



The Sabbatical took place over the Spring semester 2020, officially starting in January and ending in May.

## The original plan:

- Cuba, January – February  
La Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Pedro Pulido, images and contacts for future university 392 proposal, laying the groundwork, site visits, etc.
- Cate School, Carpinteria CA, February/March  
Give a lecture and workshop (2 days) on the creative aspects of laser cutting and fabrication, software and technique. Exhibition of finished work. Some funding available through Cate School. Letter of invitation available upon request.
- Baja Mexico, Malarrimo beach marine debris March/April  
Visit Malarrimo to collect marine debris for sculpture, photo and video document flotsam and jetsam for exhibit/presentation at the California Islands Symposium in November of 2020, in Ventura. Letter of invitation available on request.
- Whitman College, March/April  
Exhibit and lecture to the art program in Walla Walla. Visit Jansen Hardwoods for sculpture materials, and Stubbelfields as well. Some limited funding available. Letter of invitation available on request.
- Zion National Park, April/May  
Visit Zion National Park, research artist residency and photograph stone canyons for a body of work in progress.
- Anderson Ranch Art Center, May/June, Snowmass village Colorado  
Attend Anderson Ranch and work in the studios on developing some new skills in 3-dimensional fabrication that will be applied to my classroom practices in the Fall.

This plan was compiled almost a year ahead of time, in 2019 in order to comply with the sabbatical application process and funding cycle, which is always at least a year prior to the funded timeframe.

## Cuba, January-February, 2020

- Visited several art and culture museums in Havana, laying a groundwork for a future University 392 course
  - Visited local galleries
  - [The National Art Museum](#)
  - The National Museum of Fine Arts
  - [Fabrica Del Arte Cubano](#)
- Visited international Cuban artist [Esterio Segura Mora](#) in his studio/home and talked about the possibility of exchange and exhibition.

Due to the USA government administration at the time of both the application and funding, it was never certain that a trip to Cuba would work out, but it did, thankfully.

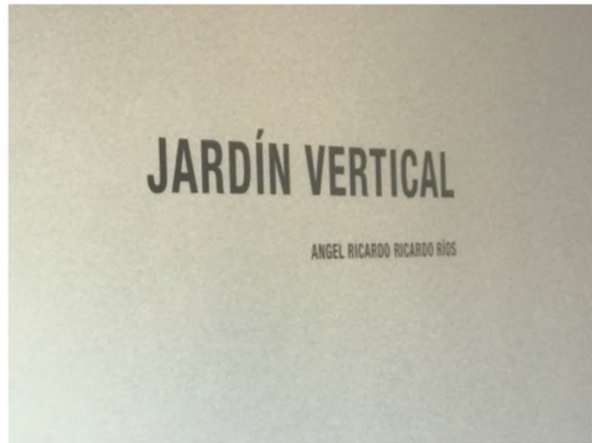
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1brica\\_de\\_Arte\\_Cubano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1brica_de_Arte_Cubano)

## Esterio's Studio, Havana



Esterio was a wonderful host for the afternoon I was able to visit with him. A small group (3 plus a guide) of private US art collectors came through while I was at this studio, it was great to watch the interaction of Esterio and the collector. The collector was a private US businessman, traveling with his partner and his attorney on a year long trip to celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The art collector was someone that I had met before in LA, many years ago. The businessman had hired her to help guide his birthday present art buying spree. I spoke with Esterio about coming to visit the university and gallery the next time he was in Los Angeles. We talked about having students come through and tour his studio if/when I brought a group back to Cuba, he was very receptive.

## Galeria De Arte Servando Angel Ricardo Ricardo Rios



This was a great exhibition right around the corner from my apartment. The gallery had a great stable of artists who all had work represented in the back rooms, as well as catalogs. The woman I met and talked with was very knowledgeable and welcoming. I made plans to correspond and possibly set up some kind of trade between her Cuban artists, and the artists at my gallery in Ventura.



## Street art, Murals Havana Cuba



Cuba is full of street art, sculptures, murals and graffiti art. Some of which is state sanctioned, but a lot of which is not. On almost every corner or building you can find some creative outlet for the populous. Taking a group of students on a street art tour would be amazing, along with the street food, think Anthony Bourdain meets Shepard Fairey.

## Artisans, functional and decorative studios, Havana Cuba



Old Town is full of ateliers and studios for both decorative and fine arts. I made contact with several contemporary artists while I was in Havana, and was able to easily convince them to open up their studios to me and my students if I were to bring a class down to Cuba.

## Fábrica de Arte Cubano

(known locally as La Fábrica de Arte or F.A.C) is an art gallery and club in Havana, Cuba. The Fábrica's gallery and stage were established inside of a former cooking oil factory, and has since gained notoriety as one of Havana's premier nightclubs and art galas. Several news outlets have described the factory as a symbol of Cuba's accelerating opening to the world.



