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ICAIC was the first cultural body created in Cuba after the Revolution in accordance with Law 169, dated 24 March 1959.

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After its emblematic Revolution in 1959, Cuba was the inspiration and the center of production for dozens of filmmakers from all continents, principally those identified with new cinemas. Important figures visited, filmed, and in some cases officially worked there for months or years, such as Jean-Luc Godard, Glauber Rocha, Miguel Littín, Ruy Guerra, Patricio Guzmán, Pedro Chaskel, Cesare Zavattini, Theodor Christensen, Agnès Varda, Chris Marker, Joris Ivens, Roman Karmen, and Mijail Kalatozov, amongst many others. It is no exaggeration to state that Havana, by housing strong cultural institutions (statist with internationalist objectives), such as Casa de las Américas and ICAIC (Instituto Cubano del Arte e Indústria Cinematográficos), was a privileged space for the sociability of artists and intellectuals from all over the world in the 1960s and 1970s.

There was an intense circulation of writers, dramatists, filmmakers, technicians, scriptwriters, actors, composers, critics, and numerous other professions from the arts in general, coming from different parts of the world and interested in discovering the Caribbean island which had experienced a revolution, defying the power of the United States, to which it had been submitted for so many years. Many cinema directors came to Cuba using their own funds, moved by the expectation of registering an unequalled social and cultural experience, with space to experiment and for engaged artistic proposals. They were also very willing to collaborate with the revolutionary cause and share their solidarity with Cuba. These visits, as well as the resulting productions and co-productions (films, projects for films, posters, soundtracks, photographic essays, etc.), were to a great extent registered in the official publication of ICAIC, the *Cine Cubano* periodical, now a valuable document of this history marked by transatlantic connections.

In addition to Cuba having been this fruitful place for the reception of foreigners and having housed plural and cosmopolitan environments in some cultural institutions, it should be noted that Cubans also circulated widely around the world during these decades. Technicians, cinematographers, and directors from ICAIC travelled intensely through three continents, capturing images and sounds for the Institute's weekly newsreels, *Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano*, whose many editions between 1960 and 1991 now constitute a valuable global collection, recognized by UNESCO. Moreover, short documentary films (some resulting from special reports from the *Noticiero*), longer documentaries, and fiction films produced by ICAIC (by Cubans and non-Cubans) circulated in numerous international festivals. It also has to be noted that through ICAIC the Cuban government cooperated with the foundation and the existence of other institutes or centers of film production in countries with ongoing revolutionary process, such as Chile during the Allende period or Sandinista Nicaragua, both targets of international solidarity by Cuba in the 1970s. ICAIC is thus of obvious importance as a place for the gestation of transnational projects and as a platform for the circulation of Cubans around the world.

The creation of ICAIC and its profile

ICAIC was the first cultural body created after the Revolution in accordance with Law 169, dated 24 March 1959. This is a strong indication of the importance which the new government conferred on the cinema after taking power.

In the history of this Institute and the eclectic production it held (films, exhibitions, collections of sound tracks, a bimonthly journal, and various book publications), both by Cubans and foreigners, there are many strong marks resulting from the rich transatlantic connections and the transnational dialogues which had a place there, principally between the 1960s and 1980s. Contributing much to this was the role which the Cuban government assumed in the middle of the 1960s, namely stimulating revolution in Third World countries in which this potential was identified. [1] In the name of this solidary political action (of

which cinema is part), filmmakers persecuted by dictatorships were welcomed, projects were funded, French critics were invited to cooperate with the Institute's journal, and professionals from Eastern Europe came to give training courses in ICAIC. In this two way relationship many young Cubans went to study in the USSR and other countries in the Socialist Bloc, while film teams went to the field to register violent conflicts resulting from decolonization processes in Africa.

It is worth briefly looking at the beginning of the history of the ICAIC, to understand why it became such an important space of creation and sociability in Cuba, apt to receive, even with the worsening of the Cold War and the 'Sovietization' process through which the country passed, filmmakers identified with various movements and political orientations. In harmony with the objective of the Cuban Ministry of Education to develop a policy for the popularization of cultural goods, the Institute's initial target on being created was to produce, as a priority, documentaries and newsreels at a low cost which could reach the entire population of the island, most of whom were illiterate. An initial annual production target of 10 feature films and 50 documentaries was established. To reach this very ambitious target for a country in ebullition, international cooperation was necessary, since Cuba did not have a sufficient number of experienced professional staff, as the films produced there before the revolution came to a great extent from the projects of US and Mexican studios. Various invitations were made to European professionals, principally from the names of Italian neo-realism, due to the aesthetic affinities with this cinema, which from the Cuban viewpoint needed to be one of the matrices for the development of national cinematography and the visual narrative of the history of the Revolution.

