

Chronology

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FIG. 1
Herrera (center) and her siblings, from left:
Archibald, Rosa Teresa, John, Antonio, Mariano,
and Addison, c. 1917–18

1915 Carmen Consuelo Marta Herrera y Nieto is born on May 30 in Havana, Cuba. Herrera's parents, Antonio Herrera y López de la Torre (1874–1917) and Carmela Nieto de Herrera (1875–1963), are both members of Havana's intellectual circle. Antonio had served as a captain in the Cuban army during the war for independence from Spain (1895–98), suffering permanent injury from bullet wounds to his left arm. After the war, he became executive editor of *El Mundo* (founded 1901), Cuba's first post-independence newspaper. Carmela was a pioneering journalist and respected author whose books included *Las Aventuras de Buchón* and *Victoria*. She was also a recognized philanthropist and feminist. In 1900 Carmela had married the American financier John Stewart Durland, with whom she had five children: Rosa Teresa, John, Addison, Mariano, and Archibald Durland y Nieto. After a divorce of mutual accord from Durland, she married Antonio in 1913, with whom she had Antonio Herrera y Nieto and Carmen—or Carmencita, as she is known to family and friends—who is the youngest child. All seven siblings are raised together.

1917 On July 16, Antonio, Herrera's father, dies. As the daughter of a revolutionary fighter, Herrera would receive an annual pension of 750 pesos from the Cuban government for part of her youth.

1920s Herrera begins her education at a Montessori school, then attends Colegio Sepulveda in Havana. Raised in a liberal Roman Catholic family, she is exposed from an early age to high culture. Her brother Addison, who was in New York as the representative of the Cuban National Tourist Commission, often invites friends from his circle there, including well-known figures such as Langston Hughes, to visit the family in Cuba. Her family's art collection includes works by Spanish Old Masters like Francisco Pacheco (1564–1644) and the School of Velázquez, as well as contemporary Cuban artists such as Fidelio Ponce de León (1894–1949).

1925 Gerardo Machado y Morales takes office as Cuba's president in May, instituting vigorous measures that advance tourism, mining, agriculture, and public works. His first term, which will end in 1928, will be remembered as a period of prosperity.

1925–28 Herrera's brother Addison, a talented painter, instills in her an appreciation for art. Together they take drawing and painting lessons with Federico Edelmann y Pinto (1869–1931), a language professor and painter who founded the Asociación de Pintores y Escultores de Cuba and established the annual *Salon de Bellas Artes* in 1916. Herrera also takes harp lessons.

1928 Herrera finishes elementary school with honors at Colegio Sepulveda.

Carmela is the Cuban delegate to the seventh Congreso de la Prensa Latina (Congress of Latin American Press), held in Havana. Herrera participates in the festivities linked to the congress, including a banquet hosted by the Spanish ambassador at the Centro Asturiano.

Machado modifies the constitution to seek a second term, which he obtains during the November elections.

1929 Herrera moves to Paris to study at the Marymount School, a boarding school in Neuilly-sur-Seine; she attends a concert by Josephine Baker and recalls the exodus of many of her American peers after the stock market crash on October 24.

The Great Depression that follows severely impacts Cuba, bringing precipitous drops in sugar prices that lead to widespread political unrest and violent suppression by Machado's government.

FIG. 2
Identification card for Herrera's annual pension from the Cuban government owed to her for her father's service as a captain in the army during Cuba's war for independence from Spain (1895–98), 1936



OPPOSITE
FIG. 3
Artists in the Primera Exposición de Pintura y Escultura al Aire Libre (First Outdoor Exposition of Painting and Sculpture) at Parque Albear, Havana, 1937. From left: Hélio Armenteros, Arturo Robinson, Herrera, unidentified nonparticipating, Cundo Bermúdez, and Pedro P. Mantilla

FIGS. 4, 5
Sculptures by Herrera exhibited at the Primera Exposición de Pintura y Escultura al Aire Libre at Parque Albear, Havana, 1937

1930 In September the police block antigovernment protests at the Universidad de La Habana, arresting many students and killing protest leader Rafael Trejo, which only serves to strengthen the opposition. In October Machado suspends constitutional guarantees, and by November the student protests have spread to Pinar del Río, Santiago de Cuba, Santa Clara, and other cities. At the end of November, Machado closes all schools in Cuba.

1931 After Herrera completes the school year at Marymount, she travels with her sister, Rosa Teresa, and their mother from Paris to Italy and Germany before returning to Havana.

1932 In early July two of Herrera's brothers are arrested in connection with the assassination of Captain Miguel Angel Calvo, chief of Cuba's secret police. Herrera recalls being instructed by her brothers to remove dynamite from their home in case it was searched for evidence. On September 12 her brothers are released along with eighty-two other political prisoners, mostly students, without having been tried in a court.

1933 After massive strikes beginning in July, Machado is forced to leave office on August 12. A provisional government is set up, with Carlos Céspedes as interim president. On September 5 a revolutionary junta led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista stages a coup. As secretary to Céspedes's wife, Carmela is in charge of removing all of the Céspedes family's personal belongings from the presidential palace. Batista establishes himself as chief of the armed forces and appoints Ramón Grau San Martín as president for a few months.

Although the political upheaval delays Herrera's education, she attends high school at the prestigious Instituto de La Habana. She also undertakes sculpture lessons with Isabel Chappotín Jiménez (1880–1964) and studies painting with María Teresa Ginerés de Villageliú at the Lyceum, a progressive cultural institution devoted to literature, music, and the arts. Herrera develops a keen interest in sculpture and in September exhibits her work for the first time, in a group show at the Círculo de Bellas Artes, Havana, titled *Exposición de Auto-retratos*.

1934 Through the Good Neighbor Policy under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the United States abandons its right to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs. The Sugar Act of 1934, a New Deal effort to protect the sugar industry domestically, helps the ailing Cuban economy by imposing protective tariffs and quotas that also favor Cuban producers. Beginning in January, a rapid succession of six Cuban presidents marks a period of instability that will last until Batista is officially elected in 1940.

1935 Herrera meets the Cuban artist Amelia Peláez (1896–1968), probably in January during Peláez's solo exhibition at the Lyceum (later called the Lyceum y Lawn Tennis Club). Herrera would later cite Peláez, who had recently returned from a sojourn in Paris (1927–33), as an early inspiration who showed her that "one is able to do what one loves, even being a woman." She recalls seeing the diminutive Peláez atop a scaffold while painting a commissioned mural for the José Miguel Gomez School in 1937.

Herrera sells her work for the first time, to American tourists who buy three of her landscape oils.



1936 Herrera in January participates in the eighteenth *Salón de Bellas Artes* at the *Círculo de Bellas Artes*, which includes work by Eduardo Abela (1889–1965), Carlos Enríquez (1900–1957), and René Portocarrero (1912–1985), among others.

1937 Armando Maribona credits Herrera as “the spirit” behind Cuba’s first outdoor exhibition, held at Parque Albear in Havana [February 27–March 5], in his review for *Diario de la Marina*. The show, mounted as a protest against the lack of exhibition spaces in Havana, is widely attended and well covered by the press. Paintings are hung from trees and sculptures placed on pedestals. Herrera, Helio Armenteros (1907–?), Cundo Bermúdez (1914–2008), Pedro Pablo Mantilla (1910–?), and Arturo Robinson, exhibit five works each. Herrera presents sculptures—most notably *Cristo* (see p. 14), a mahogany-wood carving of the head of Christ posed atop a swastika base meant to protest Nazi oppression and the anti-Semitic sentiments pervading Europe. (The head portion of this work is now in the permanent collection of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana, though the swastika is missing.)

Herrera participates in the first exhibition devoted to modern art in Cuba, *Primera Exposición de Arte Moderno, Pintura y Escultura*, held at the Salones del Centro de Dependientes in Havana [March 23–April 8]. A large survey sponsored by Havana’s Department of Culture, it includes work by thirty-one painters—among them Abela, Bermúdez, Enríquez, and Peláez—and ten sculptors, including Herrera, who again exhibits *Cristo*.

