

# CUBA – ON THE VERGE – THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF HISTORICAL CHANGE



Meg's comments on the photos of the apartment in San Jose, and her story of small town America were about the way everyday things can be almost too painful, too intimate – because of their personal associations yes, but, also because of their attachment to temporal loss. It makes us think of how we look at things.

This reminded me of a new book of words and photos of Cuba – Cuba On the Verge – An Island in Transition.

[What does historical change look like?](#)





The beach where Castro began the revolution

I once heard Condoleeza Rice, when she was at Stanford, refer to Cuba as “the road kill of history”. While this undoubtedly reflected that ruling-class mix of bitterness and arrogance at having lost Cuba to Castro, it does conjure up a great image. And it is not one of the usual metaphors applied to our experience of history (loss, victory, helplessness ...).

The book is about the contemporary past, how Cubans are wearing their history and future. There are some fabulous images of people in their homes, on the streets, under themes like Time, Sexual Healing, The Poetry of Everyday Life, Afro-Cuban Identity, Spirituality, Rural Life, From Ruins to Restoration, Women in the New Cuba, The New Middle Class, Chucho and El Tosco, Landscape meets Mythology, Exile. All work with the archaeological imagination. And these are more than the familiar pictures of a people struggling amidst lost grandeur. The images are vital and poignant, life affirming.

One series is of rooms, as camera obscuras, turned outside in – a wonderful chiasmus.



camera obscura – photo by Abelardo Morell