times we had wrappings of sweets that we hadn't even eaten. Yup, that was what it was like growing up in the 1990s. Something else that my childhood revolved around was the Tamagotchis, electronic devices which looked like eggs and had "pets" that children had to feed. I didn't have any of these and I'm grateful for that because the truth of the matter was that kids used to forget about their toy and those "critters" would be dying all over the place, filling their owners with guilt. That's right: toys can be a big pain in the neck!

Let me get to my point: children's customs have changed, the same way the country—slowly—has changed. Kids no longer save colorful wrappers, instead they are playing with sophisticated video-consoles and they exchange Bluetooth information.

Dropping into this variegated landscape, we have the otaku, or anime fans, who are legion, getting together all over the city to share their hobby. It isn't just a matter of watching Japanese films or series but also of imitating the style of their favorite characters. Cosplayers have gradually joined the youth culture of the nation. With them, this particular entertainment industry has also arrived to a certain degree—an industry that is sometimes missing in this country, which marked by "the damned circumstance of water everywhere.





### The Otakus Boom

“Gradually the need to exchange information among persons who are interested in this world has been happening. At first we were few in numbers, but with time many more have joined us. Nowadays there is a sort of fascination with otaku culture in Cuba, a sort of fad. You merely see a series and you think you are otaku. I don’t think that’s how it is; it’s a way of being entertained but it does require study and time to learn what it’s all about,” Patty tells me. She is a very young cosplayer who has seen her passion become a lifestyle; she has just graduated from the University of the Arts, aka ISA, in fashion design.

“You get started in this and say: ‘I’m not going to do another costume; this is the last one.’ But you just can’t do that. You find an animated film that impresses you and you start all over again. Every cosplayer has a super long list of characters they’d like to play. That why I don’t have a favorite one; I think that in any case, it will be the next one I will make, just for the excitement of what it’s going to be.”

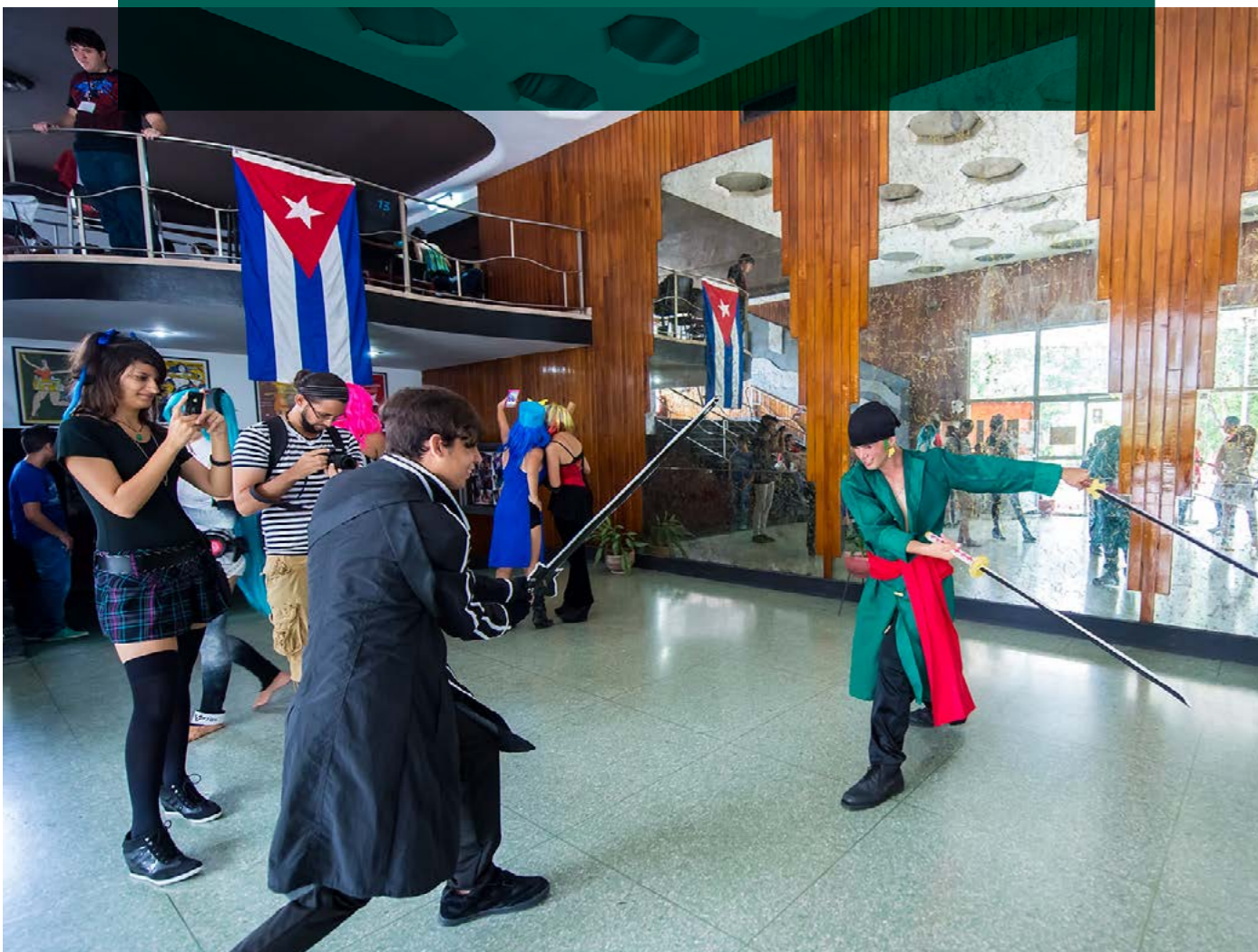
Costume competitions, lectures, workshops for making costumes...those are some of the activities that have the young people enjoying their hobby. Unlike anything many believe, cosplayers are not necessarily followers of Japanese culture, although in Cuba the costumes generally always refer to manga characters. In the rest of the world, there are other trends such as Disney or fantastic literature.

“It can be very complicated to make a costume in Cuba. You see the characters in the movies and you are always sucked in by the idea that ‘it looks easy to make’ and

you fall in love with the project. But in real life you have to be extremely crafty to put it together. Not only do you need the material, there's also silicone, metal, paper... and anything else you can think of. Sometimes I make the costumes from the ground up, other times I transform existing clothing. In any case, it takes time, effort and a whole lot of creativity”.

### Habana Cosplay

Four years ago, Patty and other fans founded the Habana Coplay Group for the aim of publicizing a culture that was in its infancy in Cuba. “At otaku meetings some of us used to wear costumes because we especially liked that practice, and so we decided to get together to help each other as fans. We've given workshops to teach others how to make costumes. As time goes by, we've tried out new techniques and materials and our results are better than they were at the beginning.”



The shortage of materials and professional sewing machines is one of the most obvious hurdles for Cuban cosplayers. But the huge parade of fans that took place at the just-concluded Otaku Festival demonstrates that there are many followers of this culture (and they are very creative).

“At our competitions, we don't just judge how the costumes and weapons are made; we also take into account the cosplayer's interpretation, how they perform. It's assumed that a cosplayer is able to put together his or her costume but they also have to act out some of the traits of their character. In my case, that's where I have to make more of an effort because I'm shy.”

It looks like this form of entertainment is attracting more and more young people. And I (approaching my 30th birthday) have a hard time thinking that my beloved collections of clippings should be relegated to oblivion. I believe that's what some sage called “getting old.” Anyway, I console myself with the thought that every generation reinvents its own fantasies.

# SNET: THE SHORTEST DISTANCE

By **Rosario Falls**  
Photos **Ana Lorena**

The shortest distance between two points is defined by the type of connection those points have managed to establish between them. In the virtual era, places separated by trans-Atlantic kilometers may be quite close thanks to the World Wide Web; on the other hand, neighboring towns may appear to be separated by half a universe should the digital breach have been imposed upon them.

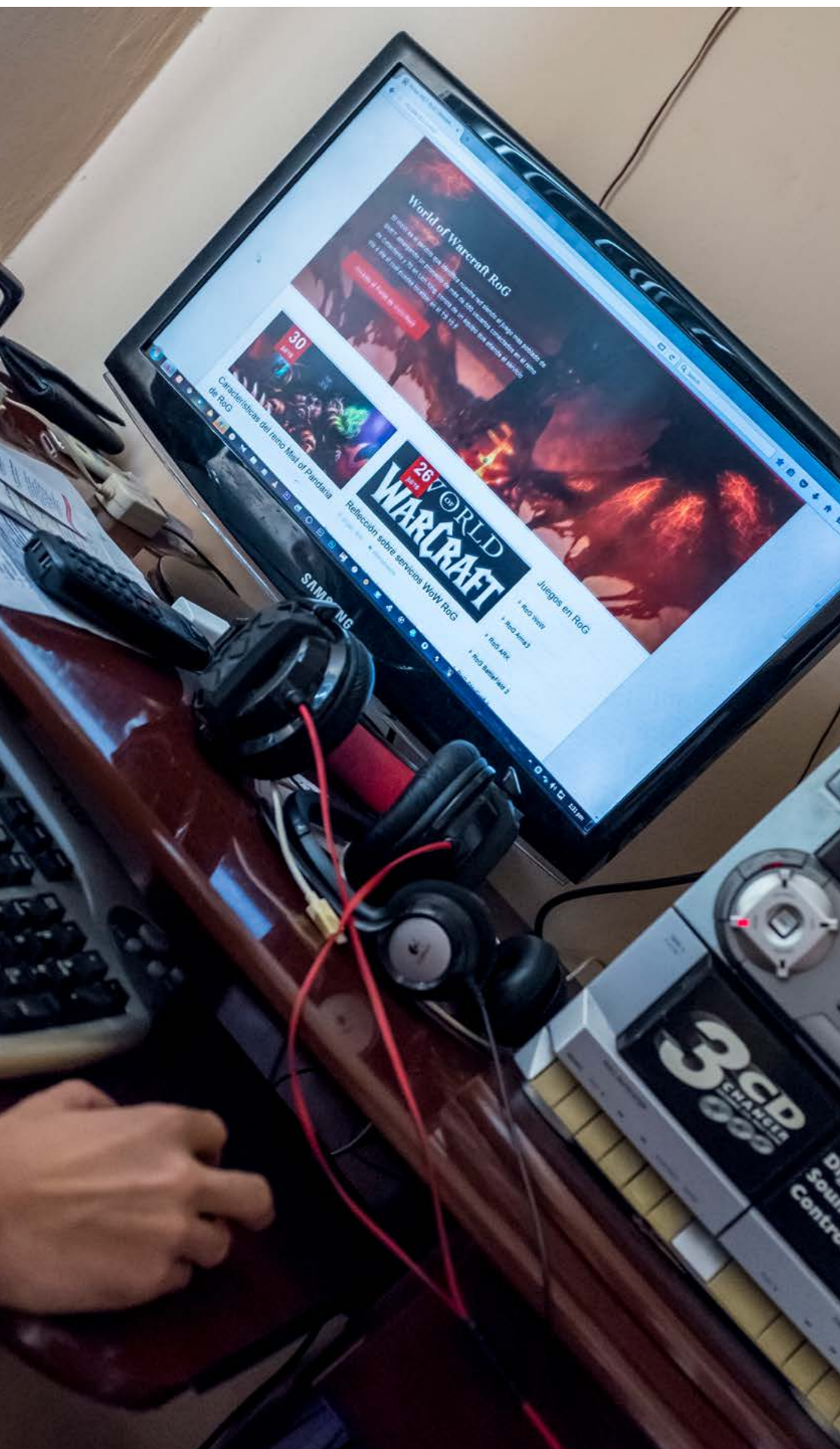
Everyone knows this, but not everyone deals with it in the same way. For years Cuba has been relegated to the soft shoulders of virtual highways. In 2014 it only had slightly over two hundred users connected to the Internet for every thousand inhabitants. Two years later, when Cubans now have daily access to the net, there are over 150,000 users, a figure which represents approximately 1.25 percent of the population.



That's one reality of the matter. The other reality shows us how Cuban universities are continuously turning out professionals in the informatics and telecommunications fields, course after course, and many other professionals are graduating from technical schools. All of this, as anyone with a minimum of two megabytes available in their head can imagine, brings with it results that go far beyond the expectations and calculations of our planning bureaus.

And so, from house to house, an alternate solution began to appear around 2001. It was a self-managed network that came to be called the Street Network (or SNET) and also as the Republic of Gamer (or RoG) and it now takes in some 8,000 computers in Havana alone. They are linked via M2 and M5 NanoStations, generating private Wifi and LAN networks crisscrossing the capital from Cojimar to the east of Havana to the town of Bauta in neighboring Artemisa Province to the west. Other similar networks, even though they have a more reduced geographic scope, have also sprouted in cities like Matanzas, Santa Clara, Camagüey or Holguín, further to the eastern end of the Island.

