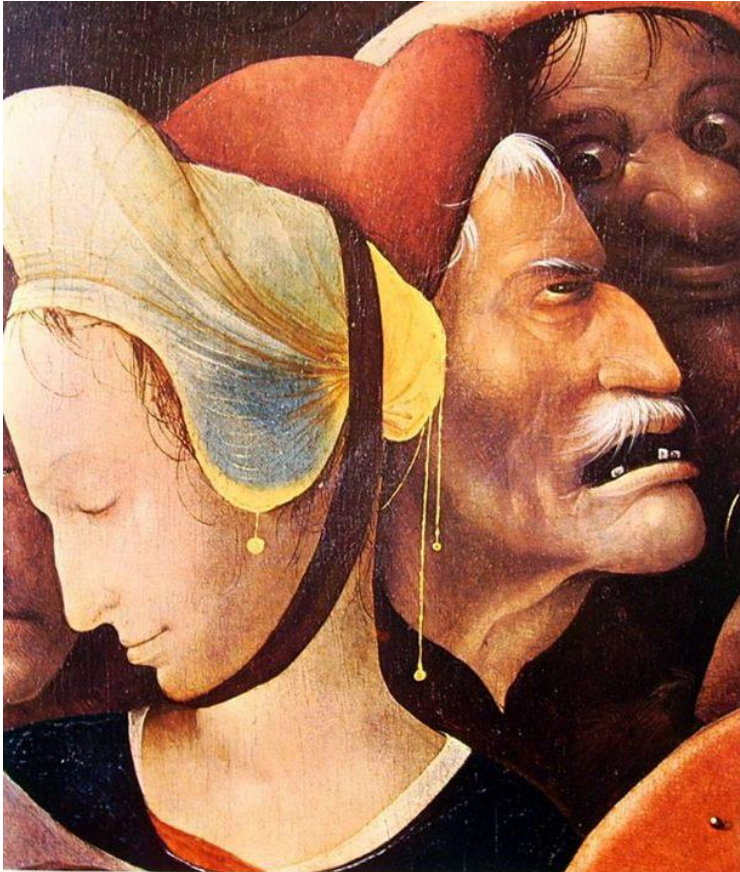


No one is going to die, especially not now



Christ Carrying the Cross . Detail . Bosch . 1510-1535 . Oil on panel . 29 in x 32 in

In notes I've recently seen from people who love me and who are outside of Cuba, there is a recurring argument that doesn't respond to my intentions and that implies a figure that has never been interesting to me: the martyr.

To cast this work from the concept of Martyrology seems problematic to me since it implies transforming its political characteristics into a sentimental event.

To speak from the image of the martyr is to focus attention upon the person and their sacrifices and not upon the themes that they propose to discuss or the system that they propose to confront. In contrast to an activist the martyr is made to bear the burden of guilt because they know in advance that their cause is destined to lose, which exempts responsibility from the system. To create the image of the martyr is to create an emotional reaction instead of creating, for example, a space of discussion about current Cuban reality so that we can all participate in the future of Cuba.

You can't be a martyr when you believe with so much conviction that freedom of expression and the penalization of violence due to political hate will one day be established in Cuba.

I would say that a person can only become a martyr if they are abandoned and therefore made more vulnerable to the abuse of the system; in that case a martyr is the responsibility of everyone. But if, on the contrary, those for whom Cuba hurts, were able to return (not as economic repatriates but as citizens who come to participate in civil society) then instead of martyrs (that is, victims) we'd have heroes (that is, victors) and everything would be different.

In my specific case, I have not come back to self-immolate. I am an artist that came to make my work (who also has a right to make myself in Cuba) I am a Cuban that wants the best for all Cubans (not only for those who are in power).

Now, I agree with those who have written and argued that the authorities are acting clumsily, and I have let my presiding officer and those security agents who have come to speak with me know it. But sometimes the point is not to be intelligent but to demonstrate more force, to emphasize that you can't do what you want and so the price of clumsiness seems less important if you reach your objective. If you ask me, all of this has been constructed by their clumsiness, had they let the performance take place none of this would have happened, but fear is also very clumsy.

I agree with everyone that expresses that I should have all charges dropped (and extend that to everyone implicated in my case) but that would mean acknowledging that they are wrong, and I would like that to happen, for them to say in front of everyone that they have made a mistake, but it seems there is not much of a precedent for that.

In so far as the passport (I would have to add that there are three legal charges that weigh upon me, and I am awaiting the Prosecutor's decision) It's not just about getting a passport returned, but rather of obtaining legal guarantees that ensure the possibility of returning to Cuba. Up until now any mention of returning my passport is as a definitive exit and I can't accept that. The solution to Cuba is not to throw all of those that make the government uncomfortable out of the country. The solution to Cuba cannot be to impede the return of Cubans until they have "learned their lesson." Cuba is not a house with a few people, but a country that belongs to everyone.

PS- A NOTE FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE CREATED A DISCUSSION THROUGH PERSONAL ATTACKS. It is always better to lick one's own wound rather than to spit in the eye of another.

We have all made mistakes because we have all been implicated in the traps set out by this society. What's important is to propose a public discussion based on what people have done (good or bad depending on who the observer is) as a social phenomenon in which we have all participated. It is not generative to make personalized accusations but rather to focus on what has transpired from the perspective of how it functions within a system (of art or power) and therefore reach a better understanding of how to change it, so that we can have a better Cuba. Furthermore, who is benefitted from Cubans behaving like a pack of fighting dogs? Who is benefitted when the few Cuban artists who have had the courage to defend me (although perhaps we're not in agreement about everything that's being argued) quit doing so at some point because they're tired of having to defend themselves from a witch hunt? May whoever is perfect write the first personal attack.

Tania Bruguera
June 19, 2015
Havana, Cuba