Herrera presents four wood sculptures in *Exposición de Escultura en Madera*, a group show of works by Isabel Chappotin’s students at the Lyceum that opens on July 29. Other artists in the exhibition include Rita Maria de la Torre and Rita Longa (1912–2000), who would become a renowned sculptor.

Herrera meets Jesse Loewenthal (1902–2000) in the summer. Loewenthal, who has traveled to Cuba for health reasons, arrives bearing a letter to Carmela from Addison, who is then chief of NBC radio’s Latin American department in New York. Born in the Bronx to Louis Loewenthal of Berlin and Fanny Haas of Vienna, both Jewish immigrants, Loewenthal is a polyglot who speaks German, Yiddish, Spanish, French, and Italian, as well as some Arabic. (He also reads Latin and would later teach himself ancient Greek). A one-time Broadway actor and Objectivist poet, Loewenthal held a degree in English from

City College of New York and taught at the prestigious Stuyvesant High School, a position he would hold until his retirement in the early 1970s. The couple soon begins a courtship nurtured by their mutual passion for literature, dance, and music. Loewenthal leaves Havana in early August with the promise to return in December. Unfortunately, finances prevent Loewenthal from returning for the holidays, so an intense exchange of letters (in English, with snippets of French and Spanish) ensues.

1938 Herrera is among the twenty-five artists selected to represent Cuba in the *Exposición del Arte Cubano Actual* at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City [February 1–15].

In June Herrera exhibits in the second *Exposición Nacional de Pintura y Escultura*, held at Castillo de la Fuerza in Havana, and begins working as a temporary clerk at the Ministry of Justice.

On August 9 Herrera graduates from the Instituto de la Habana. Loewenthal visits that summer, and their relationship intensifies. He expresses interest in moving to Cuba and asks her to help him look into the possibility of teaching English literature at the Universidad de La Habana.

FIG. 6
Herrera and Loewenthal in Havana, c. 1938

OPPOSITE

FIG. 7
Portrait of Herrera by Victor Laredo inscribed
“For Carmen and Jesse,” 1948

FIG. 8
Jeannie Rollin, Loewenthal, and Herrera in Paris,
1949



198

In September Herrera enrolls at the Universidad de La Habana. She registers as an architecture major and takes courses in literature and philosophy as well. There she meets her lifelong friend Emilio del Junco, who will go on to become a successful architect. In November a student revolt led by the Federación Estudiantil Universitaria at the university prevents Herrera from attending classes. She keeps busy working on her sculpture at the Lyceum and spending time with fellow artists Armenteros, Bermúdez, Alfredo Lozano (1913–1997), Mantilla, and José Mijares (1921–2004).

Loewenthal visits Herrera over the Christmas and New Year’s holidays.

1939 Political turmoil disrupts the academic calendar, and Herrera withdraws from the university despite having passed her exams with honors.

On July 10 Herrera and Loewenthal marry in Havana. As she is Roman Catholic and he is Jewish, they hold a civil ceremony performed by a notary public and celebrate at Herrera’s home in Vedado, surrounded by a close-knit group of friends and family. Soon after, they travel to Mexico for their honeymoon, taking road trips between Mexico City, Acapulco, and Monterrey. While in Mexico City they visit Chapultepec and the Museo Nacional de Antropología and meet

up in Xochimilco with the American painter Hope Manchester (1907–1976), who is also visiting.

Herrera and Loewenthal move to New York to his apartment on 348 East Nineteenth Street, within walking distance of Stuyvesant High School. They are surrounded by a core group of friends that includes Addison; the dancer and jazz critic Roger Pryor Dodge and his wife, Ann; the painter Barnett Newman (1905–1970), a college friend of Jesse’s, and his wife, Annalee Greenhouse; the Objectivist poet Louis Zukofsky (1904–1978) and his wife, Celia Thaew (1913–1980); and the Colombian artist Rafael Umaña (1908–1994) and his wife, Helen McGehee (born 1921), a member of the Martha Graham Dance Company. Reflecting on these years, Herrera has said: “Most of our friends earned a living as painters for the federally sponsored Works Progress Administration (WPA) or as substitute teachers.” Due to Jesse’s teaching post at Stuyvesant, “we were doing fairly well and we would host dinners for everyone.”

Upon her arrival in New York, Herrera abandons sculpture in favor of painting due to the difficulty of finding mahogany. The paintings *Piña* (Pineapple), and *La Perfecta Casada* (The Perfect Wife) (both in private collections) remain from this year.

1940 Herrera travels to Havana; on August 15, she obtains a green card at the U.S. Consulate there.

Herrera and Loewenthal move to an apartment at 234 West Fifteenth Street, where they live for one year.

1941 In April Addison leaves his post at NBC after being appointed the Latin American specialist of the Production Code Administration in Hollywood. He moves from New York to California shortly thereafter.

Around this time Herrera studies under the painter Samuel Brecher (1897–1982) at his studio on Twenty-Third Street. In search of her vision as an artist, Herrera makes many paintings, discarding those with which she is unsatisfied. Two paintings from this period are known to survive, *Early Female Figure* (1941, private collection) and *Early Male Figure* (1941, private collection). Despite the titles and subject matter, Herrera’s use of flat blocks of color to compose the figures and background begin to signal her shift away from figuration and toward abstraction.

Herrera and Loewenthal move to an apartment at 115 West Eleventh Street, where they will live until 1944.



Herrera and Loewenthal travel to Havana, where she paints small landscapes *en plein air*, the current locations of which are unknown. On this trip or one soon after, she meets the artist Wifredo Lam (1902–1982), who has returned to Cuba from Europe due to the outbreak of World War II. Herrera and Lam forge a close friendship throughout the 1940s and 1950s, meeting often in New York, Havana, and Paris.

1942 After submitting a scholarship application in 1941, Herrera takes evening life-drawing classes with Jon Corbino (1905–1964) at the Art Students League, October 19 through March 30, 1943.

After eight years of diplomatic service, Herrera's sister, Rosa Teresa, is appointed the Cuban attaché in London. One of the first female career diplomats in the world, she also serves as a special delegate of the Cuban Red Cross to the British Red Cross and becomes an air warden during the war.

Loewenthal and Herrera visit Carmela and spend two months in Havana starting in July. They spend time at the beach, swimming off the pier at the Yacht Club, buying old *danzón* records, and socializing with friends and family.

In December Carmela sells "La Casona," the family home located at Calzada 914 y Octava in Vedado. With the earnings from the sale she buys a home for herself and small properties for each of her children.

1943 Herrera takes printmaking classes at the Brooklyn Museum Art School for a year and exhibits her prints in a group show at the museum. Preparatory drawings and four extant etchings made to illustrate a poetry book that was never published reveal a fluid line with a Surrealist tinge depicting figures in interior or landscape settings.

1944 *Modern Cuban Painters*, organized by Alfred H. Barr Jr., with the counsel of Cuban art critic José Gómez Sicre, is held at the Museum of Modern Art [March 17–May 7]. All thirteen artists included are based in Havana; Peláez is the only woman. Returning from a trip to Havana, Herrera brings Ponce's drawing *Self-Portrait* (1941) to Barr for inclusion. Lam is noticeably absent from the exhibition; he refuses to participate due to personal differences with Gómez Sicre, and instead holds a solo show simultaneously at the Pierre Matisse Gallery at 41 East Fifty-Seventh Street. Gómez Sicre and the artist Mario Carreño (1913–1999) travel to New York for the opening, which Herrera also attends.

Herrera works part-time at a factory, hand-painting silk ties made from parachute scraps. Here she meets Flora Ohana de Roublev of Gibraltar, a well-known singer of Sephardic ballads, who holds a salon at her home on Friday evenings and will become one of Herrera's closest friends. The job is short lived, as the factory is destroyed by fire a few months later.

Batista's first term as Cuba's president comes to an end; he is succeeded by Ramón Grau San Martín.

1945 Herrera and Loewenthal move to 50 King Street in the West Village. Over the next decade Loewenthal will often photograph Herrera at this address, spoofing Queen Victoria, actresses, artists, and others. She is also photographed by their friend Victor Laredo (1910–2003).

