

Private Cultural Exchange and Painting Workshop In Cuba with Wesley James Drake



“Longing for Cuba” – oil painting by Wesley James Drake

Letter from Carmen:

Hi Gallery Friends & Painters,

I am thrilled to be leading an arts exchange trip to Cuba on Feb 14 - 22, 2013. This trip has been planned under the direction of the Florida Keys TREE Institute. The founders of this institute have been running successful trips to Cuba for quite some time and now we're adding art instruction to the mix. The painters in the group will be painting under the instruction of Chicago artist and Carmen's gallery artist Wesley James Drake. I hand chose Wes to lead this expedition, not only because he is one of our favorite painters, but because he is so well traveled and can adapt to any environment. He's also a great guy! We also have quite a cultural experience planned for the leisure travelers who don't want to paint, but who want to experience the art and culture of Cuba.

You are receiving this because you have expressed an interest in this trip, which is available only by referral. We will be visiting art studios of Cuban painters in Trinidad, painting on the beach at Cienfuegos, and enjoying private tours of artists' studios in Havana as well as being taken on a private tour of the Havana Museum of Art. And, that is only the beginning! There will be daily opportunities to paint with Wes Drake, but if you would rather take advantage of the non-painter activities, that's fine, too. The agenda that I'm attaching is very flexible. You will have a wonderful opportunity to visit with the locals and experience a country that very few Americans have legal access to. I took advantage of the opportunity to visit CUBA with a humanitarian exchange program led by this group 2 years ago, and I'm back for more. It was unforgettable and to think that we can experience that AND paint...I can't wait!

The trip is limited to 26 people and it's first come, first served. All of the VISAS and documents required, including boarding passes, etc will be taken care of for you. You **MUST** have a current American passport to go on this trip. Please review the attached agenda and call me or email me

for further information or clarification. For the leisure travelers, there are many excursions that you can take advantage of. For anyone coming to paint...Although Wes is an oil painter and will be using that medium, the instruction will be relevant for any medium. Or, if you want to just paint with no instruction, you can do that, too. I am so happy to be able to coordinate this arts exchange trip and hope that you will be one of the fortunate ones to join us.

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you if you're interested.

Warm regards,

Carmen

HYPERLINK "<mailto:carmensgallery@gmail.com>"

Carmen's Gallery

This year celebrating our 31st year on Solomons Island (chosen by Coastal Living Magazine as One of the Top 15 happiest seaside towns in the U.S.)!

Voted "Best Art Gallery on the Chesapeake Bay" 3 years running!

www.carmensgallery.com

410.326.2549/FAX 410.326.3264

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ITINERARY

Day one -Thursday

Arrive at your leisure into Miami and check into hotel

Day 1-Friday

Check –in at airport at 7:30AM, Depart Miami at 10:00 AM, Arrive 11:00 AM at Cienfuegos airport. Upon arrival, the bus will be waiting to head to Trinidad. Check into hotel. After lunch, there will be a guided walk through the cobblestone streets of this enchanting UNESCO Heritage city and its main square called Plaza Mayor. Preview the open air market and many cultural centers. **Pre-dinner kick off session.** Dinner to follow. **(L,D)**

Day 2- Saturday

Breakfast at Hotel- Morning walking visit to the artists and their studios in town - **morning painting session**. For non-painters and painters alike, there is much to explore. (See listing on last page) Return to hotel for lunch - **afternoon painting session**. Dinner at the hotel **(B, L, D)**

Day 3- Sunday

After **breakfast at the hotel**, visit the Botanical Gardens of **Soledad**, which served as Harvard's Botanical Station for Tropical Research. It is now run by Cuba's Academy of Sciences with more than 2,000 species of tropical plants and palm trees. **Harvard University** is an important part of the garden's rich history. Harvard's name is still visibly carved into a palm tree entrance of what was once called the **Harvard House**. Then head to UNESCO World Heritage Site, **Cienfuegos City**, a thriving port since second Columbus landing in 1494. A boxed lunch and drinks will be provided. In the afternoon, we get a tour of the important artists' studios as well as the fabulous architecture. **Afternoon painting session in the square**. For non-painters, we will offer an optional boat ride of Cienfuegos Bay. Then depart back to our hotel for dinner. **(B, L,D)**

