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The Other Network: The Havana Biennale and the Global South

Miguel Rojas-Sotelo

ABSTRACT

Since 1984 the Havana Biennale has been known as “the Tri-continental art event,” presenting artists from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, as well as artist living in the Northern Diasporas. It has also intensely debated the nature of contemporary art from a Third World/Global South perspective. The Biennale is a product of Cuba’s cultural policy since the Revolution of 1959. The Wifredo Lam Center, created in 1983, has organized the Biennial since its inception. This article proposes that at the heart of the Biennale has been an alternative cosmopolitanism as a sort of decolonial move (that became an existential internationalism), embraced by a group of local cultural agents, critics, philosophers, and art historians, and supported by a network of peers around the world. It examines the role Armando Hart Dávalos, Minister of Culture of Cuba (1976–1997), a key figure in the development of a solid cultural policy that put the Havana Biennale as a cultural project based on an explicit “Third World” consciousness. It explores the role of critics and curators Gerardo Mosquera, Nelson Herrera Ysla, and Lillian Llanes, director of the Lam Center and of the Biennale (1983–1999), who shaped the event in structural and conceptual terms. Finally, it examines how Third World Art has become Global. Using primary material, interviews, and field work research, the article focuses on the conceptual, contextual, and historical structure that supports the Biennale. Using the Havana Biennale as a case study, it is possible to reveal one side of the sociopolitical and intellectual debates taking place in the conformation of what is today called global art. In addition, the article recognizes the potentiality of alternative thinking and cultural subjectivity in the Global South.

The Havana Biennale is one of a group of cultural mega-events that has projected Cuba's interest in being at the center of world affairs. The event also highlights Cuba's alternative cosmopolitan modernism in the South and answers the question whether debates and practices taking place in the South have contributed to a redefinition of the network of "global art" today.¹ In discussions about the political subject of the South, the cultural subject of the South is many times extricated from the debate, while being, most of the time, the same subject. This paper looks at the changing nature of what was called Third World Art, now Global South Art, using as a case the establishment and development of the Havana Biennale (1984–2009), the so-called Third World Biennial—aka. The Poor Biennial.²

This article situates the Havana Biennale within a timeframe in which a number of international art biennials have emerged and takes into account the fact that many of these events have reacted to particular historical, political, cultural, and economic agendas. Most art biennials respond to national or local questions as they relate to their specific international and global interests. They try to position local production in a way that promotes local and regional (as well as international) cultural markets. The official, political, and economic dimensions of these events are unquestionable and must be acknowledged.³ But beyond that, these lines intend to add to the increasing scholarship on decolonial aesthetics as a way to re-write the hegemonic history of culture in contemporary times.

CUBAN INSTITUTIONS, POLICY AND VISUAL CULTURE

Wifredo Lam died in Paris on September 11, 1982. This Cuban modernist (surrealist) is a key figure in understanding the creation of a center for contemporary art and a biennial for the Third World Art in Cuba. The first and long lasting Cuban Minister of Culture, Armando Hart Dávalos (1976–2003), toured Western and Eastern Europe in late 1982. In Madrid, he inaugurated an exhibition on Cuban Art and Spanish Culture at the Museo del Prado, as well as a retrospective of Lam's work, prepared in part by the artist himself early that year. It is possible that pledges were made to Hart Dávalos after Lam's death by members of the international community during the trip. At his return and as part of the complex system of cultural institutions, a new center for contemporary art and culture was created:

The Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers of 1983, according to the Decree No. 113 of the same year (March 30th), stipulated the following:

1. To create the Wifredo Lam Center, under the administration of the Ministry of Culture.
2. The Center will have as attributions and functions:

- a. to promote the study and promotion of Lam's work as a universal expression of contemporary art.
- b. to promote internationally the art work of artists from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as of artists that struggle for cultural identity and that are related to those territories.
- c. to endorse international activities in the field of visual arts in order to develop and establish networks of cooperation.
- d. to facilitate the development of the visual arts in Cuba and to promote the contemporary manifestations of Cuban contemporary artists of most significance.
- e. to offer services of specialized information about contemporary art, artists, critics, and researchers.
- f. to enrich the cultural patrimony of the country through the creation of a permanent collection of visual arts and the systematic exchange of artistic and cultural documentation.
- g. to present periodically national and international events related to visual arts and to give artistic recognition in form of grants and prizes.
- h. to promote a broader interest in the visual arts to the society through didactic and artistic activities and the use of mass communication.

Signed March 30, 1983 by: Armando Hart Dávalos (Minister of Culture), Fidel Castro Ruz (President of the Council of Ministers), and Osmany Cienfuegos Gorriarán (Secretary of the Council of Ministers).⁴

What is remarkable about the creation of this institution is the fact that the Wifredo Lam Center and the Havana Biennale were established well in advance of many institutions of their kind. As a result of globalization, by the mid 1990s, other cultural centers and art biennials (not counting art fairs and museums) were created around the cultural centers of the First World and later also in the so called Third World. Thomas McEvilley, among others, recognized the phenomenon and made references to the international art survey exhibitions that were popping up all over, in particular to the ones taking place in the Third World during those years:

Other shows are not merely non-Western geographically but take place within more distinctly non-Western cultures. Several have begun quite recently—1984 was a pivotal year. These exhibitions' inaccessibility to the vast majority of Western critics, and the truly daunting difficulty of getting information about them in the West (some of the biennials I discuss here I was unable to see, and I write on them from their catalogues, themselves hard to find), are part of their story, and part of their paradox. (McEvilley 135)

McEvelley recognizes that the institution of the international juried show may be a Western phenomenon, contending that “the Third World biennials are sprouting with or without Western attention; clearly they have audiences and cultural functions of their own, quite independently of their resemblance to Western art practice” (135). On the other hand, McEvelley notes that many of those exhibitions, although taking place in countries of the Non-Aligned Axis, often were committed to the project of becoming “modern,” or Modernist in a classical sense, reinforcing the paradox of the modern (see fig. 1). It is also relevant to add that the contemporary biennial phenomenon started at the moment in which authors such as Hans Belting and Arthur Danto were publishing their famous theories on the “end of art.”⁵

The Cuban cultural agenda at the time included the Festival on New Latin American Cinema (Third Cinema) that started in 1979; the Latin American Theater festival that started in 1980; the Literary Fairs and Meetings organized by Casa de la Americas (a meta-cultural organization in Cuba since 1959; also, a precedent for many of the cultural policies of the first decades of the revolution and a major antecedent for the Havana Book Fairs of the 1990s); the *Cultura & Desarrollo* Symposiums (heirs of the World Congress of Culture of 1968), etc. Havana was by this time an alternative center, a port, of cultural life working in solidarity with many, a platform against the economic blockade established by the U.S. in 1962 as a result of the missile crisis. The Cuban Revolution was greatly admired in some countries of the old world—in Latin America, Africa, and the Far East.

Debates about the nature of the Third World and its cultural production were common in Cuba before the revolution but have become most pressing since then. The case of the graphic design committed to the revolution and later distributed via the *Tricontinental* magazine is one; the support of “Third Cinema” as communicative tool, both educational and revolutionary, via de Havana Film Festival is another well-known case. Glauber Rocha’s “Aesthetic of Hunger” manifesto, first published in 1965; Julio García Espinosa’s “For an Imperfect Cinema,” first published in 1969; and Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino’s “Towards a Third Cinema,” first published in 1969, contributed to the debates.⁶ For example, Solanas and Getino, members of the Grupo Cine Liberación, published their 1969 manifesto in the Cuban journal *Tricontinental*, the official voice of the OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America)—a sub-organ of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Third Cinema is a cinema that decries neocolonialism, the capitalist system, and the Hollywood model of cinema as mere entertainment and spectacle for profit.⁷ The manifesto started with a quote by anti-colonialist writer Frantz Fanon: “we must discuss, we must invent . . .”

Besides these filmmakers, what would become Third Cinema included also names, such as Raymundo Gleyzer from *Cine de la Base*, the Brazilian *Cinema Novo*, the Cuban revolutionary cinema, and the work of the *Ukamau* collective led by Bolivian film director Jorge Sanjinés—all of whom were making a cinema connected

for personal expression on the part of the director instead of a collective, appeals to the masses by presenting the truth and inspiring aggressive activity.⁸

Films were a major tool used by the Cuban government, not only to improve their literacy levels, but also to expand the spirit of the Revolution via visual, fictional, and documentary narratives. Entire generations of Cubans have been growing up watching and discussing films, in a global perspective. That is not the case of the visual arts.

WHAT IS THE HAVANA BIENNALE?

The Havana Biennale, established in 1984, is a stable collective scholarly/curatorial project about the art produced in the South, based at the Wifredo Lam Center in Havana, Cuba. It had developed a scholarly method in which researcher-curators travel to a region of their choice to collect materials from primary sources, interact with individuals and collectives, make interviews, visit museums, galleries, and studios, and/or participate in symposia (as organizer or jury) about local, regional, and global Third World contemporary art. The Biennale is then a collective of people working towards a goal, rather than an infrastructure or institution.⁹ In my interview with Nelson Herrera Ysla (co-founder of the Biennale and active curator at the Centro Wifredo Lam) defines the team's world view and interest:

We are neither preoccupied with the issues that are in fashion in Europe, Japan, or the United States, or privilege the practice of installation, post-conceptual, or minimal art in their many variations. We are interested in searching for ways to give more public accessibility and more clarity in the purpose of art and an exhibition, and to bestow an open reflection over our past and present, as ways to counteract the illness that our memory and history comprise. We want to be part of the contemporary intellectual space, to locate ourselves in the universe of artistic practice, and join the venture of others who are contributing to the understanding of what we are. (Rojas-Sotelo 139)

In spring 2009 (March 27–April 30), the Havana Biennale celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with its tenth edition (see fig. 2). On this occasion the event was called under the curatorial theme “Integration and Resistance in the Global Era.” Up to 300 artists from 44 countries were present, and the event featured several parallel events, exhibits, publications, openings, concerts, public art activities, etc. If size matters in a biennial, the 2009 edition responded to its critics that declared the dead of the Havana Biennale on several occasions during the last decade and a half.