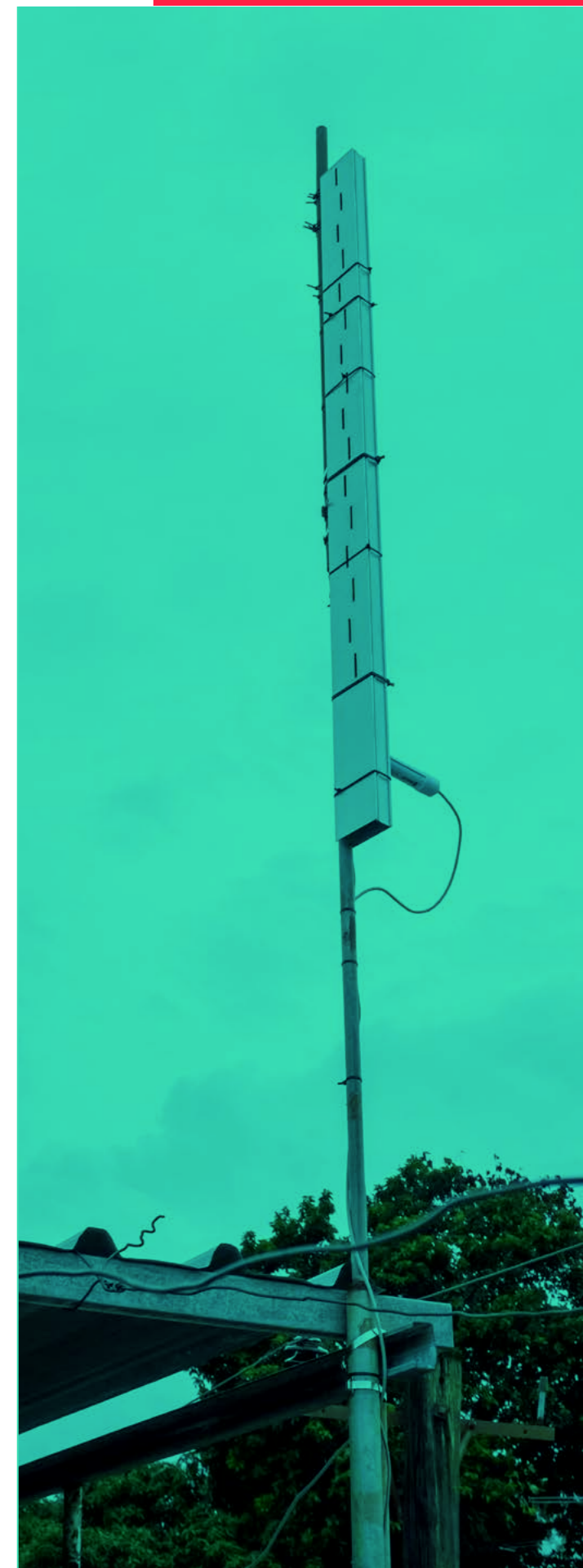
With no connections to the world web right from their beginnings, since they have no legal status for distributing and commercializing the Internet through its infrastructure, SNET is local and limited. But in the words of twenty-something-year-old Rafael Broche, one of the engineers who participated in creating the net, "At least we feel connected to a whole bunch of people. We're talking to them and sharing files."



That is one of the chief virtues of SNET: it has platforms configured for playing Warcraft, Call of Duty, Dota 2, FIFA, WOW, Battlefield, Starcraft, and also for using several thematic forums as well as the TeamSpeak app, which lets you voice-chat with anybody who is connected. You can also download movies or popular TV programs, consult a copy of Wikipedia filed on the servers or have access to an ingenious Cuban version of Facebook.

As in any community, some basic principles govern the functioning of SNET. For example, it is completely free of charge, does not provide Internet services, TV channels, pornography or anything else considered to be illegal, and you cannot use obscene language. That is one of the survival strategies agreed to by the administrators who invested in the technology that today supports the network.

Without a doubt, SNET is one of the best examples of Cuban improvisation, applying telecommunications engineering in order to generate an organized structure with ethical rules and techniques, which, even though it doesn't provide the solution, does ameliorate the condition of virtual non-connectivity and puts thousands of young people who are craving interactions into lucid and creative relationships. Each of them leapt over the virtual gap with whatever they had at hand—their knowledge, their enthusiasm and their capacity to bring to reality the dreams for which they did not want to wait any longer.



# POKÉMON FEVER

There's a Pokémon fever. Everybody is chasing them with their smartphones. There are only a few safe havens in the world where they can avoid capture. Pokémon really need to take a rest and there's no better place for that than Cuba. In the Caribbean island they can take a break from being hunted while enjoying sunshine and mojitos.

Twelve of them have already been to Havana following in the footsteps of The Rolling Stones, the Kardashians, Beyoncé and Madonna. It seems that they didn't really need OFAC licenses to travel to Cuba or even sneak in Air Force One with President Obama. So here are the favorite spots for some of the Pokémon. We will keep updating the list as we get comments from these cute creatures.

## VOLTORB

Voltorb choose to stay near a great power source. He is an electric-type that needs to feed on tons of electricity. That's why he settled on La Rampa, in the heart of Vedado. There, electricity flows like water on Niagara Falls, turning on street lamps, neon lights, and business signs.



## BELLSPROUT

Bellsprout is not a guy from Plants versus Zombies. He is a grass-type Pokémon that came to Havana's Botanical Garden to avoid zombie-like Pokémon Go players. There he enjoys his time hanging out with a lot of endemic species.



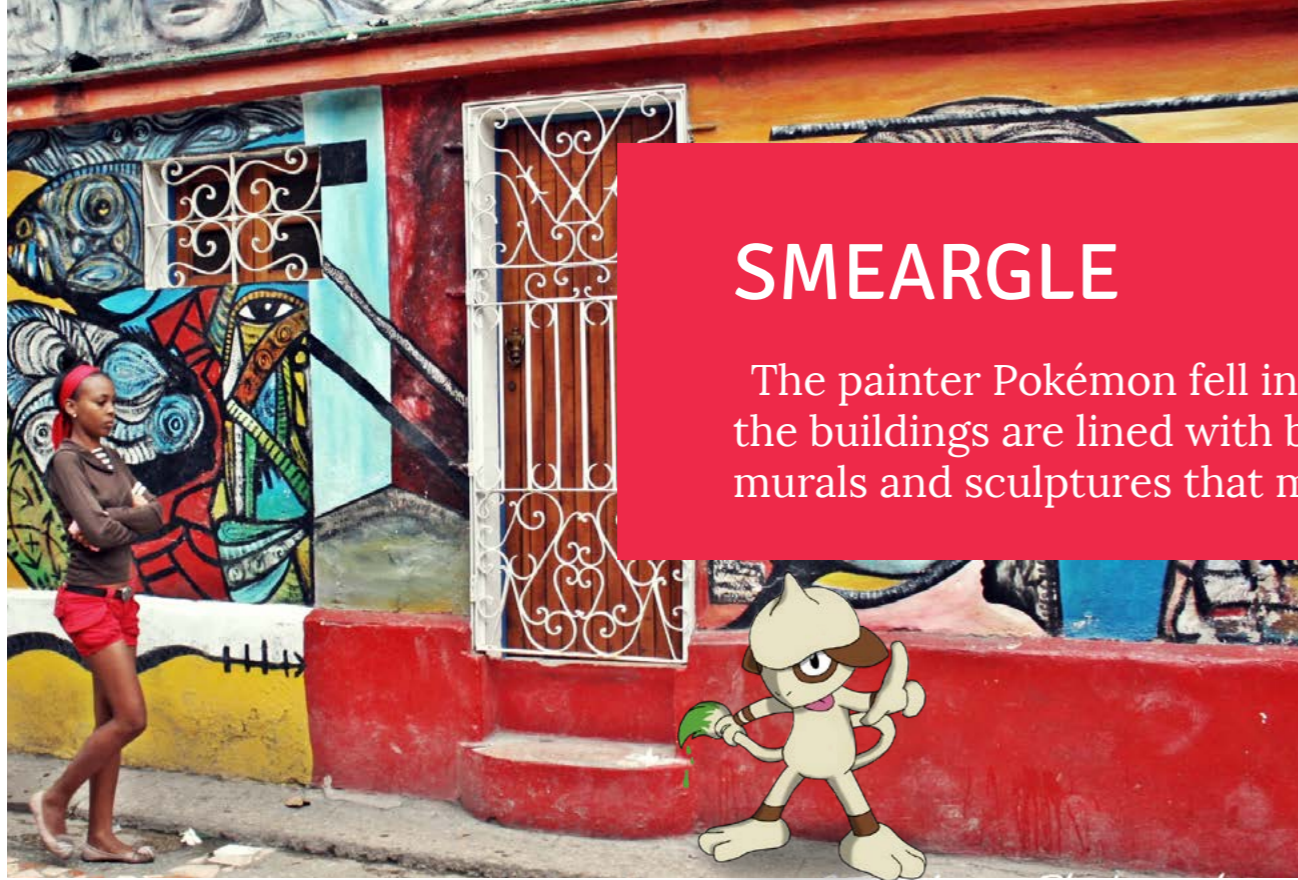
## CATERPIE

Caterpie needs lots of leaves to survive. So he went to Havana's Parque Almendares, or Metropolitan Park, Havana's green lungs. This park is also visited by a great many children and their parents. In this huge forest that grows on both banks of the Almendares River you can find dinosaurs, pony rides, mini-golf courses and trees galore, embellished with hanging vines.



## SMEARGLE

The painter Pokémon fell in love with Hamel Alley. There the buildings are lined with brightly-colored paintings, murals and sculptures that make the delight of any artist.



## VAPOREON

The cutest Pokémon ever loves the sea. Havana has plenty of that to offer. Santa María del Mar is the most popular beach among Habaneros and tourists, like this water-type Pokémon. Vaporeon can be seen there flipping in the air to the delight of vacationers.



## ARTICUNO

This Pokémon bird has found its favorite spot on the heights of the Jose Martí Memorial. Overlooking Plaza de la Revolución, he spends most of the time flying over the blue Havana sky. After all, it's the perfect combination for its lovely blue plumage.



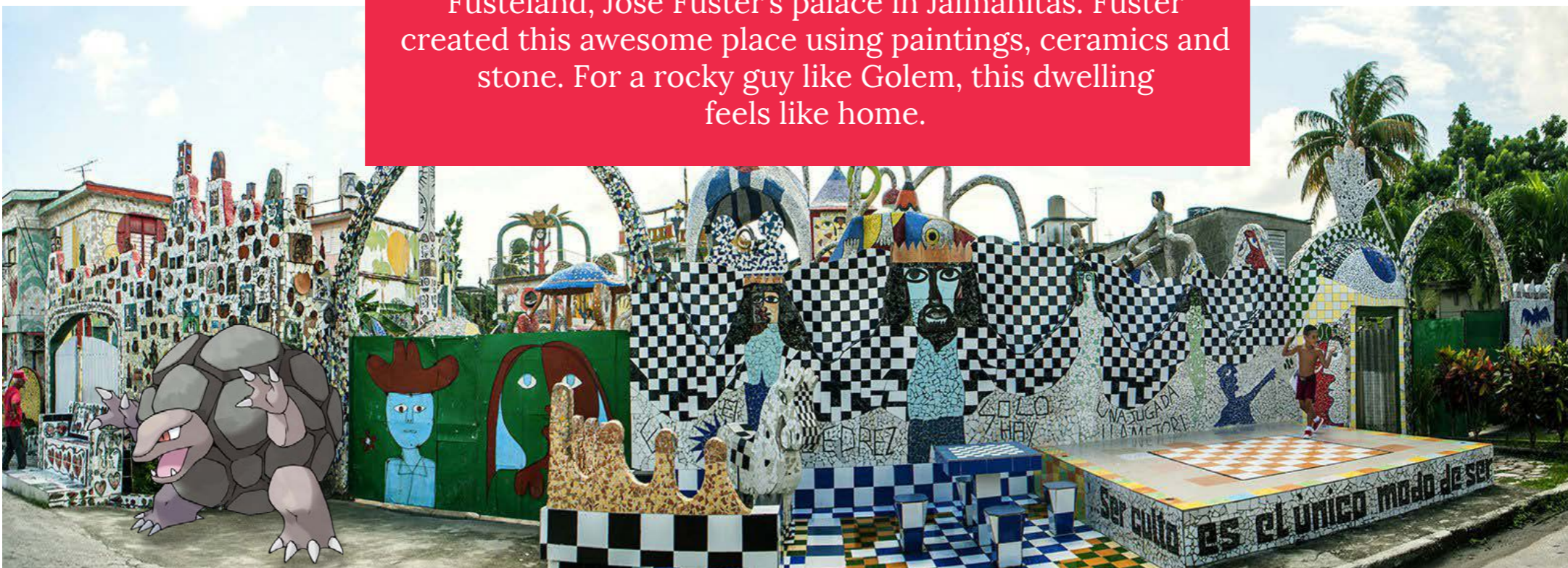
## CLOYSTER

Clamps like rocks. Havana's Malecón is essentially a 6.2 kilometer-long collection of reefs attached to a magnificent seawall. This is where Cloyster lives now. Havana's outdoor lounge now has a new tenant.



## GOLEM

The fearsome rock-type Pokémon has settled on Fusteland, José Fuster's palace in Jaimanitas. Fuster created this awesome place using paintings, ceramics and stone. For a rocky guy like Golem, this dwelling feels like home.





## MOLTRES

A Pokémon bird that loves fire, volcanos and light, Moltres lives now by the brightest of all Havana beacons: The Morro lighthouse. This lighthouse is the most recognizable symbol of the city. The view from the top at sunset mimics perfectly Moltres' fiery feathers.

## JIGGLYPUFF

Jiggly craves for attention. This Pokémon is lovely and takes advantage from this fact. He lives now at Parque Central, a hub for pedestrian visitors to Old Havana. There people can enjoy Jiggly cuteness in sheer quantities.



