



Boxing Cuba: From Backyards to World Championship

Michael Schleicher, Katharina Alt

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Boxing is a national sport of Cuba, rivaling baseball as the country's best-loved pastime and with an equally rich history. In the backyards and beaten alleyways of Havana, boys emulate hometown fighters on the international stage. And though Cuban boxers are prohibited from competing professionally, the country has consistently produced world-class boxers admired for their technical perfection and speed.

For *Boxing Cuba*, photographer Katharina Alt gained unprecedented access to the country's boxing schools and world champions to create an insightful chronicle of the noble sport, from the grueling preparations leading up to a fight to the bell that rings on the final round. In the photographs, we see young boys practicing their stance and seasoned fighters squaring off in the open-air rings of Havana's world-famous Rafael Trejo gym. To Alt's expressive portraits of athletes, managers, trainers, and fans, journalist Michael Schleicher has contributed brief chapters corresponding to the twelve rounds of a professional boxing match, taking readers through the changing face of the sport in art and popular culture, from Greek bronzes to the figure of the boxer as iconoclast in Hollywood cinema.

Boxing, as the saying goes, is "life itself," both shaped by and reflected in Cuba's culture, making it a fitting subject for Alt's touching photographic tribute.



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