

CUBAN CULTURAL CENTER NEW YORK PRESENTS In association with **Anthology Film Archives**

‘THE CUBAN NEXUS’ DOCUMENTARY FILM SERIES

A series of highly acclaimed documentaries and shorts by Cuban, American, and European filmmakers, reflecting a rich variety of themes, but all with Cuba as a point of reference.



Gustavo Pérez

**THEY WOULD ALL BE QUEENS /
TODAS IBAN A SER REINAS**

2013, 55 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

The unique stories of several Soviet women living in or around Camaguey, Cuba, all of whom married Cuban men and moved to Cuba in the 1980s before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union fell and Cuba entered “The Special Period,” where food and all other goods became scarce, if not non-existent, these women found themselves trapped in a situation they could have never imagined. The film provides a unique insight into the fallout of a geopolitical relationship forged during the Cold War and the individuals whose lives were deeply affected by it. **Thurs 20 at 7 pm / Fri 28 at 9 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A via Zoom with the director and with the film’s writer and producer **Oneyda González**.



Ricardo Figueredo Oliva

**THE CUBAN THEORY OF THE PERFECT
SOCIETY /
LA TEORÍA CUBANA DE LA SOCIEDAD
PERFECTA**

2019, 61 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

The latest work by a director who is regarded by many as one of the most relevant Cuban filmmakers residing on the Island. The film exposes the theory of the “New Man” as it has become manifest six decades after its official endorsement by the Cuban government. The incisive exploration unveils personal testimonials from a diverse group of ordinary citizens, including workers, artists, and intellectuals, who provide a raw portrait of contemporary Cuban society. **Mon 24 at 9 pm / Thurs 27 at 7 pm**



Michelle Memran

THE REST I MAKE UP

2018, 79 min.

In English.

A lyrical and heartrending documentary about the visionary and avant-garde Cuban-American playwright María Irene Fornés. The film profiles her career in New York and follows her over several bittersweet years as Alzheimer’s steals her memories. Although she is dealing with dementia, Fornés begins a collaboration with filmmaker Michelle Memran to explore her remembered past. **Fri 21 at 6:30 pm / Wed 26 at 6:30 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A with the director via Zoom



Kim Hopkins

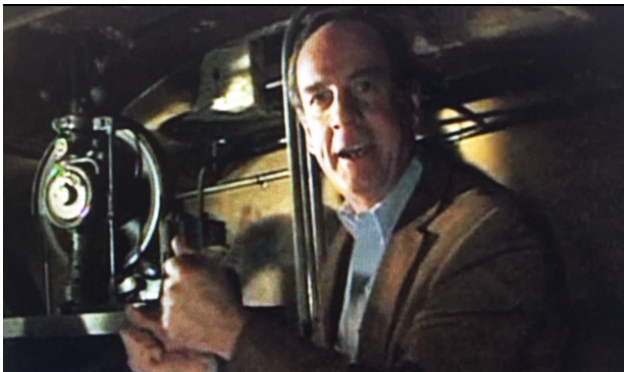
**VOICES OF THE SEA /
VOCES DEL MAR**

2018, 83 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

A moving documentary revealing the stark realities faced by the poorest of rural Cubans. With unique access and empathy, the film tells the story of a 30-something mother of four longing for a better life. The tension between wife and aging husband – one desperate to leave, the other content to stay – builds into a high-stakes family drama after her brother and the couple's neighbors escape. **Sun 23 at 2 pm / Sun 30 at 5 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A with the director via Zoom



Katja Esson

VERTICAL TRAVELER

2000, 43 min.

In English.

The late Aurelio Alvarez, a self-proclaimed “elevator man” devoted to vertical travel in the vertical city of New York, is the focus of this unique documentary, a film that interweaves the history of the elevator with Alvarez's own life and fascination with the subject. A gifted mechanical engineer, Alvarez arrived in New York as a Cuban exile in 1961 when he was still a teenager. First employed as an office boy at GAL Manufacturing Corporation, he rose to become a Senior Engineer. He authored several patents, including the Rope Gripper, a device that prevents an elevator from free falling and that was subsequently adopted as standard code for new elevators in North America and Europe. Widely regarded as the leading expert in elevator mechanics in NYC, Alvarez was often consulted to solve problems that others could not. **Thurs 20 at 9 pm / Tue 25 at 7 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A with the director via Zoom



Manuel Zayas

**ODD PEOPLE OUT /
SERES EXTRAVAGANTES**

2005, 54 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

A documentary about the process of marginalization, repression, and denial of the gay community during the first two decades of the Cuban Revolution, through the eyes and voice of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas. He is the main character in an account by other writers and artists who were part of his life, and who were also punished and persecuted by the Cuban regime. The film constructs a kaleidoscopic depiction of Reinaldo's life, of the Cuban gay community that surrounded him before the revolution, and of the hardships he endured after it. A unique testimony of a unique time and a unique artist, the film combines rare archival material with contemporary footage clandestinely shot in Cuba. **Tue 25 at 9 pm / Fri 28 at 7 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A with the director via Zoom



Ricardo Bacallao

**CUBANS ON THE EDGE OF THE BERLIN WALL/
CUBANOS EN EL FILO DE LA MURALLA DE BERLÍN**

2014, 52 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

In 1989, after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, many Cuban students and workers in Germany decided to remain there, rather than return to Cuba, as was demanded of them. They were suddenly caught in a no man's land, bereft of all the government support previously provided to them. This is their story. **Sat 22 at 5 pm / Sun 30 at 2 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A with the director via Zoom



Kristofer Ríos & Julian Moura-Busquets

HAVANA SKATE DAYS

2017, 85 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

An intimate portrait of Cuba and its current struggles told through the story of Havana's nascent skate scene. The film follows Yojany Pérez, a young, talented skateboarder trying to promote extreme sports in Cuba, as he and his tight knit crew of skateboarders struggle to carve a space for themselves. **Sat 22 at 2 pm / Sat 29 at 5 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A via Zoom with the directors, writer/editor **Ismael de Diego**, and some of the skaters from the film.