1946 Art dealer and collector Frédo Sidès founds the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles in Paris with Jean Arp (1886–1966), Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979), Jean Dewasne (1921–1999), and Nelly van Doesburg (1899–1975). They pay homage to abstract artists, including Delaunay, Van Doesburg, Otto Freundlich (1878–1943), Vassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), František Kupka (1871–1957), Kazimir Malevich (1878–1935), Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), and Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943). Their

FIG. 9
 Herrera's membership card to the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles in Paris, 1951

FIG. 10
 Herrera's studio in Paris, c. 1953



200

first exhibition, at the Palais des Beaux-Arts [July 19–August 18], includes eighty-four international artists.

1948 Herrera visits Carmela in Havana in May.

Acting on the couple's shared desire to live in France, Loewenthal requests a sabbatical, and in late June he and Herrera move to Paris, where her brother John is the Consul General for Cuba. Facing difficulties in finding housing, they spend two months at 8 rue Cassini in Montparnasse, the home of their friend Robert-Jean Longuet, a left-leaning journalist and activist and great-grandson of Karl Marx, who is away on vacation. They eventually find an apartment nearby, at 5 rue Campagne Première, that also functions as Herrera's studio. The street is lively, and they befriend their neighbors, artists Marie Raymond (1908–1988) and Fred Klein (1898–1990), parents of Yves Klein (1928–1962); and Rella Rudolph (1906–1988), an abstract painter from Alabama. They frequently attend the Monday night salons hosted by Raymond, dubbed "les lundis de Marie," which gather artists, gallerists, collectors, and writers, including Arman (Armand Fernandez, 1928–2005), César Baldaccini (1921–1998), Eugène Ionesco (1909–1994), Serge Poliakoff (1900–1969), Denise René (1913–2012), Pierre Soulages (born 1919), Jean Tinguely (1925–1991), Victor Vasarely (1906–1997),

and Jacques Villeglé (born 1926). They are also active in the literary and experimental theater milieu through their friendships with critic Jean Rollin and Bernard Frechtman, a prolific translator who brought works by Albert Camus, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Genet, Ionesco, and Jean-Paul Sartre to English-language readers. Herrera and Loewenthal regularly attend concerts, plays, and readings. While Herrera paints, Loewenthal writes for *Books and Authors*, a review of modern literature.

Herrera abandons figuration, and for the next five years her work will fluctuate between geometric and lyrical abstraction. She experiments with acrylic paint, uses different scales, and creates paintings with exposed burlap such as *Halloween* (private collection) and *A City* (pl. 3).

1949 Herrera becomes a member of the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles and participates in the group's fourth exhibition, at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris [July 22–August 30], and will do so each year until 1953. Through the Salon she meets many international artists, including Yaacov Agam (born 1928), Arp, Olle Bærtling (1911–1981), Jamil Hamoudi (1924–2003), Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), Auguste Herbin (1882–1960), Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), and Saloua Raouda Choucair (born 1916). Her contact with the Salon is essential for the development of her work. Herrera

vividly recalls a comment by Sidès about one of her canvases: "In that painting there are many paintings, Madame." Initially pleased, she later realizes it is a subtle way of suggesting that she simplify her compositions.

Herrera and Loewenthal travel to Bornoux, a town near Lake Saint-Agnan in Bourgogne, with Frechtman and dancers Anita Avila and Jack Nile.

1950 Loewenthal twice extends his sabbatical, allowing the couple to stay in Europe until 1954.

Herrera participates in *Dessins pour Textiles par des Artistes Français et Étrangers* at the Librairie Paul Morihien [July 25–August 25] and the fifth *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris [June 10–July 15].

Herrera begins the Habana Series, painted between 1950 and 1951 during sojourns to her native city. She explores gestural abstraction, using brilliant hues of acrylic paint.

Herrera returns to Havana in December for her first solo show at the Lyceum y Lawn Tennis Club. *Carmen Herrera. Pinturas* [December 23–January 3, 1951] presents paintings from her Habana Series, whose energetic, gestural lines are similar to those that characterize Abstract Expressionism.



As one of Cuba's first exhibitions of abstract work, it creates an uproar in the artistic community. In Rosa Oliva's review for *El Mundo*, Herrera is quoted as saying, "I began painting by adhering to academic standards, but I have felt the aesthetic need to represent something unknown. It has been a slow process."

1951 Herrera travels back to Paris in late January. She exhibits in *Art Cubain Contemporain* at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris [February 28–March 24]. Organized by the artist Dolores "Loló" Soldevilla (1901–1971), Cuba's cultural attaché in Europe, it is the first group show of Cuban artists in Paris since the 1920s. Of the twenty-seven artists included, only three—Herrera, Pedro Álvarez (1967–2004), and Wifredo Arcay (1925–1997)—present nonfigurative works. Critic R. V. Gindertael singles out Herrera as "a fine colorist and one of the best in the show."

Herrera is included in the fifth *Salón Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado* at the Centro Asturiano de La Habana [July–August] and the sixth *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris [June 8–July 16].

Inspired by André Lhote's call, in the left-wing Paris newspaper *Combat* (1948), for artists to acquire and restore abandoned homes in Alba-la-Romaine, a countryside town in Ardèche dating back to the Roman Empire, Loewenthal and Herrera around this time acquire a "dreamlike," rustic "manor house" where they will spend the next few summers. Despite precarious conditions, they enjoy Alba, befriending locals and socializing with artist friends who also settle there—most notably, Hope Manchester and her husband, American painter Theodore Appleby (1923–1985); Spanish sculptor Honorio García Condoy (1900–1953); Colombian painter Alejandro Obregón (1920–1993) and his wife, dancer Sonia Osorio (1928–2011); and British painter and printmaker Stanley William Hayter (1901–1988) and his wife, American sculptor Helen Phillips (1913–1995).

1952 On March 10, Batista returns to power, overthrowing President Carlos Prío Socarrás in a military coup that encounters almost no resistance. He will preside over an oppressive and corrupt regime until he is ousted in 1959 during the Cuban Revolution.

Herrera participates in *L'Ensemble "A"*, a group show organized by the Iranian artist Jamil Hamoudi (1924–2003) at L'Institut Endoplastique in Paris [March 21–April 15] featuring twenty abstract artists, including Pierrette Bloch (born 1928), Christine Boumeester (1904–1971), Natalia Dumitresco (1915–1997), Henri Goetz (1909–1989), Hamoudi, Alexandre Istrati (1915–1991), Henry Lhotellier (1908–1993), and Poliakoff.

Herrera's work is included in the seventh *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris [July 18–August 17].

Herrera begins a long-running series of black-and-white paintings, including *Verticals* and *Untitled* (pl. 21). Of this series of canvases she would later state, "For me black and white are colors. . . . These paintings are about rigor, about setting up a challenge for myself as a painter."

FIG. 11
Brochure published in conjunction with the exhibition *Art of the Americas* at Galería Sudamericana, New York, 1954

FIG. 12
Letter from Herrera to the *New York Times*, March 5, 1961

FIG. 13
Portrait of Herrera, c. 1961. Photograph by Ralph Llerena, George Perruc Staff Photographers



202

1953 Herrera and Loewenthal attend the first staging of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett at Théâtre de Babylone.

Herrera is included in *Quelques Femmes Peintres* at Galerie Olga Bogroff, the eighth *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris [July 10–August 9], and shows at the Galerie Variations Plastiques.

In early July, Herrera and Loewenthal travel to London to visit Herrera's sister, Rosa Teresa, for a few days. They return to Paris, go to Alba, and spend August in Spain, visiting San Sebastián, Seville, and Madrid.

1954 Having run out of sabbatical extensions and facing financial concerns, Loewenthal and Herrera are compelled to return to New York in March and settle back into their apartment at 50 King Street. From this year on, Herrera will live and work in New York.

Herrera participates in *Art of the Americas* at New York's Galería Sudamericana [April 3–24], run by Chilean author and critic Armando Zegrí. She is one of fifteen artists from twelve countries who represent the "varied styles that make the complete picture of Art of the Americas in 1954." She also lends a work by Ponce from her collection.