Day 4 –Monday

After **breakfast at the Hotel**, a morning trek to the base of the Escambray mountains to a waterfall and tropical forest for some environmental subject matter **Morning sketching session**. Return to hotel for lunch. The afternoon is full of choices! Head back to Trinidad City or paint on the beach. **Afternoon painting session**. Non- painters can enjoy the beautiful Caribbean or head back to the City. Farewell to Trinidad dinner.
(B, L,D)

Day 5- Tuesday

After breakfast at the hotel, check out and depart early for **Havana**. On this journey, the roads transition from Southern Caribbean to the Atlantic. The route will cross many sugar cane fields, and agricultural farms. **Lunch will be at a local restaurant in Old Havana** with traditional Cuban music. Enjoy one of the most magnificent cities in the Americas, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1982, to become acquainted with its history and architecture. . The will be walking tour after lunch. Stroll the handsome plazas and browse through the local book stall market. Check in to our hotel. **Dinner will be on your own at a private paladar**. Optional entertainment at Meson Flota and a walk up Opisbo St. **(B,L)**

Day 7- Wednesday- optional painting session

After **breakfast at the Hotel**, we will begin our day with a lecture by Dr. Mario Coyula along with a guided bus trip to view the architectural buildings of New Havana, a stop at the **Decorative Arts Museum** and private entry to **the University of Havana Arts Center**. See students in their working studios. **Lunch** will be on your own at **Aljibe**. After lunch we will visit

the renowned **Fuster's Mosaic City**. Then we will finish with a stop at the **Hotel Nacional**. The hotel offers breathtaking views overlooking the famous Malecon and Atlantic Ocean. Dinner will be on your own. Optional entertainment: Buena Vista Social Club **(B)**

Day 8- Thursday- optional painting session

After a big **brunch at hotel**, we will visit the **Belle Arts Museum of Fine Art** for a personalized visit. **Lunch on your own**. We will then taking a walking trip to some of the new contemporary artists' galleries in Old Havana as well as a stop at the arts& crafts market. Optional: guided trip to Museum of the Revolution and previous Presidential Palace (extra). **Final paint workshop review**. In the evening, we enjoy a ride to **Miramar** and **dinner suspense**. **OPTIONAL:** 10:00PM SHOW AT THE TROPICANA, **or**, other entertainment that might be available. **(B,D)**

Day 9 - Friday

Breakfast at the hotel. Depart for a trip to the **Hemingway House** before heading to the airport. **(B)**

Please note that itinerary is subject to some alterations for reasons beyond our control. Cuba has a tendency to shut down sites without advanced notice due to lack of utilities or for emergency repairs. However, we will substitute an experience that is equal or better!

Places of Interest in Trinidad City, Cuba

Holy Trinity Cathedral was completed in 1892, replaced the original 17th-century church that was destroyed in 1812 by a hurricane. The new construction is rather simple on the outside, but the restored interior reveals a Gothic vaulted ceiling and nearly a dozen attractive carved altars with unique statues and paintings. There are only two depictions of Jesus Christ sitting in the world and one of them is here. The cathedral can be visited Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 1pm. The highlight of the Plaza Mayor, and the most evocative reminder of Trinidad's glory days, is the lovingly restored **Palacio Brunet**, Fernando H. Echerri 52 at the corner of Simón Bolívar. The colonial mansion dates to 1704 (the second floor was built in 1808) and houses the **Museo Romántic**. Its splendid collection of period antiques culled from a number of old Trinitario families convincingly evokes the life of a local sugar baron in the 1800s. Don't miss the enormous kitchen, covered in *azulejo* (glazed ceramic tiles), with a wood-burning stove. The views from upstairs are marvelous. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9am to 5pm and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Admission is CUC\$2; allow about 45 minutes for your visit. **Museo de Arqueología** features a collection that encompasses natural sciences and pre-Columbian Cuba. It's mostly an uninspired hodgepodge of exhibits, though; you'll find bones of Indian natives and slaves, glass-enclosed stuffed animals, and a 19th-century

kitchen, which, though interesting, is hard to classify as either archaeology or natural science.

