

# *Guayasamín and Fidel Castro: the story of a painting and their long-lasting friendship*

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May 6, 2020, marked 59 years since Ecuadorian master painter and sculptor Oswaldo Guayasamín created the first of four oil painting portraits of Fidel Castro.

Radio Havana Cuba journalist Pedro Martínez Pérez made that first Havana encounter between Fidel and Guayasamín possible -- the beginning of a close friendship between the Cuban revolutionary leader and the painter of Ibero-America that lasted until Guayasamín's death on March 10th, 1999.

In statements to Cuban press, Pablo Guayasamín, son of the Ecuadorian master painter and sculptor, said that unfortunately that first portrait of Fidel was lost, and is only known from photographs, although the story of Guayasamín's arrival in Havana and Fidel's posing on May 6, at the headquarters of the Cuban Friendship Institute is well documented.

The President of the Oswaldo Guayasamin Foundation recalled that over 38 years of friendship Guayasamín created three other portraits of Fidel, the originals of which are well-preserved and treasured here in Cuba.

In 2002, three years after his death, Guayasamín's masterwork, La Capilla del Hombre ("The Chapel of Man"), was completed and opened to the public.

Fidel Castro attended the opening ceremony in Quito, Ecuador, on November 29th, 2002. In his remarks, Fidel said: 'Guayasamin was perhaps the most noble, transparent and humane person I have ever met. He painted with the speed of light and his dimension, as a human being, was boundless.'



**Radio Habana Cuba**