

CHECKLIST ENGLISH



*Passport to the
Exhibition*

*Creole World
Photographs of New Orleans
and the Latin Caribbean Sphere*

WELCOME TO CREOLE WORLD

Richard Sexton's fascination with the Creole world is a longstanding one, initiated during a 1974 automobile trip from Georgia through Central and South America and back, with a memorable stop in New Orleans along the way.

New Orleans provided the primary reference point for my visual exploration of the broader Creole world of the Caribbean and Latin America. The shared history of French, Spanish, and African influences during the colonial period; the pervasive presence of the Roman Catholic church; geographic proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean; and a common tropical and subtropical climate were all common elements. Not only were there historical similarities, but contemporary ones as well. Great wealth and importance during the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods, which gradually devolved into lesser wealth and importance in the modern era was a common fate. Grandeur gone to seed and an ambiance of frayed elegance envelop many of the settings I photographed. And there were also striking similarities in the different ways the cultural influences had blended together to create something new and distinctively Creole. Whether it was food, music, literature, architecture, or the urban settings themselves, the similarities were uncanny.

-Richard Sexton, photographer



New Orleans resembles Genoa or Marseilles, or Beirut, or the Egyptian Alexandria more than it does New York, although all seaports resemble one another more than they can resemble any place in the interior. Like Havana and Port-au-Prince, New Orleans is within the orbit of a Hellenistic world that never touched the North Atlantic. The Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico form a homogeneous, though interrupted, sea. New York, Cherbourg and Bergen are in a separate thalassic system.

-A. J. Liebling, from *The Earl of Louisiana*, 1960

CHECKLIST

All of the photographs in Creole World are archival pigment prints by Richard Sexton and are part of the holdings of The Historic New Orleans Collection.

The dates in this listing refer to when the photograph was taken. The prints were produced in 2013.

1



Street scene, El Chorrillo neighborhood; Panama City, Panama

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A1. 2014.0011.12

2



Italianate shotgun house and Creole cottage, Esplanade Ridge neighborhood; New Orleans

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A2. 2014.0011.01

3



View of the French Quarter; New Orleans

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A3. 2014.0011.10

4



View of Cartagena's Historic District; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A4. 2014.0011.11

5



Cemetery gate, Cementerio La Reina; Cienfuegos, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A5. 2014.0011.9

6



Cemetery gate, Saint Louis Cemetery No. 3; New Orleans

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A6. 2014.0011.8

7



Sign for Doña Blanca restaurant, advertising Creole food; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A7. 2014.0011.4

8



Produce vendor on Napoleon Avenue, advertising Creole tomatoes and okra; New Orleans

1994

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A8. 2014.0011.5

9



Ceramic street sign, French Quarter; New Orleans

1992

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A9. 2014.0011.7

10



Ceramic street sign, historic district; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

A10. 2014.0011.6

Architectural Evolution and Improvisation

The evolution and improvisation of buildings over time is itself a kind of creolizing process. Club Cartagena, in Cartagena, Columbia, is an example of this phenomenon. Founded in 1864 as a social club for the city's elite. The club unveiled an imposing Beaux-Arts headquarters in 1925 designed by French architect Gaston Lelarge, a disciple of Charles Garnier, who designed the Paris opera house that still bears his name today. Fronting Parque Centenario, Club Cartagena hosted holiday festivities, family banquets, and ceremonies for visiting dignitaries. In 1944, when the big-band era was in full swing, an expansive dance floor was added. The building's heyday ended in 1959, when Club Cartagena moved its headquarters to Bocagrande, an emerging beachfront neighborhood outside the historic district. In the recent past, a rear section of the building served as a hip-hop club and was decorated with airbrush art. Today the building is empty, save for a handful of scrappy individuals living there; they serve as guards and caretakers for the current owners who plan to eventually redevelop the property.

