

## **Ruth Behar**

Born November 12, 1956, Havana, Cuba  
Citizenship: United States of America

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### **Academic Position**

Victor Haim Perera Collegiate Professor, Department of Anthropology; Faculty Associate in Women's Studies, Latina/Latino Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Michigan, 1989-present.

Founder and Director, University of Michigan Semester Study Abroad Program in Havana, Cuba, 2010-2014.

Michigan Society of Fellows, 1986-1989.

### **Education**

Princeton University  
Department of Anthropology  
Wesleyan University  
College of Letters

Ph.D.	October, 1983, Distinction
M.A.	June, 1980
B.A.	June, 1977, Cum Laude, Honors

### **Awards**

Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, June, 2012.

Named to the Victor Haim Perera Collegiate Professorship of Anthropology, September, 2010-present.

Circle Award, La Celebración Latina, University of Michigan, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives, April, 2010.

University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science, and Arts, Excellence in Education Award, 2006.

University of Michigan, D'Arms Faculty Award for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities, 1998.

Wesleyan University, Distinguished Alumna Award in Recognition of Outstanding Achievement and Service, 1997.

University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science, and Arts, Excellence in Education Award, 1997.

University of Michigan, Latina/Latino Studies Program, Faculty Recognition for teaching and service, 1997.

John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Award, 1995-1996.

MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Award, July 14, 1988-1993.

Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Career Development Award, for research and writing on Mexico, 1989-1992.

### **Grants and Fellowships**

Henry King Stanford Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, University of Miami, Jan-April, 2008, Jan-April, 2009.

Fulbright Senior Fellowship, for teaching and research in Buenos Aires, Argentina, February-May 2007.

Institute for the Humanities, Hunting Family Faculty Fellowship, University of Michigan, 2003-2004.

American Council of Learned Societies/Social Science Research Council Fellowship, 1997-1998.

Rockefeller Residence Fellowship in the Humanities, Cuban Research Institute, Florida International University, January 1996-May 1996.

Council for International Exchange of Scholars, Postdoctoral Research Award, Spain, 1992.

### **Books**

2017 *Lucky Broken Girl*, an ethnographic novel for young readers. Nancy Paulsen Books, imprint of Penguin Random House.

2013 *Traveling Heavy: A Memoir in between Journeys*, essays on identity, migration, and travel. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

- 2007 *An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba* (with photographs by Humberto Mayol). Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- 1996 *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press. Paperback, 1997.
- 1993 *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*. A Notable Book of the Year, *New York Times Book Review*. Boston: Beacon Press. Paperback, 1994. Tenth Anniversary Edition, 2003.
- 1986 *The Presence of the Past in a Spanish Village: Santa María del Monte*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Paperback edition, with new Afterword, 1991.

#### Edited Books

- 2015 *Bridges to Cuba, 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*, with new Introduction. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 2008 *The Portable Island: Cubans at Home in the World*. Co-edited with Lucía Suárez. New York: Palgrave, 2008.
- 1995 *Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- 1995 *Women Writing Culture*. Co-edited with Deborah A. Gordon. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

#### Documentary Film

- 2002 "[Adio Kerida/Goodbye Dear Love: A Cuban Sephardic Journey](#)." An 82-minute documentary film drawing on ethnographic research in Cuba, Miami, and New York. Distributed by Women Make Movies.

#### Curatorial Work

- 1998-present "[Intersections, Cultures, Identities: Artist Books from Cuba by Rolando Estévez](#)," Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.
- 2016-2017 Consultant, [American Museum of Natural History Exhibition, "¡Cuba!"](#) (I worked with AMNH curators to develop the exhibit and assisted with content and exhibit text).

#### Blog

- 2015-present [Bridges to/from Cuba: Lifting the Emotional Embargo](#). Ongoing blog co-founded in June, 2015 with inaugural poet Richard Blanco.