Museo de Arquitectura Colonial features moderately interesting exhibits that trace the development of Trinidad, including examples of woodwork and ironwork, maps, models, and photographs. It's open Monday, Thursday, and Saturday from 9am to 5pm and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Admission is CUC\$1

The former Palacio Cantero, an 1830 palatial residence built by a noted sugar baron, houses the **Museo Histórico Municipal**, Simón Bolívar 423 between Peña and Gustavo Izquierdo. In addition to antiques and 19th-century furnishings, there are bits and pieces of slave history, old bank notes, and exhibits of revolutionary Cuba. For many visitors, though, the highlight is the climb up the narrow and rickety wooden stairs to the tower, which has terrific bird's-eye views of Trinidad and the surrounding area. The museum is open Saturday through Thursday from 9am to 5pm; admission is CUC\$2. Allow about an hour for your visit, a bit longer if you want to linger over the views. The second of Trinidad's two major towers is the picturesque, yellow-and-white domed bell tower belonging to the former 18th-century **Convento de San Francisco (Convent of Saint Francis of Assisi)**, Fernando H. Echerrri at Piro Guinart. Today the building hosts the dogmatic, but rather fascinating **Museo de la Lucha Contra Bandidos**, which focuses on revolutionary Cuba and the continuing "struggle against bandits." Exhibits document Fidel's battles against counterrevolutionaries -- the *bandidos* in question -- who sought to overturn the regime's ideals by winning support among *guajiros* (poor rural farmers) and fighting in the Sierra del Escambray in the 1960s. In addition to newspaper reports, you'll find machine guns, military maps, a CIA radio, and photos of the ragtag principals who finally, and quite extraordinarily, overthrew the Batista government in 1959. As is the case with the Museo Histórico, though, the biggest draw may be the panoramic views from atop the bell tower. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 9am to 5pm; admission is CUC\$1. Allow 45 minutes or so, including the visit to the tower.

DETAILS

Florida Keys TREES Institute invites you to experience our Sister Island through a humanitarian exchange program by our 501 © 3 nonprofit organization. Share a true "People to People" exchange of shared love for the arts, culture and the environment. This exceptional art and learning experience will include visiting the magical, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Heritage sites of Trinidad, Cienfuegos and old Havana. While there, you will learn about the art and architecture of these historical cities and have an opportunity to personally interface with local artists, sculptors and architects of this region. Each package includes: complimentary conference call debriefing 4 weeks prior to the journey, Miami hotel, round trip non-stop CHARTER AIR service direct from Miami International to Cienfuegos with return from Havana to Miami, private air-conditioned motor coach, four and five star accommodations, special travel visa, approved license, all tips*, luggage handling throughout the trip, all transfers & fees, English speaking guide, spectacular entertainment, and meals as stated on the itinerary. The first 4 days of this trip include all meals, all drinks at the all inclusive hotel. All painting sessions are optional.

Not included: Cuba departure tax of \$30.00 & baggage fees charged in Miami.

We travel on a **US Department of Treasury** approved license and Visa. There are a limited number of seats available for this rare chance to visit this distinctive island. We encourage you to send in your deposit now. Leave the rest to our knowledgeable and capable guides!!

Trip dates are as follows:

February 14- 22, 2013

8days/8 nights. The first night will be in a Miami hotel which is included in this fee.

Price:

\$4395.00 per person double occupancy

(Add \$500.00 for single supplemental) **limited rooms available**

*****Trip cancellation insurance is now available upon request only thru our representative.*****

******THIS TRIP IS LIMITED TO 26 PERSONS******

First come, first served with deposit only!

Signups no later than by Sept 20, 2012. Final payment & registration will be due by October 30, 2012
Non-refundable after October 30, 2012.

In order to make your reservation and hold a space, we require a non- binding \$500.00 deposit (Checks only please). We will confirm receipt via email.

The check is to be made to:

Florida Keys TREE Institute

(A 501 c-3 non- profit organization)
PO Box 4567, Key West, FL 33041.

MARK YOUR CHECK MEMO- "DRAKE TRIP". Include a cell or home phone number and email address. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send a full registration packet on or about Sept 30, 2012

Questions?

Contact: Richard Keefe **HYPERLINK "<mailto:rwkeefel@aol.com>" rwkeefel@aol.com**
305-304-1729