In early May, Herrera travels to Havana alone to help her aging mother, who has undergone surgery for her failing eyesight. In a letter to Herrera, Loewenthal celebrates the U.S. Supreme Court's May 17 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which overturned school segregation on the basis of race. Herrera remains in Havana through June painting small-scale works, none of which are known to have survived.

1955 Herrera travels to Havana between July 9 and 14.

Her second solo show, at the Eglinton Gallery in Toronto [September 17–October 12], includes twenty-seven mixed-media paintings made with enamel, plaster, sand, and oil paint. The gallery is run by the artist Karl May (1901–1976), son of the famous German author by the same name, and is the only Toronto gallery exhibiting contemporary art. May also mounts shows by Anna Bella Geiger (born 1933), Roger Larivière (1917–2006), William Ronald (1926–1998), and Andor Weininger (1899–1986) around that same time.

1956 Herrera and Loewenthal move to 232 East Fifteenth Street, where they will live for three years.

Herrera's first New York solo exhibition takes place at Galería Sudamericana [January 30–February 18]. The exhibit is favorably reviewed by Emily Genauer in the *New York Herald Tribune*.

In November Herrera exhibits in *Twelve Cubans* at the Roland de Aenlle Gallery in New York, alongside Mario Carreño, Hugo Consuegra (1929–2003), Raúl Milián (1914–1984), Peláez, and others.

1957 Herrera is included in *Modern Cuban Painting* at Galería Sudamericana [January 28–February 16].

Herrera and Loewenthal visit Havana in July.

1958 Herrera is troubled by the reception of her work in New York compared to Paris. She will not exhibit between 1958 and 1962, likely due to her mother's deteriorating health and the political unrest in Cuba, which destabilizes her entire family emotionally and economically. Nonetheless, these are pivotal years for her production as she creates some of her most iconic works, including *Green and Orange* (1958), *Blanco y Verde* (1959), and *Red with White Triangle* (1961).

Letters to The Times

Cuba's Political Prisoners

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:
 After reading A. L. Colloms' letter on civil liberties in Spain and the answer to it by His Excellency Don Mariano de Yturralde, Ambassador of Spain, the first thing that comes to mind is that nearer in time and space is the plight of Cuban political prisoners.
 No investigation is being made by any international commission of lawyers, no help is forthcoming from any international body and no clamor is heard from such quarters as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, let's say.
 As a Cuban, I want to bring to the attention of The New York

Times and the public opinion of this country the fate of the political prisoners, men and women civilians who were condemned to long prison terms, not by civil, but by military tribunals.
 Intervention on their behalf of international organizations and all people concerned with the redress of wrongs could no doubt be of great help to those unfortunate citizens of a country that is so close geographically to this great nation.
 If an amnesty were granted to those prisoners and full political freedom restored in view of future elections, even now a healing of the profound wounds that my unhappy country has suffered could take place.
CARMEN HERRERA DE LOEWENTHAL,
 New York, March 5, 1961.



On June 27, Herrera embarks on *Oriente*, a steamship headed to Havana, which arrives on July 1. Loewenthal meets her in Havana and they travel together to Sagua La Grande. Loewenthal remains supportive of Herrera's artistic pursuits and begs her to pay no heed to the lack of exhibition opportunities.

Fidel Castro's guerrillas sabotage the elections in November and defeat Batista's troops, forcing Batista to flee the country on January 1, 1959.

1959 The United States recognizes Castro's government and he is sworn in as prime minister on February 16. The revolution takes a Communist turn in May, when Castro launches a program of agrarian reform instituting limited land ownership, nationalizing U.S. assets, and expropriating property without compensation.

In June Herrera visits Carmela in Havana.

In October President Dwight D. Eisenhower approves a program proposed by the U.S. Department of State, in agreement with the CIA, to support opposition to the Castro government within Cuba.

1960 In January Eisenhower orders the CIA to plan a covert invasion of Cuba. Sabotage and incendiary bombing missions begin throughout different regions in Cuba and last through February, destroying refineries, sugar plantations, and some urban areas.

The political turmoil affects Herrera's finances, as she stops receiving rent payments from the tenants living in the property her mother gave her in Havana, due to recently passed laws that prohibit wire transfers to other countries. In March she and Loewenthal begin looking for a new apartment, but with little success. They live briefly at 147 Christopher Street, then move to an apartment at 360 Central Park West, where their friends Flora Ohana and Dr. Alexander Roublev live. Flora holds "tertulias," friendly gatherings of piano playing, singing, dancing, and dining on Friday evenings with a group they refer to as the "pandilla del 360" (360 gang). Some of the participants are Isabelita Lipton, Ninette Lukashok, Frank McCourt, Joyce Afriat, Naomi and Abraham Pinto, Louise and Francis Kloeppel, and Lola and Leon Leslau.

After some family properties in Havana are invaded and ransacked, Herrera must sell most of what is left of the family's belongings, including furniture, artworks, and jewelry. In the spring she manages to export the objects to New York with the help of the renowned

Cuban pianist Conchita Espinosa and her husband, Eric Schamroth, who owns a shop in New York.

On May 24 Herrera participates in a roundtable discussion on Contemporary Latin American Art at the Galería Sudamericana, along with María Luisa de Pacheco (1919–1982) from Bolivia, Rodolfo Mishaan (born 1924) from Guatemala, and fellow Cuban artist Julio Girona (1914–2002); the talk is moderated by Armando Zegrí.

Herrera's work is included in *Benefit for Victims of Chilean Earthquake* at the Cisneros Gallery in New York [June 9–17], whose director, Florencio Cisneros, had owned galleries in Havana and Caracas.

In October Cuba's Reforma Urbana takes effect, cutting rents in half and nationalizing hundreds of Cuban and U.S. companies. The United States begins its economic embargo.

In November Herrera's brother Antonio is arrested as a political prisoner in Cuba and is given a twenty-year sentence; he will be transferred to five different prisons over the next three years.

FIG. 14
Herrera and Loewenthal in front of her painting *Beacon* (turned on its side), c. 1965 (whereabouts unknown)



FIG. 15
Invitation to the exhibition *New York Cuban Group*, in which Herrera participated, Cisneros Gallery, New York, 1965



1961 In January the United States severs all diplomatic ties with Cuba.

On March 9 the *New York Times* publishes a letter from Herrera aimed at raising public awareness about the lack of civil liberties in Cuba and the fate of political prisoners condemned by military tribunals.

In April the CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion, led by a group of Cuban exiles against Castro, is a failure, strengthening the dictator's anti-American rhetoric and his ties to the Soviet Union.

During the next few years, Herrera and Loewenthal will be deeply involved in helping refugees leave Cuba. They work with the International Rescue Committee, inform friends and relatives about how to leave the country legally, secure visa waivers for them through the State Department, and help them with airfare costs. Among the many people they assist is the architect Amado Cesar Nieto and his family.

Herrera travels to Havana between May 18 and June 8.

1962 Herrera is invited by her friend, Cuban architect Emilio del Junco, to participate in *Geometric Painting, Classic and Romantic* at Jerrold Morris International Gallery in Toronto [March 23–April 7]. The other artists are Tadaaki Kuwayama (born 1932) and his wife, Rakuko Naito (born 1935), and George Terasaki (1931–2010). Although no works are sold, the exhibition is well received by the press.

In October the Cuban Missile Crisis brings the Cold War to new heights, causing fear of a full-scale nuclear war. The crisis is resolved when the USSR agrees to remove its missiles from Cuba in return for the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear missiles in Turkey and the promise not to invade Cuba in the future.

1963 In January Herrera and Loewenthal begin making plans to move to Spain when he retires at the end of the school year.

Herrera receives news that Carmela is gravely ill. Despite the risks of traveling to Cuba in the current political environment, she requests a special permit through the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic Embassy in Washington, DC, and travels to Havana on April 13. Although still in captivity, Antonio is allowed a last visit to Carmela, escorted by non-uniformed guards. On April 23 Carmela dies at age eighty-eight. Herrera leaves Havana on May 17 for the last time.

