I have a professor who told me once about having heard Dr. Martin Luther King speak at her college. She had heard of him, but didn’t really know much about him, other than that he seemed important enough for her to go hear him speak. Later when she realized the significance of who Dr. King was, she was glad that she had the opportunity to actually hear him speak in person, and while the meeting didn’t exactly change her life, it was an important memory for her.

Remembering my professor’s story about seeing/hearing Dr. King on her campus, I found my-

CARLOS FUENTES VISITS THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Tarah Johnson

PERFORMANCE, STREET ART, AND PUBLIC PROJECTS OF THE 10TH HAVANA BIENNIAL

Tijen Tunali

The Havana Biennial was incepted in 1984, which coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Socialist Revolution in Cuba. From the point of the Cuban government the Biennial has three significant goals: the first is to show Cuba’s achievements in sciences and arts internationally, the second is to profit from the escalating market on Cuban Art, and third is to boost the tourist industry, which is the major income for Cuba’s economy since 1994. Hence, for contemporary Cuban art, the significance of the Biennial, extends from the government’s goals, -as it is a state-sponsored Biennial- to a more complex relationship of local artist- international art production- international art market triangle.

The 10th Biennial was inaugurated in March 27th 2009 with the title “Integration and Resistance in the Global Era.”
MESSAGE FROM THE SOLAS PRESIDENT

Dear Solistas,

I hope that your semester is coming to a peaceful close. It’s been a long haul this fall but I’m sure that everyone has been successful in their academic and personal endeavors. I would like to thank of all our lecturers this semester. From politics in Nicaragua to Immigration Law we had a variety of topics presented by academics, students, and community members. Thank you to everyone who participated. **Before you leave for the semester don’t forget to donate an unwrapped toy for the families at Enlace Comunitario!** There are boxes in the LAII, the SUB, and in El Centro. We would like to collect as many toys as possible before the holidays arrive so don’t forget to make a child’s day by donating a gift! Next semester we have a lot to look forward to including our annual film festival, Sin Fronteras. Tell your filmmaking friends that submissions are due March 5th. If anyone is interested in helping us plan this exciting event, please email me at pkent@unm.edu. We’re always looking for volunteers to help with fundraising and media design. I hope everyone enjoys their winter break, whether you’re reading a book for fun, spending time with family and friends, or hitting the slopes!

See you in the spring,
Patricia Kent

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Solistas-

I would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue for not only making my job easier, but providing interesting examinations of the region that we all find so alluring. I would especially like to commend the winners of the Field Research Grants that were kind enough to share with us their research projects and what they hope to uncover. Hopefully many people find their projects interesting and will look forward to learning about the findings come spring semester. While this issue is perhaps more academic than the last, I would still like to encourage people to submit community events, poetry, and other articles or stories that are relevant. This semester UNM has been lucky enough to host a number of high-profile lecturers and it would be nice to host a discussion of their (often) controversial nature in LIMON. If you would like to opine on or cover any of these events do not hesitate to contact me. Good luck with finals, and have an excellent winter break.

Sincerely,
Alex Acerra
self wondering if I was in a similar situation, when I heard about Carlos Fuentes coming to speak here at UNM. I have to admit that before going to listen to Mr. Fuentes speak I knew very little about him. Nevertheless, after hearing him speak, I began to realize what an honor it was that he chose to come to UNM and speak to students. His prolific (and controversial) career has spanned the 20th century, and he has written some of the most influential novels in the Spanish language. He has been a vanguard for the promotion of literature and literacy, and for a new cannon of literature that includes a more international (or as he called it third world) perspective.

For many of the students and faculty in attendance, including myself, meeting Fuentes, and hearing him speak, was an inspiration. His influence on Spanish language literature is immense, and along with Gabriel García Marquez, Fuentes is among the most widely known writers in Spanish, in the world. He is as much known for his literature as he is for his politics and before his arrival; there were murmurs of displeasure within the community about inviting him to speak on campus. During his presentation, none of this was evident, and he seemed to steer clear of politics (to the disappointment of some students present).