11



Archways, Club Cartagena; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

B1. 2014.0011.58

12



Outdoor dance floor annex, Club Cartagena; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

B2. 2014.0011.27

13



Improvised hip-hop lounge, Club Cartagena; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

B3. 2014.0011.28

14



Facade, Club Cartagena; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

B4. 2014.0011.54

Frayed Elegance

In the Creole World, the great wealth of the colonial and immediate postcolonial eras produced ostentatious displays of majestic architecture. Grand villas with wide front porches, double-gallery mansions with stately columns and expensive mill -, stone-, and ironwork, and bold flourishes of neoclassicism can be seen throughout these architectural vestiges of long departed prosperity. Today they exist in various states of repair, some preserved as cultural facilities or improvised offices, others languishing under a succession of middle-class or poor inhabitants—some descended from the patriarchs who built them. The remnants of vanished wealth are an endless source of fascination for me and are a recurring theme in my work. These grand piles, covered in vines, crumbling at the edges, contribute to the character of their cities in a poignant, intriguing way—reminders of how the past continues to haunt the present.

15



Classical Revival villa, Getsemani neighborhood; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

C1. 2014.0011.30

16



Italianate villa on Esplanade Avenue; New Orleans

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

C2. 2014.0011.48

17



Classical Revival villa, Vista Alegre neighborhood; Santiago, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

C3. 2014.0011.13

18



Art Nouveau facade, Centro Habana; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

C4. 2014.0011.34

19



Classical Revival villa, Vista Alegre neighborhood; Santiago, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

C5. 2014.0011.25

Urban Vortex

The gestalt of urbanity, particularly in large third-world cities, can be a chaotic and intimidating force. In many Creole cities, it is also defined by the starkest of contrasts—rich and poor, black and white, formal and vernacular, all mixed together in free-form fashion. A hodgepodge of economic classes, ethnicities, religions, and circumstances can give birth to new and exciting things: pralines, jazz and bounce music, second lines, go cups, and po'boys are all creations that have percolated up from the streets of New Orleans. In Cuba, it's mojito's, conga lines, rumba, and mambo. In Argentina, its tango, milonga, parrilladas, and a Spanish porteño dialect infused with Italian pronunciation. The permutations are as unpredictable as they are intriguing, and they come flying straight out of the chaos of the urban vortex.

20



Street scene; Cap Haitien, Haiti

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

D1. 2014.0011.18

21



Quito, as seen from the hill known as El Panecillo; Quito, Ecuador

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

D2. 2014.0011.29

22



Outbuilding, damaged by the 2010 earthquake, and barbershop kiosk; Léogâne, Haiti

2012

Inkjet print

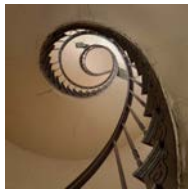
On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

D3. 2014.0011.53

The Inner Sanctum

Just inches from the sidewalk, behind closed shutters and veiling drapes, a parallel, private world exists, often in stark contrast to the bustling street outside. Tall ceilings, large windows, elaborate transoms, and private outdoor spaces—lush courtyards, patios, and terraces—are common responses throughout the Creole world to the subtropical or tropical environment. These climate-driven elements are complemented by ornate plasterwork, grand mantels, and richly weathered wood plank-floorboards. Living in these old buildings, which have not been fully modernized and need constant care, is a challenge. The experience is mitigated by the buildings' architectural opulence, however frayed, which creates the sensation of being far removed from the hubbub of the modern world, ensconced in a private inner sanctum.

23



Spiral staircase, Charbonnet house, French Quarter; New Orleans

2006

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

E1. 2014.0011.16

24



Residence and studio of artist George Dureau, French Quarter; New Orleans

1996

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

E2. 2014.0011.42

25



Double parlor, Germain-Vitry house, Faubourg Tremé; New Orleans

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

E3. 2014.0011.50

26



Parlor in a casa colonica; Trinidad, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

E4. 2014.0011.51

27



Studio of Carlos del Toro, detail, Habana Vieja; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

E5. 2014.0011.44

The Public Realm: Living Streets, Commercial Corners

As an urbanist, one of the things I find most seductive about Creole cities and towns is the very public attitude toward the street and the propensity for mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods. These aspects of urban life languished in most of the United States during the post-World War II suburban housing boom but have been embraced anew in some contemporary planning circles. In much of the Creole world, traditional urban values have persevered in large part because the socioeconomic conditions necessary to the development of automobile-dependent suburbs—the kind that became pervasive in postwar American—are rare.

