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## MAESTRA TOUR SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



**NORMA GUILLARD** joined the 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign (the Campaign) when she was 15 years old. She is one of the women featured in Catherine Murphy’s *Maestra*, a documentary about the women and girls who taught their nation to read and write during the Campaign. A social psychologist from Santiago de Cuba, she is one of the first Cuban women of her generation to call herself a feminist. She primarily works on the issues of gender, race, sexual orientation and issues of diversity and identity in a Cuban and Caribbean context. As a Cuban of African descent, Guillard has contributed much to the lively debates on race and racism in Cuba.

She is an adjunct professor at the University of Havana teaching psychology and gender, and a past president of the Cuban Association of Psychologists. She is also an Advisor to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and to the United Nations Development Program on the issue of gender in the prevention of

HIV/AIDS. She is a principal collaborator at the National Center for the Prevention of AIDS and the National Center for Sex Education (known as CENESEX in Cuba), which spearheads work to educate against homophobia and to lobby for civil unions in Cuba. Additionally, she is one of the founders of “Oremi,” the first organization of lesbian and bisexual women in Cuba.

Guillard participated in the effort in Cuba to reprise playback theatre, an original form of improvisational theater in which audience or group members tell stories from their lives and watch them enacted on the spot. This type of theater is used to facilitate discussions about the impact of HIV/AIDS from the personal perspective of HIV positive people and their families.

Professor Guillard brings these issues to the social media field as well as the academic world, and has helped to produce several educational documentaries, including the celebrated film *Living to the Limit* by leading Cuban director Belkys Vega. Gulliard is also a poet and is widely published.



**CATHERINE MURPHY** is a San Francisco-based filmmaker who has spent much of the last 20 years working in Latin America. Murphy is founder and director of The Literacy Project, a multi-media documentation project on adult literacy in the Americas. Since 2005, The Literacy Project has focused on gathering oral histories of volunteer teachers from the 1961 Cuban Literacy Campaign, culminating in two documentaries – one of which is *Maestra* - and she also has a web-based oral history archive and a bi-lingual book of stories in the works. Four short stories based on her interviews were published in Eduardo Galeano’s recent book *Espejos*.

Murphy lived and worked in Cuba in the 1990s, earning a Master’s degree in Sociology at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) program at the University of Havana. While in Cuba, she organized dozens of academic and cultural exchange programs for U.S. universities, non-profits and cultural institutions. Most recently, she was advisor to the Cuba Residency for Wynton Marsalis & the Jazz at Lincoln Center

Orchestra.

As an independent producer, Murphy's work has largely focused on social documentaries. She has worked on the films *Gay Cuba*, *The Greening of Cuba*, *Venezuela Rising* (subtitled *Stealing America*) by Dorothy Fadiman, *Out* and *Refusenicks* by Sonja de Vries, and she is associate producer on Eugene Corr's *From Ghost Town to Havana* and Saul Landau's *Will the Real Terrorist Stand Up?* She also served as an archival researcher for Harry Belafonte's current documentary on his life.

In 2006, Murphy worked as senior producer at the TeleSur TV Washington DC bureau and has produced content for Pacifica Radio National, TeleSur TV, Avila TV, Pacifica Radio and WBAI.

In 2009 while in Caracas, Murphy founded Tres Musas Producciones, a collaborative production house of independent women producers, working together in film, music and literature.