With the installment of Raúl Castro as president, Cuba has returned to politics as usual (the Castro brothers have been more stringent than ever in what has been called the retro-revolution with a neoliberal accent). Two of the most



Figure 2. April-March, 2009. El Castillo del Morro (Havana), a venue for the Tenth Edition of the Havana Biennale. (author's photo)

progressive officials, former Vice President Carlos Lage and ex-Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque, were among a dozen officials who left their posts in early March 2009. Later on, the government called the two relevant politicians to apologize before the Cuban people for their “bad behavior.” The incident was reminiscent of the Soviet practices of silencing the critics of the party inner circle during the Stalinist era. Jorge Castaneda wrote in a piece for *NewsWeek* (March 14, 2009) that the two politicians were allegedly part of a conspiracy to overthrow Raul Castro.¹⁰ In one of his reports to the Cuban people (April 3, 2009), Fidel Castro said that after many years as good revolutionaries, the officials were corrupted by power.

These events happened in a year in which the combined effect of higher international food prices, three hurricanes, and the general worldwide economic meltdown pushed Cuba, again, into a hard spot economically and politically. As a result, an already ailing Fidel Castro stepped down as president in February 2008; his brother Raul announced some modest economic reforms, such as legalizing mobile phones and issuing licenses for private taxis and some other business. He also had to promote austerity measures, including laying off thousands of public workers and cutting foreign travel by government officials by fifty percent.

Paradoxically, after a decade of diminishing economic support and general crisis, the 2009 Havana Biennale enjoyed remarkable vitality and plenty of resources (in the form of money and services), coming from the central government as well as from international cooperation, mostly from the Spanish Agency of Cooperation, which is aggressively securing business for Spanish corporations in the entire region. It is an interesting case where contemporary global art celebrates daunting, dangerous, unstable times with a party.

Comparatively, during the late 1980s and the 1990s, the Biennale, as well as Cuba, faced the hardships coming with the fall of the Soviets. Nonetheless, Lillian Llanes, the first director of the Lam Center and the biennial for more than a decade, was able to navigate the intricate Cuban bureaucracy and presented a good case for its existence, defining the role the event was playing:

As a result of the extraordinary fusion of peoples and cultures in the history of the Third World, many people currently believe that it has great cultural wealth and variety, and has a market interest in re-asserting its own traditions while striving for universality. Out of the conviction that contemporary Third World art and artists are contributing to global art, emerged the idea of creating in Havana a space which would favor the dissemination of their work and encourage discussion on the problems of contemporary art, especially those of the Third World. (Llanes 9)

THIRDWORLDISM AND CRITICAL THINKING

For decades, Cuban magazines, such as the *Tricontinental Magazine*, *Bohemia*, and *Pensamiento Crítico*, published articles by well-known international intellectuals and they underlined the same concerns and created a larger understanding of the changing conditions of the time. In postmodern Cold War times, the postcolonial emerged in the form of anti-imperialism and a radical Thirdworldism embracing a decolonial strategy. In the cultural environment of Cuba of the early 1980s, a powerful discourse materialized.¹¹ Various socialist and marginal thinkers, and these articles underlined the same concerns and created a larger understanding of the changing conditions of the time. In 1970 *Pensamiento Crítico* for example republished Harry Magdoff's "The Age of Imperialism" that had appeared initially in the *Monthly Review* in September 1968.¹²

By the mid-1980s, an active group of cultural critics became relevant in identifying those who were engaged in socially and politically engaged cultural practice.¹³ In the visual arts, the name of Gerardo Mosquera became relevant. His first curated exhibition, titled *Volumen Uno*, featured the new generation of Cuban artists; for many, this exhibition has been the starting point of the social, cultural, and politically engaged artistic practice in the visual arts in contemporary Cuba. At the same time, visitors to the island, such as Ana Mendieta, Lucy Lipard, and Luis Camnitzer, helped the propagation of ideas and practices regarding performance and conceptual art. International and Latin American art events at the time, such as the São Paulo Biennial, the Bienal Interamericana (Mexico), the Bienal Americana (Argentina), the Medellín Biennial (Colombia), and the Bienal de Gráfica Latinoamericana (Puerto Rico & Cali), among others, were also relevant to circulating new ideas and artists (the only survivors of these cultural events are the São Paulo and the Havana biennials).

