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Anneke Wambaugh / Claire Garoutte Cuba. On a Given Day

Texts by Ruddy Fernandez
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Cuba beyond all clichés: a black-and-white documentation of the many faces of the Caribbean island

Claire Garoutte and Anneke Wambaugh, acclaimed documentary and street photographers living in Seattle Washington, have worked together in Cuba since 1996.

Their book stems from a rare collaboration based on a shared aesthetic, a love for Cuba, and a deep friendship.

Cuba. On a Given Day is a visual journey that speaks to the strengths, contradictions, and raw seduction of the country and its people. The photographers' candid black-and-white images capture humorous, intimate, enigmatic and often surreal moments of day-to-day life in Cuba. As such, they offer a glimpse into the many different realities of this multifaceted country as well as the changes it has undergone over the last quarter century.

Over the years, Cuba became a second home to the photographers, a place where they were simultaneously insiders and outsiders. This collection dwells therefore in a space between familiarity and foreignness. The images, taken both during and long after an intensive research project about Afro-Cuban religion, eventually coalesced into a narrative about the people and places the photographers had come to know. Their long-term commitment allowed Garoutte and Wambaugh to build profound connections resulting in images of unparalleled authenticity.

Cuba. On a Given Day is not just about a place. It is a deeply immersive exploration of life in Cuba where the photographs tell a story of the island's cultural complexity and everyday poetry.

From the essay by the artist Ruddy Fernández:

Anneke and Claire don't pretend to offer solutions or answers, but the questions arising from their work require viewers to look beyond the usual clichés about what it is to be Cuban and to be open to Cuba's many realities. The use of black and white is the icing on the cake. Although the two photographers admit to being captivated by Cuba to the point of feeling themselves citizens of our archipelago, it has never been their intention to use color in this magnificent compendium. Even in the humblest settings, the colorfulness of the environment might distract from the observation of the essential—the people, their lives, and individuality.

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