

## **Cuba: Performance artist Tania Bruguera detained twice**

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On 30 December 2014, several Cuban dissidents – journalists, activists and artists – were arrested, including artist Tania Bruguera who played a key role in organising a free speech event on the day. She was released soon after, and then detained and released again a second time.

A note posted on [Facebook](#) stated: “Bruguera may not leave Cuba in the next 2–3 months. They have pressed charges against her for resistance and disruption of public order.

The Cuban artist Tania Bruguera is already back to her house, at Havana’s neighborhood El Vedado. She has been released for a second time, after having a lengthy conversation with Seguridad del Estado (...)”

### **Open letter**

On 17 December 2014, Tania Bruguera sent an open letter to Cuban president Raúl Castro, American president Barack Obama and the Pope, and a free speech campaign sprung up from its key phrase, “I also demand” – #YoTambienExijo.

Tania Bruguera was due to stage an open-microphone event on 30 December at La Plaza de la Revolución – Havana’s most politically sensitive square – to call for the political, economic, cultural and civil rights of Cuban citizens.

“#YoTambienExijo will gather, without violence and without fear, at La Plaza de la Revolución to transform it into a space of respect for diversity of opinions about what kind of country we want to build. True freedom means tolerance,” wrote the organisers.

Police had denied a permit for the #YoTambienExijo demonstration and warned activists not to participate, but several had indicated their willingness to participate in this as a test case for public dissent.

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The event was deemed a “political provocation” by Cuban officials.  
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## **A reenactment**

The open-microphone event was a reenactment of Tania Bruguera’s art-action ‘Tatlin’s Whisper #6’ which was staged at the 10th Havana Biennial in 2009 without any objections. The idea is to invite members of the public to use the microphone to speak their mind for one minute only. Bruguera specifies in her [instructions](#) for the piece, that this is a peaceful action with the purpose of creating an opportunity to discuss the current situation publicly and without censorship.

In the wake of the U.S.-Cuba diplomatic thaw, Tania Bruguera’s intent was to stage a similar happening in Havana’s Revolution Square on 30 December. That never happened, though, since the artist, along with reportedly at least 12 other dissidents, were detained hours before the event could take place.

Says Freemuse Executive Director, Ole Reitov: “Freemuse expresses great concern of the detainment of Tania Bruguera and request the Cuban authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ms Bruguera. Freemuse would like to remind the Cuban government of its obligations to respect universal rights to artistic expressions.”

Freemuse received news that Tania Bruguera was kept under some form of arrest all through 30 December 2014. On her own account, she was harassed to sign self-accusation documents that claimed she intended to disturb peace and resisted the police. She was not physically injured, but in response to her arrest and the lack of information, she refused to eat through her imprisonment.

At 2pm on 31 December, she was released from detention, and called for a press conference by 4pm. She was able to give two interviews with international correspondents before she was again detained on her way to the presentation.

She was again detained by police for several hours and was finally released at 8pm. Her passport and computers were seized without any indications of their legal status. Tania Bruguera has demanded the authorities to release the rest of the people who were detained around her action.

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## **UN artistic freedom expert**

In 2012, Tania Bruguera was a member of a special experts panel invited by the UN Special Rapporteur Ms Farida Shaheed to qualify the forthcoming report on artistic freedom. Ms Bruguera was also [invited](#) to the UN headquarters in June 2013 by the Special Rapporteur when the report was launched.

Tania Bruguera researches ways in which art applies to everyday political life by transforming social affect into political effectiveness. She has received the Meadow Prize, a National Museum of Wales Award, a Prince Claus Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, among others.

» MSNBC - 31 December 2014:

[#YoTambienExijo: Cuban dissidents detained ahead of gathering](#)

TV news segment with an analysis by Miami Herald's Nora Gámez Torrez.

» Follow the latest news on Twitter:

[#YoTambienExijo](#)

[#TaniaBruguera](#)

» Follow the latest news on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/YoTambienExijo](http://www.facebook.com/YoTambienExijo)

[www.facebook.com/events/1515487705372907](http://www.facebook.com/events/1515487705372907)

» The open letter of 17 December 2014 by Tania Bruguera:

[www.taniabruguera.com](http://www.taniabruguera.com) (PDF)

» Three audio declarations by Tania Bruguera:

[www.soundcloud.com/yotambienexijo](http://www.soundcloud.com/yotambienexijo)

» Centre For The Aesthetic Revolution:

[Tania Bruguera, #Yotambienexijo, A Call For Freedom Of Speech At Revolution Square In La Habana](#)

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» Los Angeles Times - 31 December 2014:

[Cuban artist Tania Bruguera released but detained again](#)

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» The Guardian - 31 December 2014:

[Cuban dissidents arrested before free-speech demonstration in Havana](#)

Antonio Rodiles, Eliezer Avila and Reinaldo Escobar reportedly detained. Government action will test newly restored diplomatic relations with US

» Tania Bruguera's home page:

[www.taniabruguera.com](http://www.taniabruguera.com)

» Interview with Tania Bruguera, recorded at the conference [All That is Banned is Desired](#) in Oslo in 2012.

» See also: [Tania Bruguera's presentation at the conference](#)

**Source:** <http://artsfreedom.org>

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