

# ARTFORUM

## Tania Bruguera

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

701 Mission Street

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This survey of work created between 1985 and 2017 includes all of what Tania Bruguera calls her long-term projects, which intervene in a sustained way, sometimes for years, with artistic, civic, and economic institutions, to create real alternative models for how power is exercised and circulated. Such projects include *Immigrant Movement International (IMI)*, 2010–, which has resulted in a working think tank, experimental lab for activist practices, and physical community space for refugees and immigrants.

Rather than merely document and circumscribe these activism-oriented performance works in the gallery, many have been updated for current political conditions. For example, *IMI* finds a new iteration in *The Party of Migrant People's Assembly*, 2017, which curates new conversations with Bay Area organizations devoted to immigrants' rights. Even more ambitiously, the museum has commissioned a fully functioning eight-week alternative art school in one of its main galleries: the *Escuela de Arte Útil* (School of Useful Art), 2017, organized by Bruguera, which expands and exemplifies her conception of an art that is pragmatic and mobilizing.

The overall effect is of a living, breathing, voracious practice, rather than a contained set of historical artifacts. The careful presentation of the artist's work also results in set pieces that call for audience activation, as with the staging of *Tatlin's Whisper #6 (Havana Version)*, 2009, an open mic that offered a platform for Cuban citizens to talk freely. Its reappearance here is a powerful reminder not just that Bruguera was arrested in 2014 before she could reperform the piece, but that there must be someone to speak in order for it to be realized.

— Monica Westin



Tania Bruguera, *Tatlin's Whisper #6 (Havana Version)*, 2009, mixed media, dimensions variable.

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