The 1950s in the Caribbean Conference

University of California, Los Angeles - January 30-31, 2010
Room BUNCHE 6275

Organizers: Robin Derby (UCLA) and Jorge Marturano (UCLA)

Sponsors: Latin American Institute, LAI Working Group on Caribbean Studies, and UCLA Mellon Faculty Seminar on Caribbean Cultural History

Saturday 30, 8:45 am – 9:00 am
Opening Remarks

Saturday 30, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Caribbean Art in the 1950s
Panel organizer and chair, Judith Bettelheim

Judith Bettelheim (San Francisco State University)
“Wifredo Lam: an introduction to the 1950s”

A major goal in this short presentation is to question the circumstances under which Wifredo Lam created some of his most famous and important paintings, both in Havana and Port au Prince during the 1940s. In doing so, I hope to set the stage for the decade of the 1950s, when in many Caribbean locations divergent cultural forces, some decidedly non-Caribbean, created a dynamic climate for cultural production. I propose to establish the necessity of a revisionist history, a more thorough and interdisciplinary one, that underscores the flourishing international intellectual circles that Lam participated in, and use this example to envisage the Caribbean in the 1950s.

John Loomis (San José State University)
“Las Escuelas Nacionales de Arte and the 1950s – End or Margin?”

The Escuelas Nacionales de Arte, located in the western suburbs of Havana, are the most outstanding architectural achievement of the Cuban Revolution. The five schools were conceived and initiated by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara soon after the Revolution’s victory in 1959. These schools represent an attempt on the part of their three architects: Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti, and Roberto Gottardi, to reinvent architecture, just as the Revolution hoped to reinvent society. Moreover, they sought to integrate issues of culture, ethnicity, and place into a revolutionary formal composition hitherto unknown in architecture. But in a short time the art schools and their architects fell out of favor and were subjected to ideological attacks that resulted in the art schools’ subsequent
“disappearance”, and the departure of two of the three architects. The schools are difficult to place within any canon of architecture. As is all things Cuban their critique, evaluation, and place in architecture are often influenced by the political inclinations of the critic. One point of view roots the schools in the 1950s, and regards their expressive architecture as the end of Cuba’s modernist experiments of that decade. Another regards them within the canon of the architecture of the Revolution, but politically incorrect not in line with revolutionary principles. This presentation will examine the Escuelas Nacionales de Arte and their place in Cuba’s architectural history particularly in relationship to the 1950s and will seek to draw some conclusions as to where these unique works of architecture might be consired in the history of architecture, politics, and culture.

LeGrace Benson (Arts of Haiti Research Project)
“Haitian Art at Mid-Century”

Haitian art became internationally prominent just before mid-century as a result of a convergence of political and aesthetic attitudes. Jean Price-Mars and others had mounted a campaign to revalorize the traditional African-rooted values of Haiti as a riposte to the 1915-1934 U.S. Occupation, and there were artists and writers from the elite affluence sectors who could insist on the creation of a center for the visual arts. The Surrealist, André Breton saw the works of the Kreyol painter, Hector Hyppolite, at the new center and his response launched the works of other Kreyol artists into the international awareness. Other Haitian art was going on out of sight in the countryside, but now has come to broader attention. The most recent manifestation of what might be called “deep Kreyol” works continues despite the earthquake.

Pamela Franco (Xavier University of Louisiana)
“1950s Trinidad Carnival: Gender, Politics, and the Yankee Presence”

This paper examines the re-shaping of Trinidad Carnival in the 1950s, with an emphasis on the role of gender, politics (black nationalism) and the US occupation of the island on this process.

Don Cosentino (UCLA)
Respondent

Saturday 30, 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm

*** Lunch
Saturday 30, 1:15 pm – 3:45 pm

Intellectuals and Cultural Projects in the Caribbean
Panel organizer and chair, Jorge Marturano

Fernando Valerio-Holguín (Colorado State University)
“Pedro Henríquez Ureña: The Postcolonial Mulatto Intellectual”

Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1884-1946) has been made into a post-modern cultural icon, as much in the Dominican Republic as in Latin America. As an icon, owner of a certain sacredness and truth, Pedro Henríquez Ureña represents, for the Dominican intellectuals, the dominant cultural ideology. That is, he represents the Imaginary of a Spanish culture, considered by those intellectuals as universal, in which the black remains diminished. In addition to being an icon, Pedro Henríquez Ureña has also been fetishized, and as such, possesses magical powers. My purpose in this presentation will be to discuss how Pedro Henríquez Ureña appropriates the "transatlantic gaze" in order to construct an imaginary self that is a European intellectual, thus enabling him to battle his situation as a postcolonial subaltern, an Other.

