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NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS ANNOUNCE TANIA BRUGUERA AS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Bruguera will work with Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to connect the IDNYC program with undocumented residents.

The project is supported with public funding from the City and private funds from the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, and marks the first in what will be a series of artists-in-residence at City agencies.

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New York – July 14, 2015 – NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl and Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) Commissioner Nisha Agarwal announced that internationally acclaimed artist Tania Bruguera will serve as an artist-in-residence for one year at MOIA. In this newly created residency, she will help the office engage communities with large numbers of undocumented residents about IDNYC, New York City's municipal ID program. This collaboration aims to educate undocumented residents about the services the City has created with IDNYC and build upon the close relationship that has already been established between the IDNYC program and the city's rich cultural community. Artist residencies rely on a deep engagement between the artist and host agency to reframe issues, reimagine visual communications and language, and develop innovative solutions to persistent challenges. Bruguera will use her creative practice and understanding of NYC's immigrant population to help MOIA connect with communities that are often suspicious of government agencies. The residency, which will commence later in July, is supported by private funding from the Shelly & Donald Rubin Foundation and public funds through the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA).

The approach to her residency will be based on the artist's practice of *arte útil* (literally translated to "useful art"), which employs art to develop new methods of addressing pressing social and political issues. Bruguera will work with Immigrant Movement International (IM International), a participatory artwork she initiated in collaboration with Queens Museum and Creative Time in 2011 that functions as a community space in the immigrant-rich neighborhood of Corona, Queens. IM International offers educational programming, health, and legal services at no cost to address the needs and to foster the unique potential of immigrant residents of the neighborhood. Bruguera and IM International will work with MOIA over the year to produce and implement socially engaged art projects that aim to encourage undocumented residents to register for IDNYC, to use their IDNYC cards to access local government and benefits citywide, and to draw attention to pressing issues facing these communities and to the IDNYC program as a whole.

"This project provides a unique opportunity to enhance the notion of art as a useful tool to materialize a vision of a more inclusive society," said **MOIA artist-in-residence Tania Bruguera**. "I'm excited to explore new ways of collaborating with New York's immigrant communities to make a real impact on the lives of city residents."

"I have been inspired by Tania Bruguera's vision for art as something that can propose real, tangible solutions for the people involved since I met her 15 years ago," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelppearl**. "I am enormously excited to support her work that uses art to forge a new model for enhancing our public services through creative practice."

"Art resonates across language, literacy, and culture. We are thrilled to be working with Tania and Immigrant Movement to engage immigrant communities about the benefits and importance of IDNYC in an innovative way. The IDNYC program is a key resource for New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, to interact confidently with local government, and we think Tania's work is a perfect match to deliver this message in a thoughtful and useful way," said **Immigrant Affairs Commissioner, Nisha Agarwal**.

"The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation is thrilled to offer our support for Tania Bruguera's residency," said **Foundation Executive Director Alexander Gardner**. "Tania's longstanding practice of art that addresses pressing social issues is perfectly aligned with the Foundation's initiative Art and Social Justice. The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation is committed to supporting innovative partnerships that provide access to art to broad audiences and use art as a tool for positive social change and an investment in the future."

Working with members of IM International, Bruguera's artistic interventions will target neighborhoods that have large populations of immigrant residents. Bruguera will work with members of IM International to shape her work within these targeted communities. Her practice centers around politically motivated performances that explore the relationship between art, activism, and social change. Over the past ten years, Bruguera has been teaching, developing, and researching the concept of *arte útil* through an academy in Havana, Cuba; the Arte Útil Lab at Queens Museum; the Museum of Arte Útil at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands; and through extensive programming and residencies at IM International. IM International embodies this approach, providing a structure and space that empowers residents of Corona through education, social services, and activism. This practice will be a powerful tool supporting IDNYC's goals of making undocumented residents more fully engaged New Yorkers, with all of the benefits and rights that being a part of this dynamic city implies.

The nonprofit organization A Blade of Grass will receive support to create an assessment of the residency's process, implementation, impacts, and outcome with the goal of creating a set of best practices for other agencies and organizations that wish to replicate the model in New York City and beyond. Using action-based research methodology, A Blade of Grass has already started interviewing stakeholders for this residency to develop a set of benchmark targets and outcomes to identify and measure successes.

