

NEWS

POSTED DECEMBER 31, 2014

Artist Tania Bruguera and Others Detained in Havana [UPDATED]

The artist Tania Bruguera and at least three others—Antonio Rodiles, Eliezer Avila, and Reinaldo Escobar—were being held in detention Tuesday by the Cuban government in Havana. Bruguera was in Cuba to stage *Yo También Exijo* (I also demand), an open-mic performance and protest at 3 PM that day at Revolution Square.

According to the *New York Times*: “Bruguera’s plan was the first test of whether the Obama administration’s decision to normalize relations with Cuba earlier this month would prod the Castro regime to be more tolerant of critical voices. Disappointingly, but not surprisingly, the government barred prominent critics, including Ms. Bruguera, from reaching the square.”

The Guardian, and the *Miami Herald* have also released reports about the detentions. The curator Octavio Zaya wrote on Facebook: “While some sources mention that [Bruguera] is under house arrest, witness accounts reiterate that [she] was taken to the infamous Villa Maurista, the notorious headquarters of the Castro regime’s secret police and intelligence. Deborah Bruguera has stated that her sister was not allowed to have any lawyer with her at the moment of her arrest.”

Bruguera is known for work that tests the limits of state censorship and other forms of control. In another piece, *El Susurro de Tatlin #6* (Tatlin’s Whisper #6)—which art historian Claire Bishop documented in her 2009 *Artforum* report from the tenth Havana Biennial—Bruguera invited participants to individually mount a podium in the Centro Wifredo Lam and told them they would have freedom of speech for one minute each.

Updates continue to be posted in Spanish to the Facebook page for *Yo También Exijo*.

UPDATE, December 31, 2014, 4:35 PM: According to the Twitter and Facebook accounts for *Yo También Exijo*, artist Tania Bruguera was released from detention in Cuba earlier today. Bruguera called for a press conference at 4 PM today in Havana at the Monumento al Maine Convoca. Before the press conference, however, sources report that she was arrested again.

UPDATE, January 1, 2015: Tania Bruguera is reportedly back at home in Havana. The Facebook page for *Yo También Exijo* reports that Bruguera will not be able to leave Cuba for several months. According to a press release from *Yo También Exijo*, Bruguera is being charged with “resistance and disruption of public order,” which she plans to contest.

UPDATE, January 2, 2015, 7:30 AM: The *New York Times*’s Randal C. Archibold reports that Bruguera was arrested for a third time last night. She had gone to Havana’s prison processing center to demand the release of other detainees.

“The government did the work for me,” she told AFP’s Rigoberto Diaz during an interview Thursday between her second and third arrests. “They changed the meaning of the work, giving a lesson in intolerance ... All they did was create chaos.”

A petition has begun to circulate calling for the release of Bruguera and all other citizens detained in relation to *Yo También Exijo*.



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