



# REVOLUCION

cinco miradas / five visions

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## synopsis

REVOLUCION: FIVE VISIONS reframes the Cuban revolution through the art of photography, focusing on the personal stories of five Cuban photographers whose lives and work span nearly five decades of revolution in Cuba. From Havana to Miami, photographers on both sides of the political divide reveal the Cuban people's resilient struggle for self-determination. Whether it is the passionate resistance of the revolutionary, or the individual artist's struggle to emerge as an independent voice in a collective society, the photographers in REVOLUCION reveal the defiance of revolutionaries and artists alike, and discover the power of art to liberate.

Through the stories of photographers from five generations, REVOLUCION explores changing and radically different ideas of the Cuban revolution. The film looks back on a revolution nearing its inevitable end to explore the impact of political revolution through the lens of artistic expression.

Shot on 24P hi-definition video by Mexico's premiere director of photography, Chuy Chavez, the film is a breathtaking visual exploration of Cuba, yesterday and today. This one-hour (56:40), documentary features photographers Raúl Corrales, José Figueroa, Rogelio López Marín (Gory), René Peña, and Manuel Piña.

REVOLUCION is a co-production of El Sueño Pictures and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), in association with One Light Pictures and Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB), with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). REVOLUCION: FIVE VISIONS has been selected to be part of the Emmy award winning series, Independent Lens and will receive national PBS broadcast on December 19, 2006.

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## the director

Nicole Cattell is a 2003 Guggenheim Fellow, a 2004 NYFA Fellow and an award winning documentary producer/director. She has been named by Filmmaker Magazine as one of the '25 New Faces in Independent Film'. Cattell has recently completed REVOLUCION: FIVE VISIONS, a one hour HD documentary that has been selected to be part of the Emmy award winning series, Independent Lens and will receive national PBS broadcast in 2007. REVOLUCION was awarded funding from ITVS, Latino Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Jerome Foundation. Her latest documentary was the Emmy award winner, COME UNTO ME: THE FACES OF TYREE GUYTON, a much heralded portrait of a Detroit artist and his several block outdoor art installation called The Heidelberg Project. The film garnered numerous festival awards, including three "Best Documentary" awards and an Honorable Mention at the Sundance Film Festival. COME UNTO ME aired on the Cinemax Reel Life Series, received European television distribution and a limited U.S. theatrical run. It continues to be featured in museums across the country, including New York City's Museum of American Folk Art, Boston's Museum of Fine Art and the Detroit Institute of Art. She is also in development on MERMAIDS: THE DOCUMENTARY, a sea-faring road movie through the oceans of the world in search of the original mermaid. She was the recipient of The New York State Council on the Arts, Individual Artist's grant for MERMAIDS. Cattell, who received her Master's Degree from University of Michigan, has been a freelance writer, director and producer in New York City for eight years, with clients including: WNET, Nickelodeon, Maysles Films, Fitzgerald Brunetti, Volvo Cars of North America, Mercedes Benz, and American Express. She has also recently completed several videos for the American Institute of Architects, including a profile featuring the internationally acclaimed architect, Santiago Calatrava.

Cattell recently made her feature debut as producer of A BAD SITUATIONIST, a comedy starring Janeane Garofalo, David Cross, Sarah Silverman, and Robert Schimmel, and directed by actor/comedian, Sam Seder. Cattell has continued her venture into narrative filmmaking with her first screenplay, BLACKACRE which tells the story of a 12-year-old girl who is trying to survive the turmoil laid in the wake of her young, single mother's hungry hunt for love.

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## cast – as themselves

### **Raúl Corrales (1925-2006)**

Father of the Epic documentary tradition in Cuba, Raúl Corrales was Castro's official photographer "acompañante" (companion) in 1959, and his work documenting one of the most revolutionary times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been featured in exhibitions in and in permanent collections of museums around the world.

### **José Figueroa**

José Figueroa began his career in 1964 as Alberto Korda's assistant before becoming a photographer in his own right. His work departs from the Epic documentary style as he uses documentary photography as a means of personal, artistic expression.

### **Rogelio López Marín (Gory)**

One of the first generation to graduate from the art schools begun by Castro's revolutionary government, Gory's world renowned surreal photographic images are a radical departure from the documentary tradition in Cuba and open the door for contemporary art photographers.

### **René Peña**

René Peña photographs his own body to comment on contemporary issues of identity, racism, and sexual ambiguity.

### **Manuel Piña**

Trained as an engineer in the former Soviet Union, Manuel Piña's starkly beautiful and highly conceptual imagery examines utopia and history.

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## director's statement

With Cuba on the brink of radical transformation and the U.S. embargo clearly outdated, we need new ways of understanding the Cuban revolution that transcend the polarized pro-Castro versus anti-Castro dialogue. Through the eyes of the island's photographers, REVOLUCION explores the yearning for freedom and self-determination that motivated Cuba's revolutionaries five decades ago, and that continues to inspire Cuban artists today, both on the island and beyond.

For over a century, Cuba has dared to defy the "Yankee imperialists" 90 miles to its north. Since the triumph of the revolution, Cuba has also dared to dream of realizing a utopian society.

Cuba is the last outpost of utopian dreaming in the 20th century. Nowhere else can we witness the modern successes and failures of a determined people striving towards a social dream, as on this small island in the heart of the Americas.

Despite the revolution's achievements, such as providing health care and education to nearly all Cubans, the cost of this daring, defiance, and dreaming has been severe. It has been a matter of life and death for thousands of Cubans, and has precipitated the exile of thousands more. Those who remain on the island have suffered limits to their individual freedoms as well as the effects of crippling economic sanctions.

To some, the revolution is a celebrated success. To others, it is a dictatorship. And to many more, it falls somewhere in-between. Through the work of five photographers REVOLUCION offers a multi-faceted vision of the rise and fall of the Revolutionary dream in Cuba.

Ultimately, we discover that the only place where our utopian longings really ever find satisfaction is through art.

In 1959, Fidel Castro recognized the mesmerizing power of images and selected a group of photographers to "tell the story of the revolution in pictures." With this, Cuban photography became an indispensable tool for promoting the revolution's struggle against Yankee imperialism, and for ensuring that Castro's version of history would be remembered for all time.

Today, new generations of photographic artists continue to tell the story of the ongoing revolution in pictures. But the story they tell is very different from the one Castro set out to convey. Today, Cuban photographers use the medium to express dissent, criticism, and their own ideas of history and truth.

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## credits

**director/producer** Nicole Cattell

**producer** Tommaso Fiacchino

**editor** Natalia Almada

**director of photography** Chuy Chavez

**musical score composed by** Marc Ribot

**executive producers** Leif Owen Klein, Sonia L. Gilbert

**executive producer for ITVS** Sally Jo Fifer

**executive producer for LPB** Luca Bentivoglio

**post-production services** GTN, Inc.

Revolucion: Five Visions is a co-production of El Sueño Pictures, LLC and the Independent Television Service (ITVS) in association with One Light Pictures and Latino Public Broadcasting, with funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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