Fragments along the Archipelago:

Photography of the Contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its Diasporas

By

Beth A. Zinsli

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:
Jill H. Casid, Professor, Art History
Anna V. Andrzejewski, Professor, Art History
Michael Jay McClure, Associate Professor, Art History
Lauren Kroiz, Assistant Professor, Art History
Guillermina De Ferrari, Professor, Spanish and Portuguese

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Introduction

Signaling Chaos as Coherence: Photography in the Contemporary Spanish Caribbean

In an effort to describe the Caribbean, Cuban-American writer and cultural studies scholar Antonio Benítez-Rojo theorized the "meta-archipelago," a dynamic geographic metaphor for the region. This "meta-archipelago" is a form that emerges from Chaos and is comprised of *la isla que repite*—the repeating island.[1] The artwork of José Manuel Fors (b. Havana, Cuba, 1956) provides a concrete image with which to visually describe the metaphoric archipelago, and gives photographic form to the theoretical and conceptual structure of this project. A Cuban artist well-known for assembling complex, intricately-layered works, Fors's practice itself also represents a crucial point of intersection for the interdisciplinary areas into which this dissertation delves: the history of photography as a highly charged visual medium and the Spanish Caribbean as a complex and diverse socio-cultural area related by a shared colonial legacy. Using literal photographic fragments, Fors's photo-installation *Archipelago* (fig. 1) serves to aesthetically render the animating metaphor for the Caribbean that Benítez-Rojo describes in his text. In *Archipelago*, Fors creates multiple reproductions of historical photographs, both found historical images and those from his own family archive, cuts them into small, uniform squares without regard for their subject matter, and arranges them in a chaotic, asystematic composition that spans the length of the gallery wall. The photographic fragments are, at various points, overlapped, scattered, organized into dense groupings, or positioned as though they are floating away on their own (fig. 2). Visually similar yet ultimately distinct fragments recur and reappear intermittently in different locations within *Archipelago*. Taken

[1] Antonio Benítez-Rojo, The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective, trans. by James Maraniss (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992).

together, the tiny reproductions comprise a much larger work that undulates erratically and circulates irregularly across the gallery space. In this form, the chaos of the photographic fragments visually reproduce the "discourse of Chaos" that compels Benítez-Rojo's metaphorical archipelago.[2] The multiple photographic reproductions create images that repeat—they are reproductions of the same source materials—and yet do not precisely repeat, replicating the concept of the island that repeats endlessly. Like this project, the artwork is itself a coherent visual system, but its individual components initially appear to lack cohesion and significance when taken as discrete fragments. Although we as viewers may desire and may even impose a more systematic, linear but artificial coherence on Fors's aesthetic project, no single narrative or history is available to us through *Archipelago.* Instead, it is the apparent chaos and incommensurability that connects the photographic fragments into an intelligible whole. *Archipelago* thus functions as an aesthetic representation of Benítez-Rojo's metaphorical archipelago, and by extension, of this dissertation as a conceptual body that coheres precisely because of its fragmentation and its incoherence.

In this project, I present a series of case studies in order to reconsider the medium of photography as a system of visual and aesthetic representation within the context of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas. An expansion of Benítez-Rojo's descriptive literary metaphor of the archipelago facilitates critical coherence for this project despite *and also because of* its fragments, fractures, and ultimate incommensurability. To force another, artificial coherence in a study of the Caribbean, he suggests, would cause "a new chaotic flight of signifiers," scattering everything into disparate fragments, and yet still repeating again

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[2] Ibid., 3. A number of other writers also use the concept of the significant fragment to describe the cultural context and formations of the Caribbean, including Derek Walcott, The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory: The Nobel Lecture (New York : Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1993).

and again, like the photographic fragments in Fors's *Archipelago*.[3] Rather than force a false sense of unity and spend time gathering up flighty signifiers, my extension of the archipelago for this project enables a cohesive thesis of non-cohesion as an intervention into the history of photography via the Spanish Caribbean, including its U.S. diasporas. To accomplish this task, my project first locates and defines the Spanish Caribbean. This is a problematic endeavor, particularly if approached through an exclusively geographic lens. As Holland Cotter, art critic for the New York Times, asked in reference to the three-museum exhibition *Caribbean: Crossroads of the World*, "Is the Caribbean a place? If so, what are its boundaries? Are Florida and Colombia as much a part of it as Cuba?"[4] Cotter pinpoints the difficultly in describing the Caribbean as fixed site with discrete boundaries, knowable solely in geographic terms. His rhetorical questions complicate even the elemental terms of engagement: land or water? Is the Caribbean a regional landform bounded by a sea, or is it a group of unique island forms conjoined by that marine body? I address the cultural production of just one of the various linguistic traditions that have developed from the situation of colonialism in the Caribbean, further reducing this question to a focus on the Spanish-speaking Caribbean cultures. More than merely a functional limitation, the concentration on the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas allows me to make specific arguments about how photography as a representational medium circulates among spaces, as well as how it signals chaos and enables coherence. Ultimately, the crucial question is, "is the Spanish Caribbean an actual geographic place at all, and, if it is not, where might we find and define its disciplinary contours and research boundaries?" Over the course of this project, I repeatedly push against the notion that the Spanish Caribbean as a

[3] Ibid., 12.

[4] Holland Cotter, "Islands Buffeted by Currents of Change: 'Caribbean: Crossroads of the World' Spans Three Museums," New York Times, 14 June 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/06/15/arts/design/caribbean-crossroads-of-the-world-spans-3-museums.html (accessed 20 June 2012). *Caribbean: Crossroads of the World* was held at the Studio Museum in Harlem, El Museo del Barrio in Manhattan, and the Queens Museum of Art in Flushing, making the exhibition itself something of an archipelago of discrete island forms in itself.

cultural designation can be bounded solely by the places where the edge of an island meets the sea. Instead, I expand the place of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean to include its vibrant diaspora populations in the United States and even the spaces of transit and circulation between psychic and geographic locales.

An attempt to locate the Spanish Caribbean as solely within the boundaries of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico as modern nation-states (of varying political status) is, as Benítez-Rojo expresses it, “a debilitating and scarcely productive project,” in that it ignores centuries of migratory flows to and from those islands and, ultimately, reinforces the myth of the Caribbean as a cultural *tabula rasa*.[5] Further, the singular island is the antithesis of the chaotic archipelago; to ignore the diversity and multiplicity of the theoretically repeating islands would flatten any attempts at in-depth analysis. The Spanish Caribbean as a generic aggregate can be rendered, in the most basic terms, as a complex, diverse socio-cultural site that is linked by the shared linguistic and cultural heritage of its colonial past; yet this too, compresses the subject into a less dynamic form. Cotter gestures subtly to another place that we might consider to be, conceptually if not in strict geographic terms, the Caribbean: Florida, which in his query stands in for the large diaspora communities found within the United States at this moment in the early twenty-first century. Incorporating the Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican diasporas in the United States productively expands the scope to include analysis of cultural forms that are inarguably crucial islands in the metaphoric archipelago of the Spanish Caribbean, if not in the terrestrial one.

The diaspora is a particularly important extension of the animating archipelago, which, as a location without defined boundaries, limits, or a center, can indeed encompass areas that are

[5] Benítez-Rojo, 24.

actually far from the otherwise fixed site of the Caribbean basin.[6] The diaspora is another crucial place—an imagined, psychic, affective, cultural location—where the metaphorical island both does and *does not* repeat. That is, the Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican diasporas in the U.S. can be seen as another aspect of what Benítez-Rojo calls a "chaos within which there is an island that proliferates endlessly, each copy a different one," and yet which never, ultimately, coheres.[7] My choice in using the term diaspora is not to suppress other, more politically precarious terms like migration and exile. Instead, I use diaspora in the often-used sense of a dispersion of individuals from a shared site of origin to acknowledge the various reasons that might motivate such an event: political, economic, religious, personal.[8] Further, diaspora alludes not only to the scattering of people from the Spanish Caribbean to the U.S. or elsewhere in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but also to the African and Asian diasporic populations brought to the island as forced laborers beginning in the sixteenth century. These diasporic groups and the Spanish Caribbean diasporas in the U.S. form vital islands in the critical archipelago of this project, islands that seem to and yet do not precisely repeat the distinct spaces of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico in ways I will discuss more in-depth throughout the project. These repetitions, though productive, also create deep fractures in memory, history, culture, and identity, further deepening the incoherence of the archipelago. Yet these fragments also give my project its coherent form and structure: the disparate fragments become the cohesive framework of the project as photographic archipelago. The idea of the Spanish Caribbean and its diasporas as a metaphorical archipelago of fragments informs the structure of my inquiry into how photography works to create meanings within this conceptual space.

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[6] Ibid., 4

[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] "Diaspora, n.," OED Online. December 2013. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/52085?redirectedFrom=diaspora& (accessed January 3, 2014).

In the same vein as Benítez-Rojo, I strive for this project to be "an object of rereading, of a 'certain kind of' reading" of both photography and the Spanish Caribbean.[9] My intention here is to produce a "certain kind of" rereading that renders the incommensurability of the multiplicity of these two forms meaningful and useful. Importantly, fracture and incoherence haunt both photography and the Spanish Caribbean as areas of scholarly inquiry in an expanded sense. The things that Benítez-Rojo lists as characteristic challenges to studying and writing about the Caribbean in a meaningful way—"its fragmentation; its instability; its reciprocal isolation; its uprootedness; its cultural heterogeneity; its lack of historiography and historical continuity; its contingency and impermanence; its syncretism, etc.,"—are, in a large part, the very same elements that deny photography an essential disciplinary coherence and historiography.[10] The diversity of photographic case studies from or about the Spanish Caribbean that I grapple with in this project—documentary style photographs, photography exhibitions, photographic archives, vernacular photographs, art photo books, online photo-sharing sites, digital photography, photographs printed and displayed on unconventional materials, hand-colored photo postcards, digitally and chemically altered photographs, photo-collages, among others—gestures in itself to the lack of homogeneity inherent in the set of images we nevertheless refer to uniformly as "photography." Critical coherence through incoherence ultimately defines both the Spanish Caribbean and its diasporas and the history and theory of photography as interdisciplinary areas of inquiry. My project is not an effort to smooth over these rough terrains with artificially imposed homogeneity; rather, in taking the archipelago as its form and attempting a "certain kind of" rereading of the Spanish Caribbean and photography, I deploy this incoherence as a means to conjure a small island of clarity and significance at the space where the two forms intersect.

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[9] Benítez-Rojo, 5.
[10] Ibid., 1.

Visual representations of the Caribbean have been closely and deftly analyzed by scholars as crucial to the establishment, propagation, and dismantling of the imperial projects of the fifteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.[11] Sociologist Mimi Sheller argues, the visual image of the Caribbean *writ large* is "one of the first 'global icons' to encapsulate the dreams and contexts of modernity. In an endless simulacrum, earlier literary and visual representations of the 'Paradise Isles' have been mapped into the collective tourist unconscious before they have even set foot there."[12] Analyzing visual and narrative representations gathered from first contact to the slave trade and plantation system to the present-day tourist economy, Sheller and others have written extensively about the ways in which European and U.S. consumption have shaped the cultures of the Caribbean.[13] The standardized vision of the Caribbean landscape, first as a fertile tropical paradise ripe for cultivation, later as an endless stretch of sun- and rum-soaked white sand beaches dotted with palm trees, has been constantly reinforced through the circulation of various reproducible visual technologies, often in conjunction with textual accounts. Yet at present the scholarly literature in English on contemporary Spanish Caribbean visual culture is alarmingly spare. The focus of much of this scholarship is on contemporary art production in the Caribbean as a whole and largely takes the form of short essays in richly illustrated exhibition

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[11] See Jill H. Casid, Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) and Krista A. Thompson, An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006) for a discussion of the Caribbean and the picturesque; Nicholas Mirzoeff, The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011); Mimi Sheller, Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies (London & New York: Routledge, 2003); Ian G. Strachan, Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean (Charlottesville, VA, 2002); Krista A. Thompson, "The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies," Representations 113, 1 (Winter 2011): 39-71; Beth Tobin, Colonizing Nature: The Tropics in British Arts and Letters, 1760–1820 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Geoff Quilley and Kay Dian Kriz, eds., An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the North Atlantic World, 1660-1830 (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2003); among others.

[12] Mimi Sheller, "Demobilizing and Remobilizing Caribbean Paradise," in Tourism Mobilities: Places to Play, Places in Play, eds. Mimi Sheller and John Urry (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 13.

[13] Sheller, Consuming the Caribbean.

catalogues rather than in-depth cultural and historical analyses such as this project.[14] For example, the catalogue for the exhibition Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World, mentioned above, features twenty-two short essays by prominent Caribbean writers, art historians, and curators of Caribbean art.[15] Yet the scope of these texts is generally limited to introductory and contextual information, with the exception of those pieces that are reprints of well-known essays by Caribbean writers Derek Walcott, Édouard Glissant, and Aimé Césaire.[16] Conversely, a number of other museum exhibitions have limited their purview to a single Spanish Caribbean state—Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Puerto Rico—rather than drawing attention to common elements that connect the culturally, linguistically, and historically linked islands.[17] Many exhibitions and their catalogues also draw a sharp line between art created in the Caribbean and art made by members of diaspora communities in the United States or elsewhere, seemingly to avoid the potential complications of addressing transculture and transnationality in visual artworks.[18] Exceptions to the general insufficiency of depth and breadth in this area of scholarship are Leon Wainwright's recent study Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean, which considers contemporary art in the Anglophone Caribbean as a globalized

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[14] See Tumelo Mosaka, Annie Paul, and Nicollette Ramirez, eds., Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art (New York: Brooklyn Museum/Philip Wilson Publishers, 2007); Island Thresholds: Contemporary Art From the Caribbean (Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 2005); Judith Tannenbaum and René Morales, eds., Island Nations: New Art from Cuba, The Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the Diaspora (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 2004); Deborah Cullen and Elvis Fuentes Rodríguez, eds., Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World (New York: El Museo del Barrio, 2012), among others.
[15] Cullen and Fuentes. In addition to the critical or scholarly essays, the catalogue also includes twenty "Selected Excerpts," reprinted passages from historical primary source texts, poetry, and fiction from and about the Caribbean.
[16] Ibid.
[17] See Gerardo Mosquera and Cylena Simonds, eds., States of Exchange: Artists from Cuba (London: Iniva, 2008); Mosquera and Holly Block, eds., Art Cuba: The New Generation (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001); Eugenio Valdés Figueroa, ed., Utopian Territories: New Art from Cuba (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery, 1997); Tim B. Wride, ed., Shifting Tides: Cuban Photography after the Revolution (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art & Merrell Publishers, 2000); Marilyn Zeitlin, ed., Contemporary Art from Cuba: Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island (New York: Arizona State University Art Museum, 1999); Laura Roulet, Contemporary Puerto Rican Installation Art: The *Guagua Aérea*, the Trojan Horse and The Termite (San Juan, PR: University of Puerto Rico Press, 2000);
[18] See Lynette M. F. Bosch, Cuban-American Art in Miami: Exile, Identity and the Neo-Baroque (Burlington: Lund Humphries Publishing, 2004).

phenomenon, and the compiled essays in Curating in the Caribbean, which uses the lens of curatorial practices to examine a range of expressive forms, as well as the impact of migration and diaspora communities on Caribbean art production today.[19] Like the authors of these texts, I account for the Spanish Caribbean's connection to the global flows of culture through circulation in various forms, including migration, travel, the contemporary art system, actual and digital archives, and virtual connectivity. Further, although it is limited to the idea of photography in its various forms, this project is an in-depth analysis of the spectrum of photographic practices as part of the larger visual culture within the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas.

This dissertation is also an attempt to produce a reconsideration of the medium of photography which, as it intersects with a rereading of the Spanish Caribbean and its diasporas, enables a greater coherence for both forms. In order to do this, my project breaks down the tight epistemological, medium-based, or function-specific definitions of photography with an interdisciplinary approach to the range of practices, histories, and image forms that photography encompasses. I follow the encouragement of historian of photography John Tagg, who urges, "photography as such has no identity. Its status as a technology varies with the power relations which invest it. Its nature as a practice depends on the institutions and agents that define it and set it to work. Its function as a mode of cultural production is tied to definite conditions of existence, and its products are meaningful and legible only within the particular currencies they have. Its history has no unity. It is a flickering across a field of institutional spaces. It is this field we must study, not photography as such."[20] Indeed, my decision to engage with a diverse set of photographic forms, a range of critical theories, and variety of methodologies throughout this

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[19] Leon Wainwright, Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2011); David A. Bailey, ed., Curating in the Caribbean (Berlin, Gerany: The Green Box Kunstedition, 2012).
[20] John Tagg, The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories (London & Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 63.

project is an attempt to test the expanses of the larger field of photography studies through the lens of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas. Interdisciplinarity is not novel to the history of photography as an aspect of visual culture, however; a number of scholars in addition to Tagg have productively crossed disciplinary boundaries in their approaches to the study of the medium, including Geoffrey Batchen, Carol Mavor, Christopher Pinney, Shawn Michelle Smith, Margaret Olin, Krista A. Thompson, and Catherine Zuromskis.[21] Coming from a range of disciplines, such as literature, history, anthropology, art history, and critical theory, these scholars have analyzed many different forms and types of photographs through a variety of critical and cultural lenses. Their innovative and unique considerations of a variety of photographic objects, such as family photographs, portrait albums, amateur photographs, collages, snapshots, photo postcards, tourist brochures, and aesthetic representations, opened up the scope of photography studies. My project builds on their expanded notion of the medium by focusing on and complicating the idea of photography through an understudied geographic area, the Spanish Caribbean.

This dissertation also positions photography as a deeply affective form of visual representation intimately tied to memory, emotion, cultural and familial histories, and self-identification. The multiple ways in which a photograph as an affective image contributes to and shapes collective memory and cultural identity functions as a thematic current through the

[21] See Geoffrey Batchen, Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Peterson, eds., Photography's Other Histories (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003) and Pinney, Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Shawn Michelle Smith, American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999) and Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004); Carol Mavor, Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs (New York: I.B.Tauris, 1996), Becoming: The Photographs of Clementina, Viscountess Hawarden (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1999), and Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J. M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D. W. Winnicott (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008); Margaret Olin, Touching Photographs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Krista A. Thompson, An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006); and Catherine Zuromskis, Snapshot Photography: The Lives of Images (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013); among many others.

chapters, educing further coherence and unity among the various case study fragments. A number of scholars' work touches on the connections between photography, memory, and emotion: Marianne Hirsch, Leo Spitzer, Diana Taylor, Annette Kuhn, Patricia Holland, Jo Spence, and Deborah Willis regularly examine the potential of vernacular or family photographs specifically to generate affective individual and collective memory in the present, particularly in the face of collective cultural traumas.[22] My project expands on the work of these scholars by examining ideas of memory, circulation, and affect within the context of the postcolonial Spanish Caribbean and its diasporas in the U.S. Further, while I utilize similarly interdisciplinary and visual methodologies, I also consider photographs found outside the family album, including artworks and archival photographs. I take art historian Lisa Saltzman's work as a model for discussing memory and affect in relation to contemporary art practices, particularly her book Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art, which deftly and compassionately considers the relationships between art and memory.[23] In this text she ponders "how and why it is through certain types of visual objects that we are able to bear witness, even if it only belatedly and obliquely, to the histories that at once found and confound our identities."[24] This statement strikes me every time I read it, as it gets at the core of what photography as an affective medium can provide: an emotional connection, however tenuous and difficult to grasp, to the distant times and places that make us who we are.

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[22] Marianne Hirsch, Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), Hirsch, ed., The Familial Gaze (1999); Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory (London & Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Spitzer, Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998); Spitzer, Mieke Bal, and Jonathan Crewe, eds., Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present (Hanover, NH & London: University Press of New England, 1999); Diana Taylor, The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas (Duke University Press, 2003); Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister, eds., Locating Memory: Photographic Acts (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, eds., Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography (London: Virago Press, 1991); Deborah Willis, ed., Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography (New York: The New Press, 1994); among others.
[23] Lisa Saltzman, Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[24] Ibid., 5-6.

The conjoining of memory, identity, and visual culture is an urgent task for the contemporary Spanish Caribbean diasporas in the United States. These are communities in which vernacular photography functions as a vital means of representing memory and cultural identity, though perhaps "only belatedly and obliquely," at a geographic, historical, and emotional distance from the homeland. Indeed, connecting the circumstances of migration and the Caribbean diasporas in the U.S. to the affective potentials of photography is another important goal of my dissertation. I draw therefore on the wealth of recent scholarship in the humanities on post-colonial studies, as well as globalization, migration, and diaspora studies. From this body of work I rely on the writings of several scholars, including Susan Friedman, Nico Israel, Edward Said, and Ella Shohat, among others.[25] Very few sources exist that treat the Dominican and Puerto Rican diasporas in the U.S. from the interdisciplinary perspectives of visual culture, and my project will thus contribute significantly to this field.[26] There are, conversely, an increasing number of texts dealing with the cultural implications of a Cuban diaspora in the United States, especially from literary and film studies.[27] My dissertation builds on and contributes to this burgeoning field by addressing photographic images that represent the circumstances of migration and living in a diaspora in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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[25] Susan Friedman, "Migrations, Diasporas, and Borders," in Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literature (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2007); Nico Israel, Outlandish: Writing Between Exile and Diaspora (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Edward Said, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Ella Shohat, Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006); among others.

[26] The social sciences and environmental studies tend to produce the bulk of current scholarship on Dominican and Puerto Rican emigration. See Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia R. Pessar, Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration (London & Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York After 1950 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[27] See Isabel Alvarez Borland, Cuban-American Literature from Exile: From Person to Persona (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Eduardo González, Cuba and the Tempest: Literature and Cinema in the Time of Diaspora (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Ricardo L. Ortíz, Cultural Erotics in Cuban America (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994); among others.

In The Repeating Island, Benítez-Rojo claims his project is one "whose end is not to find results," not to discover and map and know the entire archipelago, but rather to discern and describe the various "processes, dynamics, and rhythms" that comprise the Caribbean.[28] In a similarly restrained effort, this project does not stake out the precise coordinates and limits of the complex archipelago of contemporary Spanish Caribbean photography, or seek to present any irrefutable and universal results about it. Utilizing visual and critical methodologies that follow the distinctive forms of the photographic case studies I present, my intention is to closely examine a few of the critical fragments that comprise this much larger conceptual and discursive body. Through an examination of the critical incoherences found within the Spanish Caribbean and the medium of photography, I seek to map out the various moments of chaos and the multiple paths of circulation that flow among the repeating islands in the archipelago.

Chapter Summaries

My first chapter, titled "Consuming Havana: Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio in its Contemporary Afterlives," examines the trajectories of one of the many possible repeating fragments of Spanish Caribbean photography. I focus here on a Cuban case study, Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio, now part of the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. While this chapter briefly discusses the historical context of Walker Evans's trip to Cuba and the images he created there, its central focus is not the geographic or temporal locations of Havana or 1933. I examine instead what I term the contemporary afterlives of Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio. By the portfolio's "afterlives," I mean a period after a photograph's initial creation and distribution, a period in which there is often a discernable shift in its discursive formation and meaning. In the case of Evans's photographs specifically, I

[28] Benítez-Rojo, 3

consider their afterlives as the period since the establishment of the Walker Evans Archive in 1994. The opening of this archive enabled regular scholarly access to all of the Havana photographs for the first time. Since this point, the Havana 1933 portfolio images have been circulated with increasing frequency through U.S. museum exhibitions and fine art publications. In their afterlives, several of Evans's Havana 1933 photographs have been consistently selected and sequenced by curators and publishers, and, importantly, re-presented as artworks rather than as documents. In this re-presentation of the Havana 1933 portfolio, the original discursive framework of the photographs has changed radically. Circulating in their afterlives, Evans's Havana photographs problematically position Cuba and its citizens as strange and rare commodities available for visual consumption. This chapter also examines similarly provocative images of Cuba by contemporary foreign photographers, a genre known as "ruin porn." Obscuring the realities of daily life in favor of aesthetic renderings of the city's deteriorating architecture, such representations also offer up contemporary Havana as a visual comestible to U.S. viewers.

The second chapter of my dissertation, "Snapshots of a Diaspora: Visualizing Collective Memory in Spanish Caribbean Vernacular Photography," takes up a different photographic fragment in the archipelago: vernacular photography. "Vernacular" is a category of images that occupies an ill-defined space in the history of the medium. Vernacular photography is the everyday, familial, popular, and personal facet of the medium, and the set of images most closely tied to memory and expressions of identity. This chapter examines snapshots, portraits, and picture postcards as vernacular images that have circulated between Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the United States as a result of twentieth-century migrations. I study groups of family photographs found in cultural and historical archives and in online photo-

sharing sites. In doing so, I also subject the category of vernacular photography to in-depth critical examination and propose a set of visual conventions that dominate this as a form of representation. I then determine how the visual conventions of vernacular photography, as an effort at satisfying sameness, actually reveal fluctuations in identity construction and self-representation as a result of migration. This is especially compelling as individuals and families who have migrated navigate the tensions between maintaining familial and social ties with a home community and addressing the demands of a diasporic community. I therefore suggest the ways in which vernacular photographs and their visual conventions are used as a social tool to legitimize and reinforce aspects of individual and cultural identity for diasporic and home communities beyond the boundaries of the albums and homes that contain them.

Chapter Three, titled "Desiring Bodies of Memory: The Fantasy of Embodiment in the Spanish Caribbean Photographic Imaginary," investigates aesthetic representations of the body as the conflicted site of collective diasporic memory and identity. I consider three contemporary photographic series: an untitled series of photographs printed on bone by the Cuban artist Carlos Garaicoa (2012); the *Enlace* series by Dominican artist Raquel Paiewonsky (2012); and the *Wall Maps* series by the Puerto Rican artist Karlo Andrei Ibarra (2005). The photographic series is, of course, another vehicle through which to consider the relationships between seemingly discrete fragments that enable a larger, coherent form, further tying the discrete themes and subjects of this chapter into the larger coherence of the project as a whole. Applying ideas from psychoanalytic theories of embodiment to these photography series, I demonstrate that an embodied socio-cultural imaginary is a crucial element for coping with the experience of diaspora from within the Spanish Caribbean. The socio-cultural imaginary is a psychic space that connects people in spite of an excess of geography caused by the phenomenon

of diaspora. The photographs in these three distinct series embody collective memory and enable the expression of cultural identity, among and across the spaces of diaspora in the United States. The bodies represented in the photographs, some obvious, some inferred, reveal the situations of fracture, displacement, deterritorialization, and disorder caused by mass migration (for various reasons) between the Spanish Caribbean and the United States in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Chapter Four of my dissertation, "Fragments from an Unhomely Medium: The Photography of the Spanish Caribbean Diasporas in the United States," also examines photography and art production, but from the perspective of the Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican diasporas in the United States. Through the artists and artworks considered in that chapter, I present photography as a means for representing exilic vision and the sense of the unhomely within a diasporic space. In addition to Cuban-American photographer Abelardo Morell's camera obscura photographs, which present a visual image of this theorized exilic vision, I investigate the photographic work of Dominican artist Scherezade (Scherezade García) and Nuyorican artist Adál (Adál Maldonado). These artists, all of whom live and work in the U.S., and also travel between here and the Caribbean, use photography as part of their art practice. Yet they also blur the distinct lines between performance, installation, collage, and video, and thus complicate a strict notion of medium specificity, just as the situation of diaspora complicates notions of home and belonging. Finally, this chapter stages an important intervention in the current scholarship in that it addresses the creative potentials of living and working in a diaspora. Rather than presenting the situation of diaspora as a static or stagnant state, I argue that diaspora encompasses and enables a range of creative articulations. I present diaspora as a multifaceted

space of complexity and conflict, but also as a space of intense creativity and even pleasure, which expands traditional conceptions of contemporary Spanish Caribbean photography.

Chapter One

Consuming Cuba: Walker Evans's Havana 1933 Portfolio in its Contemporary Afterlives

The Contemporary Visual Discourse of Cuba

There are many citizens of Havana who survive by selling their own visage to tourists bearing cameras. They pace across La Plaza de la Catedral, wander along the narrow streets of Habana Vieja, and gather in front of the Capitolio building: Afro-Cuban women in *santera* costumes, a man with two miniature dachshunds dressed like tiny *revolucionarios* in berets, elderly women with enormous cigars jutting from their mouths, a Hemingway impersonator who ambles around near the entrance of the Hotel Ambos Mundos. These entrepreneurs usually request one or two *convertibles* (C.U.C.s or convertible pesos, the Cuban tourist currency) in exchange for the tourists' snapshots of them as they pose or perform.[29] The snapshots attest to the tourist's experience of an ostensibly authentic Cuba. There is one type of image hustler, however, who offers visitors to Havana a very different type of photographic souvenir, one that turns the camera on the tourists themselves. Usually found in front of the Capitolio building on the Paseo del Prado, a man takes photographs of foreign tourists with a seemingly antiquated box-style camera propped on a low tripod (fig. 3). The homemade box camera produces sepia-toned photographs of the tourists posed in front of the large, neoclassical Capitolio.[30] Combined with the shabbiness of the operation—the patched-up body of the camera, the ragged cloth hanging from the rickety looking tripod leg—the antique appearance of the souvenir photographs

[29] U.S. currency was banned in 2004.

[30] An architectural symbol of Cuba's former grandeur and the opulence of the Machado era, the Capitolio Building has been undergoing renovations for several years. In figure 3, the stairs up to the building have been closed to the public, so the operator has turned the camera to face the Paseo del Prado and the line of refurbished antique U.S.-made automobiles that are usually parked there, also with the intention of charging tourists to take snapshots.

evokes an ambiguous sense of history.[31] The souvenir photographs suggest that the tourists traveled not just to Havana, but also back in time, to a different historical moment in the Cuban capital. Their full-color snapshots of the costumed Cuban characters attest to the purported cultural authenticity of the tourists' experience in Havana as a city outside of time. The artificially antiquated photographs, on the other hand, reproduce something quite different, though equally problematic: a ruddy-brown tinted, romanticized vision of Cuba's past, into which the present-day tourists have been incongruously inserted. Through these false photographs of the past, the island's history is conjured and visually consumed as part of the tourists' experience of Cuba.

In Havana there are many places where the past and the present seem to overlap, conjoin, or become confused, causing a temporary sensation of temporal rupture. But like the souvenir snapshots of the *santeras*, the Romeo y Julieta cigars, and Havana Club Rum, the experience of disjointed time that Havana occasionally educes is not currently available for consumption by most U.S. citizens. Yet the desire for Cuba persists, even from abroad, despite and undoubtedly also *because* of the prohibition against travel to the island upheld by the U.S. government to varying degrees since 1962. The desire to experience Cuba, to consume it as part of a touristic experience, must be fulfilled through other means.[32] Another way of satisfying this desire is through the visual consumption of photography of Cuba. As Susan Sontag argues, tourist

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[31] Literature and cultural studies scholar José Quiroga also discusses the photographers outside the Capitolio building, noting that, "on closer inspection, the picture show is all deceit." Indeed, hidden inside the wooden box camera is another camera, a Polaroid or, increasingly, a small digital camera and photo printer set to produce the sepia-toned images (note the winding wires in figure 3, which lead from the hanging bag up to the false camera body). Quiroga argues that the "pretense at antiqueness" emphasizes foreign visitors' need to imagine Cuba as "stuck in the past and outside historical time." The souvenir photographs further enable this imagined backwards Cuba and, as I will argue in this chapter, the photographs of Walker Evans and others do as well. Cuban Palimpsests (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 82-83.

[32] Even before the gradual easing of the ban beginning in 2008, some U.S. citizens, did, of course, still travel to Cuba with special licenses from the U.S. Department of the Treasury on religious missions, educational trips, and with charitable organizations, or clandestinely, via Mexico, Canada, or other Caribbean islands.

photography is a way of "converting *experience* into an *image*" for travelers, a means to both certify the experience and to limit the potential anxiety of it through the act of photographing.[33] In precisely the opposite way, photographs of Cuba and particularly of its capital work to convert the *image* into a substitute for the *experience* that U.S. citizens might desire but cannot legally have. Aesthetic photographic representations of Cuba as presented in museums and glossy publications become part of the larger project of visually consuming Cuba for U.S. audiences. Historical and contemporary photographs of Cuba are regularly consumed with equal appetite, and they are often presented in these formats as equivalents, without regard for the risk of temporal disjunction such images might create. As a genre, aesthetic photographic representations of Cuba, both historical and contemporary, form a visual discourse in the present day about the island that encourages a pleasurable sense of postcolonial nostalgia, as well as voyeuristic eroticism and exoticism. I concentrate my analysis here on a group of images taken by Walker Evans in Havana in 1933. This chapter briefly discusses the historical context of Walker Evans's month-long trip to Cuba's capital city on a commissioned assignment and the group of images he produced there, initially published in the book The Crime of Cuba. Its central focus, however, is not the geographic or historical location of Havana in 1933.[34] Neither is its methodology a monographic examination of Evans's biography and *oeuvre* nor a critical review of the vast body of art historical scholarship on the photographer. Rather, this chapter places Evans's portfolio of images of Havana within a larger context of aesthetic photographic representations of Cuba that circulate within the United States today, in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

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[33] Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Picador USA/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973/2001), 9. Emphasis mine.

[34] In 1933 Evans was hired by the publishing company J.B. Lippincott & Company and sent to Havana to take photographs that were to be included in a book by the journalist Carleton Beals, titled The Crime of Cuba (1933). The lengthy text is highly critical of what Beals saw as the mutually reinforcing and increasingly corrupt activities of the Cuban president, Gerardo Machado y Morales, and U.S. capitalists with commercial and industrial interests on the island. This texts and the circumstances of Evans's commission will be discussed more in-depth below.

I am not concerned here with the photographs that Evans produced during his brief tenure with the Historical Division of the U.S. Farm Security Administration (F.S.A.) or with his collaborative project with James Agee, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.[35] My own interest in Evans's body of work is focused on the less celebrated and less often critically considered set of images known as the Havana 1933 portfolio. Likewise, I am not concerned with the art historical moment of 1933, the original context of Evans's Havana photographs, except as it relates to the larger discursive formation of photographs of Cuba circulating in the present day. Instead, I focus on what I call the "afterlives" of the photographs in the Havana 1933 portfolio.[36] By "afterlives" I mean the extended period after the photographs' initial creation and distribution, publication, or exhibition, with an emphasis on the discursive shifts that occur over time. I consider the Havana 1933 photographs' afterlives as the period beginning around the establishment of the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 1994, an event discussed more in-depth below.

As photographic objects move through collections and archives, as well as in and out of public or scholarly consciousness, their interpretations and receptions change. In their afterlives photographs shed and acquire significances; new meanings related to the contemporary period are read and reread into the images, and into their historical subjects and contexts. In examining the photographs' afterlives rather than the historical moment of their original creation and

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[35] James R. Mellow, Walker Evans (New York: Basic Books, 1999) and Belinda Rathbone, Walker Evans: A Biography (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995). The journalistic writings and photographs produced by Agee and Evans during their travels through rural areas of the U.S. South in the summer of 1936, which ultimately became the book Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, were commissioned but ultimately rejected for publication by Fortune magazine (Mellow, 308-9).

[36] The idea that photography and other forms of visual media might change in meaning and interpretive potential over time was brought to my attention by Michael J. Casey's study of the multiple afterlives of Korda's 1960 *Guerrillero Heróico* photograph, Che's Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image (New York: Vintage, 2009). While Casey does not make a scholarly or art historical argument about the photograph, the case study of *Guerrillero Heróico*'s transformation from a photo document of the Cuban Revolution to an ambiguous sign of rebellion ironically held under corporate copyright illuminated the idea that images can have many distinct lives after their initial creation and circulation.

publication, I highlight the fluidity and mobility of the discourses of Spanish Caribbean photography in circulation among disparate geographic locations and temporalities. Decades after their creation and initial dissemination in the book The Crime of Cuba, the Havana 1933 portfolio images circulate again, through contemporary museum exhibitions and fine art photography publications.[37] The renewed interest in Evans's photographs of Cuba was sparked by the settlement of his estate and the subsequent creation of the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1994, which made many of his personal papers and the Havana 1933 image files available to scholars and curators for the first time.

The Havana 1933 portfolio contains over four hundred negatives, yet only a few of the images from the portfolio were exhibited in the years between their creation in 1933 and the founding of the Walker Evans Archive.[38] The circulation of the Havana photographs through art museum exhibitions and fine art publications in the United States accelerated markedly after 1994, and the images have generated significantly more interest than they did immediately following their initial publication.[39] For example, consider an image titled *Fruit Stand, Havana* (fig. 4), which did not appear in The Crime of Cuba or in any museum exhibitions of Evans's work from the 1930s through the 1960s.[40] The abundant produce would have definitely

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[37] See Walker Evans, John T. Hill, and Giles Mora, Walker Evans: Havana 1933, trans. Christie McDonald (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); Judith Keller, Walker Evans: The Getty Museum Collection (Malibu, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995); Walker Evans and Andrei Codrescu, Walker Evans: Signs (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1998); Maria Morris Hambourg, Jeff L. Rosenheim, Douglas Eklund, and Mia Fineman, Walker Evans (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press/The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, 2000); Walker Evans, Andrei Codrescu, and Judith Keller, Walker Evans: Cuba (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001); and the exhibition "A Revolutionary Project: Cuba from Walker Evans to Now," which ran from May 17 to October 2, 2011 in the Getty Center, Los Angeles, but did not have a separate catalogue publication.

[38] Because the Havana 1933 portfolio negatives and photographs remained in Evans's possession until his death, he had control over their exhibition and publication. I have not been able to find written evidence about why he selected some and not others for public display.

[39] The critical and popular reception of The Crime of Cuba and Evans's photogravures published with it is discussed more in-depth below.

[40] See Judith Keller for an extensive bibliography on Evans, including lists of solo and group exhibitions and attendant catalogues; Andrew Eskind, ed., George Eastman House Index To Photographers, Collections, And

contradicted Beals's arguments about famine and corruption, discussed further below, but it is unclear why Evans himself never chose to exhibit the photograph, as he did with just a few other Havana images.[41] *Fruit Stand* is a formally exquisite photograph of a market stand stocked with gleaming tropical fruits attended by a roughly dressed male vendor, his back to the viewer. The visual repetition created by the neat rows, brimming bowls, and bunches of fruit; the strong horizontal lines breaking up the picture plane into neat thirds; and the strong tonal range mark it as an excellent example of modernist photography and highly characteristic of Evans's observational *oeuvre* more generally. Despite being left out of circulation in the decades immediately following 1933, *Fruit Stand* has been selected consistently—almost without exception—for inclusion in the exhibitions and fine art publications on Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio noted above.

As the situation with the *Fruit Stand, Havana* photograph suggests, the images of Havana repeatedly selected by publishers and curators from Evans's portfolio for contemporary exhibitions and catalogues differ greatly from the images presented in The Crime of Cuba, published in 1933 and in exhibitions like *American Photographs* organized by Evans himself.[42] This suggests a discursive reordering or reprioritizing of what the portfolio as a whole has come to mean *about* Cuba in its extended afterlife since 1933. The drastic shift in the discursive potentials of the Havana 1933 photographs in the decades after their production demonstrates the temporal disjunction in the act of photographic looking. Evans's photographs of the Havana of the 1930s—its architecture, people, and urban life—work in the present day to represent Cuba as

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Exhibitions, 3rd ed. (New York & London: G.K. Hall/Prentice Hall International, 1998), as well as the several exhibition catalogues listed in footnote 9 above.

[41] For example, the 1938 exhibition Walker Evans: American Photographs at the Museum of Modern Art included one hundred images, two of which came from the Havana 1933 portfolio: *Havana Policeman* and *Citizen in Downtown Havana*. See Walker Evans, American Photographs (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938); Mellow, 367.

[42] See footnote 12.

an exotic and nostalgic commodity readily available for visual consumption, operating like the luscious-looking produce in *Fruit Stand, Havana*. The Havana we can imagine in the present, enabled by Evans's historical photographs, has implications on the larger discourse of photography as a means of representing the Spanish Caribbean today as geographically, ecologically, and climatically fortunate yet culturally indigent; as the alternatively modern, the politically corrupt, socially vulnerable, and, particularly in the case of Cuba, the ruinously abject. Through renewed interest by curators, art publishers, and museum-going audiences, elegant and well-publicized exhibitions, and increased scholarly attention in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs have allowed viewers in the United States to vicariously experience Cuba and its potential pleasures.

The historically turbulent affiliation between the United States and Cuba also contributes to a fascination with the island: North Americans, according to writer Andrei Codrescu, "have a stormy love-hate relationship with Cuba that is one of the great dramas of the New World."[43] Nostalgia for the colonial relationship of the early twentieth century, the persistent demands of the exile community in the U.S., and recent political and cultural events have rekindled interest in Cuba and further marked the island's exotic exceptionalism and historical appeal.[44] The prohibition against U.S. citizens consuming the architecture, art, and culture of Cuba as tourists due to the trade embargo and travel ban has—in the U.S.—induced a strong desire for and

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[43] Andrei Codrescu, "Walker Evans: The Cuba Photographs," in Walker Evans: Cuba (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001), 11.

[44] The political and cultural events that refocused and renewed U.S. citizens' attention on its relationship with Cuba include the release of the documentary film The Buena Vista Social Club by German filmmaker Wim Wenders (1999); the Elián González affair (2000); the conviction and imprisonment of five Cubans for espionage in the United States (2001); former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's visit to the island (2002); news of the transfer of presidential duties from Fidel Castro to his brother, Raúl Castro (2006) and Raúl's formal election as president (2008); and the increased attention on the U.S. government's activities at its naval base on rented land at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, after September 11, 2001, among others. Modifications to the U.S. travel ban and economic sanctions based on changes in political control—sometimes tightened, sometime loosened—over the past twenty-five years have also stimulated interest in cultural and business exchanges.

interest in all aspects of Cuban culture. As noted by comparative studies scholar Ana María Dopico, "a thirty-year shortage of Cuban images on the world market only made more precious and extreme Havana's aesthetic and sensual fetishization and its promotion as a must-see, world historical destination."[45] Cuba is unique in its position as the one Caribbean island U.S. citizens cannot directly experience through tourist activities or direct consumption of imported goods. Due in part to the antagonistic relationship between the two nations since Castro's *Revolución*, the contemporary visual discourse about Cuba in the United States is decidedly different than that of other areas of the Caribbean. The contemporary trope of the tropical tourist paradise, epitomized by imagery of the sand, the sun, and the sea, does not fit so neatly in the case of Cuba. The visual discourse of Evans's 1933 portfolio in the present offers up instead highly aestheticized representations of an historical Havana.

