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El Acercamiento/The Approach: Cuban and American Artists Come Together in Miami



Artist Juliana Romero's performance, sculpture, and video installation, *Enlace*, from *El Acercamiento/The Approach's* 2017 Havana exhibition. Photo credit: Tanya Orellana. Courtesy of CalArts. [Click here for high resolution image.](#)

Uniting Cuban and American artists to envision possible futures between their two countries, students from Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte and California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) join with professional artists for an afternoon of art and storytelling on January 6th, 4-7pm, at Centro Cultural Español.

The exhibition, featuring creative documentation of previous El Acercamiento/ The Approach projects and artist-led storytelling tours, launches the final year of the three-year transnational project with events in Miami, Havana and Los Angeles.

Valencia, CA December 7—On January 6, 2018, *El Acercamiento/The Approach* begins its culminating year with a one-day exhibition (4-7pm) at the Centro Cultural Español in Miami, Florida. Each year, since the project launched in 2015, students and professional artists from *Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte and California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Los Angeles* have created, collaborated and presented original visual and performing artworks in *Miami, Havana and Los Angeles*. This ongoing exchange has inspired a dynamic multi-city series of public dialogues, exhibitions, performances and urban interventions that imagines possible futures and cultural collaborations between the two countries. Exhibitions are being planned for March in Havana and May in Los Angeles. *El Acercamiento/The Approach* is a project of California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) Center for New Performance (CNP)/ Duende CalArts. The exhibition is curated and designed by Aubree Lynn and Evelyn Serrano.

Serving to document *El Acercamiento's* preceding three years, a sea of flags on nine foot poles, bearing images of past projects will fill the gallery of Miami's Centro Cultural Español. During the one-evening exhibition, *El Acercamiento* artists will lead story-telling tours of the installation.

In Havana, “el acercamiento” is the slow and cautious act of getting closer, a term used to describe the process of normalizing relations between Cuba and the United States. “The last three years, in particular, have taken us through a wild foreign- policy roller coaster ride punctuated by the re-opening of the U.S. Embassy in La Habana, the historic visit of President Obama to Cuba, the death of Fidel Castro, mysterious sonic attacks, and new travel restrictions designed by the Trump administration,” says **Evelyn Serrano**, a CalArts professor and one of the project founders. Serrano, who was born and raised in Cuba, explains *El Acercamiento's* mission as one of seeking modes of connection and repair through creative collaboration. “*El Acercamiento* aims to engage in a process of healing after so many decades of divisive politics between Cuba and the U.S.”

Thanks largely to key partnerships between CalArts and artists, faculty, and students from Instituto Superior de Arte and Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro in Havana this transnational project has thrived. Cuban and American artists involved in *El Acercamiento/The Approach* have given shape to a multiplicity of potential futures through creative explorations of the thawing relations and what such relations imply. Works in the project have included **Shaina Lynn Simmons' Afrofuturo**, a live, multimedia performance-installation which examines Afro-Cuban and Afro-American female experience; *Horas Comunes*, a work by experimental vocalist **Carmina Escobar** consisting of two synchronous performances from remote locations in Havana and Miami; and Cuban artist **Aissa Santizo's Wet Steps** honors those who have perished in the journey from Cuba to the U.S. with a minute of silence at the edge of the sea.

This project is supported by the CalArts Center for New Performance / Duende CalArts, Espacio a-106, Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Calendar Editors Please Note:

What:

El Acercamiento/The Approach launches its culminating year with a one-day exhibition documenting its past projects.

When:

Saturday, January 6, 2018

Where:

Centro Cultural Español
1490 Biscayne Blvd Miami, FL, 33132

Exhibition hours: 4-7pm

Admission is FREE

More Information:

El Acercamiento/The Approach

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

Television report: “Artists from Los Angeles Collaborate with Cubans for Exhibit that Will Come to Miami” <https://www.local10.com/news/cuba/artists-from-los-angeles-collaborate-with-cubans-for-exhibit-that-will-come-to-miami->

Video: *El Acercamiento/The Approach* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiwz7Sdyx2o>

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