

Selected Documentaries by  
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Documentaries by Cordones-Cook have received numerous national and international awards including an Emmy nomination. They have been screened hundreds of times at prestigious venues around the world including La Sorbonne and the University de Lyon, in France; the University of Humboldt and the Instituto Cervantes, in Berlin; the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; the Universidad de Cartagena, in Colombia; the Universidad de la República, in Uruguay; Casa de las Américas, Feria Internacional del Libro, UNEAC, Casa del Caribe, and Fundación Caguayo, in Cuba; and in the United States, at Harvard University; Washington University; the University of Michigan; the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, among many other academic institutions, as well as at major national and international museums and festivals, including festivals dedicated to Cordones-Cook films.

- \* ***La silla dorada (antología audiovisual)*** (Cuba 2010), ca. 90 minutes long. Direction y production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Audiovisual anthology of poetry by the leading Afro Latin American writer, Nancy Morejón. The poet reads 52 of her most celebrated poems. Film is accompanied by a book that includes the 52 poems edited and with an introduction by J. Cordones-Cook.
- \* ***Cimarroneando with G.H. / Cimarroneando con G.H.*** (2011), ca. 30 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction y production de Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. A documentary of a candid interview of Georgina Herrera with Juanamaría Cordones-Cook where poet discusses memories, gender issues, racial relations, and racism in socialist Cuba. Film includes images of the poet in different moments of her life, with artwork and African masks from the University of Missouri Museum of Art and Archaeology and the Museum of Anthropology. The music was composed and played for this documentary by Professor Anthony Glise. This film has also been published with a bilingual anthology of poetry by G. Herrera.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=dxlDAoBZwyo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dxlDAoBZwyo)
- \* ***Battle: Change from within / Battle: Cambio desde adentro*** (2012), ca. 50 minutes long. Co-produced and co-directed by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook and Julie Middleton, and others. Comment: This documentary explores in depth the life of Dr. Eliot Battle, a Columbia educator who played a pivotal role in desegregating schools, housing, and the community. As he facilitated changes with quiet resolve, he faced resistance from both the black and white communities. His calm demeanor and dedicated work within existing institutions and systems allowed him to bridge the gap between the two races and change Columbia for the better.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=148&v=3aouPdS6Lpw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=148&v=3aouPdS6Lpw)
- \* ***Nancy Morejón: Famous Landscapes / Paisajes célebres*** (Cuba 2013), ca. 52 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. This documentary offers a unique perspective on contemporary Cuban culture and intellectual life through the world and artistic achievements of one of its most celebrated

poets, Nancy Morejón (Havana 1944), as well as through the voices and images of prominent Afro-Cuban intellectuals. The music was performed by Richard Egües, Marta Valdés, and Elena Burke.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=B2ZZq8pqHXg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=B2ZZq8pqHXg)

\* ***Diago, a Maroon Artist / artista apalencado*** (Cuba 2013), ca. 28 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: presentation of a prominent multimedia artist, Juan Roberto Diago (1972), who employs discarded materials. Diago understands the creative possibilities of recycling and *bricolage* and enriches his images by juxtaposing graffiti with racially contesting intent. He has labeled himself a “maroon artist” and his artwork results in “cultural resistance”. In this documentary, Diago openly discusses issues of race and poverty in contemporary Cuba, as well as their representation in his paintings and installations.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xp\\_OR3vxo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xp_OR3vxo)

\* ***Rogelio Martínez Furé: A Cuban Griot / Un griot cubano*** (Cuba 2014), ca. 30 minutes with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: This film presents the life and work of Rogelio Martínez Furé (Matanzas, Cuba, 1937), Afro-Cuban writer, Africanist, scholar of folklore and religion, and founder of the National Folkloric Ballet of Cuba. Through conversations with Martínez Furé and other prominent Afro-Cuban intellectuals-- Georgina Herrera, Nancy Morejón, Manolo Mieler, Roberto Zurbano, as well as images and performances of religious rituals and dances of the National Folkloric Ballet and the Olurum Group, this film discloses layers of Cuba’s rich African legacy and cultural heritage. It portrays Martínez Furé as a contemporary *griot*, a repository of oral tradition who recovers and guards Afro-Cuban and Caribbean silenced memories and true identity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-r9ZkwY0Lc>

