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CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS

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Contact: Margaret Crane
Media Relations Manager
mcrane@calarts./661.222.2787 (Do Not Publish)



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.

El Acercamiento/The Approach: Cuban and American Artists Come Together for the Third and Last Artistic in Havana

Concluding its three-year run, *El Acercamiento/The Approach* brings together Cuban and American artists in a series of collaborative events across Havana, Los Angeles and Miami.

Students from Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte and San Alejandro and California Institute of the Arts join with professional artists for a series of exhibitions and performances scheduled to take place at locations throughout Havana Pinar del Río province between March 24 and April 1, 2018.

Valencia, CA – After three years of collaborative exhibitions, public interventions, and performances staged between Havana, Los Angeles and Miami, *El Acercamiento/The Approach* will present its final Cuban showcase of new multimedia works at sites

across Havana. Students from California Institute of Arts (CalArts), and Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte and Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro have once more teamed up with professional artists from the U.S. and Cuba, culminating in a new set of projects that address possible futures between the two countries.

The project's penultimate showcase will take place at various sites across Havana and Pinar del Río province in Cuba between March 24 and April 1, 2018 before concluding its three-year run in Los Angeles this May.

Closing events will be held at El Ciervo Encantado theater in the El Vedado neighborhood of Havana on March 30 and 31 at 8pm.

"El Acercamiento" is a term describing the slow and cautious process of normalizing relations between Cuba and the United States. This series of exhibitions, visual and performative projects, and urban interventions works to untangle the implications of renewed U.S. - Cuba relations and to give shape to potential futures.

Each year of the three-year project brings together a group of American and Cuban art students and professional artists who collaboratively create and present a fresh cycle of exhibitions. The series is a project of [California Institute of the Arts \(CalArts\)](#) [Center for New Performance \(CNP\)](#)/[Duende CalArts](#).

The brainchild of CalArts faculty member Evelyn Serrano, *El Acercamiento* "aims to engage in a process of healing after so many decades of divisive politics," says Serrano. A Cuban interdisciplinary artist herself, Serrano teaches classes such as "Arts and Activism" and "Art & Community Engagement" in the CalArts School of Theater.

A child of the Cold War and the U.S. Embargo, Serrano says that "*El Acercamiento*, now in its third year cycle, has braved remarkable changes in U.S.-Cuba relations: the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in La Habana, the historic trip of President Obama, the death of Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, and, in the last year, the cooling of relationships between the two countries. The Trump presidency's recent Cuba policy changes have had a chilling effect on travel and trade between the two countries at a remarkable cost to Cuban families. *El Acercamiento* offers a counterpoint to Trump's return to Cold War policies, and aims to continue to build artistic and educational bridges of understanding and solidarity between our peoples."

This year's programming in Havana includes nine projects serving to evoke the many layers of U.S.-Cuba relations. Serrano herself conceived and directed *Rueda*, using *rueda de casino*, a popular Cuban social dance form, as a performative matrix to tell stories. The performance was devised with CalArts cast members Heaven Gonzalez, Derek Jackson, Fernando Mitre, Talya Levine, Eloy Neira, Diana Teixeira, Elizabeth Noriega, Karina Fathi, Inobe Thomas, Micah Mora, Ruben Rubio, as well as CalArts faculty Carmina Escobar. Other works include a choose-your-own-ending *Folktale Journey for Two* by Fiona Dornberger, a performance by Ani Kazandjian that will be sited at a Cuban tobacco farm in Pinar del Rio inspired by her father's love of Cuban

cigars and her research on the effects of the U.S. embargo on the lives of Cubans, and *Apartment 34*, a performance by **Joana Knezevic** inspired by the life, work, death, and legacy of Cuban artist Ana Mendieta.

El Acercamiento/The Approach is supported by the CalArts Center for New Performance/Duende CalArts, Espacio a-106, and El Ciervo Encantado Theater.

Calendar Editors Please Note:

What:

El Acercamiento/The Approach

When:

March 24-April 1, 2018

Closing events will take place on **March 30 and 31 at 8pm**

Where:

Various sites across Havana and Pinar del Rio Province, Cuba

Closing events will be held at **Teatro el Ciervo Encantado** in the El Vedado neighborhood of Havana

CalArts Center for New Performance (CNP) is the professional producing arm of California Institute of the Arts, established to provide a unique artist- and project-driven framework for the development and realization of original theater, music, dance 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. It also enables CalArts students to work shoulder-to-shoulder with celebrated artists and acquire a level of experience that goes beyond their curriculum.

California Institute of the Arts 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.