This chapter examines how the contemporary consumer culture of the United States and its art and museum economies now devour Cuba through Evans's historical images of Havana. The consumption of the Caribbean includes more than visual imagery of the geography and topography: "viewing 'the scenery,'" sociologist Mimi Sheller notes, "was not simply about a relation to the landscape, but also was about a relationship to the Caribbean people."[46] Caribbean bodies occupied the same visual plane as the tropical landscape, both understood through their availability to produce pleasure, capital, or comestibles. While Sheller's analysis focuses on the bodies of slaves, indentured laborers, and service workers, the bodies that appear in Evans's

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[45] Ana María Dopico, "Picturing Havana: History, Vision, and the Scramble for Cuba," Nepantla: Views from South 3, 3 (2002): 451. See the abundance of news articles noting increased U.S. tourist traffic to Cuba, such as Marc Frank, "Americans Traveling to Cuba in Record Numbers," *Reuters.com*, 18 October 2013 (among many others); travel articles on how to visit Cuba, such as Damien Cave, "Cuba: Doing It Your Way," *New York Times,* 11 September 2013, Travel section, and Stephanie Rosebloom, "Cuba: Going With a Tour Company," 11 September 2013, Travel section (among many others); and the plethora of tours advertised in travel publications and websites like Lonely Planet, TripAdvisor.com, and Expedia.com, all of which suggest a strong desire on the part of U.S. citizens to visit to Cuba after many years of an embargo and travel restrictions.

[46] Mimi Sheller, Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), 61-62.

photographs occupy different positions within the specific context of Cuba at a tumultuous historical moment. My analysis of the Evans's Havana photographs as a case study therefore requires an extension of her approach to the visual consumption of the Caribbean through images in circulation. The Havana 1933 portfolio features people in Havana strolling, posing, working, and sleeping in an urban environment—for example, the vendor in *Fruit Stand, Havana*, among others discussed below. The images connect their bodies to the public spaces of the city, but not explicitly as the direct producers of consumable goods and services. Instead, it is their photographic image, the index of their bodies, that is the forbidden fruit exposed to the eager consumption by contemporary viewers through museum exhibitions and art publications. The Cuban bodies in the circulating photographic representations like Evans's necessarily become part of the larger project of visually reproducing an exotic, erotic historical Cuba ripe with nostalgia in the present.

Contemporary U.S. audiences' visual consumption of Evans's images of Havana in museum venues and art books demonstrates the strong desire for an imagined, pre-Castro Cuba that is shaded variously with feelings of postcolonial nostalgia and a sense of exoticism and eroticism. The concept of postcolonial nostalgia that I use here is intended to suggest the type of memory and longing experienced not by a diasporic or displaced subject torn from the homeland, the former colonial subject, but rather by one yearning for the historical moment of imperial power, one now denied access to former sites of pleasure and satisfaction.[47] The exoticism and

[47] I first encountered the concept of postcolonial nostalgia in Dennis Walder, Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation, and Memory (New York and London: Routledge, 2011). Walder's literary analysis considers memory and nostalgia through the writings of former colonial subjects coping with the complicated aftermaths of empire. As I use it here, the idea of postcolonial nostalgia attempts to extend this analysis to those with no direct experience of colonialism, only to the history and collective memory of it. My ideas were influenced by various readings on history and collective memory, which illuminated the inherent difficulties in managing and representing the past in the present, including Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999) and "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections, ed.

eroticism that the Havana 1933 portfolio images evoke suggest the emotional allure of the forbidden and the unknown that is also available and potentially accessible for consumption, visual or otherwise. In the case of *Fruit Stand, Havana*, for example, the photograph's sensuous representation of the ripe, voluptuous exotic fruits on display insinuates a very direct means of consuming Cuba, now lost to the passage of time and political realities; in other images I will discuss later, the erotic charge and exotic appeal is placed on Cuban bodies, not produce. The Havana 1933 portfolio also presents a vision of Cuba that exists in an alternative Caribbean modernity, one that is both alluring and abject. The sites for experiencing Cuba in the present, which I argue include Evans's Havana 1933 photographs in their contemporary afterlives, perpetuate an imagined idea of the island as outside of time. Further, the images in the Havana 1933 portfolio viewed in contemporary settings create a sense of temporal rupture, a moment of confusion and disorder that frames the shifting visual discourse on Cuba and informs subsequent photographic representations of the Spanish Caribbean island nation, its people, and its urban spaces.

In a similar fashion, contemporary art photography of Cuba taken by U.S. and European artists that emphasize Havana's painfully deteriorating infrastructure allow for a mixture of nostalgia for Cuba with an almost pleasurable sense of mourning Havana. I argue that such contemporary images, a genre of photography known colloquially among artists and critics as "ruin porn," are informed by the discursive structure of the Havana 1933 photographs, not necessarily as arranged or selected by Evans himself, but in their present-day circulation through galleries and fine art publications.[48] Like the afterlives of Evans's portfolio, the photographs of

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Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968/2007), Svetlana Boym, The Future of Nostalgia (New York: Basic Books, 2001), among others noted elsewhere in this project.
[48] Ruin porn is a recently coined term used to describe photography and other forms of visual representation that focus on the deterioration and physical decline of urban or otherwise developed spaces, usually in the wake of

the ruins of Havana reinforce the continued misreading that Cuba is somehow outside Western temporalities or isolated from the modernity experienced by the West.[49]

Walker Evans & The Crime of Cuba

In May 1933, the twenty-nine-year-old Evans was hired to take a series of photographs in Havana to illustrate a forthcoming book, titled The Crime of Cuba, by the incendiary investigative journalist, historian, and activist Carleton Beals.[50] Beals was well-known for his previous books and articles on Latin American politics, which concentrated on anti-U.S. imperialism movements and leftist causes. He had spent six weeks in Havana in 1932 researching his next journalistic book project on political conditions in Cuba.[51] Beals's title indicted both the despotic, brutal dictatorial regimes that governed Cuba and the imperialistic interests of the United States.[52] With the support of several Cuban academics and activists both on and off the island, including the exiled anthropologist Fernando Ortíz, Beals's book brought to light the widespread poverty and the increasing violence that plagued Cuba under Machado and his predecessors.[53]

Walker Evans's assignment in Havana, which lasted about a month in the late spring of 1933, was to photograph the burgeoning uprising against President Machado and to visually

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social, political, or economic crises, or natural disasters. This genre is exemplified by photographs of Detroit, Michigan, including French photographers Yves Marchan and Romain Meffre's traveling exhibition The Ruins of Detroit and glossy art publication of the same title (London: Steidl, 2010), and U.S. photographer Andrew L. Moore's Detroit Disassembled (Akron, OH: Akron Art Museum, 2010). New Orleans, Louisiana, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is another frequent subject of ruin porn photography for both professional and amateur photographers.

[49] Sheller, 2.

[50] Mellow, 173. Walker Evans was recommended to Beals and his editors to make the photographs for the book by Lippincott associate and former journalist Ernestine Evans (no relation), who frequently promoted the young photographer, as she had other artists in her personal coterie, such as Diego Rivera (Rathbone, 78).

[51] John A. Britton, Carleton Beals: A Radical Journalist in Latin America (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 103.

[52] Ibid., 111.

[53] Ibid., 107. The book was published in August 1933, two weeks after Machado was ousted from power (Rathbone, 82).

document the effects of his corruption and collusion with U.S. business interests on the impoverished citizens of Cuba.[54] Just prior to leaving for Havana, however, Evans stipulated two conditions for the photographic commission: he would not "make literal illustrations for the text," and his images must be presented together as an autonomous work, discernibly separate from Beals's account.[55] Evans demanded and was granted "an independent photo essay" at the end of the book, allowing him some control over the sequence and captioning of the images and granting them a bit more visual authority.[56] After the publication of The Crime of Cuba, Evans claimed that he had never even read Beals's book, making the direct visual correlation between the words and images that the author and his publisher might have hoped for impossible.[57] The portfolio of photographs included at the end of The Crime of Cuba included thirty-one images: twenty-eight photographs of Havana taken by Evans and three "Anonymous Photographs" drawn from a larger file of clippings that he compiled from local newspapers.[58] Of the thirty-one photographs in the published signature, only the anonymous newspaper images gave an indication of the violence of the Machadato and the impending revolution against it.[59] Evans selected the photographs for publication from approximately four hundred negatives he made

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[54] Ibid., 112; Mellow, 175.
[55] Rathbone, 79; Giles Mora, "Havana, 1933: A Seminal Work," in Walker Evans: Havana 1933, trans. Christie McDonald (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 9. See also: Mellow, 176.
[56] Mellow, 176.
[57] Ibid., 175. Mellow's biography also argues that it is unlikely that Evans could have read any of Beals's book before his departure for Havana, as the manuscript was not yet complete when he left the country in mid-May.
[58] Ibid., 180. Evans preserved the printed newspaper photographs in his image file as 8 x 10 inch negatives, each with its own descriptive title. Jeff L. Rosenheim and Douglas Eklund, Unclassified: A Walker Evans Anthology: Selections from the Walker Evans Archive (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 209.
[59] My thanks to Professor Lauren Kroiz for helping me determine the correct terminology for the section of the book that contains the thirty-one captioned photogravures of Evans's photographs. As per her suggestions, I will use the word "signature," as in "one unit of a book comprising a group of printed sheets that are folded and stitched together" or "a sheet of paper folded, or to be folded, into leaves forming a book" to refer to the section of The Crime of Cuba, which appears after the main text, appendix, bibliography, and index (signature, n. OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press.
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/179546?rskey=W3EFJs&result=1677&isAdvanced=true (accessed March 2, 2012).

while in Havana, most of which he developed and printed after he returned to New York.[60] The photographs in the Havana 1933 portfolio depict the type of street scenes, architectural studies, and subtle portraits for which he would be celebrated and canonized later in his career. Thus, Evans's photographs included in The Crime of Cuba, and the larger Havana 1933 portfolio from which they were drawn, form the contemporary art historical discourse about Evans, revealed in the vast literature about his work, as well as the visual discourse of representing Cuba through photography eighty years later, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Beals's textual account of the imminent revolution in Cuba focused on the brutal violence of the Machado regime and the progressive destitution of the Cuban people. While it is likely that Beals gave Evans a complete description of his project and a brief history of Cuba and its relationship with the U.S., the author's written account and the collection of photographs included with the text do not necessarily match up in tone, subject, or context.[61] Aside from the anonymous newspaper images, "very few of the photographs Evans made for The Crime of Cuba could be considered powerful arguments against an oppressive dictatorship or proof of the island's desperate poverty."[62] An observation echoed among the scholarship on Evans and his time in Havana is that the photographs Evans took himself do not carry the same criticisms and indictments of the Machadato as the text of The Crime of Cuba.[63] It is probable, then, that the

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[60] Mellow, 183. Based on a note found in his journals, Mellow claims that Evans processed and printed some film at American Photo Studios, Calle Zenea 43, Havana. While there was some reason for concern about having his images confiscated by government officials, Evans also ran out of his advance money half-way through his trip, making processing all of his film in Cuba unfeasible and unlikely (Mellow, 180). John Tagg refutes this hypothesis, claiming that American Photo Studios was in fact "a picture agency and archive, not a processing laboratory as some commentators have assumed," (John Tagg, "Crime Story: Walker Evans, Cuba and the Corpse in a Pool of Blood," Photographies 2, 1 (2009 Special Issue on Globalization): 102). Mellow also contends that Ernest Hemingway, with whom the photographer developed a friendship in Havana, "clearly remembered that as a precaution Evans had given him a set of his prints to take back to the State on his boat the Anita," (183).
[61] Mora, "Havana, 1933," 9.
[62] Rathbone, 81.
[63] See Stephanie Schwartz, "The Crime of Cuba: Urbanism, Photography and the Geopoliltics of Americanization" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997), in particular on this point: "Evans's photographs of Havana and its

newspaper images were included with Evans's own photographic submissions to appease Beals's need to portray the Machadato and its U.S. collaborators as savagely violent. Perhaps to drive the point home to Beals and his publisher even further, Evans captioned one anonymous newspaper image of a murdered young man *A Document of the Terror* (fig. 5). But there is also a particular formal attraction to the Cuban newspaper images Evans clipped from Havana newspapers and then used in The Crime of Cuba.[64] For example, the repeated circular forms of the overturned hat and the coil of rope in the foreground of figure 5, both bisected at inverse angles by the ominously positioned knife and the deceased man's limp arm, and the compressed flatness caused by the angle of the image may have appealed to Evans's formal, modernist sensibility. While the newspaper image might have been included to satisfy Beals's incriminating narrative, it also bears the visual markers of what some scholars have since exalted as Evans's particular photographic style or, in more poetic terms, his "eye," explaining his interest in the newspaper pictures for The Crime of Cuba commission and for his own image collection as well.

Beals also requested visual evidence of the growing impact of the corrupt business practices of the Cuban government and its U.S. accomplices on the country.[65] Only a small number of Evans's photographs for the book, however, featured the unquestionably destitute Cubans Beals described in his text. The captions Evans insisted upon for them, including *Family* and *Havana: Country Family*, complicate Beals's condemnations. Art historian Stephanie Schwartz has emphatically argued that, as evidenced by the portfolio of photographs included in The Crime of Cuba, "Evans was *not* Beals's accomplice" in promoting his leftist contentions

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citizens are overwhelmingly mundane. In fact, in the almost 400 photographs he took at the height of the revolution… almost nothing happens," (25).

[64] Mellow makes note of the fact that while in Havana, Evans collected "a small file of atrocity photographs probably gotten from local newspaper sources," (180-181). The Walker Evans Archive also has several folders of newspaper clippings from several different decades collected by Evans, suggesting a lifelong habit of archiving newspaper articles and images.

[65] Mora, "Havana, 1933," 9 and Rathbone, 81.

about Cuba and U.S. imperialism: "organized as they are, Evans's photographs do not refer to Beals's history."[66] Ultimately, Beals focused his analysis on the escalating political crisis in Cuba. Evans, meanwhile, did not want to submit to documenting only those subjects requested by Lippincott and included in the verbal directives from Beals. Instead, he used the commission as an opportunity to wander through the streets of a foreign city, to "avidly explore Havana, refining his sense of observation, the ability he recognized as essential for a photographer."[67] He would further hone these observational skills later in his career, particularly in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. This is not to imply that Evans's work is purely about form; rather, I mean to suggest that his photographs do very different work than Beals's text in describing Cuba in 1933. Given the photographer's reticence about visually reproducing the political indictments presented in the book and his deliberate disregard for representing the actual content of the text, Beals's and Evans's projects can be regarded as individual and separate endeavors toward representing Cuba at a particular moment in time.

The Crime of Cuba received moderate attention in the U.S. literary press when it was released in August 1933, but the inclusion of Evans's photographs did not necessarily enhance the book's publicity as much as the publisher and author had hoped.[68] Nor did the commission garner Evans immediate status as a celebrated photojournalist, a role he likely would have disdained.[69] Unlike the photographs and negatives Evans made for the F.S.A. a few years later, he kept the collection of negatives, copy prints, and a file of newspaper clippings from Cuba in his personal collection, in "an archive that was still stored separately in his studio at the end of

[66] Schwartz, 37. Emphasis original.
[67] Mora, "Havana, 1933," 13.
[68] Schwartz, 31. She also notes that, "In several reviews of the book [Evans's photographs] were not even mentioned," suggesting that his insistence on a separate photo essay at the back of the book may have inadvertently concealed his work behind Beals's thick text, appendix, bibliography, and index.
[69] Mellow, 175. Ernestine Evans suggested to Lippincott that Walker Evans could be the next Margaret Bourke-White, a comparison Mellow suggests the photographer likely would have resisted.

his life, in an old suitcase."[70] Thus, while Evans's F.S.A. photographs were available to researchers at the Library of Congress as early as 1944, the Havana 1933 portfolio and its approximately 400 images were inaccessible and mostly unknown, except for those published in The Crime of Cuba, the few that he selected for subsequent exhibitions and publications, and the few images he sold to art museums as collection acquisitions. For example, Evans included three images from the larger Havana 1933 portfolio in his solo show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1938, titled *American Photographs*, and in the catalogue publication of the same title, but none of those images had been culled from the signature of The Crime of Cuba.[71]

Renewed interest in the F.S.A. photographers during the 1960s and 1970s prompted an exhibition of Evans's work at the Museum of Modern Art called simply, *Walker Evans* (1971). The exhibition included five images from the Havana 1933 portfolio, only one of which was published with Beals's text.[72] Except for the very occasional inclusion in exhibitions of Evans's work curated by others, the Havana 1933 portfolio photographs were generally ignored by scholars and curators until the publication of Walker Evans: Havana 1933 in 1989.[73] In 1994 Evans's personal collection of prints, negatives, and contact sheets, including those in the Havana 1933 portfolio, as well as his journals, personal and professional papers, and his copyright, were donated to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the museum formally

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[70] Tagg, "Crime Story," 83.

[71] Evans, American Photographs. Alan Trachtenberg notes the potential challenges of the exhibition title: "What *is* an American photograph? Photographs made in and of America, or expressive of America? And if both, what does this doubleness imply about each word, 'American' and 'photographs'?" The inclusion of the Havana 1933 photographs productively complicates Trachtenberg's reading of Evans's highly nonspecific exhibition title. Reading American Photographs: Images as History Mathew Brady to Walker Evans (New York: Hill & Wang, 1989), 240. Emphasis original.

[72] Rhetoric studies scholar Cara A. Finnegan notes that this renewed interest was encouraged by two photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art: Edward Steichen's show of F.S.A. images, The Bitter Years (1962) and a retrospective on Dorothea Lange (1966), both of which featured images of the poverty and suffering endured during the Great Depression in the U.S. Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003), xviii.

[73] See Mora, Walker Evans: Havana 1933. This publication includes an essay by Gilles Mora, a French historian and photography critic, sequencing by John T. Hill, and over one hundred photographs from the Havana 1933 portfolio, most of which were not included in the signature at the end of Beals's book.

established the Walker Evans Archive in its photography department.[74]

Evans's portfolio of images of Havana from 1933 have thus become a part of the scholarly discourse on Evans's singular style, poetic visual sensibility, and intense interest in sequencing. The conversion of the Havana 1933 photographs from visual documents intended to corroborate claims of corruption and poverty (though they failed in this regard) into highly lauded works of art occurred almost immediately. Evans himself was deeply invested in the reconsideration of his photographs as art objects rather than documents, regularly chaffing against his classification as a documentary photographer or as a photojournalist. Indeed, Evans claims he found those terms inadequate to the subtleties of his practice; he preferred the term "documentary style" to describe his photographic work.[75] Early in his career as a photographer, however, Evans did not yet have the luxury of fully determining the treatment or contextualization of his photographs, though he did try to exert a degree of control through the sequence and captions of the photographs that appeared in The Crime of Cuba. The rapid transformation of Evans from young man with two cameras on a paid assignment in Havana, to a documentarian wandering the U.S. South with writer James Agee, to a canonized art photographer further suggests the interpretive pliability of his photographic body of work over time. As I will demonstrate, Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs have been particularly susceptible to dramatic discursive shifts as the photographer's reputation, role of the museum in circulating images, and the political situation in Cuba have all changed over time.

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[74] Mora, "Havana 1933," 22. Evans passed away in 1977. The production of this book was facilitated by John T. Hill, Evans's friend and the executor of his estate, who had access to all of the photographer's files immediately following his death. See also Rosenheim and Eklund, 11.

[75] Hambourg, "A Portrait of the Artist," In Walker Evans, 22.

A Shifting Discourse: The Havana 1933 Portfolio & its Contemporary Afterlives

Since the publication of the book Walker Evans: Havana 1933 and the creation of the Walker Evans Archive in 1994, Evans's photographs from Cuba have generated increasing interest among scholars and curators of photography.[76] Similarly, reprints from the original film negatives of the Havana 1933 portfolio have been featured repeatedly in numerous exhibitions and publications in the past two decades, including traveling exhibitions initiated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California, and the Museum of Modern Art, each accompanied by an expensive catalogue of reproductions.[77] The images selected from the Havana 1933 portfolio for circulation in these contemporary exhibitions and publications establish the discursive structure of photographic representations of Cuba in the present day. Despite their shared origin in Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio, the photographs in the exhibitions and their catalogues are consistently *not* the same set of images as included in The Crime of Cuba signature. The inclusion of a distinctly different set of images from the Havana 1933 portfolio in museum exhibitions and the discontinuation of Evans's tight control over their sequence and captions signals the malleability of interpretive meanings contained within the Havana 1933 portfolio in its multiple afterlives. Many of the recent scholarly publications, however, focus only on the Havana photographs published in The Crime of Cuba. This tendency makes sense from a research perspective: the Walker Evans Archive contains extensive correspondence and records about the commission from Lippincott, ideal for

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[76] See Dopico "Picturing Havana;" Tagg, "Crime Story," Schwartz, The Crime of Cuba; Olga Rodríguez Falcón, "The American City: Havana 1933," Third Text 24, 6 (2010): 735-747, among others.

[77] Again, see Keller, Walker Evans: The Getty Museum Collection; Codrescu, Walker Evans: Signs; Hambourg, Rosenheim, Eklund, Fineman, Walker Evans; Codrescu and Keller, Walker Evans: Cuba; and the exhibition "A Revolutionary Project: Cuba from Walker Evans to Now," Getty Center, Los Angeles. All of these exhibitions focused on Evans's Cuba photographs exclusively or featured a large section of images, essays, and explanatory text devoted to the Havana 1933 portfolio. The most recent exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum also included a panel discussion on "How Do Americans Imagine Cuba?" and a continuing education course on "Picturing Cuba—Photography in Context," which suggest a sustained interest in how images shape U.S. perceptions of Cuba. http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/walker_evans_cuba/events.html (accessed April 14, 2012).

archival investigation into the specific, discrete set of images in the book. The possible connections and disparities between the text in The Crime of Cuba and the images in the signature section are compelling to unearth through a comparative methodology, as evidenced through the recent scholarly research on this subject, including essays by photography historians Gilles Mora and John Tagg.[78]

Several historians and theorists of photography have also focused closely on the sequencing of images produced through the paginated form of the signature section. Because they were to be published as a separate segment of pages in the back of the book, Evans found it necessary to submit his own recommendations for the labels and organization along with his images to Beals and the editors at Lippincott. The author and publisher intended the photographs to meet the burden of proof for Beals's allegations of a crime, but Evans's insistence on the specific captions and sequence for the photogravure reproductions in the publication expose his determination to produce his own statement on the city of Havana. Through the highly arranged sequencing of the signature, Evans "presents more than a compilation of individual photographs; rather, [he presents] a deliberate order of pictures, a *discourse of images*."[79] While historian of photography Alan Trachtenberg is referring here to Evans's 1938 book of images titled American Photographs, the photographer's letters and journal entries demonstrate similarly close attention to the sequencing and labeling of the images submitted to Beals and his publishers for The Crime of Cuba.[80] Evans wanted to create a discursive structure through the images.

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[78] See Mora, "Havana 1933;" John Tagg, "Crime Story: Walker Evans, Cuba and the Corpse in a Pool of Blood," Photographies 2, 1 (2009 Special Issue on Globalization): 79-102; Raúl Rubio, "Afro-Cuban Havana, 1930s: Walker Evans and Carleton Beals in The Crime of Cuba (1933)," Caribe: revista de cultura y literatura 12, 1 (2009): 81-102; and Jordan Bear, "In the Morgue: Censorship, Taste, and the Politics of Visual Circulation in Walker Evans's Cuba Portfolio," Visual Resources 23, 3 (2007): 221-243; among others.

[79] Trachtenberg, Reading American Photographs, 233. Emphasis mine.

[80] For example, see Walker Evans's letter to Carleton Beals, dated June 25, 1933, 23 Bethune St., N.Y. Evans pleads, "I made a selection which as to number of prints and order and titles seems not to bear any changing at all, and have prayed Mr. J. Jefferson Jones [an editor at J.B. Lippincott and Co.] to leave it thus… because I think that

Trachtenberg also notes Evans's particular, almost obsessive attention to the progression and captions of his published images, which suggests that the images "insist on the *inscriptive* rather than *transcriptive* aspect of the camera, on its service as a kind of pen or pencil, an instrument of a kind of writing."[81] As an act of inscription, the ordering of the images in the book is simultaneously Evans's declaration of his own creative presence in them, and an indication of their relation to the larger visual discourse about Havana outside the covers of The Crime of Cuba. The inscriptive, creative act further separates Evans's photographic project from Beals's book at the moment of their joint publication, which scholars including Stephanie Schwartz and John Tagg have argued eloquently.

In their contemporary aestheticized afterlives, however, I argue the discursive structure of the Havana 1933 portfolio has shifted significantly. It is the present moment, then, that I am most interested in examining here. In the Havana portfolio's afterlives Evans's carefully inscribed sequence and captions are largely discarded in favor of curatorial choices and art publication conventions. Rather than serving as support for Beals's arguments about political corruption and widespread poverty at a particular historical moment in Cuban history, or as an assertion of Evans's desire to control the discourse of his images, the photographs now emphasize a sense of postcolonial nostalgia and desire for an exotic, erotic physical and psychic space that U.S. citizens cannot access. Evans's photographs have acquired different meanings within the spaces of the art museum and the glossy publication, changes that form the new discursive structure of the images. Art historian Rosalind Krauss has eloquently argued that the same photographic

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arrangement will mean something," and a few lines later he is insistent about leaving the submitted images themselves unchanged: "I do think that if they are reproduced precisely my way, as indicated, they will be something noticeable, and that ought to help the book." Carleton Beals Papers, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, quoted in the Foreword of Walker Evans: Havana 1933, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), n.p.

[81] Alan Trachtenberg, "Walker Evans' America: A Documentary Invention," in Observations: Essays on Documentary Photography, ed. David Featherstone (University of Michigan: Friends of Photography, 1984), 65-66. Emphasis mine.

image can effortlessly inhabit two different cultural discourses. In her discussion of two nearly identical nineteenth-century images, Krauss argues that, because of their disparate modes of viewing and means of circulation, the photographs "belong… to two separate domains of culture, they assume different expectations in the user of the image, they convey two distinct kinds of knowledge; in a more recent vocabulary, one would say that they operate as representations within two separate discursive spaces, as members of *two different discourses*."[82] Similarly, the portfolio of photographs taken by Walker Evans in Havana in 1933 have come to occupy different scholarly discourses, presenting distinct kinds of visual knowledge and setting the parameters within which to discuss them.

The recent reinterpretation of Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs within what Krauss calls "the discursive space of art," the flat white walls of the art museum and the pages of fine art publications, does more than just "legitimate" them as part of an aesthetic discourse.[83] Despite their origins in a purportedly documentary project, the Havana 1933 photographs have already been granted their aesthetic credentials through their adherence to the stylistic and formal demands of photographic modernism as part of Evans's larger *oeuvre*. The contemporary exhibitions of Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio produce a different, if parallel, visual discourse about Cuba, revealing the interpretive instability of the images when viewed within a new context, through a different medium, and at a very different moment in time. I situate Walker Evans's Havana 1933 photographs within "the discursive spaces of art," rather than in the discourse connected to The Crime of Cuba and the moment of 1933. Within this contemporary

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[82] Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," Art Journal, 42, 4 "The Crisis in the Discipline" (Winter 1982): 311. The photographic images Krauss compares are a printed photograph by Timothy O'Sullivan (1868) and nearly identical photolithograph after O'Sullivan's image (1875) of the Tufa Domes, geological structures in Pyramid Lake, Nevada. Emphasis mine.

[83] Ibid., 313. Krauss is highly critical of former MoMA curator Peter Galassi's claim that photography is "a legitimate child of the Western pictorial tradition" as a way to confirm its presence in the art museum (Galassi quoted in Krauss, 313).

visual discourse, Evans's newly aestheticized representations of Havana conjure a sense of postcolonial nostalgia, exoticism, and voyeuristic eroticism that encourage contemporary U.S. audiences to visually consume an imagined idea of Cuba.

"I wonder if the illustrations will seem Cuba to you, as you know it": Consuming the Havana 1933 Portfolio Photographs[84]

Woman on the Street, Havana

While the Havana 1933 portfolio contains hundreds of images that did not appear in the signature of The Crime of Cuba, in the decades following Evans's commission, many of these photographs have had very active afterlives. Selected for contemporary exhibitions and reproductions by curators and art publishers, a few of the subjects of the photographs from the Havana 1933 portfolio have become visual synecdoches for the whole of Evans's production on the island and, in some cases, for Cuba itself.[85] The images regularly featured in contemporary exhibitions determine the ways in which U.S. audiences are able to consume Cuba in the present day. Among the most exhibited images from the portfolio, the photograph referred to as *Woman on the Street, Havana* or *Woman Standing on Street, Havana* is compelling in terms of the sense of nostalgia, exoticism, and eroticism it offers to a viewer hungry for a taste of Cuba (fig. 6). *Woman on the Street* is a photograph of an unnamed Cuban woman standing on an urban street. Her *contrapposto* stance and turned head are classic and statuesque, but her silky, tailored white dress, black pumps, and the city setting in which she stands are fully modern. Her image also evokes a moment firmly in the past: the cut and design of her dress, the seam up the back of her

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[84] Walker Evans's letter to Carleton Beals, dated June 25, 1933, 23 Bethune St., N.Y. Carleton Beals Papers, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, quoted in the Foreword of Walker Evans: Havana 1933, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), n.p.

[85] Finnegan further explores the rhetorical concept and problematics of utilizing the subjects of photographs as visual synecdoches for larger ideas or systems in Picturing Poverty, 87.

stockings, her prim hairstyle, the brick-paved urban street with streetcar rails, all in nostalgia-inducing black-and-white, suggest this is a photograph of a different historical moment than our own. The woman has just stepped onto the street from the sidewalk, hesitating briefly as though waiting for traffic to pass before crossing. She holds her small black purse under her bent left arm and a brown-paper wrapped package in front of her. She is a striking figure, alone on the street, well-dressed and neatly put together for her daily errands around the city.

The precise moment of the shutter snap, the way she is framed by the camera lens, and shallow depth of field reveal that the Cuban woman has visual counterparts in Evans's earliest photographic work in New York City, and in his later images for the F.S.A. and Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. Evans's ability to capture small, surprising, and subtle details of the photograph contribute to an alluring sense of mystery about the woman as well: the rough, diagonal slash of a scar across her smooth upper arm, suggestive of past violence; the bottle-shaped package she holds printed with the ambiguous phrase "*problemas humanos*" ("human problems"); her slightly furrowed brow and tilted head as she considers something or someone down the street to her left. The details of the image invite the close, intimate study of her body: she is presented to a present-day viewer to be exquisitely examined. The anonymous woman on the Havana street in 1933 fills the frame of Evans's photograph, her whole body positioned and displayed for consumption through the gaze: the gaze of the photographer through his camera, the man in the suit across the street, and the contemporary viewer, all at once. Through the body of its subject, *Woman on the Street* simultaneously embodies a sense of nostalgia for the past and a palpable eroticism that encourages contemporary U.S. audiences in the present to visually and vicariously consume the woman pictured. *Woman on the Street* fits easily into the art historical arguments about Evans's "documentary style" and his preferred subjects, but its formal elements

also accentuate the woman's potential sexual availability, on display for the viewer's visual consumption. Despite its omission from The Crime of Cuba signature, this image is consistently chosen for contemporary museum exhibitions and glossy publications on Evans and his Havana 1933 portfolio because of its subtle yet inherent eroticism, which allows viewers to more easily consume the exotic spaces of an imagined historical Cuba.

The exclusion of *Woman on the Street, Havana* from the signature section of The Crime of Cuba is logical, since it visually contradicts Beals's textual indictments of the Machadato in the 1930s. Unlike images of destitute Cubans begging and sleeping on stoops, *Woman on the Street* challenges Beals's claims about the extreme poverty, lack of resources, and general social regression on the island under Gerardo Machado and the U.S. capitalists. Indeed, the Cuban woman pictured in the image appears quite lovely, even stylish; she looks well taken care of, not starving, displaced, or noticeably impoverished. She is an elegant and modern woman in an urban setting about whom nothing else is known besides her appearance. Although it was left out of The Crime of Cuba, the photograph has been included in nearly all of the contemporary exhibitions of Evans's Cuba images, including the most recent show, Cuba: A Revolutionary Project, from Walker Evans to Now at the J. Paul Getty Museum (2011). This exhibition featured three distinct sections: photographs selected from Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio; photographs from the period immediately following the 1959 Revolution by Cuban photographers Alberto Korda, Perfecto Romero, and Osvaldo Salas; and photographs from the Special Period in a Time of Peace (declared by Fidel Castro in 1990) by foreign contemporary photographers Virginia Beahan and Alex Harris (United States) and Alexey Titarenko (Russia). Through the photograph's inclusion in this exhibition in particular, the image of the Cuban woman has been inserted into a longer genealogy of images of Cuba produced for consumption by U.S. viewers.

The photograph has also been used regularly for the publicity and catalogue materials that have accompanied several of the contemporary museum exhibitions and appeared prominently in their catalogues. A cropped version of the photograph even appears on the cover of the catalogue for Walker Evans: Cuba (2001), directly connecting the woman's compelling features and conspicuous scar not only with Evans's photographs but also with the very idea of Cuba in viewer's minds (fig. 7). The repeated use of the photograph has made it an emblematic image for the portfolio's afterlives. Despite the fact that it was rarely seen prior to Evans's death and the establishment of the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the black-and-white photograph of an anonymous Cuban woman has become one of the most recognizable and frequently consumed images from Havana 1933 portfolio.

The public spaces of the city captured in *Woman on the Street* and other Havana 1933 photographs are presented to contemporary audiences as places of desire and sexual possibility. In a 2001 essay accompanying a glossy publication of Evans's Cuba photographs, travel writer Andrei Codrescu noted that Walker Evans "portrayed a world of people who looked and acted modern and occasionally prosperous. The city of Havana appears vast and sexy… there are beggars, possible prostitutes, people sleeping on park benches, and hustlers, but they could be part of any urban scene in the 1930s."[86] Many of Evans's photographs of destitute Cubans and the "people sleeping on park benches" feature prominently in the signature of Beals's book, and have been included in some recent exhibitions as well. Codrescu's summary of Evans's Havana photographs as "vast and sexy," however, is clearly based on the images selected for recent exhibitions rather than those featured in The Crime of Cuba. Photographs of Cubans identified as

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[86] Codrescu, "Walker Evans: The Cuba Photographs," 14. Dopico notes with some deprecation that Codrescu's expertise about Cuba is based solely on his travelogue, Ay, Cuba! (1999) and that he fails to critically engage with past or present politics in his essay, (Dopico, 489). Citing him here, I hope to emphasize the colloquial rather than critical responses to Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio by viewers in the United States. Codrescu's rhetoric highlights the availability of Havana's citizens for visual consumption through Evans's images.

"possible prostitutes" and "hustlers" populate the Havana of 1933 and seduce contemporary consumers of Evans's photographs through the discursive spaces of museum exhibitions and publications. This potential for visual seduction suggests the subtle change in the discourse of the Havana 1933 images over time. The sexual possibilities available in the photographs also indicate that the exotic citizens of the Havana represented here might be available for erotic consumption.

The woman in the photograph is clearly subject to the desiring gaze of the men on the street around her, including Evans, whose gaze is mediated through the lens of his camera. The woman is quite literally surrounded by male gazes in the public space of the street; in another photograph from the Havana 1933 portfolio (but also *not* included The Crime of Cuba), Evans captured her the moment before she stepped into the street, paused on the sidewalk (fig. 8). In this image, often titled *Corner Dairy Shop, Old Havana*, Evans photographed the same woman from the front. This photograph allows the viewer to visually consume more of the woman, her face, her clothing, and her body, but from another angle.[87] To the English-speaking U.S. viewer, her gender is further emphasized by the horizontal lettering of the painted signage over her left shoulder. The letters H-E-R hover over her head, presumably part of a fading sign once reading *LECHERÍA* (dairy store). Also shown in the photograph are two men clad in white, ostensibly employees of the dairy shop. The men lounge in low chairs and openly survey the passersby on the street. While they are not necessarily looking directly at the woman in this version of the image, the moment she steps onto the street she will be surrounded on all sides by male gazes: the dairy shop workers, Evans with his camera behind her, the man leaning against a telephone

[87] There are four shots of this scene on film in the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: 1994.251.630, 1994.251.640, 1994.251.641, and 1994.251.642; as well as *Woman Standing on Street, Havana* (1994.251.712), all of which were taken with Evans's 2 1/2 x 4 1/4 inch medium format camera.

pole, whose stare is quite blatant, and even the man who hurries across the street in a blur on the right side of the image was able to glance at her before he passed.

At the moment of its creation, the woman in the photograph was caught in a web of gazes within the public space represented in the photograph, and today she is fully available for visual consumption through the gaze of the contemporary U.S. viewer in the museum space as well.[88] In contemporary exhibitions, Havana 1933 photographs like *Woman on the Street*—and the Cubans represented in them—are visually consumed through these many different gazes. None of the various gazes to which the photographs are exposed can be returned across the temporal and geographic divide between U.S. viewers of today, hungry for a vision of Cuba, and the Havana that Evans sought to represent in 1933. The subject of *Woman on the Street* is displayed for the visual consumption of the erotic, vulnerable to the "gaze of desire" from both within the photograph and from without. In the Havana 1933 portfolio's afterlives, the woman represented in the two photographs silently embodies and emphasizes the complicated identity politics both within Cuba and between Cuba and the United States. In particular, the race of the subject in *Woman on the Street, Havana* and *Corner Dairy Shop, Old Havana* has important implications for the visual discourse of erotic consumption of Cuba through photography. While issues of racial difference on the island are addressed directly, albeit crudely, in The Crime of Cuba text, none of Evans's captions refer to the racialized bodies within the signature photographs. As in Beals's narrative, the more easily elucidated divisions of class and politics dominate the signature section through representations of Havana's indigent and working classes, and through images of the violent aftermath of political activity and its repercussions. The complex questions

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[88] See Dopico, 453, on the consumption of Cubans by U.S. gazes elsewhere: "Cuban subjects are constituted as consumable images by the gaze of desire or of pity, the gaze of solidarity, the gaze on the uncanny. In these mainstreamed photographs of Cuba we follow the gaze of global empire reestablished, the gaze that can rarely be returned."

of gender, sexuality, and race in Cuba were more difficult to articulate concisely in Evans's visual narrative. The multiple images of the same woman on the Havana street, for example, suggest an interest in understanding the interactions between an Afro-Cuban woman and a group of men in the public space of the city. The Havana 1933 portfolio as a whole features many photographs of a diverse range of Cubans that reveal Evans's investment in investigating the full spectrum of class, gender, sexuality, race, social roles, and political views that constitute the complexities of *cubanidad*, or Cuban identity.

In the context of museum exhibitions and publications in the present, Evans's images from the Havana 1933 portfolio are often subject to a more reductive version of race and gender identity in Cuba. Condensed into an erotic figure for ease of visual consumption, the woman in the photograph functions as "the iconic mulata," the embodiment of an overtly racialized sexuality in the Spanish Caribbean, both historically and, importantly, in the present day.[89] As a receptacle for the strongly implied connections between race and sex, *Woman on the Street* becomes a convenient emblem for the supposed erotic availability of Afro-Cuban women. Indeed, because of the race of the subject of *Woman on the Street* and the fact that she is navigating the public space of the street unaccompanied, contemporary scholars have repeatedly interpreted the woman in the photograph as a possible prostitute.[90] Seen through the lens of her

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[89] Vera M. Kutzinski, Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism (Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 7. According to literary studies scholar Kutzinski, the iconic mulata is "a symbolic container for all the tricky questions about how race, gender, and sexuality inflect the power relations that obtain in colonial and postcolonial Cuba."

[90] The idea that women pictured in Evans's photographs, including but not limited to *Woman on the Street, Havana*, are prostitutes is pervasive in the scholarship on the Havana 1933 portfolio. See Codrescu, 14, and his discussion of *Woman in a Courtyard* (whose subject, he claims, looks like a sex worker he saw at the Hotel Nacional); Mellow, 190; Trachtenberg, 244, who notes that Evans's Havana is a series of contradictions, including "begging mothers and fashionable prostitutes;" Keller, Walker Evans: The Getty Museum Collection, 66, who mentions that other Cuban women featured in Evans's photographs are possibly prostitutes, including *Cuban Girl Looking Through Window Bars*; see also a blog post by Julio César Pérez Hernández, architect and author of Inside Cuba, and an online article by arts journalist Lenika Cruz, both about the Getty Center exhibition, which describe women in Evans's images as sex workers or prostitutes.

potential sexual availability, the photograph of the Cuban woman on the street is offered up to a contemporary viewer for visual consumption as part of an imagined, eroticized Havana.

The visual discourse of eroticism and sexual availability was formed in the afterlives of the Havana 1933 portfolio. Despite Beals's interest in the social problems experienced by Cuban citizens in the 1930s, The Crime of Cuba only mentions the existence of prostitution a few times.[91] None of the images Evans submitted for the book's signature section feature a woman alone on the street or as fully available to the intersections of gazes in quite the same way as *Woman on the Street*. In the larger Havana 1933 portfolio, however, there are many photographs of Cuban women which shape the contemporary discourse of erotic consumption, women posing in cafés, makeshift courtyard kitchens, doorways, and, most discreetly, through the bars of a street level window.[92] There is little in the photographs to visually suggest their sexual availability, and no evidence in his writings or papers that Evans sought out Havana's sex workers as the subjects of his photographs. Rather, the visual discourse of sexual availability and erotic consumption has been framed in the Havana 1933 portfolio's afterlives. In contemporary exhibitions and expensive art publications, the striking woman on the Havana street becomes wholly available for consumption through our gaze; thus, *Woman on the Street* and *Corner Dairy Shop* are ultimately about sexual consumption of and a contemporary desire for the imagined spaces of Cuba and its citizens.

Whether or not the Cuban woman on the street was, in fact, a prostitute, the discourse of visual consumption framed by contemporary exhibitions of Evans's photographs encourages the

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[91] Beals, 112, 287, and 300. The references to prostitutes typically depict the women not just as sex workers but also as violent criminals. Noting that "prostitution has been ever on the increase; Havana has more public prostitution in proportion to the population than Paris, Berlin, or Marseilles," (300), Beals depicts sex work as further evidence of the Machadato's social corruption of Cuba rather than a symptom of poverty and economic inequalities.