\* ***Choco*** (Cuba 2014), ca. 29 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: Presentation of Eduardo “Choco” Roca Salazar, an artist who embodies the cultural success of the Cuban Revolution in its promotion of the arts. Born in a working class family in a small town in the Oriente province, Choco graduated from Cuba’s National School of Art and became a world famous print-maker. Documentary shows Choco at work in his Old Havana workshop, as well as visiting his former art school and a vast collection of his art work from the start of his career. Film is enriched by readings by Nancy Morejón and Pablo Milanés, as well as the music created specially for Choco by Miguelito Núñez.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPGWLXSmG4M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPGWLXSmG4M)

\* ***The magical world of Mendive / El mundo mágico de Mendive*** (Cuba 2015), ca. 40 minutes with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: Film offers a unique perspective into the personal and artistic world of Manuel Mendive, a leading contemporary Afro-Cuban artist. Creating in various genres, drawing, painting, body painting, soft and hard sculpture, installations, and performances, Mendive is also a Santería priest, whose spirituality permeates all of his creations. This documentary shows a broad spectrum of his work including his latest performance in Havana, *Las Cabezas* (May 2012). Mendive appears painting in his studio as well as in the midst of his tropical forest offering some unprecedented remarks on his early life, on African elements in his art while he discusses his aesthetics and his profound fascination with the creative process. This film is enriched with comments by major Cuban intellectuals, Nancy Morejón, Pablo

Armando Fernández, Yolanda Wood, and Adelaida de Juan, as well as with music by Ulises Hernández and Argeliers León.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKpy4XMHxI>

\* ***Olazábal: A Maker of Objects / Un hacedor de objetos*** (Cuba 2015), ca. 34 minutes with subtitles in English. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: Nurtured by spiritual traditions of the Yoruba culture, multimedia artist Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal (Havana 1955) establishes an intense and constant aesthetic dialogue with the divinities of the Ifá Orisha religion. Through unique symbols, rituals, and mysteries, his work expresses the profound grief of his African ancestors. In this documentary, Rodríguez Olazábal shares his thoughts about his personal and artistic development, visits his childhood neighborhood and meets with old friends. He also draws in charcoal human figures that he effectively complements with vibrant primary colors. The film displays a wide range of his bidimensional and tridimensional oeuvres including his recent exhibit at *Galería Habana*, “*Palabras*” (2014-2015). The documentary is enriched by remarks of outstanding personalities of the Cuban art scene, curator Gretchen Lima Molina, gallerist Luis Miret, and art critics Hilda María Rodríguez and Yolanda Wood.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EO5CnhdtFU>

\* ***Lescay, Earth and Soul / alma y tierra*** (Cuba 2016) ca. 38 minutes with subtitles in English. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: Film on Alberto Lescay Merencio (Santiago de Cuba 1950), an award-winning monument sculptor and painter who graduated in painting (1968), at the “Tejada” Fine Arts School; in sculpture (1973), at the “Cubanacán” National Art School, and as an Art Professor (1979), at the “Repin” Academy, in San Petersburg, Russia. Lescay is the creator and director of the Caguayo Foundation for Monumental and Applied Arts, an institution that has assisted with and enabled the development of works by numerous national and international artists. A public intellectual and artist with profound social consciousness, he shares his concerns on artistic, racial, and spiritual issues. Lescay is presented in his own personal and creative environment while working in different artistic projects as well as meeting with colleagues and friends. He discusses his family roots, his life, his world, his ideas, and his artistic objectives and accomplishments. The film is enriched by images of his sculptures and paintings and by comments by major Cuban intellectuals as well as by original music by Albertico Lescay.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGpqn\\_tdlz0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGpqn_tdlz0)