In receiving foreign filmmakers with distinct formations and political orientations (although all were sympathetic to the Cuban Revolution) and on being shaped by various young Cuban filmmakers, technicians, and artists (such as graphic designers, musicians, poets, fine artists), well disposed towards experimentation in that revolutionary environment, the Institute's artistic productions at various moments evolved distant from the formal governmental directives in relation to cultural policy (which foresaw an essential art of propaganda). ICAIC was thus constituted as a cultural body with relative autonomy and a great capacity to attract talent - inside the island and abroad - in the artistic and intellectual field.

Cuban history usually attributes ICAIC the place of the 'ground zero' of national cinematography. However, Juan Antonio Garcia Borrero [2] reports the existence of previous Cuban production, contributed to by cinema clubs and amateur directors, as well as the existence of prior international exchanges, as analyzed by Emmanuel Vincenot, between Cinemateca de Cuba [3] and the French Cinemateca. What this shows us is the existence before the Revolution, particularly in Havana, of the circulation of ideas and projects involving cinephilia and cinema production. Obviously this disposition would be made more potential by the Revolution, the creation of ICAIC and the sympathy which this project awoke in various European and Latin American filmmakers.

Alfredo Guevara (1925-2013) was the longest serving president of the Institute (between 1959 and 1982, and again between 1992 and 2000), followed by Julio García Espinosa (1926-2016), who held the position between 1983 and 1991. Guevara was not "someone from the cinema", but was chosen by the government to occupy this position due to a policy of political alliances which used intellectuals from the old communist party in Cuba to occupy positions in recently created bodies under the aegis of the *Movimiento 26 de Julio*. Nor can there be ignored the pre-existing connection between Guevara and Fidel Castro (old acquaintances since the times of the student movement). It was this relationship which in many circumstances guaranteed the autonomy of the Institute or the 'blind eye' turned by the government to

filmic productions with a critical content, to some celebrities who usually made polemical declarations (such as Glauber or Godard), or to some "excesses of formalisms" little appreciated by those linked to state bureaucracy, and present, according to this view, in the *Nouvelle Vague* or *free cinema*.

Until 1975, Guevara, as president of ICAIC, acted in practice as a power similar to the Minister of Culture, participating directly in governmental meetings and the organization of events (congresses, meetings, colloquiums) which determined the directions of cultural policy, as well as the destiny of publishers, periodicals, artistic groups, and intellectuals from other sectors. This data helps us understand the relative autonomy of the Institute, which allowed it both welcome foreign visitors and finance determined projects which did not exactly obey the requirements of national production.

Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano



O *Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano*

Source: Ecured

Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano which existed until 1990, was the last large important newsreel in the Americas to disappear, one of the reasons which justified important action for the digitalization and preservation of its archive, as well as the making of a documentary about it. [4]

VIDEO

View online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd4_NxOmkFI

Trailer for the documentary *Memória Cubana* (Alice de Andrade and Ivan Nápoles, 2010

Source: YouTube

In addition to its important function as a propaganda vehicle for the Revolution all over the world, the *Noticiero* included images filmed in numerous parts of the globe, including many countries in conflict (Vietnam, Congo, Angola, Nicaragua, Chile). In it are registers of the principal global historic events, therefore, rather than simply 'Latin American,' as its name suggests, this newsreel assumed a more Third World discourse and is undoubtedly a document with transnational connections produced by Cuba. Filmed in black and white, with a 10 minute format, the weekly newsreel was produced by a team coordinated by Santiago Alvarez and Humberto García Espinosa, distributed in all the cinemas of the

country, where it had to be shown before each session. It was also part of the program of itinerant sessions of mobile cinemas. Some of its editions also circulated in festivals, congresses, communist youth meetings, and Cuban support events in various parts of the world. Various strategies were used in its preparation to make the language agile and good humored, such as collages, superimposition, intertitles with a strong use of graphics, caricatures, animations, newspapers, pamphlets, and songs. Considerable use was made of material produced for TV, by foreign filmmakers, amateur cinematographers, and photographers, amongst others. The creative use of still photos, popular music, and the insertion of interviews, graphic resources, and animations compensated production difficulties, the lack of equipment, and other economic difficulties. Under the supervision of Santiago Álvarez, who imprinted a very particular mark on the *Noticieros* and who established himself as the director of the ICAIC Documentaries Department, this newsreel was an important 'visiting card' for ICAIC and the Cuban Revolution, and it was exhibited outside the island, almost always in independent circuits. One of its 1965 editions about the repression of the black movement in the United States circulated in an independent form with the title *Now*, presented as the sound track a homonymous song, performed by Lena Horne.