[92] Several of these photographs of women were featured in the first contemporary publication of the portfolio images, Walker Evans: Havana 1933 (1989) and have been included in many recent museum exhibitions and catalogue publications.

notion of an eroticized, sexually available Cuba. A location prohibited to most U.S. citizens, the island's long "histories of topical decadence and pleasure" are nonetheless enticing and exciting.[93] Along with the sun and the sea, sex is written into the very notion of Cuba as a space of consumption envisioned by historical and contemporary visitors. Mimi Sheller notes that in the early to mid-twentieth century, "Havana was known as the 'brothel of the Caribbean' and had up to 10,000 sex workers," an exotic commodity available for consumption just like rum, cigars, and tropical sunshine.[94] As a commodity itself, Cuba is all the more desirable and exotic because it is forbidden to U.S. citizens. During the Special Period of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Cuba's historical availability for erotic consumption also "contributed to the resurrection of sex tourism in Cuba in the 1990s, as Fidel Castro reopened the country to the international tourist market, and sold Havana as a destination tracing on its crumbling colonial past, 1950s American cars, and the promise of sex."[95] Prostitution is presently illegal in Cuba, but informal sex workers known as *jineteras* continue to fulfill this sexual promise to foreign tourists.[96] They are the descendants, through the complicated political and economic genealogy of the 1959 Revolution and the Special Period, of the woman on the street photographed by Evans, captured and held for erotic consumption through the gaze, and, in some cases, more. For U.S. viewers prohibited from experiencing and consuming the island's pleasures directly, the photograph *Woman on the Street, Havana* is an alluring, sophisticated, aestheticized alternative. Interpreting the larger Havana 1933 portfolio through the screen of Cuba's historical and

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[93] Mimi Sheller, "Demobilizing and Remobilizing Caribbean Paradise," in Tourism Mobilities: Places to Play, Places in Play, eds. Mimi Sheller and John Urry (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 19.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] The term *jinetera* or *jinetero* (sometimes *pingüero* is used for male sex workers) is derived from the Spanish word for jockey, *jinete*. The actual practice of *jineterismo* in Cuba today is more complicated than the straightforward exchange of money for sex. Coco Fusco offers an excellent narrative insight into *jineterismo* in her essay, "Hustling for Dollars: *Jineteras* in Cuba" (1996), reprinted in The Bodies That Were Not Ours and Other Writings (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 137-153.

contemporary commodification of sex and eroticism form and reinforce a discourse of an imagined Cuba based on its visual consumption.

Roast Pork Stand, Cuba

Contemporary exhibitions of Walker Evans's Havana 1933 photographs produce a very specific visual discourse about Cuba through a sense of nostalgia, exoticism, and eroticism. The austere spaces of the museum exhibition and the spare pages of the art publication thoroughly unshackle Evans's Havana photographs from their status as historical and political documents and transform them into visual comestibles. Dopico notes that in their contemporary afterlives, "the severing of Evans's photographs from Beals's polemical narrative… signals a new era of the 'phatic image' where compelling yet consumable photography is relatively untrammeled by distracting or disturbing text, and where the latent self-sufficiency of the image appears to 'represent' beyond the politics of socialism, beyond old empires and cold wars."[97] Indeed, recent exhibitions of the Havana 1933 portfolio photographs excise both Evans's carefully composed captions (not to mention the distractions of Beals's immense, elaborate text), but they also unwittingly demolish his carefully rendered arrangement, which, to Evans, "seem[ed] not to bear any changing at all."[98] With Evans's subtle captions and careful sequencing eliminated, the photographs in their contemporary afterlives are consumed through the eye and the viscera, as emotional and aesthetic rather than as cognitive experiences connected to order and textual connotations.[99] The Havana 1933 portfolio photographs selected for contemporary exhibitions thus function quite differently from the images reproduced in The Crime of Cuba, presenting

[97] Dopico, 458.
[98] Walker Evans's letter to Carleton Beals, dated June 25, 1933, 23 Bethune St., N.Y. Carleton Beals Papers, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, quoted in the Foreword of Walker Evans: Havana 1933, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), n.p.
[99] Dopico, 489.

Evans's status as a modern artist and the island of Cuba as a commodity to be visually consumed.

Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photograph titled *Roast Pork Stand, Cuba* is both explicitly and implicitly about the consumption of Cuba as an exotic and nostalgic commodity (fig. 9). The small, white roadside stand named *El Guajiro* (a farmer or rural person) advertises its *lechón asado*, a style of slow roasted sucking pig that is a Cuban culinary specialty. With its carefully painted decorative trefoils and signage, the artificial flowers tacked to the front, and the string of antiquated electric lights that frame the large front window, the stand appears old-fashioned and homemade. The stand occupies the left four-fifths of the sun-dappled foreground of the image; on the right side a gap between the stand and the edge of the image allows for a glimpse of the low buildings in the background. The small structure is empty except for a grid-like rack on which rests a barely discernible object, perhaps a hunk of the suckling pig. Indeed, unlike many of Evans's photographs of the busy, urban Havana streets, the entire image is emptied of people, except for one: Evans himself. Captured in the reflection of the window of the *lechón asado* stand, we can discern Evans's hat and shoulders as he bends over the viewfinder of his box camera.[100] Through Evans's reflected presence, the photograph points directly to its own status as a representation, and to the photographer's role in the work of creating the image.[101] Evans's reflection—and the blurred reflection of his instrument—at the moment of taking the photograph "implicat[es] the very internal processes of photographic meaning in and after the act of exposure with the camera, so that Evans's image becomes, in a certain light, a photograph about a relation to photography," an image that refers back to itself rather than to its ostensible

[100] Evans brought two cameras to Cuba: a medium format 2 1/2 x 4 1/4 inch hand-held camera for quicker shots and a 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 inch large format view camera with a tripod for more detailed, stationary images like *Roast Pork Stand, Cuba*. Mellow, 175-176.
[101] Trachtenberg, "Walker Evans' America," 60-61.

subject matter.[102] Through the sly inclusion of his own reflected image, Evans reminds the viewer that the photograph is, in fact, an aesthetic representation to be appreciated and analyzed. The photograph *Roast Pork Stand* presents to the contemporary U.S. viewer an imagined Havana that is available for visual consumption rather than a document of Havana at a particular socio-political historical moment, as required by the assignment for The Crime of Cuba.

Aware that Beals and his editors at Lippincott would not be interested in using The Crime of Cuba to evoke questions about photography's representational potentials, Evans did not submit *Roast Pork Stand, Cuba* to the author and publisher for its signature section. Indeed, even as he set up his camera before the empty stand, Evans was likely conscious that the resultant photograph would not satisfy Beals's request for images that indicted the Machadato and its U.S. collaborators. The roadside stand has little to do with Beals's concerns or his explicit instructions to Evans. With the inclusion of Evans's reflection captured in the very act of making a photograph, *Roast Pork Stand* immediately belongs to the "domain not of things as such, of unequivocal objects in the world exterior to the camera, but of *images*, things already in the condition of image, of representation."[103] It is a photograph about photography, allowing us to consume the medium itself as an aesthetic object. The formal elements of the photograph further emphasize its status as aesthetic representation rather than visual document. Pressed into the foreground, the shallow depth of field renders the *lechón asado* stand in crisp detail, while the thin sliver of background visible to the right of the stand is indistinct, with the effect of flattening the image. The grid-like structure of the photograph also emphasizes its flatness. The horizontal lines of the street curb and the stand intersect with its vertical lines, which are extended to the top

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[102] Tagg, "Melancholy Realism," 49. For more on reflection and duplication within photographs and their implications on photographic meaning, see Craig Owens, "Photography *en abyme,"* October 5 (Summer, 1978): 73-88.
[103] Trachtenberg, "Walker Evans' America," 60. Emphasis original.

edge of the image by the artificial flowers stretching from both corners of the small building's façade. Evans's reflection is superimposed over the latticed wooden rack behind the window of the stand, echoing the virtual crisscrossing lines of the image. Caught within the implied grids of the photograph, Evans's reflection in the pane of glass further emphasizes the flatness of the image. A visual signal of modernism, the formal elements of the photograph reinforce its status as an aesthetic representation rather than as a document of Havana in 1933. As works of art presented in contemporary museum exhibitions and publications, Evans's photographs themselves, not just their ostensible subject matter, become available for visual consumption by U.S. viewers.

In their extended afterlives, Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs have come to occupy a new discourse that "resolves itself around a representation of the very space that grounds it institutionally."[104] That is, the portfolio now occupies a visual discourse interested in and reflective of the flatness of the gallery walls and the pages of fine art publications on which Evans's photographs are displayed. The museum and the art book, spaces through which the Havana 1933 photographs have increasingly circulated since 1994, are also the spaces of visual consumption. Stripped of the textual frameworks of The Crime of Cuba and Evans's captions, the photographs are presented for visual, emotional, and aesthetic, rather than cognitive or political, consumption. Reiterating and reflecting its own two-dimensionality as a photograph, *Roast Pork Stand, Cuba* reinforces its status as a representation rather than as an evidentiary visual document for The Crime of Cuba. The newly framed discourse of the Havana 1933 photographs suggests the interpretive instability of the portfolio over time and in new contexts as an aesthetic representation. The smoky, delicious *lechón asado*, the presumed sexual availability of a beautiful woman on the street, or even the reflected presence of the recalcitrant, mythical

[104] Krauss, 315.

artist himself offer up an idea of Havana that appeals to the senses and emotions, stirring an unsatisfied hunger for a location prohibited to U.S. viewers.

In a 1933 letter to Carleton Beals explaining his photographic submission for The Crime of Cuba, Walker Evans considered whether the images faithfully represented the island for the author: “I wonder if the illustrations will seem Cuba to you, as you know it.”[105] Evans was aware of Beals’s first-hand familiarity with and knowledge of Cuba. The brief statement nevertheless reveals Evans’s investment in the interpretive pliability and inherent subjectivity of the visual discourses formed by the Havana 1933 portfolio. While insistent that the signature section of the book adhered to his sequence and caption preferences, Evans’s inquiry suggests his attentiveness to the fact that despite his attempts at control, the interpretation of his photographs was ultimately subjective.[106] The discourse of poverty and corruption expounded by Beals in The Crime of Cuba is different from the visual discourse of consumption produced by contemporary art exhibitions and publications of Evans’s photographs of Havana. Although they are drawn from the same portfolio of photographs, the book signature and the museum exhibition operate within two different discursive spaces, producing two disparate ways of displaying, interpreting, and visually understanding Cuba through Evans’s images. A physical and psychic space from which U.S. citizens are prohibited, Cuba becomes an imagined place colored by a sense of postcolonial nostalgia, tropical exoticism, and the possibilities of sexual encounter. The visual discourse of the Havana 1933 portfolio produced by contemporary exhibitions and glossy photography publications fulfills the growing desire to consume Cuba. Thus the Havana 1933

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[105] Walker Evans’s letter to Carleton Beals, dated June 25, 1933, 23 Bethune St., N.Y. Carleton Beals Papers, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, quoted in the Foreword of Walker Evans: Havana 1933, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), n.p.

[106] There is the possibility that Evans was acutely aware of the potential afterlives of the photographs, a situation he anticipated and tried to arrange through his attention to sequence and caption.

portfolio photographs become, for contemporary U.S. viewers who cannot experience the island directly, "Cuba to you, as you know it."[107]

"Even more grandiose in its state of decay": Consuming Cuba through Contemporary Ruin Porn Photography[108]

In a contemporary context, Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs encourage U.S. audiences to visually consume an imagined idea of Cuba. The desired sense of nostalgia, exoticism, and eroticism that inheres in Evans's images is reinforced by the inability of U.S. viewers to experience—to directly consume—the island as travelers and tourists. The Havana 1933 portfolio images frequently selected for contemporary exhibitions and art publications frame a visual discourse that is quite different than the set of thirty-one photographs reproduced in Beals's The Crime of Cuba. The discursive distinction suggests the interpretative transformation of Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio in its aestheticized afterlife. The temporal disjunction between the moment of the photographs' creation in 1933 and their escalated rate of display in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries also encourages the acceptance of an imagined vision of Cuba as a place that is isolated from Western temporalities and modernity. In the present day, Evans's photographs of the unfamiliar, unknown urban spaces of Havana interfere with the perception of historical time as it as passed on the island. But exhibitions and publications of Evans's Havana photographs are not the only means for the visual consumption of Cuba through aesthetic representations.

Since the collapse of Soviet Union in 1989 and the declaration of the Special Period in a Time of Peace in 1990, photographs of Cuba by U.S. and European artists have proliferated and

[107] Walker Evans's letter to Carleton Beals, dated June 25, 1933.
[108] Giuliana Bruno, "Havana: Memoirs of Material Culture," Journal of Visual Culture 2, 3 (2003): 305.

circulated through exhibitions and art publications.[109] Many of these contemporary photographs focus on the decay and dilapidation of Cuba's architecture and infrastructure in the difficult decades since the Revolution in 1959. These images also frame a visual discourse about Cuba that works in tandem with Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs. At approximately the same moment that the Walker Evans Archive became available to researchers, Cuba slowly opened up to intrepid U.S. and European photographers with special travel licenses. I argue that this type of photography, a genre known as "ruin porn," is deeply informed by the transformed discursive structure of the Havana 1933 photographs. Allowing for a similarly pleasurable mixture of postcolonial nostalgia and voyeuristic exoticism, contemporary photographs of the disintegration of Cuba's built environment further reinforce the visual consumption of the island by U.S. audiences.

While the terms "ruin" or "porn" do not appear in the artist statements, wall texts, or introductory essays that accompany the exhibitions and publications, elements of the pornographic are manifest in the contemporary photographs of Cuba. When used to describe images of ruin, decay, and deterioration, the abbreviated form of the word "pornography" loses its explicitly sexual edge, instead implying "the sensuous or sensational aspects of a non-sexual subject, appealing to its audience in a manner likened to the titillating effect of pornography."[110] Like sexually pornographic images and film, however, ruin porn photographs are ultimately

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[109] Publications of pictorial works about Cuba since the Special Period was declared include: Adam Kufeld, Cuba (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994); Tria Giovan, Cuba: The Elusive Island/*La isla ilusiva* (New York: Harry N. Abrams/Commonplace Books, 1996); David Alan Harvey and Elizabeth Newhouse, Cuba (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 1999); Tony Mendoza, Cuba: Going Back (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999); Robert Polidori, Havana (Göttingen: Steidl, 2001); E. Wright Ledbetter, Cuba Picturing Change (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2002). Andrew Moore, Inside Havana (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2002); Jeff Milstein, Cuba (New York: Monacelli Press, 2010); Chip Cooper and Néstor Martí, Old Havana/*La Habana Vieja*: Spirit of the Living City/*El espíritu de la ciudad viva* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2012), among many others. While not all of these publications present a vision of Cuba through the lens of ruin porn photography as I define it here, this partial listing indicates the range of photographic approaches to the island and the increase in the number of publications since 1990.

[110] "Porn, n.2." OED Online. April 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/148003 (accessed May 5, 2012).

about the visual consumption of the subject, which is depicted "in a manner intended to stimulate or excite."[111] The excitement of ruin porn images is generated through implicit or threatened violence, the exposure of a hidden secret or an unknown aspect, or severe deviations from the proper order. Ruin porn photography of present-day Cuba supplies a bit of all of these elements for visual consumption: a building destroyed by the violence of a *derrumbe*, a crumbling interior behind an otherwise sturdy façade, or a line of trees growing out of an empty second story window. In the 1990s, ruin porn photography of Cuba began circulating more frequently through exhibitions and expensive art publications, "offer[ing] consumers the chance to travel while standing still, to enjoy a new imaginary investment" in a place they could not otherwise access.[112]

Contemporary photographs of the island by North American artists like Canadian Robert Polidori and U.S. based Andrew L. Moore, among others, offer a titillating glimpse into the otherwise hidden side of a prohibited space. The visual consumers of photographic representations are virtually transported to Cuba, without the presumed problems associated with travel to a prohibited and potentially dangerous place. The cliché of post-Revolutionary Cuba based on Korda's iconic photograph of el Che and images of 1950s American cars has been displaced by the more damaging cliché of destruction and decay found in the ruin porn images. The newly formed visual discourse presents tantalizingly abject imagery that evokes a sense of nostalgia and mourning for the grander past, yet can still be enjoyed at a safe distance. Ruin porn images of the island's crumbling architecture offer a particular vision of a deteriorating Cuba that is available for visual consumption by U.S. viewers.

Like Evans's Havana 1933 photographs in their contemporary afterlives, the ruin porn

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[111] "Pornography, n." OED Online. April 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/148012 (accessed May 5, 2012).
[112] Dopico, 463-464.

photographs illustrate a Cuba that is simultaneously abject and alluring, deteriorating and dynamic, yet also seemingly untouched by the passage of historical time. While both sets of images frame a discourse that encourages the consumption of Cuba, their visual strategies are different. Evans's black-and-white photographs focus on the hectic moments of urban life and the activities of its citizens. In the Havana 1933 portfolio the city appears fully engaged in the struggle to achieve the promises of modernity, even in the face of looming violence and impending revolution. The ruin porn photographs of Cuba, on the other hand, repeatedly present a vision of the island as outside of modernity, fading and perhaps slowly dying, deviant and enigmatic, subject to the violence of severe neglect. Unlike Evans's images, many ruin porn photographs of Cuba are typically—though not always—uninhabited by people. The emptiness further emphasizes the moribund sense that time has halted in the images.

Through these differences, ruin porn photography produces an alternative Caribbean picturesque for U.S. viewers, one based not on the image of a fertile tropical paradise or sandy beaches with palm trees but on the severe dilapidation of formerly resplendent buildings and infrastructures. The situation is troubling, as Dopico argues, since these proliferating "color photos of Havana and Cuba seem somehow too banal and consumable, too deceptively simple in their visual tropes and picturesque allure, and thus both deeply disturbing and deeply enticing."[113] The exquisitely printed photographs presented in museums and art publications reinforce the problematic beauty of the ruins of Cuba and create an "iconic visual order based on mourning, scarcity, and nostalgia."[114] Contemporary ruin porn photographs emphasize the persistence of the deterioration with a sense of melancholy and loss, as though Cuba has been displaced from modernity. The sense of mourning and nostalgia is nevertheless intensely

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[113] Ibid., 467.
[114] Ibid.

desirable and pleasurable when experienced through the screen of photographic representations, thus encouraging the visual consumption of Cuba through photographs of its present-day urban ruins.

The pleasure and gratification of visually consuming the ruin porn images of Cuba is further reinforced by the exoticism and potential danger of the otherwise unreachable locales for U.S. viewers. Not only is travel to Cuba itself prohibited, but the photographs also offer access to the interior, private, and restricted spaces of the modern day urban ruins. While Evans focused on the public, exterior spaces of Havana, several contemporary photographers have gained admission into Cuban homes and otherwise interior or private spaces to capture the scale of decay.[115] Contemporary U.S. photographer Andrew L. Moore's 1998-2002 series *Inside Havana* offers many different images of Cuba's deterioration, often from the interiors of crumbling buildings. His 1999 photograph titled *Campoamor, Vista Oeste* (*Campoamor, West View*) fits precisely within the characterization ruin porn photography, making the slow destruction of Cuba's built environment available to U.S. viewers for visual consumption (fig. 10). The full color photograph depicts the interior of an old theater in Centro Habana near the Capitolio building.[116] Sunlight streams into the theater through the collapsed roof, suffusing the balconies with a golden glow, but also illuminating the precariously balanced upper levels and crumbling masonry. The rotting jumble of crisscrossing boards sag over the gaping hole in the roof, which contrasts dramatically with the elaborate decorative carvings still partially visible along the walls, columns, and edges of the balconies. While the sustained neglect of the building was

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[115] Evans's focus on the public and exterior spaces of Havana was likely due to a number of factors, including his belief that Cuban government agents were following him around Havana and might take his film, his desire to protect the Cuban contacts Beals has arranged for him, and his lack of Spanish, which would have made communication about access to private homes very difficult. Mellow and Rathbone.

[116] The Teatro Campoamor and its inhabitants were also featured in the documentary *Habana: Arte nuevo de hacer ruinas (Havana: New Art of Making Ruins)* by German filmmakers Florian Borchmeyer and Matthias Hentschle. (Raros Media, 2006). My thanks to Professor Guillermina De Ferrari for bringing this film to my attention.

borne of a total lack of resources for restoration and repairs, there is evidence of small acts of maintenance. Stray rubble has been swept away from the central area of the theater's floor to make parking spaces for idle bici-taxis and motorcycles. The signs of care also divulge the structure's continued use and habitation despite its devastated and potentially dangerous condition.[117] The former beauty of the theater's interior architecture is still discernible, but the stray wires, toppled roof, encroaching vegetation, large patches of missing plaster, and piles of debris reveal the unimpeded disrepair and slow decay of the once grand performance space. Moore's use of a large format camera and the lush, meticulously detailed color printing technique highlight the stark contrast between the beautiful and the derelict in *Campoamor, Vista Oeste*. Steeped in a kind of postcolonial nostalgia for its former beauty, the interior space of the theater becomes accessible to U.S. viewers through the printed and published photograph, allowing them the vicarious pleasure of visually consuming Havana's ruins.

The images of Havana in Evans's 1933 portfolio are filled with people living and moving through the urban space: walking, working, pushing carts, selling newspapers, sweeping and cooking, or sleeping in the park. Evans presented the city of Havana as a bustling, busy place whose citizens were made available for visual consumption through his camera lens. The coal-smudged stevedores, the women lounging in cafés, and the indigent citizens dozing open-mouthed on benches in the Parque Central in Evans's Havana have been vacated from many of the contemporary ruin porn photographs of the city. Emptied of the bodies that actually occupy the Teatro Campoamor, Moore's photograph focuses instead on the neglected ruins of the built environment. The neatly parked bici-taxis and motorcycles in the lower level of the theater

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[117] In addition to the extensive structural damage documented in Moore's photographs and Borchmeyer and Hentschle's film, several Latin American news services reported a severe *derrumbe* (a collapse or cave-in) on 27 January 2012 that left only the façade of the building standing. A casualty of this recent collapse is thought by many to be the long-time resident of the theater interviewed in the film. See "Derrumbe en al Teatro Campoamor," Cubaenencuentro, January 27, 2012, cubaenencuentro.com (accessed March 2, 2012), among other sources.

allude to the presence of possible occupants, the bodies that make the machines move, but in the photograph they appear abandoned and motionless, another aspect of the slow decline of the city. While Evans focused on the largely destitute yet vibrant population of Cuba in 1933, many contemporary ruin porn images represent the island's poverty through its crumbling, seemingly forsaken architecture and infrastructure. As noted by José Quiroga, contemporary ruin porn photography makes the deterioration available and desirable for visual consumption by U.S. and other Western viewers: "Cuba entered the world's perennial market for images in the 1990s as an impoverished country, yet one where poverty could always be rendered in aesthetic terms."[118] The absence of people in the ruin porn photographs is an essential part of the project of aestheticizing the representations of Cuba's poverty and deterioration. The emptiness depicted in Moore's photographs of the Teatro Campoamor and other buildings suggests that the ruins of Havana are like the ruins of ancient Greece or Rome: seemingly unoccupied and unused, outside time and impervious to modernity, completely available for visual consumption without regard for the contemporary inhabitants. The violent aftermath of the collapsed roof and the visual access to a forbidden, secret, and even deviant space are also titillating to an outside viewer. The visual discourse of ruin porn photography stimulates the excitement of experiencing the dangerous and forbidden spaces of Cuba. While the devastated buildings of Havana are the result of more recent neglect and lack of resources, there is still a sense of grandeur in the poverty. The photographs' aestheticization of the ruins enhances the sense of nostalgia and exoticism and encourages U.S. viewers to visually consume the otherwise inaccessible spaces of Cuba.

Contemporary ruin porn images also frame a discourse about Cuba that directly references Walker Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio photographs. While the two sets of images are visually, historically, and thematically disparate, the narrative of Evans's trip to Cuba is a

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[118] Quiroga, 81.

constant touchstone in the prefaces and introductions that accompany fine art publications and exhibitions of ruin porn photography. In fact, Evans is regularly evoked in such writings as the creative forerunner and inspiration of Moore, Polidori, and other photographers of Special Period Havana. He is positioned in the essays and short pieces as "an influence and a kind of tutelary spirit," as the primogenitor of a lineage of photographers who travel to Cuba, the visual poet whose path through Havana the contemporary photographers must surely follow.[119] Linkages are even made through technique and style: one essayist noted the continued use of large format cameras to capture Havana and another observed the many visual allusions to Evans's "documentary style" in the contemporary images.[120] Indeed, citing Evans's influence on contemporary photographers is seemingly prerequisite for publications and exhibitions of ruin porn photography.

More problematically, however, the written discourse accompanying the contemporary photographs situates Evans as the archetypal producer of images of Cuba. Such claims suggest that photography as a technical process and as a signpost of modernity did not arrive on the island until 1933, again marking Cuba as isolated from Western temporalities.[121] Further, highlighting the connections between Evans and contemporary, non-Cuban photographers, rather than the many photographers currently working on the island, elides the rich history of Cuban photography. Examining the discourse of indifference to Cuban agency in its own photographic representation, "one cannot help but feel a certain historical déjà vu, and, remembering former

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[119] Philip D. Beidler, "The Photographers and the Living City/*Los Fotógrafos y la Ciudad Viva*," in Chip Cooper and Néstor Martí, Old Havana/*La Habana Vieja*: Spirit of the Living City/*El espíritu de la ciudad viva* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2012), 13. See also Eduardo Luis Rodriguez, "Poet in Havana," in Andrew Moore, Inside Havana (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2002).

[120] Andy Grundberg, "The Photograph as Territory" and Eduardo Luis Rodriguez, "Poet in Havana," in Andrew Moore, Inside Havana (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2002), n.p.

[121] The first daguerreotype was produced in Havana in 1840. There is evidence of the establishment of several photography studios and various photographers working in Cuba by the 1850s. Yolanda Retter, "Cuba" in Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-century Photography, ed. John Hannavy, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 352.

hegemonic gazes, recognize in these multiplied visions the resurrection of old mappings, the resilience of imperial sight and its privilege."[122] That is, contemporary ruin porn photographs of Cuba created and visually consumed by U.S. and Western audiences reproduce precisely the colonial and neocolonial relations that Carleton Beals, with Evans's presumed photographic corroboration, identified and indicted in his book. Some scholars argue that Evans's Havana 1933 photographs "have *always* been part of the narrative of Cuban photography… claimed by those subjects whom they sought to capture."[123] While Cuban photographers and visual artists may have claimed Evans's Havana 1933 portfolio as part of their own visual history, it is only since the establishment of the Walker Evans Archive and the increased circulation of the photographs in the 1990s that the portfolio has even been a part of common visual discourse about Cuba. To U.S. and other viewers outside Cuba, on the other hand, Evans's photographs offer a desirable and deeply pleasurable sense of postcolonial nostalgia, voyeuristic exoticism, and even a sense of eroticism. The discursive structure of Evans's Havana 1933 photographs, which also informs the discourse of contemporary ruin porn images, reinforces the visual consumption of a similarly imagined idea of Cuba for viewers unable to experience it directly. In their contemporary circulations through museums and fine art publications, the ruin porn images, like Moore's *Campoamor, Vista Oeste* and many others, produce a titillating vision of a Cuba that is moribund, outside Western modernities, and "even more grandiose in its state of decay."[124]

The recent establishment of the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the subsequent surge in scholarship on the Havana 1933 portfolio has added a new

[122] Dopico, 464.
[123] Quiroga, 84. Emphasis mine.
[124] Bruno, 305.

dimension to art historical knowledge about the photographer. The close study of his photographs of Havana and his work on the selection and sequencing of the signature section of The Crime of Cuba reveal his acute interest in both the impact of an individual image and the larger narrative of a group of photographs. The new investigations of the Havana 1933 portfolio have altered the discourse of scholarship on Evans in the histories of art and photography. Yet the majority of U.S. viewers of the Havana photographs, most of whom are not art historians, find them in the galleries of art museums or on the glossy pages of fine art books, not in scholarly journals or texts. The site of photographs' exhibition and presentation to a general audience matters; as rhetorical studies scholar Cara A. Finnegan argues, "we do not encounter photographs in an isolated fashion; each encounter is framed by the context in which the photograph is experienced, whether that context be a museum gallery, a family photo album, or the pages of a magazine."[125] The structure of the museum and the art publications thus form a different discourse for the Havana 1933 portfolio, revealing the interpretive pliability of the photographs over time, across geographic distance, and even in different contexts of encounter. As the Havana 1933 photographs circulate through museum spaces and art publications in their contemporary afterlives, they make Cuba and its citizens available to U.S. viewers for visual consumption. The visual discourse of the Havana 1933 portfolio, and of the more recent ruin porn images, offer up highly aestheticized representations of an imagined Cuba. The Havana 1933 photographs conjure a sense of postcolonial nostalgia and allow U.S. audiences to visually consume the exoticized, eroticized, and otherwise restricted urban spaces and citizens.

What remains to be investigated are the implications of the visual discourse of consumption formed by the Havana 1933 portfolio, and of the sense of nostalgia and eroticism that seem to inhere in the images, on Cuba and its citizens. As evidenced by the citizens of

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[125] Finnegan, xvii.

Havana who proffer their own likenesses for the tourists' cameras, a critical engagement with the ethics and effects of photographic representation may be overwhelmed by the need to survive. Yet, as José Quiroga notes in his own discussion of Evans's Havana 1933 photographs, "the question as to how the Cuban state and the Cuban nation needed to be represented—and how these representations engaged citizens' own self-understanding—affected perceptions beyond the nation."[126] The contemporary visual discourse of the Havana 1933 portfolio and contemporary photography of the island has definite and clear repercussions for Cuban self-representation on a transnational stage. As demonstrated here, the ground of the visual discourse formed by Evans's and others' photographs of Cuba is prone to radical shifts based on the spatial and temporal context of encounter. Yet in an attempt to examine or reexamine the history of aesthetic photographic representation in Cuba, and the Spanish Caribbean in general, is the stabilization of the discourse constructive or even required? The shifting discourses that frame and reframe the meanings of the Havana 1933 portfolio over time and across geographic distance may, in fact, provide a productive model for better understanding the very nature of photography in the contemporary Caribbean.

[126] Quiroga, 81.

Chapter Two

Snapshots of a Diaspora: Visualizing Collective Memory

In Spanish Caribbean Vernacular Photography

Vernacular Photography, Absence, and Memory

Dominican-American writer Junot Díaz begins his short story “Aguantando” with the nine-year-old narrator Yunior describing a snapshot photograph of his father, who migrated to the United States five years earlier:

> When I thought of Papi I thought of one shot specifically. Taken days before the U.S. invasion: 1965. I wasn’t even alive then… You know the sort of photograph I’m talking about. Scalloped edges, mostly brown in color. On the back my mom’s cramped handwriting—the date, his name, even the street, one over from our house. He was dressed in his Guardia uniform, his tan cap at an angle on his shaved head, an unlit Constitución squeezed between his lips. His dark unsmiling eyes were my own.[127]

The photograph is one that the reader can easily visualize based on Yunior’s description. It is likely that he or she has even seen or owns one like Yunior’s family photo, pasted into an album or tucked into a shoebox, with the same scalloped edges and discoloration from age. Yet this ordinary photograph represents the entirety of the young narrator’s memories of his father. To Yunior, his absent father “was a cloud of cigar smoke,” a shadowy, indistinct figure whose

[127] Junot Díaz, Drown (New York: Riverhead Books/Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1996), 68-70. The title of the short story, “Aguantando,” translates as “to endure” or “enduring,” with the sense of a difficult burden to bear.

outlines became discernable only in an old photograph.[128] “The only way I knew him,” Yunior recalls, “was through the photograph my moms kept in a plastic sandwich bag under her bed.”[129] When his father finally writes to say he is coming back to the Dominican Republic to bring them all to the United States but ultimately never arrives, Yunior becomes obsessed with the fading photograph in the clear plastic bag. He demands to see the photograph constantly, as if he might still somehow summon his delinquent father by looking at the image and remembering him.

The sense of absent presence produced by a photograph and the efficacy of such images in the fortification of memory are crucial ideas for this chapter on Spanish Caribbean vernacular photography. In Díaz’s story, the presence of the photograph reinforces Yunior’s father’s absence from the family home due to migration, but it also subtly reveals the value of visual images for producing and strengthening memory, however shadowy, hazy, and unclear. Since the mid-twentieth century, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico have had significant diaspora populations in the United States, making absent family members a commonplace occurrence. Vernacular photographs like the one of Yunior’s father assist in the important act of remembering those family members who, however temporarily, live and work *de allá* (over there) or remain *de acá* (here), as well as those who move continuously between the two.

Vernacular photographs are ordinary images of everyday life. One important function of vernacular images is that they are the visual medium through which the collective memory of a cultural group is developed and disseminated. In many cultures vernacular photographs function as visual *aides-mémoire* or mnemonic devices to remember distant people and places. While vernacular photographs are also crucial in the formation of individual and family memories, for commemorative purposes, and in the research and writing of social and cultural histories, among

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[128] Ibid., 70.
[129] Ibid., 69.

many other things, it is their complicated connection to collective memory that this chapter addresses. I argue that personal collections and institutional archives of vernacular images assist Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican diaspora communities in the United States in developing distinctive collectively held memories. Scholars in sociology, philosophy, history, anthropology, and psychology variously theorize collective memory as a social and cultural phenomenon.[130] Indeed, it is a fundamentally social process in which a specific group holds a memory or a set of memories of the past in common. These memories influence the collective historical consciousness of a community, and, importantly, their sense of cultural identity. The formation of cultural identity through a shared collective memory becomes more urgent in the context of a diaspora, at a geographic, historical, and emotional distance from the homeland. Yet the collections and archives of vernacular photographs from which such memories are formed are often incomplete and fragmentary; such absences in archives and their effect on collective diasporic memory are a vital aspect of this chapter.

My use of collective memory as a cultural and experiential phenomenon expands on the work of French philosopher Paul Ricœur. Ricœur's conception of collective memory is fully articulated in Memory, History, Forgetting, a text in which he meditates on the work of memory and the writing of history, both of which are attempts, however inadequate, to represent the past in the present.[131] Ricœur takes up the issue of collective memory from a philosophical rather than sociological standpoint. Grounded in the writings of Aristotle, Plato, and Henri Bergson, Ricœur's approach is ultimately more concerned with the phenomenology of memory rather than its social applications. In phenomenological terms, the significance of highly personal objects

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[130] For more on the concept of collective memory, see Paul Connerton, How Societies Remember (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux des Memoire*," Representations Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory No. 26 (Spring, 1989), p. 7-24, among others.
[131] Paul Ricœur, Memory, History, Forgetting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

like family photographs are related to the equally subjective experiences of the passage of time and the formation of memory. In Ricœur's theorization, the socio-cultural group is the originary context for collective memory. Collective memory on a large scale is produced before individual memory; indeed, it becomes a backdrop against which individual memory, and thereby cultural or group identity, is formed. This chapter extends and applies Ricœur's ideas to vernacular photographs of the Spanish Caribbean as a means through which collective memory is formed and experienced in the context of contemporary Spanish Caribbean diasporas in the United States. As visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards notes, "with its reproductive and repetitive qualities, [photography] is a form of externalized memory *par excellence*, fulfilling the inscriptional and performative qualities of memory," and privileging a mutually constructed idea of the past over a strict adherence to historical facts.[132] In the same vein, I examine the ways that the very nature of photography enhances the relationship between the images and the collective memory of a cultural group.

The circulation of vernacular photographs among Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and their U.S. diasporas traces the geographic trajectories of collective diasporic memory. In this chapter I identify some of the dilemmas presented by the deep connections that link collective memory, diasporic community, and vernacular photography as a form of visual representation. This chapter also considers the movement of images between the private spaces of family homes and photo albums and the public spaces of the Internet and archival institutions in the formation of collective memory and cultural identity. I also make a claim for the importance of vernacular photography within the larger critical discourses of the history of photography and the discipline of art history. I define this image category by describing what I

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[132] Elizabeth Edwards, "Photography, 'Englishness' and Collective Memory: The National Photographic Record Association, 1897-1910," in Locating Memory: Photographic Acts, eds. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 70.

call the visual conventions of vernacular photography, with a concentration on images of families from the Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican diaspora communities in the United States in order to further illuminate the cultural consequences of vernacular photography on collective memory and cultural identity.

The Discourse of Vernacular Photography

Vernacular photography is a category of images that art historian Geoffrey Batchen describes as the "ordinary photographs, the ones made or bought… by everyday folks from 1839 until now, the photographs that preoccupy the home and the heart but rarely the museum or the academy."[133] Vernacular photographs are the pictures of vacations, holidays, and birthday parties taken with inexpensive point-and-shoot cameras and developed at drugstores and sent in the mail folded into handwritten letters, and carefully pasted into albums and scrapbooks. They are the studio portraits of chubby babies and awkward high school students, and the snapshots of daily life that fill up shoeboxes in the closets of our mothers and grandmothers. They are images that adorn the mantles, refrigerators, and walls of our homes, and, increasingly, they monopolize digital storage on the servers of social websites like Facebook and Flickr. While these examples might make vernacular photography seem relatively innocuous, it is in fact a complicated and untidy category of images. Vernacular photographs easily make up the largest percentage of photographic images generated globally each year. The hordes of amateur photographers around the world, armed with their relatively inexpensive and uncomplicated cameras, far outpace the production of the comparatively tiny community of professional photographers.[134] Studio portraits feature prominently in scholarly accounts of the early history of photography, which

[133] Geoffrey Batchen, Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), 57.
[134] Ibid., 59.

concentrate on popular nineteenth-century vernacular phenomena like Daguerreotypomania and the *o* craze. But the scholarship of vernacular photography tapers off around the turn of the twentieth century in favor of aesthetic manipulations of photographic processes and, later, an increased absorption with aesthetics, formal qualities, and abstraction. The work of these photographers—now regarded as artists rather than portrait studio entrepreneurs or upper-class amateurs—aligned more closely with the art historical narratives of modernism in both stylistic concerns and subject matter. In defying neat disciplinary categorization by artistic style, period, or philosophy, however, the continued production of vernacular images trouble the art historical narrative that dominates this history of modern photography as an art form.[135] Thus, in spite of its ubiquity in everyday life, vernacular photography in the twentieth and now twenty-first centuries has yet to attract much scholarly or critical attention. The historiographic shift in concentration away from vernacular production in the history of photography suggests a lack of attention to the relationship between ordinary, everyday photography as a meaningful representational medium and memory as a highly visual phenomenon.

The application of the term "vernacular" to this category of images in conjunction with the larger idea of photography as a set of practices, histories, and objects is not without scholarly dissonance. Architecture and material culture historian Bernard L. Herman has noted that vernacular is a term scholars typically utilize "when placing one body of expressive culture in opposition to (or at least in tension with) the perceived powers of a dominant canon," particularly in an effort to legitimize the study of otherwise marginalized forms of cultural production, like family photographs or picture postcards.[136] Paradoxically, Herman argues, the move toward

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[135] Ibid.

[136] Bernard L. Herman, "Vernacular Trouble: Exclusive Practices on the Margins of an Inclusive Art," in In the Vernacular: Photography of Everyday, eds. Stacey McCarroll Cutshaw and Ross Barrett (Boston, MA: Boston University Art Gallery, 2008), 29.

disciplinary legitimacy through categorization as vernacular actually holds the marginalized set of objects and practices apart and subjects them, perhaps unproductively, to canonical forms of critical analysis. With Herman's cautions on the problematic applications of the word vernacular in mind, my study of Spanish Caribbean photography interferes with conventional art historical designations of photography and intervenes in the traditional interpretative methodologies for the medium. Rather than ushering the photographs and objects under consideration into a false state of classification in a dubious move toward equal disciplinary status, I employ an "object-driven" interpretative strategy.[137] This approach does not regard the vernacular as something that inheres in the photographic objects themselves, and is less concerned with the strict formal qualities of the images, though visual analysis is, of course, an important component. Instead, the object-driven strategy is an attempt to examine vernacular photography from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and their U.S. diasporas within their distinctive domestic and institutional contexts, as well as a means to discern the ways in which they are culturally and historically meaningful as objects, as images, and as signs in circulation.[138] More specifically, this methodology will frame my examination of a few case studies of vernacular visual culture—family snapshots and picture postcards—that course and flow between domestic and archival spaces in the Spanish Caribbean and the United States. Considered through this disciplinarily unconventional and non-canonical lens, vernacular photography in circulation functions as an unfixed representation of collective memory, as a kind of visual family archive, and as a strategy for understanding cultural identity in transition.

Etymologically, the Latin origin of the word vernacular denotes something that is domestic, native, or indigenous, a definition that suggests an autochthonous state of being or

[137] Ibid., 30.
[138] Ibid., 31.

something strongly rooted in an indigenous space or a homeland.[139] On the surface this may seem to create a contradiction in terms for a study devoted to the cultural production of contemporary diasporic populations. The rationale behind the use of vernacular to describe the images under consideration in this chapter, however, gestures toward the critical underpinnings of my understanding of the Spanish Caribbean diaspora in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. My larger project expands the geographic purview of the Spanish Caribbean beyond the national or insular boundaries of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico to include the diasporic spaces of the United States. If, as Caribbean literature studies scholar Vanessa Pérez Rosario notes, "exile is a territory of the nation," then photography and texts form an important part of a nation's canon of cultural production.[140] Further, my analysis of vernacular photography in circulation productively expands the dual nature of the term domestic, in the sense of a home space and as the geographic borders of the nation state, overriding the strict boundaries between political entities and the divisions between private and public. Informed and inspired by Martinican poet Édouard Glissant's poetic theorization of the Caribbean as a non-linear, decentered, and diffracted space, this critical reorientation of the geographic limits of diaspora allows for an expanded use of "vernacular" in the sense of native or domestic and yet also diasporic images in circulation among diverse home spaces.[141] Along the same lines of critical analysis, my examination of the Spanish Caribbean and its diaspora contends that culture, identity, and even memory are constructed, not inherited or transplanted whole and unaltered. In this context, the circulation of vernacular images as a discursive structure becomes crucial step in assembling and articulating a sense of cultural identity and collective memory.

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[139] "vernacular, adj. and n.". OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/222608?redirectedFrom=vernacular (accessed March 31, 2011).

