

Teacher Resource Guide

***Cuba Avant-Garde:
Contemporary Cuban Art
from the Farber Collection***



© Armando Marino, *The Raft*, 2002

October 10, 2008

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Guest Presenter: Merrill Watrous

Merrill taught in K12 for 20 years, graduate classes on the teaching of writing, reading, and children's literature for 5 years, and at LCC for 8 years. Merrill teaches K12 teachers through the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Writing Program, and the JSMA. Her first book on the teaching of art and writing was published by Simon and Schuster, and she is now revising her second on the same topic, *Writing in Color*. Merrill has published widely for teachers of adult learners and younger learners including: *The Magazine of American History*, *Techniques*, *Clearing*, *The Oregon Science Teacher*, *Instructor*, *Learning*, *Mailbox*, *Oregon English*, *Writing Teacher*, *Teacher* and others.

Merrill's K12 students published their own writing statewide, nationally, and internationally. She has won various teaching awards such as: a Monticello-Stratford summer fellowship, an LCC teaching award with multiple year nominations, inclusion in an Oregon English Best of 25 years' publication, and election to an honorary technology society.

Merrill is **passionate about arts integration**. It is the major theme of her reading, her writing, her teaching and her life. She is the mother of a writer and mother-in-law of a composer (himself the child of children's book illustrators). She was especially excited to learn more about Cuba for CUBA AVANT-GARDE because of her interest in the Spanish-speaking world. Her grandson Max, the love of her life at 13 months, is being raised to be Spanish-English bilingual.

Lisa Abia-Smith

Ms. Abia-Smith has been the Director of Education and Outreach at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon since 1997. Before moving to Eugene she held the position of Visiting Assistant Professor of Art Education and Curator of Education at SUNY College, Buffalo, NY from 1995-1997. While teaching in Buffalo and working at the university museum, the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, she designed and implemented the nation's first graduate concentration program in Museum Education for Visitors with Disabilities. Abia-Smith lived in San Francisco from 1985-1995 where she received her Master's degree in Museum Studies from JFK University in Berkeley and her B.A. from St. Mary's College of California, and studied painting at the Leo Marschultz Art School in Aix-en-Provence, France. Before moving to Buffalo she held various curator of education and museum education positions at the Jewish Museum in San Francisco, the Oakland Museum of California, as well as an independent museum consultant on accessibility.

Sharon Kaplan

Sharon Kaplan joined the JSMA staff as Museum Educator in 2006. She earned her B.S. in Art Education from The Pennsylvania State University in 2001 (with minors in Italian and art history) and a M.A. in Art Education from The University of Texas at Austin in 2004. Ever since studying in Rome during her junior year, she has been addicted to Italy. She combined her enthusiasm for Italy with that for museum education as a Fulbright scholar to Italy in 2004-5, researching children's education in museums in Bologna and Turin. She has also worked as a K-12 substitute teacher (willing to accept most any job except boys' physical education) and is certified as a K-12 art teacher in New York State. In her free time, Sharon enjoys playing flute with the Eugene Symphonic Band, reading children's books, cooking, and learning new things (currently she is developing her skills as a figure skater and tango dancer).



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your participation today in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art's teacher workshop, inspired by the current exhibition, Cuba Avant-Garde. Our goal is for you to use the works of art in the exhibition as a vehicle for understanding about Cuban culture, its influences, and most importantly, the invaluable role contemporary art can play in the lives of our students and ourselves.

This packet contains lesson ideas for a diverse age range of students and we encourage you to try these activities back in your classroom. We are very interested to hear how the materials presented today are applied to your teaching.

We invite you to bring your students to this exhibition so they can view it first hand. There are a number of scholarships available for bus transportation and to cover other costs. The museum is a powerful tool that a resource year round to you and your students. We look forward to seeing you back at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

Sincerely,

Lisa Abia-Smith
Director of Education

Sharon Kaplan
Museum Educator

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART

1223 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1223 T (541) 346-3027 F (541) 346-0976 <http://jsma.uoregon.edu>

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JORDAN SCHNITZER **MUSEUM OF ART**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at University of Oregon (JSMA) is a premier Pacific Northwest visual arts center for exhibitions and collections of historic and contemporary art. The museum continues a long tradition of bridging international cultures and offers a welcoming destination for discovery and education centered on artistic expression that will deepen the appreciation and understanding of the human experience. We engage diverse communities through innovative, interpretive programs in a newly expanded museum within a major university setting.

JSMA ARTS EDUCATION MISSION

Education is an integral component to the JSMA and is central to its vision. We believe that education should be included in the development and design of each tour, exhibition, and program we create. We value museums as learning environments in which curiosity, discovery, and contemplation are encouraged. Our aim for each visitor, regardless of age, background or ability, is to experience the museum with enthusiasm and success, empowered by new perspectives.

Our programs focus on family-centered learning, interdisciplinary connections, and the individual learning styles of each visitor. We are committed to providing exceptional programs that promote museums as sources for life-long learning.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

Cuba Avant-Garde: Contemporary Art from The Farber Collection

October 4, 2008 through January 4, 2009

Cuba Avant-Garde: Contemporary Art from The Farber Collection, making its West coast premiere at the JSMA, dramatizes the extraordinary production and innovation of Cuban artists over the past century. It represents a variety of styles and media including painting and photography. The exhibit captures a wide range of experiences and points of view, reflecting the rich and complex experiences and expressions of artists who share a common love for Cuba. *Cuba Avant-Garde: Contemporary Art from The Farber Collection* is originated by the Samuel P. Harn Museum at the University of Florida and is toured by Curatorial Assistance Traveling Exhibitions (CATE), Pasadena, California. Cosponsored at the University of Oregon by the Coeta and Donald Barker Foundation. Major funding provided by Connie and Jeff Huling.

Discussion Topics for Contemporary Art

The art exhibited in *Cuba Avant-Garde* is considered contemporary art. All but two of the artists in this exhibition are still living. They range in age from 35-65 years.

Locating a definition – The word ‘contemporary’ is essentially dynamic – meaning now, and now, and now. There are multiple definitions when it comes to contemporary art: art of today; work of living artists; art that is post-Modern or made after Warhol; art outside the boundaries of traditional categories (installation, new media, etc.); art related to a particular self-consciousness about what art is and what its boundaries are, often interested in transcending or breaking those boundaries.

Changing the questions – Instead of starting with the question about whether a work of art is good or bad and asserting a judgment, a more relevant approach for contemporary art is “why is it here?” Similarly, viewers often approach contemporary art assuming they should be able to immediately understand or successfully translate what they are looking at. If not, there is frustration with either themselves, or the artist. Instead, art should be considered an opportunity for exploration and investigation, an opportunity to consider ideas and different perspectives, to learn something new and eventually, express an opinion about it.

- What do you see?
- What does it make you think of? What does it remind you of?
- What choices/decisions has the artist made in creating this work?
- Why do you think they made those choices?

Connections to Art History – The field of art has undergone drastic changes over the past 500 years. How did a culture of artistic sponsorship (art as a commissioned object for wealthy patrons or religious usage) become a culture of individualized artistic statements (art as a unique object or idea for public consumption)? How has this historical change affected the way we are able to appreciate and understand art today?

Connections to current events – Contemporary artists are grappling with contemporary issues. Their work and ideas have connections to the range of issues we see in the newspapers and our communities: politics, war, the economy, self & society, as well as timeless concerns: identity & culture, history and storytelling.

Connections to students and their lives – What does the world around them look like? Remind your students that artists are looking at the same context with their own ideas and opinions. The extension activities and lessons in this packet are designed for your students to create works of art (written, visual, and performing).

What is VTS?

VTS, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), is an approach for teaching K-12 students about visual art.

- Uses a learner-centered method to examine and find meaning in art
- Uses art to teach thinking, communication skills and visual literacy
- Measurably increases observation skills, evidential reasoning, and speculative abilities, and the ability to find multiple solutions to complex problems
- Uses facilitated discussion to practice respectful, democratic collaborative problem solving among students that transfers to other classroom interactions, and beyond
- Uses eager, thoughtful participation to nurture verbal language skills, and writing assignments to assist transfer from oral to written ability
- Produces growth, including visual literacy and greatly enhanced verbal and thinking skills, in all students, from challenged and non-English language learners to high achievers
- Encourages art museum visits to underscore connections to art and to integrate a community resource into students' lives

How do I teach using Visual Thinking Strategies?