VIDEO

View online: https://www.ina.fr/video/VDD13020499/homenaje-a-los-negros-caidos-a-los-estados-unidos-hommage-aux-noirs-tombes-aux-etats-unis-video.html

> *Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano*
>
> **Source:** INA

The circulation of foreigners in ICAIC

The 1960s, during which the *Noticiero* improved in aesthetic terms and when many films were filmed in Cuba, is considered a 'golden period' for Cuban cinema. Not only did numerous filmmakers from many parts of the world circulate on the island, but films from various tendencies were exhibited and there was a feeling of profound optimism about the development of Cuban cinematography. The productions made on the island circulated rapidly outside the country in various festivals such as Leipzig, Oberhausen, Pesaro, Viña del Mar, Moscow, Karlovy Vary (in Czech Republic), amongst others, a good part of them in socialist countries at that moment and principally aimed at documentary production.

During this decade many foreign filmmakers volunteered to collaborate with ICAIC, while others were officially invited by the government, due to the urgent need for training of Cuban filmmakers. A 1969 article in the *Cine Cubano* periodical, which provided an overview of the Institute's first ten years, lists the famous visitors: "Prominent filmmakers have visited us. First, Gérard Philipe. Coming afterwards were llegarian Zavattini, Sadoul, Ivens, Christensen, Karmen, Marker, Kalatosov, Chujrai, Varda, Wadja, Gaal, Eceiza, Richardson, Brooks, McLaren, Rosi, and Godard..." [5]

VIDEO

View online: http://www.ina.fr/video/VDD13021434/aniversario-de-la-creacion-del-icaic-anniversaire-de-la-creation-de-l-icaic-video.html

> In the final three minutes of this newsreel, in commemoration of the 10^th anniversary of ICAIC, the foreign filmmakers who visited the Institute and filmed in Cuba are noted.
>
> **Source:** INA

Also very important were the opportunities which opened up for young Cubans to participate in festivals, attend workshops, and go on technical training courses abroad through invitations and scholarships from other socialist governments (principally in cinema schools in Moscow, Prague, or Lodz, in Poland). From the 1970s onwards, the military collaboration of the Cuban government in the African wars of independence was accompanied by the concession of scholarships for young African students to come to Cuba to learn film and editing techniques. We can thus see that there was a significant transatlantic exchange, involving the presence of foreigners in ICAIC (coming principally from Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America), both as apprentices and professionals (filmmakers, photographers, scriptwriters, and critics). In addition, a significant circulation of Cuban filmmakers can be observed in international festivals on both sides of the Atlantic, and of young Cubans wanting to enter the cinematographic world, in film courses and schools, predominantly in the socialist countries.

The first response found by the Cubans in their search for cinema compatible with the Latin America reality and the Cuban context, came from Italian neo-realism. One of the first visits received by ICAIC in 1959 was - not coincidentally - from Cesare Zavattini, who had visited Cuba before the Revolution at the invitation of *Sociedad Cultural Nuestro Tiempo,* which brought together young leftwing university students, generally interested in cinema and in avant-garde artistic expressions.

A wave of Italian professionals came to ICAIC to collaborate in various functions, principally those associated with production. One of these visitors, Otello Martelli, arrived in Cuba in October 1959, accompanying the cinematographer Arturo Zavattini, and assumed the photographic direction of two episodes of the film *Historias de la Revolución*, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's first feature length film, which debuted in 1960 and is considered one of the first films of "the Revolution." Another work which fed discussions about neo-realism was based on a plot proposed by Cesare Zavattini, the film *El Joven rebelde* (1961) by Julio García Espinosa, whose photography was the responsibility of the Spaniard Juan Mariné. This film possessed the structure of many Soviet films which exported the so-called 'positive hero' and followed an evolutionary structure, a process of self-improvement in which the main character overcomes challenges and undergoes trials or 'rites of passage' which makes them aware of the importance of their total surrender to the revolutionary cause.