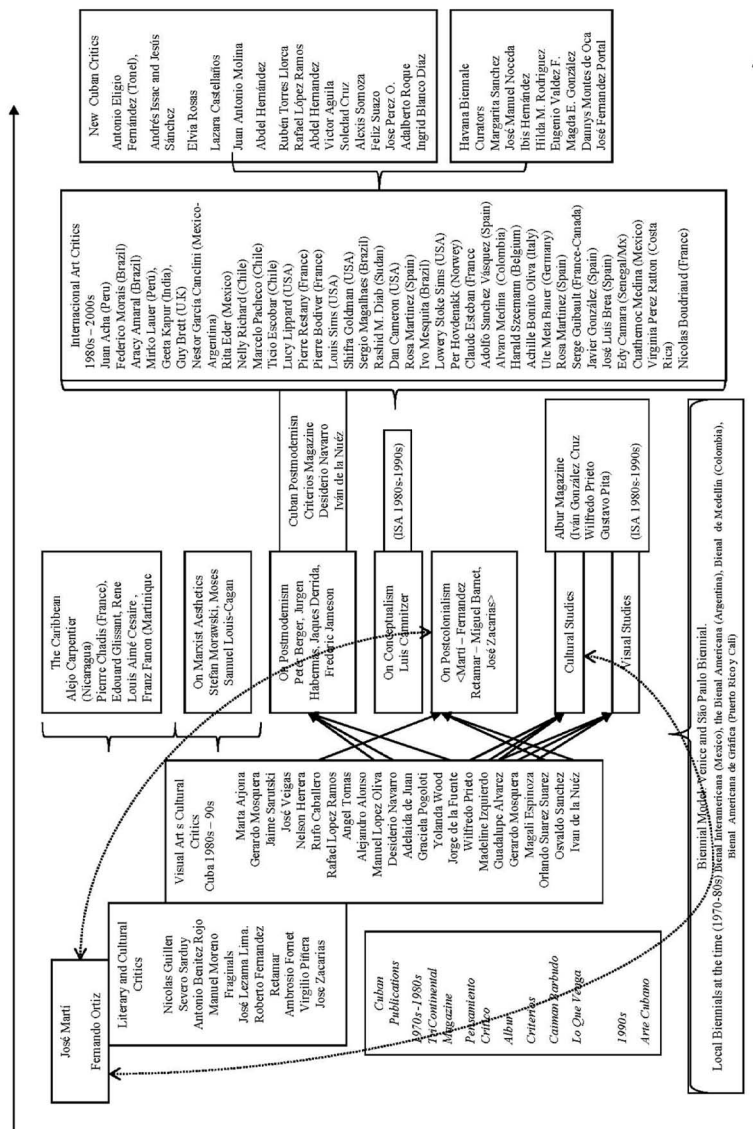


Figure 3. Theoretical sources of the Havana Biennale (art and cultural sources).

Cuban cultural discourse evolved out of the establishment of the Casa de las Americas (1959) and the development of an elaborated net of cultural institutions that were part of the Ministry of Culture and Education, a result of the political changes after the *quinquenio gris*.¹⁴ Cuban intellectuals had built a local discourse connected to the Revolution, linking thinkers from a variety of geographies and times, from José Martí and Simón Bolívar, who had actively pursued a regional alliance and continental unity, to the postcolonial thinkers of India, Africa, and the Caribbean (Gandhi, Fanon, Glissant, etc.), and the political debates taking place among the countries of the NAM (see fig. 3).¹⁵

THIRD WORLD ART

The integration of local and international cultural critics made Havana a rich environment. In that sense, a structural understanding of art informed the Lam team's initial approach, which was based on the Marxist aesthetic agenda with an input from studies of popular culture. The core group was led by art critic Gerardo Mosquera, architect Nelson Herrera Ysla, and Lam Center director, art historian and cultural manager Lillian Llanes, with support of a young group of art historians who faced the epistemic challenge. In order to define Third World contemporary art in a new dimension, they had to take into account historical and social traditions, as well as old and new artistic practices which were connected to the lives of the people of the South. They also had to take special interest in alternative practices, hybridizing Western disciplines and integrating the intellectual work produced outside the centers of hegemonic power—a practice used by other cultural institutions, such as Casa de las Americas and ICAIC.¹⁶ Lillian Llanes commented on their understanding of Third World and contemporary Third World art at the time:

It is a fact that the term [Third World] was used for the first time in 1955 during the Bandung Conference, and that it emerged in specific historical circumstances. It is also true that its use now has become generalized. . . . [It has] emerged from the system of relations imposed by the highly industrialized countries in the aftermath of colonialism; that is, underdevelopment and the economic dependence of neo-colonialism. This is the meaning of 'Third World' . . . and despite its limitations; we shall continue to use the term for lack of a better one. (9)

In his "Comunicación en tiempos difíciles: Uno más cerca del otro," Nelson Herrera Ysla insists that "Third World artists are trapped within the global system, which governs what is considered contemporary art"(22). In that respect, contemporary art exists in a sphere between, on the one hand, the main current of history and its multiple subsidiary streams which follow certain interests, and, on the other hand, a reflexive, parallel, and alternate historical dimension that aims to reach an understanding of what it is to live in contemporary times without distancing oneself from those particular historical forces.

Havana Biennale curator Ibis Hernandez puts it in a simple way:

We were establishing a new contemporary symbolic production when distinguishing the practices from . . . the expressions tied to living cultures. We were giving them space among the more conventional manifestations from the art world which was established by the West and in which we were trained. It was an act of decolonization in our own practice. (Rojas-Sotelo 140)

However, it is Gerardo Mosquera's input which had gone even further. His condition of an internal exile after resigning from the Biennale in 1991 allowed him the opportunity to look at the problem with critical distance as well as a sense of involvement. Mosquera problematizes the issue of "Third World" or "art of the South" not as a geographic problem but as a problem of the geography of power. He calls for a better understanding of "globalization" as a new and often negative imperative. Resistance to the emergent art, to its illegitimate origin and its peripheral condition, might restrict its capacity to join the mainstream. The first half of the 1990s (the first decade of the global age) brought a surprise for non-believers in such a possibility. In addition, Third World is part of the universalization of the western concept and practice of art as a self-sufficient activity based on "impartial" contemplation and driven by the production of very specialized aesthetic-symbolic messages. It is, therefore, as Mosquera argues, "a colonial product."¹⁷

It is also a fact that the Havana Biennale has produced a series of misinterpretations of what Third World art means and how far it can go. Manuel López Oliva puts it in the following way: "From its second concretion in 1986, the Havana Biennale has been based on the theory of the Three Worlds (which in its many variants has been used by Maoist rhetoric, the UNESCO programs, and by many countries and individuals). It looks contradictory in a sense, since it poses 'First World' perspectives on the so-called 'Third World'" (49). The Biennale at the beginning, therefore, replicated a way of seeing things in fragments, not in complex relationships.