During his speech, which was mostly in Spanish, Fuentes spoke about the importance of the third world, and Latin America in particular, in shaping the future of literature. Surveying the cannon of important novelists, Fuentes spoke of South African, Pakistani, and South American authors, all of whom were in his eyes were among the most important and influential writers today.

When asked about where the novel fits into a modern society where newspapers and other forms of traditional media are being replaced by digital forms, Fuentes defended his beloved novel. For Fuentes, nothing can replace the transcendent and almost spiritual place that the novel holds, not only as a form of expression for the author, but also as a form of catharsis for the reader. His eloquence and passion when speaking on this topic was evident, and almost touchable. It was clear to everyone in the room that despite the many hats Mr. Fuentes may have worn over the years, diplomat, politician, professor, international playboy, that he was an author, first and foremost.
A Field Research Grant from the LAII will help fund my research in Mexico over the winter break. My research project is concerned with the effects of globalization on small firms in Latin America and the developing world in general. Globalization and trade integration pose serious challenges to small producers in developing countries: not only are they exposed to increased competition from more productive foreign enterprises in their home markets, they are also required to meet demanding standards for product quality overseas. Researchers have disagreed about the consequences of these challenges. Some anticipate a “race to the bottom” in which small producers are forced to compromise wages, working conditions, and environmental protections in order to compete on cost. Others argue that in striving to reach the demanding standards and lucrative markets of wealthy countries, producers in poor countries may actually upgrade their productive capacities, and thereby improve their products and their working conditions simultaneously. Since there is variation in the success of small firms within – not just between – countries, the primary question I’m interested in is what explains which firms upgrade and which end up on the low road.

Mexico is a great place to study this because its economy has become tightly integrated with the US economy and there is a lot of variation in how small firms have responded. My research trip in January will be to look into a single sector that has done relatively well in upgrading: the traditional ceramics sector in Michoacán. The innovation made by the ceramics sector was the development and diffusion of an alternative to lead-based glaze. The glaze traditionally used in Mexican ceramics had long exposed producers and consumers to lead. Then, in the 1980s, the import of lead-glazed ceramics was banned by the US, eliminating the largest export market for the ceramics. At the behest of producers, a cooperative effort between ceramics producers and Mexican state agencies developed an alternative, nontoxic glaze and complementary kiln technology. They have also worked to get ceramics producers to abandon their traditional means of production and adopt the new technologies. The development and diffusion of these technologies have not only re-opened the US market for Mexican ceramics, helping drive economic development, but have increased safety for artisans and consumers by sparing them exposure to lead.

Essentially, the goal of my trip will be to gather useful information about the manner in which the innovative technologies were recognized as necessary, created, and disseminated among artisans. I will be conducting interviews primarily with artisans and government agents. The larger project will involve the comparison of this success story to sectors that have fared less well in the age of trade integration. As small, labor-intensive firms are critical for economic and social development across Latin America and the global south, my hope is that the findings eventually have policy implications that will help make the global economy yield more benefits to the poor.

I’d like to express my gratitude to the LAII for funding my proposal and making the research possible.
For the past two decades, urban agriculture has been increasing throughout the world, in both poor and wealthy nations. Millions of urban residents in developing countries are growing crops and raising animals in yards, on rooftops and balconies and on vacant urban lots. Urban agriculture has evolved from a survival mechanism to a popular means of supplementing income, diversifying diets, and achieving independence and self-sufficiency in a city setting. Nico Bakker, Mustafa Koc and Miguel Altieri have written about case studies from Africa, Asia, Cuba and South America that provide evidence that urban agriculture can serve as an avenue towards food security for poor and marginalized communities. Urban food production can be more than food related. Community-based and individual food production in cities meets further needs of the urban population like sustainable urban development and environmental protection. These case studies highlight potential benefits ranging from environmental remediation, to community and economic development, and increased access to food.

