

Art World (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world>)

## Pussy Riot to Be First Resident Artists in Tania Bruguera Crowdfunding Initiative

Trevor Paglen is also on the list.

Christian Viveros-Fauné (<https://news.artnet.com/about/christian-viveros-faun%C3%A9-374>), March 25, 2016



Pussy Riot.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Cuba has made plenty of headlines this week. For starters, Barack Obama officially [closed the book on the Cold War](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/22/remarks-president-obama-people-cuba) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/22/remarks-president-obama-people-cuba>) March 20 by becoming the first US President to visit Cuba in nearly a century. During the visit, Obama conferred privately with Raul Castro, held a strained joint press conference with the Cuban President, met a dozen of the island's political dissidents, and subsequently took in the first game between a Major League club—the Tampa Bay Rays—and the Cuban national team in 17 years. Behind the scenes, Cuba's creative and political communities were girding for the coming fight for freedom of expression on the island.

As Obama's plane touched down in Havana on Sunday more than 60 people were rounded up in a first wave of arrests that lasted the entirety of the President's trip. Among those detained were members of the "Ladies in White," a group made up of relatives of political prisoners, the rapper Angel Yunier Remon, known as "El Critico," punk rocker Gorki Águila, and the artist Danilo Maldonado, alias "El Sexto"—who spent 10 months in detention without charge in 2015 for staging a public art performance. All were involved in doing what people around the world and all artists take for granted: exercising their right to free speech.



"El Sexto" aka Danilo Madonado Machado being arrested yesterday.  
Photo: courtesy Pollock Fine Art.

Conspicuously absent from this wave of recent arrests was the artist Tania Bruguera, who was detained three times in Havana last year after planning a performance in Havana's *Plaza de la Revolución* and forcibly kept from traveling out of the country for eight months by Cuban authorities. Far from evading her creative and political responsibilities during Obama's visit, the artist was busy in New York and San Francisco doing something both pragmatic and novel. Known for "turning ideas into civic actions," Bruguera transformed a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign into one of her characteristic works of "activism," or "useful art."

A campaign intended to benefit the [Institute of Activism Hannah Arendt \(https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/850321425/institute-of-activism-instituto-de-artivismo-hanna\)](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/850321425/institute-of-activism-instituto-de-artivismo-hanna) (INSTAR)—a performance-cum-free-speech-organization the artist launched during the 12<sup>th</sup> Havana Biennial—Bruguera's drive will fund a fledgling institution self-defined as "a platform for socially engaged art" that looks to push for practical results on the island beyond the reestablishment of US-Cuba diplomatic relations. According to a recent press release, the organization says it aims to erect "a cultural project which will help eliminate political violence, generate jobs with fair pay for those living in Cuba, and promote the role of art as an agent of social change in response to a specific political moment."



Tania Bruguera and curator Pablo Leon de Barra (left) pose next to the roadworks outside Bruguera's Havana house.  
Photo via: Pablo Leon de La Barra.

While that may sound grandly ambitious, Bruguera's organization has wasted no time in finding boldface names to attach to INSTAR's timely explorations of the links between art and politics. One of her principal missions is to create an activist artist's residency, which is set to launch when the institute reopens its doors in September in Bruguera's former home in the crumbling Old Havana neighborhood.

The first residents to be announced are the Russian collective Pussy Riot. The second is the Palestinian artist Khaled Jarrar, who was denied permission to travel to the US by Israeli authorities for the 2014 New Museum exhibition "Here and Elsewhere." Also scheduled to visit INSTAR is the surveillance artist Trevor Paglen. All three artists have years of experience in promoting free speech in the face of government opposition.

"Besides the fact that these are great artists, the exposure these residents bring to the institute is very important," Bruguera told artnet NEWS this week. "The Cuban government will look ridiculous if they don't let artists like Pussy Riot into the country."



Screenshot of *House of Cards*.  
Image: Courtesy of Netflix.com.

Besides acting as a magnet for well-known international artists, INSTAR is also designed, Bruguera says, to serve a basic pedagogical function. “It will be a real-life school for useful art, a place where artists and activists can both learn and teach the ABCs of civics,” declares the Hugo Boss Prize-shortlisted artist who is also the first artist in residence for Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. “What keeps me up at night is not what’s happening today in Cuba, but what may happen tomorrow, unless people learn about and recognize their rights as citizens.”

Take the workshop the Palestinian Jarrar has designed, for instance: It will use both the artist’s background as an ex-bodyguard for the late chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat, and the current penchant of Cuban police to violently repress the free speech of their fellow citizens. “I want to teach them how to use their weapons to make [Jackson Pollock](http://www.artnet.com/artists/jackson-pollock/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/jackson-pollock/>)-style abstract paintings,” Jarrar says when reached by phone in Ramallah. “Many armies and police forces are taught that they are superior to their fellow citizens. The idea with this workshop will be for the police to recognize themselves in other people and to control their aggression in order to make it productive.”

Another form of backing for INSTAR has come in the form of admiring blog posts, a recent one coming from Kickstarter co-founder Yancey Strickler. Writing on the crowdfunding platform’s blog this week, Strickler penned the following: “Freedom of expression is a value many of us take for granted, but not everyone enjoys. We believe deeply in the power of art to transform the world for the better and support a future where artists and creators all over the world can express themselves freely. We’re thrilled Tania has decided to bring her idea to life on Kickstarter. Today we’re excited to stand with that community fighting for freedom of expression by backing Tania’s project as an organization. We hope you’ll stand with us, too.”