César Salgado (The University of Texas at Austin)
“On the Eve of Moncada: State and Intellectual Politics at the Jose Martí Centennial Celebrations in Batista's Cuba, 1953”

This paper will discuss the participation of Cuban intellectuals in the national commemoration of the Martí Centennial in January 1953, just months after Fulgencio Batista retook state power in the March 10, 1952 military coup. The paper analyzes how and why some key intellectuals of the 'Avance' generation--such as Felix Lizaso, Emeterio Santovenia, and Francisco Ichaso--and of the 'Orígenes' group--such as Gastón Baquero--collaborated with the Batista administration in the planning and execution of Centennial events while others--such as 'avancista' Jorge Mañach and 'origenista' José Lezama Lima--did not. The paper ends by analyzing the discrepancies between the iconic image of Martí as a fulfilled "Cuban apostle" that the state-sponsored 'avancista' intellectuals engineered for the Centennial events and the counter image of Martí as a still-banished "Messiah-to-come" fashioned and promoted by the 'origenista' writers in their independent journal.

Juan Carlos Quintero-Herencia (University of Maryland)
“Aires bucaneros: Cultural Policy and Poetry in 1950's Puerto Rico”

This essay is an assessment of the specific nature of Luis Palés Matos poem “Aires bucaneros” (1944, 1950) in the particularly complex cultural terrain of Puerto Rico during the 1950s. I would like to demonstrate how Palés Matos politics of the poem allow us to rethink innovative forms of conceptualizing what constitutes political practice in contemporary times. This paper is part of a projected book on the conditions of
possibility of the literary text as a singular space and a way in which politics emerges, affecting the beliefs of both, the modern reader and the citizen in a Hispanic Caribbean society.

Marta Hernández Salván (UC-Riverside), and Juan Pablo Lupi (UC-Santa Barbara)
Respondents

Saturday 30, 3:45 pm – 4:00 pm

*** Coffee Break

Saturday 30, 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm

Historical Contexts in the Caribbean
Panel organizer and chair, Robin Derby

Jorge L. Giovannetti (University of Puerto Rico)
“Fieldnotes on Rural Cuba: Pre-Revolutionary Anthropological Views”

This paper illustrates aspects of the daily life of rural Cuba before the Cuban Revolution, specifically in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The ethnographic materials collected by U.S. anthropologist Carl Withers and his leading informant in rural Cuba during this period are used to provide insights into issues of race, ethnicity, politics, religion, superstition, and myths in the daily life of Cubans. An attempt is also made to put Withers ethnography in the context of post-war anthropology of the Caribbean.

Harvey Neptune (Temple University)
“A. Waugh on White Supremacy: A Queer Story of British West Indian Decolonization”

Robert Hill (UCLA)
Respondent
Shannon Dudley (University of Washington)
“Steelband, Calypso, and the Construction of National Culture in 1950s Trinidad”

As Trinidad approached its political independence from Britain (which came in 1962), concerns with defining and promoting the island’s local culture increased dramatically. This presentation will focus on developments in steelband and calypso during the late 1940s through the early 1960s, analyzing the interaction between community music-making, nationalist cultural promotion, and media. Some of the dynamics of Trinidad’s cultural development (e.g. folklorization, professionalization, and the imposition of elite concerns on folk culture) are common to the histories of other decolonizing nations in the mid-20th century. Because Trinidad’s most well-known expressive forms are associated with carnival, however, music production there is seasonal and more closely wed to local concerns and style than elsewhere in the Caribbean (brief comparisons to Jamaica will be made as an example). This has complicated the commodification of Trinidadian music in the international market, on the one hand, but has also fostered distinctive strategies for the international marketing of festival itself as a sort of commodity.