The overall purpose of the case study is to explore the main goals of the barranca program and to evaluate its success. This case study functions as an example of a partnership between Álvaro Obregón (the delegación government), two major Universities and the local community, with the common goals of increasing local food access and environmental sustainability and focuses on the barrancas in the delegación Álvaro Obregón. The universities are: Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo (the oldest, largest agriculture university in Mexico) and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). The income disparity in Álvaro Obregón is extreme with some of the poorest and the richest people of Mexico City existing in the same borough, similar to Manhattan, but in the context of a developing country. The lack of municipal services has led to the use of the barrancas for informal trash disposal by the most marginalized residents of Álvaro Obregón. In an effort to clean the canyons and to increase access to fresh food, UNAM, Chapingo and the delegation government have teamed together with neighborhood groups (usually ran by local women) to take the trash out of the canyons and install gardens. According to Dr. Pedro Ponce, lead researcher from Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo; the university provides the agricultural knowledge, pesticide-free gardening and composting instruction. The government provides the funding and logistics for the initial trash clean up and the security for the central garden that also houses equipment. This project is ongoing and when I return to Mexico City in late January there will be canyons in all stages of development across the delegación. The stages include; proposal to the community, instruction classes, trash clean up, soil

(Continued next page)
remediation, the planting/tending of the gardens, harvest and the eventual turnover to the local community.

During my summer trip I gathered preliminary data on the landscape of the food system of Mexico City, identifying where the majority of the food consumed in the city comes from. For this trip, I am looking for data on whether or not these barranca programs have increased the food security of the participants. Do they have more access to fresh food? What is an average weekly yield? Has participating alleviated some of the financial burden of purchasing food? Who participates in the programs? I also will gather data on how the programs are implemented, tracked and eventually turned over to the local community (at least 3 gardens are scheduled to be turned over to the community by December). I will gather data to measure the program’s success. Is it accomplishing its goals? What are some unintended outcomes of the program? Data will be gathered through a case study based on personal semi-structured interviews with two government officials in the delegación, ten local non-profit leaders, a dozen community organizers in Álvaro Obregón, and at the two lead researchers from Chapingo and UNAM. These stakeholders will provide valuable insight into the process of implementing and running a program such as this. Urban agriculture is a relatively new area of research in Latin America. I expect to find that multi-faceted urban agriculture programs can increase access to fresh food for the marginalized population of Mexico City, to the extent to which one program can. This research trip to Mexico City represents a vital data-gathering period for my master’s thesis. I have been invited by Dr. Ponce to present the findings of my thesis at the Universidad de Chapingo, and I plan to return after my defense and present my thesis to the graduate students and faculty there.

For more information please contact me, edubois@unm.edu

Before you take off for the semester…

Don’t Forget!

Enlace Comunitario Toy Drive

Please drop unwrapped donations in the SOLAS toy drive box located in the LAII, the Student Union Building, or El Centro.
Manuel Mendive’s spontaneous and ritualistic performance was one of the most carnivalesque moments of the Biennial. For the opening of his exhibition *El espíritu, la naturaleza, cabeza and corazón* (Spirit, Nature Heads, and Hearts) at the Orígenes Gallery, in Havana’s Grand Theater, Mendive painted the dancers from Cuba’s Contemporary Dance Ensemble, the National Folkloric Group, and the Caribbean Dance Company, from eastern Santiago de Cuba province and prepared them for the performance. Huge crowds joined when a group of dancers, dressed in carnival costumes Mendive designed with the experienced designer Ignacio Carmona, started their parade at the Saratoga Hotel and danced through the infamous Prado Promenade to the rhythm of percussion. When they arrived at the Grand Theater, other group of dancers, with painted naked bodies, joined them while Maestra Pura Ortiz played baroque music. Here, they engaged in a dance mimicking the rituals of transformation, and resurrection, renewal. In this symbolism of carnival rituals, Mendive mixed the life and the African spirit world.

José Emilio Fuentes Fonseca (JEFF)’s a herd of life-size metal elephants called *Memoria* (Memory) wandered the streets of Havana and stopped at the Capitol Building, the José Martí Anti-imperialist Tribune, the Old Plaza, in the Buena Vista neighborhood and on the steps of the Havana University. Elephants, symbolizing power, marked their footprints, first in the colonial spaces that are the symbolism of power, later those places that symbolize the engagement in the historical struggle for this power. Thus, JEFF made those sites a playground by letting the children groups climb on the elephants and play with them. The elephants were metal with their fusion lines visible, but they also had inflation valves suggesting that no matter how giant and stable the power seems *todo se devance en aire*.