Following her attempted public performance in Cuba in December 2014, Bruguera had her passport taken by Cuban authorities. At the time, planning for her residency with MOIA was already underway and DCLA and MOIA decided to move forward in full support of Bruguera's artistic practice. The Cuban government returned her passport on July 10, but Bruguera won't depart Cuba until she has a guarantee that she can return. Cuban authorities have indicated that they will provide such a guarantee in the next two weeks.

New York City has a history of successfully integrating the arts into the operations of City agencies, the delivery of City services, and as a powerful tool for communication between the City and the public. Performance artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles' nearly 40-year residency at the Department of Sanitation provides an example of the profound impact the arts can have on City government, fostering collaboration among their staff and constituents to encourage creative approaches to transforming the perception of City workers, improving services, highlighting key issues and community needs, and engaging the broader public. Sanitation also maintains a number of partnerships with cultural organizations for composting and material reuse programs through DCLA's Materials for the Arts, and the Department of Probation and Department for the Aging have recently worked with DCLA and cultural organizations to develop innovative models for integrating the arts into services offered to their target populations. With the IDNYC residency as a model, DCLA will continue to work with colleagues in City government to explore new ways to integrate the arts into transformative programming and services.

The Museum of Modern Art also announced today that Tania Bruguera's Untitled (Havana, 2000) has been acquired for the collection. Exemplary of Bruguera's devotion to a socially conscious practice, the large-scale performance and video installation investigates questions of authority, liberty, action, and collectivity through a mixture of political subject matter and active audience engagement. It was conceived for and shown at the VII Bienal de La Habana in 2000, and is the first work by Bruguera to enter MoMA's collection.

About Tania Bruguera

Tania Bruguera was born in 1968 in Havana, Cuba. Bruguera, a politically motivated performance artist, explores the relationship between art, activism, and social change in works that examine the social effects of political and economic power. By creating proposals and aesthetic models for others to use and adapt, she defines herself as an initiator rather than an author, and often collaborates with multiple institutions as well as many individuals so that the full realization of her artwork occurs when others adopt and perpetuate it. Advancing the concept of *arte útil* (literally translated to useful art; art as a benefit and a tool), she proposes solutions to sociopolitical problems through the implementation of art, and has developed long-term projects that include a community center and a political party for immigrants, and a school for behavior art.

Tania Bruguera attended art schools in Havana, including the Instituto Superior de Arte (1987-92), and received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2001). She received a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship (1998), and has been awarded residencies at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2002); Headlands Centers for the Arts (1998); Fundación Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Maracay (1998); Art in General (1997); and ART/OMI (1995). Major exhibitions of her work have appeared at the Van Abbemuseum (2014); Queens Museum (2013); National Museum Wales (2012); Havana Biennial (2010, 2003, 2000); Neuberger Museum of Art (2010); Venice Biennale (2009, 2001); Tate Modern (2008); Moscow Biennial (2007); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2006); Shanghai Biennial (2004); Istanbul Biennial (2003); Documenta (2002); San Francisco Art Institute (2002); SITE Santa Fe Biennial (1999) and the São Paulo Bienal (1996). Tania Bruguera lives and works between Havana, Cuba and Queens, New York.

About Immigrant Movement International

Since its founding, IM International has been maintained by the residents of Corona as a community space where members of Queens' immigrant community combine practical creative knowledge to develop a holistic approach to education and communication about immigrants' rights and the perception of immigrants by the broader public. IM International combines no-cost community education workshops on rights and services available to immigrants with community-driven communications and advocacy campaigns. IM International collaborates with over 30 organizations to meet the needs of the community.

In 2013, the community of Corona, Queens created a leadership committee with the responsibility of governing the space with input from Bruguera. IM International has become a long-term project intended to create a lasting, global movement. Over the next few years, IM International expects the project to grow by establishing small "cells" and collective spaces in various cities around the world, empowering migrants and taking on a unique form in each location, according to the specificity of the local social and political conditions.

About the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation

The Foundation believes in art as a cornerstone of cohesive, resilient communities and greater participation in civic life. In its mission to make art available to the broader public, in particular to underserved communities, the Foundation provides direct support to, and facilitates partnerships between, cultural organizations and advocates of social justice across the public and private sectors. Through grantmaking, the Foundation supports cross-disciplinary work connecting art with social justice via experimental collaborations, as well as extending cultural resources to organizations and areas of New York City in need. sdrubin.org