

Chronogram

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ARTS.CULTURE.SPIRIT







ABOVE: Havana Centro #7 (Avenida Simon Bolivar),
OPPOSITE: (top) Chess Parlor Interior, Camaguey, Cuba,
(bottom) Boy with Blue Scarf, Trinidad, Cuba.

Photogenic Decay

When we hear about Cuba in the news, it's almost exclusively on the following topics: the US trade embargo, the health of Fidel Castro. Americans are not exposed to the day-to-day reality of life in that colorful, cosmopolitan, rustic, isolated isle seemingly trapped in amber since January 1, 1959, when US-backed dictator Fulgenico Batista was overthrown. In his recent book, *Cuba* (The Monacelli Press, 2010), photographer Jeff Milstein shows the quotidian simplicity of the island, its crumbling infrastructure and its optimistic inhabitants. Milstein, whose artful photographs of planes have won him wide recognition—collected in the stunning *Aircraft: The Jet as Art* (Harry N. Abrams, 2007) traveled to Cuba multiple times in recent years, chronicling the island from its lush rural areas to its crowded urban areas. In his photographer's note to the book, Milstein describes his process:

"My hope is that these photographs offer a poetic glimpse of this frozen-in-time yet optimistic island. I was taken with the richness and beauty of the faded architecture

that was once so grand and opulent. The decay and sculptural forms within speak layers of history and the inevitability of change. No matter how hard we try, everything, even our own bodies, slowly decays, but the effect can be very beautiful. The work in this book reflects on change while celebrating the passionate ideals of a people and the energy and light of a country in transition."

An architect and graphic designer as well as a photographer, Milstein's photographs are in the collections of many museums, including the Akron Art Museum, the Getty Center, the Eastman House in New York, and his work has appeared in *Wired* and *Men's Vogue*, among other publications.

Jeffrey Milstein will be exhibiting recent photographs of Cuba, many from *Cuba: Photographs by Jeff Milstein*, at Oriole 9 in Woodstock through the month of October. Portfolio: www.jeffreymilstein.com. (845) 679-5763; www.oriol9.com.

—Brian K. Mahoney