The acknowledgment of a world that is more horizontal but at the same time pervasively unequal has transformed, as López Oliva argues, the world map and brought new coordinates to mark the journey: "Poverty, ethnicity, migration, marginalization, de-integration, identity struggle, war, environmental debacle, etc., are some of the topics that lead the Havana Biennale to have such an imprecise configuration. It becomes a mosaic of inharmonic and amorphous images in the labyrinth of the world art" (50). As for Global South concerns, the debate is still open.¹⁸

HAVANA AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

In academic circles, the countries of the former Third World are now known, among other appellatives, as the Global South, the developing countries, and the underdeveloped countries, as well as the disadvantaged nations. Economists refer to these nations as the "Two-thirds World" and/or "The South," referring to the two-third not economically developed under capitalism. International agencies call them developing countries, but the term is disapproved by activists who argue that the term implies that industrialization is progressive. What is true is that Global South emerges in the lexicon to denote a

tendency of becoming aware of how the forces of the modern/colonial axis dominate the social and political landscape of the territories of the hemispheric south by the inhabitants of such territories.

In the case the Havana Biennale, the fact that the curatorial team based their scholarly practice on Wifredo Lam's legacy, reaffirming the paradigmatic condition of his Afro-Cuban-Chinese background, as well as on their insular/archipelago condition, produced an extraordinary way to perceive the cultural production of the South. Mosquera, a Modernist critic himself, insisted that Lam's goal was to build his identity from the inside of the modern project and that his art represents the ethos of the modern in the form of a new kind of internationalism within Modernism. It is clear that co-optation menaces all cultural action based on autonomy, independence, and syncretism—the failure of the politics of identity is just one example. Syncretism is, for many of the cultural critics of Latin America, our way to be in the world.¹⁹ For others, it is the simplest definition of Latin America's post-modernism. The challenge is to see who retains control of the changes and articulations.²⁰ Mosquera, like members of the curatorial team involved in structuring the Biennale, knew the problems of establishing merely ethnographic approaches. That is why they became "participant observers," a practice that inverts the classical concept of critical distance. Derived from the term *candomblé* in the work of Brazilian anthropologists,²¹ this notion reverses the way the Frankfurt School understood positive criticism based on "critical distance," establishing "zones of contact" where knowledge is produced in a new fashion via collaboration, resistance, and insistence. If the Havana Biennale could be defined via this approach—one of proximity, participation, and survival—the concept of art is not so much for contemplation and sublimation, but for action and militancy. Here we find the real subtext of the Havana Biennale that recognizes its polysemic and mimetic character, but always under circumstances of uneven power relations with respect to the art world. The Havana Biennale is still a biennale in the best Western tradition of the world expos and cabinets of curiosities, but organized and located outside it and building on the premise of collaboration, exchange, and re-existence (as autonomous as an official event like this can be).

The double isolation (insularity and blockade) of Cuba led to social convulsion and conceptual challenges; however, the Caribbean archipelago tends to unite itself through proximity and shared cultural identity. For Glissant and Benitez-Rojo, the region is paradigmatic.²² For Mosquera, the Caribbean is a universe—an idea of mestizaje, diversity, transculturation, porosity, migrations, and open exchange. For Nelson Herrera and architectural critic Roberto Segre, Havana is a Western City par excellence; it is a node, a social and physical lab in the cosmic network. Like many peoples of the Caribbean, Cuban subjects could not maintain their ethnic purity due to the transoceanic gap (the middle passage). Africans and their descendants participated actively in the processes of creolization and mixture, becoming sources of new cultures and nationalities in the

Americas. As explained by Paul Gilroy in *Black Atlantic*, many areas were kept necessarily opaque in a sort of modernity of catastrophe. Now, however, they are visible through social movements and popular culture.²³

This bio-network (mestizaje, hybridization, and syncretism) has also another dimension, one connected to the flow of capital and people through the routes of the globalized economy. During colonial times, Havana was the door of the Americas, and the Biennale has generated a market scene and a flow of peoples, ideas, and goods. This has been widely discussed in reports and articles, which in many cases attack the Biennale as an economic platform for Cuban artists and as another Cultural Tourist destination, supporting the Cuban state. But the gains have been shared by many—Cuban artists, collectors, scholars, and institutions in and out of Cuba. The Biennale as official event is alive also because it has helped created a Cuban art market. However, the real legacy and asset for its own survival in the future is the network created by and around it. The importance of the Biennale does not only lie in having connected the Cuban cultural establishment with the larger art world. It did not only situate the Biennale in the global picture, but it went beyond. It opened debates about the cultural production of the South in the larger discussions of the Global. Much has to be done in rescuing a legacy of an event that is still present in the cultural agenda but could, because of its precariousness, lose sight of how individual, collective, and communal cultural producers (artists in the classical sense) live in the territories of the South in the moment in which the worlds collide. The debates about the South are pressing: social and political upheaval, mass migration and force displacement, environmental degradation through resource extraction economies, cultural survival, sovereignty and autonomy, to name a few.

