

SUMMARY 2017: The Heritage We Must Preserve

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Several national monuments and expressions were recognized in 2017. CubaSi provides a summary of the restoration, conservation, and promotion efforts of the Cuban heritage this year.

The funeral monuments of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, Mariana Grajales, Jose Marti, and Fidel Castro, four paramount leaders of the Cuban history and its Revolution, are close to each other in the same circuit of the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery in Santiago de Cuba. The most sacred place of the Homeland, as Santiago's citizens use to say, was subject of a broad restoration effort whose climax was reached after the removal of the remains of the Father of the Cuban Nation and the Mother of the Maceos to their new location; same circuit where the remains of our National Hero and the Cuban Revolution leader lie. On October 10, in a formal ceremony, the Cuban president Raul Castro and the secretary of the FMC (Federation of Cuban Women) placed the urns in the respective monuments.

The **Cuban Punto**, expression of our cultural identity, is part of the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from 2017 on. The Intergovernmental Commission of this International Organization highlighted in Seoul the contributions of this art manifestation to the promotion of cultural diversity and

inter-cultural dialogue. The Cuban delegation who attended this meeting in November, pointed out that the formation and consolidation of our nationality are better conveyed through the **Cuban Punto**. This musical expression is an essential element of the Cuban intangible cultural heritage, open to all, which promotes dialogue and expresses feelings, knowledge, and values of the communities performing it. One month earlier, the Cuban Eastern Organ (and all its wisdom, techniques, and traditional usage) was declared Cuba's Cultural Heritage.

In November, the regional meeting organized by the National Cultural Heritage Council and the National Commission of Monuments was held in Havana. The goal was to implement a new draft publication concerning railway architecture in Latin America. It was a great way to celebrate the 180th anniversary of railway in Cuba.

The Havana's Christ Redeemer, one of the city symbols and the most important work of Cuban sculptress Jilma Madera, was declared National Monument. To grant such recognition, the authorities of the National Commission of Monuments had into account its exceptional artistic values and the symbolism of the statue in the bay landscape as well as the high popularity among citizens.

Early in the year, architect Isabel Rigol Savio was awarded with the National Cultural Heritage Award for lifetime work. The jury assessed her merits as well as her professional career for more than 40 years for the benefits of the national and world heritage.

Simultaneously, National Awards and Mentions for Conservation and Restoration of Monuments were granted to some sites and buildings: Benny More Novel Arts Cultural Center; the private house in 33 Street No. 5201 b/ 52 and 54 Streets, in Cienfuegos; the Birthplace of Abel Santamaria Cuadrado; La Marqueta Square in Holguin; the House of Fidel in La Plata; the House of family O'Farril, current Municipal Museum in Madruga.

Days of festivities were held around the country on April 18 —International Day of Monuments and Sites—; May 18 —International Day of Museums—, and November 16 —International Day of World Heritage.

The Havana City Historian's Office and his Master Plan undertook works of restoration and beautification of monuments, buildings, and public spaces in the city. The city was also given a precious gift: the identical replica of the mounted statue of Jose Marti in Central Park in New York. The monument was placed in front of the Museum of the Revolution and will be officially inaugurated in 2018.

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