Herrera has a solo show at Trabia Gallery in New York, owned by longtime friend Angelo Lanza di Trabia (1906–1977).

In July Herrera and Loewenthal visit their friends, pianist-composer Helena Stepanoff and artist Vladimir Hegstroem, in Jackson, New York.

Herrera and Loewenthal travel to Madrid on October 1. With the help of her uncles, Cardinal Angel Herrera Oria of Málaga and Admiral Pedro Nieto Antúnez, minister of the Spanish navy, who intercede on the family's behalf, Carmen succeeds in securing the release of Antonio from prison. In mid-November he flies from Havana to Madrid.

Although Herrera and Loewenthal had planned to settle permanently in Madrid, they change their minds and return to New York on December 9, staying temporarily at Hotel Irving located at 26 Gramercy Park South.

1964 Herrera and Loewenthal move to 118 East Nineteenth Street, where they will remain for three years. Loewenthal resumes teaching at Stuyvesant.

FIG. 16
Black-and-white photograph of Herrera's
Blanco y Verde, 1968 (whereabouts unknown)

FIG. 17
Herrera, *Construcción Azul*, 1969–70
(no longer extant)



1965 At about this time, Herrera meets the artist Leon Polk Smith (1906–1996) and his partner, Robert Jamieson, who live down the block on Nineteenth Street. She greatly admires Smith and his work, and they visit each other's studios often.

Herrera participates in *New York Cuban Group* at the Cisneros Gallery in New York [September 7–20].

Herrera presents twelve large-scale works in a solo exhibition at Cisneros Gallery [November 23–December 11].

1966 Herrera exhibits in three group shows at Cisneros Gallery: *American and Latin American* [January], *Latin American '66* [May 17–June 4], and *American and Latin American 2nd* [September 7–24]. *Latin American '66* includes works by Uruguayan artist Julio Alpuy (1919–2009) and fellow Cubans Sita Gómez de Kanelba (born 1932) and Waldo Díaz-Balart (born 1931), among others. Herrera and Loewenthal host a large party after the opening whose attendees include Cisneros, Díaz-Balart, Gómez, and their friends, Isabelita Lipton, Flora Ohana, and poet Jozef Wittlin.

Herrera wins a fellowship granted by the CINTAS Foundation to support Cuban artists living and working in the United States.

1967 Herrera and Loewenthal move to an apartment on East Nineteenth Street between Park and Broadway, where Herrera will reside to this day. The front half of the apartment will function as studio and art storage space until her works are sent to off-site storage in the early 1990s.

She exhibits in *Art Today*, 1967 at the New York State Fair in Syracuse [August 29–September 4], alongside twenty-three other artists, including Josef Albers (1888–1976), Richard Anuszkiewicz (born 1930), Ben Cunningham (1904–1975), Jim Dine (born 1935), Eva Hesse (1936–1970), Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), Marisol (1930–2016), Claes Oldenburg (born 1929), Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), George Segal (1924–2000), and Andy Warhol (1928–1987); and *Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York* at the Center for Inter American Relations in New York [December 6–January 14, 1968], alongside Alpuy, Argentinian artist Fernando Maza (born 1936), Mishaan, and Chilean painter Ricardo Yrarrázaval Larraín (born 1931).

1968 Herrera is granted a second fellowship by the CINTAS Foundation, the maximum number of awards they give to a single artist. She uses the money to hire a carpenter and begin her series *Estructuras*, consisting of wooden sculptures based on her drawings. In appreciation she offers to give one of them to the CINTAS Foundation collection in New York.

She participates in *Latin American '68* at the Cisneros Gallery [February 20–March 6].

1969 On April 5 *El Mundo*, the widely circulated newspaper Herrera's father had once headed, is closed by order of Fidel Castro.

She participates in *Graphics '69* at the Art and Home Center of the New York State Fair in Syracuse [August 26–September 1].

FIG. 18
Clipping from *El Diario-La Prensa* showing participants in the exhibition *6 Cuban Painters Working in New York* at the Center for Inter-American Relations, New York, 1975. From left: Sita Gómez de Kanelba, Juan González, Herrera, Hugo Consuegra, and Daniel Serra-Badué (Oscar Magnan is not pictured)

FIG. 19
Herrera at the opening of her retrospective exhibition at the Alternative Museum, New York, 1984

FIG. 20
Loewenthal in the part of his and Herrera's New York apartment dedicated to her studio, 1987



1970 In November Herrera files a declaration of intent to become a U.S. citizen.

Loewenthal retires in the early 1970s. In letters to their former teacher, Loewenthal's students vividly recall his four decades of teaching at Stuyvesant. In his memoir *Teacher Man*, Loewenthal's colleague Frank McCourt writes: "He was the oldest teacher in the department, with his elegant three-piece suit, the gold watch chain looping across his waistcoat front, his gold-rimmed spectacles, his Old World manners, his scholarship, Jesse who did not want to retire but, when he did, planned to spend his days studying Greek and drifting into the next life with Homer on his lips."

Herrera applies for a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship but is declined.

1971 Artists and writers dissatisfied with the lack of representation of women in art institutions create the Women in the Arts Foundation. Herrera soon joins the group.

Herrera becomes a naturalized citizen of the United States on August 2.

1972 While installing her work in *Contemporary Latino American Art Exhibit*, a group show at the Contemporary Arts Gallery at the Loeb Student Center of New York University [September 18–October 5], she meets Tony Bechara (born 1942), an artist from Puerto Rico and a neighbor, who will become one of her closest friends. The show, curated by Ida Rubin, also includes Arnold Belkin (1930–1992), Herman Braun (born 1933), Leonel Góngora (1932–1939), Miguel Ocampo (1922–2015), Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar (1922–2004), and Freddy Rodríguez (born 1945).

1973 Herrera's work is included in *Women Choose Women*, a groundbreaking exhibition organized by the Women in the Arts Foundation at the New York Cultural Center [January 12–February 18]. It is the first museum survey selected by a jury of female artists, curators, and critics and devoted exclusively to art by women. Its ambitious scale (109 artists) and Lucy Lippard's catalogue essay provide important momentum to the women artists' movement.

1974 Leon Polk Smith introduces Herrera to Robert Buecker, who invites her to participate in *Purism in New York: 1951–1963: Black and White*, an exhibition at his gallery, Buecker and Harpsichords [November 2–December 28], that includes work by Smith, Lily Ente (1905–1984), Ramírez Villamizar, and others. The show moves Herrera to create two seminal black-and-white paintings: *Ávila*, inspired by Francisco de Zurbarán's *La Virgen de las Cuevas* (The Virgin of the Caves) (c. 1655; Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville) and the letters of St. Teresa of Ávila; and *Escorial*, Herrera's take on the austere architecture of the monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial, begun by architect Juan Bautista de Toledo and finished by his pupil, Juan de Herrera (no relation to Carmen).

1975 Herrera exhibits in *6 Cuban Painters Working in New York* at the Center for Inter-American Relations [January 15–February 23], alongside Hugo Consuegra (1929–2003), Gómez de Kanelba, Juan González (1942–1993), Oscar Magnan (born 1937), and Daniel Serra-Badué (1914–1996), who organizes the show. As chairman of the college's art department, Serra-Badué mounts an expanded version of the exhibition at St. Peter's College Gallery in Jersey City, New Jersey, titled *9 Cuban Artists* [April 9–30], adding work by Julio Larraz (born 1944), Juan Nickford (1925–2001), and Roberto Polo (born 1951).



Sometime in the mid-1970s, Herrera and Loewenthal meet sculptor Wallace French (born 1940) and his wife, Pat, as well as photographer John Gregory, who will document much of Herrera's work. Along with Tony Bechara, they all live on Nineteenth Street. Through the late 1980s they will often dine together at the nearby Il Cardinale Ristorante.

1976 Herrera participates in exhibitions organized by the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in Washington, DC.

1977 In October Herrera wins a Creative Artists Public Service Award (CAPS) from the New York State Council on the Arts. In gratitude she donates a painting to the permanent collection of the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation, New York University Medical Center. A grand cocktail reception is held in her honor.

