

## Haunted Havana: Unseen Urban Spaces Through Film

Through film, we make an architecture of identity. As Eisenstein clearly stated, “The ancestor of cinema is without a doubt architecture.” In the case of Cuba and the three films I wish to look at and the spaces where they have been shown such as the Muestra de Nuevos Realizadores (established in 2001) memory, and urban space become even more politicized and problematic than usual. In Cuba, as elsewhere there is a loss of faith in “supreme fictions” or metanarratives. This affects the faith in the state and the revolutionary ethic. The challenge emerges to balance political aims with aesthetic concerns, local needs with global forces, tradition with innovation, and still continue to “contribute to the creation of a unique Cuban culture” (Stock, 56). In many ways, Havana is haunted by Havana itself.

Havana hardly appears in my three chosen films: “Buscándote Habana,” “De generación” and “Utopía,” or at least not its monumentalized, historicized, Habanified (parallel to Disneyfied) form as we have seen it in recent years.

All three films engage with memory as they focus on people who wage the right to a remembered presence in the present moment, and with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality. Ironically, all three films project the necessity to narrate a marginalized history through unseen urban spaces as much as possible free of the biases and misconceptions of that history advanced for the past fifty years by the State. This is ironic because, of course, these were the very intentions originally of the Cuban State in its formation of

ICAIC — to advance a progressive view of voices silenced by imperialism. As we shall see, the spatial dynamics of urban community become more personal than political, more individual than collective, more dynamic than static.