A unique and amazing place if ever there was one. FAC is a combination performance space, museum, gallery, food court, bar and nightclub. It has multiple labyrinthian rooms and corridors that host all manner of creative endeavors, simultaneously. Its like a creative carnival crashed in to an art fair, and that isn't even close. There is often a line around the neighborhood to get in, and unless you are there or have a special pass, many people don't get in.

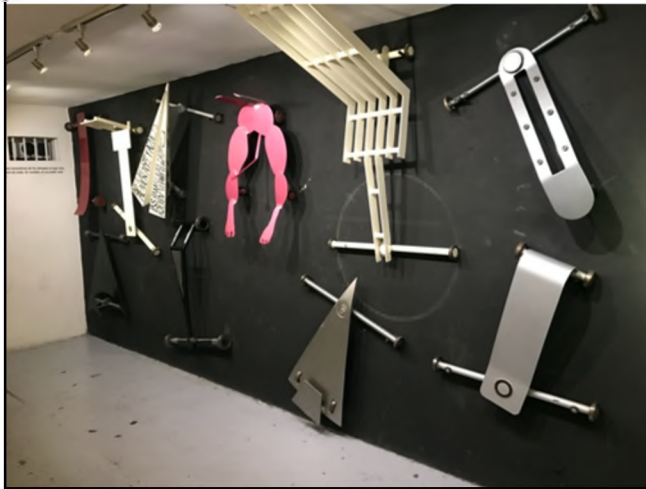


## F.A.C. Installations

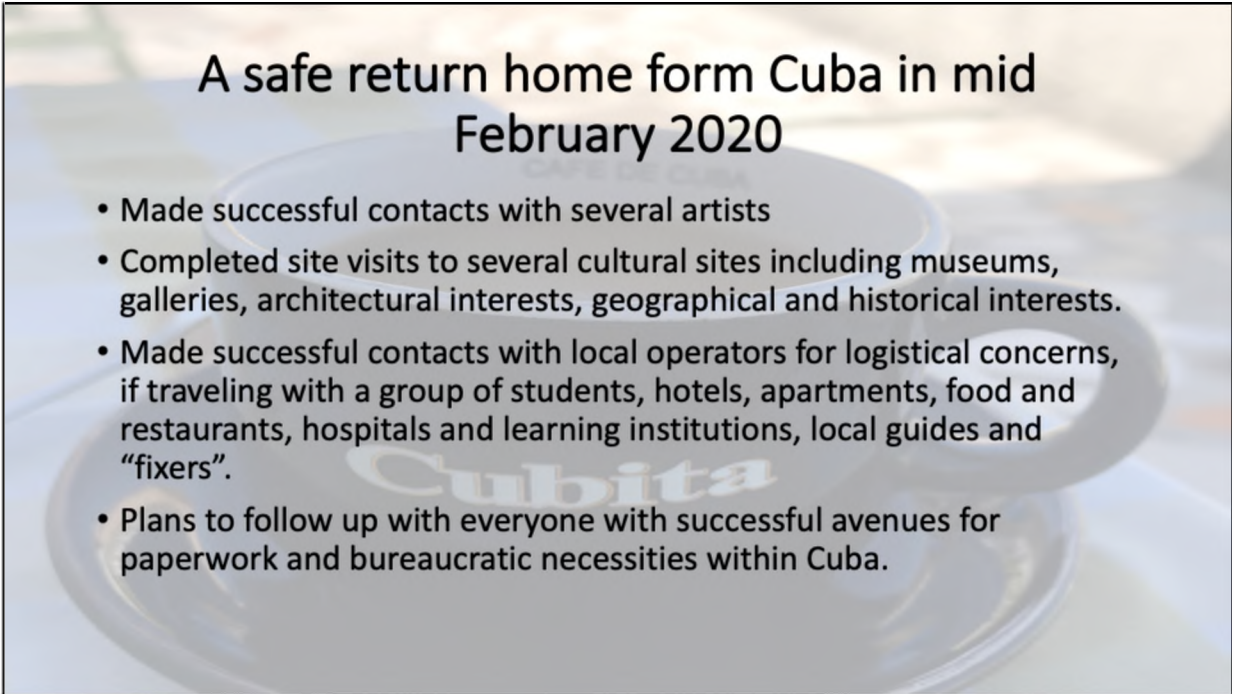


The island of Cuba recreated in an installation of keys, FAC.

## F.A.C. artwork



More amazing artwork in FAC from Cuban artists, the sculptures on the left represent homemade soap box racers, scooters, and skateboards that were home made because no commercial items like that were available in Cuba while the artist was growing up.



