



**PennAlumni**  
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Travel



## **Afro-Cuban Arts & Culture in Havana**

with Professors Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw and Peter Decherney

**March 3 – 9, 2024**



## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

**ACCOMPANY** Professors **Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw** and **Peter Decherney** on a fascinating exploration of Cuba's history, culture, art, music, dance, and current affairs through the lens of the country's rich Afro-Cuban heritage

**PARTICIPATE** in discussions with artists at their homes and studios, enjoy access to a private rehearsal at a famous dance company, and take part in an inspiring evening of art and music at Havana's Fábrica de Arte Cubano

**DELIGHT** in a private, curator-led tour at the National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana, with its impressive collection of Afro-Cuban art

**CELEBRATE** and mingle with fellow travelers and local artists at exclusive receptions, including a cocktail reception and dinner at The Ludwig Foundation of Cuba

**MEET** the thought leaders who are shaping Cuban society and learn from their profound insights on Cuban politics

**VISIT** the private home of a *Babalawo* (Santería high priest) to learn about his faith's traditions and origins and take a walking tour of Old Havana led by a celebrated Cuban social activist and writer

**ATTEND** thrilling musical performances, including an exclusive concert by the Choir of Matanzas inside a hilltop church

## TRAVELING WITH YOU



**Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw** is the Class of 1940 Bicentennial Term Associate Professor. Shaw is an expert in art and visual culture of the 19th and 20th centuries in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean, with a focus on issues of race, gender, and class. She has served since 2019 as Senior Historian and Director of History, Research, and Scholarly Programs at the National Portrait Gallery. She is the author of *Seeing the Unspeakable: The Art of Kara Walker*, the forthcoming *First Ladies of the United States*, and a work in progress on 20th-century artist Sargent Johnson. She co-curated the landmark 2015 Philadelphia Museum of Art exhibit *Represent: 200 Years of African American Art*. In 2019, she received the Ira H. Abrams Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching, the highest faculty teaching honor in Penn Arts and Sciences. She earned a Ph.D. in art history from Stanford University and a B.A. with High Honors in art history from the University of California, Santa Barbara. This is her fourth trip to Cuba with Penn Alumni Travel.



**Peter Decherney** is Professor of Cinema & Media Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Director of the Penn Global Documentary Institute, and Faculty Director of Penn's university-wide Online Learning Initiative. He is the author or editor of seven books including *Hollywood's Copyright Wars: From Edison to the Internet* and *Hollywood: A Very Short Introduction*. Professor Decherney has also written for *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, and *Inside Higher Ed*, among other publications. He is an award-winning documentary and virtual reality filmmaker, who has directed a series of films about global migration and on the political role of artists in Myanmar, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the U.S. His virtual reality docuseries, *The Heart of Puerto Rico* about artists in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria (co-directed with Jean Lee) won the Best VR Experience and Best Director awards at the 2020 AT&T Film Awards.





Dear Penn Alumni and Friends,

Once largely off-limits to American travelers, Cuba thrills visitors with its colorful art, fascinating history, and sublime natural beauty. In March 2024, join us as we travel to Havana in support of the Cuban people, experiencing the country through the eyes of its welcoming citizens. Delve into Cuba's African heritage and how it has shaped modern Cuban society. Explore the legacy of more than 800,000 enslaved people brought here from West Africa and the wealth of art, culture, and religions they developed in the face of adversity.

Traveling with you will be **Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw**, Class of 1940 Bicentennial Term Associate Professor in the Department of the History of Art, and **Peter Decherney**, Professor of Cinema & Media Studies. A scholar of the art of the African diaspora in the Americas, Professor Shaw has previously led several groups of Penn alumni to Cuba, and Professor Decherney will share his insights as a documentary filmmaker focusing on global migration and on the political role of artists.