\* ***An Afro-Cuban Journey: Zuleica Romay / An Afro-Cuban Journey: Zuleica Romay*** (2017), ca 34 minutes. Direction and production by Juanamaria Cordones-Cook. Comment: documentary presents the oral history of Zuleica Romay, an award winning writer and a remarkable cultural leader, president of the Cuban Book Institute (2009-2016), and director of the Program of Afro American Studies at Casa de las Americas, since 2016. In her testimony, Romay shares her life journey going back to her ancestral memories. She discusses her humble background and early experiences, her reflections on her development and her human environment, the awakening of her interest in books, the role of religion in her family. Romay reveals her independent and rebellious spirit, and at the same time her loyalty to the ideals of the Cuban Revolution that gave her the opportunity to be educated. In addition she discusses her thoughts about race in Cuba, the racialized vision of people, the naturalization of prejudice, as well as racism and racial discrimination in 21<sup>st</sup> century Cuba. Zuleica Romay asserts the need to have a ubiquitous social debate on racial issues, as well as a struggle against racism at several levels in order to give the problem and its consequences

the visibility they deserve.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiggpWxL5G4>

\* ***Africa in Modern Cuban Dance: EDUARDO RIVERO / África en la danza moderna cubana: EDUARDO RIVERO*** (2017), ca. 42 minutes with subtitles in English. Direction and production by Juanamaria Cordones-Cook. Comment: this film documents the life history and artistic legacy of Cuba's great dancer and choreographer Eduardo Rivero Walker (1936-2012) told by himself and by some of those who knew him well: Alberto Lescay, Nancy Morejón, Santiago Alfonso, Isidro Rolando and Natalia Bolívar, among others. A member of the founding generation of contemporary Cuban dance, Eduardo Rivero developed a unique and effective technique to dance and to teach. Inspired by ancient African traditions, he created unforgettable choreographies and was a master of generations of dancers in Cuba, the Caribbean, Europe and Canada. The film is enriched by clips of Rivero dancing and of several of his classics, such as *Súlkary*, *Okantomí*, *Duo a Lam*, among others. Eduardo Rivero was and still is a master of Modern Cuban Dance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u83Je2OpPp4>

\* ***The Many Natalias Bolívar: Art, Utopia, and Religion / Las muchas Natalia Bolívar: Arte, utopía y religión*** (2018), ca. 57 minutes with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaria Cordones-Cook. Comment: presentation of the many social and cultural roles lived by Natalia Bolívar (Havana 1934), a direct descendant of the Cuban Simon Bolívar family. A deeply patriotic aristocrat with a revolutionary calling, she joined the *Directorio Revolucionario* for the Cuban Revolution and was arrested and tortured by the Batista regime. After 1959, Natalia actively collaborated with the new order in numerous cultural spheres. She was in charge of restoring, reorganizing, and directing the *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes*. She also founded and directed the Numismatic Museum of the *Banco Nacional de Cuba*, as well as the Napoleonic Museum, in Havana. A natural and powerful cultural advocate and promoter, Natalia has been a frequent consultant for filmmaking, film festivals, exhibits, books, plays, and theater performances. A disciple and follower of Lydia Cabrera, she became a highly knowledgeable ethnographer and practitioner of Afro-Cuban religions who Reynaldo González fondly calls "the Supreme Witch." She has published numerous books on religious issues that have become instant best-sellers. In addition, she writes poetry that has been published by *Ediciones Vigía* in beautiful books designed by Rolando Estévez. At a young age Natalia received rigorous artistic training in Havana and New York, and later on became a *naïve* visual artist whose work enriches the entire film. The presentation of this essential figure of Cuban culture and history is complemented by the insightful comments of Eusebio Leal, Nancy Morejón, Choco, Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal, Guillermo Jiménez, Jorge Perugorría, Reynaldo González, and Monseñor Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. The music has been created for this film by Juan Antonio Leyva and Magda Rosa Galván.