1979 Herrera and Loewenthal travel to Paris in the fall.

Herrera has a solo exhibition, *Carmen Herrera: Wood Construction—Paintings*, at the Institute of International Education in New York [November–May].

1980 Herrera donates paintings from the late 1950s to a charity auction held at Bacardi Art Gallery in Miami [August 11–16] to raise funds for the International Rescue Committee, which helps Cuban exiles settle elsewhere in the United States.

1981 Herrera exhibits in *The Big Picture: Major Paintings*, a group show at Buecker and Harpsichords [January 3–February 21].

1983 In August Herrera and Loewenthal travel to Spain for two weeks.

1984 Herrera's first retrospective, *Carmen Herrera: A Retrospective, 1951–1984*, is held at the Alternative Museum in New York [December 19–January 19, 1985].

1986 Ljubomir Rastovski invites Herrera to exhibit at his gallery in the East Village. Herrera is recommended by her friend Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996), one of the gallery's artists, and Rastovski had seen her work in the CAPS artist-slide registry. *Two Minimalists Four Decades Apart: Carmen Herrera—Elizabeth Poverono* is on view at the Rastovski Gallery from October 22 to November 16. She will show with Rastovski until 1990.

1987 Herrera participates in a group show at Rastovski Gallery with Launa Beuhler, Suzanne Bocanegra (born 1957), Don Freeman (1908–1978), Fabio Salvatori (born 1952), Joseph Zito (born 1957), and others [June 24–July 19]. She presents a solo show also at Rastovski Gallery [November 6–29].

She creates *La Hora* and *Yesterday*, black paintings with a single thin white zigzag line that fragments the composition. The works are made in honor of two friends she lost to AIDS.

Herrera is included in *Outside Cuba. Contemporary Cuban Visual Artists/Fuera de Cuba. Artistas Cubanos contemporáneos*, a large exhibition of contemporary Cuban artists of the diaspora [March 22–May 26]. The show opens at the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and travels to five more venues between 1987 and 1989. In the *New York Times* William Zimmer singles out Herrera's work, stating: "Carmen Herrera's abstractions 'Sunday' and 'Thursday' in clean colors—red and black and yellow and black—are a refreshing surprise."



1988 Herrera participates in a group show at Rastovski Gallery along with Gonzalez-Torres, Project infinite, Salvatori, Damir Sokic (born 1952), and Young K. [June 24–July 16].

Herrera has a solo exhibition at Rastovski Gallery [October 6–29]. The show is reviewed by Stephen Westphall in *Art in America*, who describes her work as “a particularly sexy sort of geometric symmetry.”

Herrera participates in *Cintas Fellows Revisited: A Decade After* at the Metro-Dade Cultural Center in Miami [October 1–January 15, 1989].

She is included in *El espíritu latinoamericano: arte y artistas en los Estados Unidos, 1920–1970*, a survey exhibition that originates at the Bronx Museum of the Arts [September 29–January 29, 1989] and travels widely in the United States from 1988 to 1990. Reviewing the show in *Contemporanea*, Don Bacigalupi writes, “Nothing can prepare one for the power and authority of Carmen Herrera’s *Green and Orange* (1958). . . . This spectacular work challenges one to imagine it in its proper context three decades ago.”

Invited by Gonzalez-Torres, she exhibits in *Cultural Participation*, one of four exhibitions that make up *Democracy: A Project by Group Material*, organized by the artists’ collaborative Group Material at Dia Art Foundation in New York [November 19–December 10].

1989 Herrera participates in a group show at Rastovski Gallery with Mario Emes (born 1953), Claudia Matzko (born 1956), Bonnie Rychlak (born 1951), Michael St. John (born 1953), Salvatori, Young K., and others [June 22–July 15].

1990 Ljubomir Rastovski writes the Rastovski Gallery Manifesto, a twenty-three-page document that espouses “the ideals and cultural position that constitute the program of the gallery . . . [that is] Committed to promoting the Fine Art of constructive qualities.” Herrera is included in the group show [January 11–February 24] that accompanies the launch of the manifesto, along with Young K., John Kirchner (born 1955), J. S. Riker, and St. John.

She applies for a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship and again is declined.

1992 *Duo Geo: Two Geometric Artists: Carmen Herrera/Ernesto Briel* is organized by Gustavo Valdés at Jadite Gallery in New York [September 24–October 6]. Valdés also interviews Herrera for inclusion in “El color de la palabra,” a special edition of *STET* magazine with interviews of thirty-two Cuban artists.

1993 *Tony Bechara, Carmen Herrera, Tom Murrin, Mac Wells: Abstract Paintings, Masks, and Performances* is mounted at Artists Space in New York [June 3–July 10].

Valdés invites Herrera to be included in the second volume of *Cuban Artists Collection*, a portfolio of screenprints published by Victor Gomez (born 1941), director of the Miami Press Workshop. In her first venture into printmaking since the 1940s, she makes *Rojo y Negro* (1993) for the portfolio and later *Verde y Negro* (1995), also with Gomez.

1994 Herrera participates in a number of group exhibitions, including *Cuban Artists: Expressions in Graphics* at Jadite Galleries [March 3–5]; *Cuban Presence* at Vista Gallery in New York [October 6–November 5]; and *Paper Visions V: A Biennial Exhibition of Works on Paper by Thirty Contemporary Latin American Artists* at the Housatonic Museum of Art in Bridgeport, Connecticut [November 2–December 16].

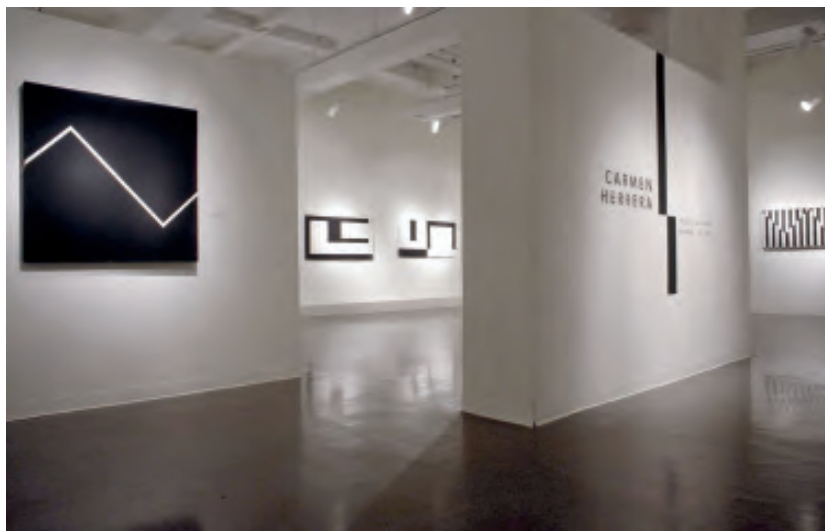


FIG. 21
Installation view of *Cultural Participation*,
part of *Democracy: A Project by Group Material*
at Dia Art Foundation, New York, 1988

FIG. 22
Cover of Herrera's monograph *The Black and
White Paintings, 1951–1989*, published on the
occasion of her 1998 solo exhibition at El Museo
del Barrio, New York

FIG. 23
Installation view of *The Black and White
Paintings, 1951–1989*, curated by Carolina Ponce
de León, El Museo del Barrio, New York, 1998

She is the subject of the documentary *Artist in Exile: Carmen Herrera*, directed by Ray Blanco and broadcast by PBS.

1995 Herrera contributes work to *Silent Auction of Works by Contemporary Artists to Benefit FAITH Services* at Jadite Galleries [May 25–31].

Bechara throws an eightieth-birthday bash for Herrera at his studio. Friends in attendance include architect Warren James, Peruvian journalist Sonia Goldenberg, painter and writer Russell Connor, and Isabelita Lipton.

1996 Herrera participates in *9 Cuban American Artists* at Kingsborough Community College Art Gallery, City University of New York [November 20–January 22, 1997].

Loewenthal's health begins to deteriorate. Herrera stops painting and devotes her time to caring for him.

1997 Herrera exhibits in *Crossing Borders: Contemporary Art by Latin American Women* at the College of New Rochelle, New York [September 2–October 26].