Cuba may not be a “Democratic Republic” but Havana Biennial has been more democratic than many biennials in its search for including suppressed voices and energies.
Many mainstream art biennials and others, which are peripheral but celebrated in the art biennial system in regard to their structural similarities, often are dispatched from the sociological context of the local environments and insert the biennial into the visual space of the city, by only means of billboards, airport advertisements, signs and pictures of the venues and maps. The 10th Havana Biennial actively involved with the public development projects that constructed valuable experiences from the contextual practice of art. One of those was Labrotorio Artístico de San Augustín –LASA (The Artistic Laboratory of San Augustin) that carried the Biennial to one of Havana’s peripheral neighborhoods, San Augustin. The curator of this project Candelario, with the collaborative work of the 17 artists from Venezuela, Cuba, Canada, Germany, Italia, Mexico, France, Puerto Rico, Japan, Brazil and Italy succeeded to create an intercultural dialogue within that community without an adequate service of urban infrastructure. In order to transform the daily experiences of their environment, the laboratory worked with artists from the periphery and centers of the art world and from various visual art disciplines such as architecture, urban planning, music, dance and film. With close dialogue and personal attention of the artists, “the public is offered an interactive platform for the mutual artistic and personal enrichment through and unselfish dialogue.” This experimental space, where the border between the artist and the inhabitant, the spectacle and the spectator is erased, inspired an egalitarian way of social relations in the economical, the educational and the ecological system. Thus, during the temporality of the Biennial the residents actively participated in the “carnivalisation” of their neighborhood, while they discovered joyful aspects of the places they live in and “enjoyed their environment from completely new standpoints.”

Cuba may not be a “Democratic Republic” but Havana Biennial has been more democratic than many biennials in its search for including suppressed voices and energies. Tania Brugera’s performance at the Center of Wilfred Lam, which is a part of the ongoing project called la Cátedra de Arte Conducta will not be erased from the memory of the viewers easily. Brugera created a liminal time and a space of political action where Cubans are invited to the stage to talk about “anything” for one minute, while two actors dressed as officials of the Ministry of Interior tried to put one of the two doves on the shoulder of the speakers. This gesture invoked the event that occurred on the January 6th 1959 when a white dove landed on his right shoulder while Fidel Castro was giving his initial speech of the Revolution. At the time this appeared as a proof for the followers of Santeria –the Afro Cuban religion-that the Gods are with Castro and thus, for the majority of Cubans, he was spiritually “crowned” as the leader of the Cuban people.

In Brugera’s performance, upon taking the stage, a woman cried hysterically, another screamed, and a young man kept silent for a minute. One acted like Fidel and said: “this should be banned” another was thrown out of the stage because she exceeded the one minute rule. Hence, some 30 speakers criticized the government actions on the freedom of speech, and the use of internet. The interesting point was that, when they complained about their government to the art world, all of them yelled
for “freedom” and “democracy,” yet nobody touched upon the other unjust issues in the practical life like the changing power relations and the growing inequality between those who have access to external resources and those who do not.

Miami Herald reported the event as the triumphal moment of the 25th years’ history of the Biennial while Brugera remained without a comment.iii Later, the organizers of the Biennial declared that the powerful media group PRISA in Spain made use of Brugera’s performance in the service of the anti-Cuban propaganda machine: “They spoke - or rather acted - for the cameras and now several media outlets in Florida are turning it into big news.”iv

