

American-Cuban Cultural Collaboration Project



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In the spring of 2003, Vision Project initiated the idea of a cross-cultural collaboration with the Taller Experimental Grafica of Cuba, the School of Visual Arts in New York and Vision Project. After viewing a series of photographs taken of the September 11th - World Trade Center Disaster by Vision Project's President, Richard Falco, the groups decided to create a collective statement about this transforming global event. The purpose of the project was to highlight the fact that people from all over the world share many of the same hopes and fears and that we are united by our humanity more than we are divided by it. The goal of the project is to show that art and photography can build bridges of understanding that can traverse the political, social or economic divisions that often separate nations.

The project included members from Vision Project, professors and staff members from the School of Visual Arts, and artists and staff members from the Taller Experimental Grafica in Havana. The initial idea was to create visual interpretations of photographs taken at Ground Zero by Richard Falco. In an effort to bring the different mediums together, two of Mr. Falco's images were made into large black and white lithographs by the School of Visual Art's printmaker, Gunars Prande. This gave the Cuban artists at the Taller Experimental Grafica, a paper medium on which they could contribute their own ideas and vision into the aesthetic process. Forty Cuban artists participated in the project. They are: Edgar Hechavarria Ricardo, Rafael Paneca Cano, Rigoberto Mena, Luis Lara, Ernesto Rancano, William Hernandez, Juan Rodriguez Bonachea, Julio Cesar Pena, Norberto Marrero, Cesar Leal, Frank Martinez, Angel Ramirez, Alejandro Sainz, Zenen Vizcaino, Lesbia Vent Demois, Ibrahim Miranda, Alexis Leyva, Flora Fong, Diana Balboa, Jose Omar Torres, Eduardo Abela, Eduardo Roca, Anyelmaidelin Calzadilla, Tomy Ortiz, Gesser Lopez, Alberto Sautua, Vicente Hernandez, Max D.C., Isolina Limonta, Angel Rivero, Jesus Hernandez, Andres Jimenez, Ruben Rodriguez, Hugo Azcuy, Sebastian Leal, Ricardo Silveira, Manuel Lopez Oliva, Carlos Del Toro, Janette Brossard, Juan Carlos Menendez, Rafael Zarza, Samuel Riera. The collaboration became a true collective effort for everyone involved. The traveling exhibition is the culmination of those efforts.



The Original Photos

These are the original photographs taken by Richard Falco at Ground Zero the week of September 11.

From these images Gunars Prande made large black and white lithographs for the Cuban artists to use as their canvases.





In January 2004, Richard Falco, Gunars Prande and a delegation from the School of Visual Arts, returned to Cuba with two sets of black and white lithographs, made from Richard Falco's photographs. Everyone gathered at the Taller Experimental Grafica.



The Cuban artists, some of whom were seeing the images for the first time, then began the last phase of the collaboration. Reviewing the original photographs, the artists conversed amongst one another, thinking and discussing ideas.



Cuban artists examined the original color photographs and the black and white lithographs on which they would work.

After a day long discussion with Richard Falco sharing insights about the September 11th experience, each of the Cuban artists was given a single lithograph to take back to their studios. They were then given complete autonomy to add their own ideas and interpretations to the piece.