Residential blocks are studded with bars, restaurants, music clubs, coffeehouses, and corner grocery stores. Vendors hawking their wares, neighbors hanging out on stoops, a barroom's boisterous clientele spilling out onto the sidewalk—everything I've observed in the Creole world has given me a deep appreciation for the role of the street in urban vitality. In the Creole World much of urban life is conducted in the public realm, and there's a certain flair to it all, a proclivity that allows public spectacle and random engagement to flourish.

28



Street scene, Centro Habana; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

F1. 2014.0011.39

29



Corner store at night, Centro Habana; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

F2. 2014.0011.52

30



Stickball in the street, Getsemani neighborhood; Cartagena, Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

F3. 2014.0011.56

31



Street scene on Calle Habana, Habana Vieja; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

F4. 2014.0011.59

32



Street scene at twilight, Centro Habana; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

F5. 2014.0011.40

The Intervention of Modernism

In cities with a wealth of historical architecture and a contemporary identity rooted in a rich past, modernist architecture can seem as though it has landed from outer space. For me, though, the juxtaposition of modernism—which was no longer au courant by the late 1970s and therefore historical itself—with older architectural styles is in keeping with the Creole tradition of mixing old and new. Modernist architecture injected into established historical settings may not make the urban landscape more harmonious, but it does make it better, more diverse, and surprising. It is a creolizing process and plays an important role in shaping the latest chapter of the continuing Creole story.

33



Central City streetscape, looking toward the Louisiana Superdome (now the Mercedes-Benz Superdome); New Orleans

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

G1. 2014.0011.36

34



Street scene looking toward a housing block built by the US government, El Chorrillo neighborhood; Panama City, Panama

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

G2. 2014.0011.49

35



Guste public housing apartments, Central City; New Orleans

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

G3. 2014.0011.14

36



Partially demolished building with Edificio FOCSA in the background, Vedado neighborhood; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

G4. 2014.0011.26

The Ritual of Burial

The elaborate aboveground tombs of New Orleans have long been attributed to the city's high water table and constant threat of flooding, but similar cemeteries can be found throughout the creole world, even in high-elevation locales where flooding is unknown, such as Cementerio San Diego, in Quito, Ecuador. These common burial traditions are rooted in the Catholicism of their founding empires. Aboveground tombs became popular throughout the Catholic world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Catholicism is not only the dominant religion of the Creole world but also a fundamental component of the urban framework of virtually every Latin town or city I've ever visited. At the town center there's always a plaza, and the most prominent edifice on the plaza is the Catholic Church. Government buildings may be hard to find by comparison, but you can't miss the church.

37



Aboveground tomb, detail, Saint Louis Cemetery No. 1; New Orleans

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

H1. 2014.0011.47

38



Aboveground tomb, Cementerio San Diego; Quito, Ecuador

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

H2. 2014.0011.46

39



Saint Louis Cemetery No. 1; New Orleans

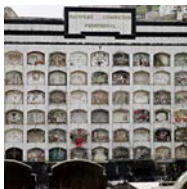
2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

H3. 2014.0011.23

40



Society tomb for cab and truck drivers, Cementerio San Diego; Quito, Ecuador

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

H4. 2014.0011.19

Haiti: Louisiana's Colonial Cousin

A common French colonial heritage is only the beginning of the vital link between Haiti (formerly Saint-Domingue) and Louisiana. During and following the slave revolt of 1791-1803, approximately ten thousand Haitian residents—divided fairly equally among whites, free people of color, and slaves, some of whom left with their masters and others who made new lives as free people—fled the country and found refuge in Louisiana. As Louisiana was beginning its transition from European colony to U.S. territory and bracing for an influx of Americans, it saw a significant increase in the Creole population because of the Haitian diaspora.

Though Haiti was once France's richest colony, today it ranks as the poorest nation in the Americas and has endured devastating natural, political, and economic disasters. Vestiges of the French colonial rule and the wealth that came with it can be found in Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Cap Haitien and elsewhere. Haiti's historic architecture—with its elaborate wrought iron, steep broken hip roofs, brick-between-post construction, and detailed transoms—is highly evocative of Louisiana's architecture from the same period.

