



NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

Regla

Nicola Lo Calzo

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 Designed by Kehrer Design (Loreen Lampe)
 Cloth hardcover with title shield
 18,7 x 23,4 cm
 144 pages
 81 color and 3 b/w ills.
 English / Spanish
 ISBN 978-3-86828-788-2
 Euro 35,00 / US\$ 40.00 / GBP 32.00

The challenge of freedom in the face of revolutionary dogma: Afro-Cuban heritage caught between emancipatory practices and colonial memory

In Cuba, the word »regla« has multiple meanings.

Above all, it is the name of the port city, Regla, located on the periphery of Havana and one of the most important religious centres of the country.

Regla also refers to the three major Afro-Cuban religions: the Regla de Ocha or Regla de Ifá, better known as Santería, the Regla de Palo, and the Regla Abakuá.

Lastly, in Spanish, regla means rule, precept or law, and, by metonymy in Cuba, the Cuban regime.

For the last five years Nicola Lo Calzo has been exploring the living memories of slavery and colonialism on various continents. After going to West Africa, the Caribbean and South America, then to Louisiana and Mississippi, he turned to Cuba, in particular the Afro-Cuban communities, the descendants of former African slaves and creoles.

The images presented here are the result of immersing himself in marginal spaces, formerly clandestine but now tolerated, albeit controlled by the Castro regime, such as the temples of the Regla de Ocha and the Regla del Palo, the Abakua secret society, the carabali associations and the Masonic lodges. 130 years after the abolition of slavery, these free spaces, based on values such as solidarity, the sacred, memory, the importance of the individual, and freedom of expression, are the direct heirs of forms of culture and resistance developed by African slaves and »free people of color« during the Spanish colonial period. The hip-hop movement that was brought in from the United States in the

1990s also plays a part in creating a space for freedom and anti-power for the new generations. Regla shows how the raperos are reclaiming a negra identity and culture, and are bringing back to life the history of a slave past.

Nicola Lo Calzo, an Italian photographer born in Torino in 1979, lives and works in Paris. His photographic practice and research break down the barriers between art and documentary photography. His photographs have been widely exhibited. He has published two books: *Inside Niger* (Kehrer 2012) and *Obia* (Kehrer 2015). He is also a regular contributor to the international press including *Le Monde*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and is occasionally commissioned by institutional or commercial enterprises.

Ivor L. Miller is a cultural historian specializing in the African Diaspora in the Caribbean and the Americas. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History & International Studies. University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Papá Humbertico (born Humberto Joel Cabrerías Santana in 1985) is a Cuban hip hop musician and owns and operates Cuba's most important hip hop production company out of his home in eastern Havana.

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 Kehrer Verlag, Wieblinger Weg 21, 69123 Heidelberg, Germany
 Fon ++49 (0)6221/649 20-25, Fax ++49 (0)6221/64920-20
www.kehrerverlag.com www.artbooksheidelberg.com

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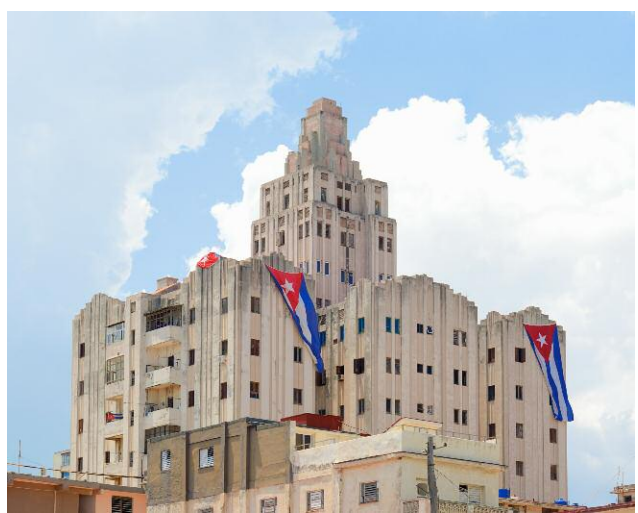
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Captions

01.
The Aberisún íreme dancing in front of the temple entrance. Erume Efó lodge in Guanabacoa.
02.
Enrique King Bell, before a Palo ceremony, in his temple in Santiago de Cuba. Enrique was initiated as a child and is now a tata nganga (shrine guardian).
03.
Oneyda, Raúl and Osmiel, members of the Lamento Cimarrón folk group, a historical re-enactment project created by the government in 1998. Palenque des los Cimarrones Cave, Viñales.
04.
Eva Emerida Augustin and Sergio Ramo, Queen and King of the Cabildo Carabalí Olugu, founded as the cabildo de nación africana in 1783. Santiago Carnival.
05.
A young ekobio shows his brother's Abakuá signature (firma) in the form of a tattoo. Muñongo Efó temple, Regla.
06.
López Serrano Building, Havana.
07.
Reinier, a young Cuban on a Sunday at the Siboney beach, close to Santiago de Cuba.
08.
Georgelina Suarez with her daughter and grandchildren. Cabildo de Santa Barbara, Trinidad.
»This place is the heir of a black brotherhood created in the first half of the 19th century by a certain Orizondo, an African slave of Bantu origin. The brotherhood had a license to worship African cults, to use the drums and dress in traditional outfits.«
Georgelina Suarez.
09.
Initiation of aspiring Abakuá neophytes with their sponsors. Muñongo Efó lodge, founded in 1930, Regla.
10.
Young campesinos washing their horses before sunset in the Pastora, close to the city of Trinidad. Valley of the Sugar Mills.
11.
The Aberisún íreme moves through the crowd of excited members. Muñongo Efó lodge, Regla.
12.
Iliana, a Tumba Francesa de la Caridad de Oriente dancer. Los Maceos neighborhood, Santiago de Cuba.