Representing Their Young Selves: The Case of Cuba’s Cámara Chica Youth Audiovisual Program

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Since 1959, the Cuban state has invested in the celebrated Film Institute (ICAIC) supporting some of Latin America’s most acclaimed works in fictional film and documentary, including Memorias del subdesarrollo (1968) and Por primera vez (1967). The short documentary Por primera vez captures the country’s commitment to cinema, and the far-reaches of the ICAIC, as the film observes the experience of rural audiences watching a film for the first time. The endearing images and interviews show the rural community as innocent, simple, and passive.

Despite the success of the groundbreaking films like Por primera vez, researchers have revealed that focusing primarily on the state’s centralized Havana-based ICAIC Film Institute does not represent the vastness of Cuban filmmaking (Arcos, Diéguez, Farrell, García Borrero, and Stock). This article further expands the discussion of filmmaking beyond both the ICAIC and Havana by examining the children’s national film initiative Cámara Chica, which began in 2013. In particular, I focus on one specific, active and celebrated branch of the collective in La Conchita, Pinar del Río Province, in western Cuba. With an analysis of the role of Cámara Chica in La Conchita community, we see how these young filmmakers challenge the representation of Por primera vez’s passive rural audience members watching urban film, and even use their works for critical audiovisual journalism, as we see in their short film 7 y 50 (2015).

I show that the Cámara Chica initiative, while new, creates a dialogue with Cuba’s film past with both the Por primera vez documentary as the rural young children tell their own stories, and takes part in a dialogue with Julio García Espinosa’s Cuban film manifesto “Por un cine imperfecto” (1969). García Espinosa penned his manifesto, amidst a wave of nationwide revolutionary filmmaking in Cuba. He explores the objective of revolutionary transformation to reach political and cultural liberation in filmmaking, which in a near future would become a shared practice not limited to elite urban filmmakers but rather include audiences as filmmakers themselves. He argued that through cultural and political liberation both filmmakers and audiences would become equal workers and an effect of this transformation is imperfect cinema breaking with the commercial or what he refers to as colonized perfect works. Like many in his generation of Cuban revolutionary filmmaking, García Espinosa recognizes the power of low-budget filmmaking that reflects local realities rather than distant idealized cinematic escapes. Despite his 1969 manifesto, the most visible examples of Cuban state filmmaking have remained in the hands of formally trained Havana-based male urban film specialists, with some key exceptions. I explore how the Cámara Chica initiative, with inexpensive

The author thanks the American Philosophical Society Franklin Research Grant and the Fairfield University Humanities Institute for funding support for the article’s research.

1 For more information about the foundation of the ICAIC see Michael Channan.

2 For more on beyond-Havana filmmaking see Stock.
digital technology, reveals another chapter of the proposed transformation with audiences capturing local realities rather than high budget urban narratives.

Finally, I explore how Cámara Chica is represented by others in Daniel Muñoz’s making-of documentary Tras la lente de la Cámara Chica (2016) respecting the young filmmakers’ agency in the creative process. I conclude that Cámara Chica’ and Muñoz’s works highlight the interconnected web between state institutions, national funding for local initiatives, film schools, and rural organizations, which embody Cuban contemporary audiovisual realities as well as create a dialogue with Cuba’s film past in the contemporary Cuban audiovisual landscape.

Reversing Por primera vez and Breaking with Havana-centrismo

In her analysis of Octavio Cortázar’s film Por primera vez (1967), Stock examines how, while a beautiful documentary through an urban Havana gaze depicting the rural community, “[campesinos] are relegated to the position of passive consumers of images produced by their more informed counterparts in the metropolis.” (Stock 84).

With images of smiling and giggling children as they watch Chaplin in the film Modern Times (1936) in awe, an off-camera voice interviews the community members remarking about their experiences seeing a film for the first time.

The ICAIC-created film is a visual masterpiece observing distant communities in relationship with cinema. Por primera vez documents a crucial project in Cuban film history, known as the Cine Móvil ICAC³, which brought cinema to rural audiences. However in the film the rural communities are portrayed as childish and innocent, even in the interviews with community adults. The rural community remains in the role of passive audiences for urban films, and objects for an urban gaze in Havana theaters. Additionally, the rural audiences watch films selected by the urban film crew, as the main film programming decisions are made in Havana. Havana is also the primary

location for exhibition spaces for viewing, premieres, and festivals, which have remained rooted in the cinemas located in Havana’s middle to upper middle class neighborhoods with few exceptions to this tradition.