[140] Vanessa Pérez Rosario, "Introduction: Historical Context of Caribbean Latino Literature," in Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration: Narratives of Displacement, ed. Vanessa Pérez Rosario (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

[141] Édouard Glissant, Poetics of Relation, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

The constructive tension between the etymological sense of domesticity and rootedness and the diasporic, circulating nature of this category of photography creates a compelling new direction for the study of vernacular forms. Importantly, however, alternative definitions of vernacular are concerned with the term as it refers to native languages and tongues, or as a kind of writing.[142] Herman and other scholars have called attention to the affinities between language and vernacular cultural forms; this analogy is particularly suited to the parallels between the immediacy and quotidian elements of common, everyday communication and the speed and subject matter of snapshot photography.[143] The link between vernacular photography and language is apt, since a significant aspect of the theoretical framework for this chapter on Spanish Caribbean vernacular photography, and indeed the project as a whole, is a consideration of photography as a form of writing itself, produced and fixed metaphorically and literally with the salt water and sunlight of the Spanish Caribbean. Further, the connection to concepts of writing and language situates the examination of photography as a discursive formation, a category of knowledge, practices, and images with a specific and specialized set of visual forms that are replicated and reinforced by their own production.[144] Part of the discourse of vernacular photography, which I call its visual conventions, will be discussed in depth in the following section. A discourse of vernacular photography in the sense of categorical, recurring knowledge alludes to the visual structures of the everyday, the common, and the unremarkable, but also to the circumstantial, variable, and strategic elements of these types of images as they relate to collective memory and cultural identity.[145]

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[142] "vernacular, adj. and n.". OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/222608?redirectedFrom=vernacular (accessed March 31, 2011).
[143] Herman, 31.
[144] Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 38.
[145] Herman, 31.

The connections between vernacular photography, the construction of collective memory, and the visual representation of cultural identity become more urgent in the context of contemporary migrations and the circumstances of life in the diaspora. It is here that a less common and older definition of vernacular rises to the surface: vernacular as it refers to the personal and private aspects of one's life.[146] Vernacular photographs often capture extremely intimate moments in the life of a family and the intended viewers are usually restricted to a small circle of relations and friends. While the case studies of Spanish Caribbean vernacular photography I present here all come from research institutions and online archives freely and fully accessible to the public, I am extremely conscious that the images represent the lives, actions, and personal histories of actual individuals and families. I subject the images to visual analysis and draw larger scholarly conclusions about vernacular photography as a means of representing memory and cultural identity, but I am simultaneously aware that these are in fact mere snapshots of lives, not complete narratives. I avoid dissecting the inner workings of families or otherwise taking inappropriate advantage of the public access to private images. The people moving and migrating between Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the United States carry with them unique understandings of memory and identity that, although based on a sturdy foundation constructed in the homeland, are altered and radically reinterpreted in the diaspora. Vernacular photography in circulation is similarly subject to transformation, visually linking the memory of the homelands and the reality of the diasporic spaces of the Spanish Caribbean. The photographs, like the individuals moving between locations, also change in meaning and interpretive potential over the course of the journey.

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[146] "vernacular, adj. and n.". OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/222608?redirectedFrom=vernacular (accessed March 31, 2011).

The Visual Conventions of Vernacular Photography

At the turn of the twentieth century, Kodak's first Brownie camera made vernacular photography widely available to the general public.[147] The well-known advertising slogan, "You press the button, we do the rest," emphasized the simplicity and accessibility of photography for everyone, even small children, who were frequently featured in Kodak advertisements operating the cameras with ease and delight. No longer reliant on the professional in the portrait studio, recreational photographers began documenting the daily lives of their families. The Brownie and other early portable box cameras and roll films were "developed with the family in mind" as an uncomplicated and relatively affordable means of image making for the untrained masses.[148] It was not until the middle of the twentieth century, however, that photography became a widely available and truly popular means of image production and consumption within the economic means of the middle and working class amateur photographers around the globe. The increased availability and effortlessness of point-and-shoot cameras and the already encapsulated, quickly loaded rolls of film, in tandem with reduced processing costs, contributed to the proliferation of vernacular photography worldwide. The escalating number of family photographs being produced by amateur photographers triggered an increase in the various means of image storage and display, including photo albums and scrapbooks with blank pages on which to carefully paste the developed images and other personal memorabilia. As film studies scholar Annette Kuhn points out, the seemingly innocent and universal wish to make and keep photographs in order to memorialize one's family and friends is bound up in an advanced consumer industry: "the makers of the various paraphernalia of family photography—cameras, film, processing,

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[147] The Eastman Company put its first Kodak camera apparatus intended for amateurs on the market in 1888. Roll film, which made loading the cameras easier, was introduced a year later. The first Brownie cameras were introduced in 1900, retailing at $1.00 (the film sold for 15 cents a roll). www.kodak.com/global (accessed April 4, 2011).

[148] Patricia Holland, "Introduction: History, Memory and the Family Album," in Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography, eds. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), 4.

albums to keep the pictures in—all have a stake in our memories."[149] Despite the subtle commodification of memory, collections of vernacular photographs became part of a kind of domestic archive, initially accessible only to those with the privilege of familial ties or close friendship. The explosion of digital and mobile technologies in the twenty-first century has increased the production of vernacular photography and moved the domestic archives and albums of images online, where they are quickly and easily uploaded, captioned, tagged, organized, commented on, and circulated across geographic distances. Even the older, slightly discolored, low-definition analogue photographs from family collections, taken with the now-obsolete film cameras, have found a second life online after being scanned and converted to digital images.

The global, popular interest in making snapshots of family and friends, carefully arranging and storing them in albums, and devotedly displaying them in the home or online, reveals something deeper than an international mass of casual photography hobbyists. The desire to create and maintain a domestic archive of family photographs reflects a more profound attachment to the images, and thereby the memories, of beloved people and places. Beyond the family home, collections of vernacular photographs, including studio portraits, picture postcards, and informal snapshots, are increasingly found in cultural centers and historical archives, suggesting the value of such images in constructing institutional narratives. In many cases, however, both the subjects and photographers of these historical vernacular images in public collections remain unknown, challenging definitive declarations of their content, purposes, and historical contexts. In the digital realm, photo-sharing websites like Flickr, Photobucket, Picasa, and ImageShack feature virtual albums specifically for archiving family and other historical

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[149] Annette Kuhn, "Remembrance," in Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography, eds. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), 24.

photographs of specific socio-cultural groups. For example, there is an image group titled *Cuba BC (Before Castro)* on the photo-sharing site Flickr devoted to exhibiting images of Cuba before the Revolution.[150] Among many photographs posted to the site, there is an image of a family enjoying a day of swimming at the Miramar Yacht Club in Cuba from around 1951 (fig. 11).[151] The group member who posted *Miramar Yacht Club* goes by the username Dos Épocas, meaning two ages or two eras, and is a Cuban-American journalist who also writes a personal weblog on the impact of the 1959 Revolution on Cuba and on his family.[152] The photograph, which features five individuals standing in a casual arrangement in front of a blue expanse of enclosed swimming pool and open sea, and the caption provided, reveal many layers of information about the type of narrative of collective memory that Dos Épocas wants to develop through this publicly shared domestic archive. Importantly, the captions on vernacular photographs—handwritten on the back in some cases, typed in code online in others—are as crucial an element to the conventions of vernacular photography as the visual, an idea which I will discuss further later in this chapter.[153] The fact that Dos Épocas took the time to scan, upload, and compose the

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[150] http://www.flickr.com/groups/cuba-bc/ (accessed March 11, 2010). The *Cuba BC (Before Castro)* image pool on Flickr.com was created on July 3, 2006 and at the time of writing has 125 members who have posted 819 photographs to the site. Many are contemporary photographs of Cuba, though some, like user Dos Época's images, are historical vernacular images. The group description states: "Cuba was a very different country before the arrival of Fidel Castro in 1960. This group showcases the images from that bygone era... people, places, things... photos, documents, maps... whatever you'd like to submit is welcome. Let's share the beauty of this special time and place in history!"

[151] The caption for this image is: "Miramar Yacht Club: Ramon Villalobos (C), owner of the Havana Shipyards, spending a day at the Miramar Yacht Club with family members. Circa 1951." Dos Épocas emphasizes the social (member of a yacht club) and professional (owner of a shipyard) status of Mr. Villalobos. This and other photo captions in the image pool, discussed below, suggest Dos Épocas's opinion of the current regime and situation in Cuba.

[152] http://www.dosepocas.blogspot.com/ (accessed March 17, 2010). Despite repeated attempts over the course of this project, I have not been able to ascertain a definitive identity for Dos Épocas. The user profile for Dos Épocas on Blogspot states: "A former U.S. News & World Report staff member and contributing editor to the Crimes of War project, Gabriel has been traveling to Cuba on a yearly basis since 1999 for general reportage as well as continuing work on Dos Épocas, A Flight of No Return. Currently a Washington, DC-based editor at a photographic news agency, he can be reached at: dosepocas@gmail.com." All of my messages to this address, including those requesting permission to publish the photographs, have gone unanswered.

[153] As a group, the captions and textual tags Dos Épocas adds to the photographs on the Flickr site are quite telling in terms of his investment in a particular historical narrative of Cuba in the 1950s. The tags include: Cuba, Castro, pre,

caption for the photograph *Miramar Yacht Club* is meaningful in terms of its relationship to collective memory within the online archive. It is in the participatory, communal act of sharing of vernacular photography through albums and archives that a familial, and, on a larger scale, collective cultural memory is produced and propagated. Domestic archives of vernacular photography, regardless of digital or analogue format and storage location, are regularly, if informally, consulted and shared in the formation of collective histories. In embarking on a study of these images, I also participate in the production and analysis of a form of cultural memory in the pursuit of scholarly knowledge. The composition of such a history, based in part on family photographs, is a delicate task that joins memory and photographic representation. Because of the potential for revisions and rewritings, memory is highly subjective historical resource to draw upon. With the components of vernacular photographs—the visual elements as well as the textual captions, in some cases—as the primary evidence, such family and community histories are frequently subject to revisions and rewritings over time.

Since the introduction of mass-produced point-and-shoot cameras, easy to use film and, later, inexpensive processing and undemanding digital technologies, photography albums and living room walls around the world are full of these common and powerful visual representations of memory. Vernacular photography is now a globally ubiquitous practice, bridging diverse cultures, classes, and social customs. It is the ordinariness of vernacular photography, its persistent presence in everyday life, its recognizable and repeated conventions, and its inherent sameness among many and diverse cultures that makes it almost invisible to the critical eye. The predictability and conventions of vernacular images also imbue them with the power of affiliation and automatic association. The similar postures, gestures, arrangements, and subjects

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pre-castro, before castro, havana, miramar, yacht, club, Miramar Yacht Clue [sic]. Such textual supplements to online image archives encourage the revision of collective cultural narratives by enabling specific viewing practices for digital images, since the images are searchable by the subjectively worded caption texts and tags.

that comprise the visual conventions of vernacular photography recur again and again, over generations and across geographic distances.[154] Despite the fact that amateur photographers have absolute freedom in selecting and arranging their subjects, they continually point their camera lenses at their family and friends at particular special moments like birthdays, vacations, and the first day of school. The family and friends, in turn, strike the same poses, display themselves in the same uniform arrangements, and assume the same facial expressions when the shutter snaps. In her introductory essay to Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography, Patricia Holland notes that the intended subjects of the photographs are almost always complicit in the production of this visual verisimilitude: "there is no attempt to conceal the process of picture-taking—participants present themselves directly to the camera in an act of celebratory cooperation. Everyone knows what to expect from a family picture. If subject matter or visual style breaches the conventions, the effect is less satisfactory."[155] Indeed, despite the intensely personal, intimate nature of the some of the family moments pictured and of the private memories evoked by vernacular photographs, there is also a sense of a shared social experience through the repetition of subject matter, poses, and forms.[156]

In the *Miramar Yacht Club* photograph, for example, the arrangement of the family members in two close rows, with a sense of physical intimacy, each subject presenting him or herself directly to the camera and making direct eye contact, clad in informal, summer clothing or bathing suits and framed by the a scenic day of leisure, precisely satisfies the visual

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[154] As photography historian Karl Steinorth points out, however, an infinite amount of variation is still present in the details of vernacular photography: "today's snapshooters are generally interested in the very same subjects that interested their predecessors of a hundred years ago. Thus snapshots show a continuing repetition of ever recurring subjects within which, however, a remarkable variety is possible." Karl Steinorth quoted in Stacey McCarroll Cutshaw and Ross Barrett, "In the Vernacular: Photography of the Everyday," in In the Vernacular: Photography of the Everyday eds. Stacey McCarroll Cutshaw and Ross Barrett (Boston, MA: Boston University Art Gallery, 2008), 20.
[155] Holland, 4.
[156] Jeremy Seabrook, "'My life is in that box,'" in Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography, eds. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), 177-178.

expectations desired of vernacular photographs. In addition, the photograph also reveals other standardized social practices through a clear enunciation of gendered and age-related social roles through dress and gesture. In vernacular photography, Batchen argues, the visual similarities indicate that a "conformity to (rather than difference from) established genre conventions is a paramount concern" to both photographer and subjects because it records the observance of generalized social and cultural expectations in the photographic record and, thereby, in the collective memory of a family unit or group.[157] There is a strong *desire* to visually adhere to a specific sense of collective memory through vernacular images, despite the fact that they present explicitly personal memories and the particularities of a unique individual's or family's existence. The easy adoption of an image by viewers into a larger narrative, a move that is enabled by the standard visual conventions of vernacular photography, has a direct impact on how we read and understand photographs, accurately or inaccurately, as representations of individual and collective memory.

Despite the visual conventions of the form that I have described, representing the past through an ultimately subjective medium like vernacular photographs also enables the possibility of rupture between individual and collective memory. The tensions between the lived experience of individuals and a collectively revised sense of the past is particularly urgent in vernacular photography from the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas. This study focuses on Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and their diasporas in the U.S. that resulted primarily from the political events of middle of the last century: Fidel Castro's Cuban Revolution of 1959, the end of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1961, and the establishment of Puerto Rico as an Associated Free State in 1952. While linked by a shared cultural, historical, and linguistic heritage, the Spanish Caribbean diasporic communities in the

[157] Batchen, Each Wild Idea, 77.

United States were subject to distinct political realities and social experiences that precipitated their migrations in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. The particularities and personalities of each diasporic population in the United States are reflected in the domestic archives of vernacular photography they produce and maintain. These factors, among others, influenced the uniquely Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican articulations of identity and memory in the diaspora, analyzed in this chapter through the archive of vernacular photography. There is a shared desire to use vernacular photography as a means to visualize a culturally distinctive sense of collective memory and identity and yet also adhere to the standardized visual conventions in order to produce and reaffirm the social expectations of the form.

We can discern some of the visual conventions of vernacular photography from the Spanish Caribbean in the image *Pre-Castro Daily Life*, also posted to the *Cuba BC (Before Castro)* image pool on Flickr by user Dos Épocas (fig. 12).[158] The photograph features a middle-aged man in a collared shirt and trousers kneeling and embracing two small children: a boy and a girl. The little girl's head tilts forward, an expression of impatience on her face. The small boy, even more perturbed at having his play interrupted to pose for the family portrait, gestures toward the camera, causing his left hand to blur slightly. His father restrains him with a firm hand on his chest; he likewise arrests the girl's movement by pulling her toward him, though her *contrapposto* stance suggests that she will be in motion again as soon as the shutter snaps. They all face the camera straight on, meeting the gaze of the photographer, most likely another close family member or acquaintance. The pyramidal arrangement of the subjects and their physical proximity, their positioning in front of the family home (at least according to Dos Épocas's caption), the paternal gesture of affection and restraint, and the direct gaze of the subjects into

[158] The full caption for the image is: "Pre-Castro Daily Life. A father with his two children in the yard of their family home in Havana's Miramar neighborhood, circa 1951."

the camera's lens are all typical formal elements of vernacular photography. These are all typical visual components of the photograph that we as contemporary viewers recognize and often relate to, regardless of the difference in historical moment or culture. As literature and visual studies scholar Marianne Hirsch observes about vernacular photographs, their "conventional and predictable poses make them largely interchangeable… family pictures are often so similar, so much shaped by similar conventions, that they are readily available for identification across the broadest and most radical divides," whether cultural, linguistic, geographic, political, or even temporal.[159] In precisely the same way, the standardized forms and subject matter like those I describe in the *Pre-Castro Daily Life* photograph readily trigger identification with otherwise temporally and culturally distinct images.

The almost effortless means of identification with otherwise unfamiliar family photographs based on these visual conventions engenders in a casual viewer an almost familial affection, a relationship to the image based not on actual family ties or social connections but on visual resemblance. Even in my description of *Pre-Castro Daily Life* I could not resist ascribing typical familial roles to the subjects, including a firm but loving father with two playful, impatient, and energetic children. This sense of affiliation and affection informs a reading of vernacular photography found outside of the domestic archives our own families, and even outside the image archives of our own cultures: "because we all have snapshots of our own, and thus know the habit of understanding them, we are all equipped to imagine ourselves into the snapshots of others."[160] Indeed, in my own case, *Pre-Castro Daily Life* immediately evokes an image of my own father and two younger siblings (fig. 13). My father sits in a recliner with my

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[159] Marianne Hirsch, "Introduction," in The Familial Gaze, ed. Marianne Hirsch (Dartmouth: University Press of New England, 1999), xiii.
[160] Peter Galassi, Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort (New York: The Museum of Modern Art & Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

brother and sister balanced on his lap, an arm around each to support them and draw them near. Commanded to smile, they all meet the gaze of the camera, most likely wielded by my mother. While the settings of the photographs, as well as the historical and cultural contexts, are different, there is a correspondence in the arrangement of the family members and the comforting yet containing force of the fatherly embrace that connects my photograph to the image of a Cuban family in Miramar in the 1950s. In her theorization of the familial gaze, Hirsch maintains, "recognizing an image as *familial* elicits a specific kind of readerly or spectorial look, an *affiliative* look through which we are sutured into the image and through which we adopt the image into our own familial narrative."[161] The visual conventions of vernacular photographs evoke this affiliative look whether or not we have an actual relationship to the subjects, locations, historical periods, or cultural contexts presented by the images. As viewers, we actually desire and impose the sense of affiliation with familial images, despite their temporal or cultural distance from us. Further, the standard visual conventions of vernacular photography reinforce how we read such images as representations of collective memory.

Cuba: Picturing Exilic Memory and Absence

For Cubans who have been forced or fled into exile in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century, the collective revision of their country's history has social and cultural implications beyond the pages of photo albums and the walls of family homes. Castro's socialist revolution took control of Havana and the nation in January 1959, causing many Cubans to go into exile in the United States and elsewhere. Urban enclaves like Miami have become home to large, multi-generational, and affluent communities of Cubans and Cuban-Americans

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[161] Marianne Hirsch, Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 93. Emphasis original.

who maintain strong cultural and familial ties to their home country. Despite the lasting connections to Cuban culture, the geographic proximity of South Florida and Cuba, the relative prosperity of the first waves of exiles, and the recent relaxation of the U.S. government's restrictive travel ban, many first-generation Cuban exiles have not returned to the island. The lack of return migration, or even brief return visits, is compelled in part by a strong sense of political resistance against the Castro regime. In general, Cubans in the United States maintain only a moderate level of transnational social relations with the homeland, in contrast to the other Spanish Caribbean diasporic communities under consideration in this project.[162] Depending on their age and the era in which they migrated, Cubans and Cuban-Americans in the U.S. recall different eras of Cuban political, social, and economic history. There is an older generation who remember the pre-Castro era, having left within a few years of the Revolution, and subsequent, younger generations who only knew the island under communism. The disparities in their collective memories create some tensions within the diaspora community. In cases where individuals have not returned to Cuba since migrating to the United States, photographic representations like family albums, portrait photographs, and even picture postcards of Cuba have become the central touchstones of memory, visually recalling their past lives and homes there. Such vernacular images serve as more than just indexical *aides-mémoire* for absent loved ones and distant homelands; they also bear the burden of supporting the potentially revised narratives that circulate and sustain the collective memory of the Cuban diaspora community in the United States.

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[162] Linda Green Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Szanton Blanc, Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1994), 8. The authors briefly define transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement," as well as the ways in which immigrants maintain multiple types of social relationships—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—across the borders that separate home and host lands (8).

Picture postcards with views of Cuba offer images that reinforce a sense of collective memory through a specific recollection of geographic place, but they were also designed to circulate between populations in Cuba and in the U.S. diaspora. Similar to the family photographs discussed above, picture postcards also have standardized visual elements which are intended to engender particular sentiments or present a specific narrative about the location and culture pictured, usually through the aesthetics of the picturesque.[163] For example, a picture postcard featuring a scenic view of the Malecón, a busy seaside boulevard in Havana, functions to reinforce a collective memory of Cuba before the Castro regime took power (fig. 14). The image on the postcard is a black-and-white photograph with an overlay of colored ink accenting the sea, the sky, and the American-made cars driving along the wide, curving road. The brightly colored cars cruising past the tall, modern buildings imply affluence and progress. The postcard presents an idealized vision of Havana as a modern, prosperous, urban capital. Among the structures visible on the Malecón in the postcard image is the Hotel Habana Riviera, an Art Deco-style hotel with a casino and cabaret built in 1957, just a few years before the 1959 Revolution. Recognizable by its height and distinctive silhouette, the Hotel Habana Riviera was a symbol of Cuba's modernity and burgeoning status as a glamorous, global tourist destination.[164] The postcard and others like it may have been sent to relatives already living outside Cuba one year after the Revolution.[165] Like the cheerfully optimistic holiday message

[163] For a deeper discussion of the Caribbean and the picturesque, see also Jill H. Casid, Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) and Krista A. Thompson, An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006), which addresses the visual rhetoric of the picturesque in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century picture postcards and other visual representations of the Caribbean.

[164] The Hotel Habana Riviera was built and run by Meyer Lansky, a Jewish-American member of an organized crime syndicate, through his Riviera de Cuba S.A. company. See also T.J. English, Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba and Then Lost It to the Revolution (New York: William Morrow, 2008).

[165] This is one in a large collection of postcards titled *Tarjetas de felicitaciones: American Photo Studios S.A. (1960-61)* (catalogue listing TPC Album 250), in the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí in Havana, Cuba. The text "American Photo Studios S.A." is printed on the reverse of the postcard. According to the U.S. Library of Congress website, American Photo Studios S.A. was a Havana-based company and copyright claimant on several images of Havana,

embossed next to it, "*Le deseamos todo género de prosperidad en el Año Nuevo*" ("Wishing you every kind of prosperity in the New Year"), the lovely color photograph masks the ugly realities of the social and political situation in Cuba before or immediately following the Revolution. Further, the image lacks any visual implication of the chaos of the Revolution or the trauma experienced by a newly exiled population. Instead, the postcard reinforces a revised sense of collective memory, visualizing Cuba as an affluent, modern society, a place free from the problems that plagued the rest of the Caribbean, like poverty, violence, and political corruption, and likewise, free from trouble-making communist revolutionaries.

Familial and social narratives can be visually discerned and recounted through vernacular photographs, but they can also be used to rewrite and revise a sense of collective memory, as in the case of the postcard featuring the Malecón. The positive connotations of the terms generally used to discuss vernacular photography, coupled with the tender feelings stimulated by such images, tend to obscure the problematic gaps that exist in the domestic archive. The narratives of the Cuban diaspora as represented in family photographs and picture postcards have been truncated and complicated by the situation of exile. Further, the larger sense of collective memory for Cubans and Cuban-Americans is heavily influenced by their general political stance toward the Castro regime, which is itself vividly recalled by the countless and now iconic

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particularly from the 1920s and 1930s (see http://lccn.loc.gov/2007663130). Photographs listed as created by American Photo Studios S.A. can also be found in the Columbia University Libraries Archives and the University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection, among other archives. American Photo Studios S.A. is also listed as the publisher of the books Havana, Cuba: The Tropical Paradise of the West Indies (Havana: American Photo Studios, 1920s) and Cuba, the Wonder-Land of America (Havana: American Photo Studios, ca. 1925), among others found on http://www.worldcat.org. I speculate, based on the printed message, that this card was created to celebrate the 1960-1961 winter holiday season.

Another postcard in the collection features a cartoon image of a cigar-smoking Fidel Castro and two other bearded, Revolutionary figures as the three wise men, bearing a flag celebrating el 26 de Julio and heading out of Oriente Province (TPC Album 250, *Tarjetas de felicitaciones, American Photo Studios S.A. (1960-61)*, La Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana, Cuba). Boldly referencing the central figures of the Revolution in a comical fashion strongly suggests to me that the cards were also intended for distribution outside of Cuba.

photographs of the Revolution taken by photographers like Korda, Raúl Corrales, and others.[166] Vernacular photographs function as a form of familial self-representation, and, by extension, social and cultural representation from which "the darker and more hidden aspects of family life, the disagreements and compromises" are excluded and thereby hidden.[167] The inclusive, affiliative look produced by the familiar visual conventions of vernacular photographs involuntarily or unconsciously legitimize and reinforce arguably negative *absences* from the collective memory of the Cuban diaspora community in the United States. The familial gaze, to use Hirsch's terms, "can also function as a screen; the identification it engenders can be too easy…. familial looking is a powerful, if slippery and often deceptive, instrument of cultural dialogue and cultural memory."[168] While we as viewers may desire the affiliative look produced by vernacular photographs, the sense of affiliation also works to mask omissions from individual and collective memories just as easily as it can create connections between disparate locations. Cubans in the U.S. diaspora employ vernacular photography like the scenic postcard of the Malecón boulevard to navigate the tensions between the evocative and poignant memories of *la Cuba de ayer*, the Cuba of yesterday, and the experienced realities of exile from the island in the present day. By engendering familial and affiliative looks, the standardized visual conventions of vernacular photography permit a slippage between an individual's personal memories and the socio-historical collective memory of the exile community as a whole.

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[166] In a similar way, the photographs of the Revolution taken by Korda (Alberto Díaz Gutiérrez), Raúl Corrales, Osvaldo Salas Merino, and Liborio Noval also function to visually revise the collective memory of those events. Intended to circulate in the same manner as the holiday greeting cards, their photographs of the Revolution, including the now famous image of Che as the *Guerrillero Heróico* have been printed as postcards which are sold individually as souvenirs in Havana and elsewhere, and as a complete set of 75 published by Ediciones Aurelia (Cuban Revolution Postcards, 104PH008, New York Public Library Photography Collection, New York City, New York).

[167] Hirsch, The Familial Gaze, xi.

[168] Ibid., xiii

In this way, vernacular photography serves to strengthen a sense of collective exilic identity and re-presents for members of the Cuban diaspora community snapshots of memory that do not always adhere precisely to the lived realities of life in Cuba. The historical narrative and the sense of collective memory associated with it has been understandably complicated and revised by the circumstances of the Revolution, the interminable Castro regime, and the seemingly permanent condition of exile from Cuba. But problematically missing from these historical images, and thus absent from the collective exilic memory, are the discrepancies in living conditions between affluent families and working class or otherwise impoverished Cubans, as well as representations of any individuals or groups that live outside traditional family or social structures. Many of those in the first waves to leave Cuba after 1959, known as the “Golden Exiles,” were able to choose exile over staying on the island, thus exercising more control over their own cultural narrative. Others were not granted the same privileges upon their exit from the island. One of the early groups of Golden Exiles included the family of Ramon Villalobos, whose family photographs Flickr user Dos Épocas posted to the *Cuba BC (Before Castro)* image group and whose exodus story he attempts to narrate as part of his weblog, *Dos Épocas: A Flight of No Return*. Another vernacular image of members of the Villalobos family from late 1960 attests to their affluence and, ultimately, provides a counterpoint to the absences in the collective domestic archive of the Cuban diaspora in the United States. Captioned “Residence of Havana Shipyard Owner Ramon Villalobos, The daughter (C) of Ramon Villalobos, owner of the Havana Shipyards, with her children,” the photograph features the same children from the photograph *Pre-Castro Daily Life* (fig. 12) discussed above, named Rosi and Gerardo, though they are now several years older (fig. 15). Situated in front of the same home as the photograph from around 1951, this time pictured with their mother, the children pose stiffly

in their starched school uniforms, squinting into the morning sunlight on what might be the first day of school, an event commonly captured in family photographs. Like the previously discussed snapshots from the domestic archive of the Villalobos family, *Miramar Yacht Club* and *Pre-Castro Daily Life* (figs. 11 and 12), the same analyses of the visual conventions of vernacular photography are applicable, including the production of an affiliative look based on gestures of intimacy, implied familial relationships and roles, and a typically domestic setting. In this image, however, there is also a clearer sense of the privileged circumstances of the Villalobos family: the stately, columned home, the shiny foreign car, the private education for the children, even the presence of a Kodachrome camera and film suggest their wealth. Further, the social standing of the family is strongly reiterated in Dos Épocas's caption: the fact that Ramon Villalobos was the "owner of the Havana Shipyards" is repeated twice in the description of the image. Thus, while this vernacular image reinforces a narrative of Cuban exile from the privileged perspective of a socially affluent family group, and reinforces a collective memory of pre-Castro Cuba as a prosperous, modern society, one must ask who might be left out of this domestic archive, and who might exist beyond the borders of the conventional family snapshot.

Because of the beguiling effects of affiliative look, it is sometimes difficult to see, or even to acknowledge, what is written beyond the margins of a family album or outside the regular discourses of vernacular photography. In an essay on contemporary artist Christian Boltanski, Ernst van Alphen states that, in the case of family photographs, "we do not really look. We do not see anything *in* the image. The image produces, however, memories of situations or places that are similar to what we see in the image. We are not led into the image, we are led back into our memories… We recognize only what we have in common with them.

We see only familial circumstances."[169] The visual conventions of vernacular photography, van Alphen argues, obscure the actual subjects and details of the images behind a screen of individual and collective memory. Likewise, we cannot always see the glaring omissions from the domestic archive of vernacular images. For example, later groups of immigrants to the United States, including the mentally ill, homosexuals, prisoners, political dissidents, intellectuals, and those Cubans who simply lived outside the traditional family arrangement or disregarded other social expectations in the wake of the Revolution, were persecuted and driven out of the country. Also absent from these images are any indication of race relations in Cuba, eliding the important historical presence of Africans and Asians in Cuban culture. Mass exoduses like the Mariel Boatlift in 1980, and the huge number of Cuban *balseros* who have attempted to emigrate independently and illegally on flimsy rafts or inflated inner tubes, have left a segment of the Cuban population doubly exiled in the United States. Forced to leave quickly and travel lightly, many exiles departed without even a change of clothing, much less their family photo albums. These Cuban migrants have been left both without a homeland and without a real presence in the domestic vernacular record.

For example, an image of the Mariel Boatlift taken by a member of the U.S. Coast Guard does not reproduce the affiliative and familial looks described by Hirsch in the same way that a vernacular family photograph might (fig. 16). Although the photograph of the Mariel Boatlift refugees arriving in the United States contains some of the same visual conventions of vernacular family photography, including the way in which the subjects present themselves to and meet the gaze of the camera, it does not engender the familial look. The image lacks the usual arrangement of figures by their social and gender roles—the subjects in the photograph are all

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[169] Ernst van Alphen, "Nazism in the Family Album: Christian Boltanski's *San Souci*" in The Familial Gaze, ed. Marianne Hirsch (Dartmouth: University Press of New England, 1999), 48. Emphasis original.

men—and it also does not have the gestures of affection and familiarity found in other examples of vernacular photography discussed here. The caption and credit lines also charge the photograph with the sense of a specific moment in world history, a stake in global politics, as well as a connection to the perhaps threatening power of government, elements which do not satisfy the strong desire for conformity to the standard visual conventions of vernacular photography. The Mariel Boatlift refugees and other Cuban migrants are without any photographic representation in the shared domestic archive of the Cuban diaspora in the United States; due to this absence they are left outside the collective exilic memory.

The absence of members of the Cuban diaspora from the domestic archive of vernacular images has a direct impact on the collective memory of the Cuban exile community. The exclusion of segments of the population and the creation of collective sense of the "*recuerdos de la Cuba que dejamos*," memories of the Cuba we left behind, do not always accurately or fully represent the realities of the exile experience for the whole spectrum of the Cuban diaspora community in the United States (fig. 17). Like the holiday picture postcard of the Malecón, which produces a collective memory of Cuba based on nostalgia, the small booklet featuring full color photographic scenes was intended to circulate and sustain a collective memory of the island for the diaspora community in the United States. Yet also like these images, the photographs in Recuerdos de la Cuba que dejamos present a vision of Cuba free from the political, economic or racial tensions that were, in fact, glaringly present. One is forced to wonder, in fact, to whose memories the images in the booklet are intended to represent and who is left out of this version of Cuban collective memory. There are certainly further problems with the affiliative gaze engendered by vernacular photography, and other absences that it creates within domestic and cultural archives that I do not address here. The vernacular photographs included in domestic and

cultural archives reinforce the narratives that come to represent individual and collective memories, but the images that are excluded also inform the real situation of exile. While no archive can completely or accurately represent the collective experience of Cuban exile and life in a diaspora, the problematic absences in the domestic diasporic archive of vernacular photographs create a sense of collective memory that does not accurately represent the historical reality of events and lived experiences.

The Dominican Republic: Writing Collective Diasporic Memory

In the mid-twentieth century the collective memory of the Dominican Republic was subject to frequent and sometimes drastic revisions at the hands of its leader, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina. A monomaniacal and malicious dictator, during his thirty-one year regime Trujillo manipulated Dominican collective memory and cultural identity through the extremely violent and pervasive control of language, media, visual culture, and even the bodies of the population.[170] Any attempts to subvert or avoid Trujillo's influence over everyday life in the Dominican Republic were met with brutality, further encouraging the acceptance of his version of collective memory and Dominican identity. One of Trujillo's more ostentatious modifications to the psychic geography of the nation was to change the name of its capital city from Santo Domingo de Guzmán to Ciudad Trujillo, a constant reminder of dictator and his seemingly limitless power over daily life. The city resumed its original name after his assassination in 1961, but visual remnants of Ciudad Trujillo and the horrors of Dominican life under *El Jefe*

[170] Literature studies scholar Kelli Lyon Johnson noted that Trujillo "commemorated himself frequently and on a grand scale. Monuments, parades, and rituals were devoted entirely to him, earning him, for a time, a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as the leader who built the most statues in his own honor." Kelli Lyon Johnson, "Both Sides of the Massacre: Collective Memory and Narrative on Hispaniola," Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature 36, 2 (June 2003), 75.

remained.[171] A subtle yet striking attempt to recuperate Dominican collective memory from Trujillo's forced revisions can be discerned in a picture postcard of La Catedral de Santa María de la Encarnación building (figs. 18 and 19).[172] As discussed above, picture postcards present standardized visual elements that suggest specific narratives about the location and culture depicted. The postcard of La Catedral depicts the façade and front courtyard of the building from a side angle, as though viewed from just across the street. The low stone fence surrounding the perimeter frames the view and visually mimics the pointed Baroque pediment above. The mirrored pyramidal shapes formed by the pediment and the courtyard fence confer a sense of stability and durability to the building. The impression of permanence can be extended to the institution of the church and, given the modified name of the city, even to Trujillo himself.[173] But the text on a postcard can also reveal important evidence about collective memory. The words printed in the upper right hand corner of the postcard tersely identify the scenic architectural view: *Catedral—Ciudad Trujillo, Rep. Dom.* The typeset text has been effaced, however, undermining the otherwise official nature of the caption: the words "Ciudad Trujillo" have been roughly crossed out with pencil and "Santo Domingo 1500" handwritten below.[174] The alteration of the postcard text, though scribbled by an anonymous hand, works to reclaim a sense of

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[171] This is not to suggest that daily life in the Dominican Republic was an tranquil and fair democracy in the years following Trujillo's regime; the election and overthrow of President Juan Bosch, the invasion by the U.S. military, and the presidency of Joaquín Balaguer, a former puppet of Trujillo who harshly suppressed civil and human rights, and economic difficulties were also tumultuous events in Dominican history.

[172] From the Tito Enrique Cánepa Collection, Dominican Studies Institute, City University of New York, New York City.

[173] Trujillo installed several enormous signs with promotional slogans around the Dominican Republic during his regime. There were at least two versions (one in neon lights) of a particularly infamous sign reading "God and Trujillo," which explicitly connected the dictator with the Catholic Church. Richard Lee Turits, Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 6-7.

[174] There was no supplementary information about the postcard in the Tito Enrique Cánepa Collection of the Dominican Studies Institute, City University of New York, and thus no further explanation of who might have written on the postcard or what the addition of "1500" might mean. The Cathedral was built in the early sixteenth century, so 1500 may refer to the colonial history of the city and the century in which European imperialism took hold of the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean in general.

collective memory from the attempted revisions demanded by Trujillo. Binding the restoration of the original name of the city, Santo Domingo, to the visual image of La Catedral, a well-known site in the colonial part of the city, further solidifies the important relationship between vernacular images and a sense of collective memory. The penciled-in script on the surface of the picture postcard explicitly links a significant physical symbol of Dominican history and cultural identity with the location's reclaimed designation, recovering both from Trujillo's attempts at the revision of collective memory.

Within domestic archives, vernacular photographs are often informally inscribed in a similar manner with names, locations, and dates to further connect an image to a specific person, place, or event. This form of writing, usually mere snippets of text, relies heavily on the photographs to transform their condensed syntax into meaningful signs. Language, writes Latino studies scholar Juan Flores, is "the supreme mnemonic medium, the vehicle for the transmission of memory," and important details would almost certainly be lost in the passing of generations and travels across borders without such annotations.[175] Conversely, I think that without the visual representations provided by the vernacular photographs, the writing on the reverse of the photo paper or on the pages of photo albums—a list of names, an abbreviated reference to a home address or city—becomes difficult to interpret as an integral part of collective memory. Although the informal captions scribbled on the paper backing of analogue images are quickly being replaced by the tags, captions, and keywords attached to digital photographs, they are still common enough to be considered another convention of vernacular photography in its material form. Handwriting and other marks on a photograph become another visual element of the image, as I will discuss through a set of vernacular photographs found in the Juan A. Paulino

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[175] Juan Flores, "Broken English Memories" in The Places of History: Regionalism Revisited in Latin America, ed. Doris Sommer (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 283.

Collection in the Dominican Studies Institute at the City University of New York. Like the conventions discussed above, the handwritten captions reveal a desire to conform to social and cultural expectations imposed on the collective memory of a family unit or group, which include remembering and sharing places, dates, and the names of those pictured within the photographs. Although the images and their handwritten notations represent personal memories, we recognize the impulse to informally record the names and dates of those in vernacular photographs. Through the recurring captions, often inscribed, reinscribed, and modified over time, "family albums can lose their dangerous ambiguities to become part of an 'infrastructure of popular memory,'" which, although a social and familial construction likely embedded with absences, works to "reinforce a sense of national and cultural identity."[176] The recognition of captions as a conventional practice in vernacular photography furthers the sense of affiliation with the images and connects them to the larger collective memory of a cultural group.

As an element of vernacular visual conventions, handwritten captions on a photograph are a critical part of the assembly and articulation of cultural identity and collective memory. In the context of the Dominican diaspora in the United States, vernacular photographs in circulation communicate collective memory across time and geographic distance. Through the written notes, captions, and other markings on the photographs, the diasporic domestic archive constructs familial and cultural narratives between the Dominican Republic and the United States. The discourse of vernacular photography, communicated through its visual conventions, is legible to Dominicans in both the United States and the Dominican Republic. According to historian Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, "even those Dominicans who do not actually migrate (or who migrate and

[176] Holland, 13.

never return) participate in a world of ideas and symbols shared across national boundaries."[177] These shared "ideas and symbols," visualized through the visual conventions and other elements of vernacular photography, are the basis of collective memory. A black-and-white photograph captioned *Asistentes al Bautizo de la Hija: Altagracia Concepción Paulino* (Attendees at the Baptism of a Daughter: Altagracia Concepción Paulino) (fig. 20), is a compelling example of the ways in which vernacular photographs and their handwritten annotations contribute to a sense of collective memory and identity in circulation between the Dominican Republic and its U.S. diaspora.[178] The photograph reveals a large group of people closely gathered together in a small, outdoor patio under a canopy of trees. Forming a tight half-circle, most of the well-dressed people pictured, attendees at the celebration of a baptism, lean forward or twist around in order to come into the sight of and face the camera's lens. A few subjects are seen in profile, either captured in conversation or glancing across the room; two younger girls in the foreground are pictured with their backs to the camera, making visual identification almost impossible. The top left-hand corner of the image was torn at some point and carefully repaired with cellophane tape, and the tear is now yellowing along the seams. The surface of the image has also been damaged and scrapes, stains, rents, and faded spots that efface a few areas, and the faces of some subjects are largely hidden by the damage.

While the image itself features many of the visual elements and subject matter typical of vernacular photography, the back of the photograph also reveals a wealth of information about the social and cultural expectations of such images. The reverse of *Asistentes al Bautizo* (fig. 21) features a detailed, handwritten list of all the attendees at the baptismal celebration. The lengthy

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[177] Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), xvi.
[178] Altagracia Concepción Paulino is the oldest daughter of Juan A. Paulino, in whose collection the photograph is archived at the Dominican Studies Institute, City University of New York, New York City.

caption records and enumerates the given names, nicknames, and familial roles of the guests as they appear in the image from left to right, differentiating between the seated and the standing to ensure correct identification. A short note jotted in the lower right-hand corner in the same handwriting also confirms the date and the occasion for the gathering. The rent on the front of the photograph is mirrored on the back, also patched with tape that has yellowed enough to partially obscure some of the text. Due to its age and the damage to the photograph, the text and the image are both required for the complete identification of the attendees, preserving the evidence of those who were present at this important social event. The documentation of all the attendees in the photograph at the baptismal celebration, done with such careful precision and attention to detail, reveals the close connection between the informal captions of vernacular photographs and the desire to articulate and preserve familial and, on a larger scale, collective cultural memory.

With its extensive handwritten captions, the photograph *Asistentes al Bautizo* also reveals another aspect of Hirsch's familial gaze. In vernacular family photographs there are actually multiple intersecting looks that position the subjects—family, friends, lovers, community members—in relation to one another, and, importantly, to various other external gazes, both in the past and in the present.[179] It is at this intersection of gazes that we participate as viewers, as we desire and impose a sense of affiliation with otherwise disparate vernacular images. The familial look is also "structured with *the need for* the look to be returned… the look of recognition secures one's own identity" within the collective memory of the family and cultural group represented.[180] The attendees at the baptism celebration position themselves in the

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[179] Hirsch, The Familial Gaze, xii and xvi.
[180] Kirsten Emiko McAllister, "A Story of Escape: Family Photographs from Japanese Canadian Internment Camps," in Locating Memory: Photographic Acts, eds. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 100. Emphasis original.

standard poses before the camera's lens in order to conform to the visual expectations of vernacular images, but they also eagerly display themselves for identification within the group photograph. The returned look of the familial gaze confirms the domestic relationships and one's own identity within the social group. The handwritten annotations on the reverse of the photograph function in a similar way, simultaneously validating familial relationships among the subjects through notes like "*Mercedita (Nieta de Mercedes Rosa)*" (Mercedita, Granddaughter of Mercedes Rosa), and reaffirming specific identities, as suggested by sobriquets like "*Pancho*," a familiar form of Francisco, and "*El Cabito*," the little end of a candle or a stub. Without the handwritten captions like these on vernacular photographs, such aspects of familial and collective memory would be lost within the domestic diasporic archive. Kuhn has remarked that while some aspects of identity are acknowledged as constructs, such as a playful nickname inscribed on the back of the photograph, one still has to live with "the very real consequences" of given identity markers and labels; "the identity conferred by family," and by social and cultural groups, are no exception.[181] The consequences of a nickname as an aspect of one's identity within a family or group are usually relatively benign, but the "the very real consequences" of identity politics within a diaspora community that Kuhn gestures toward resonate within the multiple intersecting looks of the familial gaze, across generations and geographic distance in the diaspora. As part of the returned look of recognition engendered by the familial gaze, informal captions written on vernacular photographs reveal the desire to articulate aspects of identity within the larger collective memory of the Dominican diaspora in the United States.

