

MS 83 Cuban Handmade Books

About the collection:

A collection of 15 handmade books from Cuban publishing collectives Ediciones Vigía and Ediciones El Fortín. Ediciones Vigía was founded by Rolando Estévez Jordán in Matanzas and operated between 1985 and 2014, producing over 500 books in that time. Ediciones El Fortín was founded by Estévez in 2014.

The books were produced by Cuban artisans and demonstrate their creativity and innovation to produce such work despite shortages of almost every resource. They are made from largely recycled and repurposed materials such as wood, cottons and previously printed works.

Books in the collection were purchased in 2023 and 2024.



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MS 83/1 Misterios del oficio

Ana Ajmátova, Juan Luis Hernández Milián, Alfredo Zaldívar

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

31 pp. 6-3/4 by 8-1/2 inches. One of 200 copies. Colección Clásicos.

A collection of poems by Odessan-Russian writer Ana Ajmátova, translated from Russian into Spanish by Juan Luis Hernández Milián especially for this edition. The text is mimeographed from typescript onto pink paper, with collage section dividers and illustrations after Modigliani. Designed by Alfredo Zaldívar.

MS 83/2 Hondísima, te amo

Teresita Fernández, Alfredo Zaldívar, Mayra Hernández Menéndez

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

17 leaves, printed on one side only; irregularly numbered to 18. 6-1/2 by 8-1/2 inches. An edition of 200 copies. Colección del San Juan.

A mimeographed poetry chapbook with verses selected from three unpublished manuscripts with an introduction by Mayra Hernández Menéndez. Designed by Alfredo Zaldívar with small paper collages as illustrations. The colophon indicates that the edition is supposed to be signed by the author, but it does not appear to have been.

MS 83/3 De Montserrat a Monserrate: religiosidad, historia, tradición

Francese Catalá, Alfredo Zaldívar, Francisco Cobo, Contxa Sáinz de la Maza

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1996

113 pp., but printed only on the odd pages. 9-1/2 by 7 inches (oblong). An edition of 200 copies. Colección Venablos.

An exploration of the influence of Catalán culture in Matanzas, Cuba, and the connection between the Virgin of Montserrat in Catalonia and the Ermita de Monserrate in the hills above Matanzas. The book illuminates a history of Matanzas through prayers, hymns, and legend narratives, and is illustrated with line drawings and reproductions of photographs. Printed on craft paper recycled in Cuba and various Cuban commercial papers, including industrial paper scraps.

MS 83/4 Adiós, naves de Tarsis

Reynaldo García Blanco

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

15 pp. Colección del San Juan.

This work, by award-winning Cuban poet Reynaldo García Blanco, demonstrates the use of found objects in bookmaking in Cuba. The cover has a cut-out of a nude crouched on a piece of wood with a crucifix and mesh, acting as raft and mast, crossing a violent and stormy sea. The timber used for the deck was collected from the shores of Matanzas Bay. The bookmakers cut plant stems from the banks of the San Juan River to create the mast for supporting the mesh sail.

MS 83/5 Mujer de vida alegre

Graciela Beatriz Cabal

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1994

10 leaves, printed on one side only but numbered to 19. 8-1/2 by 9-1/2 inches. An edition of 200 copies. Colección Trébol.

An essay about the Argentinean author's grandmother and other women who influenced her. Mimeographed text, with hand-colouring and paper collage. Craft paper, crepe paper and Cuban commercial paper was used for this edition, along with heliographic and tissue papers.

MS 83/6 Barquitos del San Juan, la revista de los niños, junio 1995

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

June 1995 issue of *Barquitos del San Juan*. A multi-sensory children's magazine containing a selection of poems. Newspaper cuttings have been pasted onto crepe paper alongside hand painted illustrations, and there are pop-up elements throughout the book, including a pop-up front cover.

MS 83/7 **La pintura española vista por Martí**

Adelaida de Juan

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

An exploration of Spanish painting, including a work by Francisco Goya, as well as artists such as Velazquez and Martinez. The cover and title page are composed of photocopies of Goya's *La maja desnuda*.

MS 83/8 **Mi juego musical**

Celaida Menéndez Montero

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

[21] leaves. 7-1/2 by 9-1/4 inches. One of 200 copies. Colección Andante.

A children's song with musical notation, lyrics, and dance moves, illustrated with line drawings. The author, a composer, choral director, and music teacher, won the 1994 Premio Televisión Cubana for this song. The book is printed on one side of each sheet of Kraft paper, probably using a photocopier, rather than the more common mimeograph employed by Ediciones Vigía during this era.

