

# Being Cuban



A friend from 'outside' with whom I had never talked about politics, our conversations were always sporadic and on art, just call me to tell me that she spoke to a friend about what has happened to me. This friend of my friend, whom I do not know, in his eagerness to help has called the Ambassador of Cuba in his country to talk about my case. He received the following response (Quote) "*Tania is not a resident of Cuba and you should not touch that subject.*"

On two previous occasions, the Cuban government has solved the problem saying that I am not Cuban. These two occasions have been: the first one was after the performance in Bogotá in 2009, a newspaper called the Cuban Embassy to know the opinion of Cuban representatives on my work and the response was that *I was not Cuban, therefore they did not have nothing to declare*. The second time was after my presentation on the Commission for the cultural rights and freedom of artistic expression in the United Nations in Geneva in 2012, when the representative of Cuba approached the person who organised the event to demand for inviting me, because I was not Cuban (although the event was aimed to global issues), adding later that I was an exiled, conveying an ideological tendency that would invalidate my statements (although these do not mention Cuba) [http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/files/manifesto\\_on\\_artists\\_rights\\_-\\_eng.pdf](http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/files/manifesto_on_artists_rights_-_eng.pdf). He talked close to me, I never knew if the idea was that I would hear him or only threaten with his vote.

This is the third time that I am aware that the Cuban government has denied that I am Cuban. I have been very stubborn and I never wanted to get a passport from another country, even if that would make me live easier. I have the bad habit of thinking that things do not have to be done to make life easier, but to render meaning to life.

In this whirl of negative and pressures, I also include an email dated in 2013, from the Superior Art Institute (Instituto Superior de Arte) of Cuba to the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, to inform them that they would not allow the visit of French students if I was the teacher who took them to the trip, and they told (not asked) the French institution to send another teacher instead. Luckily that tone does not work with everyone.

Some days ago I found out that a friend from the art world mentioned that when boarding the plane coming to Cuba, she was advised by a person of the company of tourist packages in Miami that she could not contact me. I have not yet received her call, I don't know if she will be gone already. Anyhow it is good to know that the strategy of isolation of the Cuban government includes foreigners who come to visit Cuba.

All this makes me wonder whether the Cuban government denies that I am Cuban as a way to prevent persons who are concerned about me, to contact diplomatic, political and cultural institutions to make them responsible for what is happening to me.

Solidarity now resides in saying things as they are for everyone to know and to take them into account when thinking about what it is to be Cuban.

Tania Bruguera

February 12, 2015