She participates in *Color: Contrasts and Cultures* at the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport, Connecticut [September 28–January 4, 1998], where her work is placed beside that of Ellsworth Kelly (1923–2015). In his lengthy review for the *New York Times*, William Zimmer notes, “Later painters who learned from (Sonia) Delaunay about making shape and color inseparable are Ellsworth Kelly and Carmen Herrera.”

1998 *Carmen Herrera: The Black and White Paintings, 1951–1989* is held at El Museo del Barrio in New York [April 17–June 28]. Herrera and Loewenthal attend the opening together. The exhibition catalogue includes essays by Carolina Ponce de León and Alejandro Anreus, bringing scholarly attention to Herrera's work. Holland Cotter, in a favorable review of the show in the *New York Times*, writes: “[Herrera] settled on her mature style, an abstract art of quietly jazzy linear patterns. . . . Early pieces from the 1950s, with their off-register fields of stripes and bars, are prescient of Minimalism and Op art. . . . She occupies an honorable place in postwar geometric painting, and this fine show should help to secure it.”

1999 Herrera is featured in Robert Henkes's book *Latin American Women Artists of the United States: The Works of 33 Twentieth-Century Women*.

Gustavo Valdés opens ARS Atelier in Union City, New Jersey, a space dedicated to promoting visual, literary, and performing arts by contemporary Cubans. He dedicates its first publication to Herrera and Loewenthal and pens a short essay titled “Some Reasons to Love Carmen.”

Herrera's duotone diptych *Red on Red* (1959) enters the permanent collection of El Museo del Barrio, donated by Bechara. The painting will be included in the museum's five-volume catalogue *Voces y Visiones: Highlights from El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection*, published in 2003.

Herrera participates in *Towards a Society for All Ages: World Artists at the Millennium*, presented in celebration of the International Year of Older Persons at the United Nations in New York [September 11–October 18].

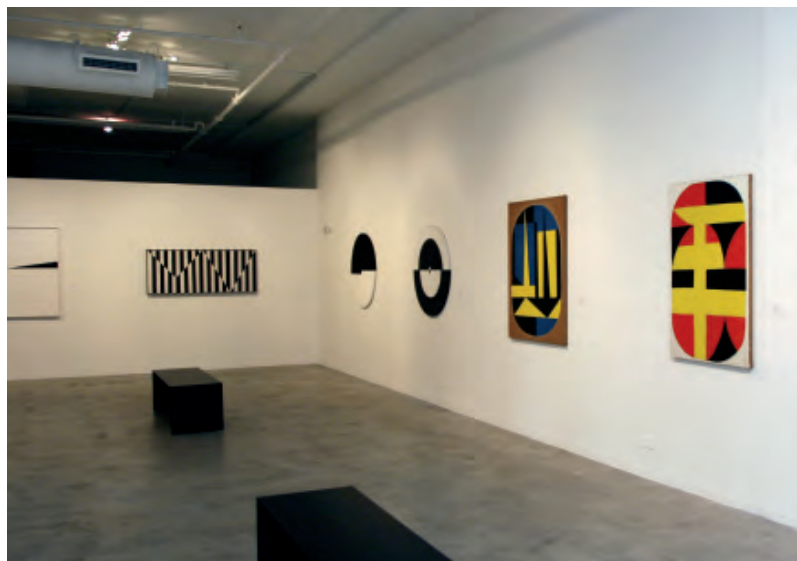
2000 Jesse Loewenthal dies on December 11 at the age of ninety-eight. Herrera enters a difficult period of mourning.

Herrera, who has not exhibited in Cuba since 1951, is included in two group shows in Havana, *Tono a Tono: exposición de arte abstracto* at the Salón de la Solidaridad in Hotel Habana Libre Tryp, where she presents the screenprint *Rojo y Negro* (1993); and *Cuban-American Art 2000* at the Official Residence of the Principal Officer of the

FIG. 24
Installation view of *The Forms of Silence: Carmen Herrera Abstract Works, 1948–1987*, Miami Art Central, 2005

FIG. 25
Tony Bechara and Herrera celebrating her ninety-third birthday, 2008

FIG. 26
Installation view of Herrera's one-person exhibition at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England, 2009



United States Interests Section [dates unknown], which includes two paintings, *Friday* (1978) and *Alternative in Black and White* (1974).

2001 Herrera participates in *Voices from Our Communities: Perspectives on a Decade of Collecting at El Museo del Barrio* [June 12–September 16].

2004 *Concrete Realities: Carmen Herrera, Fanny Sanín, and Mira Schendel* is mounted at Latincollector in New York [April 14–May 29]. At the suggestion of Bechara, then represented by Latincollector, gallery owner Frederico Sève chooses Herrera to replace Suzan Frecon, who dropped out of the show. This fortuitous event brings about Herrera's first exhibit at Latincollector, where she will show through 2010. The exhibition also marks the beginning of a friendship with Colombian artist Fanny Sanín (born 1938) and her husband, Mayer Sasson, as well as fellow Colombian artist Carlos Motta (born 1978), then director of Latincollector. Holland Cotter lauds the exhibit in the *New York Times* as a "crisp, handsome show [that] picks up the thread of geometric abstraction in twentieth-century Latin American art, and follows it in the work of three women who have made significant contributions. . . . [Herrera's] declarative, witty style has points of contact with Mondrian, Kelly and Op art but is most immediately connected to the vanguard

Neoconcrete work of artists like Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica who flourished in Brazil after World War II."

Herrera's work enters the permanent collection of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation in Miami.

2005 Herrera reaches a turning point in her career, as *Carmen Herrera: Five Decades of Painting*, a large retrospective, is held at Latincollector [May 17–July 31]. The show finds critical and commercial success, and Grace Glueck's review for the *New York Times* has been described by Herrera as the most perceptive commentary about the architectural elements in her work.

In September *The Forms of Silence: Carmen Herrera Abstract Works, 1948–1987* opens to great acclaim at Miami Art Central [September 21–November 13].

Juan Carlos Ledezma's essay "Carmen Herrera: Edging on Silence; Discourse, Object, and Abstraction" is published in *ArtNexus* 58 (December–February 2006), which presents her painting *Green and White* (1956) on the cover.

Herrera is the focus of *A Series of Conversations with Carmen Herrera*, a video directed by Carlos Motta, which includes interviews with Bechara, Julia Herzberg, and Sanín.

Herrera's creative life is captured in *Carmen Herrera: Five Degrees of Freedom*, an award-winning documentary directed by Konstantia Kontaxis, which is shown in film festivals in Rome and Naples in 2006.

Herrera's *Untitled* (1952) enters the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, a gift of Tony Bechara and Agnes Gund.

2006 Inspired by the recent positive reception of her work, and encouraged by Bechara, Herrera begins painting again after a ten-year hiatus. Without Loewenthal to stretch her canvases, she hires her first assistant, Manuel Belduma from Ecuador. Her first new work is titled *Aurora* (Dawn), prescient of the changes that lay ahead.

Herrera participates in *Abstraction: Presence of Cuban Painters in New York* at Latincollector [June 8–July 29]; *Geometric, Why Not?* at the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Florida [September 15–November 5]; and *The Sites of Latin American Abstraction* featuring selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection at CIFO Art Space in Miami [December 6–February 18, 2007]. Through 2011, versions of the latter exhibition will travel to museums in Long Beach, California; Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Bonn; and Zurich.



Blanco y Verde (1959) enters the collection of the Tate Modern, London, a gift of Ella Fontanals-Cisneros, presented by the American Fund for the Tate Gallery.

Herrera is awarded the Medalla de Excelencia Nacional Cubana by the Instituto de San Carlos in Key West, Florida.

2007 Herrera presents *Estructuras*, a solo show of her wooden structures, at Latincollector [November 17–January 19, 2008]. The show is reviewed in the *New Yorker*, *New York Press*, and *ArtNexus*.

Her work is included in *Referencing Alexander Calder: A Dialogue in Modern and Contemporary Art* at Eli Klein Fine Art [September 29–November 15], alongside pieces by Jean Arp (1886–1966), Amílcar de Castro (1920–2002), Fernand Léger (1881–1955), Joan Miró (1893–1983), and others.