Two years following *Por primera vez*, in 1969, in a wave of revolutionary filmmaking in Cuba and manifestos throughout Latin America, film director Julio García Espinosa penned his key manifesto of New Latin American Cinema, which reflect on the film landscape in Cuba and propose a future ideal for filmmakers to eventually assume the role of workers rather than elite artists. In this future transition to liberation, García Espinosa explains that the audiences would also become workers, capable of making their own films. His manifesto emphasized that filmmakers create works that show the imperfect realities of local filmmaking, and that liberated film would have inherent imperfections to reflect the revolutionary process. This ideal of working within the means and budgets of Cuban filmmaking, to create films despite financial devastation and a lack of resources is something that the ICAIC has achieved for over five decades. However in his manifesto García Espinosa proposes another ideal for film: to challenge the subject-object relationship asking “¿Pero qué hacer para que el público deje de ser objeto y se convierta en sujeto?” García Espinosa proposed this change of relationship so that audiences would eventually become filmmakers themselves, which he explains as a goal for filmmaking: to refrain from being something practiced by a privileged few (2). He explains that the future objective of imperfect cinema is to create opportunities for everyone to participate in the filmmaking process, which, from his perspective, is both a question of social justice and embodies the true meaning of revolutionary and liberated artistic activity.

For five decades, with few exceptions, the participatory challenge to further democratize filmmaking still lingers due to years of limited film stock, shrunken budgets, and centralized institutions. Since *Por primera vez* in 1967 Havana-based professionally trained film teams often have represented other parts of the country through an urban lens. Havana has also regularly served as a synecdoche of the country, and remained the primary space for film exhibition, festivals, and criticism for decades. Camaguey–based Cuban film critic García Borrero refers to the omnipresence of Havana, Havana-based institutions, festivals, showcases, or the Havana-urban gaze on the country as a practice of “Habana-centrismo” of Cuban film. He discusses this concept with close readings of films, as well as in the film programming, festivals, premieres, and showcases that often take place only in Havana—which cultural activists such as García Borrero have actively worked to challenge creating more spaces and events throughout the country. Through the critical work of Arcos, Diéguez, García Borrero and Stock, “Habana-centrismo” has received much attention in contemporary Cuban film criticism in efforts to recognize decades of overlooked audiovisual production beyond Havana. These film critics have also negotiated for other spaces, showcases, and festivals to take place beyond the nation’s capital city, and the availability of inexpensive digital technology has been a key tool in the de-centering process.

Contributing to the beyond-Havana and or beyond-ICAIC gaze, since 2000, film production has increased exponentially in Cuba to include a generation of young artists between the ages of 21-35 using digital technology. These young artists, known as

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4 For more information about New Latin American Cinema, see Zuzanna Pick.
nuevos realizadores, with inexpensive digital equipment often times produce critical, challenging and reaffirming works that question, celebrate, and confront the world in which they live. Many from this loosely connected generation of nuevos realizadores, produce their works in conjunction with their studies in the burgeoning film schools in Cuba including the Havana-based International School of Film and Television (EICTV), as well as the Havana-based Instituto Superior de Artes (ISA), and the rural Sierra Maestra-based Televisión Serrana.\(^5\) Key voices in the Cuban audiovisual landscape have also noted the role of the national film schools in diversifying who is telling Cuban stories, challenging the centrality of the ICAIC, and the focus on Havana (Arcos, Diéguez, García Borrero, and Stock). However, while Cuban film schools such as ISA have played a significant role in the current boom in emerging young voices and digital production, each of these institutional actors and filmmakers are still somewhat attached financially, borrowing from, or helping someone loosely connected to the state, rather than completely independent of it (Stock). For example, one of the continued attachments to the ICAIC and Havana, is the annual film showcase dedicated to this generation of young filmmakers. Many of these films produced by the film-school-age nuevos realizadores are shown at the annual Muestra joven ICAIC film showcase each spring in the middle class neighborhood of Vedado in Havana bringing together 20-35 year olds from across the country to share and debate audiovisual works.

Further adding to the role of the film students in challenging the Havana-centric cultural production, a key aspect of the Instituto Superior de Artes (ISA) curriculum, as well as that of the EICTV film education program, is the mandatory rural study period, which all students take part in for a minimum of two weeks. During the rural study period for the ISA Master program, ISA student Daniel Muñoz created a short documentary Tras la lente de la Cámara Chica (2016) to capture the story of the Cámara Chica program in one community in La Conchita in the Pinar del Río province. Through his documentary, Muñoz offers a behind the scenes look at the rural collective’s filmmaking process in action that moves beyond “Habana-centrismo”, and recognizes the young Cámara Chica filmmakers as subjects rather than objects of study.