## HAUNTER

Ghosts are fond of ghostly places. For a long time, Haunter has dwelt in the House of the Green Tiles, a once almost haunted mansion located in Miramar, on the west side of the Almendares River. He has refused to leave, much to the dismay of the managers of this building, which is now the Center for the Promotion and Study of Modern Architecture, Urban Planning and Interior Design



# PIKACHU

Pikachu came to Havana as the ambassador of all the Pokémon around the world. In this important endeavor he was taken to FAC, the Cuban Art Factory. This is the place to meet all the important celebrities both local and foreign. For them and Pikachu, FAC is a not-to-miss venue.





**Running through Havana, skipping from hotspot to hotspot**



by **Alejandro Pérez Malagón & Cachivache Media**

Tajiri Satoshi's Pokétto Monsutō escaped for the first time from Japan and the Pokémon Islands and they have reached your city. Pokémon GO has convulsed human civilization, aroused old bitter feelings towards "gamers" who no longer hang out in the privacy of their own homes but are out there, running around and throwing Poké Balls. During the months Pokémon GO has been online, its fans have managed to get attacked by thieves, invade private property, send Nintendo shares through the roof, awaken the suspicions of a commentator on the National Evening News, discover a body in the river and, in the meantime, hunt down many, many Pokémon.

Unlike previous generations of Pokémon which were RPG portable console games, Pokémon GO is a massive multiplayer online role-playing video game (MMORPG in its English abbreviation) that runs rampant over cell phones and tablets and includes augmented reality elements. This time it is not enough to be skilled and patient with your Game Boy, you also have to go out on the streets and get physical. Instead of wandering through Pokémon World, the pocket monsters are now scattered around your city.

The app uses your GPS on your phone as well as inert units and cameras to detect where you are and where you are pointing your handheld device. Game servers (yes, you need the internet to play) send the location of the nearby game objects to your phone, like wild Pokémon, PokéStops and Pokégyms. Using this information, Pokémon GO allows you to interact with those objects, as long as you can get sufficiently close to them.

Augmented reality seeks to modify the form in which we perceive the world through computers, adding new information. Google Goggles, for example, can inform us from our phones about any monuments, bar codes and

paintings in the Met that the device may be pointing at. Other Apps like Word Lens translates texts we film on our mobile phones, even maintaining a similar typography. Google Glass is perhaps the most spectacular of these products up to now, carrying out similar tasks from a pair of glasses. Augmented Reality is getting trendier and the video game developers are not far behind.

In 2013, Niantic Labs, then a branch of Google, launched Ingress. Thousands of players went out on the streets to grab portals for two factions: the resistance and the illuminati. Links between portals allowed you to control areas of the world's surface, scoring for each faction depending on the number of human beings living there. The "portals" were points of interest created earlier by the users of Google Maps, many of which were reused for this game. To interact with the portals you had to get close to them in the real world.

Any similarity between Ingress and Pokémon GO is not a coincidence.

#MuchaGenteAndaDiciendo

(#ManyPeopleAreSaying) that Pokémon GO is nothing more than a re-launch of Ingress in a much more attractive framework for gamers than a futuristic struggle between mystic factions. The objects of this new Pokémon are nothing more than Ingress portals reconverted to gyms and PokéStops.

Getting close or and interacting with these objects is no problem in most cities in the world, at least from the infrastructural point of view. Cultural networks provide data links to the Internet and coverage is normally broad even in suburban and rural areas. But here in Cuba it's a whole other thing. Despite





the fact that ETECSA and Cubacel provide rudimentary data coverage for their mobile phone subscribers, using ancient EDGE and GPRS technologies, these links are to the Nauta network and not to the global Internet. That prevents Pokémon GO from connecting to Niantic servers through the cellular network.

The alternative is to use WiFi hotspots but these are much too far from providing broad coverage in Havana and they are even fewer in the rest of the country. Theoretically it is only possible to interact with the Pokémon, PokéStops and gyms that are in the vicinity of the hotspots. But another impediment raises its ugly head: Pokémon GO is not active all over the world. That means that even though you can install the GO App on your cell phone, Niantic servers will only answer to access setup from countries where the game has been launched.

Fortunately it is possible to fool Niantic in this matter. The company producing the game only verifies the IP where you are playing and not from your global GPS locating device. This “negligence” allows you to use any service by anonymous proxy to play Pokémon GO as long as the proxy is located in one of those lucky Pokémon-active countries.

When we used the aforementioned trick on Cachivache Media, we were afraid that Niantic had not generated gyms, stops or Pokémon in our city. But once we got online, we noticed that we could capture a Squirtle running through the offices and that we weren't the first to get there. From our location in El Vedado, we could only detect two gyms: one at the University of Havana

and the other in graffiti around the Malecón. The leaders of both gyms were at that moment Kakolukia51 with his Pidgeot-type Pokémon (a totally evolved Pidgey) and GoonyCatchem with a Cloyster (Shellder evolution) with 886 combat power. Later they were replaced by IamTheGhost21 (with another Pidgeot) and Lester3xxxx (master of a Golduck).

Five PokéStops nearby got added to these gyms, one at the park at Infanta and San Lazaro streets, another two in the Callejón de Hamel, one at the Quixote Park and yet another in the church on Infanta St. PokéStops are important due to the fact that you can reload PokéBullets or potions there, or you can pick up Pokémon eggs. Unfortunately, because of the reach of our WiFi, it wasn't possible to get near any of those locations.

Cuban inventiveness will always find a way. We have heard of fans of the game who have tried to use laptops and other portable devices to extend coverage from the ETECSA hotspots and get, for example, to the PokéStop at Quixote Park using the Rampa WiFi points. Ingeniousness apart, Internet coverage is a serious problem if you want to have a complete experience in a game using augmented reality. After doing a bit of digging, we did some research on Ingress and discovered that there are 211 portals for the game in Havana, many of which have been reused as locations for Pokémon GO. Probably there are several nearby or they overlap some hotspots ETECSA has installed in the municipalities. For example, in the vicinity of Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, some customers at the Mesón de la Flota Hotel at one time added several Ingress portals. It's not that insane to presume that one part has been converted into Pokémon GO elements.

Old Havana is surely the best place to play the game because of the density of the WiFi networks and the points of interest that can be converted into locations. Any game object less than 50 meters away from these hotspots may give access to Nauta users, but of course the prices for this would ruin just about any overly-enthusiastic local player. A word to the wise: it's not a good idea to get hooked.

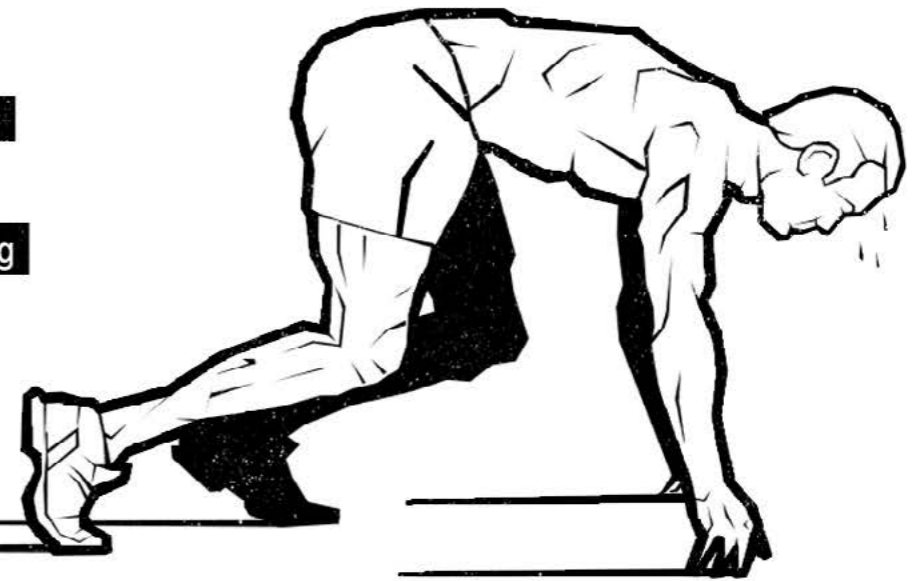
Playing Pokémon GO in Havana, more than a MMORPG, looks like a game platform where you go jumping from hotspot to hotspot so that you can obtain the objects you want to get. Some PokéStops and gyms can be accessed from the corporate networks of some institutions such as the University of Havana but they are forbidden terrain for the regular Nauta user. More than Ash Ketchum, you could end up feeling like Lara Croft.



# RUN JORGE RUN

Andreas Clark

When anybody gets out of bed every single day of their own volition, at five in the morning when the sun hasn't even risen yet, the chances are good that they have a couple of screws loose. It's one thing if you have to do this when there is no alternative, when there are some cows needing to be milked, patients to look after or dough to knead before dawn and it's something entirely different when you get out of bed, drink some coffee and start running...just because.



That's what the twenty-six-year-old computer engineer Jorge Pérez Bárcenas has been doing for several years now. You can see him every morning running along Havana's Malecón. There are many other people who like him are out there enjoying the soft caress of morning sea breezes, but he is the only one who runs so early. And he is the only one who runs so many kilometers at a time. Depending on his daily goal, he will clock between 15 and 35 kilometers every day, Saturdays and Sundays included.



The truth of the matter is that in his spare time (or in other words, during any time left over from his vice of running) Bárcenas is a computer programmer who earns his livelihood developing custom software for various clients, and he doesn't always go running at the crack of dawn.

Sometimes he's out there later because first he has to swim 2,000 meters in the cold waters of a strait of coastline known as Playita de 16, or bike for up to 60 kilometers along the Vía Blanca Road or the National Highway.



In fact, Bárcenas has been infected by a bad dream he had when he was ten, the first time he entered a race. He was participating in the 1,500-meter run at the Student Games. He lost the race but became addicted to the sport. Since then he has been running every single day of his life, fighting tooth and nail to become an Iron Man.



In the fashion of the best of the world's amateurs, Bárcenas deals with his mission solo. He doesn't have a personal trainer, but whenever he can, he gets technical assistance from the experts on the Cuban national team who have sometimes invited him to train with them. In January 2015, he was able to catch a glimpse of fame when he took part in the first edition of the Ibero-American Triathlon Championship in Havana in the Iron Man 70.3. To get ready for it, besides training like a maniac, he first had to convince his entire family to put together money so that he could buy a decent bicycle.



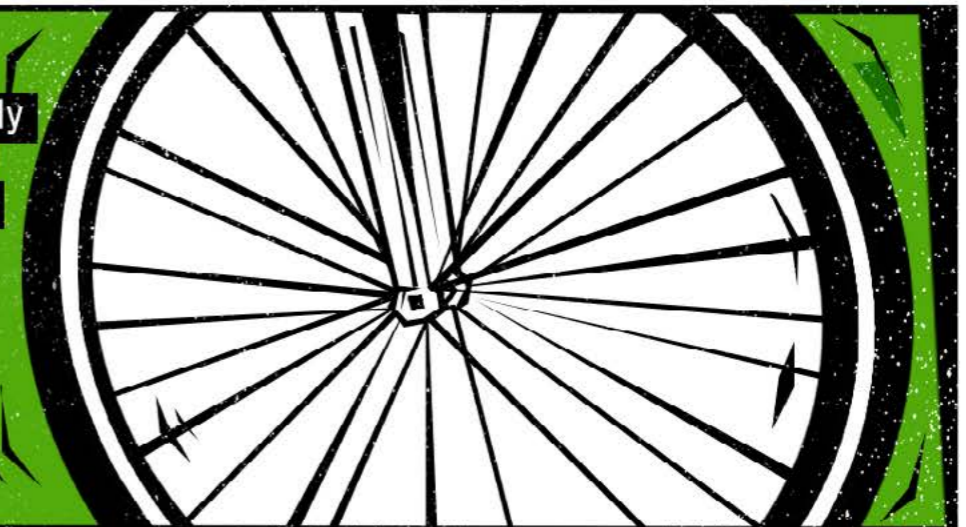
At that event he had to swim 1,900 meters, bike 90 kilometers and then run 21.1 kilometers to the finish-line, which he did in 5 hours and 52 minutes. That day, January 25, 2015, is etched in his memory: he was the second Cuban to cross the finish line and the fourth in his category (25-29 years).

As luck would have it, because of a mistake in his registration for the event, the number he wore to swim, bike and run belonged to a different participant who had not shown up for the competition, and that was enough to disqualify him. The event's website acknowledges his partial results: swimming: 53.50, bicycle: 3.29.07, running: 2.31.59. But they do not officially acknowledge his overall time even though he did receive his certificate proclaiming him as a Finisher.



In 2016, just before St. Valentine's Day, the event's second edition took place. It was not Bárcenas' best moment. His general overall time (which this time was officially acknowledged) clocked in at 7 hours and 3 seconds as the result of something unforeseen happening. During the bike race, due to an organizer glitch, a bus crossed the course and Bárcenas almost crashed right into it.

The brusque sudden braking action damaged the bike's mechanisms, severely affecting the turning of the wheels and forced him to use his extra bike to finish the stretch and then deal with the 21.1 run under the burden of an extra dose of fatigue. All things considered, and in spite of the incident, he once again achieved the fourth position in his category.



That's all "part and parcel of the trade," as Bárcenas' granny would say. And so he continues to train as always, day in day out, with several participations in the Havana Marathon tucked into his back pocket, which is by now getting rather small to hold them all. These days his sights are set on participating in the long version of his specialty, the Marathon of Ecuador. At that event he will be facing a 3.8 km-swim, a 180-km bike ride and a 42.2-km run.



On any given day, get yourself out to the Malecón at five in the morning. If your sleepy eyes will allow you to do so, you will see a 1.85-meter tall lad in pursuit of his dream, running alone with the sun as his only challenger.