Starting the Lesson

Introduce the VTS: it allows students to examine art, to think, to contribute observations and ideas, to listen, and to build understandings together. Ask students to recall these aspects of the process often.

Call students' attention to the first image. Always give students a moment to look in silence before you invite them to speak.

Asking the Questions

After they have examined the image, ask the question, "What's going on in this picture?" Once students have learned this question, use variations.

Whenever students make a comment that involves an interpretation (a comment that goes beyond identification and literal description), respond first by paraphrasing, and then ask, "What do you see that makes you say that?"

In order to keep students searching for further observations, frequently ask them, "What else can you we find?"

Responding to Students' Comments

Listen carefully to students, making sure that you hear all of what they say and that you understand it accurately.

Point to what they mention in the slide. Be precise, even when it is a comment that has been repeated.

Use encouraging body language and facial expressions to nurture participation.

Paraphrase each comment. Change the wording, but not the meaning of what is said. In rephrasing, demonstrate the use of proper sentence construction and rich vocabulary to assist students with language.

Accept each comment neutrally. Remember that this process emphasizes a useful pattern of thinking, not right answers. Students are learning to make detailed observations, sorting out and applying what they know. Articulating their thoughts leads to growth even when they make mistakes.

Link answers that relate, even when there are disagreements. Show how the students' thinking evolves, how some observations and ideas stimulate others, how opinions change and build.

Visual Thinking Strategies

VTS facilitation in a nutshell

Three things to Ask

"What's going on in this picture?"
"What do you see that makes you say that?"
"What more can we find?"

Three Things to Do

Point
Paraphrase
Link

STARTING OFF – MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT CUBA

You likely have some preconceived ideas about Cuba, understandings formed through popular culture, historical and political events, your personal experiences, and cultural background. Some of these beliefs may be based in fact, others in myth. Before introducing new material, find out what your students already know. Either of the two models (true/false statements or the open answer worksheet) can be used to evaluate what students think they know about you, about one another, or about the subject at hand.

About the Teacher Model (Using T/F as an Introduction Strategy)

1. Merrill speaks Spanish fluently; she learned to speak Spanish from her father at a very young age.
2. Merrill has traveled extensively in Latin America; she visited Cuba just last year.
3. Salsa dancing became an important part of Merrill's daughter's life while she was a student at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.
4. When Merrill visited Meadowlark/Buena Vista (Spanish Immersion) last year, she was transfixed by writing and art done by the children, teachers, and their counselor that was organized around a skin color palette.
5. Two of Merrill's students, one a bilingual educational assistant and one a bilingual teacher, are excited to be a part of El Camino's transformation to a fully bilingual school.
6. Merrill first learned about Cuba and Cubans with the rest of her generation by watching *I Love Lucy* on television.
7. Merrill lived for years in San Francisco but is unfamiliar with the Mission District.
8. One of Merrill's favorite books is *Mountains beyond Mountains*, by Tracy Kidder – but Kidder writes only about Paul Farmer and Haiti, not about Cuba.
9. A close family friend - child of Mary and Jon Jacobson of Eugene and U of O grad - was just named Latin American Bureau Chief for the Washington Post where she will use her gifts for speaking and writing Spanish every day.
10. One of Merrill's students, at 6'4", danced the Limbo – a dance that originated in Cuba - at a Bar Mitzvah party for his mentor teacher's son and danced lower than the youngest child at the party.

Myths (And Truths) About Cuba

To Use with Secondary Students as Discussion Prompts

True/False

1. In Cuba, life expectancy shorter than it is in the US.
2. Since Cuba lost its patron (the Soviet Union) and its foreign trade (due to the US embargo), it has had little to spend on public health and its few doctors are poorly trained.
3. One US occupational group can travel to Cuba without traveling through Canada because it is relatively easy for them to get a visa.
4. Fireworks may have originated in China, but dominos came from Cuba.
5. *TIME* magazine chose a Cuban blogger as one of the 100 most influential people of 2008.
6. American history students learning the story of Phyllis Wheatley, enslaved Mother of American Poetry, can connect her story to the story of the famous poet slave of Cuba, Juan Francisco Manzano.
7. The Cuban artist, Delgado, created sculpture from bars of soap and prison-issue handkerchiefs while in prison.
8. Because it is such a poor country, most of the Cuban people struggle with illiteracy.

Myths (And Truths) About Cuba

To Use with Secondary Students as Discussion Prompts

True/False Answer Key

1. FALSE – Life expectancies in the US and Cuba are about the same, but Cuba, according to the World Health Organization, has the world’s “most equitably distributed medicine.”
2. FALSE – Actually, Cuba increased expenditures on public health and ended up with well-trained doctors, more than twice as many per capita as in the US. Cuba has one of the lowest rates of HIV-AIDS in the world.
3. TRUE – Due to the US government travel restrictions, direct travel for US residents to Cuba is not possible. Teachers from the United States, however, can relatively easily obtain visas for Cuba without going through Canada or another country.
4. FALSE – The game of dominos originated in China but it is considered the second national pastime of Cuba after baseball.
5. TRUE – Yoani Sanchez, a 32 year-old Cuban blogger, was chosen by *TIME* magazine in the May 12, 2008 as a hero and one of the 100 most influential people in the world. At desdecuba.com/generaciony she protests Raul Castro’s slow reforms from an Internet café; when she criticized the Castro regime in her thesis she was denied a career in academia. She pretends to be a tourist writing in the cafes, and she writes with humor and courage.
6. TRUE – Learn about the poet slave of Cuba, Juan Francisco Manzano, by reading Margarita Engle’s book, *The Poet Slave of Cuba* (Holt, 2006)
7. TRUE – Like many Cubans and Cuban artists who have learned to be resourceful in their everyday lives and in their art-making due to a lack of resources, Delgado used the materials available to him in prison to express his ideas as an artist.
8. FALSE – Cubans are the most highly educated people in Latin America. The Cuban government has placed a great investment on public education and Cuba has a literacy rate of over 99%.

Worksheet: What do you know about Cuba?

What I think is true about Cuba:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What I think is false about Cuba:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What I don't know (but want to know) about Cuba:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

SELECTED ARTISTS AND WORKS

All works in the show can be viewed by artist at the exhibition website:

<http://www.cuba-avantgarde.com/artists.php>

Use the underlined name to help you locate the artist in the alphabetical list on the website.

Luis Cruz Azaceta

Abel Barroso

María Magdalena Campos-Pons

Yoan Capote

Arturo Cuenca Sigaretta

Carlos Alberto Estévez Carasa

Armando Mariño

Manuel Mendive Hoyo

Tonel (Antonio Eligio Fernández Rodríguez)

Luis Cruz Azaceta (b. 1942, resides in the United States)



**Rafter: The Little House 2
(Balsero: La casita 2), 1993**

Charcoal, acrylic, gesso,
Polaroids, images and
shellac

on canvas

60 x 82 in. (152.4 x 208.3
cm.)

Lent by Patricia and
Howard Farber

About the work:

Since the 1980s, Cuban contemporary art has led to changes in the ongoing dialogue about Cuban identity, the internationalization of Cuban art, and the numerous artists living in exile. Living in the United States since 1960, and now a Cuban New Yorker, Cruz's art engages with these issues. Troubled by the number of Cubans that have disappeared in the Florida Straits aboard insecure sea-crafts, Cruz imagines a rafter who carries with him his objects which stand for the motives for his escape: Polaroid pictures with images of food and a small wooden house. The escape seems doomed, however, as the rafter appears to be stranded with water in the boat rather than surrounding it.

Discussion question:

Consider the color choices, mark making, and the figure's expression and posture. How does this make you feel? How would you describe the figure's emotional state?

What factors might account for the figure's distressed situation? What conditions might he be escaping? What is the experience like for those who make such a journey? What might await him once he arrives? Do you think he will arrive safely? What evidence can you find in the painting to support these hypotheses?

Abel Barroso (b. 1971, resides in Cuba)



The Cold War Has Ended. Let's Enjoy Globalization (World Trade Center), 2004 ("Dedicated to the lives of the people who unexpectedly became playing pieces of the game of terror"), 2004

Wood

Box Dimensions: 31.5 x 25.5 x 61.25 in
(80 cm x 65 cm x 16 cm.)