On this program, you will meet leading Cuban artists on exclusive visits to their private studios and accompany curators on private museum tours highlighting Afro-Cuban art. Guided by local experts, visit pivotal sites in Afro-Cuban history and culture, including Callejón de Hamel, a vibrant two-block space in Havana filled with Afro-Cuban street art and live music, and pilgrimage sites rooted in the traditions of Santería and other Afro-Cuban religions. Venture to the private home of a *Babalawo*, a Santería high priest who will trace the origins of his faith to the Yoruba religion of West Africa.

Attend music and dance performances, including a private rehearsal from one of Cuba's leading contemporary dance companies. In the city of Matanzas, take a private tour of an 18th-century castle-turned-museum built by enslaved people. Stop for an inside look at the nearby Ediciones Vigía, an artisanal publishing house where handmade books are created.

Along the way, sample delicious Cuban cuisine at *paladares*, privately owned restaurants located in the proprietors' homes, and stay at a charming boutique hotel in the heart of Havana. Space is limited on this educational adventure. **Reserve today by calling our partners at Arrangements Abroad at 212-514-8921 or 800-221-1944.** We hope you will join us for this exclusive Penn journey, as we explore Cuba from a unique, exciting perspective.



With warm regards from Penn,

Emilie C. K. LaRosa  
Assistant Director, Penn Alumni Travel

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# Afro-Cuban Arts & Culture in Havana

March 3 – 9, 2024



## TUESDAY, MARCH 5: HAVANA

Head to the National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana, where an independent curator will lead you on a private tour of its vast collections of works by leading Cuban artists. The vibrant expressions of Afro-Cuban artists will be a special focus of this tour. After lunch, discover the colorful murals of Callejón de Hamel, a two-block alleyway and an exciting center of Afro-Cuban art and culture in Havana. While here, enjoy a live performance of infectious rhythmic Afro-Cuban music and dance. Later, visit the house of a *Babalawo* (Santería high priest) for an exclusive look at the rituals and practices of Santería. Learn about Santería's rich spiritual traditions that have been passed down through generations and trace their origins to the Yoruba religion that West African enslaved people brought to the Americas. Dinner and the rest of the evening are free to enjoy at your leisure. B,L

## SUNDAY, MARCH 3: DEPARTURE / HAVANA, CUBA

Arrive independently in Havana. You will be met upon arrival at the José Martí International Airport and transferred to Paseo 206, a boutique hotel located in a quiet, residential neighborhood in central Havana. Enjoy a welcome reception, then gather for dinner this evening at a *paladar*, a privately owned restaurant located in the proprietor's home and largely staffed by family members. R,D

## MONDAY, MARCH 4: HAVANA / REGLA / GUANABACOA / HAVANA

Join a local architectural historian for a lecture focused on the well-preserved buildings that make up this beautiful city. Then embark on a fascinating walking tour of Old Havana, led by a celebrated writer and activist. Discover the stories of Afro-Cuban people and their culture as you explore the four main squares: Plaza de Armas, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, Plaza Vieja, and Plaza de la Catedral. Visit the nearby municipalities of Regla and Guanabacoa, known for their deep-rooted traditions in Santería, Palo Monte, and other Afro-Cuban religions. Take a private look at the iconic Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Regla, a church with a storied history in the Santería tradition. Continue to the local museum, the Museo Municipal de Regla, where you will have a guided look at its extraordinary collection reflecting the area's history and Afro-Cuban faiths. This evening, indulge in a delicious dinner at a local *paladar*, savoring the unique flavors of Havana. B,L,D

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6: HAVANA / JAIMANITAS / HAVANA

Attend a morning lecture given by the distinguished Norma Guillard, a Cuban social psychologist and adjunct lecturer at the renowned University of Havana. Her academic work on gender, sexuality, race, and identity will offer an enlightening perspective on Cuba's historical and cultural evolution. Following lunch, venture just outside Havana







José Rodríguez Fuster's mosaic, Jaimanitas

to the picturesque fishing village of Jaimanitas, where you will have an exclusive visit to the house and studio of artist José Rodríguez Fuster, whose public art work here has been compared to that of Gaudí in Barcelona. Take a walking tour of the village to see how Fuster has ingeniously decorated more than 80 surrounding homes with ornate murals and domes, tailored to the personalities of his neighbors. You will also behold his masterpiece, *The Artists' Wall*, a breathtaking quilt of dozens of tiles, each one signed and donated by other Cuban artists.