# DESIGN STORE



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SANTUARIO DIOCESANO DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA CARIDAD

**PRAISE BE  
TO OUR  
LADY OF  
CHARITY!**



By **Victoria Alcalá**

Photos **Ana Lorena & Alex Mene**

While many Cubans are by nature somewhat skeptical when it comes to religion, it doesn't take much of a mishap before Our Lady of Charity (often known by the more intimate "Cachita") is invoked by believers and non-believers alike. The Church is well aware that while some people venerate the Marian image of Our Lady of Charity, others worship Ochun, the Orisha of love and money, the river Goddess, who always wears yellow. Still, others manage to worship both the Christian virgin and the goddess of the Yoruba religion syncretized in one.

The image itself is syncretic—part of a process that has occurred through the centuries. The white man, the black man and the mulatto that lie at her feet in a small boat is a reminder of the three men—one black and two Indians—who found a small wooden statue of the Virgin Mary holding the child Jesus in her arms while sailing around the Bay of Nipe in the early 17th century. The statue was fastened to a board with an inscription saying "I am the Virgin of Charity." This is the same diverse, multiracial and devout Cuban people that now make the pilgrimage, rain or shine, and adorn the road with yellow sunflowers, calling out to her over and over: "Praise be to Our Lady of Charity!"

For the Catholic world as a whole, September 8 marks the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is venerated in many countries, cities and regions as their patroness, usually under a specific title or apparition. This is the case of Cuba, which celebrates that day as the feast day of Our Lady of Charity.



Every year, several thousands of Cubans of all ages, races and social position accompany the statue in the traditional procession that takes place in the working-class neighborhood of Centro Habana. This tradition was taken up again after the historic visit of Pope John Paul to Cuba in 1998. The statue of the Virgin is carried on a platform followed by a throng of people that carry candles or flowers—sunflowers mostly. Many wear yellow, which is the color that identifies Our Lady of Charity. The people walk solemnly for several blocks around Nuestra Señora de la Caridad Parrish in Centro Habana.

During the procession, the people sing hymns, pray and shout Viva! to Cuba's Patroness and the Church. Other people follow the procession from the rooftops and porches of their homes. The procession ends at the Parrish of Our Lady of Charity where Mass is held.

Although the principal celebration on this day takes place in Santiago de Cuba at the Virgin's National Sanctuary, this beautiful and moving demonstration of faith takes place all over Cuba. Our Lady of Charity is a symbol of identity for Cubans wherever they may be, and her significance transcends the Catholic faith to the culture and history of Cuba.





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# HAVANA LISTINGS



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# VISUAL ARTS

## MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES. EDIFICIO DE ARTE CUBANO

► THROUGH SEPTEMBER 15

**Rubens y Amberes en blanco y negro** is made up by thirteen engravings, ten of which reproduce original works by Rubens. This work was carried out Flemish and Dutch masters who were summoned by the artist himself to work at his study.

► THROUGH SEPTEMBER 12

**Relatos de una negociación**, by Belgian-Mexican artist Francis Alÿs, exhibits paintings, drawings, sculptures, videos, documents, objects and actions that reflect critically on contemporary society.

## GALERÍA LA ACACIA

► THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30

**Hogar cubano**, by Inti Hernández, is an exhibition of 3D pieces made of wood, videos and performance art, which are connected to elements of an everyday household in the Island, today's reality, opportunities and challenges.

## CENTRO PROVINCIAL DE ARTES PLÁSTICAS Y DISEÑO

► OPENS SEPTEMBER 6

**Acceso directo**, multidisciplinary group show by artists from Mayabeque Province.

## GALERÍA ORÍGENES

► THROUGH SEPTEMBER 25

**CCC 2016**, show by Consuelo Castañeda, a conceptualist painter and engraver of the generation of the 1980s who had not held any exhibition in Cuba for over 20 years. Although it is not a retrospective, it reveals the artist's interests from her beginnings to the present, and her expansion into graphic design, architecture and the digital world.

## CENTRO DE DESARROLLO DE LAS ARTES VISUALES

► THROUGH SEPTEMBER 11

**Fall in Love**, by Alberto Lago is a collection of six large-scale and five small-scale canvases in which the artist makes use of his stylistic, conceptual and formal repertoire through nude figures.

► THROUGH SEPTEMBER 15

**Centrar la periferia**, group show by young artists, curated by Yonlay Cabrera, in which Cuba is considered as an organic whole free of territorial distinctions. Artists: Jeosviel Abstengo (Ciego de Ávila), Liesther Amador (Ciego de Ávila), Lillian Cedeño (Matanzas), Alexander H. Chang (Sancti Spíritus), Raúl Cué (Cienfuegos), Yosleiby Fernández (Mayabeque), Andrys Gil (Mayabeque), Alona Hernández (Cienfuegos), Oslendy Hernández (Mayabeque), Melisa Manguart (Matanzas), Tania Mesa (Ciego de Ávila), Ángel Luis M. Montagne (Sancti Spíritus), Adrián Socorro (Matanzas) and Lázaro Omar Valdés (Cienfuegos).

**Obra reciente de ilustradores de libros infantiles en Cuba** is an exhibition of the most recent work of young Cuban children's book illustrators.

photos by Alex Mene  
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes,  
Edificio de Arte Cubano

# CENTRO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO WIFREDO LAM



## CENTRO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO WIFREDO LAM

THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER  
7

**Planetario. Videomapping artesanal y guiones instalados** de Luis Gárciga presents works produced by the Cuban artist in different Latin American cities, in which Gárciga links the figurative with the symbolic and the abstract.

## GALERÍA HABANA

THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER  
9

**Amanecer**, by Pablo Rosendo, is an aesthetic and sensory adventure, whose visual experiments invite the active participation of the viewer to unravel the ultimate meaning of the exhibition.

THROUGH-  
OUT SEP-  
TEMBER

**Solo show by Antonio Tonel Eligio**, who has used—precise and concise—drawings, paintings, sculptures and installations, to review, from an aesthetics close to conceptualism and minimalism, both the events of his closer environment and universal instincts of man.

## GALERÍA GALIANO

THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER  
24

**Abre los ojos**, group exhibition of painting-installation in which the paintings, abandoning their two-dimensionality, stop being a goal to become the pretext of a visual construction sight. Participating artists include Yonlay Cabrera, Nelson Céspedes, Marlys Fuego, Marcos Gómez, Osy Milián, Yoan Pérez and Carlos Zorrilla.

THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER  
2

**Como la primera vez, Casas**, pays homage to the life and work of the late Ramón Casas, bringing together small- and medium-size drawings and sculptures from the last two decades of his production. The three-dimensional proposals combine elements of wood, metal, plastic, textile and other materials, in compositions that are generally upright, looking like obelisks or monumental towers.

## GRAN TEATRO DE LA HABANA ALICIA ALONSO (THIRD FLOOR)

THROUGH  
DECEMBER  
31

**Fuerza y sangre. Imaginarios de la bandera en el arte cubano** exhibits 160 pieces on various mediums and different trends, esthetics and manifestations (painting, sculpture, installation, printmaking, drawing, photography), by 124 Cuban artists who have repeatedly or occasionally used the Cuban flag in their work. Artists like Raúl Martínez, Nelson Domínguez, Roberto Fabelo, Manuel Mendive, René Francisco, Raúl Corrales and Osvaldo Salas are joined by the younger representatives of the national artistic vanguard in this singular tribute to our flag.



photos by Huberto Valera Jr.

## FOTOTECA DE CUBA

THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Retrospectiva, solo exhibition by photographer José Agraz.

## GALERÍA COLLAGE HABANA

THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER  
23

Group show by important Cuban photographers: Ernesto Rancaño, Jorge Otero, Guibert Rosales, René Peña, Tomás Sánchez, Adrián Fernández.

## GALERÍA ANGELUS

THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER

First Salon of Women Photographers Tina Modotti

## MEMORIAL JOSÉ MARTÍ

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 17

Amor a Cuba, by the Slovak photographer Andrej Palacko, puts together 110 pictures and two large-scale photos that capture historical moments in the Island and Cuban figures from the arts, culture, sports, and the government.



PHOTO-  
GRAPHY



# DANCE



## WORLD PREMIÈRE BY DANZA ABIERTA

SEPTEMBER 9-10, 8:30PM; SEPTEMBER 11, 5PM

TEATRO MELLA

Danza Abierta, one of the most important Cuban contemporary dance companies has created great expectations with the announcement of this première.

## PROGRAM WITH THE ROSARIO CÁRDENAS COMPANY

SEPTEMBER 16-17, 8:30PM; SEPTEMBER 18, 5PM

TEATRO MELLA

A varied program by one of the most experimental dance companies in Cuba today.



## CONCERT PROGRAM WITH THE BALLETS ESPAÑOL DE CUBA

SEPTEMBER 9-10, 8:30PM; SEPTEMBER 11, 5PM

TEATRO NACIONAL. SALA AVELLANEDA

The Spanish Ballet of Cuba will present a selection of choreographies from their repertoire.

## CENTRO DE DANZA

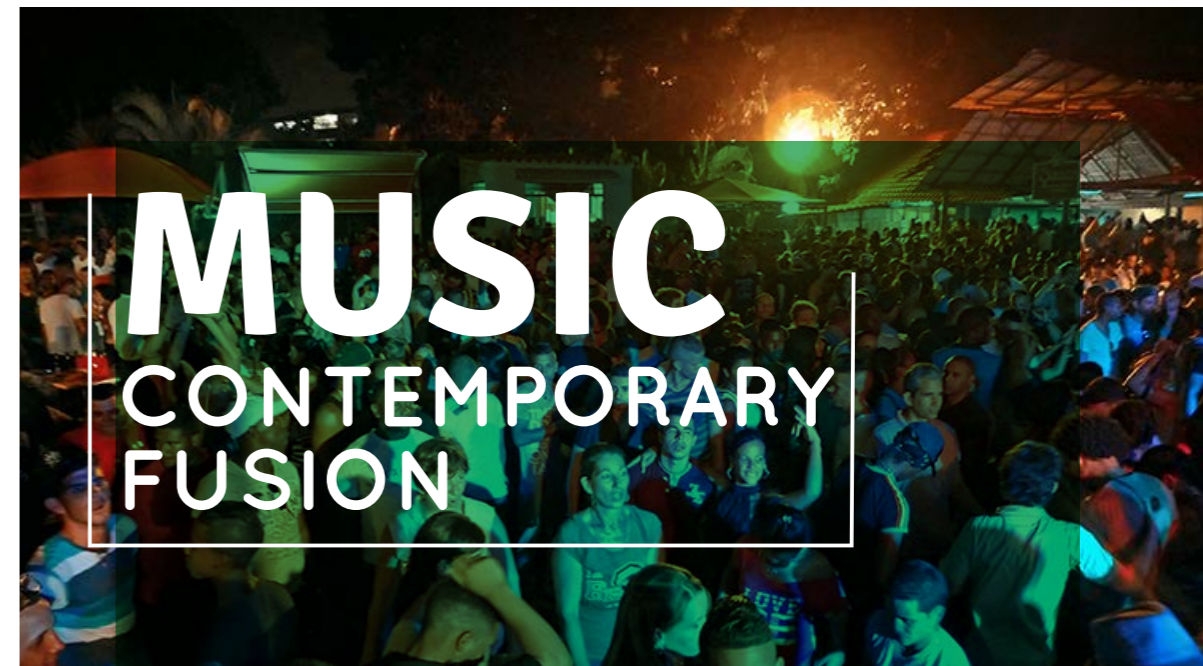
SEPTEMBER 9-18, FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS, 8:30PM; SUNDAYS, 5PM

SALA TITO JUNCO. CENTRO CULTURAL BERTOLT BRECHT

Performances by different companies belonging to the Dance Center.

The contemporary fusion and electronic music scene has expanded recently as new bars and clubs have opened party promoters have organized events in parks and public spaces. Good live music venues include Bertolt Brecht (Wednesdays: Interactivo, El Sauce (check out the Sunday afternoon Máquina de la Melancolía) and Fábrica de Arte Cubano which has concerts most nights Thursday through Sunday as well as impromptu smaller performances inside.

In Havana's burgeoning entertainment district along First Avenue from the Karl Marx theatre to the aquarium you are spoilt for choice with the always popular Don Cangrejo featuring good live music with artists of the likes of Kelvis Ochoa, David Torrens, Interactivo, Diana Fuentes, Descemer Bueno, David Blanco, just to name a few, Las Piedras (insanely busy from 3am) and El Palio and Melem bar—both featuring different singers and acts in smaller more intimate venues.



#### BALNEARIO UNIVERSITARIO EL CORAL

► FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS / 1PM-1AM

Electronic music with rapping, DJing, Vjing, Dj-producers, breakdancing and graffiti writing, among other urban art expressions.

#### CAFÉ CONCERT EL SAUCE

► SUNDAYS / 5PM

La Máquina de la Melancolía, with Frank Delgado and Luis Alberto García

#### CENTRO CULTURAL BERTOLT BRECHT

► WEDNESDAYS / 11PM

Interactivo

► EVERY OTHER FRIDAY / 11PM

Vieja Escuela & Sweet Lizzy Project

#### DIABLO TUN TUN

► SATURDAYS / 11PM

Gens

#### EN GUAYABERA

► SUNDAYS / 5PM

Discotemba

#### CASA DE LA AMISTAD

► SUNDAYS / 5PM

Rock 'n' Roll with Vieja Escuela.