Cámara Chica: La Conchita

While the works of Cámara Chica appear to represent Cuban rural realities distant from the Cuban capital, this is not an independent community audiovisual collective far from national initiatives. As Stock argues, Cuban initiatives do not work independently instead they are often part of a web of interconnected financial or training support (15). This web of connectivity rings true with the case of Cámara Chica. It was first established with funding from the British Council in collaboration with the Cuban Ministry of Culture, and ISA film school specifically its Department of Audiovisual and Cinematic Arts (FAMCA). The 2013 Cámara Chica pilot program began with the objective, according to one of its founding community adult mentors, Juan Carlos Baños Fernández, “to empower children with the necessary tools to approach the audiovisual world” (Baños Fernández 1). The pilot program’s six locations of Cámara Chica were

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\(^5\) For research on the nuevos realizadores see Diéguez, Farrell, and Stock.
located in Pinar del Rio, Havana, Santa Clara, Ciego de Ávila, Granma, and Guantánamo. The original 2013 initiative combined funding not only from the British Council but also from the British NGO First Light to make movies providing a laptop for editing, a simple film camera, and two days of training by British specialists. While starting with seed money through the British Counsel in 2013, the program was also initially launched with the training support from ISA.

The various branches of Cámara Chica throughout Cuba have continued the founding work of involving young people in the filmmaking process, and have responded to interests and needs of their local communities to reflect on the stories, histories, and icons of their immediate realities. Despite their audiovisual success in festivals, founder Juan Carlos Baños Fernández points to the organization as an opportunity for the students to think of life beyond La Conchita, to prepare for college, to meet peers from different communities beyond the western provinces, and to connect with students from other countries through their video postcard program. The various Cámara Chica groups throughout the country meet once per year for an annual competition in Havana to show their films, receive feedback, and compete in a filmmaking competition. Additionally the groups meet frequently for various regional competitions and meetings.

One of the original and active branches from 2013 of Cámara Chica that has gained momentum and grown to 2018 is based in the small rural town of La Conchita outside of Pinar del Rio in western Cuba. La Conchita’s work in Cámara Chica is of interest as they build on a highly organized and supportive community in the town which includes the pre-existing Chapuserios, a community dance, theater, and craft group. Chapuserios was founded in 2008 by town artisan Geovani “Pipo” Jiménez Izquierdo. This community level of organization and involvement of young people provided an environment for the Cámara Chica project to thrive, which was led by both Pipo and the audiovisual town resident and specialist Juan Carlos Baños Fernández.

Since the Cámara Chica program started in 2013, their films are products of a commitment to weekly meetings to work on the filmmaking process. Rotating the roles of director, producer, editor, and cameraperson, among others, each 7-18 year old member learns the components of filmmaking while also practicing the teamwork necessary to create artistic works. While this is an amateur audiovisual project, their films reveal key issues surrounding the young people’s local community while also challenge years of Havana-based stories. These young filmmakers are able to touch on topics that could be problematic or controversial, especially in their short film 7 y 50 (2015). Consequently, Cámara Chica has served as a launching pad for the young people to learn from and reflect on local stories, and to make their community stories heard on their own terms.

**Inside the Camara Chica documentary: 7 y 50 (2015)**

In Cámara Chica’s twenty-four minute award-winning documentary called 7 y 50, the young people collect local histories about the origins of their small town. The documentary begins with a traditional local history format with an off-camera young girl’s narrating voice. As the camera shows a collage of archival material including newspaper clippings, photographs, and maps, the young female narrator tells the local history of the town’s founding. The narrator begins to weave the town’s past with the creation of the La
Conchita fruit factory in 1944, when the cannery was inaugurated giving the town its name and economic lifeline. The factory was founded by the “two sons of the magnate Pío Ferro, one of whom later became a senator of the Republic. During a new postwar era of mass consumption influenced by North American market culture, the factory turned Cuba’s agricultural products into easily consumed commodities for middle-class households” (Fernandes The Nation). Within the first two minutes of the documentary, there is a clip of a radio announcement explaining that “La Conchita es de las industrias más antiguas de Cuba,” as the camera shows the happenings of the town in the early morning with children heading to school in their Cuban uniforms, to others waiting for the bus to go to work.