Afterwards, return to Havana and join a local expert at the Colón Cemetery, often referred to as the largest sculpture park in the country. Admire the ornate tombstones commemorating Cuban heroes, statesmen, and novelists, each one a testament to Cuba's cultural heritage. As evening falls, make your way to The Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, one of the few Cuban NGOs, for a presentation on Cuban art. Several local Cuban artists will also be in attendance. Later this evening, you may opt to attend a performance at one of Havana's famed music venues, including the legendary Tropicana. B,L,R,D

#### **THURSDAY, MARCH 7: HAVANA / MATANZAS / HAVANA**

Journey to the captivating seaside city of Matanzas, renowned as a birthplace of rumba and numerous Afro-Cuban folkloric traditions. Matanzas is also known as the "Venice of Cuba" for the 17 bridges and three rivers that traverse its environs. As you travel, pause at the Bacunayagua Bridge, the highest in all of Cuba, and revel in the panoramic views of the verdant valley below. Upon arrival in Matanzas, delve into the rich cultural heritage of the city with a private visit to the Castillo de San Severino, an 18th-century castle built by African enslaved people. A poignant symbol of the city's past and now a museum, the castle houses objects and photos that offer vivid glimpses into the reality of enslaved life. Continue your

exploration of Matanzas with a visit to Ediciones Vigía, an artisanal publishing house where skilled craftspeople create handmade books, and meet an artist in his studio.

After lunch, ascend the Monserrate hills to La Ermita de Monserrate, a small late 19th-century neoclassical church, where you will witness a special performance by the Choir of Matanzas. Return to Havana for an evening at leisure. B,L

#### **FRIDAY, MARCH 8: HAVANA / SAN FRANCISCO DE PAULA / COJÍMAR / HAVANA**

This morning, you may opt to proceed to Cuba's leading art school, the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA), and delight in an opportunity to interact with professors and students and view their artwork. Alternatively, venture outside the bustling city to the small, hilltop village of San Francisco de Paula for a visit to Finca Vigía (Lookout Farm), the house where Ernest Hemingway lived for 20 years. View the rooms through open windows from the surrounding terraces; see Hemingway's famous fishing boat *Pilar*; and climb the tower to his study. Following lunch at leisure, make a brief visit to the village of Cojimar, the setting for *The Old Man and the Sea*. Later, you will have exclusive access to an informal rehearsal of acclaimed choreographer/director Rosario Cárdenas's contemporary dance company, Danza Combinatoria. Before the day's end, enjoy a private visit to Fábrica de Arte Cubano (FAC), the city's liveliest multidisciplinary performing and visual arts space. Dinner is at El Cocinero. B,D



#### **SATURDAY, MARCH 9: HAVANA / RETURN**

Depart the hotel this morning for the airport and your flight home. B

**DISCLAIMER:** The itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Penn Alumni Travel and Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at [www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms](http://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms).