The carefully inscribed inventory of attendees at a baptismal celebration on a black-and-white photograph reveals the importance of informal captions on vernacular images in the articulation and preservation of collective memory. The list of partygoers' names, however, is

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[181] Kuhn, 1.

not the only text to consider on the back of *Asistentes al Bautizo*. The reverse of the image has been reinscribed at least twice since the initial notations were made: once with an "X" and the brief remark "*muerto*" next to Fabio Paulino's name, and again in the lower left-hand corner with the note "*Amigos Acepto Por Pura*" (Friends welcomed by Pura), written by Juan A. Paulino.[182] The double reinscription—an unknown person's memorial note and Paulino's later addendum—suggests that the captions on a vernacular photograph do not represent the final or authoritative articulation of collective memory. The domestic archive of vernacular photography is altered to account for significant changes like a death or transnational migration. The revision of textual captions indicates a sense of something initially missed, information or recollections added later that were required to complete the diasporic domestic archive and augment otherwise deficient areas in the collective memory. But not all of the absences in the collective memory of the Dominican diaspora in the United States are fully accounted for by handwritten captions or their subsequent revisions. The shifting politics of race as an aspect of identity in the collective memory of the Dominican Republic and its U.S. diaspora is one such absence, a lack that is difficult to discern in either the textual or visual elements of vernacular photographs. While it is almost impossible to discuss race in the Dominican Republic without immediately conjuring up its historically contentious relationship with Haiti, its neighbor on the island of Hispaniola, I concentrate here on the contrasting conception of racial identity experienced by the Dominican diaspora community in the United States.[183] As noted by anthropologist Juan Duany, "race is not

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[182] Pura Paulino is the wife of Juan A. Paulino. The handwriting of Juan Paulino was confirmed by comparison with other objects in the Juan A. Paulino Collection and in consultation with the Archives staff of the Dominican Studies Institute. Mr. Paulino made similar notations on several photographic objects shortly before their donation to the Dominican Studies Institute at the City University of New York, New York City.

[183] See also Ernesto Sagás, Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), which addresses the concept of *Antihaitiamismo* and racial politics in the Dominican Republic from the colonial period to the 1996 presidential elections, as well as Ginetta E.B. Candelario, Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), David Howard, Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic (Oxford: Signal Books, Limited,

a fixed essence, a concrete and objective entity, but rather a set of socially constructed meanings subject to change and contestation through power relations and social movements… [and] transnational migration often transforms the cultural definition of racial identity."[184] Indeed, migration to the United States requires a revision of racial identities for the Dominican diaspora community. In the same way that handwritten captions on the back of photographs require alteration after significant changes, aspects of cultural identity and thus collective memory are inevitably, if reluctantly, modified in the wake of transnational migration. Yet the changes to racial identity are only subtly, almost indiscernibly, revealed by vernacular photographs in circulation and thereby reflected in the collective memory of the Dominican diaspora in the United States.

Racial identity in the Dominican Republic is socially negotiated through a complex series of comparative markers including class status, physical traits, and cultural practices like religion. It is also intimately tied to a sense of national identity based on the historical circumstances of colonialism and slavery, as well as the traditionally contentious relationship with Haiti. Dominican racial identification occurs on a finely calibrated spectrum, with a plethora of different terms to describe slight variations in skin tone, hair texture, and hair and eye color. In general in the United States, on the other hand, racial categories are, quite literally, more black and white. Dominicans who migrate to the U.S. often experience a "cognitive dissonance regarding their racial identity."[185] For example, a Dominican who was considered *indio*, *mulato*, or *trigueño* in Santo Domingo might suddenly find himself described—and, perhaps, degradingly—as black on the streets of New York City. But vernacular photographs do not

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2001), and Kimberly Eison Simmons, Reconstructing Racial Identity and the African Past in the Dominican Republic (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009).

[184] Jorge Duany, "Reconstructing Racial Identity: Ethnicity, Color, and Class among Dominicans in the United States and Puerto Rico" in Perspectives on the Caribbean: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation, ed. Philip W. Scher (Malden, MA & Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2009), 95.

[185] Ibid., 103

necessarily portray the complex navigation of identity as it occurs in public places like busy urban street; rather, they are a private and highly oblique means of articulating racial identity in the transitional spaces of the Dominican diaspora. Two black-and-white photographs of Dominican-American Juan A. Paulino and members of his family reveal the difficulty in determining subtle revisions of cultural and personal identity through either the textual or visual elements of vernacular photographs (figs. 22 and 24). The two photographs are visually quite similar: both portray the same family group arranged close together in intimate interior settings, the smiling subjects positioned to face the camera and meet its gaze for the maximum vernacular effect. Juan Paulino, the family patriarch, occupies a central position in both images, standing protectively above or tightly embracing his children and spouse. The formal clothing and stylish hairdos, as well as the birthday cake in figure 24, suggest that the photographs were intended to capture the memories of special occasions in the life of the family. The backs of the photographs, dutifully yet concisely inscribed in the lower right-hand corners with the locations and dates of the snapshots, reveal that they were taken about five years apart, one in Santiago, Dominican Republic, and one in New York City (figs. 23 and 25). The photographs' adherence to the visual conventions of family photographs through the standard poses, arrangements, subjects, and captions readily evoke the strong sense of affiliation in a viewer. In addition, the circulation of vernacular photography, evidenced by the earlier image's movement between the Dominican Republic and the United States, encourages the construction of a collective diasporic memory. Yet an absence remains, in the photographs and in the diasporic archive: evidence of the shifting conceptions of Dominican racial identity after the experience of transnational migration.

The feeling of a common social and cultural experience and the ability to picture oneself into another family's snapshots are significant aspects in understanding vernacular images as a

formative element of the collective memory of a cultural group. But such photographs also conceal important absences in this diasporic archive, like the potential revision of identity caused by transnational migration. The lack of explicit references to the revision of racial identity within the images from both before and after the migration event belies the actual difficulties faced by the Dominican diaspora community in the United States. Vernacular images like the snapshots of Juan Paulino and his family are important not only because they visually represented collective memory in the context of the diaspora, but also because "they subtly challenged the ways in which photographs were used to underwrite discourses of racial and sexual domination" in other representations of Dominicans identity in the United States.[186] It is through their conformity to the standard visual conventions of family photography that these vernacular images work to undo or counteract otherwise negative racial discourses found in such representations. As the basis of collective memory, the images can also be a source of cultural pride and great pleasure for a diaspora community. In writing about representations of African-Americans, bell hooks has noted that, "the camera became in black life a political instrument, a way to resist misrepresentation as well as a means by which alternative images could be produced… producing images with the camera allowed black folks to combine image making in resistance struggle with a pleasurable experience."[187] Vernacular photography similarly empowered the Dominican diaspora community in the United States through the subtle resistance to negative racial discourses. As a form of visual self-representation, photography also functioned as a medium of self-examination for a community whose identity was in flux. Indeed, "the camera must have seemed a magical instrument to many of the displaced and marginalized groups trying

[186] Valerie Smith, "Photography, Narrative, and Ideology in *Suzanne, Suzanne* and *Finding Christina* by Camille Billops and James V. Hatch," in The Familial Gaze, ed. Marianne Hirsch (Dartmouth: University Press of New England, 1999), 85-86. Smith is paraphrasing bell hooks's essay, "In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life," in Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography, ed. Deborah Willis (New York: The New Press, 1994), 45-53.
[187] hooks, 49.

to create new destinies in the Americas;" vernacular photography was a means to visually track and communicate changes while simultaneously maintaining a strong connection to the homeland through collective memory.[188] The changes to racial identity experienced by the Dominican diaspora in the United States are almost indiscernible in vernacular photographs, but the presence of such images in the diasporic archive are nonetheless crucial to the construction and the potential revisions of cultural identity and collective memory.

The case of Juan A. Paulino and his collection in the Dominican Studies Institute (D.S.I.) Archives provides a diasporic counterpoint to Trujillo's blatant attempts to revise Dominican collective memory during his regime. A founding member of the Instituto Duartiano de New York, a civic and cultural club for Dominican-Americans, Paulino organized an effort to erect a monument to honor Juan Pablo Duarte y Diez, the founder of the Dominican Republic, in Manhattan.[189] While the Instituto Duartiano and Paulino's endeavors to commemorate Duarte are humble in comparison to Trujillo's massive self-aggrandizing project in the Dominican Republic, the desire to emphasize some aspects and revise other parts of collective memory is the same. Paulino was also the first person to donate his personal papers and photographs to the D.S.I. Archives, stating, "these documents are historical and must be preserved," which highlights his belief in the importance of vernacular images and other everyday records in telling the story of the life in the Dominican diaspora.[190] The familial collections of the Paulinos and

[188] Ibid., 48.

[189] To be clear, the Instituto Duartiano de New York was not founded as an anti-Trujillo organization; in fact, they initially sought to promote many of the same symbols of Dominican nationalism favored by Trujillo, including Juan Pablo Duarte, the flag, and the national anthem. President Joaquín Balaguer donated the statue of Duarte, revealing the close ties between the Instituto Duartiano and the Dominican regime. Eventually, however, confirming and promoting their ethnic identity in New York City took precedence over Dominican nationalism. As Hoffnung-Garskof points out, the symbols of *Dominicanidad* "were abstract enough to be equally useful to the project of marking ethnic projection in the everyday experiences of neighborhood life. The flag, the parades, the bus of Duarte were all quickly appropriated in New York as markers of ethnic difference." A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 130.

[190] Juan A. Paulino quoted in email correspondence with Dominican Studies Institute Assistant Archivist Nelson Santana.

other families inclusion in the D.S.I. Archives suggests a strong wish to contribute to the collective memory of Dominicans in the U.S. diaspora. Further, an institutionalized collection of cultural records like the D.S.I. promotes a positive feeling about Dominican identity, which, as discussed above, experiences a period of transition due to transnational migration.

Although an institutionalized collection, the D.S.I. Archives function much like the decentered domestic archive of the Dominican diaspora. The D.S.I. Archives maintain the vernacular photographs, albums, postcards, and other everyday artifacts of individuals and families from the diaspora community in much the same way that families preserve their own collections of images. The similar organizational structures of both archives reveals the importance of vernacular family photographs in forming collective memory. As visual studies scholar Kirsten Emiko McAllister argues, "the way the archive is organized around donations by families is a better indicator of both the continuity of … families and the continuity of the social practice of family photography" as a means to construct the collective memory of a particular cultural group.[191] In both archives, the vernacular photographs and the handwritten captions they bear offer a specific, if subjective, means for representing the past and constructing collective memory. Archives of vernacular photography, institutional or domestic, can reinforce the narratives that come to represent individual and collective memories, but they can also be fraught with absences and revisions that obscure some aspects of life in the diaspora. The visual conventions of vernacular photography, seen through repeated gestures, subjects, and settings, are crucially important for interpreting meaning in the images. It is through the handwritten inscriptions and their later revisions, the sequencing in photo albums or tagging in online sites, as well as within the perceptible absences, the shadows in the collection, that vernacular

[191] McAllister, 106.

photographs ultimately become an essential part of the shared *recollections*, the collective memory, of a cultural group.

Puerto Rico: Collective Memory and Diasporic Identity Aboard *La guagua aérea*

The collective memory of Puerto Rico in the twentieth century is inextricably bound up with its relationship with the United States. After the Spanish-American War at the turn of the century, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the U.S. as a colonial state. Residents of the island were granted U.S. citizenship status in 1917, allowing them access to government services and programs. Puerto Rico was formally established as a commonwealth in 1952, making the island a territory of the United States.[192] Puerto Rico is therefore subject to U.S. jurisdiction and the sovereignty of the U.S. president but lacks voting rights in the U.S. legislature. While the complicated and sometimes strained relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico began prior to its entrance into commonwealth status, the event does mark a significant period of transition or, rather, transitoriness in Puerto Rican society and culture. During the decades following World War II, large numbers of Puerto Ricans, particularly men, began immigrating to the United States. The local and U.S. governments promised higher wages for their labor, and the journey was expedited by their citizen status and the introduction of an inexpensive system of air transport between San Juan and New York City. These cheap, regular shuttle flights have since become known colloquially as *la guagua aérea*, the flying airbus.

The phenomenon of *la guagua aérea* and the circular migration of Puerto Ricans it has enabled have given rise to gently humorous but aphoristic sayings about the high percentage of *puertorriqueños* that are up in the air, in transit between New York and San Juan, at any given

[192] In Spanish, Puerto Rico is an *Estado Libre Asociado*, or an Associated Free State, which has a different connotation than commonwealth and is an important distinction for many Puerto Ricans.

moment. In a more critical mode, the playwright and intellectual Luis Rafael Sánchez uses the trope of the flying airbus to explore the nature of Puerto Rican identity and assimilation in relation to U.S. culture in his 1994 text La guagua aérea.[193] Further bolstering the cultural importance of the flying airbus, two of Sanchez's short stories, which also address themes of Puerto Rican identity and migration to the U.S., were adapted into a comical if caricatured Spanish language film directed by Luis Molina Casanova, also titled La guagua aérea.[194] Thus, *la guagua aérea* as an actual means of transport and as a floating concept have come to occupy a significant place in the collective memory of Puerto Ricans both on the island and in the U.S. diaspora. To travel the familiar path in the sky between San Juan and New York on *la guagua aérea* is to participate not just in a pattern of circular migration but also in the formation of collective memory and identity that is constantly in transit, thousands of feet above the ground, *routed* in-between home spaces rather than *rooted* in a specific sense of place.[195]

Puerto Rican collective memory is connected to the constant transitoriness compelled by the circular migration enabled via the *la guagua aérea*. Indeed, the very flight path of the airbus traces the geographic trajectories of collective diasporic memory. French historian Pierre Nora has argued that "history attaches itself to *events*," while "memory attaches itself to *sites*," which he calls *lieux de memoire* (places of memory).[196] In the case of Puerto Rico and its U.S. diaspora, collective memory and identity are intricately tied to a sense of mobility and motion, a site perpetually in transit rather than a fixed location. When *de allá* (over there) and *de acá* (here) are essentially part of the same shifting, interstitial place to which "memory attaches itself," there is

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[193] Luis Rafael Sánchez, La guagua aérea (University of Texas: Editorial Cultural, 1994). While ostensibly a collection of essays, this text is difficult to classify as it contains many elements of creative non-fiction.
[194] La guagua aérea, prod. and dir. by Luis Molina Casanova, 80 mins., Paramount Pictures, 1993.
[195] The connection made here between *routes* and *roots* owes much to the work of anthropologist James Clifford, particularly Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[196] Nora, 22. Emphasis mine.

an inevitable sense of rupture and dislocation in the collective memory. But despite the vulnerability and fragility of memory, the ease with which it might be lost in transition, or even in translation, Nora reminds us that it still "takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects," one of which is vernacular photography.[197] In spite of the shifting placelessness created by the phenomenon of *la guagua aérea*, memory takes the form of images and objects like vernacular photographs to make tangible and visible the conceptual, transient sense of collective memory.[198] Like the individuals in transit, however, the photographs also change in meaning and interpretive potential over the course of their geographic and temporal journey.

The first major wave of Puerto Rican immigrants began to arrive immediately after the end of the Second World War and prior to the initiation of Operation Bootstrap in 1948. This group was composed mainly of working class and rural Puerto Rican men. These immigrants were flown to the U.S. on decommissioned World War II military planes in search of better jobs and higher wages in the agricultural industry, most expecting to return to Puerto Rico within a few years (fig. 26). While not on the scale or frequency of the later *la guagua aérea*-style shuttle flights, these initial air transports created an immediate connection between the psychic experience of migration and the flight path from San Juan to the U.S. for Puerto Ricans. The black-and-white photograph of the labor migrants aboard the plane, likely taken by an administrator with the Offices of the Government of Puerto Rico in the United States (O.G.P.R.U.S.), shows the men seated in temporarily installed, lawn-chair style seats, rows of which extend all the way to the back of the bare metal plane body. The woven fabric chairs, insubstantial and provisional in comparison to the durable, industrialized interior of the plane, reflect the contingent and impermanent status of the migratory men who occupy them on their

[197] Ibid., 8-9.
[198] Ibid., 9

journey to the U.S. The black-and-white image makes visible the collective memory of transport that informs the cultural identity of Puerto Ricans moving in and out of the U.S. diaspora via airplane. This photograph also complicates the very notion of vernacular images as familial and deeply personal, or as strongly rooted in a particular home space, as it was probably taken by a staff member of O.G.P.R.U.S., the U.S. government organization responsible for the developing system of migration, rather than by a family member. Yet lacking other visual images to describe this moment in their cultural history, this photograph is an attempt to fill in crucial absences in the Puerto Rican diasporic archive of collective memory. The photograph reflects the shifting nature of vernacular photography as a discursive visual formation, one that tracks the migratory paths of Puerto Ricans traveling on *la guagua aérea*. Where is the actual home space, here or there, if continual migration and movement is the model? Found in an archive rather than a family photo album, the photograph replicates the system of migration in the mid-twentieth century. Further, the largely impersonal, government-made image standing in for a family photo reinforces the idea that the Puerto Rican collective memory is doubly diasporic and routed in the spaces in-between—and high above—the island and the U.S.

In stark contrast to the mass air transport of the working class and rural Puerto Rican men migrating for agricultural work, smaller numbers of more prosperous Puerto Ricans also began to travel to the United States in the mid-twentieth century.[199] Unlike the seasonally migratory agricultural workers, many settled permanently in urban areas of New York, New Jersey, and Chicago. These immigrants, more affluent and with higher expectations for comfortable travel, typically made the journey on well-appointed commercial aircraft. A forerunner of the daily

[199] The pattern of Puerto Rican migration is the reverse of that from Cuba and the Dominican Republic, in which larger numbers of affluent, professional, and educated Cuban and Dominicans left in the mid-twentieth century, followed later by waves of less skilled and less prosperous workers. Presentation by Silvia Pedraza, "Assimilation or Transnationalism? Evidence from the Latino National Survey 2006," at the *Cuba Futures: Past & Present Conference*, March 31 to April 2, 2011, CUNY Graduate Center, New York City, New York.

shuttle flights that became *la guagua aérea*, newly established Waterman Airlines ran regular flights from La Isla Grande Airport in San Juan to New York City in 1946 (figs. 27 and 28).[200] The thickly curtained windows, sturdy tray tables, and plush upholstered seats of these airplanes, as well as the light sandwich lunch and the amusements like solitaire enjoyed by the passengers, speak to a very different form of air travel—and a different type of traveler. More like the interior of a conventional home than a stopgap seating arrangement, the Waterman Airlines planes and the later shuttle services indicated the sense of permanence for these migratory flights. Despite the drastic differences in class and status, these photographs also reiterate the centrality of the flight from Puerto Rico to the United States in the formation of the diasporic collective memory. The collective memory that adheres to the flight path between locations, however, is still subject to an attendant sense of rupture, fracture, and dislocation. According to Latino studies scholar Juan Flores, "to attend to the 'break' that migration has meant in Puerto Rican history, it is necessary to remember the whole national project from the perspectives of the breaking-point itself, from aboard the *guagua aérea*, the proverbial 'airbus.'"[201] The 'break' erupting from *la guagua aérea* flights that Flores refers to is the sense of absent presence created by over a half-century of migration and the immense diaspora population. Although burdened with ruptures and breakages, the flight on *la guagua aérea* functions as the transitory site to which Puerto Rican collective memory adheres and is thereby made concrete. The flight is the interstitial space between *de allá* and *de acá* that informs cultural identity in both Puerto Rico and its U.S. diasporas.

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[200] "Waterman Airlines Lockheed 18-56 Lodestar NC58360," http://www.edcoatescollection.com/ac3/Airline/Waterman%20Airlines%20Lockheed%20Lodestar.html (accessed February 2, 2012).

[201] Juan Flores, From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 51.

As sites of collective memory for those who live in the Spanish Caribbean diasporas, vernacular photographs often serve to "shrink the distance the migrants have traveled. Photographs of friends and relatives—either deceased or left behind—weave the past and faraway home places into the imaginations of their children."[202] While the phenomenon of *la guagua aérea* make Puerto Rico and the U.S. psychically and emotionally closer than they might otherwise appear on the map, the sense of rupture and dislocation created by distance and diaspora is still discernable. The black-and-white photograph of a woman holding a small child waiting to board a flight from San Juan to New York in 1946 clearly expresses the affective impact and emotional tenor these sentiments (fig. 29). Taken from below, again by an O.G.P.R.U.S. staff member, the snapshot captures a well-dressed woman holding a toddler. They wait in line on the portable stairs to the aircraft, the guardrail and pyramid shape of their fellow passengers leading up to the horizontal line of the airplane behind and above them. She stares into the space to the left of the photograph's frame, an expression of worry and anxiety on her face as she clutches the child. Perhaps she is considering the distance she is about to travel, the sense of placelessness she might feel while flying between her old home and her new, or what she might do once she arrives in New York. About to travel the migratory path that will become the route of *la guagua aérea*, the woman and the child in the photograph will participate in the formation of Puerto Rico collective memory that is dependent on that specific geographic trajectory, the in-between space. Even if we cannot discern precisely what she is thinking, it seems clear she will "weave the past and faraway home places" into the sense of collective memory and cultural identity that she conveys to the child she holds in her arms. This collective memory, which adheres to the placeless site of *la guagua aérea's* flight path, is *la memoria rota* (broken memory). Despite the absences and dislocations it creates, it is the site "not merely of

[202] Valerie Smith, 86.

exclusion and fragmentation, but also of new meanings and identity… it attest[s] to the *act of memory*" at the break itself, aboard *la guagua aérea.*[203]

In this chapter, I argued that vernacular photographs are the ordinary images of everyday life through which the collective memory of a cultural group is developed and disseminated. Adherence to the visual conventions of vernacular photography, including the repeated subjects, locations, poses, and gestures, reflect and confirm familial conformity to standardized social roles and communal practices. There is a strong desire to follow the conventions of vernacular photography in order to reproduce and reaffirm a specific sense of collective cultural memory. Despite the fact that vernacular photographs depict the memories of an individual or family, they also comprise a larger, decentralized archive of images stored all around the world and online. The domestic archive of vernacular photography is regularly, if unofficially, consulted in the formation of a family's and a cultural group's collective memory. Collective composition is a delicate task that joins memory and photography, two highly subjective forms of representation; this makes collective memory prone to frequent revision and rewriting, depending on the needs and desires of the particular cultural group.

In the context of the Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican diasporas in the United States, vernacular photography functions as an unfixed representation of memory and as a strategy for articulating cultural identity. The conjoining of memory and visual images is particularly urgent for these contemporary diaspora communities, in which vernacular photography in circulation serves as a means of representing collective memory and cultural identity within the transitional spaces of the diaspora. But the geographic, psychic, historical, and emotional distances of diaspora can also erode the indexical relationship between the photographic images and the

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[203] Flores, From Bomba to Hip Hop, 54.

realities of the worlds they represent, producing absences and other irregularities in diasporic collective memory. As sociologist Iwona Irwin-Zarecka argues, distance, particularly in geographic and temporal terms, "offers great impetus to creative memory work, and especially to mythical production."[204] This "creative memory work," often reliant upon the shadowy, nostalgia-tinged recollections of specific segments of the diasporic community, reinforces a revised sense of collective memory that does not always adhere to the lived realities. Absences *from* the collective diasporic memory, Irwin-Zarecka notes, are "just as socially constructed as memory itself, and with an equally strong intervention of… ideologically grounded claims to truth."[205] The elements that are elided, excluded, or erased—the absences from collective memory—can reveal an immense amount of information about the ways in which distinct communities in the United States experience, remember, and recount the unique experience of life in the diaspora. Indeed, it is worth pointing out, as Batchen does, that vernacular photography itself, as a group of images with a particular historiography, is not just about what is *included*. Rather, it is "the *absent presence* that determines its medium's historical and physical identity; it is that thing that decides what proper photography is not. To truly understand photography and its history, therefore, one must closely attend to what that history has chosen to repress."[206] Likewise, it is through an interrogation of the absences in the domestic archives of the Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican communities in the United States that we can begin to understand the importance of vernacular photography in visualizing collective diasporic memory.

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[204] Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 129.
[205] Ibid., 116.
[206] Batchen, Each Wild Idea, 59. Emphasis mine.

Chapter Three

Desiring Bodies of Memory: The Fantasy of Embodiment In the Spanish Caribbean Photographic Imaginary

At first, I had no idea what we were expected to do. Norwegian artist Crispin Gurholt's performance piece in the Eleventh Havana Biennial, *Live Photo #23: Havana, Cuba* (2012), was installed in the first floor of an early twentieth-century stone building on Calle Línea in the Vedado neighborhood. It was located just a few blocks down from the *casa particular* in which I was staying, and on a previous research trip to Havana I had walked past the building almost every day. I assumed it was a multi-family residence, repurposed like many similar Spanish colonial style buildings in the city. The Lada, a Soviet-made automobile imported to Cuba, parked in the driveway, the water collection barrels along the walls and on the roof, and a rotating display of laundry drying in the courtyard of the building were common signs of domesticity in the largely residential neighborhood.[207] But at the official *Bienal de La Habana* event for Gurholt's *Live Photo #23: Havana, Cuba*, the building had been converted from a living space into living tableau. Arriving at the event, I was ushered into the house with other attendees. Standing in the hallway of the building on Línea, we stared into a sparsely furnished room occupied by two silent, motionless people, a woman and a man. In the next room, a bottle of Havana Club rum and a small glass, wooden cigar boxes, the green cap of a *revolucionario*, and a faded Cuban flag in a triangle fold had been arranged under a black-and-white photograph of el Che (fig. 30). Outside the building, the Lada had been temporarily replaced by a tan-and-brown 1950s Chevy, another universal visual sign of Cuba to outsiders and tourists, like those of

[207] After May 19, 2012, the official end of *Live Photo #23: Havana, Cuba* at the Eleventh Havana Biennial, the Lada was once again parked next to the building, suggesting it was, in fact, a multi-family home that had been rented out for Gurholt's performance piece.

us attending the Havana Biennial event (fig. 31, lower right hand corner). Like the two older people posed inside, a young man stood statue-like on a side veranda, scowling and clutching a can of spray paint, and a young woman sat alone in the back seat of the Chevy, staring wistfully out the vehicle's window. Both of these figures were also silent and perfectly still despite the stream of viewers moving around and gazing at them. Transparent Plexiglas dividers kept us, the Havana Biennial visitors, from moving among the immobile figures and the all-purpose symbols of Cuban culture; we could only look at, not participate in, the carefully arranged displays. I glanced around at the other visitors. Everyone else knew precisely what to do to properly experience Gurholt's piece: they had taken out their cameras and were enthusiastically documenting the scene and the bodies before them.

The implied narrative drama of these highly constructed scenes are typical of Gurholt's *Live Photo* series, an on-going project that spans more than a decade. The viewers' impulse to photograph the tableaux Gurholt assembles—to create lasting visual documents of their own—is built into the experience of his performance pieces.[208] My own initial confusion about how to react to the piece was produced by a general wariness of exploitative tourist photography and its clichéd visual signs (el Che, rum, cigars, old American cars) in the Cuban context.[209] But I quickly understood: the act of photographing on the part of the viewers is central to the meaning and execution of the performance as an embodied event. In fact, the experience and description

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[208] Selene Wendt, "Perfectly Real Fiction," in Crispin Gurholt: Live Photo Volume II, Selene Wendt, ed. (Milan, Italy: Skira Editore, S.A., 2009), 20-33.

[209] Art historian Benjamin Buchloh has also suggested that, as a visual medium, photography automatically reduces the subject of an image to a spectacle and fetish. Thomas Struth: Portraits (New York: Marian Goodman Gallery, 1990), 29-40. For more on the problematics of tourist photography in Cuba, see José Quiroga, Cuban Palimpsests (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). For more on the conjoined voyeuristic qualities of tourism and photography, see Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Picador USA/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973/2001) and Regarding the Pain of Others (New York: Picador USA/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002).
About the importance of the interactions between the viewers and figures in Gurholt's *Live Photo* series, art historian and curator Selene Wendt notes, "although an absolute barrier exists between the models and the audience, as spectators we are also active participants in the overall experience. In its entirety, the event is a happening which includes everything that takes place on both sides of the window." Wendt, "Perfectly Real Fiction," 22.

of *Live Photo #23: Havana, Cuba* illuminates the idea that photography holds the promise that memory and identity are embodied practices, and that through this visual medium we might give collective memory a body it might not otherwise have. Photography offers visual signs of the actions of the body; the camera seems to replicate and capture the objects of the embodied gaze. The hired Cubans being photographed as part of the performance stand in for various metaphorical bodies—cultural, social, architectural, geopolitical—as well as for affective, intangible, yet notionally embodied concepts like memory and identity. As Caribbean art historian Krista A. Thompson argues, "photography is a technology through which memory can be materialized and stored outside the body, and in the process transmitted across generations over time."[210] While Thompson is discussing historical photographs of slavery—or, rather, the "archival absence" of such images from the Anglophone Caribbean—her statement is also suggestive of the way in which photography as an aesthetic and embodied practice allows for the possibility of visually representing the collective memory and cultural identity of a group. In *Live Photo #23*, the bodies of the models stand in for a certain kind of memory of Cuba, albeit filtered through Gurholt's outside interpretation. The staged scene creates a photographic imaginary and gives memory a body as a visual image through which the foreign viewers at the Havana Biennial can attempt to identify with the bodies of their Cuban hosts.

I describe Gurholt's photo-performance piece in Havana here to illustrate a particular type of photographic imaginary. Within *Live Photo #23*, the psychoanalytic identification through a visual image occurred across disparate cultural and social contexts: between the Biennial exhibition viewers and the motionless hired models, who embodied, within the constructed scene, a particular vision of Cuba, again photographed—imaged—by the viewers.

[210] Krista A. Thompson, "The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies," Representations 113, 1 (Winter 2011): 39-71.

The Spanish Caribbean as a socio-cultural space also contains within it a similar sense of self and other. Created by the separation of home and diaspora, the fragmented body of the Spanish Caribbean requires identification across geographic and psychic distance; photography holds out the possibility, however precarious and fragile, of visually materializing memory through a body. This chapter investigates contemporary art production utilizing photographic processes as a strategy for visually representing and embodying collective memory from *within* the fractured, diasporized spaces of the Spanish Caribbean. The artworks I consider all grapple with the situation of fracture, displacement, deterritorialization, and disorder caused by mass migration (for various reasons) between the Spanish Caribbean and the United States in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The contemporary Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican photography-based art objects and practices I examine desire the materialization of collective memory as a coherent body among and across the fragmented spaces of diaspora in the United States. By using photography, with its connection to the real, the works seek to substantiate a collective memory through the various bodies—actual human bodies, as well as urban, geographic, architectural and metaphorical bodies—that appear within the images. Yet the cohesion is ultimately undone by the artists' own aesthetic strategies, which serve to emphasize the fracture and fragmentation in the socio-cultural imaginary that are caused by the situation of diaspora. Though my ideas are informed by Lacan's conception of the imaginary order and other embodied concepts from psychoanalytic theory, I utilize a broader definition of the imaginary which gestures to the larger visual discourses that circulate between concrete geographic spaces in tandem with the bodies and photographic art objects under examination.[211] A definition of the

[211] Following Freud, Lacan consistently describes the body and the psyche as disconnected. According to Kaja Silverman, "Lacan insists even more emphatically upon a disjunctive relationship between the body and the psyche; identity and desire are inaugurated only through a series of ruptures or splittings which place the subject at en ever-

"socio-cultural imaginary" encompasses "the myths, narratives, discourses, or fictions that constitute the foundational symbols" of multifaceted Spanish Caribbean identity and collective memory, and which are brought to the surface through artworks and visual culture.[212] The socio-cultural imaginary is a psychic space that connects people in spite of an excess of geography, in spite of the physically and socially fracturing experience of diaspora.

This chapter also examines the idea of photography and photographic vision as inherently embodied practices. These practices, I argue, expose the performance of the past in the present in contemporary Spanish Caribbean art photography. Recent photography-based series by Cuban Carlos Garaicoa, Dominican Raquel Paiewonsky, and Puerto Rican Karlo Andrei Ibarra each suggest the ways in which contemporary aesthetic representations can embody a sense of collective memory and cultural identity, but also reveal the sense of fracture and fragmentation created by the situation of diaspora. Regardless of whether professional contemporary artists are living and working within the Spanish Caribbean (such as those discussed in this chapter) or in the United States (as examined in the next chapter), their artwork manages to circulate internationally through the global art market. The means of circulation for artworks between the Spanish Caribbean and the United States in particular is achieved through their inclusion in international biennials and art fairs, representation by contemporary art galleries, the organization of group and solo art exhibitions in which the works are featured, and their acquisition by art museums and collectors.

The ability of the artists themselves to circulate depends on their status as citizens of distinct Spanish Caribbean nations. Garaicoa, for example, is one of a small number of Cubans currently allowed to travel abroad frequently in order to participate in exhibitions, collaborate as

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greater remove from need and other indices of the strictly biological." Threshold of the Visible World (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 9.

[212] Alan West, Tropics of History: Cuba Imagined (Wesport, CT & London: Bergin & Garvey, 1997), 4.

an individual with foreign commercial entities, and create and sell his art outside of Cuba.[213] Thus, Garaicoa and his photographic artworks circulate between Cuba and the United States (and elsewhere) with greater regularity and ease than other Cuban citizens.[214] All three Spanish Caribbean states—Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico—have significant diaspora populations in the United States, indicating that bodies, ideas, images circulate among these geographic and socio-cultural spaces. The physically fragmented, fractured, and separated forms featured in the photographic works examined in this chapter stand in for the body politic and collective memory of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico and their geographic disconnections from their diaspora populations in the United States.

Bodies and Memory in the Spanish Caribbean Imaginary

Within the diverse range of contemporary art practices, the idea and definition of photography has moved beyond previously established limits of what the medium might be or look like.[215] Similarly, the boundaries of what is termed the contemporary Spanish Caribbean are constantly shifting and expanding to include the spaces of shared identity and collective memory, diasporic spaces that may not be situated within the strict geographic confines of the Caribbean basin as realized on a regional map. The ideas crucial for analyzing photography in an expanded epistemological sense can be productively revised through a parallel connection to the Spanish

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[213] Carlos Garaicoa has worked with the Spanish company Factum Arte to fabricate artworks using imaging and laser technologies not available in Cuba, and he is represented by a number of galleries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe and his work is in museum collections in the United States as well. See http://www.carlosgaraicoa.com/.

[214] The case of Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez illustrates the deep disparity in travel allowances granted by the island's government. Denied permission to travel for several years despite repeated requests, Sánchez was finally granted an exit visa in 2013. She returned to Cuba after approximately three months abroad. See http://www.lageneraciony.com and @yoanisanchez on Twitter.

[215] Further revisions and expansions to theorized scopic regimes of Caribbean photography might be made through a conception of the Baroque within the Caribbean and its relation to Martin Jay's competing regimes of modernity, the mobilization of the literary concepts of *lo real maravilloso* and *el neobarroco*, or through an examination the political and social traumas that have occurred within the Caribbean through Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory.

Caribbean as an expanded yet fragmented geographic *and* psychic space. Photography is also increasingly theorized through its deeply affective relationship to intangible ideas like identity, memory, history, and desire; these subjective perceptions are frequently utilized in recent analyses of the phenomenon of diaspora as well. In this chapter I interrogate photography's utility and even indispensability as a means of writing cultural identity and collective memory in the contemporary Spanish Caribbean, even as the situation of migration and diaspora complicates the possibilities of shared cultural or national subjectivities like memory and identity. The conceptual connections between contemporary photography and the Spanish Caribbean provide an entry point for exploring the medium as an embodied technology, and as a tenuous means of granting a body to collective memory through aesthetic representations.

As a part of their larger socio-cultural imaginaries, contemporary photography-based art from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico forms a crucial component of collective memory and cultural identity. In order to conceptualize an embodied collective memory within the socio-cultural imaginary as represented in contemporary art photography, I turn to ideas from psychoanalytic theory. French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's theorization of the gaze addresses notions of photography as an embodied ocular practice and as a means of analyzing individual and cultural subjectivities. The embodied gaze is crucial to an understanding of photography as an expanded visual form, and can be productively extended to include a consideration of contemporary Spanish Caribbean art photography as an expression of—and as an image-making technology that shapes—the collective memory and cultural identity of fragmented and diasporized social groups. The gaze is the uncanny sense that the object of our look is looking back at us of its own will; however, this theory also posits a schismatic relationship between

sight and the gaze as a "misrecognition" of the subject within the self.[216] When connected to the gaze, the misrecognition simultaneously structures the relation of self *as* other and self *and* other—an inherently fragmented subject, like the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas. Lacan further describes his conception of the gaze through a photographic metaphor: "It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which… I am *photo-graphed*."[217] His play on the idea of writing the self with light strongly implicates the visual technology of the camera in his formulation of the gaze as part of the self and further connects his work to photography theory. But Lacan's statement also refers to the *embodiment* of light, and of the self, through the gaze. The self is "photo-graphed," written and embodied through the same light required to create a photograph through the gaze of the camera's lens. Elsewhere, Lacan elaborates on the connection between embodiment and the self through the metaphor of the "fragmented body."[218] The image concept of the fragmented or dismembered body also corresponds to the theorization of the Spanish Caribbean as a fragmented, dispersed geographic and cultural location that encompasses the U.S. diasporas. Lacan's theorization of the gaze allows for an expansion of the psychic place of the Spanish Caribbean to include its diasporas in the United States, a kind of geo-cultural self *as* other.

The series of photographs by Carlos Garaicoa, Raquel Paiewonsky, and Karlo Andrei Ibarra that I consider in this chapter examine this sense of self as other created by the contemporary situation of diaspora. Positioned within the home space, configured as the self, these artists must grapple with the misrecognition and identification of the diasporic other as part

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[216] Jacques Lacan, "The Gaze as *petit objet a*" (1973), The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981), 73.
[217] Lacan, "What is a Picture?" (1964), The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, 106. Emphasis mine.
[218] Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience" (1949), Écrits: A Selection, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977), 4.

of the self. Importantly, the very form of their aesthetic projects—unified series comprised of individual photographs—emphasizes the fragmented, divided nature of the self. Their photographs seek an understanding of the self as an embodied, external, specular image or *imago* (or, perhaps, the self as a photograph). This understanding occurs at a remove from the self, through what theorist Kaja Silverman calls identity-at-a-distance.[219] Identity-at-a-distance is the condition or quality of understanding one's identity at a remove from the embodied self: "such an identity is, of course, inimical to the very concept implied by that word, which literally means 'the condition or quality of being the same.' Identity-at-a-distance entails precisely the opposite state of affairs—the condition or quality of being 'other.'"[220] Silverman argues that we simultaneously idealize and identify with the subjects—the bodies, really—"which we would otherwise reject" as abject and outside our cultural "ideality."[221] Silverman usefully extends Lacan's theory of the gaze by connecting identity-at-a-distance to his work on the "screen" as an external representation of the self and the subsequent necessity of the "unlocalizable gaze," usually figured as a camera, for self-identification with the screen image.[222] To consider diasporic identity-at-a-distance from this perspective would productively disrupt the concept of misrecognition of the Caribbean self. Thus, Lacan's theory of the gaze and Silverman's desire for identity-at-a-distance can be mobilized in the context of the Spanish Caribbean to understand or relate to its diasporic populations as a self at a remove—or the self as image, self as photograph. The Spanish Caribbean can be considered a cultural entity or identity that also encompasses within it a geographically separate yet relational diasporic population, a part of the self as other. This identification across the distance of diaspora is enabled through the shared

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[219] Silverman, 15.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid., 4.
[222] Ibid., 18.

socio-cultural imaginary and is visualized through the photographic images. The Spanish Caribbean artists whose work I discuss in this chapter attempt to use photography to give collective memory a coherent body that it might not otherwise have, yet these affective efforts are ultimately undone by the artists' own aesthetic strategies, which focus on the fracture and fragmentation of diaspora.

Embodying the Ruins of Havana: Carlos Garaicoa's Photographs on Bone

The work of Cuban visual artist Carlos Garaicoa (b. Havana, Cuba, 1967) frequently addresses architecture and urban topographies, both real and imagined. Working across and mixing a range of representational forms, including photography, painting, architectural drafting, *trompe l'oeil* installation, mixed media sculpture, and video, Garaicoa defies easy categorization through a single aesthetic medium. He explores even the limits of photography as an image-making technology, creating photographs with added elements in wire, string, pushpins, and drawing; images printed on metal, bone, or stucco; three-dimensional sculptures made from photographs carved with a laser; and tapestries woven from digital images. While many of his works feature fantastic, idealized cityscapes rendered in elaborate and capricious detail, several of Garaicoa's series and installations attend more closely to the very real collapse of utopia and its architectures as a part of everyday life in contemporary Cuba. Garaicoa's art has repeatedly utilized and scrutinized the conditions of the built environment in which he lives and works, among the many dilapidated and crumbling buildings in contemporary Havana. The ruined buildings of the city are the visible manifestation of the economic deprivations suffered since the Cuban Revolution. The scarcity and poverty was felt most acutely during the *Período especial en tiempo de paz* (Special Period in a Time of Peace), declared by Fidel Castro in 1990 after the

dissolution of the Soviet Union, and from which it is only now beginning to recover.[223] Although also a symptom of the general lack of resources since the implementation of the United States' total trade embargo against Cuba in February 1962, the severe shortages of imported fuel, basic provisions, and construction materials from the former Soviet Union during the Special Period exacerbated the decline of Havana's architecture and infrastructure. For Garaicoa, however, the architectural ruins are more than a metonymy for the extended social crisis in Cuba. His many different aesthetic representations of the city's collapsing structures suggest that the urban topography is a form of memory, however incomplete and fragmentary. In particular, Garaicoa's recent series of photographs printed on thin slabs of bone represent the crumbling infrastructure of Havana as a metaphor for the deterioration of the social body of Cuba and reveals an embodied but fragmented sense of collective memory.

