

Statement from Yamilia Pérez Estrella

First of all I want to give thanks for the spiritual support and solidarity which from different countries has brought me the fraternity of many people.

To Yoani Sanchez, Dagoberto Valdes, and the entire Coexistence Collective.
To the Office of Human Rights in Cuba.
To all my friends and especially to my two daughters, 9 and 10.

I am a creator committed to artist language, social time, and the investigations conducted since 2000 on the impacts of color on our emotions and their influence on different artistic expressions. I am not satisfied simply to offer my works to galleries which attract the usual and specialized audience, but I want to insert it in the spaces that belong to ALL, including projecting my body in every interactive performance intervention as an expression of art, trying to bring a deep consciousness of our natural humanity, individual or collective strength: SOCIETY as the idea of a more human time.

I believe in the power of Art as a peaceful unifier of internal freedom: THE FREEDOM OF THE ARTIST, but also THE FREEDOM OF THE CITIZEN PERCEIVER.

In 2004 I conducted my first event at Centro Hermanos Loynaz, titled "Island" in honor of our writer Maria Loynaz.

On December 10, 2009, despite threats and attempts to prohibit the event by cultural officials and directors from the Municipal and Provincial Communal Directorate, I managed to realize my second interactive performance event titled, "Without Permission."

On January 9, 2010, I attempted to perform the third interactive performance event: "Without Permission 2: Step to Change," with three artists: Maykel Iglesia, doctor and poet, Sergio Abel Suarez, agronomist engineer, yoga practitioner and origami instructor, and me. Maykel was abducted and taken to his house by State Security, Sergio and I were followed by a large group of people and in front of the Palace of Justice they undertook an act of repudiation, destroying with kicks the painting we had in our hands, painted with black, red and white.

On December 10 of this year I attempted to offer my fourth performance event: "Without Permission 3: Unity and Struggle of Opposites." From the early morning in front of my house at Maceo No. 28, a crowd distributed in small groups prevented my leaving and also prevented friends from entering my house and the neighbor's house next door.

* A Curfew *

I remember the image and doctrines of the Maximum Leader of the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro, when he said in his rebuttal to the dictator Fulgencia Batista in "History Will Absolve Me," I quote:

... The strongest man is never strong enough to be master forever...

“To renounce freedom is to renounce one's status as a man, to renounce one's human rights, including one's duties. There is no possible compensation for renouncing everything. Total renunciation is incompatible with the nature of man and to take away all free will is to take away all morality of conduct. In short, it is vain and contradictory to stipulate on the one hand an absolute authority and on the other an unlimited obedience”...

Behind the bars of my window, with my left hand painted black on one side and red on the other across my chest, I extend my right hand painted white on top, as one who wishes to speak.

To be detained in my own home by officials from the Ministry of the Interior in plain clothes, verbally threatening my life, a man handing out stones to a group of women who stand in the front row, a State Security official saying that December 10 was the day of dissent and he was there to protect me from the impulses of “the patriotic people.”

There were some vain, contradictory and authoritarian responses to my artistic and peaceful act, to my right to FREEDOM.

From Pinar del Río, Cuba

December 11, 2010

J. Yamilia Pérez Estrella

Artist of the visual arts