Alejandra Bronfman (University of British Columbia)
“Batista is Dead: Radio and Revolution in 1950s Cuba”

This paper uses an episode in 1950s Cuba during which radio broadcasts falsely announced the death of Fulgencio Batista to examine the role of communications technologies in politics and in repertoires of both contention and repression. Arguing against attempts to investigate the ways broadcasting mobilized citizenries, I propose to understand how citizens and governments mobilized radio. While historians have understood 1950s Cuba as a collection of causes of the Revolution, I suggest that it is important to understand this period as a series of consequences of prior processes.

Ariana Hernández-Reguant (UC – San Diego)
“Guerrilla Advertising and the Political Underground. Havana 1958”

In 1958, two advertising campaigns made a big splash among Havana residents: not because of the particular product advertised but because of the campaigns' political (not commercial) subtext. Designed by advertising executives that were members of the underground anti-Batista movement, these campaigns were effective propaganda coups against the government and contributed to a climate favorable to the advance of the revolutionary forces. Going beyond the historical anecdote, the paper explores the use of
advertising techniques and resources not for political propaganda but for the subversion of political propaganda and, eventually, of advertising as well.

Raúl Fernández (UC-Irvine) and Elizabeth DeLoughrey (UCLA)
Respondents

Sunday 30, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
General discussion, lunch, and conclusions

About the Participants

LeGrace Benson holds an interdisciplinary PhD from Cornell University. She was Assistant professor in the History of Art Department at Cornell, and subsequently Associate professor and Associate Dean for Special Projects for Women at Wells College. She directed the Arts, Humanities and Communications section of the Center for Distance Learning, SUNY-Empire State College until 1991, when she established the Arts of Haiti Research Project. She is currently a member of the Board of the Haitian Studies Association and Associate Editor of The Journal of Haitian Studies.


Alejandra Bronfman is Associate Professor in the Department of History at University of British Columbia. She is the author of Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship and Race in Cuba, and On The Move: The Caribbean since 1989. Her current research investigates histories of technology and violence in the Haiti, Jamaica and Cuba.

Donald John Cosentino, Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA, is Professor of Culture and Performance (Folklore, Literature, Visual and Material Arts, Popular Culture, African and Afro-Caribbean Studies). Cosentino has been co-editor of African Arts magazine, published by the UCLA African Studies Center, since 1988. As a Guggenheim Fellow (2006), Cosentino recently completed fieldwork for a book on Afro-Angeleno Spiritism. He is the author of "Defiant Maids and Stubborn Farmers: Tradition

Elizabeth DeLoughrey is Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the author of Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures (2006) and co-editor of Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture (2005). Her scholarship has been supported by institutions such as the NEH, Rockefeller, UCLA Global Studies Program, Fulbright, and the Cornell Society for the Humanities. She is currently co-editing a volume on postcolonial ecologies and completing a manuscript entitled “Tropics of Globalization,” which traces the exchange of plants and commodities between the Caribbean and Pacific Islands and their literary representations.

Robin Derby is Associate Professor at the Department of History at UCLA. Her research interests include the modern Caribbean, Latin American political regimes, authoritarianism, state terror, U.S. imperialism, popular Catholicism, and cultural history. Her book The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Dominican Republic (Duke University Press, 2009) focused on public culture and daily life during the regime of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic (1930-61), examining the culture of consent forged by the regime via forms of symbolic patronage and exchange, from official oratory, gifts and rumors to state rites and monuments, as well as state efforts to reshape the citizenry through ritual and urban reform. In contrast to the literature that portrays the excessive state ceremony of the Trujillo regime as insignificant window dressing in relation to state terror, it demonstrates how public ritual played a critical role in establishing a new mestizo state elite and civic identity.

Shannon Dudley is associate professor and head of ethnomusicology at the University of Washington. He holds a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, 1997. His most recent book is Music From Behind the Bridge: Steelband Spirit and Politics in Trinidad (Oxford 2008), and he also researches and writes on the history of popular music in Puerto Rico. Dudley is a guest curator for American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music, an exhibit that opened at the EMP in 2007 and is currently touring nationally. He also performs and records as a steel pan player and percussionist, and is currently active in the Seattle Fandango Project, working to build community through participatory music.