The administrators of the Biennale understand that in order to survive in the precarious Cuban economy, which is now subject to the rhythm of the international markets, it is necessary for the art shown there to address global themes, spiced with a hint of local exoticism. Cuba no longer has the same leadership role in Third World culture as it once had, as head of the NAM, or the economic resources of the 1980s. In the era of Kassel, Istanbul, Dakar, Johannesburg, Kwangju, and the many Middle Eastern and Asian art biennials that keep critics, curators, intellectuals, and artists hopping from plane to plane on the never-ending search for novelty, the Havana Biennial must offer something more than Third World art. The novelty it has offered thus far was a 'critical' art, in particular Cuban, that called the concept of a socialist utopia into question while surviving it. And of course the city of Havana, itself an attraction, softly radiates the exoticism of an old city emerging from the ruins.²⁴

During the past twenty-five years, the Havana Biennale has opened a window in which cultural and intellectual production of the South finds a voice, making it possible for a short time to experience complex, yet common concerns of the peoples of the South (see fig. 4 and 4a). It is in this re-writing of cultural

1 st Havana Biennale Latin American Cuban Artists 1984	Model: Survey exhibition and competition. 715 artists, 35 countries Mostly Latin America Prizes given (by genre/practice/me dium)	conventional survey
2 nd Biennale The World 1986	Model: Survey exhibition and competition. 690 artists 57 countries. 10 awards were given. Large number of parallel shows, meetings, conferences, workshops etc.	Transitional phase
3 rd Biennale Contemporary 1989	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 538 artists 54 countries Parallel shows, meetings, conferences, workshops etc.	
4 th Biennale The World Collaboration 1991	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 250 artists 43 countries (Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin-America, the Middle East, minorities in other regions) Special shows Latin American Architecture, Aboriginal Craftworks from Brazil, Feather Art from Bolivia, Australian Aboriginal Painting and Native Art from Canada. Extended program all around Havana.	Research-based Biennials
5 th Biennale Art, Ecology Collection 1994	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 350 artists 54 countries (World Wide) 1. Fragmented Spaces - Art, Power and Marginalization 2. The Other Store - Migrations 3. Appropriations and Crossovers - Hybridizations, Cultural Mixtures 4. Environments and Circumstances - Ecology. Conditions of Life 5. Art and the Periphery of the Postmodernity	
6 th Biennale Brazil and its Memory 1997	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 180 Artists from 41 countries Exhibitions: Several venues - Faces of Memory. - Interior - Inhabitants, - Collective Memories. Several parallel events: exhibitions on contemporary Cuban art in Havana	Global Triennial
7 th Biennale Other 2000	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach (UNESCO prize) 163 artists 42 countries (including first world). Exhibitions in several venues - Art and Communication. Cuban film posters - Third World, South, People at home - Contemporary Cuban Ceramics - Jean Michel Basquiat - Hélio Oiticica - The Technological Renaissance: A Century new Cuban art in Havana	
8 th Biennale Art Today 2003	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 157 artists 49 countries from the Third World, Europe, North America, and Asia Several venues Exhibitions: - Art with Life, -4D RAIN. - Mover las Cossas, Alamar - Isroko, La California (art and community) - Forms to invent a smile - I am Kurtzyk - SENSATIONAL of Mexican design (Ghana), Ana Tiscornia (Uruguay) and Spencer Tunick (U.S.), Flavio Garciañda, Los Capulteros, etc.	State of Suspension
9 th Biennale Dynamics of Urban Culture 2006	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 140 artists from 50 countries Exhibitions: (94 total) -Dynamics of Urban Culture Solo exhibitions: Guillermo Kuitca (Argentina), Antoni Miralda (Spain), Shirin Neshat (Iran/U.S.), Jean Noüel (France), Lucy Orta (France), Aime and Patrick Poirier (France), Carlos Saura (Spain), Rívane Neutschwander (Brazil), El Anatsui (Ghana), Ana Tiscornia (Uruguay) and Spencer Tunick (U.S.), Flavio Garciañda, Los Capulteros, etc.	
10 th Biennale Heterogeneous in the Global Era 2009	Model: Survey of Third-World Art - Curatorial approach 300 artists from 50 countries Exhibitions: -Integration and Resistance in the Global Age. Solo exhibitions: Paul Bratsky, Brasil/ Luis Camitzer, Uruguay León Ferrari, Argentina, Hervé Fischer, Canada Fernell Franco, Colombia Shigeo Fukuda, Japan Guillermo Gómez Pena, México Several collateral events and exhibitions	

Figure 4. Unpacking the Havana Biennale History

production away from hegemonic categorization that new and alternative (other) epistemologies emerge and are seen clearly. Let's do it while the door is open.

The next figures (fig. 5 and 5a) are intended to map the connections the Wifredo Lam Center has created over the years in the developing of the Havana Biennale. It has established a network of support and interaction with individuals, groups, and institutions outside Cuba, which function as the bones and flesh of the Havana Biennale. More than two hundred institutions and almost a thousand people around the world have interacted with the members of the Havana Biennale team during the research, exploration, and realization of the Biennale. The data for these figures were gathered from the Lam Center archives and through interviews conducted with members of the Wifredo Lam Center (2003, 2006, 2009). Note that bolder lines underscore the continuous flow of communication and exchange taking place between institutions. Thinner lines show connections that supported a particular Biennale or exchanges that did not last. It would be necessary to produce maps for each area of the world in order to have a clear picture of the complex interweaving that has come into being along the years of the Biennale.