The documentary reveals how the town of La Conchita starts moving at 7:50 AM. 7:50 AM is when the factory whistle sounds marking the beginning of the day in the town of La Conchita which alludes to the title of the documentary by the same name 7 y 50. With the 7 y 50 title we see that the factory’s sounding whistle reinforces that La Conchita factory not only happens to be in the town, but rather is the center of it, the cannery naming the town and simultaneously giving life to the community each morning. The narrator collects short testimonies from towns’ people about how the factory’s sounding whistle at 7:50 AM continues to shape daily life serving as a form of a beloved icon and town clock.

Next, the young narrator connects the history of the cannery with that of Cuba as it was originally owned by a single wealthy family prior to the Revolution. Similar to many private businesses in Cuba, on October 14, 1960, the factory was nationalized with the Revolution. The camera rests on faces of retired workers as they share their stories and the pride that they continue to have for the factory whose history parallels that of the Revolution. The young narrator’s voice explains that, similar to many aspects of life in Cuba, the US Embargo affects the fruit cannery, resulting in a lack of spare parts to fix the antiquated machinery in the factory. This aligning of Cuban Revolutionary history and the Embargo with the cannery and community’s reality begins to reveal the conflict of this seemingly straightforward local history film.
As the camera pans over aging factory machinery, the young off-camera narrator explains a need for replacement parts, which is a challenge due to the Embargo. The camera switches from the general history of the town and the outside of the factory building, to zoom in on the inner workings of the factory. The camera cuts to an interview with the Engineer Demaris Gallardo Martínez who explains “La Fábrica abre directamente al río y por esta razón tiene un estricto control y seguimiento desde el año 95 hasta el 2012” which highlights the documentary’s pivot to journalistic reporting. After explaining the concern about the factory’s untreated waste, the camera shows images of pollution, and questionable safety of the surrounding area. With a variety of images, the audience realizes the factory also contaminates the town’s water supply. If the cannery is the town’s lifeline, then the water supply is the threatened town’s blood. The factory contamination problem is two-fold and is a direct result of the US Embargo on Cuba, as the factory remains in disrepair with aging parts.

The camera focuses on the factory director Fara María Pérez Fernández who explains that “hemos desarrollado acciones internas que han favorecido la disminución de la contaminación.” The image of her speaking about improvements in a three quarter shot in the sunshine is quickly followed by contrasting images of contamination and ill-repaired factory pieces accompanied by melancholic background music.

The images show a different reality from the positive words of the factory director about initiatives to address the aging infrastructure and pollution problems. Without the narrative voice explicitly pointing out a difference between the positive spin and the factory’s reality, the camera allows the spectator to note the distance between official discourse, and local realities.

Quickly the camera moves to another interview, this time with environmental specialist, Almara Sánchez Díaz, the chief of the Atmospheric Pollution Study, explaining that “las personas dentro de la fábrica están contaminadas, pero a partir de 200 metros se contaminan más. La población tiene más afecto con infecciones respiratorias agudas y cáncer.” The camera shares the graphs showing the results of the contamination study of the surrounding community of La Conchita cannery. In response to these harrowing numbers demonstrating the dense particles in the air, increased respiratory sickness, and cases of cancer, the government decided to close the factory.

To highlight what the closing of the factory would mean for the community, the camera collects interviews with people from the town of La Conchita ranging from young students, to retired workers, to even the town historian. One of the retired workers
likened the closing of the factory to the ending of the Revolution itself: “Es lo mismo que sentiría si me dijeran que se cayó la revolución una mañana que me levante.” Equating the importance of La Conchita as the lifeline of the community with the Revolution itself, while criticizing the official decision to close the factory, the film redefines how the community’s issue is not part of the rural periphery despite its distance from Havana. Instead, the health of La Conchita is central to and reflects that of the health of the Revolution. The factory/Revolution comparison is accompanied by intense background music to further share the gravity of the situation.

The film concludes with testimonies sharing local pride while making the town’s cannery central to the original values of the Revolution. The cannery is the lifeblood, albeit contaminated, that determines the future of the residents in this small community. Uncovering the state’s decision to close the factory, the young filmmakers portray it as a death sentence for this community that we come to see as deeply vulnerable, and as such a possible challenge to the health of the Revolution itself given the parallels the documentary has established in the first 18 minutes between the factory’s history and that of the Revolution.

