

# 10 Cuban Artists Who Are Shaping Contemporary Art

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In 2021, an influential group of Cuban artists called for a boycott of the 14th Havana Biennale. The Cuban authorities had jailed many of their colleagues for exercising their right to free speech, and these artists wanted to fight back. Protests against the unjust and repressive government have persisted. At this year's Documenta 15, Cuban artist Tania Bruguera and the Cuban collective Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt (Instar) highlighted the plight of Cuban artists in a moving series of presentations. On Friday, June 24th, numerous artists and human rights organizations condemned the Cuban regime when it sentenced performance artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara to five years in prison for “contempt, defamation, and public disorder.”

It would be inaccurate to say that all Cuban contemporary art is an act of protest—many of the artists in this list steer away from the subject. Yet it would also be careless to ignore that, for decades, Cuban artists have made art under impossible circumstances. The country faces dire social and economic conditions, and artists and intellectuals are subject to constant harassment and arbitrary detainment at the hands of a government that wants them to remain silent. Though these tribulations have led many Cuban artists to exile, many have also stayed and held their ground.