Raúl A. Fernández is Professor at the School of Social Sciences at UC – Irvine. His research is focused on economic and cultural transactions between the U.S. and Latin America. Fernandez has authored six books, The U.S.-Mexico Border: A Politico-Economic Profile, U of Notre Dame Press, 1977; the Mexican-American Border Region: Issues and Trends, U of Notre Dame Press, 1989; Latin Jazz: The Perfect Combination, Chronicle Books and Smithsonian Institution, 2002; One hundred years of Chicano

Pamela R. Franco is currently an Executive Associate to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Xavier University of Louisiana. Previously, she taught courses on the Arts of the African Diaspora at Tulane University in New Orleans and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research interest and publications have been on women performances in Trinidad Carnival.

Jorge L. Giovannetti is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Puerto Rico. His most recent publications include a contribution to the edited book Contemporary Caribbean Cultures and Society in a Global Context (2005), and articles in the journals Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies (2006), Small Axe (2006), Cuban Studies (2008), and International Labor and Working-Class History (2009). A former British Academy Scholar, he held visiting appointments at London Metropolitan University and Princeton University.

Ariana Hernandez-Reguant is an anthropologist and assistant professor of media studies at the University of California in San Diego. She is the author of numerous works on revolutionary Cuban culture and cultural politics.

Marta Hernández Salván is an assistant professor at the Department of Hispanic Studies at UC-Riverside. Her work focuses on contemporary Caribbean cultural production, postmarxism, psychoanalysis, critical theory and film, and more specifically on the ideological and emotional trauma created after the withering of the socialist utopia in Cuba. Her book in progress “Hyperbolic Moment” studies the work of postrevolutionary poets and essayists Antonio José Ponte, Rolando Sánchez Mejías and Iván de la Nuez among others, exploring the exhaustion of the allegorical rhetoric of the Cuban Revolution and the ethical promises of the emerging poetics of irony.

Robert Hill is a Professor at the Department of History at UCLA. Professor Hill is the Editor-in-Chief of the Marcus Garvey and UNIA papers at UCLA and has authored many works on the Garvey movement and racial ideologies in Africa, the West Indies and the United States.

John Loomis is the author of, Revolution of Forms: Cuba’s Forgotten Art Schools, published by Princeton Architectural Press. This book examines the convergence and collision of architecture, ideology, and culture in 1960s Cuba through the architectural design for the Escuelas Nacionales de Arte. The attention that his book has brought to
these works of architecture has prodded the Cuban government to commit to their restoration. John Loomis’s other writings have appeared in *Design Book Review*, *Casabella*, *Progressive Architecture*, and other publications. He holds a Bachelor of Arts With Distinction in art history from Stanford University and a Master of Architecture from Columbia University. He practiced and taught architecture in New York until 1996 when he moved California. He has been a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Research Institute and a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University. From 1998 to 2002 he was Chair of Architecture at the California College of Arts and Crafts. In June 2002 he co-chaired in Havana the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) International Conference: “Architecture, Culture and the Challenges of Globalization”. In December 2002 he was a member of the California Business Delegation to Cuba. He has been Director of Communications and Development of the CyArk 3D Heritage Archive project of the Kacyra Family Foundation and Consulting Associate Professor at Stanford University. He is currently the Director of the School of Art & Design at San José State University.

**Juan Pablo Lupi** is an assistant professor at the Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese at UC-Santa Barbara. His research interests include José Lezama Lima, contemporary Venezuelan literature, relationship between literature and science, and literary theory. He has published articles on Lezama, “Orígenes” group, contemporary Venezuelan history, and on Eugenio Montejo. He is working on a book about the experience of language and the interpretation of culture on Lezama Lima’s works.

**Jorge Marturano** is an assistant professor at the Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese at UCLA. He has published articles on travel narratives, Latin American novel, post dictatorial fiction, Cuban essay and narrative discourse. His work focuses on the relationship between prison narratives and the intellectual field during the Cuban republic and the interaction between intellectuals, writers, narrative fictions, and the Cuban state.

**Harvey Neptune** is professor at the Department of History at Temple University. Trained in the fields of African Diaspora and Latin American history, his research and writing thus far has concentrated on the postemancipation Caribbean. Professor Neptune is particularly interested in recovering experiences, events and movements that highlight the region’s integral place within the history of the modern world. Indicative is his forthcoming history of Trinidad during World War II, years in which the United States established military bases on the British territory. Beyond showing how race, gender class complicated local encounters with US occupiers, this book reveals the colony to be an instructive scene for apprehending the how people across the globe have contended with the making of the American century. He is also currently pursuing research on the early history of petroleum in the Circum-Caribbean; it will culminate in a book-length project that combines labor, environmental and cultural history and will push Caribbean historiography “beyond the plantation.”