The circumstances of the Special Period have a strong influence on contemporary Cuban visual art and intellectual life. Garaicoa is a member of the generation of Cuban artists who were trained at the Instituto Superior de Arte (I.S.A) and began their careers in late 1980s and early 1990s, just as the slow starvations of the Special Period began to take effect.[224] Although Garaicoa and other visual artists have benefited immensely from the international exposure of the Havana Biennials, inaugurated in 1984 and organized by the Cuban government's Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wilfredo Lam, the hardships of the Special Period still reverberated through the social and cultural institutions of Cuba. Writers, filmmakers, and artists from this

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[223] The end of the Soviet Union and the subsequent withdrawal of its economic and material support from other socialist states around the globe was especially problematic for Cuba, causing serve shortages of fuel and food and a general economic depression.

[224] Garaicoa attended the I.S.A. from 1989 to 1994, after studying thermodynamic engineering at the Instituto Técnico Hermanos Gómez. http://www.carlosgaraicoa.com/ (accessed November 12, 2012). I initially resisted the art-historical practice of grouping artists from Cuba into successive generations. However, conversations with Professor Guillermina De Ferrari and fellow graduate students persuaded me that this type of categorization is produced and reinforced by Cuban writers and artists themselves. Further, prominent art historians, curators, and critics of Cuban art including Rachel Weiss and Gerardo Mosquera have followed this generational organizational and narrative strategy in recounting the history of Cuban contemporary art.

generation produced work that subtly—or explicitly—addressed the deteriorating conditions and the deprivations of the situation, as well as the erosion of the utopian ideals of the Revolution. Notably, several of the writers and artists who have openly depicted the social and physical conditions of the Special Period have been censored by or expelled from the Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists), and their work has been banned on the island. For example, essayist, poet, novelist, and "ruinologist" Antonio José Ponte writes extensively about the deterioration of the city of Havana and the misery of the Special Period; to avoid government censorship of his work, he publishes in the United States, Spain, and Mexico rather than in Cuba.[225] The inability to procure essential goods and the professional danger in critically assessing the problems of the Special Period weighed heavily on aesthetic production in Cuba. Garaicoa himself recognized the pervasive sense of doom that clouded the psyches of Cuban citizens plunged into the hungry days of the Special Period, stating in an interview, "I belong to a defeated generation."[226] In addition to the daily defeats rendered by the social conditions of the post-Soviet period, larger, more public tragedies also informed the work of Garaicoa and his I.S.A. cohort. This generation of Cuban visual artists, which includes Kcho (Alexis Leyva Machado), Manuel Piña, Sandra Ramos, Tania Bruguera, and Los Carpinteros, also witnessed the traumatic mass exodus from Cuba in the 1990s, known as the Balsero Crisis, which had been foreshadowed by the chaos of the Mariel Boatlift in 1980.[227]

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[225] Esther Katheryn Whitfield, Cuban Currency: The Dollar and Special Period Fiction (University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 14. While several cultural studies scholars have suggested that Ponte was expelled from U.N.E.A.C. in 2003, others like José Quiroga state that Ponte was only threatened with expulsion, saved by the succor of his colleagues (Cuban Palimpsests, 229).

[226] Rachel Weiss, To and from Utopia in the New Cuban Art (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 174.

[227] The term *balsero* refers to people who attempt to leave Cuba on constructed rafts or modified boats. Curator Okwui Enwezor states that the pedagogy and curriculum of the I.S.A. the government funded art school, exposure to the "counter-hegemonic curatorial logic" of the Havana Biennales, and the Mariel Boatlift trauma form the "aesthetic foundations" of Cuban art of the 1980s and 1990s. "Between Apparatus and Subjectivity: Carlos Garaicoa's Post-Utopian Architecture," in Carlos Garaicoa: Overlapping (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 17.

These intertwined tragedies, the Special Period and the Balsero Crisis, deeply inform the visual art produced by Garaicoa and his generation.

Several Cuban artists from Garaicoa's generation were featured prominently in the Fifth Havana Biennial in 1994, often referred to as the *Balsero Bienal*. The Fifth Biennial earned this designation both because the dramatic escalation of the Balsero Crisis coincided with the month-long run of the Biennial exhibitions and because the event was dominated by Cuban artworks that utilized the iconography of illegal migration.[228] Imagery of suitcases, of rafts and boats, of bodies leaping into or submerged in the salty sea, and of the rocky shoreline of Cojímar, a popular embarkation point east of Havana, could be found throughout the arched alcoves of the Fortaleza de la Cabaña, the main Biennial exhibition site, and in the many improvised and formal gallery spaces around the city. Many Cuban visual artists from Garaicoa's generation continue to reference the iconography of migration by sea, suggesting the enduring impact of the Balsero Crisis and illegal migration on aesthetic production and popular consciousness. Kcho in particular has consistently deployed the symbol of the wooden boat in his crowded sculptural installations to reference the collective memory of the Mariel Boatlift in particular and the continuous illegal emigration of Cubans across the Straits of Florida on improvised rafts in general. Similarly, Manuel Piña's series of photographs *Aguas Baldías* (*Water Wastelands*) from 1992 to 1994 are each intently focused on an exterior space along the far off horizon, somewhere in the sea just beyond the boundaries and the barriers of life in Cuba. Garaicoa, in contrast, grapples with the related Cuban misfortunes of the Special Period and the migration crisis through his representations of the ruins of Havana. In the photographs on bone, crumbling and collapsed buildings are a visual analogy for the exposed social body of Cuba, decimated by

[228] Weiss, 128.

hunger and migration, fractured through diaspora, yet connected by a set of shared memories and a cultural identity.

Despite the transfixed outward gaze of many Cuban artists and citizens, coping with the intertwined catastrophes of the Special Period and dangerous mass exodus of the Balsero Crisis, Garaicoa's artwork remained interior and inward-looking, interested in the sometimes slower, less immediate tragedy of the creeping deterioration and desertion of Havana. Garaicoa addresses the crises of his generation by embracing the realities of the urban landscape of Havana. Rather than the floating, itinerant, and potentially seaworthy works of his I.S.A. group, Garaicoa concentrates on the fixed forms and assumed stasis of the urban built environment, reflecting an internalization of the migration phenomenon and an acceptance of "a narrowed range of emotions, inexorably tied to decay and abandonment."[229] The effects of neglect, overcrowding, illegal additions like *barbacoas*, the violent collapses of the *derrumbes*, and the inability to conduct repairs due to lack to funds and materials wear down the social body and the architecture alike.[230] More than simply the built environment through which bodies live and move, Garaicoa declares that the architecture of a city "speaks about people, their needs, their suffering and hope, their loss of faith, their future, and individual and collective memories."[231] I argue that the photographs on bone do not just *speak about* the needs, suffering, and memory; in Garaicoa's images, the ruins of the city of Havana *embody* these feelings, and embody the collective memory of Cuba, both on the island in the diaspora. The photographic embodiment of urban spaces is a strategy that Garaicoa has used frequently. Drawing on similar ideas yet

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[229] Ibid., 181.

[230] A *barbacoa* is an improvised loft or half-floor added to a Cuban family's apartment to provide more space for sleeping and storage. These illegal structures often add considerable stress to the already compromised buildings. *Derrumbe* is the Cuban term for the violent collapse of a poorly maintained structure, often during a rainstorm. *Derrumbes* are sudden and usually fatal for the people living inside the buildings.

[231] Carlos Garaicoa, quoted in "Exclusive Interview: Carlos Garaicoa," http://blog.uprising-art.com/tag/11e-biennale/page/2/ (accessed September 11, 2012).

achieved through different visual strategies, Garaicoa's untitled series of small photographs printed on bone cleverly and subtly reveals the embodiment of Havana and the collective memory of Cuba. In signifying the crises of the Special Period, mass migration, and the fractures of diaspora, the buildings in Garaicoa's photographs form a lived topography of Cuban collective memory, which, over time, becomes as incomplete and fragmented as the ruins themselves. The photographs enable the acceptance of an identity-at-a-distance, the recognition of the embodied self as the diasporic other. Through the small, delicate photographic representations of Havana's architecture, the specialized printing material and technique, and the subtle connections to the declining human body, Garaicoa represents the ruined buildings as embodied forms that, like collective memory, are also fragmented and incomplete.

The ruins of Havana remain a problematically picturesque symbol of Cuba's continuing struggle with underdevelopment and a severe lack of resources. As I argued in the first chapter of this project, ruin porn, a genre of photographic images driven by the deterioration of urban buildings and structures, is a fashionable and compelling subject for many contemporary photographers. Havana is a particularly popular subject for ruin porn, providing a visually satisfying combination of "ruins, beauty, melancholy and nostalgia," accentuated by a surfeit of Caribbean sunlight and carefully exposed exoticism.[232] The glossy, gorgeously colored yet decidedly manipulative prints by ruin porn art photographers like Robert Polidori and Andrew L. Moore make efficient use of the confluence of these qualities in Havana. According to contemporary art scholar Rachel Weiss, some Cuban artists (she includes Garaicoa) have garnered financial benefit and international art world recognition by referencing the failing infrastructure and lingering mystique of the city in their work. "In a city falling to pieces," she

[232] Weiss, 175.

cynically notes, representations of "utopia, even in ruins, still exported well."[233] Garaicoa's aesthetic representations of the ruins of Havana, including his photographs on bone, could perhaps be too-easily read through the same skeptical lens as the many ruin porn images of the city produced by foreign photographers and Cuban artists. I argue, however, that Garaicoa's recent photography-based works printed on cow bone accomplish something quite different than the images created by North American photographers Moore or Polidori. Although "inexorably tied to decay and abandonment" as a visual theme, Garaicoa's images of the urban ruins of Havana deny an image of Cuba as an exotic commodity for visual consumption.[234] Instead, the photographs on bone represent the urban topography as an embodied form of Cuban collective memory, albeit incomplete and fragmentary in the wake of daily privations, mass exodus, and a population in the diaspora.

Garaicoa's untitled series of small photographs printed on bone cleverly and subtly reveal the ruins of Havana as the architectural embodiment of the collective memory of Cuba. The ruined buildings in Garaicoa's photographs correspond to the psychoanalytic image concept of the fragmented body, or, in this case, the exposed social body of Cuba fractured by migration, diaspora, and poverty. The photographic objects on bone enable a recognition and acceptance of a cultural identity-at-a-distance, of the self at a distant remove from the self—a Cuban self that is torn apart, and socio-politically and geographically disparate. In signifying the crises of the Special Period and migration, the ruined buildings suggest a lived urban topography of Cuban collective memory that is fragmented and partial, ravaged by time like the ruins themselves. Rather than representing Havana as a dying environment without future or purpose, however, Garaicoa is interested in portraying his city's "urban spaces as lived spaces that shape collective

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[233] Ibid., 179.
[234] Ibid., 181.

imaginaries" in the present.[235] As works of art in circulation between home and diaspora, Garaicoa's photographs on bone enable a diasporic gaze and its connection to a specular image in order for Cuba and its diaspora to see itself as whole. The choice of Havana's crumbling architecture, rendered in small, delicate photographic objects, the specialized printing technique, and the subtle, visual connections they make to the aging, declining human body present the ruined buildings as embodied forms which, like Cuban collective memory, are fragmented and incomplete.

Garaicoa's six photographic images printed on bone were included in the Eleventh Havana Biennial.[236] A constant presence at the Havana Biennials since graduating from the I.S.A., Garaicoa's submission to the Eleventh Biennial was part of a group show titled *Caos* (*Chaos*) at the small, modern Galeria Habana space in the Vedado neighborhood. The exhibition also featured new works by several internationally known contemporary Cuban artists, including Ivan and Yoan Capote, Glenda León, and Los Carpinteros. Like Garaicoa, these artists have significant representation in galleries and museum collections off the island, and they and their artworks frequently circulate between Havana, the United States, and Europe, extending their networks and audiences. Garaicoa's photographic objects on bone are quite small, just twelve by fifteen centimeters (4.72 by 5.9 inches), and the bone tablets appear delicate and fragile. Garaicoa created the series using a unique printing technique developed by Factum Arte, a Madrid-based company dedicated to digital mediation and production for artistic and museum

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[235] Andreas Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7.

[236] On display from May 11 through June 11, 2012 around the city of Havana and its suburbs, the Eleventh Biennial continued the event's vigorous emphasis on visual arts from those areas presumably underrepresented in the global art market and its Northern urban centers: Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa.
The photographs on bone were first shown at in a solo show titled *Sin Solución* at the Galleria Continua in San Gimignano, Italy, which represents Garaicoa in Europe, from February 11 through March 31, 2012. The photographs printed on bone were shown in this exhibition alongside Garaicoa's photo-topographies (photographic images transferred to and then mechanically carved out of a white polyspan/polysterene material). The photo-topographies were created from the same set of six photographs of buildings in Havana.

endeavors.[237] For the photographic objects, the images were pigment printed on four or five miniature laths of cow bone, which were joined and mounted on a metal, plate and then coated in gelatin (fig. 32).[238] The photographs present different examples of the architectural ruins of Havana, located within the urban landscape by their titles, which correspond to streets, intersections, or the local, unofficial names for the urban geography: *20 de mayo y Estévez*, *Cuatro caminos*, *Esquina de Tejas*, *Avenida del puerto y Luz*, *Calzada del Cerro y Castillo*, and *Oficios y Santa Clara*. The ruined buildings pictured on the bone tablets are concentrated in the outskirts of the Habana Vieja area and the teeming Centro neighborhood, intentionally far from the hotels, cabarets, bars, and historical landmarks frequented by foreign tourists.[239] Although small, the images on bone render the decay and collapses of buildings within the city in exquisite detail. Yet Garaicoa's photographs of these ruins also represent the psychic and emotional deterioration of Cuba inflicted by time, neglect, abandonment, and want. These temporal and social processes, compounded by the Special Period and the continuing emigration crisis, erode and ravage the buildings, the bodies and spirits of the people, and the collective memory of Cuba as an architectural embodied form.

The delicate, detailed black-and-white photographs on the thin, slightly mottled slabs of bone make a subtle yet striking visual connection between the dilapidated architecture of Havana and the organic infrastructure of the declining and fractured human body. In the image titled *20*

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[237] See http://www.factum-arte.com/eng/about.asp (accessed September 11, 2012).
[238] From an email conversation with Factum Arte employee Adam Lowe.
[239] Garaicoa has little interest in replicating a vision of Havana created by travel companies like Havanatur or Marazul to entice foreign tourists. In an interview with Garaicoa on the Uprising Art blog in 2012, the artist states, "What I am looking for in the city is something that has no connection with the tourist map of the city, I do not want to show famous places in my artworks. The same thing happened for the representation of Cubans… We progressively went from an image of the Cuban revolution in black and white, like with Korda or Corrales, to a representation in color of the 'Cuban being,' touristic, shallow, half-foreign and a bit naïve. I needed to avoid this game of simulation. I have always wanted to avoid these stereotypes of the 'fairground' photography. I wanted to erase, take off all the elements unnecessary to the photograph." See http://blog.uprising-art.com/tag/11e-biennale/page/2/ (accessed September 11, 2012).

de mayo y Estévez, the exposed central beams of the building poke out like scrawny, withered limbs and the pockmarked supporting walls sag like aging skin. Chunks of rubble accumulate along the foundation as though they are petrified, discarded bits of bodily detritus like rotten teeth or torn-off hangnails (fig. 33). The uneven color of the cow bone on which the photographs are printed also imbues the contemporary images with a sense of age and physical decay. The mottled yellow-brown hue recalls the sepia-toned prints of the past, but imperfectly; the colors of the surface spread unevenly, blotchily. Unlike the pleasurable nostalgia evoked by an old Brownie snapshot, Garaicoa's photographs on bone are painful reminders of bodily decline mirrored in the architectural forms. The marble-like surface of the bone suggests the slow yellowing and staining of teeth and nails, or the accumulation of the liver spots and faded blemishes of age. The visible joins of the slabs of bone that comprise the surface of the photographic objects subtly divide the image into horizontal bands, which further suggests the lack of wholeness or completeness in the work. While every part of *20 de mayo y Estévez* refers obliquely to the body—the visual metaphors of the ruined architecture, as well as the material on which the image is printed—it is a body in pieces, incomplete and fractured by the collapse of utopia and a population in exile.

Cuba and its collective memory are metaphorically embodied in Garaicoa's photographic images on bone. It is a social body, however, which is collapsed and crumbling because of the circumstances of mass migration and the difficulties of the Special Period. The photographs of the ruins of Havana correspond to the Lacanian image concept of the fragmented body, or, in this case, the body politic fractured by migration and diaspora. The photographic objects permit a recognition and acceptance of a cultural identity-at-a-distance, of the self at a remove from the self—a self that is torn apart and temporally and geographically dispersed. Yet the photographs

on bone also reveal that the very topography of the city is a representation of a fragmented sense of collective memory and, by extension, cultural identity. Ruins, Garaicoa states, "are the presence of the past but also reveal the present state of things," suggesting the confluence of today's deteriorating buildings and the architectures of collective memory, layered together in the Cuban social imaginary.[240] The photograph titled *Calzada del Cerro y Castillo* also illuminates this conjoining of the urban ruins and collective memory as embodied yet fragmented forms (fig. 34). Like the other photographs in the series, the ruined building evokes a human body in decline: the disintegrating plaster is like crumpled and cracked skin and the stone pillars are like rigid, ossified limbs. The horizontal bands of bone also mimic the dappled surfaces of marble, suggesting the connection between the hard structural materials that make up and support both buildings and bodies.

The ruins represented in *Calzada del Cerro y Castillo* further emphasize the connections between the deteriorating architecture and the vulnerable, fractured social body of Cuba. The columns in front of the collapsing building form the calzada, a street arcaded by columns. The row of columns rise from the accumulating piles of debris and frame the pockmarked and crumbling face of the building behind them. The columns themselves bear the cracks, stains, and disfigurements of decay, but they continue to buttress the eroded stone architrave, as weakened bones continue to support the aging body. In addition to visually connecting architecture and the human body, the columns in *Calzada del Cerro y Castillo* also refer to important aspects of Cuban collective memory and cultural identity. While a representation of the "present state of things," Garaicoa's photograph of the deteriorating columns also refers directly to "the presence of the past" as it is architecturally inscribed onto the city. The decorative marble columns with

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[240] Garaicoa, La Ruinas, 96. Garaicoa is perhaps quoting Jacques Derrida: "Memory projects itself toward the future, and it constitutes the presence of the past," in Memoires for Paul de Man: The Wellek Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine (Columbia University Press, 1986), 57.

Corinthian capitals allude to Cuba's four hundred years as a Spanish colony, Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier's characterization of Havana as *la ciudad de las columnas* (the city of columns), or Fidel Castro's Revolutionary condemnation of bourgeois decadence as manifest in architectural styles. Garaicoa also captured a piece of the recent past in *Calzada del Cerro y Castillo*: the blurred rear end of a Lada appears in the lower right-hand corner of the photograph. Even more ubiquitous than the famous 1950s U.S. automobiles that serve as informal taxis, the fleet of Ladas around Havana serves as a visible reminder of the formerly advantageous relationship between the two states. The poor condition of the columns, the crumbling building, even the antique but still running Lada suggests the poverty of the Special Period and the difficulties of migration and diaspora on the social body of Cuba. A fragmented collective memory of Cuba's past is thus embodied in the ruins of Havana, revealing a fractured sense of cultural identity caused by the Special Period and the crises caused by the mass migrations from the island.

Cuba is gradually recovering from the economic and social deprivations of the Special Period and the traumas of the *Balsero* Crisis. New tourism initiatives on the island, productive trade relations with Latin American neighbors like Venezuela, and relaxed travel restrictions between the U.S. and Cuba have enabled some architectural restoration and allowed the return of those who migrated during the *Balsero* crisis and after.[241] Yet the fracturing experience of diaspora and the trials of the Special Period still linger in the Cuban imaginary and the many crumbling buildings of Havana remain as "the presence of the past." As I discussed in relation to the ruin porn photographs in Chapter One of this project, the ruins permit a problematic mixture of nostalgia and an almost pleasurable sense of mourning for viewers of these images. On the

[241] Between my first visit to Havana in 2010 and the second in 2012, there were visible signals of these changes, including on-going structural and cosmetic repairs to cultural and governmental buildings, an increased number of cell phones and cell phone repair shops, and many new, imported vehicles. I also observed a very recent *derrumbe* in the Centro neighborhood, suggesting that the economic changes and improvements have yet to reach all Cubans.

other hand, for those Cubans whose memories are mapped through the actual buildings and who live with (or within) the ruins, the situation and sense of relation to them is quite different. By signifying the crises of the Special Period, migration, and diaspora, the deteriorating buildings of Havana suggest a lived urban topography of Cuban collective memory, which has become fragmented and partial, ravaged by time like the ruins themselves. According to literature scholar Andreas Huyssen, "the same space cannot possibly have two different contents. But the urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past."[242] In the same way, the urban ruins pictured in Garaicoa's photographs on bone represent the presence of two things, two moments in the same place at once: the urban topography of the present as an embodied form of Cuban collective memory of the past, rendered painfully incomplete and fragmentary. Despite the literal fracturing of the buildings and the metaphorical fracturing of memory, however, Garaicoa's photographs on bone enable a diasporic gaze and an acceptance of a cultural identity-at-a-distance in order for Cuba and its diaspora to see itself as whole.

Tenuous Bonds, Fragmented Bodies: Diasporic Intimacy and Collective Memory in Raquel Paiewonsky's *Enlace* Series

Contemporary Dominican artist Raquel Paiewonsky (b. Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic) is most often recognized for her sculptural installations that feature disconnected or detached parts of the human body rendered in soft fabric forms. *Inopia* (2012), *Bitch Balls* (2008), *Bitch Balls mentirosos* (2010), *Muro* (2009), and *Muro: tetas mentirosas* (2009), for example, present large groups of isolated breast-like forms rising from the surfaces of bedroom

[242] Huyssen, 7.

furniture, hanging limply from a section of a gallery wall, or gathered together in flocks of flesh-colored spheres.[243] Elsewhere, roughly amputated mannequin feet dangle from the ceiling encased in translucent beige hosiery (*Levitando a un solo pie*, 2003). Similarly, for Paiewonsky's performance piece *Interludio* (2012), female models silently pace a gallery space in monochromatic full-body costumes that cover them from head to toe, save for strategically cut-out areas of fabric that expose only their naked buttocks, their breasts, or a triangle of their pubic hair, divorcing these features from the anatomy as a whole.[244] Paiewonsky's desire to represent the human body in fragments—fragments which are often explicitly gendered—is not limited to her sculptures, installations, and performances pieces. The isolated and fractured anatomies also appear in her photographic work.[245] In Paiewonsky's piece *Sin título* (*Untitled*) from 1996, blurred and distorted photographic transparencies tinged with shades of red and pink slowly reveal a confusion of body parts: clenching fingers, bare breasts with large, dark nipples, the encounter between a bent elbow and a knee, a pregnant abdomen with a protruding bellybutton, front teeth clamped on a jutting tongue (fig. 35). Paiewonsky created the indistinct, shadowy, and, at times, abstracted effect by layering several photographic transparencies on top of each other, utilizing extreme close ups and severe cropping, and adding an artificial reddish tint to the prints. The obscured and surreal vision of the human body represented in the forty-eight

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[243] Paiewonsky's installation *Inopia* takes its title from a Latin word that connotes an insufficiency, a shortage, or a lack of ideas. "Inopious, adj." OED Online. November 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/96410?rskey=GJJiH7&result=1&isAdvanced=true (accessed November 11, 2012). *Muro* and *Muro: tetas mentirosas* can be translated as Wall and Wall: Lying Tits. Images of most of Paiewonsky's artworks can be viewed on her website: http://raquelpaiewonsky.com.

[244] Translated as "Levitating on only one foot" and "Interlude."

[245] Paiewonsky's interest in the connections between discrete parts and reassembled wholes is especially compelling considering her participation in the Dominican art collective called Quintapata (meaning the fifth leg, suggesting the sense of something that is superfluous or unnecessary). The Quintapata Collective includes Dominican visual artists Paiewonsky, Pascal Meccariello, Jorge Pineda, Belkis Ramírez, and Tony Capellán. Together the Quintapata Collective produces installations interactive pieces that interrogate ingrained social behaviors and power relations. They also frequently exhibit individual art works together in group shows. The Quintapata Collective was selected to represent the Dominican Republic at the Eleventh Havana Biennial in 2012 and the Fifty-Fifth Venice Biennial in 2013.

photographs that comprise *Sin título* reveals a chaotic, indefinite space filled with potentially aroused and inflamed yet also isolated and disconnected fragments. Like Carlos Garaicoa's representations of the ruins of Havana printed on bone, Paiewonsky's photography explores the human body as a metaphor for the contemporary phenomenon of diaspora from the perspective of the Spanish Caribbean home space. In works like *Sin título* and in Paiewonsky's more recent photography series, the physically fragmented and separated human body stands in for the body politic and collective memory of the Dominican Republic, where Paiewonsky lives and works, and its geographic disconnection from the large Dominican diaspora in the United States.

Despite their presumed unity as a work of art within the tight, orderly, grid-like schema of the installation, each individual photographic transparency of *Sin título* is contained within an opaque, light-colored, wooden frame. The proximity of the framed images suggests a contiguous relationship and even a sense of wholeness among them, yet each photograph is ultimately a unique, isolated fragment, cut off from absolute continuity with the others by its wooden barrier. The similarities in form and color and the repeated, unambiguously female anatomical parts among the individual images visually conjure a synecdochal relationship between the forty-eight discrete panels and a complete human body, each photograph seeming to represent a part of the whole. Yet in the photo-installation, what might otherwise be a whole, intact body is broken down into pieces, each isolated and separated from completion or cohesion.[246] The body fragments represented in the work look as if they are parts of a whole, yet they are also violently divorced, divided, and perhaps changed in the disconnection. Ultimately, viewers are not able to visually join the fragments in a meaningful, coherent way, like pieces from different puzzles that do not fit together neatly. Similar to the disparate and agitated body parts in Paiewonsky's

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[246] Paiewonsky's *Sin título/Untitled* (1996) was installed in this manner for the exhibition *ReVUETLA*, presented at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2009.

photographic work, the Dominican Republic has also experienced a drawn-out fragmentation from the mid-twentieth through the twenty-first centuries through successive waves of migration to the United States. Denied unobstructed geographic proximity and unity because of its large diaspora population in the United States, the Dominican Republic is also psychically fractured, its cultural identity and collective memory similarly rendered fragmented, altered, and incomplete.

Paiewonsky explores the sense of separation and the subsequent transformation of Dominican diasporic collective memory and cultural identity in her recent series titled *Enlace* (link or bond) from 2012. The tenuously conjoined, awkwardly appended, gendered figures in Paiewonsky's photographs visually represent the contemporary phenomenon of diaspora as an embodied experience. While migration and diaspora are indeed fundamentally distressing experiences, I argue that Paiewonsky's photographs also offer the reparative strategy of diasporic intimacy. The sense of intimacy across the transnational space of diaspora suggests a means to reconnect and relink a fragmented sense of collective memory and identity. This reconnection occurs in spite of the violent bodily and emotional fractures created by the large contemporary Dominican diaspora in the United States. Paiewonsky's series of nine photographs examines both the violent separation and the symbolic unification of fragmented, isolated, and diasporic bodies as a deeply intimate gesture. As described by Caribbean curator Gerardo Mosquera, Paiewonsky's art utilizes the body as a recurring theme as a way to "transcend the individuality to become an emblem and even to constitute a social body linked to intimacy, intimacy being a comment on this same social body."[247] Aesthetic representations of the body, then, are simultaneously deeply intimate and inherently social. In the large, full color, and yet starkly

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[247] Gerardo Mosquera, quoted in "Raquel Paiewonsky*: Im propia*." http://blog.uprising-art.com/raquel-paiewonsky-im-propia/?lang=en (accessed November 12, 2012).

austere photographs, Paiewonsky renders the abjectly corporeal, gendered, and eroticized human body as a visual metaphor for the imagined diasporic social body of the Dominican familial, cultural, or national unit. The variously fragmented, appendaged, bound, and otherwise artificially conjoined bodily forms captured in Paiewonsky's *Enlace* photographs represent the embodiment of collective memory and cultural identity in the context of the Dominican diaspora. This embodiment is rendered photographically as a deeply intimate and yet also often uncomfortably awkward undertaking. Paiewonsky positions the human body as a fractured and disrupted site and also, importantly, as the tenuous site of a diasporic intimacy. Literature studies scholar Svetlana Boym has proposed that diasporic intimacy offers only a fragile and inadequate form of communion in the face of the violent fracturing phenomenon of diaspora. Such intimacy, she argues, "can be approached only through indirection and intimation, through stories and secrets. It is spoken in a foreign language that reveals the inadequacies of translation. Diasporic intimacy does not promise an unmediated emotional fusion but only a precarious affection."[248] Such paradoxical intimacy—a familiarity and closeness not fully realized—is not an absolute remedy for the emotionally and psychically fracturing experience of diaspora, a discomfort felt by both those who leave and those who stay.[249] Rather, diasporic intimacy enables the mild relief of the isolation through a connection, however slight or transitory, to a larger sense of collective memory and cultural identity. The figures in Paiewonsky's recent photographic series embody the inadequacies and precariousness of Boym's conception of diasporic intimacy, as well as the awkward and uneasy conjoining of the fractured Dominican self and its diasporic other.

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[248] Svetlana Boym, "On Diasporic Intimacy: Ilya Kabakov's Installations and Immigrant Homes," Critical Inquiry 24, 2 (Winter 1998): 499.

[249] Paiewonsky has experienced both sides of this diasporic coin. While she currently lives and works in Santo Domingo, she resided in New York for ten years (1991-2001). During this period she attended Parsons School of Design and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1993. She also exhibited her artwork in both New York and the Dominican Republic. http://raquelpaiewonsky.com/ (accessed November 3, 2012).

In each of the photographs, two models, a male and a female, are posed together before a plain white background.[250] They bear and are bound together by various flesh-colored bodily appendages, anatomical extensions, and partial costumes. Except for the skin- and limb-like appendages and abbreviated attire, which both connect and divide the bodies, Paiewonsky photographs the figures nude, further emphasizing their corporeality.[251] In addition, some of the ornaments and garments are explicitly gendered, converting either the figures' sexual and reproductive anatomies or traditionally gendered apparel into wearable symbols that both bind together and visually demarcate the separations between their bodies.[252] The flesh-colored costumes—the embodied links or bonds of the series' title—thus create and expose a clumsy, tense physical intimacy between the figures posed in Paiewonsky's images, presenting a photographically embodied form of Boym's uneasy diasporic intimacy. In one of the untitled photographs from the *Enlace* series, the female figure wears a flesh-colored brassiere, the cups of which extend into long sleeves attached to the male figure's outstretched arms (fig. 36). The figures face each other, making direct and intense eye contact, another sign of recognition and familiarity among humans, yet their expressions remain impassive. The figures' two bodies are

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[250] Paiewonsky's *Enlace* series (2012) consists of nine untitled photographs, which can be viewed as a slideshow on the artist's website: http://raquelpaiewonsky.com/index.php/proyectos/2013-02-13-00-51-52/enlace.

[251] Paiewonsky usually uses models and materials in her artworks that better represent the spectrum of distinct racial phenotypes visually apparent to Dominicans and Dominican-Americans, which I discussed in Chapter Two of this project (see, for example, the photograph *Preambulo* (2008), the performance *Interludio* (2012), or any of the various *Tetas* installations). For the *Enlace* series, however the two models are both quite light-skinned. I was unable to find any specific information about the models in the *Enlace* series.

[252] The intense emphasis on heterosexual relations and coupling in the *Enlace* photographs remains a troubling aspect of the series, particularly because Paiewonsky playfully subverts strictly anatomical definitions of gender and sex through clothing and appendages elsewhere in her photographic work (see the series *One* (2012), for example). One possible interpretation of the heteronormativity of the series is based on sociological studies of Dominican migration to the United States, which reflect cultural anxieties about the erosion of traditional familial structures (men typically migrate first to secure employment and housing). Literature studies scholar Myriam J.A. Chancy has also commented on the sense of bodily fragmentation, noting "migration patterns that have often resulted in the departure of male heads of households to other countries," leaving the work of child rearing and "self-sustenance" to women, upholding gendered stereotypes in Dominican culture. Read through Paiewonsky's series, this migration scenario thus fragments the familial body, and women at home attempt to bind themselves by whatever means to the diasporic men. From Sugar to Revolution: Women's Visions of Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), xxviii.

joined in a seemingly erotic, deeply intimate gesture, perhaps a moment of foreplay or an unwanted sexual advance. In spite of the intended gesture of intimacy and the appearance of physical contact, the brassiere/arm appendage is actually stretched tightly across the several feet of space separating the two bodies. The attempted contact is awkward and devoid of any actual closeness or affection, and the figures' nudity becomes at once highly sexualized and somehow banal. Despite the implication of intimacy through the brassiere/arm appendage, the distance between the figures and the futility of actual physical connection between hand and breast emphasizes instead the sense of isolation and disconnection. Like Lacan's self and other, or the self of home and other of the diaspora, the figures appear only tenuously connected; they are ultimately incomplete and fragmented in the face of a large diaspora population in the U.S. While they remain linked and part of the same whole, the situation permits "only a precarious affection," a limited sense of intimacy across the fracturing and fragmented space of diaspora.

Paiewonsky creates another tenuous and deeply awkward photographic representation of diasporic intimacy through a second image from the series. The two figures in the previous photograph reveal the fragmentation of self and diasporic other through physical distance and also suggest a weak but meaningful connection through the brassiere/arm appendage. These visual and bodily elements are inverted in another untitled image in the series (fig. 37). The two figures are forcibly conjoined and literally bound together, yet this photograph also suggests that the models are the embodied fragments of a fractured whole. In this photograph, the male and female figures again stand facing each other before the same blank, white background. Here, the figures are positioned so close to one another that their nude bodies are pressed together, chest to chest and groin to groin, again simulating an intimate sexual act. The figures' heads are bound tightly together with a band of fabric and their features from their chins up are completely

obscured by the flesh-colored cloth. The cloth binding extends approximately three feet upward from the conjoined bulges of their heads, crowning their bodies with an odd, phallic appendage. The visual, embodied representation of the tenuous state of Dominican diasporic intimacy is created through extreme proximity rather than through awkwardly grasping gestures, physical distance, and their locked gazes.

Despite the clumsy conjoining, however, the figures maintain a distinct bodily separation. Their isolation in spite of such closeness reflects the inherent divisions of self and diasporic other. There is an implication of sexual intimacy created by the figures' nakedness and the proximity of their faces and sexual organs, yet their inertly merged postures reveal a lack of excitement and the failure of a deeper connection through bodily contact. Even their hands, hanging limply at their sides, brush against each other but do not attempt to clasp or caress in a gesture of sexual interest or even real familiarity. The photograph dramatically represents the intensely awkward experience of diasporic intimacy, and also reveals the ways in which this intimacy tenuously reconnects the body politic, fragmented and isolated by the global phenomenon of diaspora. As scholars Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner have noted, in opposition to the global, "the intimate comes in close and supplements the visual with a host of other sense experiences: sound, smell, taste; the ways bodies and objects meet and touch; zones of contact and the formations they generate. Through its participation in the tactile, the intimate functions not as an opposite to the global but as its corrective, its supplement, or its undoing."[253] As embodied viewers, we can imagine the sensory experience of the heady intimacy embodied through these figures: the heat and odor of another body, the texture of skin and hair, and the moist air of exhalations. Despite the sensory intimacy revealed in the photograph, the figures

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[253] Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner, "Introduction: The Global & the Intimate," Women's Studies Quarterly, 34, 1/2, (Spring-Summer, 2006), 17.

remain distant and distinct their physical closeness, embodying the distance and fragmentation of self and diasporic other. While the forced bodily proximity does not necessarily translate into an automatic or easy connection, the figures still visually represent an embodied yet tenuous form of diasporic intimacy across the transnational spaces of the Dominican Republic and its U.S. diaspora.

The flesh-colored appendage that binds the heads of the figures in the untitled *Enlace* photograph is a familiar visual form in Paiewonsky's oeuvre. Similar seemingly anatomical protuberances are found in the photography and installation cycles *Mutantes* and *Otros mutantes* (*Mutants* and *Other Mutants*) from 2003-2006 and in the photography series *Guardarropía* (2010), among others.[254] The headpiece that binds the bodies in fig. 37 replicates the form of the costume in the photograph *Contenedor de ideas* (*Container of Ideas*) from the *Guardarropía* series.[255] Like the image from the *Enlace* series, the model is photographed before a blank, white background and wears a modified cloth garment that covers her face and extends above her head in a stylized cylindrical form. The extension of the head and the modification of other body parts elsewhere in Paiewonsky's work emphasize the idea that these imaginary anatomies are bodily storage spaces for otherwise disembodied elements like memory and identity. In the untitled *Enlace* photograph, the embodied site of the intimate yet awkward link in the photograph—the head—is, importantly, the same place we imagine that collective memory and cultural identity is embodied as well. Paiewonsky has declared the importance of the body as the physical bearer of knowledge and experience in her work: "I have always been very interested in how the body is a container, sometimes in a mysterious and subtle way, and sometimes in a forceful way, of the

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[254] The tubular appendages in these art works typically take the form of a breast or phallus, sometimes they are tipped with red-lacquered fingernails or tiny hands. *Guardarropía* is a term for a wardrobe or closet but can also suggest a situation that is make-believe or pretend, a dual meaning important for understanding the series of photographs featuring models in a variety of fabricated costumes. See http://raquelpaiewonsky.com.
[255] The costume worn by the female model in the photograph *Contenedor de ideas* is made of a white linen *guayabera* or *chacabana* shirt, a typical men's garment in the Caribbean.

experiences we go through during life."[256] Rather than containing the memories and identity of a single body as in the in *Contenedor de ideas*, in the *Enlac*e photograph Paiewonsky utilizes the flesh-colored appendage as a device to tightly bind two bodies together. Her use of this form in the series suggests an interest in photographically representing the possibility of a link *between* distinct, gendered bodies. Symbolic of a shared sense of collective memory and cultural identity, the unusual headpiece in Paiewonsky's *Enlace* photograph creates an embodied bond that connects disparate bodies and places, however tenuously or awkwardly, across the fractured spaces of the Dominican diaspora.

Cultural anthropologist Patricia Pessar has observed that, "when Dominicans describe emigration to the U.S., they speak about the *cadena*, the chain that links one immigrant to the other," and each migrant in the diaspora back to the home space of the Dominican Republic.[257] This imagined system of a social links among Dominicans in the Caribbean and in the United States diaspora is dramatically, if awkwardly, embodied through the photographs in contemporary Dominican artist Raquel Paiewonsky's *Enlace* series. Paiewonsky renders the abjectly corporeal, gendered, and eroticized human body as an embodied, visual metaphor for the fragmented imaginary of the Dominican Republic and its U.S. diaspora. The physically fragmented and separated male and female bodies in her photographs are aesthetic representations of the fractured and diasporized social body of the Dominican Republic. The embodied connections created through the costumes and appendages in the *Enlace* photographs further emphasize the utility of diasporic intimacy as an ameliorating, reparative strategy for dealing with the painful fragmentation of diaspora and migration. Although an inherently

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[256] Raquel Paiewonsky, artist statement, quoted in various places, including: http://www.uprising-art.com/en/portfolio/raquel-paiewonsky-photographies/ and http://raquelpaiewonsky.com/ (accessed November 3, 2012).

[257] Patricia R. Pessar, Visa for a Dream: Dominicans in the United States (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1995), 11.

awkward and tenuous situation, as Boym again notes, "diasporic intimacy is not limited to the private sphere but reflects collective frameworks of memory that encapsulate even the most personal of dreams."[258] In spite of the perhaps violent fractures created by the contemporary situation of the large Dominican diaspora in the United States, diasporic intimacy is thus a means to emotionally reconnect disparate social bodies and a way to link together a sense of collective memory and cultural identity across diasporic distances.

Embodying Excess and Imagined Geographies: Karlo Andrei Ibarra's *Wall Maps Series*

Like Carlos Garaicoa and Raquel Paiewonsky, the emerging Puerto Rican artist Karlo Andrei Ibarra (b. San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1982) works in a wide range of media. Similarly, Ibarra resists the established boundaries of art photography, provocatively pushing the medium past its formal and categorical limits in contemporary art practice. Importantly for this study, Ibarra's photographic and performance-based works also question the reliability of memory, borders, and identity in the context of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its diasporas. His interactive performance piece, *Memoria colectiva* (*Collective Memory*), depends on an individual viewer's attachment to and visual memory of the topographical boundaries on the surface of the planet. The work consists of a sphere coated in chalkboard paint situated within a wood and brass stand tilted at an angle, a globe perhaps borrowed from an elementary school classroom (fig. 38). Part sculpture and part interactive performance piece, the viewer is given chalk and asked to draw the map of the world on the sphere based on information from his or her memory or imagination. In most iterations of the performance, the viewer-participants contribute much more information than just the basic outlines of geographical features retrieved from the collectively held memory of a globe. Doodles, symbols denoting significant places, small jokes ("*como una hormiguita*" or

[258] Boym, 499-500.

"like a little ant" on the lower half of the sphere in reference to a tiny island in the Pacific Ocean, for example), and other markings from the viewer's cognitive map of the planet appear in chalk, often laid over the more accurate renderings of continents and nations. The inscriptions are then slowly erased, signaling the end of the interactive performance. Ibarra suggests that the piece reveals "the ambiguity of borders, which belie the assumed veracity of the collectively held information about them."[259] More than merely inducing suspicion about the efficacy of geopolitical boundaries and our awareness of them, however, the piece also allows viewers to map the spaces of their collective socio-cultural imaginaries. With each performance of *Memoria colectiva*, the various psychic spaces that exceed conventional and established geographies are envisioned on the surface of the chalkboard sphere. The otherwise unseen but collectively imagined spaces that connect disparate people are suddenly embodied as maps, and made as concrete and visible as the actual topography of the planet.