### Shooting in Ramallah

from [Khaled Jarrar](#)

The way INSTAR's Kickstarter campaign operates is not unlike public radio's pledge drives: The artist offers a series of gifts in exchange for promised funding that ranges from \$1 for having your name inscribed on one of INSTAR's walls to \$10,000 for a personalized tour of Havana and several nights of lodging at the institute. In fact, INSTAR, Bruguera tells artnet News, is on the verge of announcing a new raft of "thank you" gifts.

Free expression, the artist seems to be saying, comes at the minimum price of involvement. At time of publication, the project's Kickstarter ticker is \$54,902, or a little more than halfway to the stated \$100,000, with 14 days left to go on the campaign. In the words of NPR, "Give early and shorten the fund drive."

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### Tania Bruguera Artist-in-Residence at Mayor's Office

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## Brussels Museum Reopens With Increased Security Following Terrorist Attacks

The Bozar Museum has few visitors, but high hopes.

Rain Embuscado (<https://news.artnet.com/about/rain-embuscado-297>), March 24, 2016



Bozar Museum.

Photo: Courtesy of Bozar Museum's Instagram.

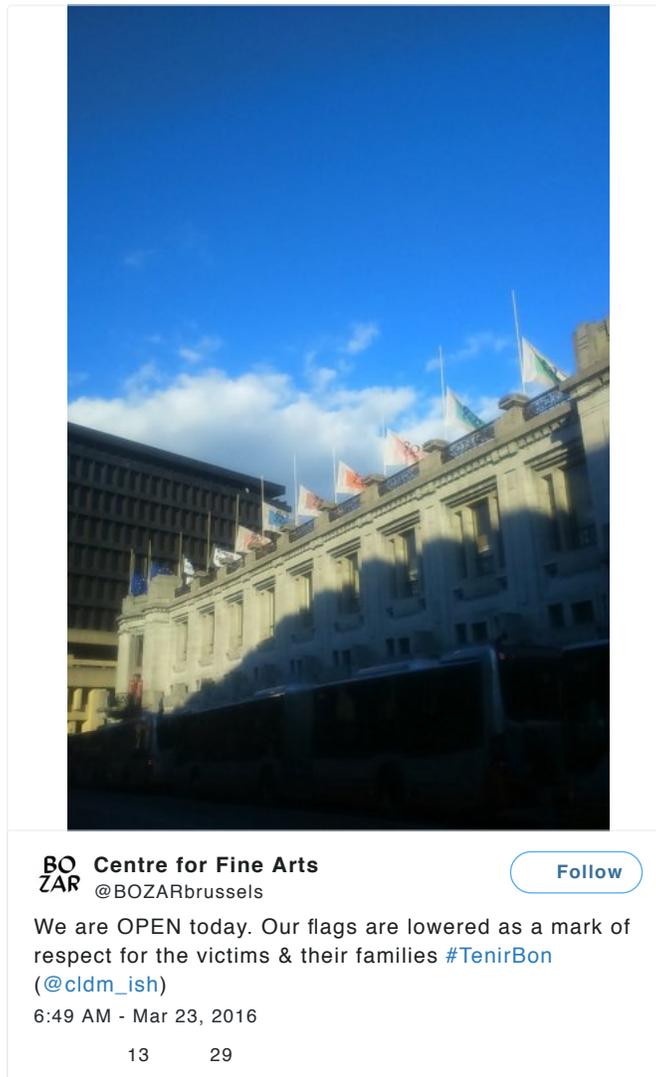
The [Centre for Fine Arts Brussels](http://www.bozar.be/en) (<http://www.bozar.be/en>), commonly referred to as [Bozar](http://www.bozar.be/en) (<http://www.bozar.be/en>), reopened its doors on Wednesday morning following a citywide lockdown after Tuesday's terrorist attacks, reports [Artforum](http://artforum.com/news/id=58908) (<http://artforum.com/news/id=58908>). The museum opened at 10 a.m. "with additional security measures in place," reads the museum's [Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/BOZARbrussels/posts/10153525693247291) (<https://www.facebook.com/BOZARbrussels/posts/10153525693247291>).

Visitors trickled in Wednesday, but traffic has since picked up on the museum's second day of re-opening. "We have less visitors for our exhibitions than usual," Bozar press officer Leen Daems told artnet News in an email. "We sense that people are still very shocked. However, today we already had more visitors than yesterday, so we hope we're able to reassure our public with the safety measures so life in Brussels can be back to normal as soon as possible."



Bozar Museum Brussels.  
Photo: Courtesy of the Bozar Museum Brussels.

Visitors can expect to go through metal detectors and check in their bags and belongings into assigned lockers, according to museum representatives. The flags at the institution, which famed Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta designed in 1928, remain at half staff.



A number of shows are currently on view, including a selection of [Rembrandt van Rijn](http://www.artnet.com/artists/rembrandt-van-rijn/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/rembrandt-van-rijn/>)'s etchings in "[Rembrandt in Black & White](http://www.bozar.be/en/activities/106071-rembrandt/) (<http://www.bozar.be/en/activities/106071-rembrandt/>);" an exhibition dedicated to fellow Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg titled "[A New Expression of Life. Art and Technology](http://www.bozar.be/en/activities/103881-theo-van-doesburg/) (<http://www.bozar.be/en/activities/103881-theo-van-doesburg/>);" and a show exploring French artist [Daniel Buren](http://www.artnet.com/artists/daniel-buren/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/daniel-buren/>)'s multimedia (and multifaceted) practice in "[A Fresco](http://www.bozar.be/en/activities/81379-daniel-buren/) (<http://www.bozar.be/en/activities/81379-daniel-buren/>)."

The museum's decision follows a public gathering on the day of the attacks, which found Brussels's citizens inscribing their thoughts with multi-colored chalk on the [stock exchange square](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/brussels-citizens-responded-with-art-456059) (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/brussels-citizens-responded-with-art-456059>).

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