This narrative strategy of gradual revelation, in which the viewer slowly discovers the 'message' through a growing process of perceiving reality and the acquisition of a political awareness, pleased the public and the government. It was repeated in other ICAIC productions in the following decades - the case of *El Brigadista* (Octavio Cortázar, 1977). However, the filmmakers, anxious for new forms, aimed to develop their own aesthetics, one that was Latin American *par excellence*. A debate started in the Institute about realism, recent Italian cinema, and other contemporary European manifestations. The judgement of non-realistic films such as *La dolce vitta* (1960, by Federico Fellini) and *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959, by Alain Resnais) and whether or not these should be shown in Cuba were hot themes of discussion at the beginning of ICAIC's history. These discussions involved opinion polls with the Cuban people, commissioned by the government, in order to demonstrate to the filmmakers enthusiastic about this vanguard production that these films were not 'understood' by the people. There also occurred tense roundtables in ICAIC about formal freedom and the type of cinema most suited to the Cuban context, and in a more general manner, to the Latin American reality. On these occasions, a polarization emerged between the filmmakers who defended artistic experimentalism and intellectuals linked to the old Cuban Communist Party, sympathizers with socialist realism. It was not rare for filmmakers or invited foreigners passing through Cuba to participate in these roundtables, as happened, for example, with Mikhail Kalatosov in 1963. [6]

In this period, the repercussions of *free cinema* were in the center of several controversies. One of the first exhibitions of *free cinema* on the island occurred in 1960, on the occasion of the visit of the independent US filmmaker Albert Maysles, who exhibited in a private session his documentary *Primary* (1960). Although the connections between Cuba and Europe were very expressive in the cinematographic field, in this period the proximity of the United States and the interest of Cubans in independent US cinema, added to the circulation of ICAIC films in some festivals and alternative circuits, resulting in important cultural exchanges between these two countries.

Free cinema used 16mm film, without scripts or any prior preparation or interference of the team, used hidden or handheld cameras (without tripods), and captured the environmental sound, in short resources which enchanted young filmmakers who made in an experimental form, outside ICAIC, the short film *P.M.* (Orlando Jiménez Leal and Sabá Cabrera Infante, 1961).

VIDEO

View online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKvbUeqPYlo

> short film *P.M.*(Orlando Jiménez Leal and Sabá Cabrera Infante, 1961)
>
> **Source:** YouTube

However, this short film, which showed the Bohemian lifestyle in the port region of Havana, was quickly used by Fidel Castro as an example of what should not represent the 'cinema of revolution,' or more generally, the 'art of revolution.' The censorship of the exhibition of this work and the manifesto of the ICAIC filmmakers against this prohibition were the trigger for Fidel to make in 1961 the first speech considered indicative of the post-Revolution governmental cultural policy: the speech *Palabras a los intelectuales*. The so-called 'PM Case' was the first impasse which permeated the Cuban cinematographic environment, with it being very clear that it was not simple for the ICAIC filmmakers or those who produced its films to be daring in their work. Nevertheless, some ambiguous, allegorical, or even politically provocative films were made, such as *Memorias del Subdesarrollo* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968), *Coffea Arabiga* (Nicolás Guillén Landrián, 1968), *De cierta manera* (Sara Gomez, 1974-77), *Los sobrevivientes* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1978), *Techo de vidrio* (Sergio Giral, 1982), *Alicia en el pueblo de maravillas* (Daniel Díaz-Torres, 1991), and *Fresa y Chocolate* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1993), amongst others. Filmmakers took advantage of some breaches (allowed by a certain autonomy which ICAIC had) and managed to make these productions which, however, were not always able to reach the public. The history of many of these films produced by ICAIC and their repercussion allows us glimpse the dynamics of complex negotiations established between the Institute, the filmmakers who were part of it, and the Cuban government.

Over the decade, ICAIC made various co-productions and received many visitors. Along with a large number of Soviet specialists who came to "make the institute work" (camera operators, electricians, lighting engineers), came other professionals with some fame in the socialist world, such as the East German (RDA) filmmaker Kurt Maetzig (1911-2012), the Czech director and actor Vladimir Cech (1951-2013), and the Russian director Roman Karmen (1906-1978). This occurred principally after the Cuban government's decision for socialism in 1961 and the consequent movement of approximation of the countries in this bloc, in the context of the Cold War, seeking to improve ties with Cuba in political, economic, and cultural terms. In March 1962, Cech directed and prepared the script of *Para quién baila La Habana* (82 minutes), a coproduction between the Cuban institute and the Barrandov studios, which

debuted the following year. Maetzig, linked to the DEFA studios, came for the third time to Cuba in 1962, for the filming of *Preludio II*, a film about the invasion of Playa Girón, with a script by Wolfgang Scheyer and with the Brazilian director as Iberê Cavalcanti (1935-) as an assistant director. Karmen, who arrived in October 1960, filmed some documentaries about the new Cuban reality (*Cuba hoy*, *Alba de Cuba* and *La lámpara azul*, the latter about the 1961 Literacy Campaign).

