



GRACE & GRIT
CUBA
DON DILLON

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Cuba: Grace and Grit
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For the people of Cuba - whose grace and grit
endure through every hardship and challenge.



GRACE & GRIT

Cuba first entered my life through the glowing screen of a black and white television set. Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, played masterfully by real-life husband and wife, Lucile Ball and Desi Arnaz made I love Lucy an American classic and sparked my interest in all things Cuban. For a kid growing up in a small town on Route 66 in Arizona, Cuba seemed like a far-off, exotic and exciting place. Later, the island turned darker, gripped by revolution, embargo and the looming shadow of the Cold War.

Forbidden places always call the loudest. When the door cracked open to visit Cuba after years of being completely walled off, I stepped through - first with the University of Arizona and then with the Bronx Art Museum guided by the artists, whispers and a hunger to understand the real Cuba. These initial forays were followed by two intensive street photography workshops led by master photographer and storyteller, Steve Simon.

What I found was not the Cuba of headlines or American history books but a country that survives on grace and grit, where hardship and honor live side by side and beauty insists on being seen - even through rust, ruin and ration lines.

These photographs are my attempt to listen with my eyes; to honor beauty and resilience of the Cuban people and to show the poetry they live, even when life is anything but poetic.

Don Dillon, 2026



































KELLY ABSTRACT

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LIBRE















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Don Dillon is a street photographer who grew up in Holbrook, Arizona, a town with a wild-west past along historic Route 66, where early exposure to travel and everyday human interaction shaped his way of seeing. His work has been influenced through study and workshops with Peter Turnley, Eric Kim, Steve Simon and Al Satterwhite, and through photographing in cities including New York, Hanoi, Tokyo, Havana, Lisbon, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Paris and Milan. He cites the life story and work of Vivian Maier as a lasting influence. Dillon's photography focuses on fleeting, unrepeatable moments observed in the street. This book reflects that ongoing pursuit.