At his interview with Pablo Esspinoza for La Jornada, Abel Prieto, the Minister of Culture, spoke very highly of the Biennial and asserted that one of the principles of the Biennial is to Construir una alternativa frente a las concesiones del mercado (build an alternative to the concessions market). Prieto also called the Biennial a vehicle to “defend utopia.” Upon being asked about Tania Brugera’s performance, he condemned some speakers for being provocateurs but he also added: “Criticism from the art system is a revolutionary act today. We are promoting a critical art of reflection to help us discover our distortions to defend utopia. “Cuando se hace la crítica desde una posición compromiso con el país, los resultados son realmente fecundos” (If the criticism comes from a position of commitment to the country, the results are really fruitful.)v Thus, this also shows that Ministry of Culture continues to stand as a buffer between the Castro’s government and the demands of the young artists, most of them born after the period Cuba enjoyed being the “true utopia” for leftist intellectuals and artists. It seems that the demands of the young generation is being heard as Abel Prieto added: “Es sano, es una crítica desde la revolución, desde una posición comprometida con la revolución y muchas veces esas críticas coinciden con el análisis que estamos haciendo para lograr una mayor eficiencia, luchar contra las mismas trabas burocráticas que nosotros mismos hemos creado” (This is healthy criticism since the revolution, from a position committed to the revolution, and these often coincide with the critical analysis we’re doing to achieve greater efficiency, fighting the same bureaucracy that we ourselves have created.”)vi

The examples of carnival resistance of street activism were also evoked in the collective exhibition named Bisagra (Hinge), alias muestra multiple de arte, de re-accion, situaciones plasticas y otras reverberaciones (multiple exhibition of art, re-action plastic situations and other reverberations). Curated by Patricia Mendoza, Bisagra erased the borders between art and street politics. The images of 2006 Oaxaca resistance mixed the traditional images of strong cultural roots, such as those of Zapata with the unpublished images of social activism. The exhibition made strong references to the global solidarity of the many heterogonous activities known under Anti-Globalisation Movement that make use of conventional networks as well as that of the digital communication. The photographs of Oaxaca uprising were side by side with printed images of Zapatista women on batik material and the audiovisual testimonies of Qaxacans. Transforming street activism to “audiovisual activism” and “editorial poetics”- the technology and methods of are those that are not used by the image reproduction of the traditional mechanical
reproduction techniques- Bisagra brought the streets to
the Biennial and the new visual language to the streets.

Alexis Lyva Machado (Kcho)’s performance in
the 10th Biennial was spectacular, yet the action itself
scratched a historic scar of thousands of Cubans, fami-
lies and children gathered, while Cuban TV stations
broadcast the event. Like the Situationists, Kcho organ-
ized his action at one of the largest plaza in Havana in
front of the Convent of San Francisco de Assisi, where he
“burned the ship” with the help of Halo de Cai Guo-
Qiang, who carefully mounted hundreds of fireworks on
the wire that raised the boat off the ground as well as in
the boat that only had a wooden skeleton. With thou-
sands of locals and the biennial visitors, clapping,
screaming, and yelling, the boat, raised four stories high
above the ground, exploded and burned. This gesture,
laud and exuberant, suggested a celebration of burning
Kcho’s own ship, his vessel to the capitalist world. Kcho
is one of the few artists who became internationally re-
nowned in the 1990s and came back to Cuba after he
enjoyed his fame in Europe. After the devastating ef-
effects of recent hurricanes, Kcho organized the Martha
Machado brigades, with the young artists, musicians,
actors, dancers to help improve the living conditions and
well-beings of the Cuban people. A branch of this pro-
ject was mounted at the La Cabaña ditch to allow an
open space for the biennial artists to live, interact, and
create together, adding another layer of energy to the
Havana Biennial’s landscape.

Cuba today is in a constant flux trying to adapt
to the changing circumstances in the world and maintain
the Revolution at the same time. With two legal curren-
cies, minimal internet access, and divisions between
those who can and can’t access external resources, life is
about social negotiations. Cuban art stems from life it-
self and negotiates the exchanges between the personal
and social, the political and cultural.

i. 10th Havana Biennial Catalogue, p. 186. Michael Bakhtin, in
his widely quoted work Rebalias and His World, argues that
carnival can be a suspension and inversion of the established
order, which generates temporal alternatives. According to this
argument, carnival-like situations are more conducive to genu-
ine dialogue than mundane everyday interchange and they
open up new conversations across class lines within social sys-
tems.