Notes

1. This article is a summary of a long research project on the cultural history of the Havana Biennale titled *Cultural Maps, Networks and Flows: The History and Impact of the Havana Biennale 1984 to the present*.

2. Magazines such as *Flash Art*, whose motto is "internationalism," did not cover the Havana Biennale until 1997 (and in a very deceptive and reductive way) while actively covering, and helping to create, other Biennials in proximity to Europe and the U.S. *Artforum* has published only a handful of reports on Cuban art (1986 and 1991), turning its attention to the Biennale only after 1997, while publishing massively and repeatedly on other similar biennials. *Art in America* has published more systematic reports with emphasis on American and Cuban artists, but has remained silent about the participation of artists from other areas of the world. A common denominator of many of the reports is the absence of the idea of alternative cosmopolitanism and Global Art from the bottom up; it seems that the discussions on Global Art only occur at the art centers and their institutions (such as art magazines).

3. As Stuart Cunningham suggests, "many people trained in cultural studies would see their primary role as being critical of the dominant political, economic and social order. When cultural theorists do turn to questions of policy, our command metaphors of resistance and opposition predispose us to view the policy making process as inevitably compromised, incomplete and inadequate." Cunningham finishes the argument stating that "these people are then called to the bar of an abstrusely formulated critical idealism." I hope to have a different fate. See Cunningham's *Framing Culture: Criticisms and Policy in Australia* (1992), page 9.

4. See República de Cuba, Ministerio de Cultura, *Pincipales Leyes y disposiciones relacionadas con la cultural las artes y la enseñanza artística*, Tomo II. (1984), p. 121. (All texts originally in Spanish have been translated by me.)

5. See Belting's *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte /The End of Art History* (1984) and Danto's "The End of Art" (1984). 1984 was the year of the first Havana Biennale.
6. For a complete history of a Third World Cinema, see Shohat and Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (1994), pages 248–90.
7. The Manifesto was first published in the Cuban journal *Tricontinental Bimonthly* and later in the English translation in *Cineaste* (New York), Winter 1971. To read the manifesto go to <http://documentaryisneverneutral.com/words/camasgun.html>.
8. Solanas and Getino argued that traditional exhibition models also needed to be avoided: the films should be screened clandestinely in order to avoid both censorship and commercial networks, but also to make sure that the viewer must take a risk to see them. See Bordwell and Thompson's *Film History: An Introduction* (2003), page 545.
9. The foundational team, which has been almost the same for the last twenty-five years has been composed of art historian and administrator Lillian Llanes (director 1984–1999); architect Nelson Herrera Ysla (senior curator, 1984 to today); art critic and curator Gerardo Mosquera (1984–1992); art historian Juan Manuel Noceda (1984 to today); philologist Silvia Medina (1984–1994); art historian Ibis Hernandez (1984 to today); art historian Magda Elián González Mora (1984–2000); art historian Leticia Cordero (1984–1994); art historian Margarita Sanchez (1985 to today), artist and art historian Hilda Maria Rodriguez (1986–2004); art critic and historian Eugenio Valdez Figueroa (1991–1995), and, more recently, curator Dannys Montes de Oca (2000 to today).
10. See Castañeda's "The Plot Against the Castros" (2009). *I Want To Start Spending! NewsWeek Magazine* (March 23) online version. For more versions about the changes taking place in Cuba during the transition from Fidel to Raúl, see Kaptcia's "Raúl Castro and Cuba: Reading the Changes" (2009).
11. It was in 1966 that Cuba organized the 1st Tricontinental Conference and created OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity for the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America). The result was the *Tricontinental Magazine* produced by OSPAAAL, which in its multilingual edition (published in Spanish, English, and French, sometime in Middle Eastern languages) became the forum for the Non-Aligned movement and Cuba as a new leading member. The magazine had produced a series of propaganda posters that were folded up and placed inside each copy, becoming a visual arts machine for anti-imperialist and de-colonial struggle.
12. Henry Samuel Magdoff (1913–2006) was for years the co-editor of the Marxist publication *Monthly Review*. A prominent American socialist commentator and analyst, Magdoff held several administrative positions in the government during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Later in his life he was accused of being a Soviet spy, but was never indicted. *The Age of Imperialism*, published in 1969, was his first book.
13. During the decade of the 1980s, a new generation of art critics born out the Revolution was taking over the places of the best known critics. Following Fernando Ortiz's legacy, they exercised an open and wider practice of writing from art reviews to cultural criticism, fashion and design, theory, and political commentary. Among those active in that period was Desiderio Navarro (philosophy), José Veigas (art); Roberto Segre (architecture and urbanism), Angel Rivero (film), Jaime Saruski (literature and popular culture); Alejandro Alonso (art), Manuel López Oliva (art), Salvador Bueno (literature, folk, and pop culture), Adelaida de Juan (art history), Marta Arjona (patrimony, architecture, culture, and art), Gerardo Mosquera (art, literature, and popular culture); Jorge de la Fuente (philosophy, photography, and art), Rufo Caballero (art, theory), Rafael Lopez Ramos (art), and Nelson Herrera Ysla (architecture, design, and art). At first, they followed the work of Lezama Lima, Cabrera Infante, Guillén, Fernandez Retamar, Benítez Rojo, and Portuondo, but they soon departed from formulas of literary criticism by introducing popular culture and moving in the direction of cultural studies (informed by the work of, among others, Nestor García Canclini and Jesús Martín Barbero) and postmodern thinking, and adopting a clear counter-colonial (anti-imperialist) discourse in the fashion of the new cultural anthropology.