Cuban Artists Work



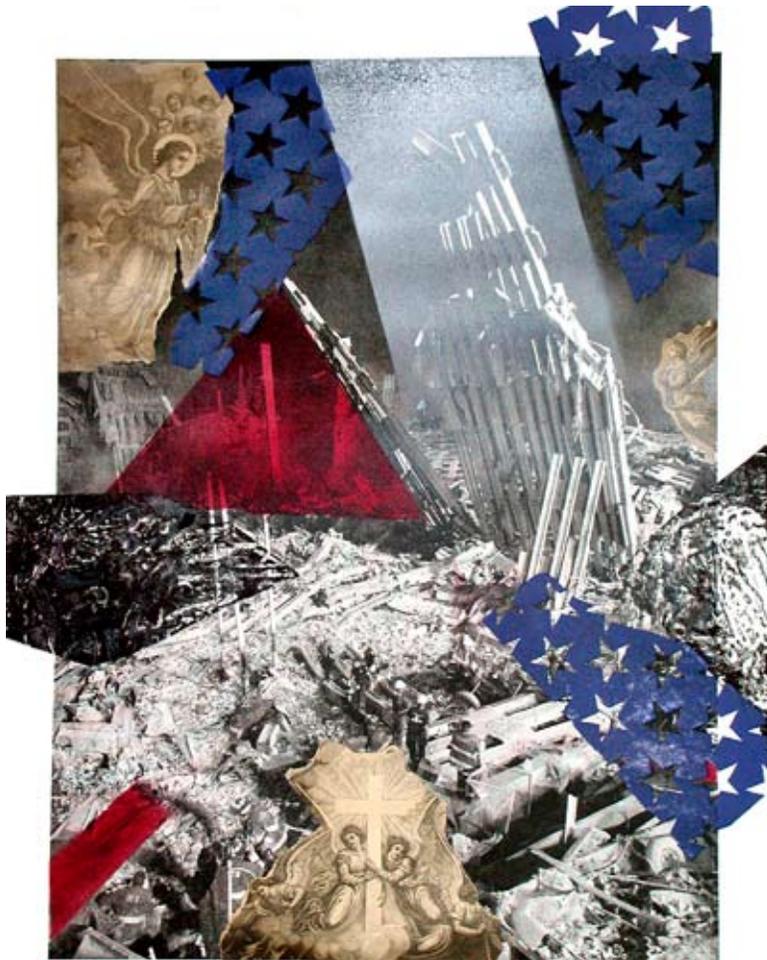
Cesar Leal



Janette Brossard



Isolina Limonta



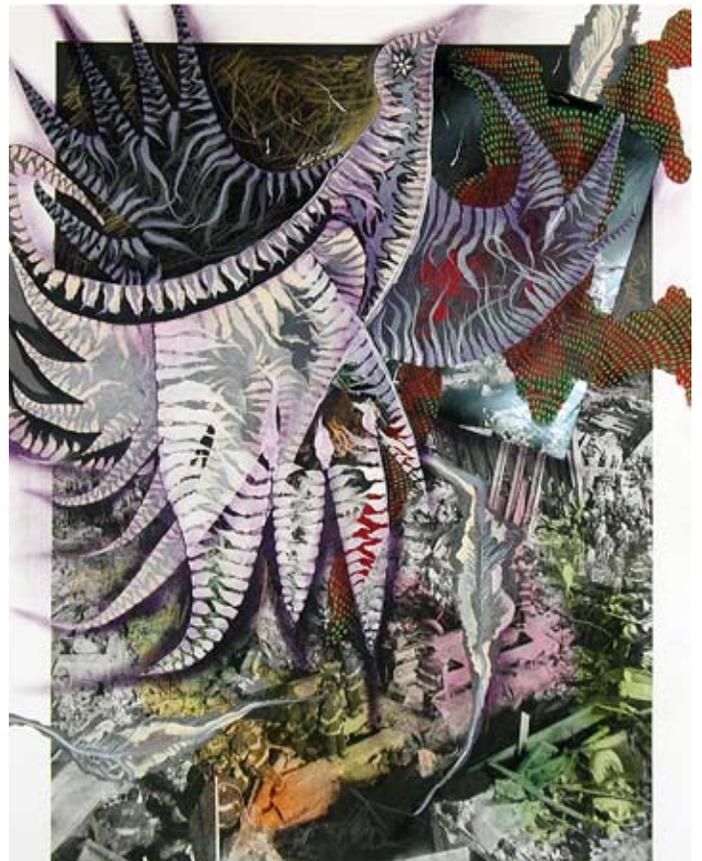
Angel Rivero



Alejandro Sainz



Lesbia Vent Demois



Carlos Del Toro



Rafael Zarza



Eduardo Abela



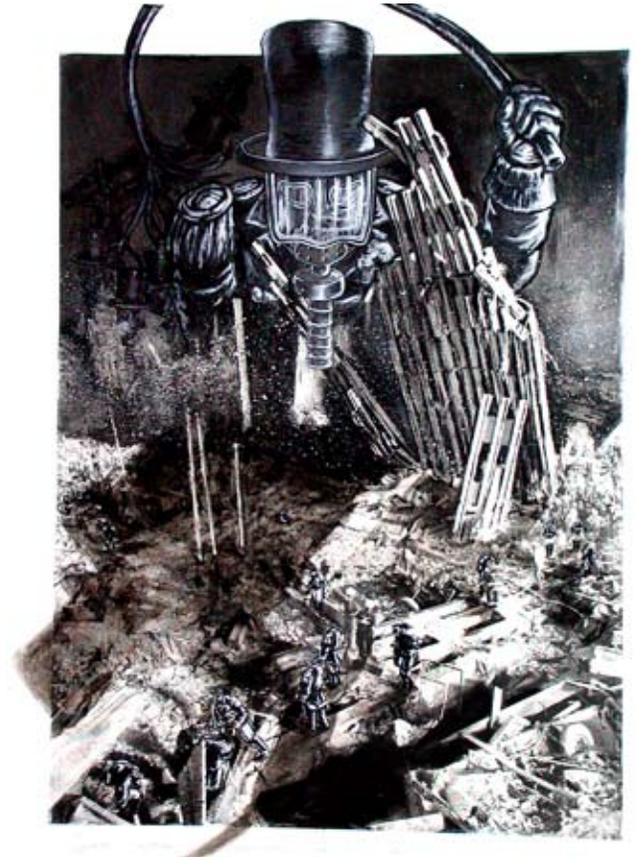
William Hernandez



Luis Lara



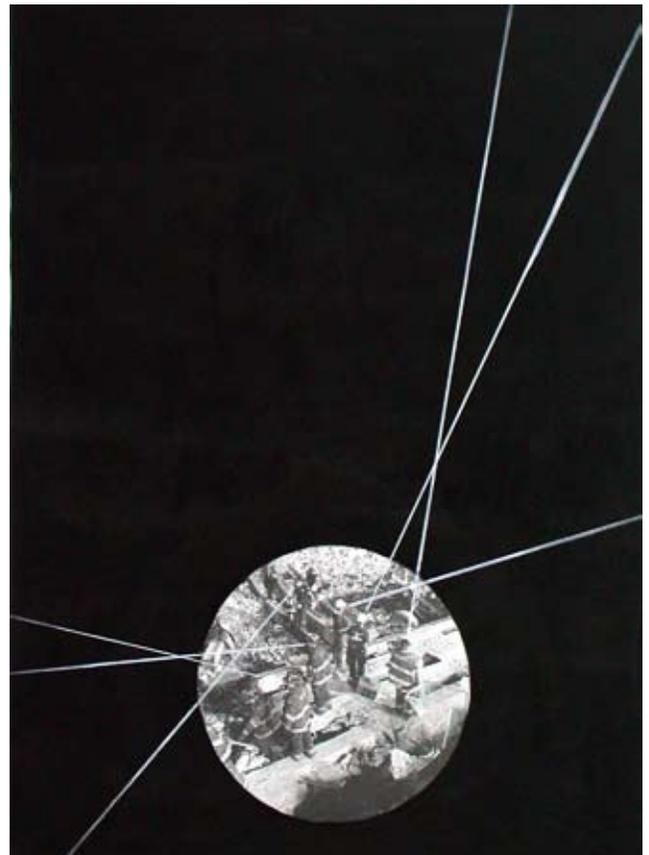
Manuel Lopez Oliva



Tomy Ortiz & Gesser Lopez

Alberto Sautua

Anyelmaidelin Calzadilla





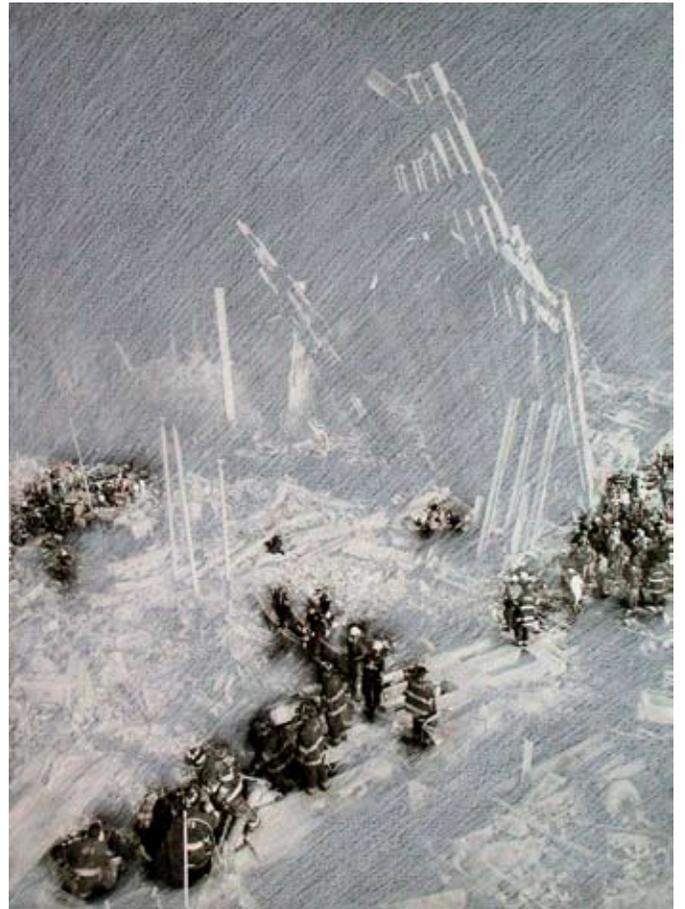
Norberto Marrero



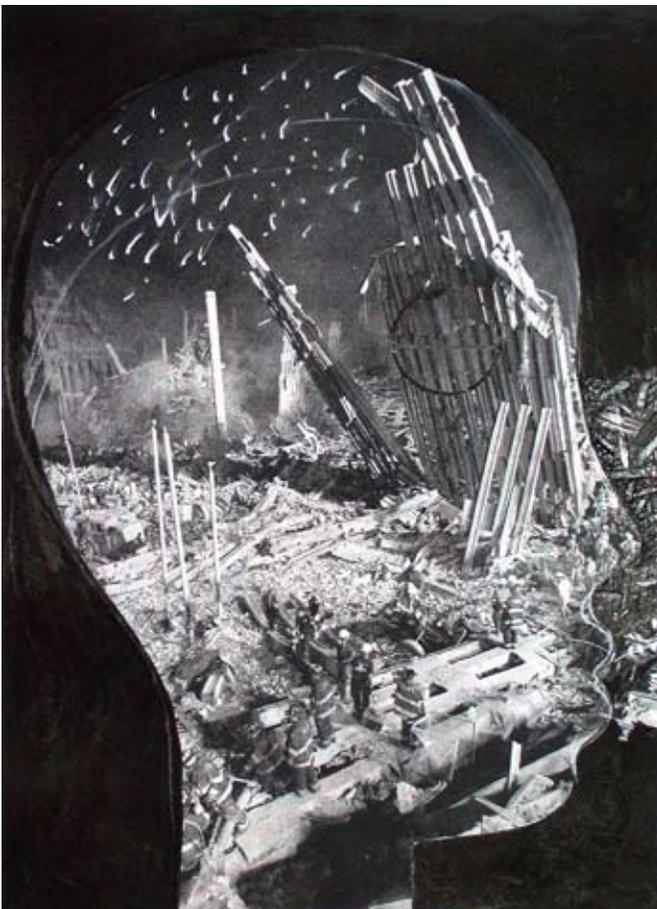
Juan V. Rodriguez Bonachea



Guero



Sebastian



Eduardo Roca (Choco)



Andres Gimenez



Max D. C

The Exhibition



The exhibition opened in Havana on July 8, 2004 at the Jose Marti Memorial Exhibition Hall. The show stayed at the Hall for one month before it began to travel to other countries around the world.



Opening Day in Havana



More than a thousand people and news organizations from around the world attended the opening at the Jose Marti Exhibition Hall. A continual flow of viewers came to see the exhibition during its stay in Cuba.



The New York Opening of the Exhibition



After traveling to a number of countries around the world, the exhibition arrived in New York. Diplomatic complications between the United States and Cuba long delayed the show's entry into the United States. It finally opened on September 11, 2009 at the Westside Galleries at the School of Visual Arts.

Its arrival reinforces the essential goals of the collaboration -- that art and photography can build bridges of understanding that can traverse the political, social or economic divisions that often separate nations -- that people from all over the world share many of the same hopes and fears -- that we are united by our humanity more than we are divided by it.





The goal of all the project's participants is to create a traveling exhibition that will traverse the United States.