Ibarra's *Memoria colectiva* provides evidence that the official borders and natural boundaries of states do not always demarcate the emotional and psychic boundaries of a place. Other factors, including collective memory and cultural identity, tend to push against the authority of lines drawn on a static map. This is the case with the island of Puerto Rico and its large contemporary diaspora population in the United States. In the period immediately following the U.S. military occupation in 1898, Puerto Rico's insularity, in both senses of the word, dominated the discourse about its cultural identity, history, and collective memory. Puerto Rico's relative isolation, its collectively presumed racial homogeneity, and its very islandness were "inscribed as a master metaphor for national character."[260] Puerto Rico, and thereby

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[259] Karlo Andrei Ibarra, statement on *Memoria colectiva*. http://www.karloandreiibarra.com/kai/memoria-colectiva-2012/ (accessed August 16, 2013).

[260] Jorge Duany, "Nation On The Move: The Construction Of Cultural Identities In Puerto Rico and the Diaspora" American Ethnologist 27, 1 (2000): 12. Here Duany refers to and describes the continued influence of Puerto Rican

puertoriqueñidad (Puerto Ricanness), were easily demarcated and held in at the place where the edge of the island met the Caribbean Sea. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, Puerto Ricans began to circulate more freely between the Caribbean and the United States, theoretically carrying their *puertoriqueñidad* along with them like a suitcase. In this way, *puertoriqueñidad* became an embodied identity, reinforced by language, custom, and collective memory rather than by geographic location. The authenticity and purity of the Puerto Ricanness-in-transit, of *puertoriqueñidad* in the diaspora, however, became a matter of robust debate on the island. Suddenly, the boundaries demarcating Puerto Rico were more fluid; the island extended into the diaspora, all the way to New York City and elsewhere in the United States. It is within this expanded socio-cultural imaginary that Ibarra's artworks function, questioning the cogency of real and artificial boundaries and their impact on cultural identity and collective memory.[261] In addition to economic and social factors, the increasingly quick, frequent, and inexpensive means of circulation known as *la guagua aérea* facilitated a large, mobile Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States.[262] And "large" might be a significant understatement: "at the beginning of the twenty-first century," cultural anthropologist Jorge Duany writes, "almost half of all persons of Puerto Rican origin [did] not reside in their 'national' territory, the island, but in the U.S. mainland."[263] This continuously circulating diaspora compels an almost constant reconsideration of the boundaries of Puerto Rico in the socio-cultural imaginary, of what constitutes the spaces of the fractured nation and its collective memory and identity, and, importantly, how to demarcate where Puerto Rico is and where it is not. Among other voices, Duany has argued stridently that "any serious reconceptualization of Puerto Rican identity must include the

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writer Antonio Pedreira's Insularismo (1934) on national self-conception and identity on the island.

[261] Ibarra, artist statement, http://www.karloandreiibarra.com/kai/statement/ (accessed August, 16 2013).

[262] See the description of *la guagua aérea* phenomenon from Chapter 2.

[263] Duany, 16.

diaspora in the United States."[264] The psychic boundaries of the nation and culture, he contends, no longer match up neatly with the geographic borders of the island of Puerto Rico. An excess of geography created by the U.S. diaspora permeates the Puerto Rican socio-cultural imaginary. A new symbolic map of *puertoriqueñidad* is required to cope with the perceived geographic excess. But what might such an expanded psychic map of Puerto Rico look like, not as drawn on the surfaces of globes or in topographical maps, but as embodied in the collective socio-cultural imaginary?

In his *Wall Maps Series* of digital photographs (2005), Ibarra follows the impulse to re-map the expanded and ever-changing boundaries of the island in the Puerto Rican socio-cultural imaginary. And his attempt to chart the newly expanded borders of Puerto Rico and of *puertoriqueñidad* in the photographs is ultimately a failure, though a purposeful one. The *Wall Maps Series* consists of digital color photographic prints tightly focused on the deteriorating walls of buildings in San Juan's *zona colonial* (colonial area). On top of the bright and saturated colors of the photographs, Ibarra has drawn thin, pixelated, irregular lines with photo editing software, creating ambiguous and sometimes unsuccessful geographic formations from the areas of deterioration. The walls of the buildings in the *zona colonial*, Ibarra claims, "allude to the memory of the architectural spaces and form maps and unequal cartographies through the corrosion."[265] Thus the series is only superficially about the actual architectural decay and destruction of historic buildings in the capital city, the conceptual focus of Garaicoa's photographs on bone discussed above. Indeed, Ibarra's subtle alterations of the color photographs with superimposed lines allow them to perform a different move from Garaicoa's

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[264] Ibid., 7. Opposing sides of the discussion surrounding the issue of Puerto Rican identity point to the perceived deterioration of Puerto Rican culture through assimilation to and acceptance of English and U.S. customs. The diaspora population and its presumed dismissal of authentic *puertoriqueñidad* also fuel the debates about Puerto Rico's potential entrance into statehood, independence, or continuation of commonwealth status.

[265] Ibarra, statement on *Wall Maps Series,* http://www.karloandreiibarra.com/kai/wall-maps-series/ (accessed August 16, 2013). Translation mine.

series. More than merely revealing the physical deterioration of a city, the *Wall Maps Series* photographs suggest the futility of mapping a psychic space that, because of its large and mobile diaspora population, exists only in the collective socio-cultural imaginary: a singular, self-contained island called Puerto Rico.

The untitled digital color photographs from the *Wall Maps Series* present a close up view of a deteriorating plaster or stone wall. In one photograph, Ibarra focuses on the bruised purple and dull green spots of discolored bare plaster and rust-colored corrosion that mar the otherwise sherbety oranges and pinks of the unknown building's paint (fig. 39). The uneven surface of the plaster wall and the textures of the damaged areas are sharply rendered in the high-resolution digital image. Ibarra's tight focus on an indeterminate section of a wall denies the viewer any visual context or locational information; the photograph only provides us with knowledge about a small section of the deteriorating wall of an unknown building. This lack of information purposefully removes any specificity about the building or San Juan itself, forcing a necessary ambiguity about the historical and cultural context of the place. This narrow focus also obscures the viewer's ability to make sense of the wall as a recognizable, vertical, or even three-dimensional space. Around the various areas of corrosion captured in the photograph, Ibarra digitally drew several sets of irregular, jagged boundaries in black and grey, roughly demarcating decidedly geographic formations on the wall. The coarsely drawn lines encircling the areas of corrosion immediately recall the visual form of the map, and the uneven surface of the plaster suggests possible topographic features. Cropping out all other visual details or points of reference, Ibarra transforms the rusty spots and corroded areas of a wall in San Juan's historic *zona colonial* into an embodied view of a fictional geography, a fantasy map of an unknown place. In this *Wall Maps* photograph, Ibarra's digitally rendered lines become the borders of

obsessively imagined and re-imagined island-forms, the expanded boundaries of Puerto Rico's excess diasporic geography in the socio-cultural imaginary.

In the untitled photograph discussed above, Ibarra demarcates the outlines of the deterioration to form a clear distinction between the imagined island-form and the bright orange sea of paint in which it floats. As with the island as "master metaphor" for Puerto Rico in the early to mid-twentieth century, there is a certainty about where the island ends and all that is not-the-island begins. The geographic forms are efficiently encapsulated and contained by the added lines, suspiciously declaring that the newly expanded and embodied psychic map of Puerto Rico is easy to trace and fix in space and time, even if it is done by a somewhat erratically rendered boundary line. In other untitled photographs from the *Wall Maps Series*, however, the excess geography created by the deteriorating surface of the wall becomes more unruly and confused, resisting containment by Ibarra's multiple artificial boundary lines (figs. 40 and 41). In figure 40, the pale pink areas revealed by the chipping minty-green paint are only occasionally contained by Ibarra's grey lines; large portions of the imaginary island shape are unshackled by the suggested boundary lines. The ochre-colored continents in figure 41 similarly reject the feeble attempts at mapping a coherent island with any of the black, lavender, tan, and red lines added by Ibarra. If the metaphor of insularity as cultural identity becomes unfixed, and the psychic geography exceeds the borders of the island, where, then, is really "Puerto Rico" on the map? The supplementary boundary lines in the *Wall Maps Series* demarcate the many possible shapes of the island in the shared socio-cultural imaginary. Ibarra's photographs represent an expanded psychic geography, forming new shape of Puerto Rico's "master metaphor" of islandness in the contemporary context of the U.S. diaspora.

Ibarra's *Wall Maps Series* photographs reveal the difficulty in mapping the uncertain and fluid boundaries of a diasporized Puerto Rico in the socio-cultural imaginary. Rather than the "master metaphor" of the island, Ibarra confirms Duany's contention that "contemporary Puerto Rican culture flourishes along the porous borders of political, geographic, and linguistic categories," categories which clearly "no longer capture the permeable and elastic boundaries of the Puerto Rican nation" in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[266] In altering the photographs as part of the image-making process, Ibarra intentionally undermines the possibility of representing an authentic or static *puertoriqueñidad* as an embodied geographic form. Further, the failure of Ibarra's lines to truly map and contain the imaginary islands created by San Juan's corroded walls suggests the ways in which Puerto Rico as a psychic space exceeds the edges of the actual island. Through the *Wall Maps Series* photographs, Ibarra explodes the "master metaphor" of the island that previously demarcated the boundaries of *puertoriqueñidad* in cultural identity and collective memory. The island has been exceeded, supplanted by an expanded, diasporized, and embodied map of Puerto Rico in the socio-cultural imaginary.

The photography-based series of Carlos Garaicoa, Raquel Paiewonsky, and Karlo Andrei Ibarra seek to fulfill a precarious promise of photography: to give an affective, intangible concept like collective memory a body, to visually materialize memory as an embodied form. Utilizing photographic processes and the serial form as a strategy for visually representing collective memory, these artists reiterate the desire for a cohesive, shared body of memory among and across the fractured spaces of the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas. Garaicoa, Paiewonsky, and Ibarra use various kinds of symbolic bodies—metaphorical, architectural, geographic, and literal—to represent the body of collective memory. As the fantasy of a

[266] Duany, 23.

cohesive, embodied collective memory permeates their artworks, the photographic series ultimately always refer back to the fracture, displacement, deterritorialization, and disorder created by the splintering of home and diaspora. The longed-for cohesion of collective memory is unfastened by the artists' aesthetic strategies. The architectural ruins of Havana that Garaicoa photographs and then prints onto pieces of bone; the awkwardly conjoined, tenuously intimate, gendered bodies that are clothed, arranged, and photographed in in Paiewonsky's *Enlace* series; and Ibarra's shifting insular bodies, read through the deteriorating architectures of San Juan's *zona colonial*, serve to emphasize the fracture, fragmentation, and excess geography of the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas.

Chapter Four

Fragments from an Unhomely Medium: The Photography of the Spanish Caribbean Diasporas in the United States

For the diasporic Spanish Caribbean artists considered in this final chapter, "home is more of a symbolic space than a physical space."[267] That is, for Cuban-American Abelardo Morell, Dominican-American Scherezade, and Nuyorican Adál, home is more accurately understood metaphorically than geographically. For those living in a diaspora, home exists in the slim interstices of disparate locations, the places where homeland and diaspora manage to overlap, even momentarily, rather than in a single, discrete physical site. I argue that the aesthetic production of artists in the Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican diasporas in the United States visually represents this diasporic state of being that cultural theorist Homi Bhabha terms the unhomely.[268] Bhabha's concept of the unhomely is a crucial theoretical instrument through which to conceptualize the temporal flux of the interstitial, hybrid spaces represented in the work of these three Spanish Caribbean diasporic artists. Morell, Scherezade, and Adál were born and lived in the Spanish Caribbean, but now live and work in the U.S. and travel between here and the Caribbean. Further, all three use photography as part of their art practice in order to directly address the experience of exile and diaspora in the United States. Using photographic images and practices, the diasporic artists seek to visually represent the unhomely sense of both/and: *acá* and *allá*, past and present, memory and history, home and diaspora. Yet they also blur the distinct lines between aesthetic media, incorporating performance, installation, collage, and video in their artworks, making photography itself an unhomely representational medium.

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[267] Nikos Papastergiadis, Dialogues in the Diasporas: Essays and Conversations on Cultural Identity (New York & London: Rivers Oram Press, 1998), 3.
[268] Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 9-10.

Through Morell's *Camera Obscura* photographs of Havana, Scherezade's photographic installation *Paradise Redefined*, and Adál's *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* photography series, I examine photography's utility as a mean for representing exilic vision and the sense of the unhomely within a diasporic space. Unhomeliness, according to Bhabha, is "the condition of extra-territorial and cultural initiations" and is situated interstitially as an overlap of the public and the private spheres, rather than as a hard boundary between those seemingly discrete spaces.[269] The unhomely further provides for the "articulation of cultural differences" as experienced in exile, and it is an aspect of literal homelessness, as well as geographic, cultural, linguistic, and political dislocation, such as experienced by one living, even for many years, with the memory rather than the experience of one's homeland.[270] The unhomely state, as envisaged in the photographic artworks discussed in this chapter, is an emotional and an intellectual experience; it encompasses longing, disorientation, empowerment, struggle and loss, and, importantly, creativity and recovery from the position of dislocation. Rather than presenting the situation of diaspora as a static or stagnant state, I argue that diaspora encompasses and enables a range of creative articulations. It is a multifaceted space of complexity and conflict, but also as a space of intense creativity and even pleasure, which expands traditional conceptions of contemporary Spanish Caribbean photography.

Havana Through the Lens: Abelardo Morell's *Camera Obscura* Photographs

Contemporary Cuban-American photographer Abelardo Morell (b. 1948, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Massachusetts) explores his exile from Cuba in his camera obscura photographs of the city of Havana. The images of Havana are part of his *Camera Obscura* series

[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid., 9.

(1991-present) in which Morell replicates the centuries-old camera obscura image-making technology.[271] Taken on a 2002 trip back to Cuba, his first since leaving in 1962, at the age of fourteen, Morell's photographs of Havana present a vision of the city that is mediated literally, through lens of his camera, and figuratively, through the symbolic lens of his dislocation and exile from Cuba.[272] Through the critical application of the camera obscura technology, the formal elements, and the culturally specific subject matter, the photographs visually represent the space of exile as the overlap of the past and the present and investigate the implications of memory and the loss of exile in contemporary art photography. The abrupt visual juxtaposition of interior and exterior spaces in Morell's camera obscura photographs creates an image of Havana that is at once intimate and strange, simultaneously concealing and exposing these disparate spaces. The breadth of Morell's *Camera Obscura* series consists of hundreds of photographs taken in numerous cities around the world, including New York, London, Paris, and Venice, some of which are made with color film. I focus here on the black-and-white silver gelatin prints taken of Havana, its suburbs, and the surrounding western province of Pinar del Río. In these camera obscura photographs, upside-down, almost ghostly images of the public spaces of Havana—boulevards, parks, towers, high-rise buildings, and monuments—are layered over interior spaces, private rooms often featuring deeply personal, familiar yet anonymous objects like framed portraits, open books, souvenirs, and unmade beds. Morell creates the detailed, yet inverted images of the cityscapes laid over interior spaces using an unsophisticated, homemade camera obscura as a means of projection. Initially conceived of as a way to teach his students at the Massachusetts College of Art about early photography and indulge in his own

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[271] http://www.abelardomorell.net/srcHTML/camera-obscura-statement.html (accessed December 27, 2013). According to his artist statement, in addition to using color film, Morell also began using a lens to sharpen the projected image and a prism to turn it right side up, as well as a digital camera to shorten the exposure time and capture the light at different times of day.

[272] Abelardo Morell, "Cuba from a Dark Room," in Cuba on the Verge: An Island in Transition, ed. Terry McCoy (Boston & London: Bullfinch Press, 2003), 85.

artistic interest in optical effects, the technique of converting a room into a camera obscura eventually became a strategy through which Morell could investigate deeper issues about photography and representation.[273] As Morell has acknowledged, the camera obscura becomes more than "just a device for projection onto a blank slate, but part of an encounter between inside and outside," and a way of conceptually and visually connecting the personal spaces of memory and the public spaces of the present in his work.[274]

Morell's deployment of the camera obscura technique in his practice has deeper consequences than merely making unique and evocative photographs. A camera obscura, which literally means dark room or chamber, is a technology in which light passes through a small hole or lens and an image of what is beyond the lens is projected, inverted, on the surface or wall opposite. While the camera obscura apparatus can be reduced to the size of a shoebox or smaller, Morell converts an entire room into a camera obscura to produce the desired effects in his photographs. Many photography historians and visual studies scholars position the camera obscura as the incontrovertible antecedent to the modern camera because of their similar structural elements and the ability to produce verisimilar images of the world, the camera having the perceived advantage of fixing the image to film.[275] Art historian Jonathan Crary, on the other hand, argues that the camera obscura does not fit so neatly into the teleology of the camera and is, conversely, part of a very different system of representation and observation.[276] More than just producing an imaged replica of the world, the camera obscura allows for a different

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[273] Abelardo Morell, "Afterword," in Camera Obscura (Boston & London: Bullfinch Press, 2004), 104-5.
[274] Bonnie Costello, "Outside In and Upside Down: the Art of Abelardo Morell," The Yale Review 96, 3 (July 2008): 3.
[275] The majority of textbooks on the history of photography make this antecedent claim for the camera, starting with Helmut Gernsheim's seminal text A Concise History of Photography (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), and including Michel Frizot, ed., A New History of Photography (Köln: Könemann, 1998); Graham Clarke, The Photograph (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mary Warner Marien, Photography: A Cultural History (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2002); and Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography: from 1839 to the Present, 5th Edition (New York: The Museum of Modern Art/Bullfinch Press, 1982/1999), among many others.
[276] Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 31.

environment, which enables a mediated and disembodied means of looking. Thus, through his use of the camera obscura technology, Morell performs what Crary describes as the "operation of individuation," in which the observer seeks to isolate or obscure himself in the space of the apparatus—or a room converted into a camera obscura—from the world beyond the lens.[277] But one cannot stay hidden inside the camera obscura for very long. The juxtaposition of interior and exterior spaces that Morell creates from a position of obscurity automatically re-implicates him in the Havana outside his hotel room. The photographs force the seemingly objective representation of Havana projected onto the wall and Morell's subjective memories of his childhood to coalesce into a fictional vision of the city in which the past and present intermingle and coexist.

For the photographs of Havana, Morell converted various indoor spaces into cameras obscura by making the rooms completely dark and then directing a small, concentrated amount of sunlight in through a small pinhole on the window.[278] Through the tiny opening, Morell projected detailed images of the cityscape onto the rooms and then took photographs of the resulting phenomenon—the exterior visually juxtaposed with the interior—using a large format film camera.[279] In essence, Morell captured images of Havana doubly mediated through the lenses of both the camera obscura and his modern film camera. While the effects of the camera obscura apparatus are the natural product of light and optics, the projected images appear magical and unreal, like ghostly, glowing apparitions from the past, hovering upside down on the walls and surfaces of a room. Because of the formal qualities of the light created by the apparatus, the camera obscura technique infuses Morell's photographs with the sense of ephemerality, like that of a film still: a fleeting, glimpsed vision of memory imbued with the

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[277] Ibid., 39.
[278] Luc Sante, "Introduction," in Camera Obscura (Boston & London: Bullfinch Press, 2004), 8.
[279] Morell, "Afterword," 105.

diffuse light of dislocation and loss. Like the other camera obscura photographs in his series, Morell's black-and-white image of a western suburb of Havana laid over a cluttered room, entitled *El Vedado, Havana, Looking Northwest* (fig. 42), initially inspires a sense of disorientation. The juxtaposition of the interior and exterior views suggests that the photograph is a fiction, fashioned out of the memories of the past and the realities of the present. The lower third of the image depicts a room filled with recognizable objects: a closed ironing board set against the dark door, an armchair with a plaid patterned fabric, a pair of framed pictures on the wall, and a low, wooden cabinet with decorative glass bottles and a studio portrait of a glamorous looking blonde woman arranged along the top. The upper two-thirds of the photograph, however, present an inverted urban landscape, dense with a combination of modern high-rise structures and old-fashioned stucco buildings with deep verandas receding toward a distant horizon. The transposed image of Havana is projected like a film still on the walls and ceiling of the room; it is clear, distinct and detailed, and yet also transparent and ethereal. The city scene appears to flow down the bare, screen-like walls and over the framed pictures, the upper half of the door and ironing board, barely overlapping the upper edge of the portrait photograph. The repeated, overlapping shapes further emphasize the visual disorientation and the implied connection between the two spaces caused by the abrupt juxtaposition of the interior space of the room and the exterior space of the urban landscape of Havana. The two disparate sections of the photograph intersect along the central horizontal axis of the image. The vertical, rectangular shape of the dark wood door, bisected by the horizon line of the projected image, mimics the repeated shapes of the upside-down high-rise buildings and the regularly spaced square holes in the underside of the ironing board visually replicate the multiple windows that

mark the edifices of the buildings in the projected image. These formal elements visually connect the private, interior world of the room and the public, exterior space of the city.

The viewer's inability to immediately distinguish between the separate interior and exterior spaces represented in the photograph ruptures the similarly presumed distinction between the past and the present and furthers the idea of Morell's photographic space as a visual fiction. The *El Vedado, Havana* photograph represents one of many "Havanas of the mind," imaginary places cobbled together out of visual fragments of memory.[280] The temporal flux and the interstitial, hybrid spaces depicted in Morell's camera obscura photographs of Havana reveal a strong sense of Bhabha's concept of the unhomely. The photographs represent the point of overlap between the public and the private spheres, rather than as a hard boundary between those seemingly discrete spaces.[281] The unhomely state, as envisaged in Morell's camera obscura photographs of Havana, is an emotional and an intellectual experience; it encompasses longing, disorientation, empowerment, struggle and loss, as well as recovery from the position of dislocation. Visually merging the idealized past of memory and the harsh realities of the present, Morell's photographs of Havana present viewers with a black-and-white vision of Bhabha's unhomely space. The fragments of memory and the persistent loss of exile and dislocation surface constantly in the images. Despite the cinematic quality caused by the camera obscura projection, Morell avoids unproductively romanticizing the past or homogenizing the cultural complexity of the present.

In his photographs of Havana, Morell refuses to gloss over or mask the tragic, creeping decay of Havana's buildings and infrastructure in the years since Fidel Castro's assumption of

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[280] I expand here on Salman Rushdie's descritption of his "Indias of the Mind," imagined versions of the India to which he cannot return, as described in his essay on his own exile and dislocation from his homeland, "Imaginary Homelands," in Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991 (London: Granta, 1992), 9.
[281] Bhabha, 9-10.

power in January 1959 and the devastating effects of the Special Period in a time of Peace. For example, in the camera obscura photograph *La Giraldilla de La Habana in Room With Broken Wall* (fig. 43), Morell layers an idealized vision of Havana's historical past over the jarring reality of the present, thus visually rendering Bhabha's unhomely state. La Giraldilla, the cast metal statue of a woman holding a stylized cross and a tree branch, sits on top of the watchtower of the Castillo de la Real Fuerza, the fortress that occupies the right third of the photograph. The statue, the image of which is also featured on the label of the popular Havana Club rum, is an ubiquitous symbol for the city of Havana. Further, the Real Fuerza fortress, built in the sixteenth century, is a potent located reminder of Cuba's prosperous and decadent colonial past in the Habana Vieja section of the city. In Morell's photograph, the flat, bare wall of an empty room serves as a nearly unblemished screen for the projected image of the inverted fortress and the tiny La Giraldilla, bisected by the flowing canal and the hilly suburbs of Havana across the harbor. The tower hovers between the dark, evenly spaced horizontal frames created by the upside-down image of the fortress wall above and the floor of the room below, connecting the exterior space of Old Havana with the interior space of the room. As the fortress wall retreats at a diagonal behind the watchtower, however, the reality of the crumbling, jagged doorway disrupts the idealized vision of the past and abruptly interjects the ruined interior space of the present into the evocative, picturesque, though inverted, exterior view.[282] Reiterated by its own rough shadow, the uneven, torn-looking doorway, like a gaping maw, recedes into a narrow, murky tiled space. The otherwise clearly projected image of the Real Fuerza, the narrow harbor canal, and the trees of the Plaza de Armas is lost in the shadowy darkness and busy visual geometry of the decaying room. Despite the shock in the sudden exposure of the destroyed space of the

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[282] This is not to suggest that the Castillo de la Real Fuerza is itself is in pristine condition; both times I visited Havana (July 2010 and May 2012) to do research for this project, the Real Fuerza was closed to tourist and visitors for construction.

present, the vertically positioned, obelisk-shaped watchtower and the back wall of the tiled room mirror each other and further link the inside and outside, and thus the past and the present, together in the image.

Because of the sharp visual juxtapositions between past and present in his camera obscura photographs, Morell denies the viewer a static vision of Cuba; he presents many imaginary Havanas, all layered over one another like a palimpsest. Although Morell was an adolescent when his family left Cuba, he was certainly old enough to remember the city as it had been prior to the Revolution and over four decades under Castro's regime. Thus his memories of Havana differ significantly from his experiences of the city upon returning for the first time in 2002, creating a dissonance in his experience of the city. Morell has remarked that the camera obscura technique allows him "to contemplate new realities under the half-light of things remembered," and to literally align his childhood memories of Havana and the city's present condition.[283] In this way, the rupture between the deterioration of the present and the idealized memories of the past is not quite so jarring. In reference to the *La Giraldilla de La Habana* photograph, literature scholar Bonnie Costello notes that Morell is visually describing "the fragility and exposure of the personal world in this dilapidated communist state."[284] While the deterioration of Cuba's architecture and infrastructure is a common theme among visual artists and something I have discussed repeatedly in this project, I believe Morell's *La Giraldilla de La Habana* photograph and others in this series are about more than the present state of disrepair that haunts Cuba's historical heritage and endangers the lives of some citizens.[285] Instead, the images represent the ways in which memories of the idealized past and the realities of its

[283] Morell, "Cuba from a Dark Room," 85.
[284] Costello, 10.
[285] See the discussion of ruin porn photography of Havana in Chapter One and Cuban artist Carlos Garaicoa's series of photographs printed on bone in Chapter Three.

political present visually coalesce through Morell's lens. The camera obscura photographs serve to collapse the distinction between the past and the present, and thereby the difference between public and private, fully embodying neither temporal space and existing instead in the hybrid space of the unhomely.

Bhabha's theorization of the unhomely allows for a consideration of the photographs as fictional visions of Havana, but it does not fully address the complex issues of exile that are implicated within them. Conceptions of identity in exile help to push against the limits of Bhabha's theorization. Setting aside issues of his legal citizenship and immigrant status, which usually reveal little about the phenomenological experiences of exile and migration, Morell's identity as both a Cuban and an American informs his photographic work and complicates his simple categorization as an immigrant from Cuba. While fully engaged in his life in the United States, Morell also lives in exile from the island, necessitating the mobilization and extension of an extensive scholarly dialogue about the politics and definitions of exile in general, and Cuban exile in particular. According to literature scholar Nico Israel, exile is a "way of describing the predicament of displacement," yet embodied in the etymology of the term are the contradictory senses of the individual both being forced out of a place and leaving as an expression of free will.[286] Although it is often difficult to distinguish clearly and absolutely between political and economic motivations for migration, the first waves of Cuban emigrants to the U.S. after the Revolution in January 1959 moved abroad primarily for political reasons.[287] For Cubans who fled the Revolutionary government in years immediately following Fidel Castro's rise to power, including Morell's family, who left in 1962, the stance of political exile carries within it both the

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[286] Nico Israel, Outlandish: Writing between Exile and Diaspora (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1-3.

[287] Robert L. Bach, "The Cuban Exodus: Political and Economic Motivations," in The Caribbean Exodus, ed. Barry B. Levine (New York: Praeger, 1987), 112. The "golden exiles," as Bach refers to the first waves of migrants from Cuba after the Revolution, were typically, but not exclusively, educated middle- or upper-class Cubans who feared political retribution as well as the redistribution of their assets under the new communist system.

burden of having made the choice to abandon the homeland and the painful feeling of compelled banishment.

Morell's experiences are further distinguished by the unique circumstance of the Cuban exile in the United States. Cuban-American cultural studies scholar Gustavo Pérez Firmat suggests the Cuban-American's "life on the hyphen" is ultimately shaped by the negotiation of two "contradictory imperatives" of culture and identity within the space of exile: tradition and translation.[288] Playing with the terms in both the Spanish and English, Pérez Firmat conceives of tradition, rooted in the Spanish term *traer*—to bring—as a system of cultural "convergence and continuity," the essence of the home culture brought to the space of exile. On the other hand *traducir*—to translate—insinuates, "linguistic or cultural displacement [that] necessarily entails some mutilation of the original," or a distinctive, degenerative and noticeable change in culture and language.[289] Pushing against the conceptual borders of Bhabha's theory and its culturally indeterminate notion of the unhomely, Pérez Firmat's specific articulation of Cuban-American-ness suggests that identity in exile is polyvalent and encompasses individuality, conciliation and fluidity over temporal and geographic distances. Therefore, Morell's position as an exile, and as a Cuban-American, extends the conceptual framework of the unhomely in an interpretation of his camera obscura photographs. "Once an exile, always an exile," Pérez Firmat declares, "but it doesn't follow that once an exile, *only* an exile."[290] In extending Bhabha's conception of the unhomely with a more complex and culturally specific notion of exile, I suggest a means to avoid essentializing Morell as an exiled Cuban artist living in the United States whose work speaks directly or solely to the negotiation of a singular Cuban identity through his aesthetic

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[288] Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 3.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid., 11. Emphasis original.

representations of Havana. Identity in the space of exile requires the constant negotiation and renegotiation of multiple histories and a spectrum of selves. Morell himself has made conflicting statements about his status as an exile and its impact on his work. He has replied to inquiries about why his photographic work does not more directly address his exile from Cuba with the seemingly dismissive response, "Because I am more interested in life."[291] In contradiction, he has also referred to his dislocation from Cuba as "still stirring at the bottom of much of what I do in art now. Somehow the conflicts of cultures, languages and places that I felt … gave me a sense of exhilaration, a feeling that things out there were wild and surreal."[292] While it may appear that Morell is being intentionally evasive on the subject of his dislocation from Cuba, embedded in his statements is much more than a mere repudiation or celebration of his status as an artist in exile. Morell sees his exile from Cuba as a critical part of his art and his identity, but the way in which he playfully twists the situation of *exile* into the feeling of *exhilaration* suggests that his sense of the unhomely encompasses a range of creative articulations within the space of exile. Morell's camera obscura photographs of Havana and his statements about his status as an artist in exile further a conception of exile as a multifaceted space of complexity and conflict, but also as a space of intense creativity and even pleasure.

The multiple articulations of exile employed here in the discussion of Morell and his camera obscura photographs circulate around the conception of the exile as an individual, yet none of the images of Havana feature a visual representation of this exiled individual. Indeed, there are no people in the photographs at all. This is due, in part, to the impossibility of remaining immobile for the eight to ten hour film exposure required for the photographs. Beyond

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[291] Remarks by Professor John McKee in introduction for Abelardo Morell, Bowdoin College Commencement Ceremony, May 24 2007, http://www.abelardomorell.net/pdf/J.McKee_97.pdf (accessed January 8, 2011).

[292] Remarks by Abelardo Morell upon acceptance of an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, Bowdoin College Commencement Ceremony, May 24 2007, http://www.abelardomorell.net/pdf/A.Morell_97.pdf (accessed January 8, 2011).

the physical impracticality, the lack of individuals in the camera obscura photographs speaks more directly to the concept of the unhomely within the space of exile by insinuating, but not revealing, the exiled individuals negotiating within it. The photograph *Valley of Viñales from Hotel Room, Pinar del Río, Cuba* (fig. 44) exemplifies the suggestion of the exile in Morell's fictional Havana without the actual representation of one. In this photograph, the upside-down image of the hilly, rolling landscape around Havana, viewed from the deep porch in the foreground, is laid over the black screen of the walls, ceiling, and curtained windows of a hotel room. The corner of the room is crammed with furniture: a double bed with a sinuous wooden headboard, a console table littered with a vase of flowers, full water glasses, and a transparent bottle, and a low bedside table with a small lamp and telephone. The landscape, vertically bisected by the corner where two walls meet, overlaps the top two-thirds of the room and the crests of the hills in the distance brush the upper part of the headboard. The image of Pinar del Río is just barely punctured by the top of the lamp and the bottle of water. The lamp, with its slender body and umbrella-shaped shade, mimics the palm trees in the middle ground of the landscape image, and the doubled arches of the headboard repeat the shape of the hills in the background. The large bottle and the clear glasses on the console table cast transparent reflections on the camera obscura projection of the sky above the hills, further juxtaposing the images of the outside and inside. As in the majority of Morell's camera obscura photographs, the overlap of the exterior and the interior spaces visually connects them and ruptures the presumed distinction between public and private, causing a momentary disorientation in the viewer and amplifying the experience of the unhomely.

In the *Valley of Viñales from Hotel Room* photograph, the suggestion of the absent individual also contributes to the notion of the unhomely space and the implications of memory

and loss within it. In addition to the projected image of the exterior space onto the interior space, the narrative created by the insinuated presence of an individual gives the photograph a film-like quality, recalling the juxtaposition of the public and private in the space of the cinema. Because many of Morell's camera obscura photographs are taken in hotel rooms or rented rooms, they frequently feature beds. Beds usually carry the heavy burden of connoting eroticism and sexuality.[293] In this image, however, the half unmade, empty double bed strongly evokes the absence of the individual who had recently slept there. The inverted lounge chair in the exterior space that hovers directly above the bed also suggests the individual: chairs are often interpreted as "markers for people and invitations to enter the space, to rest, to consider… [and] they define the individual's most localized space."[294] The empty lounge chair refers directly to the exile's contemplation of memory and loss as perceived within the tropical Cuban landscape. The Havana Club rum container on the console table, with the slogan "*El ron de Cuba*" (The Rum of Cuba) printed across the bottom and the emblematic image of La Giraldilla, reiterate the cultural specificity of exile from Cuba, but without the presence of a particular individual, exile is not bound to single iteration of identity and it remains open to interpretation and variation. Finally, the anonymous hotel room featured in the photograph is representative of the hybrid space of the unhomely, implied by the sense of homelessness. Hotel rooms are simultaneously private and public, spaces through which individuals circulate temporarily, leaving traces of their presence. They are also anonymous spaces, allowing for the articulation of the individual experience of exile. In suggesting but not including the individual in the representations of the unhomely spaces of his photographs, Morell rejects the notion of a singular, essentialized exilic identity and furthers his camera obscura photographs as a vision of his imagined "Havana of the mind."

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[293] Costello, 7-8.
[294] Ibid., 9.

Morell's camera obscura photographs of locations beyond Cuba, however, disrupt and complicate a tidy reading of the images of Havana as speaking directly to his memory and the loss of his original home in exile. Morell has printed and published only five camera obscura images of the city of Havana; the majority of the photographs in the series feature either his present home in a Boston suburb, or European cities across the Atlantic Ocean. These camera obscura photographs represent similarly unhomely spaces for Morell, despite the distant remove from Havana. For example, *Houses Across the Street in Our Bedroom, Quincy, MA* reveals the intimate, personal space of Morell's bedroom (fig. 45). The photograph features a double bed with a simple wooden headboard, the covers slightly disheveled and the pillows rumpled, like the anonymous beds in the Havana hotel rooms. The wall above the bed is overlaid with an inverted image of tidy East Coast suburban homes, neatly painted white and gray and framed by tall trees and their spreading, deciduous canopies. Like the images of Havana, a diffuse light created by the camera obscura technique imbues the photograph with a sense of the ephemeral, evoking the dreams of the recently departed sleeper. The image of the exterior scene extends down the wall and over the bed, creating again the strong juxtaposition of public and private spaces. In *Houses Across the Street*, the repetition of forms in the vertical trees, the bedside lamp and the bedposts link the two spaces visually and the blank white wall creates a cinematic screen for the projected exterior image. Unlike the photographs of Havana, which are littered with visual referents to the city and Cuban culture and history, there is little beyond the title to mark it as a specific location. The photograph lacks the resonance of memory and loss, but Morell signals that this is indeed a home space, though a home in exile, and imparts a sense of the unhomely onto the image with the use of the camera obscura technique.

Photographs like *The Tower Bridge in the Tower Hotel, London, England*, from 2001 (fig. 46), taken in neither in Morell's current home in the United States nor in his original home of Havana, employ the same visual strategies. The projected image of the exterior, featuring the historic London Bridge, is juxtaposed with the interior of another anonymous, yet strikingly modern and austere, hotel room. The visual connection between the inner and outer spaces is again suggested by the projection of one on top of the other, yet in this case, the area of overlap is minimal and the spaces are therefore more distinct from each other. In addition, rather than forming a visual link connecting the public and private spaces on the level memory, the two projected towers of the bridge, with their sharp, pointy turrets, loom threateningly over the vacant pillows, which both bear obvious indentations suggesting recent occupation by a pair of sleeping guests. The implied violence of the scene created by the dagger-like towers hovering over the vulnerable pillows differs from the more contemplative renderings of Havana from hotel rooms, in which the cityscapes and landscapes flow more peacefully over the interiors and objects. The clarity of focus, sharp contrast of tones, and relatively minimal décor in *The Tower Bridge* photograph also eliminate the sense of the ephemeral in the image, created by the juxtaposition of memories of the past and the realities of the present. Despite the remove from Havana or his current home in exile, Morell's photograph of London represents a similarly unhomely space though the camera obscura projection. One way to approach these images in relation to Morell's photographs of Havana is to reconsider the definition of exile and its relation to a single or unique home space. Peréz Firmat's conception of exile, or "life on the hyphen" necessarily supports both the stability and the disruption of the home culture as part of a multifaceted articulation of exilic identity. Referring to the perhaps peculiar pleasures of exile, Edward Said notes that "seeing the 'entire world as a foreign land'" as the exile does, "makes

possible [an] originality of vision," which, though fraught with anxiety, offers immense creative potential.[295] Although deeply imbued with emotional loss, for both Peréz Firmat and Said exile is also a space of creativity that allows for plural or polyvalent understandings of home, cultural identity, and memory. The photographs of Havana, which suggest both the fragmentary nature of the past and the foreign nature of the present to the artist, are Morell's imagined homeland, his fictional, photographic "Havana of the mind." The camera obscura photographs—even those that do not refer to Havana—are visual representations of the hybrid, exilic spaces that speak to the generalized unhomeliness of Morell's camera obscura photographs as a series. In this light, Morell's camera obscura photographs present more than just a vision of the unhomely or an imagined homeland, but also the suggestion that, in the geographic, intellectual, and psychological spaces of exile, both everywhere and nowhere are home.

The Tales of the Tent: Collapsing Home and Diaspora in Scherezade García's *Paradise Redefined*

If there is a dwelling that typifies the extra-territorial experiences and cultural initiations that Bhabha describes as the unhomely, it is the tent. A tent is specifically designed for easy transportation from place to place and yet it also functions as a kind of home space. It is a tenuous home, however, and one with a highly porous barrier that enables the experience of the overlap of public and private spaces much more than a sturdier structure might. As a symbol, the tent evokes nomadic wanderings, annual migrations, refugee camps, and, more generally, the interstitial spaces of exile, waiting, and temporariness.[296] For Dominican-American artist

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[295] Edward Said, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 186.
[296] There is an interdisciplinary discourse about the tent as a multivalent symbol, including Susan Rasmussen, "The Tent as Cultural Symbol and Field Site: Social and Symbolic Space, 'Topos,' and Authority in a Tuareg Community," Anthropological Quarterly 69, 1 (January 1996): 14-26; John Durham Peters, "Exile, Nomadism, and

Scherezade García (b. 1966, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; lives and works in New York City), the tent as an unhomely space also has a deeper, culturally specific resonance as a sign of the Dominican diaspora in the United States. Referencing the tent through the photographic sculptures in her *Paradise Redefined* installation (2007), Scherezade demonstrates the complexity of both the migratory experience and the concept of home in the diaspora.[297] A member of the Dominican diaspora community herself, Scherezade frequently deploys the tent and other visual symbols of Dominican migration to visually describe aspects of the experience in her art practice.

Fully embracing the literary history of her name, the central female character in the Arabian Nights, also called Tales of a Thousand and One Nights, Scherezade sees herself as a diasporic storyteller—she produces visual tales to express "the urgency of a concept to be kept alive," just as the fictional Shahrazad kept herself alive by telling stories in the framing plot of the Arabian Nights.[298] In her artist statement, Scherezade explains that she "create[s] allegorical narratives by appropriating and transforming symbols and objects," including various items that for her directly reference Dominican life and the migration journey: life jackets, inner tubes, suitcases, mattresses, umbrellas, religious icons, newspaper clippings, and, of course, tents.[299] While tents may not seem as crucial to emigration by sea as the life jackets and inflated inner tubes that appear elsewhere in Scherezade's artworks, in the Dominican Republic the tent has a

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Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon," in Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place, Hamid Naficy, ed. (New York & London: Routledge, 1999); and Nicholas Blomley, Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), among others. Peters in particular writes about the tent as the symbolic dwelling for many biblical and historical diasporic groups (24-31).

[297] I have not been able to find an account in her own words about why Scherezade García is typically referred to by her first name only in art criticism, interviews, and other writings. There are many examples in print and online in which this is the case. For example, in a review of *Paradise Redefined*, curator and critic Elvis Fuentes refers to the artist as Scherezade and notes that just "Scherezade" is how "she prefers to sign her works." "Scherezade García: Lehman College Art Gallery," Art Nexus 6, 64 (April 2007): 140. I follow this tendency here to avoid confusion and, later in this chapter, to productively examine the utility of pseudonyms in Spanish Caribbean diasporic art practices.

[298] See http://scherezade.net (accessed January 14, 2014).

[299] Ibid.

special place in some migration narratives. For those Dominicans who cannot afford a commercial airline flight to the U.S. or, lacking relatives who might sponsor them, plan to enter illegally, the tent is a crucial aspect of the sea journey to Puerto Rico and then, often, to the mainland U.S. Indeed, fleeting villages of field tents regularly appear along the northern and eastern seashores of the island of Hispaniola, a sign that there are people waiting for a *yola,* the name for the substandard and usually overloaded boats on which to make the dangerous journey to Puerto Rico and beyond.[300] In the case of the Dominican migrants, the tents on the beaches serve as the spaces of the unhomely, the interstitial sites where the cultural and personal condition of diaspora is initiated.