#### Selected Essays and Articles

- 2017 "Everything I Kept: Reflections of an 'Anthropoeta'," in *Women Writing Resistance: Essays on Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Jennifer Browdy. Boston: Beacon Press, 45-58.
- 2017 "Scholars Talk Writing: Ruth Behar." Dialogue with Rachel Toor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 4/23/17.
- 2017 "Wanting to Be More Than an Anthropologist in Cuba," Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, 3/23/17.
- 2016 "I Come From All Places," in *Home: An Imagined Landscaped*, edited by Marjorie Agosin. Kent, England: Solis Press: 31-37.
- 2015 "In the Meantime," in *The Future of Scholarly Writing: Critical Interventions*, edited by Angelika Bammer and Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres. New York: Palgrave, 2015.
- 2014 "[Where is home for the child of nomads?](#)" *Aeon Magazine: Ideas and Culture* (April 14, 2014).
- 2014 "La Silla," in *Wise Latinas: Writers on Higher Education*, edited by Jennifer De Leon. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- 2013 "The Day I Cried At Starbucks," in *Family Trouble: Memoirists on the Hazards and Rewards of Revealing Family*, edited by Joy Castro. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- 2012 "Mediajournays: Looking at People, Looking for People," with Marcy Brink-Danan, *Visual Anthropology Review*, 28 (1), spring 2012: 1-12
- 2012 "Death and Memory: From Santa María del Monte to Miami Beach" in *Cultural Anthropology's "Curated Collection"* on Literature and Anthropology fall, 2012.
- 2011 "The Death of the Angel: Reflections on the Relationship Between Enlightenment and Enchantment in the Twenty-First Century," *Temenos: The Finnish Society for the Study of Religion* 47:1 (2011): 77-95.
- 2009 "Folklore and the Search for Home," *Journal of American Folklore* 122 (485): 251-266.
- 2009 "Believing in Anthropology as Literature," in *Anthropology Off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing*, edited by Alisse Waterston and Maria D. Vesperi. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell: 106-116.

- 2009 "Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History," book review, *Moment Magazine* (March/April 2009).
- 2008 "Between Poetry and Anthropology: Searching for Languages of Home," in *Art-Based Research in Education: Foundations for Practice*, edited by Mischa Cahnmann and Richard Siegesmund. NY: Routledge: 54-71.
- 2008 "Ethnography and the Book That Was Lost," in the *Handbook of Arts in Qualitative Research*, edited by J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole. Sage Publications: 529-543.
- 2007 "Ethnographic Writing in a Time of Blurred Genres," *Anthropology and Humanism*, December, 32 (2): 145-155.
- 2004 "While Waiting for the Ferry to Cuba: *Adio Kerida* and the Goodbye That Isn't a Farewell," in *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*, edited by Fran Markowitz and Anders H. Stefansson. New York: Lexington Books, 2004: 199-210.

#### **Selected Stories and Poems**

- 2011 "Juban América" and "The Jewish Cemetery in Guanabacoa," in *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*, edited by Ilan Stavans (New York: Norton, 2011): 2192-2197.
- 2009 "Letter," "Offering," "The World," "A New Year's Wish," in *The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry, a Bilingual Anthology*, edited by Mark Weiss (University of California Press, 2009): 426-430.
- 2002 "A Sephardi Air," in *Taking Root: Narratives of Jewish Women in Latin America*, edited by Marjorie Agosin (Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2002): 12-15.

#### **Recent Invited Lectures**

- "Cuba and the Meaning of Place in Anthropology and the World Today," University of Texas, Arlington, the Ben and Trudy Termini Distinguished Anthropology Lecture, April 6, 2017.
- "I Come to All Places and to All Places I Go," Lin Great Speakers Series, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, October 25, 2016.
- "East and West, Cuban and American: The Foods of Home," Invited Speaker, University of Florida, Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica, Gainesville, March 31, 2016.
- "Cuban Sephardim in Literature and Ethnography," American Comparative Literature Association, Harvard University, Invited Speaker, March 20, 2016.
- Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, 40th Anniversary Gala Event, Chicago, Illinois, Co-Keynote Speaker with Sandra Cisneros, March 17, 2016.
- "Vulnerability: In Fieldwork, in Life, and on the Page," Keynote Speaker, Inter-University Research Seminar on Critical Ethnographic Research, Ghent University, Belgium, September 18, 2015.
- "We Are All Somebody: Celebration of the Human Voice," Keynote Speaker, conference on Life Writing Across the Americas, International Auto/Biography Association, University of Michigan, June 4, 2015.
- "Dreams of Sefarad," Invited Speaker, Stroum Lectures, University of Washington, Seattle, May 18-May 20, 2015.
- "Ruth Behar and the Vulnerable Observer: After Twenty Years, What Next?" Invited Speaker, Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, April 8, 2015.

#### **Recent Articles and Interviews in the Media**

- "Childhood Accident Inspired Writer's Career and Newest Book," by Mary Quattlebaum, *Washington Post*, 5/16/17.
- "The assimilation of a Jewish Cuban girl to the U.S. and the recovery of the lost island," by Nora Gámez Torres, *Miami Herald*, 3/15/17.
- "Cuba and the USA: Healing the Emotional Embargo," BBC World Service, 8/18/17.
- "The Only Cure for Homesickness is More Homesickness," interview with Julie Schwieter Collazo, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, 12/21/14.