

# THE ACCURSED CIRCUMSTANCE

Virgilio Piñera Centennial Conference  
at Stony Brook University

The Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature at Stony Brook University presents

**“The Accursed Circumstance”:** Virgilio Piñera Centennial Conference  
*at Stony Brook University*  
Thursday November 8, 2012  
Wang Center, Lecture Hall 1

**1:00 PM | Antonio José Ponte and Ana María Dopico: A Conversation**

Ponte and Dopico will discuss the vital importance of Virgilio Piñera’s work and life to genealogies of political dissent and the protection of artistic freedom. Antonio José Ponte is an internationally known Cuban fiction writer, consummate essayist, and poet living in exile in Madrid. Ana María Dopico is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at New York University, where she teaches comparative studies of the Americas with special emphasis on Cuban and Caribbean contexts and the Global South.

**2:30PM | Provostial Lecture with Thomas F. Anderson: “Virgilio Piñera Lost in Translations: A Cuban Author’s Struggle to Create an International Legacy”**

Thomas F. Anderson will address the anxiety-ridden final years of the life of Cuban author Virgilio Piñera (1912-1979), with a special focus on Piñera’s hapless efforts to have his works translated into major European languages. Departing from information gleaned largely from some 100 unpublished letters by Piñera to a life-long friend, Anderson will discuss how translation projects gone awry with prestigious publishing houses such as Alfred A. Knopf in the U.S., Feltrinelli Editore in Italy, and Éditions Gallimard in France, contributed significantly to the Cuban author’s legacy of oblivion.

Thomas F. Anderson is William M. Scholl Professor of Latin American Literature at the University of Notre Dame and the author of *Everything in Its Place: The Life and Works of Virgilio Piñera* (Bucknell University Press, 2006)

*Reception to follow*

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“The Accursed Circumstance”:

**Virgilio Piñera Centennial Conference** is a two-day conference in tribute to Virgilio Piñera in the centennial of his birth.

Virgilio Piñera (Cuba, 1912 -1979) is among the most renowned, prolific, and influential of Cuban writers in the twentieth century. He was a poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, and journal editor. Since his writerly beginnings, Piñera faced down repression courageously, spending a

long exile in Argentina from 1946 to 1958. During the first decade of the Cuban Revolution, Piñera enjoyed literary success in his homeland, winning the Casa Las Américas Award for his play *Dos viejos pánicos* in 1968. Sadly and tragically, with the advent of the Revolution's increasingly hardline cultural policy and institutionalized homophobia, Piñera spent his last decade marginalized because of his political dissent and homosexuality. Since 1971 and until very recently Piñera was essentially banished from all official accounts and cultural memory.

Through 2012, several events honoring his life and work have taken place in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Miami. Stony Brook is proud to join in this long overdue recognition. His work sits at the crossroads of poetics, gender, performance, and politics. Piñera is an essential figure in the emerging global genealogy of gender and queer studies and a cornerstone of performance art and epistemologies of the body.

With the generous support of the FAHSS Interdisciplinary Initiatives Fund, Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Student Affairs, Center for Inclusive Education, Office of the Provost, Office of the Dean of The Graduate School, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center, and the Humanities Institute.