## A safe return home from Cuba in mid February 2020

- Made successful contacts with several artists
- Completed site visits to several cultural sites including museums, galleries, architectural interests, geographical and historical interests.
- Made successful contacts with local operators for logistical concerns, if traveling with a group of students, hotels, apartments, food and restaurants, hospitals and learning institutions, local guides and “fixers”.
- Plans to follow up with everyone with successful avenues for paperwork and bureaucratic necessities within Cuba.

Heading home after a great visit, many new friends and contacts made.

## Next, off to Malarrimo, Baja California for Marine Debris in early March

- My visit to the very remote stretch of beach on the Vizcaino Peninsula on Baja's Pacific coast was successful. The beach acts a scoop for the Pacific Ocean currents and collects our trash, and everything else that is in the ocean, on its shores. This is a place I visited in the mid 1980's as a curious beachcomber and have wanted to revisit for a long time, especially now that I am actively involved in the Marine Debris Project with NOAA and CSUCI. I am involved in the creation of artwork and educational and informational creations from the trash washed up and collected. I use the marine debris in my classes and certain bodies of my own artwork. While camping at Malarrimo, I was able to collect, photograph, video and sketch for my work, as well as take drone footage of the beach and dunes.

Off on the next leg of the sabbatical adventure.



Malarrimo Beach, marked on the map \*, the cafe in the picture is located in Guerrero Negro, the closest occupied town, more than a days hard and unmarked drive away from the beach.



Guerrero Negro is close to Malarrimo as the seagull flies, only about 25 miles or less. The issue is that by car overland there is a huge natural bay, Ojo de Libre Lagoon (Scammon's Lagoon to some) that must be traveled around.



Malarrimo Images, The trek out the "road" a washed out dry riverbed, or vado. There are no signs or markers for the road. Much research, a good GPS and old maps of the Vizcaino Peninsula were required for the journey, as well as memory form the last time I made the trek close to 35 years ago.



Amazing sunset in on the Vizcaíno, to the left, my dinner cooking below my crows nest on the overland rig on the right.

## Where the vado meets the sea, Malarrimo



Plenty of traces of human existence on the shore, but no footprints for miles. Much of the trash is plastic, very different for my last trip in the mid 1980's where it was glass, wood, metal etc.

## Various debris, including Space-X debris



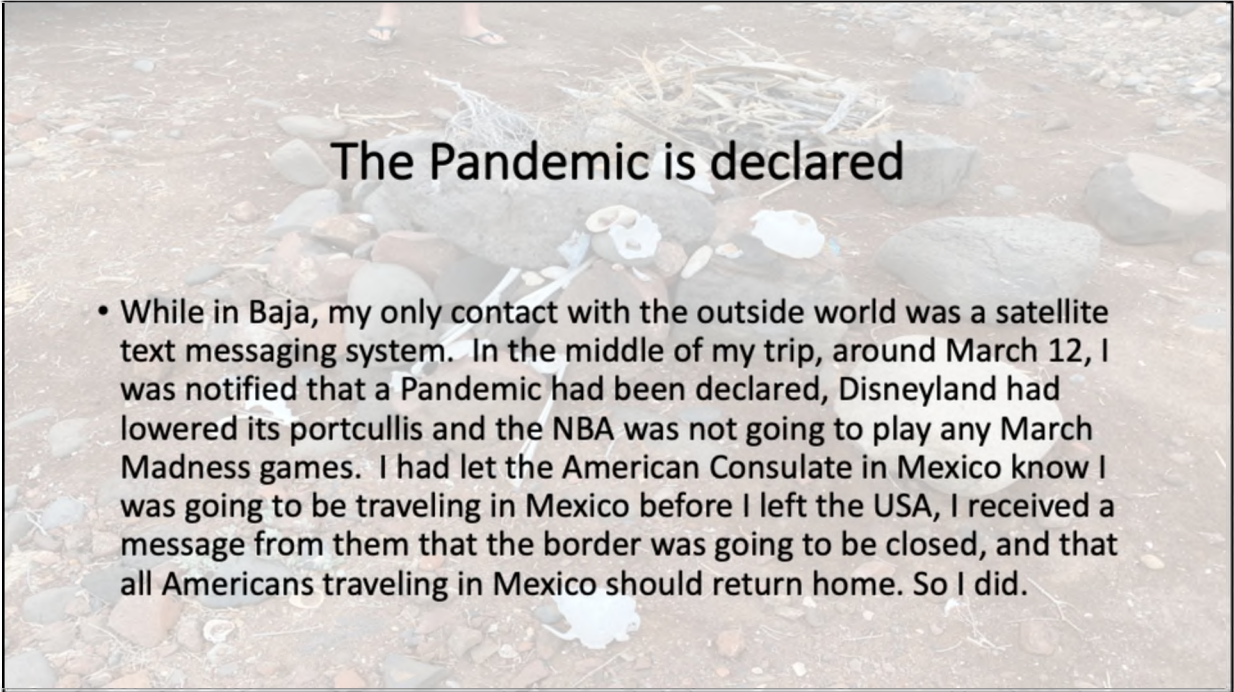
Yes, several chunks of military and space debris were washed up along the shores, lots of carbon fiber, honeycomb and HD foam constructions. A lot of fishing debris, nets rope and buoys as well.