ii. Ibid.

on 04.20.09

the-winds-of-art-and-of-f_b_188478.html on 04.29.09

v. Translation of the author. Interview of Abel Prieto by Pablo
Espinoza, “Bienal Habanera Cuba fomenta un arte crítico para
defender la utopía: Abel Prieto” La Jornada, (April 5, 2009).

vi. Ibid.
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The Latin American and Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico is soliciting submissions by faculty and graduate students for publication in the LAII’s peer-reviewed, electronic Research Paper Series and Reference Works Series.

The LAII Research Paper Series provides a venue for the publication of academic research in the following areas: Anthropology, Art History, Economics, Education, Gender and Cultural Studies, Geography, Health Sciences, History, Journalism, Linguistics, Literature, Music, Natural Sciences, Political Science, Sociology, and related fields. Interdisciplinary research is encouraged. Papers may be written in English, Spanish or Portuguese. It is recommended that papers should have a length of 5,000-8,750 words, including notes and bibliography.

The Reference Works Series is meant for the publication of the following: bibliographies, book reviews, interviews, archival indices, and catalogues. Paper length is variable. Relevant topics should cover the following geographical-cultural regions: Latin America, Iberia (Spain and Portugal), including submissions that contain significant Latin American or Iberian content.

Please refer to the editorial guidelines at http://laii.unm.edu/resources/publications/paper-series/

Deadline for submissions is February 26, 2010

For questions or further information, contact:

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The Student Organization for Latin American Studies is an organization that promotes social, political, and cultural issues pertaining to Latin America in scholarship, in activism, on the UNM campus and in the broader community. For further information contact SOLAS president Patricia Kent at solas@unm.edu

POET’S CORNER

This poetry was generously submitted by Mr. David Wilde. For more information, contact: wilde@unm.edu

LOS CISNES DE SEPTIEMBRE

Un día de otoño a la orilla del agua
en la Pequeña Mesopotamia me hace preguntarme
por Herodoto y la antigua Sais, cómo fue que
esta mezcla de historias se entrelazó, pero
no se derramó en la lengua inglesa,
especialmente en las verdes praderas y en el caminar de los patos
y en Nicola, que atraviesa la Calle Broad,
casi perdiendo el contacto visual, este día soleado.
Intercambiando palabras con calma y buscando una
solución para viajar en este estrecho impasse de
tiempo entre citas para cenar y
viajes a casa o a España y Nuevo México,
este tibio otoño, convirtiéndose en primavera, poco a poco,
cuando el invierno está tan cerca pero a la vez tan lejos,
impidiendo pero también amenazando la marcha de nuestros pensamientos,

ideas para una vida llena de sol, una cálida y envolvente
aventura, incluso una ambición, en esta visión académica,
esto pedazo de la vieja Inglaterra, este territorio, esta molesta
luz sobre la inspiración que no tapa los agujeros
de la profecía iluminada y que tampoco calma todavía las aguas de

Babilonia, crea este ámbito mundano, pero sigue adelante,
zarpa hacia Menfis, hacia las tierras más allá del Nilo,
en pactos de pasión universal, pasivos prados
interpretan esa nocturna melodía —hogar, dulce hogar— para mí.

9 / 23 / 95  Oxford, Inglaterra

EL GATO

gato salta al
silencio verde, a la quietud,
una meditación
en blanco y negro
torre gemela de hijo
e hija, hermano
hermana en sus juegos
mientras los ratones se quedan
escondidos en un sopor azul

los niños duermen un destello
brillante e inquisitivo
una brasa débil
saludando el alba
con ambigüedad de ámbar
muriendo en la luz
llorando en las sombras
de un domingo que eleva
el arco iris, de luto
por el dolor una vida feliz

el gato salta al
silencio verde, a los
dragones malabaristas de jazmín
respirando fuego té verde

LIMON welcomes IDEAS, News, PICTURES, Article Submissions, Art, POLITICAL OPINIONS, POETRY, and the like regarding Latin America!