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Libros Para el Pueblo were created by celebrated writers, including:
Enrique Sánchez Cappa, Benji Donniger, Carmen Isales, José Nuñez López, José Luis Vivas Maldonado, René Marqués, Domingo Silas Ortiz, Ramón Ruiz Ramírez, Pedro Juan Soto, Olga Menéndez de Simón, Emilio Díaz Valsaced, Fred Wals.
The División de Educación a la Comunidad (Division of Community Education, or DivEdCo) was a government agency in Puerto Rico from 1948 to 1989. DivEdCo hired many talented young Puerto Rican artists to create attractive educational content in different formats (print, film and publication) to raise awareness on issues deemed important by government policymakers. They produced educational materials to be disseminated and enjoyed by the mainly rural communities on the island. Nowadays, the DivEdCo collection showcases the works of a very talented group of artists, which have become iconic images representing Puerto Rican artistic expression.

DivEdCo left an unparalleled legacy to Puerto Rico and art lovers because they nurtured and supported a plethora of incoming young Puerto Rican artists like no other organization had done before or since. This exhibit includes works by several renowned artists, including Manuel Acevedo Hernández, Isabel Bernal, Juan Díaz, José Manuel Figueroa, Hidalgo, Lorenzo Homar, Antonio Maldonado, José Meléndez Contreras, Carlos Raquel Rivera, Julio Rosado del Valle, Rafael Tufiño, and Eduardo Vera Cortés.

The pamphlets/booklets series titled Libros para el pueblo (Books for the People) were written by well-recognized literary figures and meant to be read in study groups gathered around the bateyes. Building up the DivEdCo Libros para el pueblo collection in the Centro Library has been a slow process. The books’ dates span from 1951 to 1975. We acquired 32 out of 40 issues either by purchase or by donations from our patrons including many first, second and even third editions.

DivEdCo’s rich cultural legacy is held in high esteem in Puerto Rico and Latin America. These artists and the Puerto Rican government defined Puerto Rican art and culture on the island during that time period, and those standards remain to this day. Furthermore, all these materials are important sources to frame Puerto Rican history and culture during those four decades. Most of these works have been recognized as veritable art pieces deserving to be preserved, treasured and exhibited beyond the island.

This exhibition does not pretend to be a nostalgic journey to a long-lost era. Instead, we need to understand that this work was part of a broader cultural and political initiative that left unique treasures to Puerto Ricans and to the world. We also hope to examine these educational materials’ artistic content and the impact they made on the Puerto Rican art scene, and to the Puerto Rican communities in this country.

Pedro Juan Hernández
Senior Archivist, Centro Library & Archives
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