

# Handmade in Cuba

## *Rolando Estévez and the Beautiful Books of Ediciones Vigía*

Edited by Ruth Behar, Juanamaría Cordones-Cook, and Kristin Schwain

"A masterful integration of word and image that is a feast for the senses."—Richard Blanco, presidential inaugural poet and author of *How to Love a Country*

"*Handmade in Cuba* transmits the generosity of the Vigía project and Rolando Estévez's spirit through its contributors' critical desire to explore the strategies that make Vigía's books so appealing. It dissects the unique origins of these artist books and the experience of being up close to them, putting them into the context of the long and complex intellectual history of the city where they are made, Matanzas."—Jacqueline Loss, author of *Dreaming in Russian: The Cuban Soviet Imaginary*

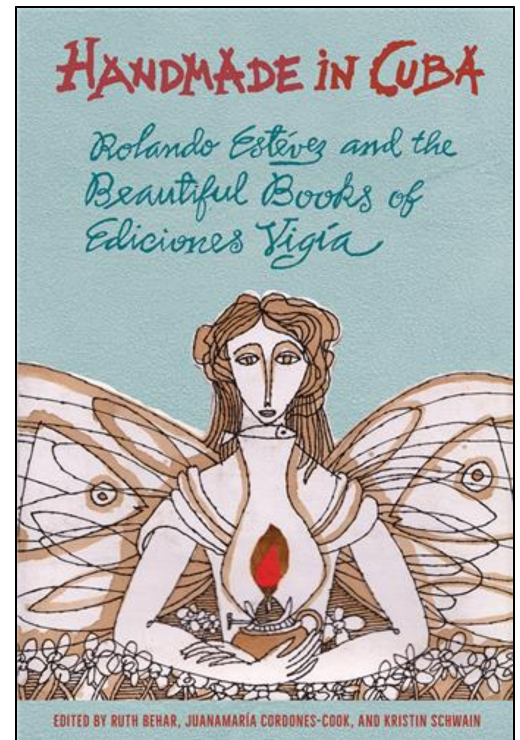
"A first-rate collection of stories, essays, and interviews that critically broach the accomplishments of Ediciones Vigía since its origins, underscoring its already prominent place in the Cuban cultural archive of the twenty-first century."—Raúl Rubio, author of *La Habana: cartografías culturales*

*Handmade in Cuba* is an in-depth examination of Ediciones Vigía, an artisanal press that published exquisite books crafted from everyday supplies during some of Cuba's most dire economic periods. Vividly illustrated, this volume shows how the publishing collective responded to the nation's changing historical and political situation from the margins of society, representing Cuban culture across the boundaries of race, age, gender, and genre.

In this volume, poets and scholars reflect on the unique artistic work of Rolando Estévez, who oversaw the creation of over 500 handmade books and magazines between 1985 and 2014. They highlight the beautiful designs and unusual materials selected, including fabric, metals, wood, feathers, and discarded items. Through diverse perspectives, including an interview with Estévez himself, the essays showcase the unlimited inventive possibilities of books as objects, as sculptural pieces, and as installations. Even in the age of digital technology, Estévez generated enormous excitement and admiration for these hand-crafted books, and this volume offers the first inside view of this important alternative publishing space.

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**Ruth Behar** is the Victor Haim Perera Collegiate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan and the recipient of MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships. Her many books include *An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba*, *Traveling Heavy: A Memoir in between Journeys*, and the award-winning *Lucky Broken Girl*. **Juanamaría Cordones-Cook** is the Curators' Distinguished Research Professor and the Catherine Paine Middlebush Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Missouri. An Emmy-nominated filmmaker, she is the author or editor of numerous award winning books, including Nancy Morejón's *Looking Within/Mirar adentro: Selected Poems/Poemas escogidos, 1954–2000*. **Kristin Schwain**, associate professor of art history at the University of Missouri, is the author of *Signs of Grace: Religion and American Art in the Gilded Age*.



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