Assembled plane: 114 x 59 x 63 in.
(290 cm x 150 cm x 160 cm.)

Lent by Patricia and Howard Farber

About the work:

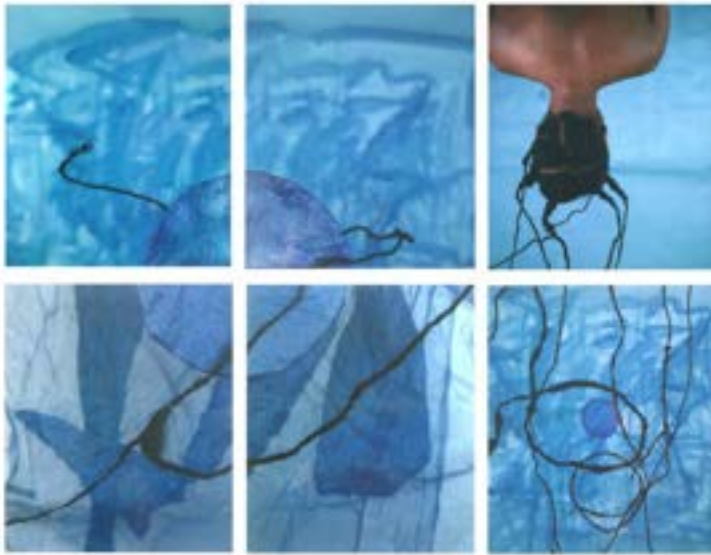
Barroso's tribute to September 11th takes the form of a do-it-yourself kit that, once assembled, recreates the World Trade Center as it is attacked and pierced by an airplane. His playful, ironic and "unskilled" approach counters the ubiquitous spectacle and melodrama that usually surrounds the historic event. The work comes with its own shipping case which in itself embodies the idea of international distribution and the circulation of raw goods, cultural images, and stereotypes. Engaged in the assembly and disassembly of the parts, exhibiting institutions, collectors, and viewers are implicated as collaborators and co-conspirators in the construction of history and memory.

Discussion questions:

- Have you ever used a kit designed for one purpose to make something else?
- How might you memorialize a significant event?
- What do you think is Barroso's commentary on this event? Who is implicated (are we all as a result of globalization)? Who seeks to profit?
- Do you think this artwork trivializes this historical event or create a more powerful commentary? Why?

María Magdalena Campos-Pons

(b. 1959, resides in the United States)



Study for Elevata (Estudio para elevata),

2004

Polaroid print

Six prints, each 24 x
20.75 in. (61 x 52.7 cm.)

Lent by Patricia and
Howard Farber

About the work:

Born in Cuba of Nigerian ancestry, Campos-Pons lives and teaches in the United States. Her lyrical and metaphoric work concerns identity and memory of African people rooted in Cuba and spread worldwide. This set of six Polaroid prints shows the inverted and suspended figure of a woman. Tendrils of her hair reach out over a vast oceanic expanse suggesting the far range and network of the African diaspora. The turned back of her nude body deflects both the voyeuristic male and racist gaze that often defined the photographs of black women taken in the past.

Discussion questions:

- Take a few moments and look at the photos in this series and consider how the artist uses her body as a metaphor for the island of Cuba. What do you think she is saying about Cuba's relationship to West Africa? How does her body serve as a symbol for her identity?
- The artist is also very concerned with the role of women in art and the portrayal of women in art by male artists. Look at how she has positioned herself in this photograph. How does this placement reveal how she feels about her role in art and her role in society?

Yoan Capote (b. 1977, resides in Cuba)



***Matrimony (Matrimonio)*, 2004**

Leather

33 in. in length (83.8 cm.)

Lent by Patricia and Howard Farber

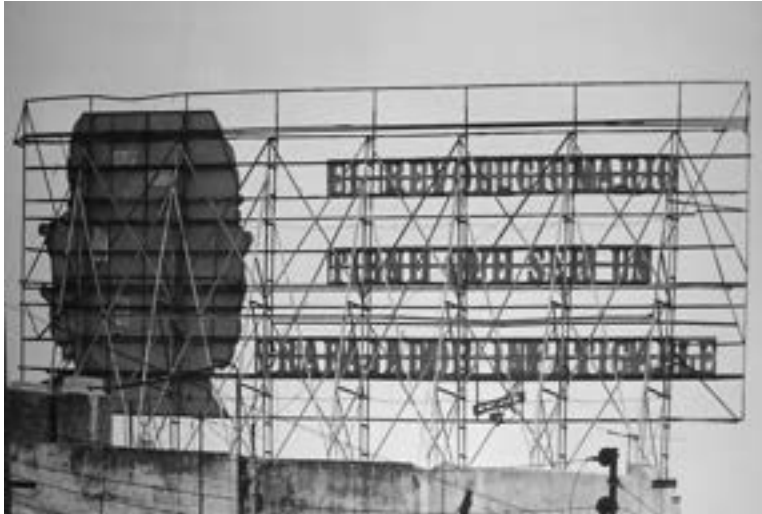
About the work:

Capote takes everyday objects to make a witty comment about marriage, union, and human communication. He takes two shoes, one each from a man and a woman, and joins them with an extended piece of leather. As a metaphor of heterosexual coupling, the shoes are inextricably bound to one another. Nonetheless, it is impossible to get close enough to effect a union or consummate the marriage. The ideal relationship (or utopian condition) remains forever out of reach.

Discussion questions:

- What do you think the artist is trying to say through this work of art?
- How does this artist use shoes as a symbol or metaphor?
- Look closely at the placement of the shoes and the materials that they are made from to create this piece. How, if at all, does the placement of the shoes make a statement?

Arturo Cuenca Sigaretta (b. 1955, resides in the United States)



**Science and Ideology:
*Che (Ciencia e
ideología: Che)***

1987-1988

Gelatin silver print

48 x 72 in.

(121.9 x 182.9 cm)

Lent by Patricia and
Howard Farber

About the work:

In Cuba the iconography of Che Guevara has taken shape in different media including paintings, posters, stickers, and graffiti. Some of these link the biography of the guerilla leader with the commercialization of his image. In this manipulated photograph, Cuenca connects his representation to a critique of the photographic "truth" and the manipulative nature of propaganda. The print shows the reverse of an enormous billboard on the roof of a building on Havana's 23rd Street that displays Che's face next to the phrase: *A revolutionary must be an indefatigable worker*. While the face remains inverted, Cuenca has manipulated the words so that they are legible. The work takes the viewer "behind the façade" placing him or her in a more critical attitude.

Discussion questions:

- Can you recognize the famous person in the silhouette in this photograph? (It is one of the most iconic portraits of the 20th century.)
- Which famous Americans would be easily recognizable in a similar situation?
- Why do you think the artist choose this perspective rather than depicting the billboard face on?
- The metal scaffolding of the billboard is very much part of the subject of the photograph. What effect does this create for you?

Carlos Alberto Estévez Carasa

(b. 1969, resides in Cuba and the United States)



The World We Live In (El mundo en que vivimos), 1996

Watercolor

38 .75 x 28 in. (98.5 x 71.1 cm.)

Lent by Patricia and
Howard Farber

About the work:

In his drawings and canvases Estévez frequently combines images of animals, human anatomy, and mechanical blueprints within the fixed grids of cartography. He does this by means of transparencies that recall treatises of esotericism, alchemy, or Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical codices. *The World We Live In* depicts the palm of a hand, a body part often associated with work and prayer, but also with aggression and punishment. Estévez transforms this hand into a metaphor for the universe. The lines inscribed on the skin are the routes of a vast geography that must be navigated with only the aid of a compass rose.

Discussion Questions:

- Look at your own hands carefully and at the hand of someone else who is older or younger. What stories do our hands tell about us?
- Young students often trace their hands and sometimes draw what they see on the top of the hand – knuckles, rings, fingernails. What makes Estévez's image different?
- What do you think the star-like symbol is at the center of the piece? Where have you seen a symbol this before? What is the purpose of a compass rose?
- What does a hand express? Consider its purpose in work, prayer, aggression, punishment, a caress.
- In many belief systems the hand is symbolic. Buddhist bodhisattvas and Buddhas teach through hand gestures or mudras, as do Christian icons. The "Hand of Fatima" is considered a protector in Islamic and Jewish traditions. Practitioners of palmistry see the hand as a window on the spirit

Armando Mariño (b. 1968, resides in Spain)



***The Raft (La patera)*, 2002**

Watercolor on paper
60 x 81 in. (152.4 x 205.7
cm.)