#### HAVANA HARD ROCK

► EVERY OTHER FRIDAY / 6PM

Soul Train, a show of soul music

► SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS / 6PM

Rock cover bands

#### CAFÉ CONCERT EL SAUCE

► SEPTEMBER 8 / 8:30PM

Isis Flores, Ernesto y David Blanco

► SEPTEMBER 9 / 8:30PM

Adrian Berazaín, Fernando Bécquer & Charly Salgado

► SEPTEMBER 10 / 8:30PM

Qva Libre

► SEPTEMBER 15 / 8:30PM

Sweet Lizzy Project

► SEPTEMBER 16 / 8:30PM

Luis Barbería

► SEPTEMBER 30 / 8:30PM

Tony Ávila

► SUNDAYS / 5PM

La Máquina de la Melancolía, with Frank Delgado and Luis Alberto García





# MUSIC

## CONTEMPORARY FUSION

**HOTEL ARMADORES DE SANTANDER**

► FRIDAYS / 5PM

| Trumpet player Yasek Manzano  
and DJ Wichi del Vedado**CAFÉ CANTANTE. TEATRO NACIONAL**

► WEDNESDAYS / 5PM

| Qva Libre

**TERCERA Y 8**

► MONDAYS / 11PM

| Baby Lores

**LA TROPICAL. SALÓN ROSADO**

► SEPTEMBER 15 / 9PM

| Urban Music Concert

► SEPTEMBER 16 / 9PM

| TECNOCUBA: Electronic  
Festival with 50 guest DJs**SUBMARINO AMARILLO**

- MONDAYS / 9PM | Miel con Limón
- SEPTEMBER 1 / 9PM | Habalama
- SEPTEMBER 2 / 9PM | Vieja Escuela
- SEPTEMBER 3 / 9PM | Osamu
- SEPTEMBER 4 / 9PM | Eddie Escobar
- SEPTEMBER 7 / 9PM | Odisea
- SEPTEMBER 8 / 9PM | Gens
- SEPTEMBER 9 / 9PM | Habalama
- SEPTEMBER 10 / 9PM | Sweet Lizzy Proyect
- SEPTEMBER 11 / 9PM | Los Kents
- SEPTEMBER 13 / 9PM | Tierra de Cover
- SEPTEMBER 14 / 9PM | Los Tackson
- SEPTEMBER 15 / 9PM | Gens
- SEPTEMBER 16 / 9PM | Vieja Escuela
- SEPTEMBER 17 / 9PM | Ernesto Blanco
- SEPTEMBER 18 / 9PM | Eddie Escobar
- SEPTEMBER 21 / 9PM | Tierra de Cover
- SEPTEMBER 22 / 9PM | Habalama
- SEPTEMBER 23 / 9PM | Sweet Lizzy Proyect
- SEPTEMBER 24 / 9PM | Osamu
- SEPTEMBER 25 / 9PM | Eddie Escobar
- SEPTEMBER 28 / 9PM | Los Tackson
- SEPTEMBER 29 / 9PM | Gens
- SEPTEMBER 30 / 9PM | Aire Libre

## CASA DE LA MÚSICA DE MIRAMAR

- ▶ ALL DAYS 5 PM, 11 PM Popular dance music
- MONDAYS 11 PM Sur Caribe
- TUESDAYS 11 PM Pedrito Calvo
- WEDNESDAYS 5PM/11 PM Juan Guillermo Adalberto Álvarez
- THURSDAYS 5 PM Manolito Simonet
- SATURDAYS 5 PM Cristian y Rey
- SUNDAYS 5 PM Bamboleo

# SALSA TIMBA

## SALÓN ROSADO DE LA TROPICAL

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 2, 9PM Disco Timba Cubana
- SEPTEMBER 3, 9PM Cabaret La Tropical: Compañía Santiago Alfonso y Mayko de Alma
- SEPTEMBER 4, 4PM Charanga Latina
- SEPTEMBER 10, 9PM Cabaret La Tropical: Compañía Santiago Alfonso, Bamboleo y Osaín del Monte
- SEPTEMBER 11, 5PM Van Van
- SEPTEMBER 17, 9PM Cabaret La Tropical: Compañía Santiago Alfonso, Elito Revé, Haila, Paulo FG, Mayito, Mandy y otros
- SEPTEMBER 18, 4PM Cristian y Rey
- SEPTEMBER 23, 9PM Disco Timba Cubana
- SEPTEMBER 24, 9PM Cabaret La Tropical
- SEPTEMBER 25, 5PM Alexander Abreu
- SEPTEMBER 30, 9PM Disco Timba Cubana

## CABARET PICO BLANCO. HOTEL SAINT JOHN'S

- ▶ WEDNESDAYS / 10PM
- | Popular dance music (Vacilón)

## CAFÉ CANTANTE. TEATRO NACIONAL

- ▶ MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, FRIDAYS / 11PM
- | Popular dance music

## CASA DE 18

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 8:30PM
- | Iván y Fiebre Latina
- ▶ SATURDAYS / 8PM
- | Ahí Namá

## TERCERA Y 8

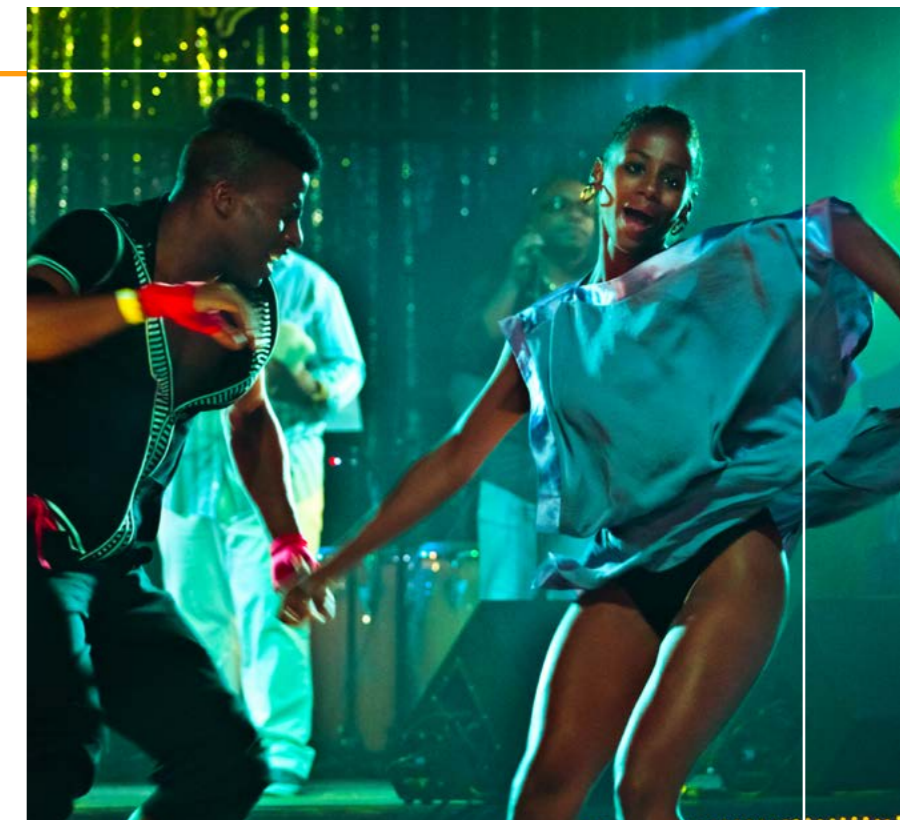
- ▶ WEDNESDAYS / 11PM
- | Alain Daniel

## DIABLO TUNTÚN

- ▶ THURSDAYS / 11PM
- | Popular dance music (NG La Banda)

## JARDINES DEL 1830

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 10PM
- | Azúcar Negra
- ▶ SUNDAYS / 10PM
- | Grupo Moncada



# MUSIC

# JAZZ

## Jazz Café

Mellow, sophisticated and freezing due to extreme air conditioning, the Jazz Café is not only an excellent place to hear some of Cuba's top jazz musicians, but the open-plan design also provides for a good bar atmosphere if you want to chat. Less intimate than La Zorra y el Cuervo – located opposite Melia Cohiba Hotel.

## Café Jazz Miramar

SHOWS: 11 PM - 2AM

This new jazz club has quickly established itself as one of the very best places to hear some of Cuba's best musicians jamming. Forget about smoke filled lounges, this is clean, bright—take the fags outside. While it is difficult to get the exact schedule and in any case expect a high level of improvisation when it is good it is very good. A full house is something of a mixed house since on occasion you will feel like holding up your own silence please sign! Nonetheless it gets the thumbs up from us.

### CAFÉ CONCERT EL SAUCE

▶ **SEPTEMBER 27, 10PM** Zule Guerra (singer) and Blues de La Habana

### CASA DEL ALBA

▶ **SEPTEMBER 9 8 PM** Ruy López-Nussa y La Academia

### UNEAC

▶ **SEPTEMBER 15, 5PM** La Esquina del Jazz, hosted by showman Bobby Carcassés



CAFÉ MIRAMAR

- ▶ **September 1, 10pm** Albertico Lescay and his project Formas
- September 2, 10pm** Pablo Menéndez y Mezcla
- September 3, 10pm** César López
- September 4, 6pm** Los Gafas
- 11pm** Alejandro Falcón
- September 6, 10pm** Delvis Ponce & Experimental Jazz
- September 7, 10pm** Gala Mayor
- September 8, 10pm** Zule Guerra y Blues de La Habana
- September 9, 10pm** Lazarito Valdés y Piano del Solar
- September 10, 2pm** Maraca
- 10pm** César López
- September 11, 10pm** Los Gafas
- September 13, 10pm** Albertico Lescay and his project Formas
- September 14, 10pm** Yasek Manzano and guest DJs
- September 15, 9pm** Michel Herrera y Madre Tierra Project, & Natjim Ouixxol

# MUSIC JAZZ



- September 16, 9pm Yadasny Portillo and his group Cauce
- September 17, 2pm Zule Guerra  
10pm César López
- September 18, 5pm Los Gafas  
10pm Ruy López-Nussa
- September 20, 10pm Ernan López-Nussa, César López & Havana in Grand Manager
- September 21, 10pm Joven Jazz
- September 22, 10pm Zule Guerra y Blues de La Habana
- September 23, 10pm Maraca
- September 24, 2pm Alejandro Falcón  
10pm César López
- September 25, 2pm Los Gafas  
10pm Reinier Mariño
- September 27, 10pm Zule Guerra & Blues de La Habana
- September 28, 10pm Gala Mayor
- September 29, 10pm Albertico Lescay and his project Formas
- September 30, 10pm Pablo Menéndez & Mezcla

## PABELLÓN CUBA

- ▶ **SEPTEMBER 1** Dennys Carbó y Jazz en Trance  
5 PM
- SEPTEMBER 8** Open Mind  
5 PM
- SEPTEMBER 15, 5 PM** Ruly Herrera y su cuarteto



# MUSIC BOLERO, FOLKLORE, SON AND TROVA

## CASA DE 18

- ▶ WEDNESDAYS / 8PM | Héctor Téllez
- THURSDAYS / 8PM | José Valladares
- FRIDAYS / 8PM | Leidis Díaz
- SUN / 4PM | Georgeana

## CLUB KARACHI

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 30 / 6PM
- | Rafael Espín

## CASA MEMORIAL SALVADOR ALLENDE

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 30 / 6PM
- | Ángel Quintero and guests

## CASONA DE LÍNEA

- ▶ SUNDAYS / 8PM
- | Trova

## DOS GARDENIAS

- ▶ WEDNESDAYS / 10PM
- | Haila María Mompié

## CENTRO IBEROAMERICANO DE LA DÉCIMA

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 25 / 3PM
- | El Jardín de la Gorda with trovadors from every generation

## CENTRO CULTURAL FRESA Y CHOCOLATE

- ▶ THURSDAYS / 9PM
- | Trova with Frank Martínez
- SUNDAYS / 6PM | Singer Leidis Díaz

## CLUB AMANECER

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 5PM
- | Conjunto de Arsenio Rodríguez

## DELIRIO HABANERO

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 10PM | Son en Klab
- SATURDAYS / 10PM | Sonyku

## DIABLO TUN TUN

- ▶ THURSDAYS / 5PM
- | Trova with Ray Fernández

## HURÓN AZUL, UNEAC

- ▶ SATURDAYS / 9PM
- | Bolero Night

## ASOCIACIÓN YORUBA DE CUBA

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 8:30PM
- | Obbiní Batá (folkloric group)

## CABARET EL TURQUINO. HOTEL HABANA LIBRE

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 11PM
- | Mónica Mesa

## CASA DE LA AMISTAD

- ▶ SATURDAYS / 9PM
- | Roberto Javier

## LE SELECT

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 9:30PM
- | Grupo Moncada

## EL JELENGUE DE AREÍTO

- ▶ TUESDAYS / 5PM | Conjunto Chappottín
- WEDNESDAYS / 5PM | Trova
- THURSDAYS / 5PM | Conjunto Arsenio Rodríguez
- FRIDAYS / 5PM | Rumberos de Cuba
- SUNDAYS / 5PM | Rumba

## GATO TUERTO

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 5PM | La Hora Infidel, with music, visual arts, literature and more.
- FRIDAYS / 9PM | Osdalgia
- DAILY / 8PM | Gato Tuerto Nights, hosted by Julio Acanda

## HOTEL TELÉGRAFO

- ▶ FRIDAYS / 9:30PMPM
- | Ivette Cepeda

## CAFÉ TEATRO BERTOLT BRECHT

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 24 / 3PM
- | Rafael Espín and guests

## PABELLÓN CUBA

- ▶ TUESDAYS / 4PM | Trova with Fidel Díaz and Ihosvani Bernal
- FRIDAYS / 4PM | Tres Tazas with trovador Silvio Alejandro
- SEPTEMBER 11 & 18 / 2PM | Guatecazo, Cuban country music
- SEPTEMBER 11 / 6PM | Waldo Mendoza



# CLASSICAL MUSIC

## CASA DEL ALBA

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 4, 5 PM En Confluencia, dedicated to guitar. Florida.
- SEPTEMBER 11, 5PM Young Composers.
- SEPTEMBER 18, 5PM De Nuestra América.
- SEPTEMBER 25, 5PM Seis por Derecho, with guitarist Bárbara Milián and guests

## BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL JOSÉ MARTÍ

- ▶ SATURDAYS, 4 PM Concerts by chamber soloists and ensembles.