Various flows of visitors who reached Cuba to cooperate with the cinema of revolution can be identified: directors and celebrities from Europe, in general renowned around the world and sympathizers of the new left and the Cuban process, important people from the Socialist Bloc, who counted on governmental stimuli for this circulation (such as the funding for their journeys by the communist parties of their countries), and exiled Latin American filmmakers or from other Third World countries, who counted on the solidarity of Cuba to develop projects with a clear political content, unfeasible in their countries of origin.

This presence resulted in a large number of films in diverse formats with different lengths, some of which call attention because they document this rich transatlantic network which was formed around ICAIC. In addition, they are witnesses to new cultural exchanges, as well as various aesthetic options, which resulted both in quite conventional works and prolix allegories.

The Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens (1898-1989), who already had great experience with social and political documentaries in various countries, arrived in Cuba in September 1960, contracted by ICAIC to organize a school of documentary makers which, however, existed only in an informal manner. In 1961 with a Cuban team, Ivens made *Carnet de Viaje* and *Cuba, pueblo armado*. In addition to Ivens, the French filmmaker Chris Marker (1921-2012) was also a 'professor' in ICAIC, where he made the documentary *Cuba si!* (1961), whose miscellany of imagistic materials Cuban documentary makers came to imitate. Ten years later Marker returned to Cuba and witnessed the failure of the governmental project to achieve the production target of 10 million tons of sugar, registering this in the film *La bataille des dix millions* (1971). In addition to the previously mentioned documentary makers (such as Karmen, Ivens, and Marker), also worth mentioning is the Belgian photographer and filmmaker Agnès Varda, invited by ICAIC to Cuba in 1962. During her time on the island an animation based on 1800 photographs taken in various regions of Cuba. She actually made four documentaries on the island, with the most important being the last, *Salut les Cubains* (1963).

Much before the formulation of the Cuban government's internationalist policy for the Third World there were Latin American filmmakers in ICAIC. Oscar Torres (1931-1968), a Dominican filmmaker, was one of the first to enter the Institute and made *Realengo 18*, a work about a peasant rebellion in the 1930s. However, this was not well received in Cuba. [7] In 1962 the dramatist and French filmmaker Armand Gatti (1924-2017) made *El otro Cristóbal*, a film which was also not well received by critics as it was considered 'delirious' to use the Afro-Cuban mythos in an allegorical manner to satirize Latin American dictatorships and US imperialism.* Ugo Ulive (1933-), an Uruguayan director, spent various years in the Institute and, in addition to the adaptation of the script of *Las doce sillas*, made *Crónica Cubana* (1963), a film about recent history, between the Revolution and Playa Girón. Released the same year was *Soy Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatosov, 1963), an ICAIC superproduction in partnership with Mosfilm which was a great public and critical failure, even being rejected by the governments of the two countries, for which reason it was on show for very short period in Havana and Moscow. What is interesting about this film is that decades later it would be recovered and valued in the United States as a *cult film*, explored by the Brazilian filmmaker Vicente Ferraz in the documentary *Soy Cuba - O mamute siberiano* (2006).



Cover DVD *Soy Cuba - O Mamute Siberiano*

Source: Mercado Livre

The revaluation of this film occurred after it was shown in US festivals (*Telluride Film Festival* and the Festival of San Francisco) and Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola's initiative to restore and commercially rerelease the work. With this legitimation, the film that had been forgotten until then and considered in general to be of low quality, came to be seen as an 'exotic' relic of socialist cinema, an impeccable register of Kalatosov's indisputably grandiloquent style. The documentary by Vicente Ferraz, a filmmaker who studied in Cuba, in the Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV de los "Tres Mundos", in San Antonio de los Bãnos, deals precisely with these tensions and disagreements that permeated the exchange between Cuba and the USSR in the making of this ambitious binational project.

In 1964, the Brazilian Iberê Cavalcanti, also in Cuba, made two films: *Pueblo por pueblo*, about Cuban solidarity with Vietnam, and *Discriminación racial*, about the struggle for civil rights in the United States.

In February 1968, Jean-Luc Godard travelled to Cuba and was received by the best known names from ICAIC: Alea, Guevara, Santiago Álvarez, and García Espinosa. He made some films and gave a speech. The reports in Cuba about his visit, which would be followed by a time in the US, were very synthetic and cautious, as if they sought to justify the presence on the island of someone who continued to be criticized for his "petit bourgeois aesthetic," since the *Nouvelle Vague* was rejected by orthodox communists.