Lent by Patricia and
Howard Farber

About the work:

Mariño lives in Spain where the word *patera* refers to the narrow rafts of *balseros* who, coming from North Africa, cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach the coast of Andalusia or the Canary Islands. In the context of this work, *patera* refers to ancient hulks of American cars powered here by human feet. Atop the numerous legs is the body of a vintage Oldsmobile car, an old American technology kept alive in Cuba. These big American vehicles not only work locally as taxicabs, but are also a means of transport for many people traveling from the eastern provinces to Havana. Absurd and funny in many ways, this work is also a poignant reminder of the chronic shortages and economic hardship that Cuba has endured since the end of the Soviet subsidies in the late 1980s.

Discussion questions:

- What is happening in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What do you notice about the feet? Why do you think they are going in different directions? What do you think will happen?
- Where do you think this car has been? Where do you think it is going?
- How does scarcity lead to creativity, or does it?
- Why did the Harn Museum choose this next work to feature on the cover of the exhibition catalogue?

Manuel Mendive Hoyo (b. 1944, resides in Cuba)



The Sons of Water, Talking to a Fish (Los hijos del agua, conversando con un pez)

2001

Acrylic, wood, metal
65 x 60 21.5 in. (165.1 x 152.4 x 54.6 cm.)

Lent by Patricia and Howard Farber

About the work:

The Sons of Water, Talking to a Fish explores the coexistence of people and animals, in accordance with the conceptual essence of Santería or the Rule of Ocha, an African religion of Yoruba origin which took root and flourished in Cuba and Brazil. Mendive is a practitioner of this religion that in 1990s Cuba was no longer only of interest for blacks and mulattos, but spread to a multiracial, multi-class population. While Mendive trained in Western art traditions, he has adapted the iconography and style of folk art as a way to incorporate the fantastic and the everyday.

Discussion questions:

- Drawing upon cultural traditions, beliefs and materials used in West African art, Manuel created a sculpture which illustrates symbols, heritage, belief and narrative. It is important to acknowledge his heritage and the African Diaspora when looking at his work.
- What elements in this sculpture show the influence of West Africa and the slave trade? (Cowrie shells, figures, and rusty chains)
- Ask students to consider the direction this ship is taking and where it came from before it placed itself here. What is the role of the man with the fish?
- Have students create a story using this sculpture as an inspiration.

Tonel (Antonio Eligio Fernández Rodríguez)

(b. 1958, resides in Cuba and Canada)



Self-Portrait as a Ship (Four Pyramids)[Autorretrato como barco (Cuatro pirámides)]

1995-1997

Mixed media on paper

60 x 95 in. (152 x 241 cm.)

Lent by Patricia and Howard Farber

About the work:

In this painting the Cuban island rests on a sunken ship with the artist's head serving as the ship's masthead. It is one of a series of pieces that Tonel dedicates to the subject of Cuba and its insular self-image. The image of this boat/island conjures ideas of Atlantis and a lost civilization while the four pyramids connect it to remote history. The work parodies Cuba's defeatist self-image and lack of vision.

Discussion questions:

- What do you think the artist is trying to say about Cuba? Do you think this is a self-portrait of the artist or a self-portrait of the artist's country? What elements in the work of art leads you to believe this?
- If you were to create a self-portrait of the United States, what images would you include?

THEMATIC LESSON: MIGRATION

Artworks:

Luis Cruz Azaceta, *Rafter: The Little House 2*, 1993

Armando Mariño, *The Raft (La patera)*, 2002

Tonel, *Self-Portrait as a Boat (Four Pyramids)*, 1995-1997

Background:

Consider the Cuban history timeline at the end of this packet. Note each instance that reflects the concept of migration.

You will see that Cuba's history is defined by waves of people arriving on or leaving the island. The indigenous peoples themselves arrived from the Latin American mainland. Later came the arrival of Columbus and the Spanish conquistadors (and other European powers), whose domination over the indigenous population and their importation of slaves from Africa completely altered the composition of the nation.

Unable to find their basic needs supported in Cuba due to embargoes, shortages, and dictatorial rule, many Cubans have sought to begin new lives abroad. Many Cubans living outside their homeland see themselves as exiles who have been forced out of their country.

Some of the most significant waves of migration have included: The **Maríel Boatlift** in 1980 (Castro announced that Cubans who wished to leave the island could and the US agreed to welcome exiles, hundreds of boats poured into Cuba's Maríel Harbor to transport some 125,000 Cubans to the US – Key West is 90 miles away); **Operation Peter Pan** (in 1961, 15,000 Cuban children were sent to the US into the care of relatives or foster families; it was expected to be a temporary solution until life in Cuba improved, but for many this resulted in years of separation from their families); and the **Rafter Crisis** (early 1990s, taking whatever means at hand, masses of Cubans attempt to reach the US, often via improvised floatation devices devised from automobile parts or non-ocean-worthy inflatable rafts; this results in an overwhelmed US coast guard and immigration service, and well as a journey that endangers the lives of all migrants who attempt it.)

Currently 2 million Cubans live outside Cuba, many in the United States.

Extension Activities:

Taking Our Homes with Us: Meaningful Objects

Some of your students have likely experienced the upheaval of leaving behind their homes and settling in a new place. Consider the painting by **Luis Cruz Azaceta**. What is the figure carrying with him from his previous life? Which objects do you think are significant to him?

Consider the objects that are most important to you. If you had to choose the five most important objects to take with you when leaving behind your home, what would you bring? What is it about these objects that make them special?

Now imagine that you want to show your new classmates about yourself. What five objects would you select to show others who you are and where you came from?

Writing Our Fears

With younger students, read Edel Rodriguez's book ***Sergio Makes a Splash*** (Little, Brown, and Co., 2008). After reading the story, ask children to draw animals inside their natural environments and then create stories about how they learned to conquer their fears of these environments as Sergio learns to live in the water. What might frighten young tigers in the jungle or birds in the sky?

Other Artistic Visions of Migration

In addition to the artists featured in this exhibition, we recommend that you and your students also draw upon the following for more representations of and lesson plans on migration and displacement.

Artist: **Do Ho Suh**, born in Korea, resides in New York.
<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/suh/clip1.html>
<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/suh/index.html>

Artist: **Jacob Lawrence** – Migration Series
<http://whitney.org/jacoblawrence/meet/index.html>

Artist: **Hokusai** (moved 100 times in his life)
<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/hokusai/>

Creative Writing and Creative Drama Extension

Overview: Students will use selected works from the exhibition for inspiration in a creative writing lesson and/or a creative drama activity. Using method acting and theatre techniques developed by Russian actor and theatre director, *Constantin Stanislavski*,* students will immerse themselves into the character found in the paintings or sculpture. Either working in pairs, groups, or solo, students will identify a series of questions about the role of a person in the work of art and then either act them out, or write a story.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Creative Writing Activity: Writing paper, pen or pencil, enough color copies of the images for each student to have at his/her desk.

Drama Activity: Optional props: oar, polka dot shirt, green fabric, shells, or any other items.

Instruction: Select 1-4 images for this activity. (Recommend **Rafter: The Little House 2** by Azaceta, **Self-Portrait as a Ship (Four Pyramids)** by Tonel, **The Sons of Water, Talking to a Fish**, and **The Raft** by Mariño.)

Steps: Ask students to each select one of the works of art for closer examination. Provide color copies of the images or select one and place on a screen for the class to review.

Next, without giving any information, ask students to spend 2-3 minutes scanning the image.

Writing Activity Option:

Have students spend 15-20 minutes writing a story about the painting. They need to identify one of the people in the work of art and take on the persona of the character. To begin, they need to answer the following questions:

Who am I?

Where am I?

What am I doing?

Why am I doing it?

Creative Drama Activity Option:

Divide students into individual parts, pairs, or groups of 4-6 (*The Raft*, 2002).

First have students spend 10 minutes writing the answers to the following questions. They need to identify one of the people in the work of art and take on the persona of the character.

Who am I?

Where am I?

What am I doing?

Why am I doing it?