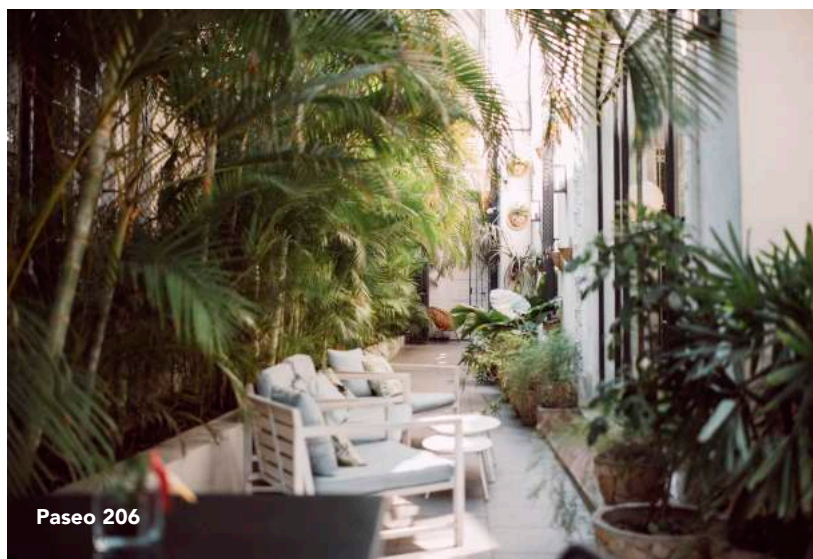
Ediciones Vigía, Matanzas, photo by Alan Kotok



## ACCOMMODATIONS

### PASEO 206

A member of the "Small Luxury Hotels of the World" collection, Paseo 206 is a beautifully restored historic boutique hotel nestled in Vedado, the economic and cultural heart of La Havana. In this family home dating to 1933, ten cozy and comfortable rooms and suites offer free Wi-Fi, 24-hour room service, Hermès bathroom amenities, Marshall speakers, and hypoallergenic king-sized beds with luxurious Frette linens.



Finca Vigía, photo by Jay Hunt



### RATES INCLUDES

**\$5,099 per person, double rate in Cozy Room**  
**\$6,399 single rate in Cozy Room**

**\$5,599 per person, double rate in Junior Room**  
**\$6,999 single rate in Junior Room**

**\$6,599 per person, double rate in Master Suite**  
**\$8,599 single rate in Master Suite**

**\$7,099 per person, double rate in Rooftop Suite**  
**\$9,999 single rate in Rooftop Suite**

- Six nights hotel accommodations as per itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine at welcome and farewell dinners
- Airport/hotel/airport transfers for all travelers
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation and entrance fees for all included visits
- Taxes, service, and portorage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers

**NOT INCLUDED IN RATES** International airfare; Cuban visa; Cuban Departure tax; limited Cuban health insurance policy (required for all foreign travelers to Cuba under age 80); passport fees; alcoholic beverages other than noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; travel insurance; airport transfers other than for those on suggested flights; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

Fábrica de Arte Cubano, photo by Robin Thom







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**AFRO-CUBAN ARTS & CULTURE IN HAVANA ■ MARCH 3 – 9, 2024**  
**RESERVATION FORM**

To reserve a place, please call Arrangements Abroad at phone: 212-514-8921 or 800-221-1944, fax: 212-344-7493; email: [trips@arrangementsabroad.com](mailto:trips@arrangementsabroad.com); or complete and return this form with your deposit of \$1,000 per person (of which \$500 is non-refundable for administrative fees) payable to *Arrangements Abroad*. Mail to: Arrangements Abroad, 260 West 39th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018-4424.

Name(s) in full as on passport(s). Please print.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address  
\_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home) (business)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Fax E-mail  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Hotel room preference  One bed  Two beds  Single

I wish to share a room with \_\_\_\_\_

Room category  Cozy Room  Junior Room  Master Suite  Rooftop Suite

**FORM OF PAYMENT**

Enclosed is my check (payable to *Arrangements Abroad*)  Debit card  Credit card

Name on credit card  
\_\_\_\_\_

Credit card number  
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3- or 4-digit security code Expiration date  
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I/We will be traveling to Cuba and agree to fully participate in this program under the general license category of travel "In Support of the Cuban People." I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read and agree to the Terms & Conditions of this Program (see [www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms](http://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms) to review or call for a copy). I/We agree to full payment 120 days prior to departure. Each participant must sign below.

Signature (required) Date  
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Signature (required) Date  
\_\_\_\_\_