



THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK  
EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, HAVANA

## WILD NOISE

*Exhibitions, Bronx and Havana*  
ARTWORK FROM THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS  
& EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES

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The Bronx Museum of the Arts' unprecedented arts initiative entitled *Wild Noise: Artwork from The Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* represents the most extensive visual arts exchange between Cuba and the United States in more than 50 years. Though this groundbreaking project has been years in the planning, this collaboration between The Bronx Museum of the Arts (BxMA) and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA) could not be more timely. Each Museum has organized a thematic exhibition of key works from their respective permanent collections that reflect upon contemporary urban life, demonstrating how living artists have addressed questions about identity, urban living, and community that are extremely relevant to residents of the Bronx and Havana. *Wild Noise* has received major sponsorship from the Ford Foundation and Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, and we hope you share their enthusiasm and your support for this unique exchange.

The launch of *Wild Noise* is concurrent with the *12ª Bienal de La Habana*, with the exhibition of over 100 works from the Bronx Museum's permanent collection at MNBA from May 21 through August 16, 2015, while the MNBA's exhibition is at the Bronx Museum from March 5 through May 29, 2016. The project also includes an International Artist Exchange through which U.S. artist Mary Mattingly and Cuban artist Humberto Díaz travel to Havana and the Bronx, respectively, where they will create community-based public programs at each venue. In addition, extensive education programs at both Museums—including a Teen Exchange as well as public programs featuring film, music and dance—will deepen community engagement. A dual-language publication available in print and online extends the impact of *Wild Noise* beyond the walls of the two Museums' galleries. The title of the initiative—*Wild Noise*—is taken from a Victor Hugo poem and refers to the sublimity and chaos of urban spaces, "the wild noise where infinity begins." The theme resonates with this year's *Bienal de La Habana*, which is held at locations across the city to integrate into the urban fabric of Havana and its communities.

March 5 to May 29, 2016

**BRONX MUSEUM**

The Bronx Museum of the Arts

1040 Grand Concourse

Bronx, NY, 10456, U.S.A.

[www.bronxmuseum.org](http://www.bronxmuseum.org) Tel: +1 718.681.6000



May 21 to August 16, 2015

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

Calle Trocadero e/ Zulueta y Monserrate

Habana, Vieja. C.P. 10200, Cuba

[www.bellasartes.cult.cu](http://www.bellasartes.cult.cu) Tel: +35 5378639484

# Wild Noise

THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK  
EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, HAVANA

## WILD NOISE

EXHIBITIONS, BRONX AND HAVANA  
ARTWORK FROM THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS  
& EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES

### FACT SHEET

#### ORGANIZERS

THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS. Co-Curators: Holly Block, Executive Director; Sergio Bessa, Director of Curatorial and Education Programs

EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES. Co-Curators: Corina Matamoros, Curator of Contemporary Cuban Art; Aylet Ojeda Jequín, Curator of Contemporary Cuban Art and Naïve Art

#### DESCRIPTION

The Bronx Museum of the Arts (BxMA; Bronx, NY, United States) and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA; Havana, Cuba) will each present an exhibition of key works from their respective permanent collections. *Wild Noise* represents the first time that a U.S. and Cuban museum will exchange their collections.

#### SCHEDULE

The BxMA will present its collection at MNBA from May 21 to August 16, 2015

The MNBA will present its collection at BxMA from March 5 to May 29, 2016

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THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK  
EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, HAVANA

## PROJECT TEAM BIOS

### **HOLLY BLOCK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRONX MUSEUM**

Holly Block was appointed director of The Bronx Museum of the Arts in 2006; she served as curator at the Bronx Museum from 1985 and 1988. In 2013, Block served as co-commissioner of *Sarah Sze: Triple Point* at the Venice Biennale, and oversaw the 2011 launch of smARTpower, the Bronx Museum's fellowship program that enabled U.S. artists to work with youth and local artists in communities around the world. As a scholar of Cuban art, Block has written *Art Cuba: The New Generation*, a comprehensive survey on Cuban contemporary art (2001), and organized *todo clandestino, todo popular* (2005-06), the first solo exhibition of the Cuban artist Alberto Casado. Before joining the Bronx Museum, Block served for 18 years as executive director of Art in General, a nonprofit arts organization in lower Manhattan dedicated to commissioning and presenting contemporary art. Block is recognized for initiating new evolving contemporary arts programming, such as Art in General's international Artists Residency Program and its New Commission Program. She has worked with contemporary artists on a range of projects over the course of her career.