After the students have developed their identity, have them practice the improvisation and then perform it for the rest of the class. Provide costumes if they are available, but they are not necessary.

*Constantin Sergeyevich Stanislavski (01.17. 1863 – 08.07. 1938), was a Russian actor and theatre director. Stanislavski's innovative contribution to modern European and American realistic acting has remained at the core of mainstream western performance training for much of the last century. Stanislavski's work draws on a wide range of influences and ideas, including his study of the modernist and avant-garde developments of his time such as naturalism, symbolism and constructivism, and Yoga.

Resources:

Rodriguez, Edel. (2008). *Sergio Makes a Splash*. New York: Little, Brown, and Co.

Rodriguez, now an Art Director for *Time* Magazine, came to the United States with his family on a boat from Cuba through the Mariel Boatlift at the age of 8. His protagonist, Sergio, fears the water; this may represent the once upon a time feelings of the child inside the author and illustrator. Rodriguez has illustrated four other picture books and designed several US postage stamps. For additional information, visit his website at www.edelrodriguez.com.

Schnabel, Julian (Director). (2000). *Before Night Falls*. (Motion picture). USA: Fine Line Features.

Based on the autobiography of openly gay poet and writer Reinaldo Arenas, who came to the US during the Mariel Boatlift, this film represents the persecution of intellectuals and homosexuals during the Revolution.

Eugene Public Library MM-DVD BEFORE NIGH

Veciana-Suarez, Ana. (2002). *Flight to Freedom*. New York: Orchard Books.

12 year-old Yara García's parents do not support Castro's revolution. When the situation worsens, her family leaves Cuba for Miami. Written as a diary, this work of historical fiction provides much insight into how Cubans abroad see their flight, not as emigrants but as exiles (Veciana-Suarez herself left Cuba with her family at the age of six). It is also a story of love of country, strength of family, generational and cultural differences in coming of age in the two cultures, and the difficulties of a teen adjusting to the circumstances of her new life.

Eugene Public Library J VECIANASUAR ANA FLIGHT T

THEMATIC LESSON: CULTURAL IDENTITY

Artworks:

María Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Study for Elevata*, 2004

Manuel Mendive Hoyo, *The Sons of Water, Talking to A Fish*, 2001

Background:

Cuba is a country with a diverse population. Many Cubans are of mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Prior to the arrival of Columbus, Cuba was inhabited by two indigenous groups, the agriculturalist Taínos and the hunter-gatherer Ciboneys, both of whom migrated from the Lower Orinoco Valley in South America. With the arrival of Columbus (who declared Cuba a paradise) and the Spanish colonial system that was established in Cuba, the indigenous population suffered greatly.

Just as the Native American population was decimated in North America, so, too, was the indigenous Cuban population as a result of disease and slavery. Few indigenous people live in Cuba today.

Most Cubans today are descendants of the Spanish settlers who came to the Island as colonial powers, descendants of the African slaves they imported to the island (until slavery of Africans was abolished in 1886), and Chinese indentured servants who came to Cuba during the mid-1800s.

Both Catholicism and Santería (a belief system that combines elements of Roman Catholicism with the religion of the Yoruba people of Nigeria) are commonly practiced religions of Cuban people.

Main ideas to be discussed in this section include **racism** (what is the legacy of slavery?), **belief systems**, and **identity**.

Extension Activities:

Ask students research how artists from across the globe address the issue of identity and race. Have them compare 3-4 artists and write a paper on their findings.

Ask students to research the role of gender in art. Looking at art from as early as 2000 BC to the present, what images can they find that represent gender and identity in art. This can also be expanded to include the role of gender in advertising and the media. Are there trends in representation? How does the gender of the artist make a difference in the execution of the work of art, if at all?

Self-Portraiture

Look at the image by Tonel and discuss the accompanying thought questions with your students.

Using collage materials, magazine scraps, and other items available to you, ask students to create a self-portrait of themselves including elements, symbols, and objects from their families backgrounds (Japanese, Irish, Italian, Nigerian, etc.)

After looking at this work of art, ask students to create a self-portrait for the United States, based on Tonel's image. Using various collage materials, images from magazines, and other graphics, have them prepare a work of art that illustrates the identity of the United States from their perspective.

How does that completed image represent their current view of the United States? What changes would they make or add to the final piece and why?

Multiple Voices in Art and Poetry

Choose a work of art (or multiple works of art) in the exhibition. Consider what the people in the artwork are experiencing and their reactions to their situations. How might different characters in the same work of art respond differently to an experience they went through together (such as migrating from Cuba)? How might the reactions compare between different artists (or characters in separate works of art) reactions?

Using ***The Poet Slave of Cuba*** as a model, write a series of thoughts (in poetry or prose) in the voice and viewpoint of at least three separate individuals

Other poetry anthologies using this similar style of multiple perspectives include the ***Spoon River Anthology*** by Edgar Lee Masters (about the residents of the small town of Spoon River) and ***Worlds Afire*** by Paul B. Janeczko (about the witnesses and victims of the 1944 Hartford circus fire). Though it is written from only the perspective of one narrator (in this case a girl living in the dust bowl during the Great Depression), Karen Hesse's ***Out of the Dust*** (1997), also provides an excellent example of historical narrative through poetry.

Poems of Home

Introduce themes of cultural identity and home with young children by reading ***A Movie in My Pillow*** (2001). In this picturebook, Jorge Argueta writes of his love for El Salvador but also about how he suffered there and then of the joys of family life in the Mission District of San Francisco.

As a writing activity, children might use the following poems as models and write "A Soup of ..." or "A Band of ..." and illustrate their own poems.

SOUP OF STARS

**Many nights
We would go to bed
Without eating**

**We would look up
At the stars –
The stars were our soup.**

And then he turns to his life in San Francisco in its most colorful neighborhood, the Mission District.

A BAND OF PARAKEETS

**Every Saturday morning
Mama and Papa
My little brother
And I walk
On 24th Street**

**We are like a band
Of parakeets flying
From San Francisco
To El Salvador
And back again**

***Todos los sabados
Por las mananas
Mama y Papa
Mis hermanitos y yo
Caminamos por la Calle 24***

***Somos una band
De pericos que vuelan
De San Francisco
A El Salvador
Y de alla par aca.***

Taking a Closer Look: The African Diaspora and Cuba

The sculpture ***The Sons of Water*** by Manuel Mendive Hoyo and Tonel's ***Self-Portrait as a Ship*** include ships as a central character. Here are 2 activities for middle to high school students that brings to life the story of the revolt on the Amistad, another ship which played a historical role in the lives of Cubans.

Lesson: The Amistad Comes to Life!

Read aloud or ask students to read the following story:

The story of the Amistad begins in 1839. The slave trade is illegal in many parts of the world -- but some slave traders pay no attention to the laws. In western Africa, Africans often kidnap their own to sell as slaves in other parts of the world.

So it was, early in 1839 -- in a place called Mendeland (in the area that is known today as Sierra Leone) -- that a group of Mende Africans were kidnapped and transported to the African slave port of Lomboko. There a Portuguese slave trader purchased about 500 of the Africans and illegally transported them on the slave ship Tecora to Havana, Cuba. Nearly a third of the slaves died during the long trip -- some from malnutrition, others from beatings.

Upon arrival in Cuba in late June the slaves were separated and sold. Two plantation owners, Spaniards named Jose Ruiz and Pedro Montes, bought 53 of the slaves -- 49 men, one boy, and three girls. Ruiz and Montes packed their cargo and their slaves on board the schooner Amistad and set sail for their plantation at Port Principe, Cuba.

Just a few days out to sea -- on July 2 -- one of the Africans used sign language to ask the Spanish cook what lay in store for the captured slaves on board. The cook jokingly replied in sign language that the Africans would be killed and eaten!

That night -- frightened by the tale of the ship's cook -- one of the slaves, whom the Spaniards called Cinque, used a nail he found to pick the padlocks that kept him chained to another at the legs and wrists. Then he worked to unchain the others. Soon the Africans found on board some sugar cane knives with two-foot-long blades -- the perfect tools for their takeover of the Amistad. Two Africans and two Spaniards were killed in the ensuing struggle.

The African slaves, now in control of the boat, demanded that Ruiz and Montes sail east, toward the rising sun -- back to their African homeland.

