



# COLORS OF CUBA

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY ROBERT BULLIVANT

This past October **Bullivant Gallery** joined photographers **Stewart Halperin** and **Jeff Hirsch** in hosting twelve photographers on a cultural and artistic photo journey through the fascinating country of Cuba.



**The Group departed Miami** and landed in the city of Cienfuegos located on the southern coast. We spent the day there touring historic buildings, meeting performing artists, and sampling the local cuisine. That evening, we headed off to the city of Trinidad, founded in the early 1500s. It is widely considered one of the best preserved cities in the Caribbean region. All of Trinidad's streets are made from cobblestones that were brought over from Europe, and used as ballast on Spanish galleons to steady these merchant ships. The stones were then left in Cuba while the ships returned to their native ports full of tobacco, rum, and sugar cane.

**Our group spent time in both the relatively modern and historic portions of the city.** We visited many sites: a gritty outdoor boxing arena where the Cuban Olympic team trains, the old city (which brings to mind what Brooklyn may have looked like in the 1950s), a ballet school (Cuba has produced some of the very best dance choreographers in the world) and a night of enchanting musical performances of a reworked and renowned Buena Vista Social Club. This city was pure magic. There is no place on Earth like this island and its people are some of the most gracious, talented, vibrant, and welcoming I've met. The return trip to Cuba can't happen soon enough.



**Staying in a local hostel**, as there are no modern large hotels in this city, we had the opportunity to get to know the locals and see how they live day to day in the predominantly agriculturally based society. As we stepped out onto the street at first light, we observed locals coming into town to work at one of the many tobacco factories converting large bails of tobacco into cigarettes or the highly sought after hand rolled cigars. Children in uniforms were seen walking to schools located in historic buildings down the street. Automobiles and delivery trucks that roamed the streets were predominantly American or Russian vehicles from mid 1950s or earlier. It felt as if we had been transported back in time or were standing in the middle of a completely authentic movie set. There were photo opportunities at 360 degrees—rich colors, textures, architecture, and interesting faces. It was a challenge to know what to pursue photographically when every moment appeared that it could be the next “decisive moment”.

**Once back in the States, the Colors of Cuba journey took on a new life** with several workshops and culminated with an exhibit of the photographs by the entire group. The first workshop focused on editing and processing participants' digital files, while a second workshop covered all aspects of the digital print: color management, file preparation, paper choice, and much more. The students were able to print their own images on the Hahnemühle paper of their choice with our staff's supervision and direction. All of the images were printed utilizing Canon's professional IPF9400 printers, a 12 color pigmented ink printer that produces stunning color, superior detail, and permanence.



**After three magnificent days in Trinidad**, we drove across the island to spend three more days in the capital city of Havana, a large bustling city of over two million people. It was in many ways the antithesis to what we had just left in Trinidad. In the 1950s Havana was a popular international travel destination with resorts, gambling, and a prolific Cuban music scene. The range of architecture was impressive, with considerable European influence in style and structure. When the country was closed off to the US in 1961 and money stopped flowing in, time and progress came to halt. Herein lies so much of the attraction with authentic decay and layers of what has and hasn't transpired both visually and figuratively since that time.

**Each small group of students worked closely with one of our expert instructors** utilizing Eizo's CG and CX graphics monitors to assure that their files were optimized for printing. While many people underestimate the value of a color accurate monitor, we certainly do not. We've used Eizo monitors for more than ten years as an essential tool for color proofing and retouching in order to produce the high-end results that our clients expect. Just as a great lens or digital camera body is an indispensable tool for creating superior images, a reliable and color accurate monitor like Eizo's CG and CX line with internal calibration is the only way to create the accurate adjustments to our digital files that assures optimal results when they are printed.

**The Grand Finale of the Colors of Cuba journey was our exhibit** featuring the very best images from everyone in our group: 43 images printed and framed, ranging in sizes from 13"x 19" to 46" x 60." On the show's opening night, Friday December 18th 2015, we shared the stories from our adventure, excellent microbrew beer, and Cuban sandwiches with over 300 friends, family and art enthusiasts. Throughout the night, we sold a substantial portion of the prints to benefit the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments. It was a truly unforgettable adventure in the exploration of art, culture, and compassion.

*Art, Culture,  
& Compassion*