41



Market scene at Rues G and 10; Cap Haitien, Haiti

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

ii. 2014.0011.45

42



Rue Vallières, near the Marché de Fer; Jacmel, Haiti

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

ii. 2014.0011.32

Cienfuegos, Cuba

In contemporary Cuba, Cienfuegos is known as “the French town.” Centrally located along the southern coast of Cuba, it was founded as Fernandina de Jagua in 1819 as a Spanish colony by Lieutenant Colonel Louis de Clouet, a Frenchman who had left Louisiana and was in service to the Spanish Crown. Under the direction of Clouet and his superiors, it was initially populated by forty-six settlers from Bordeaux, France, with groups from Louisiana and other locales to follow. Many of the settlers from Louisiana were Creoles who immigrated in response to the Louisiana Purchase, hoping to escape life under American rule.

43



Classical Revival facade of a double residence; Cienfuegos, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

J1. 2014.0011.22

44



Civic building; Cienfuegos, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

J2. 2014.0011.35

45



Street scene; Cienfuegos, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

J3. 2014.0011.24

46



Apartment block; Cienfuegos, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

J4. 2014.0011.38

Statue of José Martí

47



Statue of José Martí, the “George Washington of Cuba,” in Parque Central; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

K2. 2014.0011.37

The Predicament of Preservation

In the Creole world, historic buildings present an architectural legacy that is often in a tenuous compromise with the economic realities of contemporary inhabitants. Only the well-to-do can afford to keep a historic row house or a creole cottage in the kind of pristine condition championed by the modern preservation movement. In many Creole settings, largely due to economic circumstances, historic structures are commonly recycled and repurposed, and the results can range from quirky to confounding to completely beautiful. The life of a building across time is an extraordinary evolution that can be as unpredictable as the lives of the people inside it. Whether it's the rich patina built up on an old façade, a humble addition appended to a grand edifice, or an improvised repair crafted from recycled materials, the aesthetic appeal of organic, adaptive reuse has always been a major focus of mine—both as a photographer and an admirer of the Creole essence of mixing old and new.

48



Modern residential building featuring an improvised pigeon cote; Rio Negro, Ecuador

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L1. 2014.0011.43

49



Classical Revival facade, San Telmo neighborhood; Buenos Aires, Argentina

2006

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L2. 2014.0011.3

50



Ruin of a leprosy hospital; Caño del Oro (near Cartagena), Colombia

2010

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L3. 2014.0011.55

51



Cast-iron gate and facade on Carondelet Street; New Orleans

2012

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L4. 2014.0011.2

52



Facade; Trinidad, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L5. 2014.0011.57

53



Car and facade, Habana Vieja; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L6. 2014.0011.41

54



Facade of La Maravilla (the marvel), on the Plaza del Cristo, Habana Vieja; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L7. 2014.0011.20

55



Facade serving as a security wall; Riobamba, Ecuador

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L8. 2014.0011.17

56



Nurse's scrubs, hung out to dry, El Chorrillo neighborhood; Panama City, Panama

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L9. 2014.0011.21

57



Collapsing residential building, El Chorrillo neighborhood; Panama City, Panama

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L10. 2014.0011.31

58



Improvised facade mimicking antecedent details, El Chorrillo neighborhood; Panama City, Panama

2008

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L11. 2014.0011.33

59



Classical Revival facade on the Plaza del Cristo, Habana Vieja; Havana, Cuba

2009

Inkjet print

On loan from The Historic New Orleans Collection

L12. 2014.0011.15

Vitrine Case No. 1

Travel is partly about gathering souvenirs of places visited and remembered. This case contains a selection of objects brought back by Richard Sexton from his excursions to places in the Creole world.