MS 83/9 **Memoria italiana**

Raúl Rubén Ruiz, Urbano Martínez Carmentate

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, [n.d. but ca. 1995]

107 pp. on 56 leaves, most printed on one side only. 7 by 8-1/2 inches. An edition of 200 copies. Colección Venablos.

A book on the Italian influence in Matanzas, designed and illustrated by Rolando Estévez, who took inspiration from the Teatro Sauto in Matanzas, which was designed by Italian architect Daniel Dall'Aglio. Includes a folding map showing locations of Italian-designed buildings. The cover includes a moveable theatre curtain with a hand-coloured backdrop that can be raised with strings to reveal the authors' names.

MS 83/10 **La revista del Vigía. año doce, nos 23 y 24**

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 2001

An issue of the illustrated literary journal of Ediciones Vigía with poems and prose from a variety of authors. The pergamino (folded broadside) is a poem by Antón Arrufat. The text is photocopied onto white paper.

MS 83/11 **Vanessa anda por aquí / Danny y el viento**

Digdora Alonso

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 2001

Two books, 6 by 8-1/4 inches, in a handmade Kraft paper bag, 7-1/2 by 11 inches. 63pp. and 61 pp., printed on odd pages only. An edition of 200 copies. Colección Barquitos.

Two poetry chapbooks for children in a brown paper sack with mounted decorated-paper illustrations. By a noted Matanzas poet, published in honour of her 80th birthday. The books are photocopied on white paper from a computer-generated typescript. The illustrations and design are by Rolando Estévez, and they include reproductions of line drawings, collages, and hand-coloured elements.

MS 83/12 **Memorial de las ciudades: antología de textos sobre Ciudad Mexico y la Habana**

José Diego, Camilo Venegas, Olivia Manning

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1995

113 pp. 6-3/4 by 8-3/4 inches. One of 200 copies. Colección Paseo.

Poems and prose by 20th-century authors mimeographed from typescript on coarse brown paper. The book is illustrated with decorated green and white paper cutouts as well as mounted photocopies of photographs by Olivia Manning, printed by Editorial Praxis in Mexico City. The brown paper wrappers have decorated-paper collages with yarn on front.

MS 83/13 I am loving you from my roots: Jewish Cuban poetry = Te estoy amando desde mis raíces: poesía judía-cubana

Ruth Behar

Bellamar, Cuba: Ediciones El Fortín, 2016

75 pp. 6 by 10-3/4 inches. One of 35 copies. Colección Puente de la Plaza.

Poems in Spanish and English translation, selected by Behar, who notes that this is the first anthology of Cuban Jewish writers to be published in Cuba. The covers of the book form a single design collage assembled from a variety of papers and fabrics. The cover includes a shaped cut-out of a face in profile. Inside, some of the pages fold out into pergaminos (broadsides). The design, illustrations, and calligraphy are by Rolando Estévez.

MS 83/14 La novia de Lázaro

Dulce María Loynaz

Matanzas, Cuba: Ediciones Vigía, 1997

21 pp. 5-3/4 by 11-3/4 inches. One of 200 copies. Colección del San Juan.

The program and text of a dramatic performance of this Loynaz poem by Sahily Moreda. The text is mimeographed; the design and illustrations are by Rolando Estévez.

MS 83/15 Suite para voz y corazón en traje negro / Suite pour voix et coeur en robe noire

Bellamar, Cuba: Ediciones El Fortín, 2016

5 leaves. 7 by 9-3/4 inches; the folding broadsides inside fold-out to 72 inches; the scroll unfurls to 23 inches. One of 50 copies. Colección Puente de Hierro.

A complex book-object designed by Estévez and Laura Ruiz Montes in tribute to the singer Edith Piaf. The text is a long poem in Spanish and French translation. The poem is digitally printed on many sheets assembled into two long, side-by-side fold-outs affixed to facing pages of the book. The illustrations, reproducing Estévez's line drawings, are pasted down on other pages, and they, too, fold out. The cover is decorated with a shell, a cut-out of a black dress that extends beyond the edges of the book, a picture of Piaf, and collage elements made from paper,

cloth, and cardboard. The main illustration is a double scroll attached to the right side of the book. The scroll unrolls to reveal a multi-sheet, handcoloured illustration of the Eiffel Tower, overlaid with mesh with cut-out paper angels.



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