First of all I will like to thank to the Stone Center Graduate Student Summer Field Research Grant Committee, for awarded me this travel grant to conduct field research in Miami over the summer of 2015. My current immigration status does not allow me to leave the country so I truly appreciate the possibility that this committee gave me.

I conducted research at the Cuban Heritage Collection (CHC) at the University of Miami, whose mission is to collects, preserves, and provides access to primary and secondary sources of enduring historical, research, and art factual value which relate to Cuba and the Cuban diaspora from colonial times to the present. Therefore I knew this was one of the few places where I could find more information about the Mariel boatlift that happened in 1980 and mainly about the visual artist that immigrate from Cuba to the United States through this boatlift.

Some of the visual artists that were part of this immigration wave became visible in Miami, among the cultural sector of an earlier Cuban migration but with the distinction of belonging to the Mariel exodus. Therefore my intent at the archive was to look for this visibility. To find how such distinction of belonging to the Mariel exodus affected their performance as visual artists. I wanted to see in which art circuits they could insert their works, in which spaces were presented and which was the reference of the press about the work of these artists that had also the status of being "marielitos".

No better place than the CHC for this purpose, featuring donations from private files of some of the most important figures of the cultural and political history of Cuban immigrants to the United States. Indeed the research was productive; I could find some photographs, brochures of expositions, catalogues, and press clippings about these artists. While at the same time I confirm my thesis that there is not much written about this group of artists.

Althothough my interest of research was well focus on the life and work of these artists, I invested some time in looking into some collections that didn't add to my research but because their denomination had to do with the Miami’s art scene was It was mandatory consultation. However my inquiry at the CHC in July allowed me to locate five relevant collections for my research. These were:

1) The Artist Files.
This collection is arranged into two series. Series 1, artist files (personal names); and Series 2, gallery files. Materials in each series are arranged alphabetically by last name or gallery/venue name.
- Series 1: Artist files (personal names) contains files on individual visual artists, including show catalogs, promotional materials, postcards and programs for galleries, and other ephemera relating to the work of individuals. Materials are organized alphabetically by last name in each box.
Folder 2: Abreu, Juan
Folder 15: Alfonzo, Carlos
Folder 63: Briel, Ernesto
Folder 138: Curras & Curras
Folder 230: González, Casimiro
Folder 239: González-Sánchez, Félix
Folder 324: Marino, Gilberto
Folder 386: Ordoqui, Miguel
Folder 419: Pino, Trinidad M.
Folder 505: Selgas, Jesús

Series 2: Gallery files. Series two contains exhibit catalogs, announcements, and other ephemera related to group shows at art galleries featuring multiple Cuban artists or of galleries that support and regularly exhibit Cuban art.

Folder 2: Absolut Mariel Overview
Folder 3: Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes (San Alejandro)
Folder 78: Cintas Foundation Inc.
Folder 201: Mariel Boatlift Painter (just an exhibition)
Folder 280: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

2) The Vertical Files: Cuban Diaspora
This is a collection of ephemera, clippings, articles, and other items collected about various topics related to the Cuban Diaspora. These files range in dates and topics, but are organized by name of the subject that the materials represent.
  - Series 1 Item 63: Artists – New York.
  - Series 1 Item 598: Cuban Exile 1980.

3) Cuban Museum of Arts and Culture Records. The Cuban Museum of Arts and Culture Records contains institutional records and historical materials produced and/or collected by the Cuban Museum of Arts in Culture during its operation in the late 20th century in Miami. Materials include financial records, official correspondence, board of directors meetings minutes, policies and procedures, exhibition planning documents, project proposals, artists’ files, and resumes.

4) Carlos M. Luis Papers. He was a Cuban-born writer, art critic and curator active in the Cuban art scene both on the island and in exile.

5) Juan Boza Papers. The Juan Boza papers contain clippings, photographs, legal documents, press releases, correspondence, resumes and programs related to Cuban artist Juan Boza (1941-1991), mostly during his time in exile in New York City, New York.
Also through the book *Voces del Mariel: Historia Oral del Éxodo Cubano de 1980* by José García (which is not part of the inter-librarian loan service) I was able to read a brief but important interview to the Mariel painter Miguel Ordoqui.

For the sake of the space in this report I will explain in general terms the relevant results and findings of this field research. By being able to examine these documents I could confirm my hypothesis that the visual artist that immigate to the United States within the Mariel Exodus of 1980 also suffered the stigma that the scholarship on this event ascribed to their participants. This was the stigma of being a “marielito” and therefore a marginal entity, above their artistic skills and personal values. It is shown by the fact that on most of the catalogues, press release and critics on the collective exhibitions where these artists gather to show their art, referred to them as artist “from Mariel”. I could find that there was a lack of an artistic and curatorial purpose other than showing their work as “marielitos”.

Another discovered important aspect through the investigation of these collections is that out of Miami, in cities like New York or Chicago, it was easier for these artists to take some distance from their condition of being a “marielito”. With these images I can prove another of my hypothesis that is that Miami as a highly politicized city for being the fundamental center of Cuban Immigration in the United States, clinched the stigma of the ones that came within the Mariel boatlift.

These main findings truly add to my research so I can be able to reach a better understanding of how did these artist developed their work after coming to the United States within such an controversial and unique event as the Mariel boatlift of 1980.

Last but not least, thanks to this grant I was able to visit the Perez Museum of Art of Miami, one of the main institutions that houses the Cuban art from both outside and inside the island. On this occasion the Museum exhibited the collective show “Poetics of Relation” that responds to Miami as a site defined culturally by its diasporic communities. It showed the work of very important international artists such as Tony Cappellan and Xaviera Simmons, while “exploring the shifts in the sensibilities and global outlook of artists whose work connect the historical legacy of trauma caused by colonialism and migration”\(^1\). These views truly engage with my interest in analyzing the discourse of visual artist towards the migration phenomenon and allowed me to gain a better understanding of the visual artist’s identity as an immigrant.

\(^1\) Introductory words of the exhibition.