With amenable footage, the camera reveals the financial and historical relationship with the community, the contaminants in the nearby water sources from the plant along with machinery in disrepair in a smooth transition that appears to be a child’s lullaby based on the tranquil background music. Thus, two problems are exposed. The first problem is the pollution in the town’s water and air quality. However, the second problem is that the factory is the sole form of employment, and shutting the plant down instead of fixing it would also bring an end to the community. The documentary not only reveals the negative effects of the government’s decision to abandon the factory, but also urges for the factory to be repaired. The young producers present a conflict and a potential solution without judging the town nor the government: an example of documentary as a form of journalism.

While the Cámara Chica collective uses film to organize the youth in a positive activity, the short piece is not a juvenile work to be ignored. Instead, it adds to a larger wave of contemporary emerging filmmaking in Cuba. Fernandes and Halkin explain “the island has long nurtured expressive cultures of filmmaking through its arts institutes and internationally regarded cinema school. The availability of new digital technologies has inspired young people to take those tools and approach their realities—which they don’t see being represented elsewhere—with fresh eyes and perspectives” (22). In their article, Fernandes and Halkin make reference to university age Cubans using inexpensive technology to make their films as a form of investigative journalism, yet with a close look at 7 y 50 we see a similar practice at an even younger age. These Cámara Chica filmmakers are not the passive rural faces that are the objects of study in Por primera vez from five decades before. Instead the young voices shape the discussion of their town’s pollution challenge, echoing García Espinosa’s proposal for the future of filmmaking and cultural liberation to not be in the hands of a privileged few filmmakers, but that audiences become workers as well.

Given the work of mentors such as television specialist Juan Carlos Baños Fernández, the young group’s short documentary reached beyond the community and was eventually chosen to appear on TelePinar television—the Pinar del Río city news. Word got out on the documentary, and eventually the factory was not closed. The young people
not only took part in filmmaking, but also became agents of change in their own communities with the objective of showing the process and challenges through film rather than answers. Since the distribution of the short documentary, the factory has received further improvements, however the larger challenge of the factory’s repair persists. La Conchita audiovisual specialist and mentor to Cámara Chica, Juan Carlos Baños Fernández in his 2016 annual report for Cámara Chica, La Conchita, explains:

La obra contribuyó a que no cerrara la fábrica y a que se conociera su valor patrimonial al trasmitirse por la televisora provincial en tres ocasiones… El sistema de la televisión en Pinar del Río con su telecentro Provincial Tele Pinar, sus 6 corresponsalías municipales y el telecentro municipal Sandino Visión ha contribuido con la capacitación sistemática de las filiales de la Red del audiovisual infantil creado el 18 de diciembre de 2015 y divulgaron toda la obra realizada por los pequeños realizadores (3).

Since the short film reaching a vast television audience, the factory continues to operate. The state has responded making changes in efforts to repair broken parts, and reduce the air and water pollution. The Cámara Chica collective used its voice through film, the network of La Conchita and their mentors, to reveal an injustice that would have transformed or possibly put an end to their community.

**Beyond 7 y 50:**

La Conchita Cámara Chica has made a series of films since 7 y 50, including Proyecto y vida, El perro cojo, Mi tiempo, Entre muñecas, and La instructora to name a few of their many works. Beyond television, the group showcases its films at young audiovisual festivals throughout Cuba, including el Fórum Internacional de la Meteorología in 2015. The short documentary 7 y 50 also competed in the winter festival: Indio Cubanacán Federation of Cine Clubes in Santa Clara province in 2015. With over 70 competing short films in Santa Clara, La Conchita’s 7 y 50 won four prizes and the grand prize of the festival. The La Conchita group’s various films and Cámara Chica initiative, in general, have caught the attention of official Cuban media platforms: Periódico Guerrillero, Diario Granma, Trabajadores, Juventud rebelde, Revista mujeres, and Radio rebelde. The initiative has also been the subject of press from unofficial Cuban platforms such as the popular online magazine OnCuba, and a selection of films from the 2016 young audiovisual festival have appeared in the famous paquete semanal-offline Internet and audiovisual distribution platform. Additionally, Cuba specialist Sujatha Fernandes published a piece on further community actions from La Conchita’s Cámara Chica in the US-based progressive weekly magazine The Nation in 2018.