But Ruiz and Montes hoped to be rescued from their captors. The crafty Spaniards tried to trick the Africans by heading east into the sun all day. But then, at night, the sailors slowly turned the boat back toward the Americas. The next morning they sailed east. And at night back they turned back again. This went on for nearly two months as the Amistad made a zig-zag trip up the Atlantic, off the coast of the United States. During the long trip from Cuba, ten of the Africans died.

Then, on August 26, the Africans beached at Long Island, New York. There they hoped to trade for badly needed supplies. Instead, sailors on the U.S. Navy brig Washington spotted the Amistad. The Navy sailors, after hearing the Spaniards' version of the story, took captive the boat, its cargo, and the Africans. The sailors thought they might receive a reward for capturing the Amistad. If not, they might be able to make money by selling some of the slaves.

The Washington towed the Amistad to New London, Connecticut. The sailors could have towed the Spanish ship to a nearby port in New York, but slavery was illegal in New York. There the sailors wouldn't have any chance of selling the slaves. In Connecticut, slavery was still legal (though, by most accounts, only about 20 slaves lived in the entire state at that time).

On August 29 in New London, based on the hair-raising tale told by Ruiz and Montes, the Africans were ordered to stand trial for mutiny and murder. They were transported to a jail in New Haven, Connecticut, to await trial.

But, so far, the Africans had been unable to tell their side of the story. They couldn't tell their story because they didn't speak English or Spanish. No one understood the language that the Mende Africans spoke. Soon the first of the trials would begin...

By now, you know how the story turns out. The fight for the Africans' freedom was played out in a series of trials that resulted in the slaves being freed and returned to their Mende homeland. More important though, historically, is the role the story of the Amistad played in building the movement against slavery in the United States. The support these Africans received from Americans black and white is still remembered 150 years later.

Make a Timeline.

Activity: Ask students to create a timeline. Divide them into pairs. Print out a copy of the story above for each pair to read together. Then invite each pair of students to create a timeline that shows the Amistad events of 1839 -- from their capture early in the year in Africa to their arrival in Havana and their eventual jailing in New Haven. Additional dates of importance:

- * September 23, 1839 -- Court rules that the Africans cannot be tried for murder because the revolt took place on a Spanish ship in Spanish waters.
- * January 13, 1840 -- The judge, Andrew Judson, rules that the Africans were brought from Africa to Cuba illegally. Therefore, they are not "property." (The Government appeals the decision.)
- * March 9, 1841 -- The Africans are freed by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- * November 1841 -- The Africans sail back to Africa.

Older students might create a "History of Slavery Timeline" that includes many of the events that are part of the Amistad story plus other important events. Possible resources include Slavery and Religion in America: A Timeline 1440-1866 and Slavery Timeline.

Map skills. Divide students into pairs. Print out a copy of the world map that shows the trail of the Mende Africans from Mendeland to New Haven via Cuba. Invite students to use an atlas to locate on their maps these important places in the story of the Africans on board the Amistad:

Mendeland, Lomboko,
Cuba, Havana (Cuba),
Port Principe (Cuba),
Long Island (New York),
New London (Connecticut)
and New Haven (Connecticut).

Source:

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson043.shtml

Resources:

Argueta, Jorge, & Gómez, Elizabeth (illus). (2001). *A Movie in My Pillow (Una película en mi almohada)*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press.

Continue the connection for children to the disparate countries that make up the Spanish-speaking world with this charming story of Jorgito

who moves from rural El Salvador to the Mission District in San Francisco.

Eugene Public Library J-LC SPANISH 861 ARGUETA 2001

Càrdenas, Teresa. (1998; first English translation 2006). *Letters to My Mother*. Toronto: Groundwood Books.

An Afro-Cuban girl left in the custody of her aunt after her mother's death writes a series of letters to her dead mother about the racism she experiences at the hands of hands of her relatives. She grows and learns about her family's history, and is able to change some opinions. One of the first books of Cuban literature to expose racism in Cuban society. Càrtendas won the Premio David for young writers in 1997 and the 2000 National Prize for Literary Criticism (awarded to the ten most important books published in Cuba from 1998 to 2000).

Eugene Public Library YA CARDENAS ANG LETTERS

Eugene Public Library J-LC SPANISH CARDENAS AN TER CARTAS A

Càrdenas, Teresa. (2006; first English translation 2007). *Old Dog*. Toronto: Groundwood Books.

Winner of Cuba's highest literary honor, the Casa de las Américas Award Prize. Tells the story of an old slave on a Cuban sugar plantation, the inhumanity of slavery, and the dream of love and freedom.

Eugene Public Library YA CARDENAS TER OLD DOG

Engle, Margarita, & Qualls, Sean (illus.). (2006). *The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

In eloquently-written verse, this anthology tells the story of Juan Francisco Manzano. Born a slave in 1797, Manzano was denied a formal education yet showed exceptional talent as a poet and became one of Cuba's most important writers in colonial slave society. Winner of the Pura Belpré Award (an honor awarded biennially to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator in an outstanding work of literature for children).

Eugene Public Library YA 921 MANZANO JUAN 2006

Engle, Margarita. (2008). *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

This second poetry anthology by the Margarita Engle takes as its subject Cuba's three wars for independence (1850-1899).

Eugene Public Library YA 811.54 ENGLE 2008

THEMATIC LESSON: SCHOOL AND FAMILY

Background:

What is school and family life like in Cuba? What are the significant events celebrated by Cubans and Cuban-Americans? For Cubans who migrate to the United States, what challenges do the children and families face in adapting to their new lives? The material in this section can be used to supplement any of the previous lessons or used independently to provide a greater cultural context.

Extension Activities:

School

In Cuba, education is highly respected. With a literacy rate of 99.8% (according to the 2002 census), Cuba is one of the world's most literate nations.

Read the stories in Ada Flor Alma's ***Where the Flame Trees Bloom*** (1994). How does she describe her grandmother, a forward-thinking woman, who works as a teacher and principal? What values does her grandmother espouse to her students? What is school like for the children? How does this compare to what you learn at school?

In Ana Veciana-Suarez's young adult novel, ***Flight to Freedom*** (2002), 12-year-old Yara moves in exile with her family to Miami. There she must start at a new, unfamiliar school, in a language she does not speak, leaving her old friends behind. Have you ever moved and had to enter a new school? What was the most difficult part of this change? (When) did you start to feel at home again? How do Yara's and Ada Flor Alma's experiences of school differ? How are they the same?

Family

In Alma Flor Ada's stories, she tells tales of her childhood in Cuba. She speaks lovingly of the closeness of her family and for her childhood home which she shared with her extended family. Though they are not wealthy, it is in love for their relatives that they are rich. Select a member of your family, a friend, a pet, or an adult who had a significant influence on you as a child. Write a story sharing why this individual was important to you.

In María Josefa Lluriá de O'Higgins' ***A Taste of Old Cuba*** (1994), she shares recipes from her native Cuba alongside her family's history and stories. Do you have a favorite family recipe? Write your own reminiscence of this food and how it connects to an important memory in your life. Collect your recipes and stories into a class cookbook. Have a party in your classroom to share these special foods with each other. You might invite other students from your school to join in the tasting.

What are important events celebrated in your family? The Quinceniera, or celebration marking a girl becoming a woman at age 15, is an important rite of passage in Cuban and other Latino families. What events in your life have marked important milestones in your growing up (bar/bat mitzvah, First Communion, loss of first tooth)? How were they celebrated? Was this a tradition practiced by previous generations of your family or were you the first? Will you pass this on to the next generation?

Discover Cuba through its food. Look through the recipes in the cookbooks suggested in the book list. What are the ingredients commonly used in Cuban foods? How do these reflect the culture, heritage, climate, geography, and history of the island and the diversity of its people?

One of Cuba's national dishes is **Moros y Cristianos** (Moors and Christians). Try making this recipe from Sharon Gordon's book *Cuba* (Marshall Cavendish Press, 2003, p. 25).

Ingredients

2 T. olive oil
1 chopped onion
1 slice green pepper
2 chopped tomatoes
8 oz. cooked black beans
6 oz. rice
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pint cold water
salt and pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the onion, garlic, and pepper. Saute until tender. Mix in tomatoes and stir until it thickens. Season to taste and add the beans. Then add the rice and water. Cover and simmer until water is absorbed. Can be served with plantains.

