

Viva Cuba!

Trio celebrate the decaying splendour of the ostracised Caribbean jewel...

Rob Wilkes • 13 October, 2015



Cuba has been frozen in time since the country's communist revolution of the late 1950s, when the new regime's ideological and political ties to the Soviet Union led the USA and its western allies to impose crippling trade and economic sanctions.



Werner Pawlok portrait © Erik Mosoni

The once-opulent way of life previously enjoyed by the rich and powerful elite in Cuba came to an abrupt end, and while things changed dramatically for all Cubanos, the legacy of fabulous wealth from pre-revolutionary times remained, peeling and crumbling over the decades.

As diplomatic relations continue to improve between Cuba and the USA, some are beginning to wonder how long Cuba's uniquely nostalgic atmosphere of faded glory will remain now that the political ice is thawing. Stuttgart photographer Werner Pawlok has recently returned from Cuba — a place which has held him in thrall for a decade — to document the changes and immortalise some of its most beautiful sights, and his work has joined that of Italian photographer Luigi Visconti and Philadelphia's Larry Yust for an exhibition at LUMAS Gallery in Mayfair.

Where Pawlok's work shows us life in contemporary Cuba, Visconti's images focus on the timeless exterior architecture largely devoid of the contextualising population. Yust, meanwhile, draws on experience of work in film and theatre to create widescreen images of streets by stitching together up to 50 individual shots. The three artists' images that feature in the Viva Cubal exhibition are available for sale from LUMAS.

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