



MOVING STONE INTO PLACE: ECONOMIC REFORM, ENCLOSURE & EXODUS IN POST-FIDEL CUBA

ONLINE SEMINAR

MoMO (Moving Mobilities Online) Lecture Series

Maya Berry
(University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Thursday
5 March 2026
4 pm CET

More information
and registration



Researched against the backdrop of the post-Fidel market reforms initiated by the Cuban government to “update” the Revolution for the 21st century and extending into the economic crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic, this talk opens a deeper consideration of what a sector of Black working-class people endeavors to create for themselves and fiercely defend.

By centering those who form and are formed by *rumba*, a Black popular dance too often undertheorized by its relegation to the realm of folkloric dance and obscured by its nomination as national patrimony, this ethnography strives to account for the embodied spiritual dimensions of Black political imagination in Havana. *Rumba* practitioners initiated into ritual “families of stone” enact improvisations that are constrained by racialized gender and class, while motioning toward fugitive practices of self-making and mutual aid.



Maya J. Berry is an associate professor in the African, African American, and Diaspora Studies Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH).

A trained dancer, performance studies scholar, and sociocultural anthropologist, her theoretical and methodological approach to scholarship is interdisciplinary with a geographic specialization in Cuba. Berry is the author of [*Defending Rumba in Havana: The Sacred and the Black Corporeal Undercommons*](#) (Duke University Press 2025), and is co-editor of [*Fugitive Anthropology: Embodying Activist Research*](#) (University of Texas Press 2026). Her various projects emerge at the intersection of Black political mobilization, Black feminist theory and praxis, and embodied epistemologies of the African diaspora. Her scholarship has been supported by the Ford Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the Institute for Citizens & Scholars, among others. Prior to joining UNC-CH, Berry was a postdoctoral associate at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University.