



Association Internationale
des Critiques d'Art

32 rue Yves Toudic – 75010 Paris – FRANCE

The Censorship Committee

Subject : Statement on freedom of expression in Cuba

April 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

As a global organization anxious to improve international cooperation in the fields of artistic creativity, mediation and endeavour, AICA is committed to defending freedom of expression as a basic civil and human right. We therefore feel compelled to draw attention to the deteriorating relations between the government of Cuba and artists linked to the 27N activist group and San Isidro movement. Arbitrary arrests and harassment, crackdowns on protestors, and direct targeting of individuals with defamatory statements have been reliably reported. So far, the response from authorities has been to disqualify the groups as anti-Cuban agents, deflecting attention from legitimate grievances and closing the door to dialogue.

Four months ago, in November 2020, police stormed a house in the San Isidro district of Havana, purportedly to enforce health regulations, and arrested artists engaged in protesting against censorship. Though almost all were subsequently released, a steady escalation of tensions followed, culminating in a confrontation on 27 January 2021, in which Minister of Culture Alpidio Alonso reacted to protestors with a display of personal violence. Two months on from that incident, a campaign of intimidation has taken hold, with authorities citing the activists as “mercenaries”, disparaging the reputations of established artists, inciting resentment against them and even releasing their personal data – phone numbers and private audio messages – on national media outlets. Such actions generate a climate of fear and intimidation under which artists are pressured into silence. We view this as a cause for grave concern.

AICA calls on the government of Cuba to curtail individuals and agencies that act against the principle of human dignity enshrined in the ideals of the Revolution. Regardless of their political opinions, criminalizing artists and stifling dissent are never acceptable practices under the rule of law.

On behalf of AICA,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisbeth Rebollo GONÇALVES'.

Lisbeth Rebollo GONÇALVES
President of AICA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Cardoso'.

Rafael Cardoso
Chair of Censorship Committee