### **SERGIO BESSA, DIRECTOR OF CURATORIAL AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS, BRONX MUSEUM**

Sergio Bessa was appointed as the Bronx Museum's Director of Curatorial and Education Programs in 2003. He has over 20 years of experience as an educator and has created a variety of initiatives targeting Bronx youth, such as the Bronx Museum Teen Council. Also a distinguished curator, he has organized several critically acclaimed exhibitions including *Double Space* (Apex Art, New York, 2000); *Re: La Chinoise* (Baumgartner Gallery, New York, 2002); *Animating Fahlström*, (BAWAG Foundation, Vienna, and the Institut d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France, 2002); and *How to Read* (2005), and *Paulo Bruscky: Art Is Our Last Hope* (2013), both at The Bronx Museum of the Arts. He is currently serving as a co-curator for the San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial. His essays and articles appear in such publications as, *Öyvind Fahlström: The Art of Writing* (2008); *Architectures of Poetry* (2005); and *Zingmagazine* (1998-2000). Bessa completed his PhD in Art Education from New York University and earned an MFA from Pratt Institute.

### **CORINA MATAMOROS, CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY CUBAN ART, MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES**

Corina Matamoros has been at MNBA since 1978, where she previously served as curator and deputy director for research. She has organized more than 25 exhibitions for the MNBA and acquired a significant number of pieces by notable contemporary Cuban artists for the institution's permanent collection. Her research areas include Museum Studies, Cuban art, Contemporary Art, and Cuban painter Raul Martínez's oeuvre, and she has written two books: *Mirada de curador (A Curator's Look)*, 2009, and *Raúl Martínez. La gran familia* (2012). She has co-authored six other books and published more than 40 essays on museology and contemporary art. She has lectured extensively in the United States, Spain, France, Martinique, Equator, Venezuela and Colombia. In 2009 and 2012, Matamoros was awarded with The National Prize for Curatorship in Cuba. She holds a degree in Art History at the University of Havana and a *Diplôme Spécial de Museologie* from the École du Louvre, Paris.

### **AYLET OJEDA JEQUÍN, CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY CUBAN ART AND NAÏVE ART, MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES**

Aylet Ojeda Jequin served as Assistant Curator at MNBA before being named Curator of contemporary Cuban Art and Naïve Art in 2004. Ojeda has organized exhibitions at MNBA since 2006, including the group exhibitions *Turn On* (2013), highlighting MNBA's collection of contemporary Cuban video art; *Cartografías de una Isla de ultramar (Cartography of an Island Overseas)*, 2008; and *Lezama Lima, Un rasguño en la piedra (Lezama Lima, A Scratch on the Stone)*, 2010. She has also helped mount over 15 exhibitions at MNBA as Assistant Curator. Ojeda has contributed dozens of texts for catalogues and arts publications, and in 2006 was member of editorial council of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes for the publications: *¿Qué pasó?* and *Catálogo de arte cubano* (second edition). Ojeda holds a Bachelor in Art History (2002) and a Masters in Art History (2011) from the University of Havana.

# Wild Noise

THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK  
EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, HAVANA

## THE BRONX MUSEUM ARTIST RESIDENCY EXCHANGE WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA

**Wild Noise: Artwork from The Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes** represents the most extensive visual arts exchange between Cuba and the United States in more than 50 years. Each museum chose one artist to take part in an international artist exchange being conducted over a four to six-week period leading up to opening of each exhibition. U.S Artist Mary Mattingly's site specific installation opens concurrently with Wild Noise at MNBA on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Cuban artist Humberto Díaz will travel to the Bronx in 2016 to display artwork created during the residency, which opens at the Bronx Museum on March 16, 2016. Both artists are to create community-based public programs at each venue. A series of panels and community engagement programs will take place through 2016.



**Mary Mattingly** – a New York-based artist and former participant in the Bronx Museum artist-ambassador program smARTpower—has been commissioned for *Wild Noise* by the Bronx Museum to create a new site specific work that interacts with Cuban audiences through public programs. *Pull* by Mattingly, who merges sculpture, architecture, photography, living systems, and community participation in her practice to address ecological concerns. *Pull* is a flexible, live, work performance structure that moves throughout Havana to facilitate public dialogue and creative activities about the city's climate change and local ecology. With related talks, workshops, and performances led by Mattingly and her partners, *Pull* extends the *Wild Noise* exhibition beyond the four walls of MNBA, fostering engagement with the general public on topics and issues of local concern. *Pull*, offers a rare opportunity for the Cuban public to interact with a U.S. artist.