[https://youtu.be/z\\_ZU9WhhwPA](https://youtu.be/z_ZU9WhhwPA)

\* ***Zurbano and his Racial Consciousness*** (2018), ca. 44 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaria Cordones-Cook. Comment: presentation of the oral history of Roberto Zurbano Torres (San Nicolás de Bari, Cuba, 1965), a prominent cultural critic and literary scholar who has been an activist and a leader in major cultural Cuban institutions. In his testimony, Zurbano lucidly addresses racial issues while he guides us through the development of his intellectual and racial consciousness starting with his humble origins in a small village. In the process he articulates reflections on the socio-

historical and cultural role blacks played in the development of the nation, and on the opportunities provided by the 1959 Cuban revolution that did not effectively address racism. Zurbano argues that in Cuba there is racism and neo-racism that have been silenced in public discourse. He calls for the development of a black consciousness, for an open discussion on race and on the roots of racism as a construction of domination, and for a dialogue between the civil society, the government, and the intelligentsia. In addition he candidly discusses the heated national and international debate resulting from the New York Times publication of his editorial article “For Blacks in Cuba, the Revolution Hasn’t Begun” (March 23, 2013), and his subsequent demotion in *Casa de las Américas*. He strongly defends his right as a free citizen to talk about race, racism and neo-racism in Cuba. This testimony is enriched by hip-hop music by *Obsesión*.

[trailer forthcoming]

### **Documentaries on *Ediciones Vigía*:**

\* ***Ediciones Vigía: Visual Poetics Poéticas visuales*** (Cuba 2012), ca. 51 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: the development and evolution of this unique artistic Cuban press, the production of a *Vigía* art object book as well as interviews with *Vigía* craftsmen and women, and numerous other outstanding Cuban intellectuals who have been involved with press from its inception, such as poet laureate Nancy Morejón, composer Marta Valdés, art historian Adelaida de Juan, anthropologist Ruth Behar, among others

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK-dYtsXPmU>

\* ***A One-of-a-Kind Book by Estévez / Un libro único de Estévez*** (Cuba 2012), ca. 14 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: the conception and creation of a one-of-a-kind art-object book on the poem "Amo a I amo" / "I Love My Master", by Nancy Morejón.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ud3nQamdxUY&feature=relmfu>

\* ***Havana on Display, a Design by Estévez / La Habana expuesta, un diseño de Estévez*** (Cuba 2012), on anthology of poetry by Nancy Morejón, edited by J. Cordones-Cook, ca. 21 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by J. Cordones-Cook. Comment: the design of a book to be reproduced 200 times by the craftsmen and women of *Ediciones Vigía* as presented by Rolando Estévez.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk-s31h75Kw&feature=relmfu>

\* ***Ediciones Vigía: Between the Image and the Word / Entre la imagen y la palabra*** (2012), ca. 98 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. A brief panoramic view of the evolution of *Ediciones Vigía* by its main artist and designer Rolando Estévez Jordán.

\* ***Ediciones Vigía (1985-2011): Opening Archives Abriendo archivos*** (2013), ca. 7 hours and 30 minutes long with English subtitles. Direction and production by Juanamaría Cordones-Cook. Comment: *Vigía*'s main designer and artist, Rolando Estévez Jordán, chronologically discusses the entire collection of books, while highlighting technological changes, as well as innovations in aesthetic languages. This documentary is an audiovisual archive of 27 years of *Ediciones Vigía* book production. Not a complete record but close.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=zAELtCdjKs4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zAELtCdjKs4)

**Documentaries in preparation** on: *Art and Religion: Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal. Guided Exhibit Tour / Arte y religión: Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal. Visita guiada*; Fátima de la Caridad Patterson Patterson; Michael Middleton; Havana's Black Renaissance; Soleida Ríos; Víctor Fowler Calzada; and others.

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