



The Center for Iberian & Latin American Studies, UCSD

Valuing Dance: The Politics of Patronage in the Cuban Republic

Thursday, April 16, 2015

3-4:30 PM, Deutz Room in the Copley International Conference Center, Institute of the Americas Complex, UCSD

In spite of longstanding economic straits, Cuba boasts a world renowned dance establishment that has played an important role within Cuban society and in Cuban international relations. This study explains why. It examines the development of Cuban dance from 1930 to 1990, particularly the connection between dance and politics over the decades and how this relationship changed over time. The seminar will begin with an overview of this larger project and then focus in on materials regarding the politics of dance patronage in the Cuban Republic. Starting in the 1930s and continuing through the 1950s, dancers, supporters, and government officials debated the social and cultural value of dance and the ideal scheme to financially support its growth. As the 1950s drew to a close, questions remained regarding these issues and uncertainties informed the improvised and contradictory approach to dance funding after 1959.



Elizabeth Schwall is a PhD candidate in Latin American and Caribbean History at Columbia University, working on a dissertation on dance and politics in Cuba, 1930 - 1990. She received her A.B. in History with certificates in Latin American Studies and Dance from Princeton University in 2009 and her M.A. from Columbia University in 2012, with a thesis on dance in Mexico, 1930s – 1960s. A Graduate Research Fellowship from the Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of Miami and a Mellon Traveling Fellowship from Columbia University supported her dissertation research. She has contributed book reviews to *Dance Research Journal* and the *New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, and entries to the forthcoming *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism* and *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography*. She has also published on recent Cuban dance developments in the on-line publication *Cuban Art News*. Her broader interests include performance in the Caribbean and Latin America, cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, the relationship between anthropology and cultural production, and the histories of migration and community building through art.

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