Resources:

Flor Ada, Alma, and Martorell, Antonio (illus.). (1994). *Where the Flame Trees Bloom*. New York: Atheneum.

Poignant stories of growing up in Cuba. Values of education, devotion to family, love of natural beauty around her. Not wealthy but rich in other ways.

Eugene Public Library J VECIANASUAR ANA FLIGHT T

Flor Ada, Alma, & Martorell, Antonio (illus.). (1998). *Under Royal Palms: A Childhood in Cuba*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Second volume of stories – more about loss than previous book – but heartfelt tales of love and family.

Eugene Public Library J 921 ADA ALMA 1998

Gordon, Sharon. (2003). *Cuba*. “Discover Cultures” series. New York: Marshall Cavendish Press.

Introduces basic information about Cuban culture, including life in Cuba, school, and celebrations.

Eugene Public Library J 917.291 GORDON 2003

Lafray, Joyce. (1994). *Cuba Cocina! The Tantalizing World of Cuban Cooking – Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. New York: Hearst Books.

Eugene Public Library 641.597291 LAFRAY 1994

Leiner, Katherine, & Rodriguez, Edel. (2001). *Mama Does the Mambo*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.

Sofia's parents loved to dance but after her father dies, there is no more music in the house and no one to dance with Mama. Sofia misses the joy of her parents dancing. This colorful picturebook captures the warmth and character of Havana, where the story is set, and tells a story of love.

Eugene Public Library J-PIC LEINER KAT MAMA DOE

O'Higgins, María Josefa Lluriá de. (1994). *A Taste of Old Cuba: More Than 150 Recipes for Delicious, Authentic, and Traditional Dishes Highlighted with Reflections and Remembrances*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Eugene Public Library 641.597291 OHIGGINS 1994

Raichlen, Steven. (1993). *Miami Spice: The New Florida Cuisine*. New York: Workman Publishers.

Eugene Public Library 641.59759 RAICHLEN 1993

THEMETIC LESSON: ART AND POLITICS

Artworks:

Abel Barroso *The Cold War Has Ended. Let's Enjoy Globalization* (World Trade Center), 2004 ("Dedicated to the lives of the people who unexpectedly became playing pieces of the game of terror")

Arturo Cuenca *Sigaretta, Science and Ideology: Che*, 1987-88

Background:

Though many Americans have negative perceptions of Cuba's communist government, they should also be aware of Cuba's successes. Cuba provides its citizens universal health care and education. It has succeeded in controlling the spread of AIDS on the island. And artists are supported with state-run art schools and the opportunities to sell their art abroad. For Cuban artists, their art is a commodity that has currency on the global art market, and, as a result, artists live comparatively well.

It is always important to note that history is written from the standpoint of the victor. We must always consider the perspective and ideology of whoever is recording history. James Loewen's ***Lies My Teacher Told Me*** (1995) is an eye-opener in this regard and can help us to understand why Americans know so little about Cuba (one of its nearest geographic neighbors) despite a long history of Cuban-US relations.

Contemporary artists, and contemporary artists of Latin America in particular, use their art to make political statements about the world in which they live. In times of repressive leadership, it is above all the artists who speak out creatively and powerfully through their work.

Extension Activities:

Ask students to create a sculpture or 3-dimensional piece that uses symbols to represent an important issue to them. Have them research other artists and architects such as Maya Lin, Robert Arneson (George Moscone), Barbara Kruger (*Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face*) and Picasso (*Guernica*) and look at how they addressed political and social issues in their art.

Resources:

Loewen, James W. (1995). *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. New York: Touchstone.

Throughout history the US has been fundamentally involved in Cuban affairs, often as a provocateur. But many Americans know only one side of this story. This powerful study looks at American history textbooks in the United States, revealing numerous occurrences of twisted facts, half-truths, and outright lies that American children learn as "truth." It reveals that especially when studying history, it is important to consider the validity of your sources and the ideology of whoever is documenting it.

Eugene Public Library 641973 LOEWEN 1995

TIMELINE OF CUBAN HISTORY

Prior to 1492 – Two separate indigenous groups, the agriculturalist Taínos and the hunter-gatherer Ciboneys, both of whom migrated from the Lower Orinoco Valley in South America, inhabit Cuba.

1492 - October 27th, Christopher Columbus lands in Cuba.

1511 - Hernán Cortés and Diego de Velázquez conquer Cuba for Spain. Velázquez becomes governor of Cuba while Cortés goes on to conquer the Aztec empire in Mexico.

1512 - Chief Hatuey of the Taínos is captured by the Spanish and burned alive at the stake after a year of his army's guerilla tactics against Spanish settlement. Originally a chief from the area now known as the Dominican Republic, Hatuey fled to Cuba to warn other native peoples of the Spaniards' arrival and to prepare a defense.

1526 - Importing of slaves from Africa begins.

1528 - Bartolomé de Las Casas publishes *History of the Indies*, a critical first-hand account of the early years of Spanish colonization. His travels as advisor to the colonial governor in Santo Domingo made him aware of the appalling treatment of the indigenous population and led him to call for the abolition of their slavery. Much of what is known regarding the early years of conquest and colonization of Cuba comes from the writings of Hernán Cortés and Bartolomé de Las Casas (the story of Taíno chief Hatuey is found in his *History*).

1542 – Bartolomé de las Casas publishes "A Brief Report of the Destruction of the Indies." Due in part to his efforts, Spain enacts the New Laws, which end indigenous slavery.

1762 - Havana is occupied by the British. The year-long occupation sets off an economic expansion – and a rise in the slave trade.

1791 – A slave insurrection begins on the French colony of Saint-Domingue, ending in 1804 with the independence of Haiti. Pro-slavery French planters flee with their African slaves to Eastern Cuba, contributing to Cuban culture and bringing new advances in agricultural production.

1814 - Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda is born in Camagüey, Cuba. A romantic writer of novels, plays, and even a published magazine, she is primarily known for her love poems and her abolitionist novel *Sab*, published in 1841.

1818 - San Alejandro Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes is founded in Havana by the French painter Jean Baptiste Vermy, a student of Jacques-Louis David.

1868 – In the eastern province of Oriente, planter Carlos Manuel de Céspedes frees his slaves and begins Cuba's first War of Independence.

1869 - José Martí, a Cuban writer and revolutionary, publishes his first political writings advocating Cuban independence and is incarcerated for treason at the age of 16. He is banished to Spain where he finishes his studies in law.

1879 - The year-long "Little War" is Cuba's second War of Independence.

1886 – Slavery is abolished.

1892 - Now living in New York, Martí founds Patria, the journal of the Cuban Revolutionary Party.

1895 – Martí is killed at the start of the third and final War of Independence.

1898 – An explosion onboard the USS Maine triggers US intervention in Cuba's third War of Independence against Spain. The US declares victory in the Spanish-American War, signs a peace treaty with Spain, and occupies Cuba, establishing a military base at Guantanamo Bay. The US is also granted control of Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam.

1901 - Cuba is obligated to accept into its constitution the terms of the US-drawn Platt Amendment, which stipulates that the US can intervene in Cuba's political affairs and that land be ceded for the continuation of the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay.

1912 - More than 4,000 Afro-Cubans are killed when President Gómez represses an armed protest by the Independent Party of Color, an Afro-Cuban political party seeking racial equality.

1924 - Gerardo Machado, a general in the Cuban War of Independence, is elected president and later establishes a brutal dictatorship.

1930 - Nicolás Guillén publishes his first volume of poetry, *Motivos de son*. Guillén is the first to support the negrismo movement, the portrayal of Afro-Cuban culture as a central element of Cuban culture. He was exiled under Machado and later covered the Spanish Civil War as a journalist. After the 1959 Revolution he was named national poet, and President of the Cuban National Union of Artists and Writers.

1933 - Machado is overthrown in a coup led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista.

1934 – Women in Cuba gain the right to vote.

1938 - Desi Arnaz popularizes conga dance music in the US during a series of concerts in Miami. He would later bring Cuban culture into US living rooms as Ricky Ricardo on the TV show "I Love Lucy."

1939 – The Tropicana Club, a world-class cabaret and nightclub, opens in Havana. Its popularity results in the spread of Cuba's culture internationally. Havana becomes a popular getaway for Americans, many of whom visit to gamble.