Two years earlier in January 1966, the Year of Solidarity, Cuba officialized its internationalist policy aimed at "Third World" countries, holding the Tricontinental Conference. Created on this occasion was the previously mentioned OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America), which in partnership with ICAIC made possible the trips of various Cuban directors to Africa and Asia for filming. Films such as *La guerra olvidada* (Santiago Álvarez, 1967), *Hanoi, martes 13* (Santiago Álvarez, 1967), *Madina Boé* (José Massip, 1968), and *79 primaveras* (Santiago Álvarez, 1969) were the result of this Third World project. [8] Aften the 1967 OLAS Meeting (*Organización Latinoamericana de Solidariedad*), there was an important approximation of Latin American filmmakers with ICAIC, which had already begun at festivals and meetings where the principals and slogans of the *nuevo cine latinoamericano* emerged. In the 1970s, at the same time that the "Sovietization" process was outlined in political structures, the ICAIC, with the support of the Cuban government, gradually assumed

the mission of enabling the country to become the "base" of *nuevo cine latinoamericano* and adopted a discourse which legitimated this project and the proximity of Cuban cinematography with that of its neighbors.

Alfredo Guevara's invitation of Glauber Rocha to work in ICAIC and make an epic film about the life of Che Guevara also illustrated this disposition. Glauber remained little more than a year in ICAIC, living in Cuba under the auspices of the Cuban government between 1971 and 1972, but did not make the film, just starting the little applauded *História do Brasil* (1971-74), in partnership with Marcos Medeiros. [9]

Political events such as the Chilean and Nicaraguan revolutions reinforced the role of Latin American cinematography. Chilean filmmakers in particular played a significant role in ICAIC in the 1970s - as in the case of Patrício Guzmán, who lived for some years in Havana, where he finalized, with the collaboration of Pedro Chaskel, his famous documentary trilogy *La batalla de Chile: la lucha de un pueblo sin armas*. [10] Miguel Littín, an exile, arrived in ICAIC in 1978 and made two important co-productions [11] focusing on the question of authoritarianism in Latin America. The following year, Sergio Castilla made *Prisioneros desaparecidos* (1979) about political repression and torture in his country. In the 1980s, Pedro Chaskel spent many years in ICAIC, where he made a documentary entitled *Qué es?* (1980) and various other ones about Che Guevara, such as *Una foto recorre el mundo* (1981) and *Constructor de cada día* (1982).

After the Nicaraguan revolution, ICAIC participated actively in the creation of ISCN, Instituto Sandinista de Cine Nicaraguense. During the 1980s various Chilean directors, temporarily in Cuba, turned their lenses to Nicaragua with the support of ICAIC: Miguel Littín made *Alsino y el condor* (1982), a co-production between Cuba, Costa Rica, and Mexico, while Iván Arguello, made *Mujeres de la frontera* (1986).

Moreover, the holding in Havana, from 1979 onwards, of the *Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano*, as well as the creation in 1985 of Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano and the following year (1986) of Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV de los "Tres Mundos" in San Antonio de los Baños contributed politically and ideologically to strengthening a discourse which celebrated Cuba as the base of politically engaged cinema in Latin America, a discourse very present on the island.

ICAIC Soundtracks

In 1969 the *Grupo de Experimentación Sonora del ICAIC* (GESI or simply GES) was created, charged with composing the soundtracks for ICAIC productions. It was created at the initiative of Alfredo Guevara who, after a trip to Brazil, impressed with young people's support of *Música Popular Brasileira* (notably during *Tropicalismo* and song festivals transmitted by television, which were attended by fervent audiences), assembled *maestros* from the erudite spheres and a notable group of Cuban musicians. The musicians included Pablo Milanés (1943-), Silvio Rodríguez (1946-), Noel Nicola (1946-2005), Sara González (1949-2012), [Sergio Vitier] (https://havanamusicschool.com/sergio-vitier-soul-music/), amongst other artists who at that moment were not well regarded by the Cuban government due to their intimate compositions, considered individualist or not very exhortative of the Revolution and the "new man."

These musicians had not adhered to the conventional forms of 'protest songs' and many of them were prohibited from making formal public presentations or having their music played on the radio. Under the coordination of Maestro Leo Brouwer (1939-), the Group came to study the arrangements of the Beatles (then forbidden on the radio in Cuba, since rock was considered a 'imperialist genre') and the

Tropicalistas, in order to incorporate creative formulas for a supposedly universal sound which extrapolated the protest song models (more linked to the sound of folkloric or non-urban musical genres). Jazz, traditional Cuban genres, *batuque*, as well as electro-acoustic music and progressive rock were incorporated in GES' compositions. The soundtracks composed by GES are an example of the result of the circulation of multiple musical references (although some had been officially barred in the country), and the success achieved by this sound, together with the population who were infected by the music they heard on the cinema and rapidly became interested in getting to know that band, pressurized the Cuban government to incorporate this group and give it the visibility they were due, with the recording of LPs and holding shows.