Given the growing visibility of this young audiovisual collective, and the mandatory rural study period for Master’s students at the Instituto Superior del Arte, Spanish Master’s student, Daniel Muñoz became interested in visiting and learning more

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6 For more on the paquete semanal see Armenteros and Calviño.
about the group’s audiovisual production. After visiting the collective, Muñoz decided to
make Cámara Chica La Conchita the subject of his own documentary and Master’s thesis
in a 20-minute short film Tras la lente de la Cámara Chica. Muñoz explains his
reasoning behind the making-of film stating in his masters thesis, “se considera necesario
desde la ética una construcción de la imagen sobre el proceso de realización del corto La
instructora que genere la posibilidad de que los sujetos filmados puedan expresar su
opinión sobre la imagen de ellos creada” (Muñoz 21). Muñoz’ approach to capture the
young people as filmmakers directly connects with Espinosa’s 1969 manifesto’s vision of
the future of filmmaking and cultural liberation.

Muñoz’s documentary captures the work of this exceptional collective focusing
on the individuals in Cámara Chica in movement, not as stagnant freeze frames of docile
ethnographic figures to be objects of study. Instead, the camera shows images of the
young collective preparing the set, deciding on the storyboard, negotiating production roles, discussing decisions
with their mentor Juan Carlos Baños Fernández, and eliciting the help of the
community to shoot their short film La
instructora. As the making-of film continues, we see the young people in
Cámara Chica work on all aspects of filmmaking discussing what their
establishing shot will be, what the trigger
point in the film they are making is, and the additional shots that they will need.

Muñoz’s documentary reveals the participatory process of the collective,
including audiences watching the works, and a glimpse into the follow-up post viewing
discussion that the students facilitate with community members. Capturing both images
of the local audiences watching the film, and the subsequent post-viewing
discussions, Muñoz’s film creates a
knowing or unknowing) dialogue with the
aforementioned masterpiece Por
primera vez as the 1967 ICAIC filmmakers interviewed audiences reacting to images of Chaplin’s silent
comediy Modern Times (1936). Instead of
the bashful answers that the Los Mulos
community film audience made up of both
children and adults share with the ICAIC 1967 film crew, the audience of La Conchita are well-versed in film, in the local
initiative, and willingly discuss their reflections with the La Conchita film crew.
Following a similar pattern, Muñoz reveals the key point that the films are usually
watched in the community. However, in La Conchita, the audience members give their
feedback in Muñoz’ film, “these little giants have done a lot of cultural work for the
community.” Through various interviews between the young filmmakers and the
audiences watching La Instructora, we see that the audience members are informed about

![Image 6: Shot of students filming La Instructora](Image 6)

![Image 7: Shot of students filming reactions to La Instructora in Tras la lente de la Cámara Chica](Image 7)
filmmaking, and not only watch the students’ work, but also recognize themselves on the screen.

Muñoz’ making-of documentary shines a light on these students as active agents in the filmmaking process which he shares with La Conchita audiences. His short film challenges representations of Cuba beyond Havana, yet also reveals that further work needs to be done to create more highly visible exhibition showcases to challenge decades of Habana-centrismo in Cuban audiovisual history particularly in the areas of distribution and exhibition. The one Cuban film showcase for filmmakers between the ages of 20-35, such as Muñoz, is the Muestra Joven ICAIC Showcase held each spring in Havana despite growing criticism for being inaccessible to many non-Havana-based young filmmakers. Regardless of the continuation of decades of limited national exhibition spaces often centered in Havana, Muñoz shares his film on Cámara Chica with national audiences at the Muestra Joven ICAIC 2017 and offers Havana audiences a different rural and young representation from the celebrated Por primera vez. His short film Tras la lente de la Cámara Chica creates, also knowingly or unknowingly, a dialogue with “Por un Cine Imperfecto” manifesto which asks “¿Pero qué hacer para que el público deje de ser objeto y se convierta en sujeto?” One possible answer to that question would be to give the audience at a young age the ability to become both the directors and subjects of their own films through inexpensive digital technology, and opportunities to learn about filmmaking.

Conclusion Chica:

After winning film recognition such as the Award for Community Culture in Pinar del Río, First and Second prize in the Drama Festival of TV Pinareña, First prize and best male acting in the Yumurí Film Festival in Matanzas, as well as the Competition for Young Journalists by Canal Habana in 2016, winning four of the prizes in the young and adolescent categories, Cámara Chica La Conchita continues its work locally and nationally. With the generous support of its town mentors, artisan Geovani “Pipo” Jiménez Izquierdo and audiovisual specialist Juan Carlos Baños Fernández, these young people are re-writing who is telling their stories. Cámara Chica La Conchita has become more than an audiovisual initiative. Instead it is a space for organizing, reflecting on and changing local and national realities. It is an example of beginning to reverse top-down film and culture initiatives, while also is a key contributor to plant the necessary seeds to foster critical voices in the emerging Cuban audiovisual landscape today.

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