



The Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC in its Spanish acronym) was founded on August 22, 1961 and is legally domiciled at calle 17 No. 351 entre H y G, Vedado, Havana, Cuba. It is a non-governmental social, cultural and professional organization having consultant status on the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1998, with its own juridical personality and full legal capacity for cultural and artistic purposes. The organization gathers together Cuban writers and artists (and on rare occasions from other countries), voluntarily and following the principle of selectivity.

Among its aims, the organization represents the professional interests of its members so that they may pursue their social work; it also contributes to the forming of new artistic and literary values, strengthens the work of cultural activities in the community and defends and promotes the values of our culture and identity as based on the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba.

UNEAC is a national organization having significant presence in the country's provinces. It is made up of 5 National Associations: Writers, Audiovisual and Radio Media, Visual Artists, Music and Theatre. At the present time it has a membership of 9,455 writers and artists; of these, 2,985 are women, representing 31.5% of the total.

- **The Participation of Women in the Communication Media**

The Association of Audiovisual and Radio Media includes the following sections: editors, music programmers and sound engineers, cameramen and women, lighting designers and directors of photography, makeup artists, hairdressers and stage designers, animation and cartoon artists, writers, consultants and television, film and radio directors and broadcasters. Out of a total of 2,046 members, there are 691 women active in this association, representing 33.7%.

Throughout the years it has been in existence, UNEAC has been characterized as an organization where discussion and thinking work hand in hand with the most transcendental ideas associated with the search for social justice. As an organization bringing together writers, artists and intellectuals from Cuba's cultural sphere, UNEAC is consistently vigilant for any manifestation of sexism that may appear in artistic work.

- One example which began several years ago is the “**Huron Azul**” **information program** broadcast from UNEAC and created by the producer Lizette Vila. This program has dedicated various segments to subjects covering representations of gender in the arts and culture, access for female directors in film-making, women in the visual arts and the treatment of female eroticism in art.
- The creation of a segment for monthly discussion about gender and culture is one of the initiatives promoted by UNEAC. This regular segment called ***Mirar desde la sospecha*** (Looking from the Point of View of Suspicion) was coordinated jointly with the Faculty of Audiovisual Communication Media Arts at the University of the Arts (ISA) and ran through 2011 and 2012. Each of its discussions was an invitation to dialogue and think about representations of gender in Cuban arts and culture.
- Exchanges have been carried out between artists and researchers in order to discuss subjects dealing with audiovisual creation, literature, history, music, TV programs, female producers and the treatment of gender-oriented subjects in children's programs, just to name a few. The proposals were always associated with gender-related problems including sexism in the representation of men and women, gender violence in cultural and artistic productions, treatment of sexual diversity, etc.

With such initiatives, the trend is set for provocative art and culture which is able to mobilize thinking and perceptions while contributing to creating an inclusive artistic canon. The possibility of conceiving these discussions has been proof of UNEAC's concern and commitment with these matters.

Thanks to the regularity with which these segments have been appearing, a discussion has been created with participating TV administrators and producers, starting with some television proposals that were generating questions about the treatment and representation of women. These encounters took place with specialists dedicated to the study of gender issues in the communication and audiovisual media in general.

It is also worthwhile to point to the role of women producers in the Cuban cinema. Movies were born silent, but also male. They became a venue for stories to be told and legitimated on the basis of stereotyped images and always from the point of view and conception of the dominant sex. Cuba was no exception.

From the beginnings of our institution, many women in film were working as production assistants, assistant directors, producers and scriptwriters. The most significant case is that of Sara Gómez (1943-1974) who, even though she started as an assistant director in feature films, also directed several documentaries during that period along with her first feature-length film *De cierta manera* (1974).

In the 1990s, other women also went into directing from a start in production, assistant direction and scriptwriting, such as Marina Ochoa who, in the 1970s, started as assistant director until taking over as full director of her documentaries in 1997.

Rebeca Chávez also starts as a film critic; in 1984 she begins to direct documentaries but she doesn't make her first feature-length film until 2009: *Ciudad en rojo*. Another important name in those years is Lizette Vila Espinosa who in the 1980s first worked as music programmer and music consultant; by the end of that decade she had gone on to direct her first documentaries.

Little by little, women are becoming more involved in the direction of documentaries, animated and fiction features.

- In 2010, within the framework of the Non-Violence Against Women Session, a colloquium was held at UNEAC national headquarters entitled ***Tiene que haber otro modo: Violencia y Contraviolencia de genero en las Artes*** (There has to be Another Way: Gender Violence and Counter-Violence in the Arts). This event was accompanied by a visual art exhibition on the subject.
- Talks have been given at UNEAC along with encounters dedicated to the subject of the representation of women in television productions and in advertising. Cuban scholars on the subject and specialists from all around the world have shared their views with anyone who has wanted to take part in these encounters.
- In November of 2011, space was given to *Gender Violence in Popular Cuban Music* and as a result of that an article by the critic and musicologist Joaquin Borges Triana was published in the press, producing the discussion about representing these subjects in video clips. Several discussions about sexism in Cuban video clips have taken place in opinion segments, attended by interested directors and creators.
- One of the most important results of these years of work was the workshop given for producers and artists in the province of Camagüey in November of 2012. The workshop entitled *Gender and Creation: the commitment of seeing* had great impact since their coordinators were there to talk about the subject of gender representations in art and culture and the need for commitment with these subjects so that television productions, and artistic productions in general, would assume a less sexist stance.

Thanks to the impact made by the workshop in the province, others are being prepared throughout the country in answer to a call made by UNEAC and the gender and culture group that works in the organization to seek gender equity and its representations in the communication media and in all artistic manifestations.

Official Translation

EQUIPO DE SERVICIOS DE TRADUCTORES E INTÉRPRETES