Collection of songs recorded by G.E.S.

Source: 60's Busters

All the songs that are part of this LP can be heard here.



Cover of the LP "*Grupo de Experimentación Sonoral del ICAIC*"

Source: Ecured



Covers of the LPs "G.E.S./Icaic 3"

Source: Discogs

This gradual institutionalization of the Group's unconventional music occurred in the form of the official recognition of the *Movimento de la Nueva Trova* (MNT) and the view of this music as a 'return' to and an updating of the Cuban *Trova* genre. After 1972, what was now called MNT (with a more widespread scope than GES) came under the wing of the government and was included in the fulfilment of targets for holding festivals in the interior of the country. Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés were raised from 'damned musicians' to the condition of ambassadors of Cuban culture and began to hold international tours, notably the one held in Chile, with Noel Nicola and Isabel Parra, in September 1972.



LP recorded in Cuba and Santiago de Chile between 1971 and 1972. Released in Chile in 1972 by DICAP.

Source: Perrerac

The music produced under ICAIC is an example of the 'sound mill' formed in Cuba, mixing various international musical genres, such as jazz, progressive rock, US protest songs, Bossa Nova, Latin American protest songs, serial music, as well as a vast menu of Cuban rhythms and genres.

Graphic art in ICAIC

With each film release, a poster was ordered from fine artists and designers. This led to the creation of the *Departamento de Publicidad* in ICAIC, initially directed by Saúl Yelín. Working in this department, producing numerous posters for the cinema, were a series of designers and painters, such as Alfredo Rostgaard, an adept of *pop art* and author of a famous serigraph poster for the documentary *Now* (1965) by Santiago Alvarez, Raúl Martinez, author of the colored serigraph for the film *Lucía*, by Humberto Solás in 1968, in a *pop style,* and various other names such as Felix Beltrán, Rafael Morante, Antonio Fernández Reboiro, René Azcuy, Fernando Pérez O´Reilly, Holbein Lopez, and José Lucci. Occasionally, famous

Cuban artists such as René Portocarrero (author of the poster *Soy Cuba*, by Mikhail Kalatosov, 1964), and Servando Cabrera Moreno (author of the poster *Retrato de Teresa*, by Pastor Vega, 1979), as well as various others, were invited to make posters for Cuban films or recreate posters for foreign films.



Poster of the film *Now*, signed by Alfredo Rostgaard.

Source: Santiago Alvarez



Poster for the film *Soy Cuba*, signed by the Cuban painter René Portocarrero.

Source: Ebay



Poster for the film *Lucía* (1968), signed by Raúl Martinez.

Source: Pinterest



Poster for the film *Retrato de Teresa*, signed by Cabrera Moreno.

Source: Benito

Cuban film posters, which marked the visual memory and guided viewers' perspectives in advance to a determined interpretation or disposition in relation to the film to be watched, gained their own lives, won international fame, and were compiled and reproduced in luxurious catalogues produced outside Cuba, in the 1960s and 1970s, due to their aesthetic diversity. [12] This diversity shows us that ICAIC was a place of transatlantic meetings and exchanges which, in turn, circulated around the world, initially accompanying the divulgation of films and afterwards in a more autonomous form, as an example of the quality of Cuban graphic art.

These posters were used not only to register the release of films, but also anniversaries of the Institute, its periodical, and the Cinemateca, as well as ICAIC's exhibition and cycles, festivals of *nuevo cine latinoamericano*, mobile cinema, exhibitions, campaigns, and colloquiums. The posters which still in present cover the ceiling and the walls of the entrance hall principal building of ICAIC, reveal elements of figurativism, surrealism, *pop art*, cubism, photocollage, etc.



Entrance hall to the principal ICAIC building, covered in film posters made in ICAIC (by Cubans and foreigners) or exhibited in Cuba, principally in the 1960s and 1980s.