**Humberto Díaz** – internationally recognized Cuban artist, has been commissioned to participate in the 2016 exhibition at the Bronx Museum, creating new site specific public work that engages with the Bronx community. For the component of *Wild Noise* in the Bronx, Humberto Díaz will have a two-month artist residency at the Bronx Museum, working this fall (2015) on creating an artwork for the exhibition, developing and leading public programs and workshops to engage with the Bronx community, and meeting and interacting with Bronx school groups. Díaz's residency will provide an enriching learning experience on a person-to-person level, inspiring a new generation of youth to understand the issues shared by our countries during the transition into a new era of U.S./Cuba relations.





# Wild Noise

THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK  
EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, HAVANA

## THE BRONX MUSEUM TEEN EXCHANGE WITH UNITED STATES AND CUBA May 21, 2015 – May 29, 2016

The Bronx Museum of the Arts and the National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana, Cuba are collaborating on a teen art exchange as part of the Wild Noise exhibition at both of our institutions during 2015 and 2016. This program is inspired by the Venice Biennale 2013 teen exchange between the Bronx Museum Teen Council and a group of students working with the Guggenheim in Venice.

This is a two year project and the premise of the exchange is to connect teens from the Bronx with teens in Havana using art, inquiry and dialogue, and finally producing 2 collaborative zines and videos.





THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, NEW YORK  
EL MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES, HAVANA

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BRONXMUSEUM

## The Bronx Museum of the Arts and Cuba's El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana Launch Historic Collaboration

**Groundbreaking Initiative Includes  
Major Exhibitions in the U.S. and Cuba, Artist Exchanges,  
Educational and Public Programs, and a Dual-Language Publication**

**Bronx, NY, May 7, 2015**—The Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana (MNBA) are pleased to announce the opening of *Wild Noise: Artwork from The Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes*. *Wild Noise* represents the most extensive visual arts exchange between the two countries in more than 50 years, and includes major exhibitions at MNBA and the Bronx Museum; an artist exchange with U.S. artist Mary Mattingly and Cuban artist Humberto Diaz; a teen exchange program; a series of educational and public programs; and the creation of a dual-language publication that extends the impact of *Wild Noise* beyond the audiences that participate directly in the initiative.

*Wild Noise* opens in Havana concurrently with the 12<sup>th</sup> Bienal de La Habana, with an exhibition of more than 90 works from the Bronx Museum's permanent collection to be on public view at MNBA from May 21 through August 16, 2015. *Wild Noise* features works from the 1960s to the present day that reveal the ways contemporary artists are addressing questions of identity, urban life, and community. Reciprocally, for the first time—over 90 works from MNBA's permanent collection will be presented at the Bronx Museum in spring 2016. The title—*Wild Noise*—is taken from a Victor Hugo poem, “Ma vie est déjà dans l'ombre de la mort,” and refers to the sublimity and chaos of urban spaces, “the wild noise where infinity begins.” The theme resonates with this year's Bienal de La Habana, which will be held at locations across the city, integrating into the urban fabric of Havana and its communities.

*Wild Noise* is organized by the Bronx Museum's Executive Director Holly Block, and Director of Programs Sergio Bessa. At the MNBA, the project is spearheaded by Director Ana Cristina Perez and curated by Corina Matamoros, Curator of Contemporary Cuban Art, and Aylet Ojeda Jequin, Curator of Contemporary Cuban Art and Naïve Art.

“We are at the threshold of a new kind of relationship between Cuba and the U.S.—both politically and artistically,” said Executive Director of the Bronx Museum Holly Block. “The Bronx Museum has been working with the arts community from Cuba since the launch of the first Bienal de La Habana in 1984 and we are committed to continuing to build the cultural dialogue between our two countries.”

## **EXHIBITIONS**

### ***Wild Noise* at El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, May 21 – August 16, 2015**

The exhibition focuses on urban life and communities, and introduces artists, practices, and themes previously little-known in Cuba. More than 90 works from the Bronx Museum's permanent collection is on view, including work by over 50 artists including Bronx-born artists Vito Acconci, Lawrence Weiner, and Glenn Ligon, sculptor and visual artist Willie Cole, photographer Lisa Kahane, sculptors Chakaia Booker and Huma Bhabha, and others.

