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### **Florida International University introduces *Art of the Americas***

Miami Florida, June 14, 2022. Twenty-four scholars around the globe and a myriad of world-class artists collaborated with a South Florida art teacher to reach out to children with art from their cultures (Venezuela, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Guatemala, and the United States). On June 22-23 Florida International University's Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center will host Rebecca Hinson who will present "Creating the Children's Book Series *Art of the Americas* and How You Can Create Yours," in Room 220 of the MMC Green Library from 1:00-4:00.

For four years, LACC has funded the development of Hinson's twelve South American children's art books for grades 3-8 under their U.S. Department of Education Title VI NRC grant. As a part of the grant, Hinson partners with F.I.U. and Miami-Dade County Public Schools to provide professional development for teachers June 22-23.

"My kindergarten art student, Tomas, never smiled, never spoke, and never looked you in the eye. For years, I tried everything to reach out to him, but nothing worked," stated Hinson. "In fourth grade, I taught his class about the art of Tecún Umán, a Maya prince who fought against the Spanish conquistadors. At the end of that class Tomas rose up out of his seat. He walked over. He looked me in the eye, and he said, 'Thank you'. Of all the things that I had tried, it was the art of his own culture, which spoke to his heart. At that point I realized how powerful that art was and felt that it should be shared. In 2010 I wrote *Tecún Umán* and dedicated it to Tomas Reynoso Juan, my inspiration."

"When children migrate to the United States they sometimes feel ashamed of who they are and where they came from," stated Hinson. "Often schools lack materials which reflect their cultures of origin. My 48 children's books, instill pride in newcomers and teach them about their new country, the United States of America. I just released free audios (with pictures) of six South American books and eighteen other Caribbean, Central American, and North American books in their entirety through Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Follett School Solutions, Amazon, and I sell printed books in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole."

You can see and hear the 24 books on Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/rebeccahinsonpublishing/?hl=en>

You can hear the author:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPsFsWQl-2Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuYKQVdIgW8&t=311s>

Hinson's titles were written for practical application in the K-12 art, history, reading, social studies, ESOL, and foreign language classrooms, with text-dependent questions for each title. Spanish editions were written by Claudia Battistel Tomada, Ph.D. and Gabriela Escobar Rodríguez, Ph.D. Haitian Creole titles were written by Jacques Pierre.

Liesl B. Picard, Associate Director of the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center of the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs of Florida International University stated, "I appreciate Rebecca's continued partnership. I am excited to support her efforts and look forward to our continued work to promote Latin America and the Caribbean."

"Many thanks to Liesl Picard and F.I.U. for their continued support," stated Hinson. "I love working with M-DCPS teachers. They are very scholarly. They show up ready to work!"

"A depth of gratitude goes to my amazing editors, John Robuck, and Richard Lederer. Many thanks to Claudia Battistel Tomada, Gabriela Escobar Rodríguez, and Jacques Pierre for writing fine Spanish and Haitian Creole editions. Many thanks to the gracious scholars who guided me along the way: Marjorie Agosín, Simone Athayde, Roy Bartolomei, Guillermo Duberti, Laura Duberti, Laurent M. Dubois, Brian D. Farrell, Nora Erro-Peralta, Philippe Girard, Richard Lederer, Mary Ellen Miller, Reynaldo Ortiz-Minaya, Walter Paul, Bianca Premo, John Robuck, Inés Quintero, Michael E. Smith, Stuart Schwartz, Orin Starn, Rebecca Stone, Tomás Straka, and Edward Z. Wronsky," stated Hinson.

"If we teach students about where they come from, reading and math scores increase. Every group and every student must feel part of the education process," stated Dr. Bernadette Kelley."

"Can culture drive academic achievement? As a teacher, I understand that a child's connection with their culture is a powerful tool," stated Rebecca Hinson. "If a child sees their culture honored in my classroom, it makes school a place where they belong. If a child sees affirming representations of their culture in my classroom, it is a mirror which says, 'I can succeed here.' My books reflect and validate the identities of students from South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and North America, and provide a window for students to explore other cultures."

Why multicultural art books? The best indicator of future high school graduation is this. Does a child read on grade level by the end of third grade? Of all the large urban school districts in Florida, M-DCPS has the highest third grade reading scores, in spite of the fact that 50% of their students were born outside the U.S.A. "As educators, we understand that culture is a great motivator, especially in a county as diverse as ours," stated Bob

Brazofsky, Executive Director of Social Sciences, who purchased books for M-DCPS. “Exploring their heritages through authentic art excites and entices our students.”

Purchasing books for Palm Beach County School District, Dr. Cathy Pressey stated, “These books and text-dependent questions perfectly align with the Reading Standards of Informational Text and Literacy in History/Social Studies. They are an amazing resource for all students as they meet the challenges of these standards.” She said Hinson had covered cultural groups that large publishers had overlooked, “but they are definitely important.”