Source: Wikimedia

Amongst ICAIC's many collaborators, the painter Eduardo Muñoz Bachs (1937-2001) established himself as the most award winning Cuban poster designer. He began to work in the Institute in 1960 (his first poster was produced for the film *Historias de la Revolución*). As well as having produced around 800 posters, his very poetic and good humored style, peopled by Pierrots, clowns, and other figures related to the fantasy universe, illustrates the influence of Polish and Czech graphics on Cuba, also present in the work of Antonio Fernández Reboiro. The latter and Bachs differentiated themselves from artists with a somewhat more austere style, such as Felix Beltrán, trained in the USSR. As a rule, those who were enthusiastic about Eastern European graphics adhered to light styles, inspired by Toulouse Lautrec and 1920s Swiss painters, basing themselves on *off-set techniques*, manual lithography, the superimposition of photomontage, painting, and illustration, abundantly exploring intense colors and minimalist forms. Soviet influence, in turn, influenced the use of graphics in ICAIC's posters (which can also be observed in Santiago Álvarez's documentaries and in the *Noticieros*): titles with a format inspired by Japanese graphics, titles of various sizes, colors, and style, photocollage, moving letters, tricks which caused optical illusions, parodies of cartoons, etc.

In 1967, ICAIC acquired a screen printing laboratory especially designed for the production of posters (until then most were printed abroad) and during the 1970s, until the economic crisis which began in the 1980s, there was a profusion of posters in a *pop style*, some even 'psychedelic,' with exuberant traces and colors, often associated with political messages. In this phase some poster makers went off on daring formal searches, principally Reboiro and Muñoz Bachs, and were much criticized for this. The transformations can be seen on the covers of *Cine Cubano*, with the usual loud colors during the 1980s (the cover of issue no. 97 from 1980, for example, sports a red star superimposed on yellow stars which jump out of a deep blue negative film). Despite the variation in techniques and styles, the presence of military icons types of the ideological propaganda of the USSR was intense: rifles, helmets, boots, and the entire bellic symbology accompanied ICAIC's posters and films for various decades.

With the strengthening of the governmental cultural policy after 1971, there was some repetition of symbols and forms. Nevertheless, the case of the graphic arts developed by the Institute reveals to us how a quite eclectic experience, which was not that officially endorsed by cultural policy, emerged in ICAIC and spread through the world. The nature of the experimental soundtracks and posters produced within this Institute of Cinema also contributed to the international circulation of films, making an interesting circuit which we have sought to trace out in this text, showing the various types of transnational exchanges produced in ICAIC and through it.

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NOTES

1. This disposition is patent in events such as the Tricontinental Conference in 1966, which founded OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America), or the meeting of OLAS (Organización Latinoamericana de Solidariedad) in 1967.
2. Juan Antonio GARCIA BORRERO, *Guía crítica del cine cubano de ficción*. (La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 2001), 17.
3. Its official foundation dates from 1960, but in reality Cinemateca existed before the Revolution and under precarious conditions (without its own premises) between 1951 and 1956.

4 In relation to the incredible history of this newsreel there is the documentary *Memória Cubana* (Alice de Andrade and Ivan Nápoles, 2010, 71 minutos, VOSTF). Its different editions are available at https://www.inamediapro.com/Collections/Collection-Actualites-Cubaines-ICAIC.

5 "Cine Cubano 1959-1969", *Cine Cubano* no. 54-55 (1969): 126.

6 This subject was dealt with in detail in the third chapter of the book: Mariana Villaça, *Cinema cubano: revolução e política cultural*, (São Paulo, Alameda, 2010).

7 There are few commentaries about this film: it was not accepted by *ICAIC* supposedly because it contained a certain "exaggerated vitality and realism." Eduardo Manet, "*Cine Cubano* 1961", *Revista Casa de las Américas* II, no. 9 (1961): 126-128. Elizabeth Sutherland, "Cinema of Revolution: 90 Miles from Home". *Films Quartely* 15, no. 2 (1961): 42-49.

8 The historian Alexsandro de Sousa e Silva wrote his doctoral dissertation about this in the Post-Graduate Program of Social History in Universidade de São Paulo. It is entitled *A câmera e o canhão: a circulação das imagens cinematográficas entre Cuba e países africanos (1960-1991).*

9 In relation to this phase between 1969 and 1975, when Glauber aspired to a 'tricontinental' cinema project, see the articles written by Maurício Cardoso, as well as his doctoral dissertation about it in Universidade de São Paulo.

10 Composed of *La insurreción de la burguesia* (1973-75), *El golpe de estado* (1973-76), and *El poder popular* (1973-77).

11 *El Recurso del Método*, a Mexican-French-Cuban coproduction, with a script by Jaime A. Shelley and Regis Debray, and *La viuda de Montiel* (a Venezuelan-Mexican-Colombian-Cuban coproduction), starring Geraldine Chaplin.

12 See the catalogue *The art of Revolution*, *Castro's Cuba 1959-1970*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1970, with a presentation by Susan Sontag and Dugald Steimer, published in various languages. Another example is *Cuba ansche affiches*. Amsterdam: Stedelyk Museum, 1971.