

## **Tania Bruguera invites the public to an open conversation at her home (Tejadillo #214, between Aguacate and Compostela)**



PRESS RELEASE # 8

**Cuban artist Tania Bruguera invited the public to an open conversation this Friday, March 13, at 5 p.m. (EST) at her home (Tejadillo #214, lower level, between Aguacate and Compostela in Old Havana) after learning that Cuba's State Security (the counterintelligence service) in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture has produced an audiovisual presentation about her which has been shown at meetings held at the Instituto Superior de Arte and the Wifredo Lam Center.**

**The conversation is directed primarily at those who are invited to those meetings.** "I want to present my version of events. I'll address doubts and discuss my artistic and political positions. The more they pressure me, the more certain I am about what I think," Bruguera said. "I've even invited my instructor, the parole officer assigned by State Security to my case, who already responded that she would be unable to attend because she'll be out of town that day."

During the conversation, the materials published through the #YoTambienExijo platform will be available for copying. "We will establish a safe space for dialogue without fear because it will be transparent," said Bruguera. "I've never felt freer in my own country and I would like others to be able to share that feeling."

**"I would like to have the right to respond and defend myself, which has been officially denied to me in my country,"** Tania said in a press statement released by #YoTambienExijo. "I would hope to have a guarantee of freedom of movement to my own home in Old Havana, and the right to receive guests in my own private space and have a peaceful conversation without fear of reprisals or acts of repudiation."

**State security and the Ministry of Culture have met with representatives from the cultural community to “transmit the official version” about the performance that had been planned for December 30 at the Plaza of the Revolution and about the artist’s life and work.** According to Bruguera, counterintelligence agents were in attendance at those meetings. #YoTambienExijo has learned the meetings were led by Rubén del Valle, President of the Council of Visual Arts, with assistance from a counterintelligence agent. “At these meetings, they have presented the official position about the performance, ‘Tatlin’s Whisper #6’, which had been planned for the Plaza of the Revolution, and the official version of my political motivations.

**“I’m constantly engaged in psychological warfare.”**

“As an artist and a citizen, I presented myself at Del Valle’s office last week. When he realized I was there to ask about the meetings and what had been said and presented, he screamed at me, saying he did not have to submit to my interrogation. He continued screaming and yelling and I was finally expelled from his office.

“This week, I delivered a letter to the Ministry of Culture officially requesting a meeting with Fernando Rojas, the vice minister of culture, whom I’ve been told by various sources appears in a video explaining the official position,” said the artist. “In the letter, I request access to the material presented about me and my work which has been distributed without my consent and outside any legal process or space.”

“A lawyer informed me I have the right to see the materials because they were divulged in a public space.” It’s a legal liability to deliberately create a negative public opinion among those who might be called to testify at a hearing about a person currently awaiting prosecutorial charges,” said Bruguera.

“None of the people who told me about what was said about me realized in the moment that I was still in Cuba, that my passport has been withheld, that I’d been made to wear prisoner garb, that I’d been arrested three times, that I’d spent two nights in a cell at the Acosta and 10th of October police station, nor that I’m waiting for a decision by the prosecutor that has been put off various times.

**“At a meeting this week with State Security I was told they’d asked for another 30 day extension before bringing charges against me.** Agents also made references to my family. They’ve asked about my nephew, and they’re monitoring my conversations with my sister. I’m engaged in constant psychological warfare. They’ve worked very arduously to disrupt my relationships with other artists and now the tour de force is aimed at my intimate circle,” said Bruguera.