“These Central American, Caribbean, and South American stories tap into the prior knowledge of our immigrant students, who are learning English as a second language,” stated Mike Riley, retired Principal of South Grade Elementary in Palm Beach County, Florida. “When students see a familiar picture on the page, it supports engagement and adds meaning to their reading. The U.S.A. books also start from the ground up as they build background knowledge of U.S. history for our ELLs. The text-dependent questions challenge students to delve deeper in their comprehension of the text.”

“A book with 24 pages is less intimidating to ELL students,” stated Angela Gonzalez of the School District of Palm Beach County. “These titles are useful for close reading, read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading.”

Over ten percent of public school students in the United States are designated as English Language Learners. The reading achievement gaps between ELL and non-ELL students in the National Assessment of Educational Progress were 36 points at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level and 44 points at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Hinson’s books implement best practices for increasing reading comprehension of ELLs to bridge these learning gaps.

“My goals are to jump start ELLs out of the silent phase by tapping into their prior knowledge, instill pride in students’ identities by addressing their cultural disconnects, and increase ELL academic performance and graduation rates,” stated Hinson.

“Our students scour the shelves for Hinson’s books,” stated Media Specialist Sarah McKnight of the School District of Palm Beach County. “Our statistics show that her titles have high circulation rates which continue to rise.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded LACC's 2018 proposal, designating it a National Resource Center (NRC) and granting it a Foreign Language and Areas Studies Fellowship (FLAS) for four years. Both grants allow LACC to continue its support of research, training, and access to scholarship funds for languages and understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. This is the thirty-ninth year LACC has been named an NRC since its founding 43 years ago.

Author Rebecca Hinson is a graduate of Duke University and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. She leads workshops in teaching literacy through multicultural art. Editor John Robuck is a journalism graduate of the University of Georgia. Editor Richard

Lederer is the author of 40 books about language, history, and humor. He is the founding co-host of *A Way With Words* on Public Radio.

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Mary Ellen Miller, Ph.D. in History of Art, Yale University.  
Reynaldo Ortiz-Minaya, Ph.D. in Sociology, Binghamton University.  
Walter Paul, Ph.D. Physics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Jacques Pierre, M.A. Kent State University  
Bianca Premo, Ph.D. in History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
John Robuck, B.A. in Journalism, University of Georgia.  
Inés Quintero, Ph.D. in History, Central University of Venezuela  
Michael E. Smith, Ph.D. in Anthropology, University of Illinois.  
Stuart Schwartz, Ph.D. in History, Columbia University  
Orin Starn, Ph.D. in Anthropology, Stanford University  
Rebecca Stone, Ph.D. in History of Art, Yale University  
Tomás Straka, Ph.D. in History, Andrés Bello Catholic University  
Edward Z. Wronsky, Jr., AIA, Master of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania.

<b><i>Art of the Americas: books by Rebecca Hinson</i></b>	
<b><i>Art of the Caribbean</i></b> Carnival Masks Cienfuegos Architecture Citadelle La Ferrière Francisco Oller Independence Jíbaros	<b><i>El arte del Caribe</i></b> Máscaras de carnaval La arquitectura de Cienfuegos Sitadèl Laferyè Francisco Oller Endependans Los jíbaros
<b><i>Art of Central America</i></b> Backstrap Weaving Creation of the Maya Dance of the Deer Legend of Tenochtitlán Tecún Umán The Aztec Calendar Stone	<b><i>El arte de Centroamérica</i></b> El telar de cintura La creación del pueblo maya La danza del venado La leyenda de Tenochtitlán Tecún Umán La piedra del sol
<b><i>Art of South America</i></b> Arpilleras Gauchos Gold of Ancient America Machu Picchu Simón Bolívar Tribal Art	<b><i>El arte de Sudamérica</i></b> Las arpilleras Los gauchos La orfebrería prehispánica Machu Picchu Simón Bolívar El arte de las tribus indígenas
<b><i>Art of the United States of America</i></b> Emancipation Liberty Native American Quilting Statue of Liberty United States Capitol	<b><i>El arte de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica</i></b> La emancipación La lucha por la libertad Pueblos nativos de Norteamérica El arte de acolchar La Estatua de la Libertad El Capitolio de los Estados Unidos

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#ArtLatinAmerica #SocialEmotionalLearning #SchoolDiversity #ArtAmericas  
#WorldArt #FIUArt #ArtCuba #ArtDominicanRepublic #ArtPuertoRico #ArtHaiti  
#ArtMexico #ArtGuatemala #ArtUSA #ArtAmerican #ArtUnitedStates #ArtVenezuela  
#ArtColombia #ArtPeru #ArtChile #ArtArgentina #ArtGauchos #ArtBrazil  
#ArtEducation #arteducationmatters #CelebrateWorldCultures