

# CaLARTS

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS

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Cuban and American artists, participating in *El Acercamiento/The Approach*, on the Cuban shore looking towards Miami in 2016. Artist: Aissa Santizo. Photo: Pablo Bordon. Courtesy of CalArts. [Click here](#) for high resolution version.

## **Cuban and American Artists Unite at Centro Cultural Español in Miami, Florida on December 1**

***For El Acercamiento/The Approach, events in Havana, Los Angeles and Miami challenge Cuban and American artists to envision possible futures between the two countries.***

***In Havana, the current process of normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States is termed “el acercamiento,” the slow and cautious act of getting closer.***

***Last month, President Obama named the [first U.S. ambassador to Cuba](#) in more than five decades. With El Acercamiento/The Approach, Cuban and American artists create their own forms of diplomacy as they explore relations between the two nations.***

Valencia, CA-October 31—Following successful exhibitions in Havana, Cuba, and Los Angeles, California, [El Acercamiento/The Approach](#) brings its transnational collaboration to Miami, Florida. Uniting American and Cuban artists to investigate the past, present and possible futures of Cuba-U.S. relations, an evening of performances will take place at Miami's [Centro Cultural Español](#). Coinciding with [Art Basel Miami](#), the event takes place on **Thursday, December 1 at 6:00 pm** with a reception for the artists at 5 pm.

*El Acercamiento/The Approach* is a project of [California Institute of the Arts](#) (CalArts) [Center for New Performance](#) (CNP)/[Duende CalArts](#).

In Havana, the current process of normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States is termed “el acercamiento,” the slow and cautious act of getting closer. Giving shape to a multiplicity of potential futures, Cuban and American artists involved in *El Acercamiento/The Approach* are creating visual and performative projects, and urban interventions to explore the implications of renewed relations between the two countries.

This 4-year series of exhibitions originated in 2015 and will culminate in 2019. Each year of the project, a group of arts students and professional artists from Los Angeles, Havana and Miami will create, collaborate on, and present new original visual and performing arts works in a new cycle of exhibitions, urban interventions, and public dialogues in those three cities.

The series is the brainchild of CalArts [School of Theater](#) faculty member **Evelyn Serrano**. Serrano, a Cuban interdisciplinary artist, teaches classes such as “Arts and Activism” and “Art & Community Engagement” in CalArts’ [School of Theater](#). “I am interested in the role that artists will—and ought to—play during this historic transitional period,” said Serrano. This transnational project has thrived thanks to the key partnership with artists, and faculty and students from the **Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro** and the **Instituto Superior de Arte in La Habana**.

*El Acercamiento/The Approach* expresses the many-layered implications of US/ Cuba relations. Highlights of the performances at [Centro Cultural Español](#) include [Afrofuturo](#), **Shaina Lynn Simmons**’ multimedia and live performance installation exploring the historical, mythological and contemporary realities of the Afro Cuban and Afro American female experience. Experimental vocalist **Carmina Escobar** will stage, [Horas Comunes](#), simultaneous actions by two performers—one in Havana and another in Miami. Linked by video, the two vocalists will slowly walk towards each other, sounding their voice without words, and sending that resonance into the space between them. Cuban artist **Aissa Santizo** creates an act of reconciliation. Her [Wet Steps](#) is a group action consisting of a minute of silence at the edge of sea, in honor of all who have perished in the journey from Cuba to the US.

"My friends and I were the children of the Cold War and the U.S. Embargo, of Perestroika and Glasnost, and our memories of Cuba were shaped by the rhetoric of war, polarization, and fear," said Serrano. "*El Acercamiento* aims to engage in a process of healing after so many decades of divisive politics. The project will allow the work created by participating artists to evolve in response to our research and our encounters with our fellow artists, their communities, and their cities."

On March 30, 2017, *El Acercamiento/The Approach* will launch its second Cuban exhibition at [Fabrica de Arte Cubano](#) (F.A.C.) in Havana. During President Obama's historic visit to Cuba in 2015, Serrano and a team of artists from California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) joined with Cuban artists to present the project's first exhibition in Cuba at the Ludwig Foundation in Havana.

*El Acercamiento/The Approach* is supported by the **CalArts Center for New Performance/Duende CalArts**, **Espacio a-106**, and **Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro**. **Fundarte**, one of the project's Miami partners, has provided production and PR support for the Miami event.



#### **Calendar Editors Please Note:**

##### **What:**

***El Acercamiento/The Approach***: an evening of performance in which American and Cuban artists investigate the past, present and possible futures of Cuba-U.S. relations.

##### **When:**

December 1

Performances: 6-8:30 pm

Reception: 5 pm

##### **Where:**

Centro Cultural Español

1490 Biscayne Blvd Miami, FL, 33132

Admission is FREE

##### **More Information:**

**El Acercamiento/The Approach**

<http://www.cubausaproject.net/>

## **Duende CalArts**

<http://centerfornewperformance.org/duende/>

## **Obama Nominates First Ambassador to Cuba in Over 50 Years**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/28/us/politics/cuba-us-ambassador.html?\\_r=2&lo](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/28/us/politics/cuba-us-ambassador.html?_r=2&lo)

## **Obama's historic trip to open new era of U.S. relations with Cuba**

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/obamas-historic-trip-to-cuba-rife-wi...>

## **US-Cuba relations: timeline of a tangled history**

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2016/mar/20/us-cuba-rela...>

CalArts [Center for New Performance \(CNP\)](#), the professional producing arm of California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), was established to provide a unique artist- and project-driven framework for the development and realization of original theater, music, dance, media and interdisciplinary projects. Extending the progressive work carried out at CalArts into a direct dialogue with professional communities at the local, national and international levels, CNP offers an alternative model to support emerging directions in the performing arts.

[California Institute of the Arts \(CalArts\)](#) has set the pace for educating professional artists since 1970. Offering rigorous undergraduate and graduate degree programs through six schools—Art, Critical Studies, Dance, Film/Video, Music, and Theater—CalArts has championed creative excellence, critical reflection, and the development of new forms and expressions. As successive generations of faculty and alumni have helped shape the landscape of contemporary arts, the Institute first envisioned by Walt Disney encompasses a vibrant, eclectic community with global reach, inviting experimentation, independent inquiry, and active collaboration and exchange among artists, artistic disciplines and cultural traditions.

[Centro Cultural Español de Cooperación Iberoamericana, Inc. \(CCEMiami\)](#) promotes the social, human and economic development in South Florida through the cultural exchange of institutions and creators from Spain, Latin America and Miami providing a platform for dialogue and education for the city. CCE Miami will pay particular attention to those groups which have limited access to culture, always inspired by the principle of freedom and respect for cultural diversity.