



“¡Afrocubanismo!” parade in Banff, 1994

**Canada’s centre of excellence** for the performing arts, the Banff Centre in Alberta, has also maintained a long tradition of collaboration with Cuba. The first well known Cuban artist to become a resident instructor there was the composer Leo Brouwer in 1981. Laura Alonso, director of the Cuban company Prodanza, was a faculty member at Banff’s dance program for six summers from 1981 to 1987. More recently, in 1994 and 1996 the Banff Centre mounted two extensive multi-disciplinary festivals of Cuban arts, entitled “¡Afrocubanismo!” which covered lectures on music, religion and jazz, to outdoor performances and parades against the spectacular backdrop of Alberta’s Rocky Mountains.

**In the visual arts**, Canadian-born artist Arnold Belkin was the winner of the prize at the first ever Havana Biennial in 1984. Belkin grew up in Vancouver but moved to Mexico in the 1940s, where he became the foremost inheritor of the great Mexican muralist tradition. His prize-winning mural depicting Emiliano Zapata can be seen today in the Casa Benito Juárez in Old Havana. Cuban graphic arts have also made an impact in Canada. In 1994, the University of Quebec in Montreal organized the largest ever exhibition of Cuban poster art, based on the collection of posters sent over the years to the National Film Board of Canada by its Cuban counter-part, ICAIC.



Mural by Arnold Belkin,  
awarded Havana Biennial  
Prize in 1984