All objects courtesy of Richard Sexton

60 Plantain press

acquired 2012

wood and leather with metal fasteners

Prior to being fried, slices of plantain are mashed between the wooden plates of a press. This one was purchased at the Marché de Fer in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

61 Pensamientos

by Marcelo Javier Lopez

acquired 2006

ink on paper, bound with ribbon

The author of these poems was a patient at Borda Hospital, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

62 Cleanboy Deluxe soap

acquired 2012

Purchased at a market in Jacmel, Haiti

63 Ojos de Perro Azul

by Gabriel García Márquez

acquired 1974

Sexton bought this collection of short stories in Bogotá, Colombia, to improve his Spanish.

64 Coffee cup

acquired 2009

glass

In Havana, Sexton enjoyed strong café cubano—espresso with lots of sugar—served on the street from a takeout window. This cup, purchased from the coffee vendor, was fashioned from the bottom portion of a beer bottle.

**65 Mousetrap
artisan unknown**

acquired 2012

aluminum screening and sheet

Purchased at the Marché de Fer (iron market) in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

66 Purse made of tabs from beverage cans

artisan unknown

acquired 2009

aluminum and string

This item is from a market in Trinidad, Cuba.

67 Bowl or basket made from a tire

artisan unknown

acquired 2008

recycled tire with metal fasteners

Purchased at the main market of Saquisilí, Ecuador

Vitrine Case No. 2

Items in this case are mostly “tools” used by Richard Sexton during his first trip to Central and South America, in 1974. The political memorabilia from Cuba and Panama suggest the uneasy tenor of democracy in parts of the Creole world.

All objects courtesy of Richard Sexton, unless otherwise noted.

68 Passport of James Richard Sexton

1974

printed document with attached photograph and rubber stamp markings
issued by the US government

Sexton's passport, with extra pages added, is a shorthand expression of his journey through the Creole world.

69 Handbill promoting Anastasio Somoza DeBayle as the Nationalist Liberal Party candidate

acquired 1974

color offset reproduction by Litho Disco, printer

70 Pro-Somoza bumper sticker

acquired 1974

Somoza (1925–1980) was the third member of his family (following his father and brother) to serve as Nicaragua's president, an office he held essentially without interruption from 1967 to 1979. Somoza's authoritarian and anti-Communist policies were largely supported by the US.

71 Leica M4 camera with Summicron f/2 collapsible lens and coupled light meter

c. 1960s, manufactured by Leica Camera AG, Wetzlar, Germany

Camera body courtesy of an anonymous lender; camera lens gift of Mrs. Donald M. Bradburn

Sexton's camera on the 1974 automobile trip was a 35mm M4 Leica, like this one. He also had an extreme-wide-angle 21mm lens that could be changed out with the normal 50mm lens, as well as a 90mm lens and 35mm lens.

72 Lloyd's bulk 35mm daylight film loader; Kodak Snap-Cap 135 magazines

c. 1960s

manufactured by the Lloyd Film Loader Company; Eastman Kodak Company

In order to assure a sufficient supply of film throughout his trip, Sexton carried one hundred-foot bulk rolls and used a daylight film loader like this one to spool film onto reusable film cassettes.

73 The South American Handbook 1974

1974

by Trade and Travel, publisher

Part almanac, part hotel/restaurant guide, and part history and philosophy book, this guide proved indispensable to Sexton as he made his travel itinerary, often on the fly as the journey unfolded.

74 Road maps of Nicaragua, Honduras, and Panama

1971 (Nicaragua and Honduras), 1973 (Panama)

printed in color by Rand McNally, publisher; Texaco, distributor

The ubiquity of electronic navigation systems to plan point-to-point travel has made paper road maps the artifacts of an earlier generation. These (and others) filled the glove compartment of Sexton's Datsun 610 station wagon during his 1974 trip.

75 Snapshots of Fidel Castro and of Castro and Che Guevara at a political rally

acquired c. 1959-1967, photographer unknown

If Somoza's rule represented the far right in authoritarian politics, the opposite pole was embodied by the Marxist philosophies of Cuba's Che Guevara (1928–1967) and Fidel Castro (b. 1926).

76 Cuban postage stamps commemorating Che Guevara

acquired 2007 and 2009

produced by the Cuban government

77 Postcards of Che Guevara

date unknown

postcard with images made by A. Korda and Roger Pic in 1960 and 1963, respectively

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Richard Sexton, photographer

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