

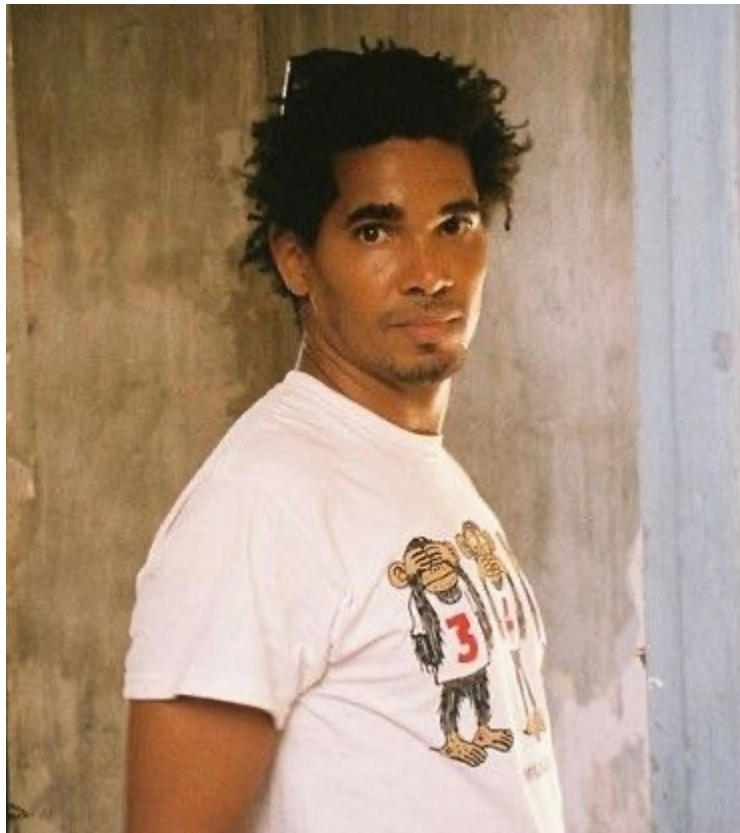
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Open Letter: Release Otero Alcántara

Julie Mehretu, John Akomfrah, Isaac Julien, Edwidge Danticat, Junot Díaz, et al.

The Cuban government is detaining the artist solely for expressing his ideas through his art and for his nonviolent defense of human rights.

May 26, 2021



Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara

Update: Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara was released from hospital on May 31, 2021.

To President Miguel Díaz-Canel:

We the undersigned condemn the detention of the Black artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, a leader of the San Isidro Movement, a group of Cuban artists, journalists, and academics that campaigns for freedom of expression.

Otero Alcántara has been held under police guard in Havana's Calixto Garcia hospital since May 2, 2021. He was forcibly removed from his home on the eighth day of a hunger strike he declared to protest the confiscation of his artworks by Cuban police. He has not been permitted to receive or make phone calls. Friends who have tried to visit him have been detained by Cuban authorities. A video of Otero Alcántara that was recently released by authorities shows that he has physically deteriorated, causing great alarm.

Prior to this forced hospitalization, Otero Alcántara faced harassment and intimidation from state security officials because of his work as an artist and a human rights defender. He has been arrested more than fifty times since 2019 for his performances and his advocacy for the civil rights of all Cubans. He has been the target of constant police harassment, prolonged house arrest, interrupted telecommunications, and defamation campaigns on Cuban state media.

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is being detained solely for peacefully expressing his ideas through his art and for his nonviolent defense of human rights. We urge you to secure his immediate and unconditional release.

Nana Adusei-Poku (Germany–US)
John Akomfrah (UK)
Dawoud Bey (US)
Lesley-Ann Brown (US–Denmark)
Taína Caragol (Puerto Rico)
Romi Crawford (US)
Edwidge Danticat (Haiti–US)
Eduardo De Jesus (Brazil)
Phillippa Yaa de Villiers (South Africa)
Junot Díaz (Dominican Republic–UK)
Elvira Dyangani Ose (Spain–UK)
Jeannette Ehlers (Denmark)
Keyna Eleison (Brazil)
Kodwo Eshun & Anjali Sagar (Otolith Group, UK))
Coco Fusco (US)
Theaster Gates (US)
Henry Louis Gates Jr. (US)
Adler Guerrier (Haiti–US)
Leslie Hewitt (US)
Sasha Huber (Finland)
Isaac Julien (UK)
Patricia Kaersenhout (Netherlands)
Julie Mehretu (US)
Joiri Minaya (Dominican Republic–US)
Oscar Murillo (Colombia–UK)
Rosana Paulino (Brazil)
Veerle Poupeye (Belgium–Jamaica)
Pepón Osorio (Puerto Rico)
Juan Sánchez (US)
Dread Scott (US)
Roger Guenveur Smith (US)
Claire Tancons (Guadeloupe–US)
Thomas Lax (US)
William Villalongo (US)
Carrie Mae Weems (US)