14. Just four months after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, the Revolutionary Government created the *Casa de las Américas* (Law 299 of April 28, 1959), an institution aimed at developing and expanding cultural relations with the peoples of Latin America, the Caribbean, and around the world. Conceived as a meeting and dialogue of different perspectives in a climate of new ideas, the *Casa de las Américas* promotes, researches, recognizes, and publishes the work of writers, artists, photographers, musicians, playwrights, and scholars of literature, arts and social sciences on the continent, which encourages cultural integration and promotes exchanges with institutions and individuals worldwide. An institution born out of the 1976 constitution is The Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA), founded in 1976. This is a graduate level school which provides the highest level art degree available in Cuba and which has been instrumental in the development of almost all of the significant artists of the later generations. The curriculum is characterized by its vigorous workload, but also by a greater emphasis on experimentation and individuality, and, coupled with an artistic formation which takes twelve years to complete, it facilitates development of artists of high maturity with solid conceptual paradigms.

15. NAM lost credibility beginning in the late 1960s when it was seen by critics to have become dominated by states allied to the Soviet Union, the so-called post-WW II Soviet imperialism. Many questioned how countries in outright alliance with the Soviet Union, such as Cuba, could claim to be non-aligned. The movement divided over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. However, the 1979 meeting in Havana saw the movement discussing the merits of a “natural alliance” with the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the summit discussed the concept of an anti-imperialist alliance with the Soviets. Actually, Castro sustained in the 34th UN General Assembly what “the Sixth Summit meeting has stated. The socialist countries did not contribute to the plundering of the world nor are they responsible for the phenomenon of underdevelopment. However, they understand and assume the obligation of helping to overcome it because of the nature of their social system in which international solidarity is a premise. . . . I am here to talk of peace and cooperation among nations. I am here to warn that either injustice or inequalities are solved peacefully and wisely, or the future is going to be apocalyptic. . . . Enough of the illusion that the world’s problems can be solved with nuclear weapons. . . . Let us say farewell to arms and concentrate in a civilized manner on the most urgent problems of our time. This is the responsibility and most sacred duty of every statesman in the world. Furthermore, this is an indispensable requirement for mankind’s survival.” The final declaration of the Sixth Conference of the NAM also condemned the Camp David peace accords as an abandonment of the cause of the Arab peoples and an act of complicity with the continued occupation of Arab territories; the focus then was decolonization and development. See Köchler’s *The Principles of Non-Alignment: The Non-Aligned Countries in the Eighties. Results and Perspectives*, 108.

16. Casa de las Américas and Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) are cultural organizations founded by the Cuban Government, the former in April and the latter in March 1959. Following a premise of Castro and Che Guevara, they were part of the first culture law of the revolutionary government. Casa was directed by Aydée Santamaría, ICAIC by Alfredo Guevara for 20 years. They were established after the Cuban Revolution for the purpose of developing and extending the socio-cultural relations with the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the rest of the world. The lawmakers who drafted the bill establishing the two institutions saw film as the most powerful and provocative form of artistic expression, and the most direct and widespread vehicle for education.

17. For more about Mosquera’s discussion on the art of the South, see Mosquera’s “The World of Differences. Notes about art, globalization, and periphery” (1995). The text is available at <<http://universes-in-universe.de/magazin/marco-polo/e-mosquera.htm>> (my translation).

18. If the term Globalization is still being defined, the Global South denotes an open-ended space of debate. See the text of the conference titled “Cultures of Globalization” (1998). An interesting discussion can also be found in Mishra’s “The Fall of the Empire or the Rise of the Global South?” (2001), pages 95–99. See also Byrne’s “Contemporary Art and Globalization: Biennials and the Emergence of the De-Centered Artist” (2003), pages 169–172.

19. Ortiz called it transcultural, Guillén used the term *mestizaje*, García Canclini opted for the term hybridization, and Camnitzer called it Spanglish.
20. See Escobar's *El mito del arte y el mito del pueblo* (1986), pages 119–31.
21. Mosquera quotes a work by Brazilian anthropologist Sergio Figueiredo Ferreti, working in developing new ethnographies in the fashion of Eunice Durham's work. See Ferreti's *Repensando o Sincretismo* (1995).
22. See Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays* (1999), pages 1–37, and Benítez-Rojo's *Repeating Island* (1992). See also Heller's "Landscape, Femininity, and Caribbean Discourse" (1996), pages 391–416.
23. Gilroy argues for a modernity broad enough in scope not simply to include the marginal positions of slaves, but also to see the "ungentle" aspects of slavery and terror as crucial and systematic enough to understand them as being at the heart of modernity itself: "A preoccupation with the striking doubleness that results from this unique position—in an expanded West but not completely of it—is a definitive characteristic of the intellectual history of the black Atlantic." See Gilroy's *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (1994), page 58.
24. See León's "Havana, Biennial, Tourism: The Spectacle of Utopia" (2001), pages 71–72.

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