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Melissa Blanco Borelli

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SHE IS CUBA



A GENEALOGY OF THE MULATA BODY



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She is Cuba: A Genealogy of the Mulata Body traces the history of the Cuban mulata and her association with hips,

sensuality and popular dance. It examines how the mulata choreographs her racialised identity through her hips and enacts an embodied theory called hip(g)nosis. By focusing on her living and dancing body in order to flesh out the process of identity formation, this book makes a claim for how subaltern bodies negotiate a cultural identity that continues to mark their bodies on a daily basis. Combining literary and personal narratives with historical and theoretical accounts of Cuban popular dance history, religiosity and culture, this work investigates the power of embodied exchanges: bodies watching, looking, touching and dancing with one another. It sets up a genealogy of how the representations and veneration of the dancing mulata continue to circulate and participate in the volatile political and social economy of contemporary Cuba.

"This triumphant offering invigorates dance scholarship with an outstanding coordination of historical method, performative writing, and coherent, compelling analysis of dance practice in Cuba. Written with authority, literary drive, and compassion, *She Is Cuba* answers a call for carefully considered research to explore the racialized feminine, the powers of the State, and to demonstrate the centrality of the living body in the construction of social identity." -- Thomas F. DeFrantz, Duke University, Professor of African American Studies and Dance, Duke University
"The mulata body dances off the page. Blanco Borelli writes her way through the Cuban siren-call of the hips. Her bi-lingual and seductive language privileges rumor and corporeality while engaging with rich histories sprung from archival research." -- Anita Gonzalez, Professor of Theatre and Drama, University of Michigan
About the Author
Melissa Blanco Borelli is a Senior Lecturer in Dance in the Drama and Theatre Department at Royal Holloway, University of London. She established the first joint honours programme in Drama and Dance at Royal Holloway. She is the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen* (OUP, 2014). She has published in *Women and Performance*, *The International Journal of Screen Dance*, and the *International Journal of Performing Arts and Digital Media*.