As a diasporic Dominican, Scherezade has personal experience with Bhabha's sense of the unhomely. In 1986, Scherezade migrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic, where she had attended the Escuela de Artes y Diseño in Altos de Chavón.[301] Settling in New York City, Scherezade attended Parsons School of Design and the City College of New York for fine arts.[302] While her primary media are painting, drawing, and printmaking, Scherezade also frequently produces installation pieces, such as her *Paradise Redefined* installation at the Lehman College Art Gallery in New York City.[303] This exhibition draws deeply on Scherezade's own knowledge of Dominican migration, as well as the experiences of others in the Dominican-American community in New York City. *Paradise Redefined* is comprised of a series of six life-sized sculptures resembling field tents, all made from a semi-sheer fabric onto which Scherezade printed digital photographic images. The digital photographic prints present close up views of storefronts and street scenes in traditionally Dominican neighborhoods in Manhattan and

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[300] Scherezade García, "From *Amor Eterno* to *Sabana de la Mar*," Small Axe 19 (February 2006): 103.
[301] See http://serieproject.org/artist-in-residence-spotlight-scherezade-garcia/ (accessed January 14, 2014).
[302] Fuentes, 140.
[303] Scherezade's other recent installation pieces include *Theories of Freedom* at the Long Island University and City College Art Gallery in 2010 and *This Side of Paradise* at the Jersey City Museum in 2003.

Brooklyn, including Washington Heights. Projected onto the wall behind the tents is a looped video of waves crashing endlessly onto a beach in Sabana de la Mar, a common embarkation spot for *yolas* in the northeast Dominican Republic (fig. 47). Sabana de la Mar is an especially poignant spot in the history of the contemporary Dominican diaspora, given the frequency of the *yola* embarkations and the sometimes tragic results. Writing about a 2003 performance piece she created of the same name, Scherezade describes Sabana de la Mar as "the town from which my fellow Dominicans have launched uncounted fateful voyages to Puerto Rico."[304] Her comment suggests the danger of migration on a *yola*, as well as the impact such failed journeys have on Dominican society. The *yolas* are often less than seaworthy vessels without navigation technology, safety equipment like life jackets, or ample supplies of food and water. There are many horrific accounts of disabled boats drifting far off course and all of the migrants perishing at sea.[305] Although the route by sea is fairly direct, the *yolas* must also pass through the narrow Mona Strait between the islands, a stretch of deep water heavily populated by sharks, causing further fatalities.[306] Scherezade references the increasing frequency of these grisly tragedies at sea in her work, citing the "many newspaper and television news reports of the perils of the passage across the Mona Channel" as the inspiration for many of her migration themed projects.[307]

Elsewhere in the *Paradise Redefined* installation, inflated plastic inner tubes hang suspended from the gallery ceiling. These inner tubes further connect the photographic tent sculptures and the looping video of waves with the idea of Dominican migration. Referencing another highly dangerous and often fatal means of attempting to cross the stretch of sea between

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[304] García, 104. Scherezade produced the video and performance piece *Sabana de la Mar* in collaboration with Dominican curator Alanna Lockward in Sabana de la Mar, Dominican Republic, in 2003.
[305] See news accounts like "Dominicans Saved from Sea Tell of Attacks and Deaths of Thirst," New York Times, August 12, 2004, among many others from U.S. and Latin American newspapers.
[306] Benjamin Genocchio, "With Expectations of a Better Life," New York Times, December 17, 2006.
[307] García, 104.

the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, these inner tubes are painted gold and positioned so they cast circular shadows onto the projected video. The shadow inner tubes appear to bob and sway over the surface of the water, visually integrating their forms with the projected representation of the roiling Caribbean Sea. Some of the golden inner tubes also hover over the tent sculptures like halos, referencing religious imagery of angels or icons, and seeming to foretell a tragic end for some of the tents' presumed migratory inhabitants as they wait for the designated *yolas* to arrive. The dangerous migration voyage from Sabana de la Mar and other points along the coast of Hispaniola to Puerto Rico by sea, and later, on to the United States, is thus initiated in these temporary dwellings on the beach, directly connecting the Dominican diaspora to the tent as a fundamental site of unhomeliness.

While much of Scherezade's installation—the tents, the inner tubes, the sea—refers to the starting point of the migration journey, other visual and aural elements of the piece are firmly rooted in its aftermath: life in the diaspora in the United States. The juxtaposition of the experiences before and after migration—the coupling of the past and the present—through the sensory elements of *Paradise Redefined* further emphasizes the idea that the tent sculptures are symbolic of the transitory, interstitial sites of the Dominican diaspora in the United States. For example, the recorded voices that emanate from each of the photographic tent sculptures make it seem as if these unhomely dwellings do indeed have occupants inside.[308] Rather than describing the wait for a *yola* on the beach before migrating, however, these voices come from those who have already made and survived the journey. To achieve this effect in *Paradise Redefined*, Scherezade recorded the voices of residents of Washington Heights, an established Dominican diaspora neighborhood in Manhattan, as they recounted their various migration journeys from

[308] For the account of the aural components of the installation, I rely on descriptions in the reviews of *Paradise Redefined* by Elvis Fuentes and others (140), as well as Scherezade's own discussions of the installation on her website (http://scherezade.net) and in her photo-essay "From *Amor Eterno* to *Sabana de la Mar*."

the Dominican Republic to the United States.[309] These diasporic voices take over Scherezade's role as the storyteller in the installation, relating in Spanish their memories of their own migration stories and of their lives in the United States. The voices therefore occupy the position of both the prospective migrants waiting on the beaches and of those who have already arrived and are established in the United States. Further, these migration stories, told by anonymous Dominicans in the United States, aurally represent the shared collective memory of the diasporic group. The individual stories lend a sense of intimacy to the exhibition, as through the viewers are privy to the private world inside the tent. Brought together in the same space, these private, individual memories form the basis for the larger, public collective memory of the Dominican diaspora as well. Through both the auditory and symbolic elements of the photographic tent sculptures, Scherezade neatly collapses the period before and the period after the journeys of the diasporic Dominicans into the same moment, overlapping the past and the present, and the public and private, just as Morell did in his camera obscura photographs. The overheard recordings of the Dominicans relating the collective memories of migration and their identity in the diaspora remind the viewer that the tent is an inherently unhomely space, a hybrid space where the past and the present, as well as the private and the public, intersect and comingle.

In addition to the auditory elements of the installation, the photographic images on the exteriors of the six tents further confuse and collapse the past and the present, and the public and private, into an unhomely space. To produce the photographic tent sculptures, Scherezade took full color digital photographic images of storefronts, building façades, and street scenes in Washington Heights, Brooklyn, and other Dominican neighborhoods in New York City (figs. 48

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[309] Fuentes, 140. Fuentes notes that "Scherezade has used this approach before. In *Sabana de la Mar,* she recorded the testimonies of survivors of *yola* journeys attempting to reach Puerto Rico from Dominican shores."

and 49).[310] She then printed the photographic images onto a semi-translucent fabric and, for several of the tent sculptures, painted graffiti-like symbols and imagery onto the fabric. Subtly illuminated from inside, the tent sculptures glow softly in the darkened gallery space (see fig. 47), enhancing the sense that the tents are on a beach at night next to crashing waves. Through the voices and photographs, the tents are also co-present with the busy urban spaces of New York City, the locus of the Dominican diaspora in the U.S. Scherezade folds the entire diasporic journey, from sandy beach to city sidewalk, into one simultaneous moment; she deftly infuses both the photographic images and the tent forms with a potent sense of the unhomely. For example, the digital photographs on the side of one tent sculpture present two tightly cropped images of storefronts in a Dominican neighborhood in New York City (fig. 48). The close up, eye-level view of the building exteriors replicates the vision of someone at ground level in front of shops and the tents are almost human scale, enabling the viewer to imagine him or herself walking along the sidewalk in front of them. The specific storefronts Scherezade photographed, Las Mercedes Botánica on the left and a shop selling *chicharrones* (a snack of fried pork skins or other meat) on the right, will be recognizable to most Dominicans in the U.S. diaspora. *Botánicas* are retail stores that specialize in a range of products related to alternative medicine and specialized religious practices, usually found in urban areas with concentrated Latin American and Caribbean diaspora populations.[311] *Chicharrones* shops, casual restaurants that sell a variety of homemade dishes and snacks, are also common to Latino neighborhoods.

Similarly, in figure 49, the digital photograph on the tent sculpture features another row of storefronts, shown at a slight upward angle to include the upper stories of the buildings, likely

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[310] Ibid., and http://scherezade.net (accessed January 14, 2014).

[311] For a further discussion of the role of *botánicas* in Spanish Caribbean diaspora communities in the U.S., see Anahí Viladrich, "Beyond the Supernatural: Latino Healers Treating Latino Immigrants in NYC," The Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies 2, 1 (Spring 2006): 156-170; and Viladrich, "*Botánicas* in America's Backyard: Uncovering the World of Latino Healers' Herb-healing Practices in New York City," Human Organization 65, 4 (Winter 2006): 407-419.

apartments. The photographic image permits the illusion that the viewer is on the street and part of the urban scene. The photograph presents a line of shop signs in Spanish or in a mix of Spanish and English: Mi Pequeña Fashions and Estrella Deli Grocery. There is also another *botánica* pictured, and El Brillo Barber Shop. Importantly, the types of businesses that Scherezade photographed for the tent sculptures—*botánicas* and *chicharrones* shops, as well as beauty salons and barber shops—are precisely the places that one might be invited to spend time talking, eating, relaxing, and visiting with others from the neighborhood, rather than merely conducting a transaction and leaving.[312] The shops in the photographs, which are culturally specific to the Dominican diaspora in New York City, are places of comfort and familiarity, and of intimacy and caregiving. The commercial and communal locations in the photographs are spaces that extend the sense of home beyond an actual residence into the public sphere, even in the diaspora. In *Paradise Redefined*, Scherezade melds the photographic representations of the storefronts in the diasporic space, Washington Heights, with the form of the tent, an inherently unhomely dwelling and a reference to migration from the home island. The photographic sculptures juxtapose the private, interior world of the tent and the public, exterior spaces of the city, and also rupture the usual distinction between the past and the present. In this way, Scherezade utilizes an unique form of photography to confuse and collapse the past and the present, and the public and private, into an unhomely space.

The richly detailed, full-color digital photographs printed onto the surface of the tent sculptures in Scherezade's *Paradise Redefined* installation are seductively illusionistic representations of the streets of Washington Heights. The close-up angles, tight cropping, and

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[312] For an in-depth discussion of the social role of beauty shops and other public spaces and the production of Dominican identity, see Ginetta E. B. Candelario, Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops (London & Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Viladrich also emphasizes the importance of *botánicas* in Latino communities as places where specialized knowledge is shared among residents.

human scale of the photographic images replicate the visual experience of walking down the street from within the gallery space. Laid over the tent structure and positioned in front of the video of waves on the beach, the Washington Heights street scenes in the photographs become at once familiar and foreign to the viewer, collapsing the two distinct places that the installation's forms and images represent. But there is another visual element that breaks down the ostensible reality of the photographic images on the tent sculptures: the graffiti-like markings that Scherezade has painted over the surface of the photographs. The painted symbols are part of Scherezade's aesthetic iconography and further references to the migration experience, laid over the photographic representations of the diaspora space, again erasing the distinction between past and present. In figure 48, a series of four cartoon-like, bright magenta (a favorite color of Scherezade's, used frequently elsewhere in her body of work) box forms are arranged vertically over the photograph of the Las Mercedes Botánica storefront on the left. The flaps of the boxes are curled open to reveal churning, splashing blue water filling each and splashing over the sides. A reference again to the *yola* migration journey across the Mona Strait, the painted emblems do not align visually with the photographic image, creating a jarring effect. The boxes and their liquid contents, with their curved lines and undulating edges, contrast with the predominantly horizontal lines created by the shop sign, window blinds, and security gate in the photograph. The paint is rendered transparently so that the details of the photograph beneath it can be discerned, but the hot pink of the boxes and bright blue of the waves clash sharply with the whites, greys, and faded reds of the storefront.

On the right side of the tent sculpture, over the photograph of the *chicharrones* shop, Scherezade has painted another graffiti image that appears frequently in her artworks: a childlike figure adorned with wings and a halo-like crown, reminiscent of a religious icon. The image is

similar to several of Scherezade's paintings, including *The Dominican York*, from the series *Island of Many Gods* (fig. 50).[313] As in these paintings, the head of the figure painted over the photograph of the *chicharrones* shop is encircled by a halo-like form as though in an early Renaissance fresco. In *The Dominican York*, the halo is comprised of airplanes, twisting in flight in a circular form around the curly-haired head (another plane hangs from the figure's neck in gold sequins). Scherezade crowned the figure painted on the tent in *Paradise Redefined* with another sign of Dominican migration more in keeping with the themes of the installation: water. Rivulets and waves of blue water flow around the figure's head and down its neck, only slightly obscuring the Presidente beer sign hanging in the window in the photograph. In addition to connecting *Paradise Redefined* to Scherezade's larger body of work and reinforcing the theme of migration, the painted figure functions like the images of boxes of water to rupture the representational potential of the photograph. The graffiti painted onto the tent sculptures undo the seemingly objective photographic representations of Washington Heights, comingling them with Scherezade's subjective, personal iconography of migration. In flattening the representational space of the photographs, Scherezade's painted images also serve to remind the viewer that the images are fictional spaces through which to creatively consider the unhomely condition of diaspora. Just as Morell layers a vision of Havana's historical past over imagery of its present, *Paradise Redefined* juxtaposes disparate imagery on the surface of the tent sculptures to visually represent what Bhabha describes as the unhomely state of exile and diaspora.

In Scherezade's installation *Paradise Redefined*, the sculptural representations of tents on the beach in Sabana de la Mar, Dominican Republic, are also the photographic representations of

[313] In addition to the causes and consequences of migration, Scherezade's body of work references religious imagery and the hybridity of the Caribbean since the fifteenth century, evident in the painted icon-like figures that appear frequently. In her artist statement, she describes her interest in the appearance of "mestizo and barroquism as consequences of colonization, the inversion of traditional beliefs of salvation, and the questioning of religious and social uses of the notion of paradise." http://scherezade.net (accessed January 14, 2014).

the *botánicas* and barbershops of Washington Heights in the Dominican diaspora in the U.S. This visual transference and simultaneous co-presence of the two disparate places occurs through the artist's use of photographic images, which become both the form of the tents in the home space—occupied by people about to migrate away from home—and an indexical representation of the space of diaspora in the U.S. Unlike Morell's work, which is very much about the medium of photography itself as an image-making technology, Scherezade engages photography's basic representational potentials in order to create the idea of coexisting spaces. In this way, the installation collapses the experience of migration, from waiting on the beach in a tent to walking down the street in Washington Heights. The periods before and after the migration journey are endured and examined all together in the same moment, and the installation itself comes to represent the interstitial space the unhomely. Juxtaposing the photographic images of the diaspora space and the voices of the Dominican migrants with the crashing waves, the symbols of migration like the inner tubes, and, especially, the form of the tent, Scherezade ruptures the distinctions between past and present, public and private, and home and diaspora.

Blurred Lives: Adál's *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* Series

Artist Adál Maldonado (b. 1948, Utuado, Puerto Rico; lives and works in New York City and San Juan) identifies as a Nuyorican, a person of Puerto Rican heritage who lives in the New York diaspora.[314] A truly interstitial and unhomely cultural designation, the word Nuyorican itself linguistically blurs the boundaries between geographic places and even between languages,

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[314] James Estrin, "Puerto Rican Identity, In and Out of Focus," New York Times, August 28, 2012, http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/28/an-artists-search-fo-puerto-rican-identity/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0 (accessed January 17, 2014). According to Jorge Duany, "Nuyorican" was originally a pejorative label that referred *only* to those born and raised in New York City, but "it is now commonly applied on the island to those who return as well as those who remain abroad." The term still has certain class distinctions and implications about the authenticity of Puerto Rican identity. Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 74. "Nuyorican" is often considered a distinct through related cultural identity to "Boricua," a Puerto Rican from the island the Puerto Rico.

borrowing from both Spanish and English (*Nueva York* merges with Puerto Rican). Adál immigrated to the United States from Puerto Rico in 1961 with his mother and sister, settling first in Trenton, New Jersey and later in the Bronx.[315] He studied photography at the San Francisco Art Institute from 1973 to 1975 and later returned to New York City to join the burgeoning Nuyorican cultural movement of the late 1960s and 1970s.[316] As with the work of many other writers, musicians, poets, and artists involved in the Nuyorican movement, Adál's art practice addresses the contemporary situation of migration between Puerto Rico and the United States and the resulting sense of unhomeliness. Many of his works also seek to represent a community with little control over its own depiction in the media and visual culture of the diaspora space. For example, his 2002 video/sculpture piece *West Side Story Upside Down, Backwards, Sideways and Out of Focus (La Maleta de Futriaco Martínez*) utilized a standard symbol of migration: a suitcase. He combined this reference to U.S. migration with clips from the movie-musical West Side Story, historical documentary footage of life in East Harlem (also known as *el Barrio*, the neighborhood), and scenes from live performances by his fellow Nuyorican musicians and poets, including Tito Puente and Pedro Pietri, among others.[317] For the sculpture, Adál embedded a small LCD screen in the side of a plain brown leather suitcase. Scenes from the film West Side Story, which have been strategically and variously blurred, reversed, played out of sequence, slowed down, and sped up, play on the screen in a continuous loop. The historical documentary footage of Nuyoricans on the street and of musicians and poets

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[315] Estrin. Like Scherezade, Adál uses only his first name professionally, with an accent on the second "a" to ensure correct pronunciation.
[316] Lisa Blanco, "Un mundo fuera de foco: entrevista a Adál Maldonado," Metacultura blog post, August 21, 2011, http://lisablanco.blogspot.com/2011/08/un-mundo-fuera-de-foco-entrevista-adal.html (accessed January 17, 2014). The well-known Nuyorican Poet's Café was formed in 1973 and provided a public forum for these artists and activists.
[317] West Side Story, film, directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins (1961; Burbank, CA: United Artists). Tito Puente is a well-known Puerto Rican salsa musician and bandleader and Pedro Pietri (also known as the Reverend Pedro Pietri) was a poet who collaborated with Adál on *El Puerto Rican Embassy*, composing a manifesto for the project.

performing is interspersed among these manipulated film scenes (the soundtracks from the performances are also interposed with that of the film scenes throughout). This renders the film's problematic narrative about a cross-cultural romance and the violent clashes between rival gangs completely incoherent and fragmented. Rather than positioning Nuyoricans in a singular and stereotypical manner, *West Side Story Upside Down* works to complicate and disrupt such clichéd representations. It presents a different view of the many Puerto Ricans living in New York City, representing a more diverse and dynamic population than depicted by the movie footage alone and revealing a rich cultural history. Yet the chaotic, distorted, and fragmented style of the video imagery also suggests that life in the U.S. diaspora has a jarring effect on the cultural identity and collective memory of Nuyoricans.

Adál's *West Side Story Upside Down* disrupts stereotypical representations of Puerto Ricans in New York City (like those portrayed in West Side Story), and then counters them with clear examples of real Nuyorican culture in action: poets and musicians performing, people working and socializing. Using the recognizable iconography of immigration and visual strategies like appropriation, montage, distortion, and sequencing, Adál complicates Nuyorican cultural identity and suggests an alternate collective memory based on the community's own aesthetic production.[318] Adál utilizes similar visual and formal tactics in his photography series to address the unique situation of the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States. In particular, in his *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series (1995-96), Adál deliberately uses visual distortion—intentionally creating the image so the subject appears out of focus—to undermine photography's own representational potentials. This strategy draws attention to the subsequent

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[318] In his use of montage, sequencing, and distortion, Adál's work has been compared to the photography of the European Surrealists. His early photographic work was featured in the exhibition *Poetic Injury: The Surrealist Legacy in Postmodern Photography* at The Alternative Museum in New York in 1987, and in the catalogue for the exhibition: G. Roger Denson and Suzaan Boettger, eds., Poetic Injury: The Surrealist Legacy in Postmodern Photography (New York: The Alternative Museum, 1987).

psychic fragmentation of collective memory and the subtle blurring of identity for the many Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. diaspora. While an inherently subjective medium, the indexicality of photography and its strong visual resemblance to the real world often conceal its constructed qualities. Photography's abilities to slyly deceive and replicate reality have been analyzed by many theorists, including Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, and John Tagg.[319] In an attempt to represent the unhomely state of Nuyoricans in the diaspora, Adál undoes photography's referential capacity by obviously manipulating the images in *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans*. Purposefully blurring the photographs he takes of the Nuyorican artists and poets, Adál removes all but a trace of visual similarity from his portrait series. The people Adál represents in the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series are rendered quite literally out of focus, yet they are also metaphorically fuzzy, revealing a cultural identity and collective memory gone blurry and indistinct in the diaspora.

A series of twenty portraits, *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* includes photographs of prominent cultural figures like musician Tito Puente, poets Mariposa and Miguel Algarín, and visual artists Sophie Rivera, Antonio Martorell, Papo Colo, and Pepon Osorio, as well as portraits of everyday Nuyoricans whom Adál encountered around New York City. Taken with a single lens reflex camera, the portrait photographs are deliberately printed out of focus in the darkroom and then scanned and distorted further digitally (see figs. 51 through 54).[320] In deliberately blurring and obscuring the faces of the Nuyoricans, Adál disrupts portrait photography's traditional goal: to reveal the distinctive traits and the intrinsic personality of the sitter. Rather than reveal the specificity and individuality of the sitters with visual verisimilitude,

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[319] Susan Sontag, On Photography (London: Penguin, 1977), 11; Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography (New York: Macmillian, 1981), 10-11; John Tagg, The Burden of Representation (University of Minnesota Press, 1988) and The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning (University of Minnesota Press, 2009); among others.
[320] Estrin. See also http://elpuertoricanembassy.org/la-gallery/.

however, the individual portraits in the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series are distorted and blurred, just barely discernable from one another. The blurring of the photographs erases most of the meaningful visual details that reveal the individual qualities of the Nuyoricans represented, making recognition, or even basic categorization based on type, a difficult task. In some presentations of the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series, Adál removes even the titles, which reveal the names of the sitters, making the blurred photographs truly anonymous. A few of the photographs playfully subvert this reduction into type: in *Sophie Rivera*, for example, the artist presents herself to the camera in a standard pose but wears large sunglasses and has a large pipe in her mouth (fig. 55). In other photographs from the series, however, the subjects' features melt into the vagueness, rendering them indistinguishable and almost unrecognizable, like the portraits of the poets, *Miguel Algarin* and *Mariposa* (figs. 51 and 52). This basic refusal of individual recognition, even on the level or general type or category, undoes portrait photography's representational capacities. Eliding the identifiable presence of prominent artistic Nuyoricans, the out of focus images suggest that cultural identity becomes blurry and difficult to discern clearly in the space of the diaspora.

In addition to undermining the representational potentials of photography as a visual medium, Adál plays with common photographic forms to represent the fragmented sense of Nuyorican cultural identity. In the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series, he appropriates the mugshot, an institutionalized and standardized form of photography intended to assist in the identification and classification of its subjects. To replicate the mugshot, Adál photographed each subject from the shoulders up, directly facing the camera, usually without expression or gesture.[321] The images are made even more standardized by the frame around each photograph, a

[321] See Allen Sekula's now-classic essay, "The Body and the Archive," for further discussion of the instrumental uses of photography within the archive paradigm. October 39 (Winter 1986): 3-64.

thick black border which mimics the edge of film on a contact sheet, further conveying their intentional uniformity. The reference to identification documents is intentional, as the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series grew out of Adál's on-going *El Puerto Rican Passport* project, in which he issues passports indicating one's symbolic citizenship in a conceptual nation, El Spirit Republic de Puerto Rico. The resemblance to passport photos suggests that the images can offer some meaningful information about their subjects—nationality, age, name, place of birth—as a means to identify and categorize these Nuyoricans. Yet this project quickly becomes impossible: the blurry distortion of Adál's images subverts any instrumental uses of the portraits. While the standardized visual forms and poses suggest that the photographs might be used to assign a class, status, or nationality to their subjects, or to identify them with the archival apparatus, the distortion of the images denies any such endeavors. Instead, the Nuyoricans represented in the photographs continue to exist in an interstitial space, both inside and outside the photographic archive simultaneously. In this way, the photographs in the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* reveal an unclear sense of cultural identity and visually reinforce the unhomely aspects of life in the U.S. diaspora.

Adál's photographs reveal the ways the unhomely situation of diaspora and their blurry citizenship status affect the cultural identity of Nuyoricans. Due to its status as an *Estado Libre Asociado* (Associated Free State, in Puerto Rican terms) or a Commonwealth state (in the U.S. government's terms), Puerto Rico occupies a unique position among Spanish Caribbean migrants to the United States. Unlike Cubans or Dominicans, Puerto Ricans are the "only immigrant group to have U.S. citizenship before immigrating," complicating the very idea that they are in fact a diaspora population.[322] Despite their legal citizenship status, Puerto Ricans who migrate to the U.S. are not automatically granted equal rights, and the transition to life in New York City (or

[322] Juan Flores, Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity (New York: Arte Publico Press, 1993), 143.

elsewhere in the United States) is not an easy one.[323] According to Adál, "although Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, they are often compelled to live as virtual foreigners in their own land, a situation that produces a sense of psychic fragmentation, of being split between two identities."[324] The urgent issues of fragmented identity and dislocation experienced by Cubans and Dominicans in the diaspora are still felt acutely by Puerto Ricans who move (albeit with more freedom and ease) between locations. In the case of Puerto Rico, it is often the social and cultural boundaries, rather than the geopolitical ones, which ultimately create the sense of unhomeliness in the diaspora. The quality of being *desenfocado* (out-of-focus) affects both Nuyoricans and Puerto Ricans still on the island. They have an "out-of-focus sense of identity," Adál claims, caused of the island's "mental colonization, first by Spain, and then by the United States."[325] In the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series, the photographs reveal this diasporic sense of fragmentation and out-of-focus identity. The lack of focus in the photographs reproduces the unclear sense of identity created by the situation of diaspora and expresses the blurred political and psychological conditions of the Nuyoricans. The blurry, out-of-focus photographs suggest that the series is a collective portrait that represents the blurred cultural, political, and psychological conditions in which Nuyoricans live, rendering this condition visible through the photographs. Adál's art practice addresses the contemporary situation of migration between Puerto Rico and the United States and the resulting sense of unhomeliness. The Nuyoricans in Adál's portraits actually occupy the unhomely situation represented in the images; they are always both home and away, inside and outside the culture of the United States.

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[323] While Commonwealth status gave Puerto Ricans some of the rights granted to citizens of the states (including the right to travel freely into and around the fifty states), it did not grant the right to vote for the president of the United States unless one has established residency in one of the states.
[324] http://elpuertoricanembassy.org/la-gallery/ (accessed January 17, 2014)
[325] Estrin.

Two of the Spanish Caribbean diasporic artists discussed in this chapter use pseudonyms in their professional art practices. In the space of the U.S. diaspora, Scherezade García and Adál Maldonado are transformed by their assumed artistic designations into just "Scherezade" and "Adál." Even Abelardo Morell goes by "Abe," a condensed and Anglicized version of his given Cuban name. Their reasons for adopting pseudonyms or nicknames are likely complex and personal, but going by an adopted name does signal a perceived shift in identity, an occurrence common to those living in the situation diaspora. As these artists experience the multiple cross-cultural initiations of life in the diaspora, the new names further represent the unhomely space, making the artists themselves the interstitial sites where past and present, and public and private, intersect. In taking on a new diasporic identity and producing photographic artworks that deal with the situation of diaspora, Morell, Scherezade, and Adál each explore and embody the experience of and sensations of unhomeliness. As an artistic, imaginative expression of the unhomely state, the pseudonyms and photographic artworks of Morell, Scherezade, and Adál reveal unhomeliness to be a state not only of disorientations and loss, but also a space of creativity and pleasure.

Conclusion

My dissertation reconsiders photography as a system of visual and aesthetic representation within the context of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas. I approached the project as an opportunity to test out a number of important ideas intimately related to the history and theory of photography: visual consumption and photographic afterlives; circulation, the archive, and collective memory; photographic embodiment and the socio-cultural imaginary; and the unhomely and diasporic creativity. Examined through the lenses of these critical concepts, I situate the Spanish Caribbean case studies I write about, and photography *writ large*, as a form of visuality rather than as a visual medium as such. Further, these ideas illuminate how deeply photography affects, to use Hal Foster's succinct description of visuality, "how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein," particularly as understood through the varied range of photographic images and practices I present here.[326]

My consideration of photography as a way of seeing and as a form of constructed vision, rather than merely as a visual image, a technology, or an artistic medium, has significant implications for how we as scholars consider varied photographic representations and processes as tied to subjective and time-based experiences like memory, nostalgia, embodiment, and identity. While my theoretical contention that photography is in fact a constructed form of vision with an important relationship to these subjective experiences can be broadly applied, I focus here on case studies from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and their U.S. diasporas in the late twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. In limiting my scope to these specific socio-cultural and psychic spaces, I was able to refine my arguments about how photography

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[326] Hal Foster, Vision and Visuality (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), ix.

circulates among spaces, how it represents and reproduces memory and identity, and how it relates to the affective situation of diaspora within the contemporary Spanish Caribbean.

As I note in the introduction to the project, I consider both photography and the Spanish Caribbean as inherently fragmented, heterogeneous, and diverse cultural forms and areas of inquiry. I continue to believe that this archipelagic incoherence is an important critical feature of both photography and the Spanish Caribbean and that this fragmentation is a crucial point of intersection between the disciplinary areas I explore in this project. A shared sense of fragmentation and an essential incoherence among discrete units does not always produce a similar sense of equivalence and parity. Indeed, in researching and writing this project I discovered that Cuba and its U.S. diaspora, though socio-politically disconnected from each other, dominate the critical scholarship and conversation on the art and visual culture of the region. As several of the chapters adhere to a tripartite argument structure, with one section in each devoted to case studies from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico or their corresponding U.S. diasporas, the bias toward Cuba was increasingly pronounced. At the outset of the project, I assumed I would be able to make up for or even write through the disparities and deficiencies in the archives and in the scholarship through comparison, or by considering photographic case studies from the U.S. diasporas as well as the Spanish Caribbean nation-states. What I ultimately discovered, however, was that the comparative methodology also had its associated deficiencies when applied to the diversity and fragmentation of the Caribbean.

While I was unable to correct or offset this imbalance for this iteration of the project, my work did unearth a number of important scholarly risks engaging with the Spanish Caribbean as a complex, diverse socio-cultural, psychic, and geographic location with a shared linguistic and historical legacy. In subsequent versions of this project, I will attend more closely to these

methodological perils and the inherent disparities in the archives, the published research, the museum exhibitions, and the general scholarly discourse of this area. The ways in which Cuba dominates this project also productively reveals that the Spanish Caribbean as a framework has its own internal limits, which makes achieving perfect equivalences difficult if not impossible. It is not just that there is a gap created by using a national frame rather than a cultural frame, but also that such a comparative project runs the risk of homogenizing distinct case studies in an effort toward parity, or even of creating a narrative of exceptionalism, a particular danger in the case of Cuba, as my dissertations demonstrates.

My motivation to continue the research presented here rests in the knotty nexus between photography, as a socio-cultural practice and as a way of seeing, and the expanded, multivalent places of the Spanish Caribbean, a space largely obscured from its histories. The varied application of photography in the articulation and representation of memory, history, race, class, and culture within the Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas offers an important window into larger ideas about visuality and the visual culture of the region. Examining this point of intersection is an attempt to write the Spanish Caribbean back into photography's histories, a necessary task in the context of an expanded and global art history. The affective and formal resonances among the photographic images that I discuss, which I have pulled through the project, are a way to begin this important work. In writing the photography of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its U.S. diasporas into this larger history, however, I must also remain aware of the moments when the incoherent fragments in the archipelago will simply *not* cohere and a significant gap in the archive endures. Art historian Krista A. Thompson concisely articulates this scholarly dilemma and urges fellow scholars of the Caribbean to remain committed to the promises of this area of research, suggesting they must "radically interrogate

the object and meaning of artistic and visual production, and be open to the possibility that some significant acts of representation or forms of visual culture in the Caribbean may lie beyond the boundary of the visible world."[327] This dissertation is my attempt to follow this vital command and also to uncover those places where photography of the contemporary Spanish Caribbean and its diasporas might function as a way of seeing rather than as image or object, rather than as something merely seen.

[327] Krista A. Thompson "Call the Police. Call the Army. Call God. And Let's Have One Helluva Big Story," Small Axe (February 2008): 181.

Figures

Figure 1. José Manuel Fors, *Archipelago*, 2012, reproductions of historical and archival photographs, installation view in the Krause Center for Innovation Gallery at Foothill College, Los Altos Hills, California, courtesy of Ron Herman

Figure 2. José Manuel Fors, *Archipelago* (detail), 2012, reproductions of historical and archival photographs, installation view in the Krause Center for Innovation Gallery at Foothill College, Los Altos Hills, California, courtesy of Ron Herman

Figure 3. Tourist photographer and his “antiquated” camera outside the Capitolio Building, Havana, Cuba, May 2012, photo by author

Figure 4. Walker Evans, *Fruit Stand, Havana,* 1933, in Judith Keller, Walker Evans: The Getty Museum Collection (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995). Also in the Walker Evans Archive, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1994.251.552

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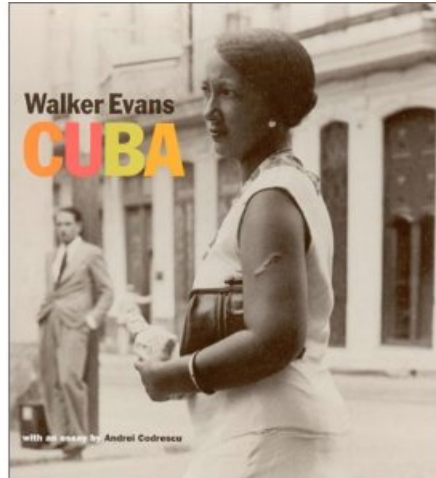

Figure 7. Cropped version of Walker Evans, *Woman Standing on the Street, Havana*, 1933, cover of Walker Evans: Cuba (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001)

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Figure 10. Andrew L. Moore, *Campoamor, Vista Oeste*, 1999, color photograph, from Andew L. Moore, Inside Havana (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2002), © Andrew L. Moore

Figure 11. Photographer unknown, *Miramar Yacht Club*, ca. 1951, digital image from scanned color photograph, Flickr.com/© Dos Épocas, 2007. Caption written by Dos Épocas: "Miramar Yacht Club. Ramon Villalobos (C), owner of the Havana Shipyards, spending a day at the Miramar Yacht Club with family members. Circa 1951."

Figure 12. Photographer unknown, *Pre-Castro Daily Life*, ca. 1951, digital image from scanned color photograph. Flickr.com/© Dos Épocas, 2007. Caption written by Dos Épocas: "Pre-Castro Daily Life. A father with his two children in the yard of their family home in Havana's Miramar neighborhood. Circa 1951."

Figure 13. Photographer unknown, *Matthew, Jon, and Kelly Zinsli*, ca. 1988, color photograph, collection of the author

Figure 14. Photographer unknown, *Untitled (Object No. 51, TPC Album 250, Tarjetas de felicitaciones, published by American Photo Studios S.A.)*, ca. 1960-61, machine-colored picture postcard of the Malecón in Havana, Cuba, La Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana, Cuba. Text: "*Le deseamos todo género de prosperidad en el Año Nuevo*/Wishing you every kind of prosperity in the New Year"

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Figure 17. Photographer unknown, Memories of the Cuba We Left Behind booklet, ca. 1960, digital image from scanned color photographic reproduction. Flickr.com/© Dos Épocas, 2007. Caption written by Dos Épocas: “A booklet published in the early 1960s titled Memories of the Cuba We Left Behind, depicting images of pre-Castro Cuba.”

Figures 18 and 19. Photographer unknown, *Catedral—Ciudad Trujillo, Rep. Dom*, front (left) and back (right), n.d., color picture postcard with handwritten text in pencil, Tito Enrique Cánepa Collection, Dominican Studies Institute, City University of New York, New York City

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Figures 22 and 23. Photographer unknown, *Juan A Paulino and Family, Stgo, R.D. (Santiago de los Caballeros, República Dominicana)*, front (left) and back (right), May 20, 1962, black-and-white photograph, Juan A. Paulino Collection, Dominican Studies Institute, City University of New York, New York City

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Figure 29. Photographer unknown, *Puerto Rican woman carries a young boy while waiting to board an airplane from San Juan to New York*, 1946, black-and-white photograph, OGPRUS/Archivos Históricos de la Migración Records, New York State Archives Digital Collections/Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, New York City

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Figure 31. Exterior of building on Calle Línea #504, e/D y E, Vedado, Havana, Cuba. Site of Crispin Gurholt, *Live Photo #23: Havana, Cuba*, 2012, installation and performance, photo by author

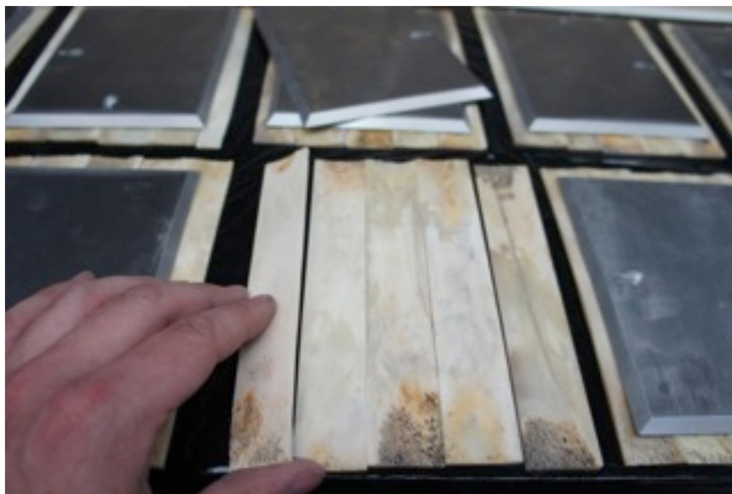

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Figure 36. Raquel Paiewonsky, *Sin título/Untitled*, from the series *Enlace*, 2012, color photograph mounted on acrylic

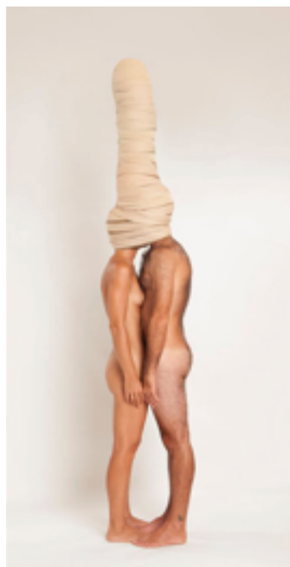

Figure 37. Raquel Paiewonsky*, Sin título/Untitled*, from the series *Enlace*, 2012, color photograph mounted on acrylic

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Figure 39. Karlo Andrei Ibarra, *Untitled*, from the series *Wall Maps*, 2005, color digital print

Figure 40. Karlo Andrei Ibarra, *Untitled*, from the series *Wall Maps*, 2005, color digital print

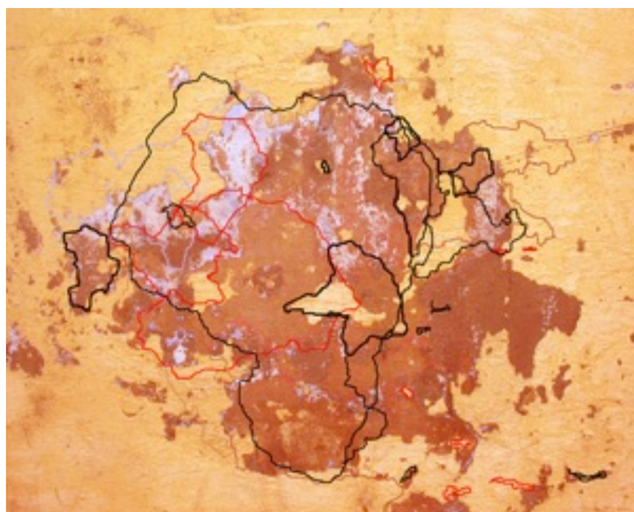

Figure 41. Karlo Andrei Ibarra, *Untitled*, from the series *Wall Maps*, 2005, color digital print

Figure 42. Abelardo Morell, *El Vedado, Havana, Looking Northwest*, 2002, silver gelatin print, © Abelardo Morell/Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York City

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Figure 44. Abelardo Morell, *Valley of Viñales from Hotel Room, Pinar del Río, Cuba*, 2002, silver gelatin print, © Abelardo Morell/Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York City

Figure 45. Abelardo Morell, *Houses Across the Street in Our Bedroom, Quincy, MA*, 1994, silver gelatin print, © Abelardo Morell/Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, New York City

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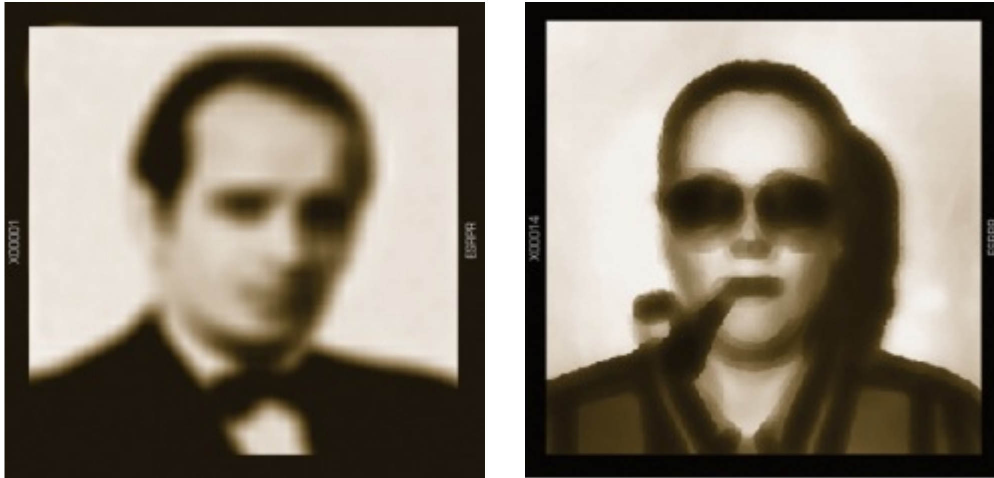
Figures 51 and 52. Adál, *Miguel Algarin* (left) and *Mariposa (María Teresa Fernández)* (right), from the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series, digitally manipulated photographic prints, 1995-1996. Algarin is a poet who co-founded the Nuyorican Poet's Café and Fernández is a poet.



Figures 53 and 54. *Adál Maldonado* (left) and *Sophie Rivera* (right), from the *Los Out of Focus Nuyoricans* series, digitally manipulated photographic prints, 1995-1996. Maldonado and Rivera are Nuyorican visual artists.

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