In addition, ***Wild Noise* will feature over 90 works from MNBA's permanent collection at The Bronx Museum of the Arts in March 16, 2016.** The exhibition will offer U.S. students, scholars, artists, travelers, members of the New York community, and Bronxites the opportunity to view the breadth of contemporary art from Cuba, providing a rare look at the range of artists who have responded to Cuba's unique political, economic, social, and cultural conditions since the 1960s.

### **U.S. AND CUBAN ARTIST RESIDENCY EXCHANGE**

Each museum has chosen one artist to take part in an international artist exchange to be conducted over a four- to six-week period leading up to opening of each exhibition. The artist exchange begins with Mary Mattingly—a New York-based artist and former participant in the Bronx Museum artist-ambassador program *smARTpower*—traveling to Cuba to create a new work for *Wild Noise* and interact with audiences there through public programs. Cuban artist Humberto Diaz has been selected to participate in the 2016 exhibition at the Bronx Museum, creating new art work for that show.

### **U.S. AND CUBAN TEEN EXCHANGE**

Using as a model the Bronx Museum's successful Venice Teen Exchange (implemented for the 2013 U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennial), the exchange program connects members of the Bronx Museum Teen Council and teens in Havana through a series of platforms, including mail exchanges, jointly produced "zines," and other collaborations investigating social issues that affect youth in both cities.

### **DUAL-LANGUAGE EXHIBITIONS CATALOG**

A dual-language print and digital publication will highlight works from each exhibition, providing in-depth examinations of the exhibitions' themes, contributing scholarship and offering fresh interpretations of the Bronx Museum and MNBA's collections. The publication will be accessible online through the Bronx Museum's and MNBA's websites.

In addition, the Bronx Museum and MNBA are currently planning additional programmatic initiatives, including educational programs, concerts, performances, film screenings, artist talks, and workshops that explore the themes of *Wild Noise*.

*Wild Noise* is supported by the Ford Foundation and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, with additional funding from Bespoke Travel, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center, Charina Endowment Fund, The Evelyn Toll Family Foundation, Fundación Amistad, Laura Blanco and Robert F. Shainheit, The Liman Foundation, May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, and RLA Conservation of Art and Architecture, and individuals. Special thanks to Lindsey Frank, Esq. of Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky and Lieberman, P.C. For more information on *Wild Noise* and other Bronx Museum initiatives, visit the Bronx Museum website at <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/>

### **About The Bronx Museum of the Arts**

The Bronx Museum of the Arts is an internationally recognized cultural destination that presents innovative contemporary art exhibitions and education programs and is committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogues among diverse audiences. Since its founding in 1971, the Museum has played a vital role in the Bronx by helping to make art accessible to the entire community and connecting with local schools, artists, teens, and families through its robust education initiatives. In celebration of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Museum implemented a universal free admission policy, supporting its mission to make arts experiences available to all audiences. The Museum's collection comprises over 1,000 modern and contemporary artworks in all media and highlights works by artists of African, Asian, and Latin-American ancestry, as well as artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their development. Located on the Grand Concourse, the Museum's home is a distinctive contemporary landmark designed by the internationally recognized firm Arquitectonica.

The Museum has sustained a long-term commitment to working with and presenting the work of Cuban/Cuban-American artists through numerous acquisitions, exhibitions, and curatorial projects, including an early research tour by staff to the first Bienal de La Habana in 1984. Currently, the Museum is featuring an exhibition *Cuba Libre!*, which showcases a selection of Cuban artwork from the Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection through June 21, 2015. Past exhibitions highlighting Cuban art have included *Revolution Not Televised* (2012), featuring works by contemporary Cuban artists in the Bronx Museum's permanent collection; *Carlos Garaicoa: The Ruin, the Utopia* (2001), the Cuban artist's first solo museum exhibition; and *The Nearest Edge of the World: Art and Cuba Now* (1991), featuring nine contemporary Cuban artists. The Museum's permanent collection also contains substantial holdings of works by Cuban artists, including Ana Mendieta, Wilfredo Prieto, Carlos Garaicoa, Sandra Ramos, Jose Angel Toirac, Luis Salvador Cruz Azeta, Tania Bruguera, Kcho, Aimée Garcia Marrero, and Reynier Leyva Novo.