“They mostly come at night, mostly...”



-Rebecca 'Newt' Jorden

Out exploring the central desert at night with a UV flashlight can reveal the unseen quite spectacularly. After leaving Malarrimo, we headed east across the main peninsula to the Sea of Cortez side, stopping and camping in the amazing Cardon Cactus (*Pachycereus Pringlei*) forest in the central part of the desert. Lots of amazing flora and fauna.



## The Pandemic is declared

- While in Baja, my only contact with the outside world was a satellite text messaging system. In the middle of my trip, around March 12, I was notified that a Pandemic had been declared, Disneyland had lowered its portcullis and the NBA was not going to play any March Madness games. I had let the American Consulate in Mexico know I was going to be traveling in Mexico before I left the USA, I received a message from them that the border was going to be closed, and that all Americans traveling in Mexico should return home. So I did.

A chance to extend the trip and fieldwork cut short.



## Return to the find out the state of the States

Upon my return, you all know the rest of the story, my sabbatical turned form my own research and creative activity to the following research and creative activities...

- Cancelling or having all the plans cancelled for the remainder of my sabbatical.
- Setting up home “offices” for my wife, who also teaches, and our 3 kids all of whom were in school at that time.
- Homeschooling my 15 year old daughter.
- Having my two college student sons return home to live and school form home.
- Start online training for the fall with THRIVE through CI, and other survival tools.
- Creating online text and video content for my classes, developing my Canvas course content.
- Wearing a mask, quarantining, social distancing, and the rest...

This is something we all had to deal with in our own ways.

## What was accomplished, and Not...

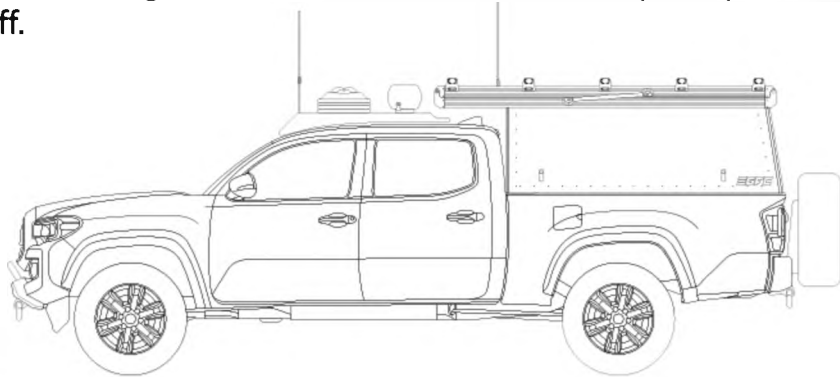
- Cuba, January – February  
La Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Pedro Pulido, images and contacts for future university 392 proposal, laying the groundwork, site visits, etc. **While successful in the trip and contacts, everything else is on Hold until further notice**
- Baja Mexico, Malarrimo beach marine debris March/April  
Visit Malarrimo to collect marine debris for sculpture, photo and video document flotsam and jetsam for exhibit/presentation at the California Islands Symposium in November of 2020, in Ventura. Letter of invitation available on request. **I was able to gather important information and materials, but a second planned trip will not happen any time soon, and the work is currently on the back burner due to current work obligations.**
- Cate School, Carpinteria CA, February/March  
Give a lecture and workshop (2 days) on the creative aspects of Laser cutting and fabrication, software and technique. Exhibition of finished work. Some funding available through Cate School. Letter of invitation available upon request. **This was completed successfully, although on line through Zoom, and much later than originally planned. I have documentation available on request.**
- ~~Whitman College, March/April  
Exhibit and lecture to the art program in Walla Walla. Visit Jansen Hardwoods for sculpture materials, and Stubbelfields as well. Some limited funding available. Letter of invitation available on request.~~
- ~~Zion National Park, April/May  
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- ~~Anderson Ranch Art Center, May/June, Snowmass village Colorado  
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I feel lucky I that at least got a start to what I wanted to do, I still want to complete the work that I started.

## Backburner, for now

So, everything has been put aside as the focus has been on much more pressing and immediate needs. I hope that I will, at some point in the near future, feel rested enough and be able to find the time to pick up where things left off.

Thank you,  
Matt Furmanski  
Professor of Art  
CSUCI



Until next time.