Herrera's *Untitled* (1952) is exhibited in *New Perspectives in Latin American Art, 1930–2006: Selections from a Decade of Acquisitions* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York [November 21–February 25, 2008].

2008 Herrera participates in *Latin American and Caribbean Art: Selected Highlights from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art* at the New York State Museum in Albany [May 17–October 13].

Rondo (1965) is purchased by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, where it is exhibited alongside important geometric abstract works by Martha Boto (1925–2004), Julio Le Parc (born 1928), and Jesús Rafael Soto (1923–2005).

2009 Herrera is included in *The Line Is a Sign* at Frederico Sève Gallery in New York [May 19–July 18].

Herrera's first traveling retrospective, and first solo show in Europe, is held at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, England [July 29–September 13], and Museum Pfalzgalerie in Kaiserslautern, Germany [January 23–May 2, 2010]. The exhibition, curated by Nigel Prince, receives much critical praise, including a glowing review in the *Guardian* by Laura Cumming, who positions Herrera as "the discovery of the year—of the decade."

Herrera exhibits in *Geometric Abstract Works: The Latin American Vision from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s* at Henrique Faria Fine Art in New York [October 16–November 24]; and *Abstractomicina* at Cremata Fine Art Gallery in Miami [November 30–January 20, 2010].

2010 Herrera wins a Visual Artist Lifetime Achievement Award from the CINTAS Foundation.

Herrera participates in *Geometric Illusion* at Frederico Sève Gallery [March 25–April 17], and presents a solo show of recent works there [April 29–June 26].

Herrera's *Untitled* (1971), from her series *Estructuras*, and three related works on paper from 1966 are purchased by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Herrera is included in *Then and Now: Abstraction in Latin American Art from 1950 to Present* at Deutsche Bank's 60 Wall Gallery [May 24–September 3] and *Grass Grows by Itself* at Marlborough Chelsea [July 15–September 9], both in New York.



212

Herrera's first exhibition in Asia, at the Today Art Museum in Beijing [September 18–October 24], presents seven paintings, including three related pieces titled *Pasado* (Past), *Presente* (Present), and *Futuro* (Future), all of which leave large areas of the canvas exposed, a compositional element she had not used since the late 1940s.

Herrera is celebrated as a pioneer of abstract art in Cuba in *La Otra Realidad. Una Historia del Arte Abstracto Cubano*, a group show held at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana [October 20–January 23, 2011].

Nicholas Logsdail invites Herrera to be represented by Lisson Gallery in London. Her first show there is held in conjunction with Peter Joseph (born 1929) [November 23–January 29, 2011].

2011 Herrera is one of 115 artists included in the book *Vitamin P2*, published by Phaidon, which aims to introduce a “new wave of painters to the world.”

She is included in *Cold America: Geometric Abstraction in Latin America (1934–1973)* at the Fundación Juan March in Madrid [February 11–May 15]; and *New Visions: A Selection of the Latest Acquisitions from the IDB Art Collection, 2008–2011*, held at the IDB Cultural Center Gallery of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC [November 7–February 3, 2012].

The Smithsonian American Art Museum acquires *Blanco y Verde* (1960) through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment.

2012 Cuban American fashion designer Narciso Rodriguez pays homage to Herrera's work in his 2012 Resort Collection. Although it is not a direct collaboration, Herrera is pleased to be the inspiration for Rodriguez's boldly colored graphic motifs and the structurally shaped garments.

A solo show of Herrera's work is presented at Lisson Gallery in London [February 1–March 3].

She is awarded the Amelia Peláez Lifetime Achievement Award by the Cuban Cultural Center of New York.

Herrera participates in *Minimum/Maximum* at the Museum of Art + Design at Miami Dade College [January 25–May 4]; *Art in Society: The Power of Culture* at the IDB Cultural Center Gallery of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC [August 1–September 28]; and *The Geometric Unconscious: A Century of Abstraction* at the Sheldon Museum of Art in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln [October 5–January 20, 2013].

2013 A solo show, *Carmen Herrera: Works on Paper 2010–2012*, is held at Lisson Gallery in Milan [January 25–March 15].

British artist and author David Batchelor interviews Herrera for *Frieze* magazine. Batchelor states that Herrera “has the relaxed dignity that comes from a lifetime's work and the understanding that she has absolutely nothing left to prove.”

Herrera exhibits *Sunset* (2011) in *Order, Chaos, and the Space Between: Contemporary Latin American Art from the Diane and Bruce Halle Collection* at the Phoenix Art Museum [February 6–May 5]; *Edge, Order, Rupture* at Galerie Lelong in New York [April 4–May 4]; and *Blanco y Verde* (1960) is included in *Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC [October 25–March 2, 2014].

2014 Herrera's *Blanco y Verde* (1959) is purchased by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

The Museum of Fine Arts Boston acquires *Blanco y Verde* (1962) with funds donated by Barbara L. and Theodore B. Alford through The Heritage Fund for a Diverse Collection. The work is exhibited in the Sandra B. and William H. Lane Galleries devoted to abstraction.



FIG. 27
Installation view of *Negotiations: The Second Today's Documents 2010*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, 2010

FIG. 28
Installation view of Herrera's *Blanco y Verde* (1959) in the exhibition *America Is Hard to See*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2015

Herrera is included in *Impact and Legacy: 50 Years of the CINTAS Foundation* at the Museum of Art + Design at Miami Dade College [April 25–July 12].

Herrera's collaboration with Spanish jewelry designer Chus Burés is presented in *Chus Burés: un dialogue entre l'Art et le Design* at Galerie Marlborough in Monaco [March 20–May 7].

Herrera participates in *A Private View präsentiert: Die Rocca-Stiftung* at Autocenter Contemporary Art in Berlin [June 7–June 21].

A portrait of Herrera is included in *Cuba Out of Cuba: Through the Lens of Alexis Rodriguez-Duarte* at the Museum of Art + Design at Miami Dade College. The exhibition presents photographs of culturally prominent Cubans such as the singer Celia Cruz, the musicians Bebo Valdés and Paquito d'Rivera, artist Cundo Bermúdez, fashion designers Isabel Toledo and Narciso Rodriguez, and playwright Nilo Cruz [September 19–August 30].

Herrera is included in *Liberated Subjects: Pioneers* at the Foundation De 11 Lijnen in Oudenburg, Belgium [October 12–January 24, 2015].

Herrera's *Untitled* (1971) is exhibited in *Art at the Center: 75 Years of Walker Collections*, celebrating the Walker's seventy-fifth anniversary, where it is installed in the company of works by Donald Judd (1928–1994), Ellsworth Kelly, Bridget Riley (born 1931), and Frank Stella (born 1936) [October 16, 2014–December 31, 2016].

2015 Alison Klayman's short documentary about Herrera, *The 100 Years Show*, is released. The film travels the festival circuit, including screenings in Toronto, Tel Aviv, Austin, New York, and Havana, winning an award for best documentary short at the Heartland Film Festival in Indianapolis.

Blanco y Verde (1959) is on view in *America Is Hard to See*, the inaugural exhibition at the new building of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, designed by architect Renzo Piano [May 1–September 27].

Surrounded by friends and family, Herrera enjoys a luncheon and chamber concert organized by Bechara and the Lisson Gallery to celebrate her 100th birthday.

She participates in *Artists for Ikon* at Ikon Gallery [April 24–May 4]; *The Architectural Impulse* at Cristin Tierney Gallery [July 9–August 14]; and *Map of the New Art* at Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, Italy [September 1–November 1].

2016 The College Art Association (CAA) grants Herrera the Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement.

She is included in *The Illusive Eye* at El Museo del Barrio [February 3–March 21]; and *Phoenix Rising: The Valley Collects* at the Phoenix Art Museum [April 16–May 29].

Lisson Gallery inaugurates its first permanent space in New York with a solo exhibition of recent works by Herrera [May 3–June 11].

Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight is presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York [September 16–January 2, 2017].

Herrera continues to draw and paint at her home on East Nineteenth Street.