### **About El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes**

Founded in 1913, El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA) is Cuba's leading fine arts institution. MNBA houses the largest and most significant collection of Cuban art in the world, as well as artwork from diverse cultures and historical periods. The Museum's extensive permanent collection reflects the cultural heritage of the nation and includes a range of work—from Colonial and contemporary Cuban art, to historic Greek pottery and Fayum mummy portraits, to English portraits from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Spanish paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and a major collection of prints.

The MNBA is housed in two public buildings: Palacio de Bellas Artes, dedicated to exhibiting Cuban art—and Centro Asturiano, which features international collections.

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# The New York Times

## Art & Design

January 21, 2015

### Bronx Plans Art Exchange With Cuba

By RANDY KENNEDY



"Daze," a 1998 sculpture by Rigoberto Torres.  
Rigoberto Torres

The [Bronx Museum of the Arts](#) and the [National Museum of Fine Arts](#) in Cuba announced Wednesday that a major exchange of works from their collections would take place this year and next in the most sweeping collaboration between the two countries' museums in more than 50 years.

The arrangement is the fruit of curatorial negotiations that began long before the recent thaw in diplomatic relations, said Holly Block, the Bronx Museum's executive director, who has traveled to Cuba and followed the work of artists there for two decades.

Over 80 works of art dating from the 1960s to the present will travel from the Bronx's permanent collection for display at the National Museum from May 21 through Aug. 16, coinciding with the 12th Havana Biennial. In the fall of 2016, more than 100 works from the National Museum's collection will come to the Bronx Museum, which has long collected and championed work by Cubans and Cuban-Americans as well as other art from Latin America and from Africa and Asia.



The National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana, which will host over 80 works from Bronx Museum of the Arts from May 21 through Aug. 16. Eliana Aponte Tobar for The New York Times

"There are, of course, huge differences between the Bronx and Havana, but there are also a lot of similarities," Ms. Block said. "The idea is to reinforce the fact that the National Museum is a very local museum, which is what we are, too."

Large portions of Havana's collection have traveled before — most notably to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 2008 for the show [“¡Cuba! Art and History From 1868 to Today.”](#) Since the United States imposed an embargo on trade between the two countries in 1960, many exhibitions of Cuban art have been organized here, and pieces from private American collections have gone on view in Cuba. But there has never been an exchange of this scale or ambition between the two museums. “It makes a lot of sense for us,” said [Corina Matamoros](#), a curator of contemporary art at the National Museum in Havana. “Our museums have a common mission and a common vision about contemporary art, created in specific community contexts.”

The exhibitions this year and next will be jointly titled “Wild Noise,” a reference to the chaotic beauty of urban spaces based on a passage in a Victor Hugo poem about [“the wild noise where infinity begins.”](#) Ms. Matamoros, who spoke in Spanish through a translator, said: “I want to be absolutely clear that because we’ve been so isolated for the last 50 years, I really don’t think the United States knows much at all about Cuban art. I think this art, which spans from the ’60s until now, is all going to be a revelation.” She mentioned artists like [Antonia Eiríz Vázquez](#), a painter of powerfully dark Goya-like visions who died in 1995; [Raúl Martínez](#), a Pop-inflected painter and graphic designer, who also died in 1995; and Alfredo Sosabravo, whose vividly colored figurative painting often combines whimsy with a social bite.

The collaboration is another feather in the cap of the relatively tiny Bronx Museum, which in 2013 commissioned the art for the United States [pavilion](#) at the Venice Biennale, a complex installation by [Sarah Sze](#).

Ms. Block, the author of the 2001 book [“Art Cuba: The New Generation,”](#) traveled to Cuba in December to talk to curators there about the project and arrived serendipitously in Havana on the day that President Obama ordered the restoration of full diplomatic relations. “I didn’t know it had happened,” she said, “but you could almost feel it in the streets. It’s a pretty amazing moment for this kind of collaboration to be happening.”

Past exhibitions at the Bronx Museum that have featured Cuban art include “Revolution Not Televised” in 2012, with works by contemporary Cuban artists in its permanent collection; the first solo American museum exhibition of the work of [Carlos Garaicoa](#), [“The Ruins, the Utopia,”](#) in 2001; and “The Nearest Edge of the World: Art and Cuba Now” in 1991, featuring the work of nine contemporary Cuban artists. The museum’s collection includes works by Cuban artists like [Ana Mendieta](#), Wilfredo Prieto, Sandra Ramos, José Ángel Toirac and [Tania Bruguera](#), a performance artist who was [repeatedly arrested](#) last month during protests in Havana demanding the release of political detainees.