1940 – The new Cuban constitution institutes progressive social reforms including an 8-hour workday, compulsory social insurance, women's suffrage, and eight years compulsory education for all children.

1944 - Batista is voted out of office and is succeeded by the civilian Ramón Grau San Martín.

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Artist Wifredo Lam exhibits his painting "The Jungle" in a New York gallery and it is acquired by the Museum of Modern Art.

1950 - After touring with Conjunto Matamoros in Mexico, Beny Moré returns to his native Cuba to establish his music career. A master of all genres of Cuban music, he is considered the greatest Cuban singer of all time and is nicknamed "El Bárbaro del Ritmo" (the Barbarian of Rhythm).

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Celia Cruz, the Queen of Salsa, gets her break as the lead singer for Sonora Matancera, one of the most popular groups in Cuba. After Castro came to power, she moved to Mexico and then New York City where she performed with Tito Puente, Willie Colón, and Fania All-Stars. She dies in exile in 2003.

1951 - Guillermo Cabrera Infante, film critic and novelist, founds the Cinemateca de Cuba. Later he serves as director of the Cuban Film Institute until falling out of favor with Castro's regime and choosing voluntary exile.

1952 - Batista seizes power again and presides over an oppressive and corrupt regime.

1953 – Lawyer Fidel Castro's first attack against the Batista regime at the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba is unsuccessful. At his trial Castro delivers his famous defense speech, "History Will Absolve Me."

1955 –Castro is released from prison under general amnesty and travels to Mexico.

1956 – After training revolutionary troops with Ernesto "Che" Guevara in Mexico, Castro lands in eastern Cuba and establishes a military encampment in the Sierra Maestra Mountains.

1959 - Castro leads a 9,000-strong guerrilla army toward Havana, forcing Batista to flee.

1960 – In response to Cuba's agrarian reforms and nationalization of US corporate holdings, the US attempts to break Cuba economically. China and the USSR respond to Cuba's economic isolation with trade agreements.

1961 –Entering the Bay of Pigs, CIA-sponsored Cuban exiles unsuccessfully attempt to overthrow Castro's regime. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev sends a diplomatic note to President Kennedy stating that the USSR will provide Cuba all necessary assistance in defending itself against an armed US attack.

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Operation Peter Pan brings 15,000 Cuban children to the US, including Ana Mendieta (whose work is on view in the exhibition).

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Cuba embarks on the Literacy Campaign: In one year, 268,420 volunteer teachers teach 700,000 Cubans how to read, dropping the illiteracy rate from 23% to 4% in a single year.

1962 – The US begins an embargo on goods to Cuba. The USSR places nuclear missiles in Cuba, leading to the Cuban missile crisis. The crisis is resolved when the USSR agrees to remove the missiles in return for a US pledge to not invade Cuba and to withdraw nuclear missiles from Turkey.

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The National School of Art is founded and becomes a center for artists such as Wifredo Lam.

1965-67 – Cuba cracks down on dissidents, including many artists and homosexuals, who are taken to labor camps called Military Units to Aid Production.

1967 – Ernesto "Che" Guevara is killed in Bolivia.

1976 – In an act of anti-Cuban terrorism, a bomb explodes on Cubana flight #455 en route from Barbados to Jamaica. All 73 passengers are killed.

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The Cuban Government establishes the Instituto Superior de Arte (Graduate School of Art). The School trains the "80s generation," the first generation of artists who have only known life under the Revolution.

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The Cuban Communist Party approves a new socialist constitution; Castro is elected president.

1978 – A group of Cuban exiles, known as the "Committee of 75," meets with Castro in Havana and convince him to release prisoners held for crimes against the state, permit family visitation to Cuba, and relax travel restrictions for Cuban nationals. (More than 100,000 Cuban-Americans visit Cuba in 1979.)

1980 – After thousands of Cubans begin seeking asylum at the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Castro states that anyone who wants to leave Cuba can and President Carter says the US will welcome all exiles. In what becomes known as the Mariel boatlift, hundreds of privately chartered boats arrive in Mariel Harbor to transport some 125,000 Cubans to the US, including many whom Castro expels from prisons and mental hospitals. Four months later the US stops its open door policy by mutual agreement with Cuba. Today about 11 million Cubans live on the island; about 2 million live elsewhere, most in the US.

1981 – The Volumen I exhibition breaks with earlier Cuban art, creating a new avant-garde.

1984 – The First Havana Biennial opens.

1988 – A bomb goes off at the Cuban Museum of Art and Culture in Miami (and again in 1990), after an auction of art by artists living in Cuba. The FBI finds the bombing suspects deliberately targeted the Museum for advocating dialogue with Cuba.

1989 – The Berlin Wall falls.

1990-91 - The "Special Period" begins with rations and other restrictions. Soviet military advisers leave Cuba following the collapse of the USSR. The sugar cane harvest fails.

1992 - *Before Night Falls*, the autobiography of Reinaldo Arenas (1943-1990), an openly gay poet, novelist, and playwright who arrived in the US in the Mariel boatlift, is published.

1993 - In response to the US embargo and the loss of Soviet support, Cuba introduces market reforms to stem the deterioration of its economy. These include the legalization of the US dollar, the transformation of many state farms into semi-autonomous cooperatives, and the legalization of limited individual private enterprise. Many countries enter partnerships with the Cuban state, particularly in the biomedical field.

1994 - Cuba and the US sign an agreement in which the US agrees to provide 20,000 visas a year to Cubans wishing to emigrate to the US in return for Cuba halting the exodus of refugees ("The Rafter Crisis").

1996 – The Cuban military downs two aircraft in international waters belonging to the anti-Castro organization "Brothers to the Rescue," killing four. The organization had been papering the island with anti-Castro propaganda flyers. In response, President Clinton signs the Helm-Burton Act, extending the US embargo to foreign companies doing business with Cuba.

1997 – The "Buena Vista Social Club" album is produced by American musician Ry Cooder. It brings international attention to Cuban musicians unknown outside

of the island following the Revolution. The story is documented in a film of the same name by German director Wim Wenders in 1999.

1998 - Pope John Paul II visits Cuba and delivers a speech alluding to the unjust embargo imposed by the US, which, he says, denies Cubans basic essentials for living.

1999 – Elián González, 6 years old, is rescued at sea when his small boat capsizes, killing his mother and ten others. Elián becomes the center of an international controversy about custody until he is returned to his father in Cuba the following year.

2000 – The US House of Representatives approves the limited sale of food and medicines to Cuba.

2002 - The Varela Project gathers 11,000 signatures in Cuba demanding free speech, electoral reforms, and amnesty for political prisoners.

2004 –President George W. Bush tightens travel and embargo restrictions.

2005 – Cuba offers to send 1,600 medics, field hospitals and 83 tons of medical supplies as humanitarian aid following Hurricane Katrina. The US refuses the aid.

2006 – Castro is hospitalized.

2008 – Fidel Castro steps down; Raul Castro becomes president and begins agricultural reforms and the easing of restrictions regarding personal computers, cellular phones, and stays in tourist hotels for Cuban nationals.

Additional Resources on Cuban Culture and History:

Ancona, George. (2000). *Cuban Kids*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

George Ancona, a photojournalist, documents the lives of children growing up in Cuba. It provides a strong introduction to Cuban history and culture, and presents an un-biased and positive perspective on Cuba. And values of country and family, wealth in areas of education, arts, and health.

Eugene Public Library J 917.291 ANCONA 2000

Cramer, Mark. (2000). *Cuba*. "Countries of the World" series. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Publishing.

With colorful photographs and a wealth of information on Cuban geography, history, lifestyle, arts and culture, this reference book provides an excellent introduction to diverse aspects of Cuban life.

Eugene Public Library J 917.291 CRAMER 2000

Sheehan, Sean. (2005, 2nd edition). *Cuba*. "Cultures of the World" series. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark.

An extensive resource on a wide range of topics about Cuba, Cubans, and the country's rich culture, history, and heritage.

Eugene Public Library J 917.291 SHEEHAN 2005

West, Alan. (1994). *José Martí: Man of Poetry, Soldier of Freedom*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press.

This biography of José Martí, the man whose words, ideas, and spirit fueled the fight for Cuban independence and who remains a beloved Cuban national hero, is a good introduction to this important historical figure. A useful resource even for older students and adults.

Eugene Public Library J 921 MARTI JOSE 1994