**Juan Carlos Quintero-Herencia** is Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Maryland. Before joining the faculty at College Park in 2001, Mr. Quintero-Herencia held an appointment in the Department of Hispanic Studies of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, as an assistant (1995-99) and then associate
(1999-2001) professor. During part of his tenure at the University of Puerto Rico, he was also an Andrew W. Mellon Research Associate at Brown University (1998-2000). He received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2010 for a book tentatively entitled La escucha transeúnte: Poéticas y políticas en el archipiélago caribeño. He has published two monographs: *Fulguración del espacio: Letras e imaginario institucional de la Revolución cubana* (Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo, 2002), which won the 2004 Premio Iberoamericano as the best book in Latin American studies; and *La máquina de la salsa. Tránsitos del sabor* (San Juan, PR: Ed. Vértigo, 2005). He is also a poet, and has two collections of poems to his credit: *La caja negra* (San Juan, PR: Ed. Isla Negra, 1996), and *El hilo para el marisco/Cuaderno de los envíos* (San Juan, PR: Ed. Del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 2002), which garnered the Poetry Prize of the Pen Club of Puerto Rico. One more volume of his poetry is forthcoming. He was a founding member and coeditor of the journal of Puerto Rican poetry *Filo de juego*, and was also a member of the collective journal *Nómada*, and a contributor to *bordes* and *Postdata*.

**César A. Salgado** is Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and Graduate Adviser in the Program in Comparative Literature at The University of Texas at Austin. He teaches graduate seminars on colonial and postcolonial New World baroque literatures, the “Orígenes” group and journal in Cuban literary history, James Joyce and Luso-Hispanic modernism, the politics of archival fashioning in Caribbean studies, and contemporary literary theory. His articles on Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Latin American and comparative literary topics have appeared in *Revista Iberoamericana, Cuadernos americanos, Inti, Apuntes posmodernos, Revista Encuentro de la Cultura Cubana, Actual, Crítica, Journal of American Folkore, La Torre, and The New Centennial Review*. Dr. Salgado is author of *From Modernism to Neobaroque: Joyce and Lezama Lima* (Bucknell University Press 2001) and coeditor with Alan West-Durán and María Herrera-Sobek of *Latino and Latino Writers*, a reference encyclopedia (Gale/Scribners 2004). He is currently at work on a manuscript currently titled “Caribbean Counterfeits: Essays in Critical Archivology.”

**Fernando Valerio-Holguín** is a poet, short stories writer, novelist, and critic. He is Professor of Afro-Caribbean literature and culture at Colorado State University. He has received awards and grants from the Fulbright, the British Academy, U. S. Department of Education, and the Mellon Foundation. His essays have been published in edited volumes such as *The Returning Gaze: Primitivism and Identity in Latin America; Cine-Lit III: Essays on Hispanic Film and Fiction*, and in journals such as Explicación de textos Literarios, *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos, Romance Quarterly, Revista Hispánica Moderna, Romance Notes y Confluencia*, among others. He wrote on Dominican writers on the *Dictionary of Twentieth Century Culture. Hispanic Culture of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean* en 1996, as well as seventy entries on Dominican culture for *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Culture* published by Routledge. His books include *Poética de la Frialdad: La Narrativa de Virgilio Piñera, 1997; The Caribbean(s) Redefined. Special Issue of Latin American Issues. [With Jaume Martí-Olivella y Giles Wayland-Smith], 1997; (De)Constructing the Mexican-American Border. Special Issue of Latin American Issues. [same co-authors], 1998; La República Dominicana en el umbral del Siglo XXI. Cultura, política y cambio social* [Con
Ramonina Brea y Rosario Espinal, 1999; Arqueología de las sombras: La narrativa de Marcio Veloz Maggiolo, 2000; Presencia de Trujillo en la narrativa contemporánea, 2006; Banalidad posmoderna: ensayos sobre identidad cultural latinoamericana, 2006; and El bolero literario en Latinoamérica. [Con Vanessa Knights], 2008.