Carlos Carcas & Fernando Trueba

**BEBO'S AND CIGALA'S KITCHEN /
LA COCINA DE BEBO Y CIGALA**

2003, 58 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

A thrilling documentary which chronicles the collaboration between two music giants: Cuban jazz pianist Bebo Valdés and Andalusian singer Diego El Cigala, with images that range from the first working session on the day they met for the first time to the rehearsals and recording of the legendary Cuban song "Lágrimas Negras." **Fri 21 at 9 pm / Wed 26 at 9 pm**



Adriana Bosch

AMERICAN COMANDANTE

2015, 60 min.

In English.

In 1954, William Morgan — who in his early life had been a merchant marine, an Army deserter and ex-con, a circus fire-eater (married to a snake charmer), and a street soldier for the mob — heard rumblings of a revolt on the island of Cuba. He headed to Havana and soon took up arms with a guerilla group in the Escambray Mountains. While the men of the Second Front were initially suspicious of the strange American, Morgan quickly proved invaluable, earning the rank of comandante. What followed is a tale of the rapid rise and deadly fall of a man caught between two nations — stripped of his American citizenship, but ultimately imprisoned and executed by the Cuban regime for which he fought. **Mon 24 at 7 pm / Thurs 27 at 9 pm**

~ Followed by a live Q&A with the director via Zoom

FIVE SHORT FILMS: Sun 23 at 5 pm / Sat 29 at 2 pm

Followed by a live Q&A with the directors via Zoom



Orlando Jiménez Leal

& Sabá Cabrera Infante

PM

1961, 14 min.

No dialogue.

A seminal film in Cuban cinema, *PM* engages in a cinema vérité analysis of Havana's lower classes in waterfront bars and cafés shortly after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. It was censored by the government after its release in 1961 and continues to be banned to this day.



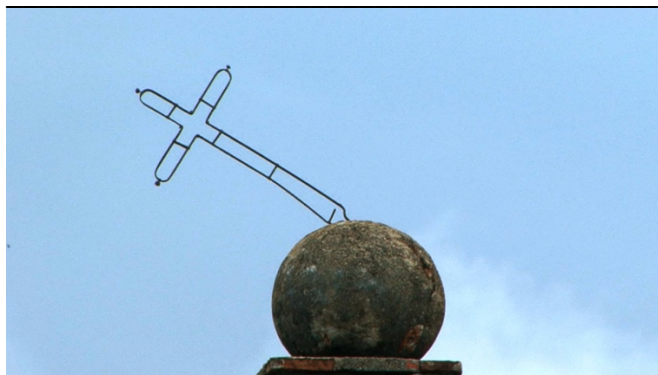
Laimir Fano

MODEL TOWN

2007, 14 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

Winner of multiple awards at international film festivals, this short was directed by Laimir Fano as a graduation project for the Cuban National School of Art (ENA) in 2007. The film tells the fascinating story of a once-thriving modern town built by Milton Hershey in the first decade of the 20th century in Matanzas, Cuba. It has since been banned from Cuban television.



Eliezer Jiménez Almeida

PERSON / PERSONA

2014, 27 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

A prostrated old man; an absent son; an ex-convict Catholic sexton who yearns for forgiveness; a mother suffering the loss of her son, who went missing at sea while trying to reach the U.S.; a writer who feels smothered by a totalitarian regime, self-exiled at home in an act of cultural resistance. Five individual stories linked only by the human condition. Everything happens on a regular day, when five people without an official social voice speak out about their lives. An award winner at the International Festival of Poor Cinema in Gíbara, Cuba, the film was later exhibited at the Cinematographic Criticism Workshop in Camagüey – where state security intervened. It has not been shown in Cuba since.



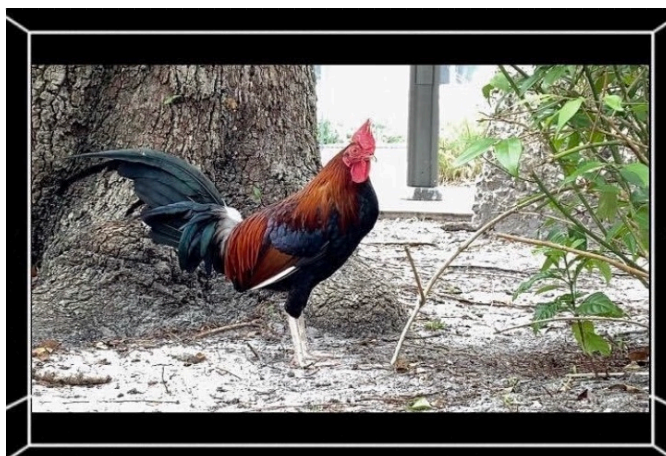
Ricardo Bacallao

**A SHORT RADIOGRAPHY OF HIPHOP
IN CUBA**

2014, 20 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

An in-depth analysis of the emergence of the hip-hop movement in Cuba, taking as a point of departure the 1995 Rap Festival founded by a group of young rappers in Havana, bringing to light prevalent racism, their subsequent clash with the government-controlled cultural institutions and their eventual detour to the underground.



Carmen Peláez

**CARIDAD Y EL GALLO /
CARIDAD AND THE ROOSTER**

2020, 3 min.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

Filmed two weeks into the Covid lockdown in Miami, this short is a tender rendition of the surreal and special bond that spontaneously developed between a Cuban lady and a rooster.