## SALA GONZALO ROIG. PALACIO DEL TEATRO LÍRICO NACIONAL

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 25, 5 PM Cuerda Dominical, with guitarist Luis Manuel Molina.

## TEATRO MARTÍ

- ▶ FRI, SAT & SUN, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 11, 6 PM Les Misérables, musical by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, adaptation and production by Alfonso Menéndez.

## IGLESIA DE PAULA

- ▶ SEPTEMBER 2 7 PM Concierto barroco para teclas, concert by Gabriela Mulen and David Pérez (clavichord and organ) and the Ars Longa Early Music Ensemble.
- SEPTEMBER 3 7 PM Caprices-suites-mascaradas. Un viaje musical por la Europa barroca, with Claudia Gerauer (recorder) and Stefan Baier (keyboards).
- SEPTEMBER 9 7 PM Reflejos. Trascendencia de la suite barroca will present flutist Alberto Rosas, the Ars Longa Early Music Ensemble and guest soloists.
- SEPTEMBER 10, 7 PM Obras para órgano del sur de Alemania, concert with works by Georg Muffat, Johann Jakob Froberger, Johann Pachelbel and Johann Kaspar Kerll, performed by organist Moisés Santiesteban, and guest organists Stefan Baier and David Pérez.
- SEPTEMBER 16, 7 PM Terra di la musica announces pieces from the Italian Baroque for violoncello performed by Alejandro Saúl Martínez and David Pérez, accompanied by the Ars Longa Early Music Ensemble.
- SEPTEMBER 16, 7 PM Terra di la musica announces pieces from the Italian Baroque for violoncello performed by Alejandro Saúl Martínez and David Pérez, accompanied by the Ars Longa Early Music Ensemble.
- SEPTEMBER 17, 7 PM Ciacconas y sonatas, performed by soloists from the Ars Longa Early Music Ensemble, who will sing and play works from the early and late Baroque by composers Marco Uccellini, Biagio Marini, Tarquinio Merula, Georg Philipp Telemann, Johann Friedrich Fasch and Arcangelo Corelli.
- SEPTEMBER 23, 7 PM El culto mariano en los santuarios latinoamericanos Christmas songs dedicated to the Virgin Mary and to the saints composed during the 17th- and 18th-century viceregal America, performed by the Ars Longa Early Music Ensemble.
- SEPTEMBER 24, 7 PM Ab imo pectore, performed by the Exsulten Early Music Ensemble.



# THEATRE

## Mas añejo sabe mejor

### TEATRO MELLA

GRUPO ONONDIVEPA, SEPTEMBER 23-24,  
8:30PM; SEPTEMBER 25, 5PM

Comedy show that combines  
audiovisual materials, sketches,  
monologues and song.

## Diálogo de fugitivos

### SALA ADOLFO LLAURADÓ

TEATRO DEL SOL, FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS,  
8:30PM; SUNDAYS, 5PM

This little known piece by Bertolt  
Brecht, with accurate humor, throw  
together a scientist and a laborer who  
are being persecuted by the fascists.  
During their plight, they put their ideas,  
which conditioned by each of their  
social status, into debate.

## Otra vez Jehová con el cuento de Sodoma

### CAFÉ TEATRO. CENTRO CULTURAL BERTOLT BRECHT

PEQUEÑO TEATRO DE LA HABANA /  
PRODUCTION: JOSÉ MILIÁN. FRIDAYS AND  
SATURDAYS, 8:30 PM; SUNDAYS, 5PM

Written by Cuban playwright José  
Milián, National Theater Prizewinner  
and director of Pequeño Teatro de La  
Habana, the play is based on biblical  
texts and documents that give grounds  
for laughing, dancing and, especially,  
reflecting.

## Delantal todo sucio de huevos

### TEATRO RAQUEL REVUELTA

TEATRO DE DOS / PRODUCTION JULIO CÉSAR  
RAMÍREZ

SEPTEMBER 9-18, FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS,  
8:30PM; SUNDAYS, 5PM

Play by Brazilian playwright Marcos  
Barbosa in which a traditional family  
is faced with the return of their son  
turned into a woman after 20 years of  
absence from home.



# FOR KIDS

## Había una vez un circo

### CARPA TROMPOLOCO

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS, 4PM & 7PM

Circus show by Cuba's National Circus Company

## Fantasías

### CINE YARA

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS, 3PM

Circus show with magic tricks, pole dance, aerial ribbons, lassos, whips, acrobatics, hula-hoop, juggling, clowns and much more.

## Puppets Galore

### TEATRO DE TÍTERES EL ARCA

Saturdays, 3pm

Puppet shows by El Arca Puppet Theater Company



photos by Huberto Valera Jr.

# EVENTS IN HAVANA



## Arte en La Rampa

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 18

TUESDAYS-FRIDAYS, 2-8PM; SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS, 10AM-8PM. CLOSED MONDAYS AND JULY 30  
PABELLÓN CUBA

As is customary every summer since the year 2000, the Art at La Rampa Crafts Fair opened its door at the Pabellón Cuba, emblematic building of 1960s Cuban architecture, with an attractive offer that includes the sale of serigraphs, footwear, clothing, costume jewelry, fans, household goods, furniture, ornaments, and much more. Fashion shows, concerts and activities for the kiddies will also take place during the Fair.

This edition has 50 individual stands and around 10 from the Cuban Fund of Cultural Property, as well as products from Egrem, Artex, Génesis, ICAIC, UNEAC, Abdala, Editorial de la Mujer, Casa de las Américas, Distribuidora Nacional del Libro, Centro Provincial del Libro and Casa del Abanico. The provinces of Cienfuegos, Matanzas, Artemisa, Mayabeque and Havana are being represented by their craftspersons. Specialized stores, like the Tienda del Mueble (furniture) and designer Freixas (clothes) are also showcasing their wares.



## Habanarte

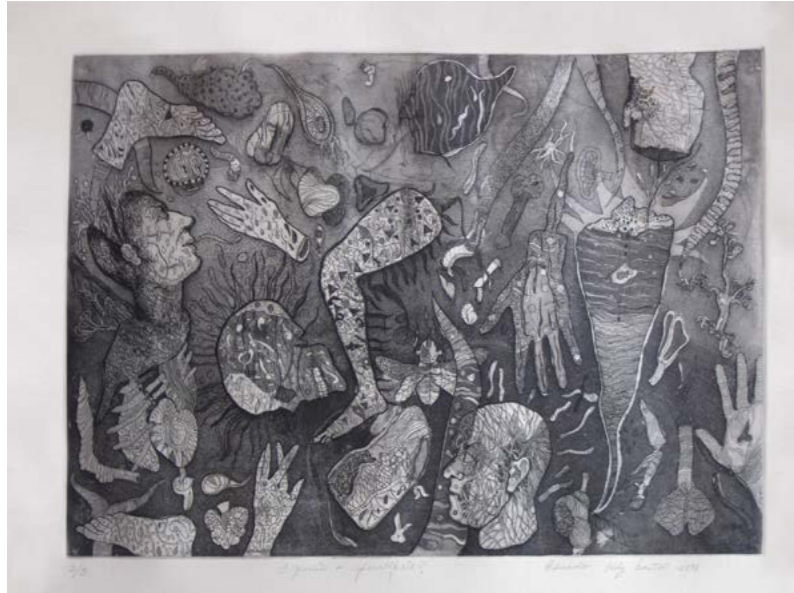
SEPTEMBER 8-18

CULTURAL VENUES IN HAVANA

Habanarte is an event that involves the participation of artists of all kinds, will be held from September 11-21. With special performances added to the usual cultural program in Havana, Habanarte aims to give a true picture of what is happening in Cuban culture today, from the traditional to the most innovative and avant-garde. This year the event, which will revolve around young Cuban art, will include a Special Exhibition at the Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales; performances by dance companies Rosario Cárdenas, Ballet Español de Cuba, Danza Abierta and the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional; musical performances by Aldo López-Gavilán, Interactivo, Roberto Fonseca, Gerardo Alfonso, Polito Ibáñez, Raúl Torres, Frank Delgado, Telmary, Yasek Manzano, Van Van, Bamboleo and Charanga Habanera, among many other.

From September 14-17, the Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso will host the first International Forum of Front Line Music aimed at assessing and creating mechanisms for the promotion of Cuban music abroad. The forum will include fairs, lectures and showcases. There will also be a special tour of Guanabacoa, the cradle of great figures of Cuban music such as Ernesto Lecuona, Ignacio Villa (Bola de Nieve) and Rita Montaner, among others, and a region of significant cultural and heritage values.

# EVENTS IN HAVANA



## IX Encuentro Nacional de Grabado

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 21

GALLERIES AND CULTURAL CENTERS IN HAVANA

This exhibition/competition will be open at the Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales on September 23. Several other galleries in Old Havana, plus UNEAC's Martínez Villena Gallery will join the meeting with their own shows. A theoretical event will be held from September 26-30 at Havana's Historical Center. The topics that will be discussed include printmaking and its creators in contemporary Cuban art, contemporary Cuban graphic art and the diverse mediums, teaching printmaking in Cuba and the insertion of this art form in the art market.



## Festival de Contratenores del Mundo

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 9

HAVANA

Organized by the Leo Brouwer Office, musicians from 11 countries will participate in 15 concerts, with several world premieres and performances of works composed from the Renaissance to the 21st century in the Festival of Countertenors of the World. The second contest of countertenors (October 4 to 6) will also be held as part of the event.

# EVENTS AROUND CUBA

## Concurso Internacional de Danza Atlántico Norte

SEPTEMBER 24-30 , TEATRO EDDY SUÑOL, HOLGUÍN

Convened by the Ukrainian Vladimir Malakhov, undisputed star of world ballet, and under the auspices of the Codanza, the contemporary dance company based in Holguín, participants will be eligible for prizes for best soloists and best companies during this dance festival in which audiences will be able to enjoy the performances of young figures of Cuban classical ballet and contemporary dance.



## Festival Nacional Metal HG

SEPTEMBER 16-25 , HOLGUÍN

One of a kind in the eastern part of the country, this festival promotes a space in which different generations of Cubans, who decades ago defended a music considered as “resistance music,” can exchange experiences with more recent bands under absolute freedom of expression and aesthetics



## V Concurso Internacional de Fotografía de Naturaleza

SEPTEMBER 12-17, PROTECTED NATURAL LANDSCAPE, TOPES DE COLLANTES

The 5th Nature Photography Contest will be held in the Natural Protected Landscape Topes de Collantes, in the heart of the Guamuhaya mountain range, 20 kilometers from the city of Trinidad, World Heritage Site. Topes de Collantes covers a hilly area of more than twenty thousand hectares in the provinces of Villa Clara, Cienfuegos and Sancti Spiritus, with elevations ranging between 250 and 900 meters above sea level.

This protected area stands out for its rich and unique biodiversity. Its beautiful landscape is formed by lush forests, many rivers and streams with fanciful waterfalls and natural pools of crystal-clear water

Participating photographers will compete in this ideal landscape. Pictures will be taken in foot trails chosen among the contestants by drawing lots: The trails are La Batata, Codina, Caburní, Vegas Grandes, El Nicho, Camino de la Barbera, Guanayara, El Cubano, Gruta Nengoa and night tours through trails devoted to amphibians.

# HAVANA'S best places to eat

Los Mercaderes

## EL ATELIER

EXPERIMENTAL FUSION

Interesting décor, interesting menu.

Calle 5 e/ Paseo y 2, Vedado  
(+53) 7-836-2025

## BELLA CIAO

HOMELY ITALIAN

Great service, good prices. A real home from home.

Calle 19 y 72, Playa  
(+53) 7-206-1406

## CAFÉ BOHEMIA

CAFÉ

Bohemian feel. Great sandwiches, salads & juices

Calle San Ignacio #364, Habana Vieja

## CAFÉ LAURENT

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Attractive penthouse restaurant with breezy terrace.

Calle M #257, e/ 19 y 21, Vedado  
(+53) 7-831-2090

## LOS MERCADERES

CUBAN-CREOLE

Beautiful colonial house. Polpular place whit great food and good service.

Calle Mercaderes No. 207 altos e/ Lamparilla y Amargura. H.Vieja  
(+53) 7861 2437

## OTRA MANERA

INTERNATIONAL

Beautiful modern decor. Interesting menu and good service.

Calle #35 e/ 20 y 41, Playa.  
(+53) 7-203-8315

## CASA MIGLIS

SWEDISH-CUBAN FUSION

Oasis of good food & taste in Centro Habana

Lealtad #120 e/ Ánimas y Lagunas, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-864-1486

## MEDITERRÁNEO HAVANA

INTERNATIONAL

Interesting and diverse menu. Beautiful terrace.