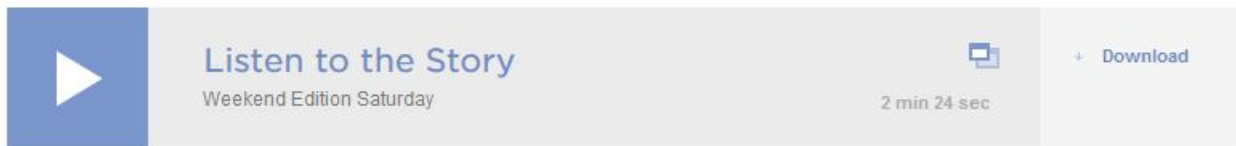
The holdings of the National Museum of Fine Arts, founded in 1913, are now divided between two buildings in the capital — one dedicated to Cuban art and the other to art from around the world dating from the classical period to the present. Ms. Block said that the diplomatic thaw would not only provide a momentous backdrop for the exchange but also open the possibility that moving artwork between the countries will become far easier. “For private collectors, it hasn’t been so tough in recent years to move works, but the red tape between governments for transfers between institutions has been very difficult,” she said.

Moving people hasn’t been much easier. Ms. Matamoros said that after years of being able to travel to the United States for art projects, she was denied a visa last year by Cuban officials. After a perfunctory two-minute interview, she said, she was given a form letter that said her application had been denied because of a suspicion that she planned to emigrate. “I very much hope that won’t happen next time,” she said.



January 24, 2015

## As U.S. Reengages With Cuba, Art Museums Make a Trade



The Bronx Museum of the Arts and Cuba's National Museum of Fine Arts are exchanging works from their collections. It's the largest art exchange between the two countries in more than 50 years.

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SCOTT SIMON, HOST:

There were talks between the U.S. and Cuba in Havana this week. And while no breakthroughs were announced, cultural exchanges, as well as trade and travel, are expected to increase. The Bronx Museum of the Arts has already begun a collaboration with the National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana, which will feature art that shows urban life. Sergio Bessa is the Bronx Museum's program director.

SERGIO BESSA: We are looking for common threads between the two communities. And if you have traveled to Havana, you will see that the local culture is spectacular, and I think it's the same thing with the Bronx.

SIMON: Later this year, more than 80 U.S. works of art, dating from the 1960s, will travel to Havana. Next year, more than a hundred pieces will come from Cuba to the Bronx. The works of Cuban artists will include the late Antonio Vasquez, who paints in a style that reminds critics of Goya, or Alfredo Sosabravo, who paints bright, vivid figures that purportedly have a critical edge. Both exhibitions will be called "Wild Noise" - words that Sergio Bessa says echo in the history of art in the Bronx.

BESSA: For example, in the early '80s, when young artists were experimenting with graffiti art, they refer to it as the wild style.

SIMON: The project will exchange artists as well as pieces of art. Mary Mattingly of New York will go to Cuba this year to create a new work and meet Cubans. Humberto Diaz, the Cuban artist, will come to the Bronx in 2016. There are also plans to connect American and Cuban teenagers by having them exchange emails and jointly work on zines and other projects.

BESSA: It goes beyond just the exhibition. I think it's more a model of engagement - it's a model of engagement through the arts.

SIMON: Sergio Bessa says he hopes the project will give Americans and Cubans alike a fuller understanding of life in countries that are so close, but have mostly been isolated from each other for half a century.

BESSA: I think when you are isolated for such a long time, you're going to fantasize about the other. And I think projects like this, people just realize there is much more in common than they suspected.

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# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## NY Culture

January 23, 2015

### Bronx, Cuba Museums to Share Works of Art in Ambitious Program

#### Art Exchange Will Coincide With the 12th Havana Biennial

*The Associated Press*

The Bronx Museum of Art and Cuba's National Museum of Fine Arts have launched an art exchange initiative that will include two major exhibitions.

The cooperation began long before the recent thaw in U.S.-Cuban relations.

The Bronx Museum calls it the most ambitious art exchange between U.S. and Cuban museums in more than 50 years.

Some 100 works from the Bronx Museum will be on view in Havana from May 21 through Aug. 16.

It will coincide with the 12th Havana Biennial.

In spring 2016, 100 works from the Havana museum will be shown at the Bronx Museum.

Both exhibitions will present works from the 1960s to the present that address identity, urban life and community issues.

The initiative also will include educational and public programs and a dual-language publication.