Calle 13 #406, e/ E y F, Vedado.  
(+53) 7-832 4894  
<http://www/medhavana.com>

## EL COCINERO

INTERNACIONAL

Industrial chic alfresco rooftop with a buzzing atmosphere

Calle 26, e/ 11 y 13, Vedado.  
(+53) 7-832-2355

## CORTE PRÍNCIPE

ITALIAN

Sergio's place. Simple décor, spectacular food.

Calle 9na esq. a 74, Miramar  
(+53) 5-255-9091

## RÍO MAR

INTERNATIONAL

Contemporary décor. Great sea-view. Good food.

Ave. 3raA y Final #11, La Puntilla, Miramar  
(+53) 7-209-4838

## D.EUTIMIA

CUBAN/CREOLE

Absolutely charming. Excellent Cuban/creole food.

Callejón del Chorro #60C, Plaza de la Catedral, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7 861 1332

## LA FONTANA

INTERNACIONAL

Consistently good food, attentive service. Old school.

Calle 46 #305 esq. a 3ra, Miramar  
(+53) 7-202-8337

## IVÁN CHEF

SPANISH

Brilliantly creative and rich food.

Aguacate #9 esq. a Chacón, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-863-9697

## EL LITORAL

INTERNATIONAL

Watch the world go by at the Malecón's best restaurant.

Malecón #161 e/ K y L, Vedado  
(+53) 7-830-2201

## SANTY

SUSHI/ORIENTAL

Authentic fisherman's shack servicing world-class sushi.

Calle 240A #3023 esq. a 3ra C, Jaimanitas  
(+53) 5-286-7039

## NAZDAROVIE

SOVIET

Well designed Soviet décor excellent food & service.

Malecon #25, 3rd floor e Prado y Carcel, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-860-2947

## SAN CRISTÓBAL

CUBAN/CREOLE

Deservedly popular. Consistently great food. Kitsch décor.

San Rafael #469 e/ Lealtad y Campanario, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-860-9109

TOP PICK ★



## El Litoral

**Style of food:** International  
**Cost:** Expensive  
**Type of place:** Private (Paladar)

**Best for** Quality décor, good service and great food. Best new place recently opened.

**Don't Miss** Drinking a cocktail at sunset watching the world go by on the Malecón

Malecón #161 e/ K y L, Vedado.  
 (+53) 7-830-2201

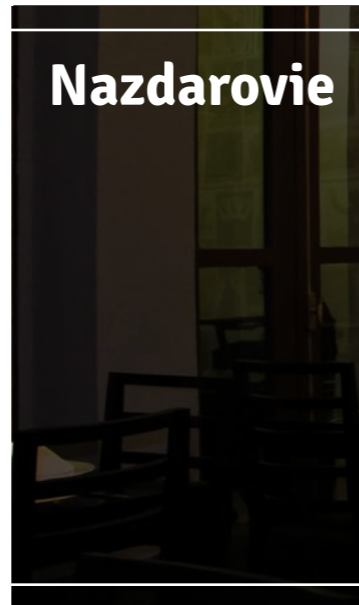
**Style of food:** Soviet  
**Cost:** Moderate  
**Type of place:** Private (Paladar)

**Best for** Getting a flavor of Cuban-Soviet history along with babuska's traditional dishes in a classy locale.

**Don't miss** Vodka sundowners on the gorgeous terrace overlooking the malecon.

Malecon #25 3rd floor e/ Prado y Carcel, Centro Habana  
 (+53) 7-860-2947

## Nazdarovie



TOP PICK ★

TOP PICK ★



## Otra Manera

**Style of food:** International  
**Cost:** Moderate  
**Type of place:** Private (Paladar)

**Best for** Beautiful modern décor and good food.

**Don't miss** Pork rack of ribs in honey. Sweet & sour sauce and grilled pineapple

Calle 35 #1810 e/ 20 y 41, Playa  
 (+53) 7-203-8315

TOP PICK ★



TOP PICK ★

## La Guarida

**Style of food:** Contemporary fusion

**Cost:** Expensive

**Type of place:** Private (Paladar)

**Best for** Authentic, charming and intimate atmosphere in Cuba's best known restaurant. Great food, professional. Classy.

**Don't Miss** Uma Thurman, Beyoncé or the Queen of Spain if they happen to be dining next to you.

Concordia #418 e/ Gervasio y Escobar, Centro Habana.  
(+53) 7-866-9047

**Style of food:** Traditional

**Cost:** Moderate

**Type of place:** Private (Paladar)

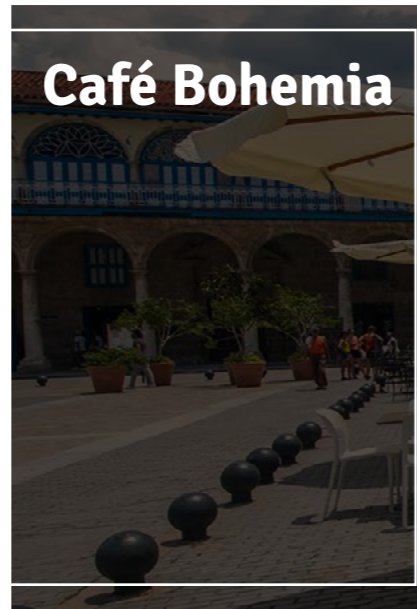
**Best for** taking a break from long walks and seeking shelter from the stifling Cuban.

**Don't miss** location in the cool inner courtyard of the colonial building.

Ground floor of the Palacio de la Casa del Conde de Lombillo, Calle San Ignacio #364

(+53) 5- 403-1 568, (+53) 7-836-6567 [www.havanaboheemia.com](http://www.havanaboheemia.com)

## Café Bohemia



TOP PICK ★



TOP PICK ★

## Iván Chef Justo

**Style of food:** Spanish

**Cost:** Expensive

**Type of place:** Private (Paladar)

**Best for** Spectacular innovative food. Light and airy place where it always seems to feel like Springtime.

**Don't Miss** The lightly spiced grilled mahi-mahi served with organic tomato relish. Try the suckling pig and stay for the cuatro leches.

Aguacate #9, Esq. Chacón, Habana Vieja.  
(+53) 7-863-9697 / (+53) 5-343-8540

TOP PICK ★



## Los Mercaderes

Style of food Cuban creole

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

**Best for** Beautiful colonial house. Popular place with great food and good service.

**Don't miss** Wonderful balcony view to the classic street.

Calle Mercaderes No. 207 altos e/ Lamparilla y Amargura. Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7861 2437 y (+53) 5290 1531

## Casa Miglis

Style of food Swedish-Cuban fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

**Best for** The beautifully designed interior, warm ambience and Miglis's personality create the feeling of an oasis in Central Havana.

**Don't Miss** Chatting with Mr Miglis. The Skaargan prawns, beef Chilli and lingonberries.

Lealtad #120 e/ Ánimas y Lagunas, Centro Habana

[www.casamiglis.com](http://www.casamiglis.com)

(+53) 7-864-1486



TOP PICK ★



# HAVANA'S best Bars & Clubs

Corner Café

## TRADITIONAL BARS

### ■ EL FLORIDITA

Hemingway's daiquiri bar.  
Touristy but always full of life.  
Great cocktails.

Obispo #557 esq. a Monserrate, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-867-1299

### ■ 1950S TRADITIONALS

Guest performers include BUENA  
VISTA SOCIAL CLUB MEMBERS

Sociedad Rosalía de Castro, Egido 504 e/ Monte  
y Dragones, Old Havana (+53) 5-270-5271

### ■ SLOPPY JOE'S BAR

Recently (beautifully) renovated.  
Full of history. Popular. Lacks a  
little 'grime'.

Ánimas esq. a Zulueta, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-866-7157

### ■ CERVECERÍA

ANTIGUO ALMACÉN DE LA MADERA Y  
EL TABACO

Microbrewery located  
overlooking the restored docks  
Simply brilliant.

Avenida del Puerto y San Ignacio, La Habana  
Vieja

## CONTEMPORARY BARS

### ■ EL COCINERO

Fabulous rooftop setting, great  
service, cool vibe.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado  
(+53) 7-832-2355

### ■ ESPACIOS

Laid back contemporary bar with  
a real buzz in the back beer-  
garden.

Calle 10 #510, e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar  
(+53) 7-836-3031

### ■ TABARISH

A comfortable place to chat /  
hang out with your friends. Great  
service.

Calle 20 #503, e/ 5ta y 7ma.  
(+53) 7-202-9188

### ■ FAC

X Alfonso's new cultural center.  
Great concerts, funky young  
scene.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado  
(next to the Puente de Hierro)

(+53) 5-329-6325  
[www.facebook.com/fabrica.deartecubano](http://www.facebook.com/fabrica.deartecubano)

**Sangri-La**

TOP PICK ★

CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

**Best for** Hanging out with the cool kids on the Havana Farundula in the most popular bar/club.

**Don't Miss** The best gin and tonic in Havana.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar

(+53) 5-264-8343

**CONTEMPORARY BARS/CLUBS****DON CANGREJO**

Love it/hate it—this is the oldest Friday night party place and is still going strong. Outdoor by the sea.

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 & 18, Miramar  
(+53) 7-204-3837

**BOLABANA**

Packed night after night with a young dressed-up clientele wanting to party. Don't go looking for Buena Vista Social Club!

Calle 39 esq. 50, Playa  
(+53) 5 -294-3572

**CORNER CAFÉ**

Great live music every day. very frequently by locals. Good tapas.

Calle B e/ 1ra y 3ra. Plaza de la Revolución  
(+53) 7837 1220

**SANGRI-LA**

For the cool kids. Basement bar/club which gets packed at weekends.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar  
(+53) 7-264-8343

**GAY-FRIENDLY****CABARET LAS VEGAS**

Can get dark and smoky but great drag show (11pm) from Divino—one of Cuba's most accomplished drag acts.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar  
(+53) 7-264-8343

**FASHION BAR HAVANA**

A superb example of queer class meets camp, accompanied by a fantastic floor show.

San Juan de Dios, esq. a Aguacate, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-867-1676

**CAFÉ BAR MADRIGAL**

Pop décor, fancy cocktails, and the staff's supercilious attitude, this is a gathering spot for all types of folks.

Calle 17 #809 e/ 2 y 4, Vedado  
(+53) 7-831-2433

**Corner Café**

TOP PICK ★

CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

**Best for** Frequently by locals. Great tapas.

**Don't Miss** Live music every day.

Calle B e/ 1ra y 3ra. Plaza de la Revolución

(+53) 5-264-8343

TOP PICK ★



## Espacios

## CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

**Best for** Laid back lounge atmosphere in the garden area which often has live music. Good turnover of people.

**Don't Miss** Ray Fernandez, Tony Avila, Yasek Mazano playing live sets in the garden.

Calle 10 #510 e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar  
(+53) 7-202-2921

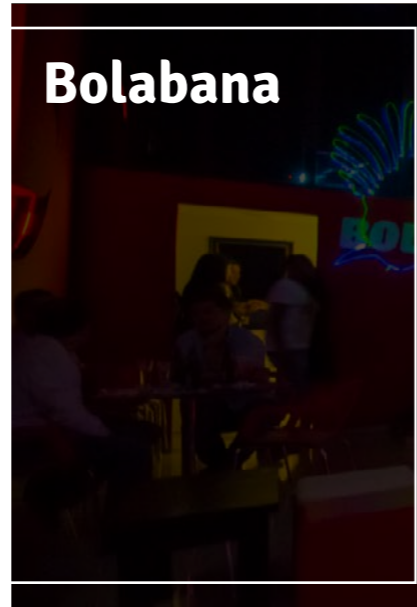
## CONTEMPORARY

**Best for** Trendy new location near Salón Rosado de la Tropicana.

**Don't Miss** Hipsters meet the Havana Farándula.

Calle 39 esq. 50, Playa

## Bolabana



TOP PICK ★

TOP PICK ★



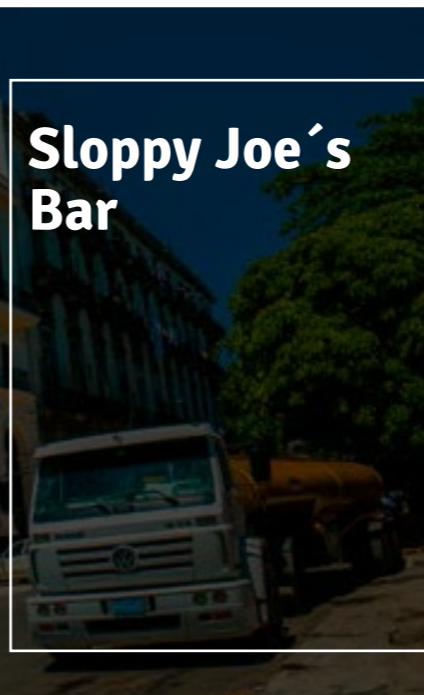
## Sloppy Joe's Bar

## BAR / TRADITIONAL

**Best for** Immense original bar lovingly restored. Good service, History.

**Worst for** Not quite grimy. Too clean.

Ánimas, esq. Zulueta La Habana Vieja,  
(07) 866-7157





TOP PICK ★

## Fábrica de Arte

### CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

**Best for** X Alfonso's superb new cultural center has something for everyone

**Don't Miss** Artists who exhibit work should demonstrate ongoing creativity and a commitment for social transformation.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado  
(next to the Puente de Hierro)

### GAY FRIENDLY

**Best for** A superb example of queer class meets camp, accompanied by a fantastic floor show.

**Don't Miss** The staff performing after 11pm

San Juan de Dios, esq. a Aguacate, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-867-1676

## Fashion Bar Havana



TOP PICK ★



TOP PICK ★

## Bertolt Brecht

### CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

**Best for** Hanging out with hip & funky Cubans who like their live music.

**Don't Miss** Interactivo playing on a Wednesday evening.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado  
(+53) 7-830-1354



# Traditionals of the 50's

A Cuban Music Project Introducing the Show

*"A 1950's Cuban Evening"*

Venue: Sociedad Rosalía de Castro,  
Egido 504 e/ Monte y Dragones, Old  
Havana. Daily from 9:30 pm.

GUESTS: BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB AND AFROCUBAN ALL  
STARS MEMBERS & CUBA'S SHOW WOMAN JUANA BACALLAO



rumba

guaguancó

guaracha

son

bolero

cha-cha-cha

conga



<http://tradicionalesdelos50musicacubana.com> (537) 5 2705271

# HAVANA'S

## best live music venues



### CONCERT VENUES

#### KARL MARX THEATRE

World class musicians perform prestigious concerts in Cuba's best equipped venue.

Calle 1ra esq. a 10, Miramar  
(+53) 7-203-0801

#### BASÍLICA SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS

A truly beautiful church, which regularly hosts fabulous classical music concerts.

Oficios y Amargura, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, Habana Vieja

#### FÁBRICA DE ARTE

X Alfonso's new cultural center. Great concerts inside (small and funky) and outside (large and popular!).

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado (next to the Puente de Hierro)

#### SALA COVARRUBIAS

TEATRO NACIONAL

Recently renovated, one of Cuba's most prestigious venues for a multitude of events.

Paseo y 39, Plaza de la Revolución.

### SALSA/TIMBA

#### CAFÉ CANTANTE MI HABANA

Attracts the best Cuban musicians. Recently renovated with an excellent new sound system.

Ave. Paseo esq. a 39, Plaza de la Revolución  
(+53) 7-878-4273

#### CAJA DE LA MÚSICA

CENTRO HABANA

A little rough around the edges but spacious. For better or worse, this is ground zero for the best in Cuban salsa.

Galiano e/ Neptuno y Concordia, C. Habana  
(+53) 7-860-8296/4165

#### CAJA DE LA MÚSICA

MIRAMAR

Smaller and more up-market than its newer twin in Centro Habana. An institution in the Havana salsa scene.

Calle 20 esq. a 35, Miramar  
(+53) 7-204-0447

#### SALÓN ROSADO DE LA TROPICAL

The legendary beer garden where Arsenio tore it up. Look for a salsa/timba gig on a Sat night and a Sun matinee.

Ave. 41 esq. a 46, Playa  
(+53) 7-203-5322

## CONTEMPORARY

### CAFÉ TATRO BERTOLT BRECHT

Think MTV Unplugged when musicians play. Hip, funky and unique with an artsy Cuban crowd.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado  
(+53) 7-830-1354

### DON CANGREJO

Love it/hate it—this is the oldest Friday night party place and is still going strong. Outdoor by the sea.

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 y 18, Miramar  
(+53) 7-204-3837

### EL SAUCE

Great outdoor concert venue to hear the best in contemporary & Nueva Trova live in concert.

Ave. 9na #12015 e/ 120 y 130, Playa  
(+53) 7-204-6428

### TEATRO DE BELLAS ARTES

Small intimate venue inside Cuba's most prestigious arts museum. Modern.

Trocadero e/ Zulueta y Monserrate,  
Habana Vieja.

## TROVA & TRADITIONAL

### BARBARAM PEPITO'S BAR

Some of the best Cuban Nueva Trova musicians perform in this small and intimate environment.

Calle 26 esq. a Ave. del Zoológico. Nuevo Vedado  
(+53) 7-881-1808

### GATO TUERTO

Late night place to hear fabulous bolero singers. Can get smoky.

Calle O entre 17 y 19, Vedado  
(+53) 7-833-2224

### TRADICIONALES DE LOS 50

The 1950s traditionals, a project created over 10 years ago, pays tribute to the Golden Era of Cuban music: the 1950s.

Sociedad Rosalia de Castro, Egido #504 e/  
Monte y Dragones, Havana Vieja  
(+53) 7-861-7761

### SALÓN 1930 COMPAY SEGUNDO

Buena Vista Social Club style set in the grand Hotel Nacional.

Hotel Nacional  
Calle O esq. a 21, Vedado  
(+53) 7-835-3896

## JAZZ

### CAFÉ JAZZ MIRAMAR

Clean, modern and atmospheric. Where Cuba's best musicians jam and improvise.

Cine Teatro Miramar  
10:30pm – 2am  
Ave. 5ta esq. a 94, Miramar

### JAZZ CAFÉ

A staple of Havana's jazz scene, the best jazz players perform here. Somewhat cold atmosphere-wise.

Galerías de Paseo  
Ave. 1ra e/ Paseo y A, Vedado

### LA ZORRA Y EL CUERVO

Intimate and atmospheric, which you enter through a red telephone box, is Cuba's most famous.

Calle 23 e/ N y O, Vedado  
(+53) 7-833-2402



Hotel Nacional de Cuba

# HAVANA'S Best Hotels



## SIMPLY THE BEST...

### IBEROSTAR PARQUE CENTRAL

Luxury hotel overlooking Parque Central

Neptuno e/ Prado y Zulueta, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-860-6627

### SANTA ISABEL

Luxurious historic mansion facing Plaza de Armas

Narciso López, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-860-8201

### SARATOGA

Stunning view from roof-top pool. Beautiful décor.

Paseo del Prado #603 esq. a Dragones, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-860-8201

### TERRAL

Wonderful ocean front location. Newly renovated.

Malecón esq. a Lealtad, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-862-8061

## BOUTIQUE HOTELS IN OLD HAVANA

### FLORIDA

Beautifully restored colonial house.

Obispo #252, esq. a Cuba, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-862-4127

### PALACIO DEL MARQUÉS...

Cuban baroque meets modern minimalist

Oficios #152 esq. a Amargura, Habana Vieja

### HOSTAL VALENCIA

Immensely charming, great value.

Oficios #53 esq. a Obrapía, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-867-1037

### CONDE DE VILLANUEVA

Delightfully small and intimate. For cigar lovers.

Mercaderes #202, Lamparilla  
(+53) 7-862-9293

**BUSINESS HOTELS****■ MELIÁ COHIBA**

Oasis of polished marble and professional calm.

Ave Paseo e/ 1ra y 3ra, Vedado  
(+53) 7- 833-3636

**■ MELIÁ HABANA**

Attractive design & extensive facilities.

Ave. 3ra y 70, Miramar  
(+53) 5-204-8500

**■ OCCIDENTAL MIRAMAR**

Good value, large spacious modern rooms.

Ave. 5ta. e/ 70 y 72, Miramar  
(+53) 7-204-3583

**■ H10 HABANA PANORAMA**

Cascades of glass. Good wi-fi. Modern.

Ave. 3ra. y 70, Miramar  
(+53) 7 204-0100

**FOR A SENSE OF HISTORY****■ AMBOS MUNDOS**

A must for Hemingway aficionados

Calle Obispo #153 esq. a Mercaderes, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7- 860-9529

**■ MERCURE SEVILLA**

Stunning views from the roof garden restaurant.

Trocadero #55 entre Prado y Zulueta, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-860-8560

**■ HOTEL NACIONAL**

Eclectic art-deco architecture. Gorgeous gardens.

Calle O esq. a 21, Vedado  
(+53) 7-835 3896

**■ RIVIERA**

Spectacular views over wave-lashed Malecón

Paseo y Malecón, Vedado  
(+53) 7-836-4051

**ECONOMICAL/BUDGET HOTELS****■ BOSQUE**

On the banks of the Río Almendares.

Calle 28-A e/ 49-A y 49-B, Reparto Kohly, Playa  
(+53) 7-204-9232

**■ DEAUVILLE**

Lack of pretension, great location.

Galiano e/ San Lázaro y Malecón, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-866-8812

**■ SAINT JOHN'S**

Lively disco, tiny quirky pool. Popular.

Calle O e/ 23 y 25, Vedado  
(+53) 7-833-3740

**■ VEDADO**

Good budget option with a bit of a buzz

Calle O e/ 23 y 25, Vedado  
(+53) 7-836-4072

# HAVANA'S Best Hotels





# HAVANA'S best private places to stay

## MID RANGE - CASA PARTICULAR (B&B)

### ■ 1932

Visually stunning, historically fascinating. Welcoming.

Campanario #63 e/ San Lázaro y Laguna, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-863-6203

### ■ MIRAMAR 301

LUXURY HOUSE

4 bedrooms private luxury villa with swimming pool

### ■ HABANA

Beautiful colonial townhouse with great location.

Calle Habana #209, e/ Empedrado, y Tejadillo, Habana Vieja.  
(+53) 7-861-0253

### ■ JULIO Y ELSA

Cluttered bohemian feel. Hospitable.

Consulado #162 e/ Colón y Trocadero, Centro Habana  
(+53) 7-861-8027

## UP-SCALE B&BS (BOUTIQUE HOSTALS)

### ■ SUEÑO CUBANO

Old palace carefully restored, seven rooms, suites with bathrooms and featuring 24 hour service.

Calle Santa Clara número 66 entre Oficios e Inquisidor. Habana Vieja

53 78660109  
39 339 1817730

### ■ CAÑAVERAL HOUSE

But undoubtedly the most beautiful about private homes in Cuba

39A street, #4402, between 44 y 46, Playa, La Habana Cuba  
(+53) 295-5700  
<http://www.cubaguesthouse.com/canaveral.home.html?lang=en>

### ■ VITRALES

Hospitable, attractive and reliable boutique B&B with 9 bedrooms.

Habana #106 e/ Cuarteles y Chacón, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 7-866-2607

### ■ CASA ESCORIAL

Attractive accommodations with a panoramic view of Plaza Vieja

Mercaderes # 315 apt 3 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja  
(+53) 5-268 6881; 5-278 6148

## APARTMENT RENTALS

### BOHEMIA BOUTIQUE APARTMENTS

Gorgeous 1-bedroom apartment beautifully decorated apartment overlooking Plaza Vieja.

San Ignacio #364 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja

(+53) 5- 403-1 568 (+53) 7-836-6567  
www.havanabohemia.com

### CASA CONCORDIA

Beautifully designed and spacious 3 bedroom apartment. Spanish colonial interiors with cheerful, arty accents.

Concordia #151 apto. 8 esq. a San Nicolás, Centro Habana

(+53) 5-254-5240  
www.casaconcordia.net

### TROPICANA PENTHOUSE

A luxurious penthouse with huge roof terrace and breath-taking 360 degree views of Havana and the ocean.

Galiano #60 Penthouse Apt.10 e/ San Lázaro y Trocadero

(+53) 5-254-5240  
www.tropicanapenthouse.com

### SUITE HAVANA

Elegant 2-bedroom apartment in restored colonial building. Quality loft style décor.

Lamparilla #62 altos e/ Mercaderes y San Ignacio, Habana Vieja

(+53) 5-829-6524

## LUXURY HOUSES

### VILLASOL

Rent Room elegant and well-equipped. Beautiful wild garden and great pool.

Calle 17 #1101 e/ 14 y 16, Vedado

(+34) 677525361  
(+53) 7-832-1927  
(+53) 5-360-0456

### CASABLANCA

Elegant well-equipped villa formerly owned by Fulgencio Batista. Beautiful wild garden.

Morro-Cabaña Park. House #29

(+53) 5-294-5397  
www.havanacasablanca.com

### MICHAEL AND MARÍA ELENA

This leafy oasis in western Havana has an attractive mosaic tiled pool and three modern bedrooms.

Calle 66 #4507 e/ 45 y Final, Playa

(+53) 7-209-0084

### RESIDENCIA MARIBY

A sprawling vanilla-hued mansion with 6 rooms decorated with colonial-era lamps, tiles and Louis XV furniture

Vedado.  
(+53) 5-370-5559



## Bohemia Boutique Apartments Red

TOP PICK 

**Best for** 3 small balconies (facing the Patio of the Palace), 1 spacious bedroom with air conditioning

**Don't Miss** The apartment is fully furnished, plenty of light and very well ventilated.

San Ignacio #364 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja  
bohemia.plazavieja@gmail.com

(+53) 5 4031 568: (53) 7 8366 567    www.havanabohemia.com

TOP PICK ★



## Bohemia Boutique Apartments Blue

**Best for** i1 internal balcony, 1 spacious bedroom on the mezzanine with air conditioning.

**Don't Miss** The apartment is fully furnished, plenty of light and very well ventilated.

San Ignacio #364 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja bohemia.plazavieja@gmail.com  
(+53) 5 4031 568: (53) 7 8366 567

## Sueño Cubano

**Best for** Old palace carefully restored, seven rooms, suites with bathrooms and featuring 24 hour service.

**Don't Miss** Relax at any of the four terraces, feel the mellow touch of antique and original Cuban furniture.

Calle Santa Clara número 66 entre Oficios e Inquisidor.  
Habana Vieja  
53 78660109 / 39 339 1817730  
WWW.SUENOCUBANO.COM

TOP PICK ★



TOP PICK ★



## Cañaveral House

**Best for** Large elegant villa away from downtown Havana. Great for families or groups of friends.

**Don't Miss** Basking in the sun as you stretch out on the lawn of the beautifully kept garden.

9A street, #4402, between 44 y 46, Playa, La Habana

(+53) 295-5700

<http://www.cubaguesthouse.com>

# lahabana.com

# THANK YOU

Wishes to thank all of the following entities for their support and involvement with La Habana.com



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