CUBA_11-3_media-interactive

Art in Cuba

Cuba has a strong and vibrant art community. Make a selection to learn more about individual artists and their works.

**Abel Barroso**  
*Wood sculptor*  
Location: Born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, in 1971; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Playful sculptures that combine printmaking and woodcuts to comment on modern technology or contemporary Cuban life.

**Alfredo Sosabravo**  
*Painter*  
Location: Born in Sagua La Grande, Cuba, in 1930; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Vibrant paintings and ceramics that weave together themes of mechanization, biology and humanity. These pieces most often take the form of surrealist land- and seascapes.

**Alicia Alonso**  
*Ballet director and choreographer*  
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1921; Based in Havana  
Best known for: In the 1940s and 50s, Alonso was one of the world’s top ballerinas; she also established the Cuban National Ballet. Alonso was widely lauded for her lead roles in *Giselle* and *Carmen*.

**Alicia Leal**  
*Painter*  
Location: Born in Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, in 1957; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Folk-art depictions of relationships between men and women in paintings and street murals. Her art is known for highly symbolic narratives.

**Arturo Montoto**  
*Painter*  
Location: Born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, in 1953  
Best known for: Depicting the changing life of Old Havana through contemporary still-lifes of ripe and decaying fruit.
**Carlos Garaicoa**  
Architectural installation artist  
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1967; Based in Madrid and Havana  
Best known for: Combining images with words and phrases to encourage viewers to think more deeply about the connotations of certain styles of architecture.

**Eduardo García**  
Photographer  
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1978. Based in Havana  
Best known for: Photographic essays that showcase the human spirit of Cuba. He’s explored the community role of open spaces, the fraternity between twins and the difficulty many Cubans face trying to acquire basic necessities.

**Glenda León**  
Conceptual artist  
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1976. Based in Havana and Madrid  
Best known for: Creating photographs and installation pieces that challenge the way we normally think about objects, natural phenomena or concepts such as time.

**Isabel Toledo**  
Fashion designer  
Location: Born in Cuba in 1961; Based in New York  
Best known for: Designing clothes featuring experimental methods of draping and patterns. Michelle Obama wore an outfit fashioned by Toledo for the inauguration of her husband as president in 2009.

**Isolina Limonta**  
Collage maker  
Location: Born in Guantanamo, Cuba, in 1956; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Assembling richly colored artworks by combining physical objects such as feathers or lace with colored pencil or acrylic paint. Her pieces are strongly influenced by Afro-Cuban religions.

**Jorge Gil**  
Titanium jewelry sculptor  
Location: Based in Havana
Best known for: Creating wearable sculptures out of titanium. Once this sturdy metal is made malleable, it can be bent and carved, and takes on colorization through heat or electrolysis.

José Antonio Villa and Raiko Valladares
Industrial designers
Location: Both Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1987; Based in Havana
Best known for: A contemporary line of chairs built only from materials commonly available in Cuba, such as recycled steel and elastic. The chairs are an interpretation of the Cuban music scene, and are suggestive of string instruments.

Los Carpinteros (Marco Castillo and Dagoberto Rodríguez)
Architectural installation artists
Location: Born in Camaguey, Cuba, in 1971 and Caibarién, Las Villas, Cuba in 1969, respectively; Based in Havana and Madrid
Best known for: Large-scale conceptual works of art that fuse sculpture, design and architecture into pieces that challenge the normal role of objects in our society.

Manuel Mendive
Painter and performance artist?
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1944
Best known for: Painting exotic figures or patterns on canvas, wood carvings and even people. Mendive’s figures are often interpretations of Afro-Cuban religious spirits.

María Magdalena Campos-Pons
Performance artist
Location: Born in Matanzas, Cuba, in 1959; Based in Boston
Best known for: Physical art that explores the declining Cuban sugar trade, and performance art that expresses the suffering experienced by slaves forced to work in the sugar industry.

María Elena González
Conceptual installation sculptor
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1957; Based in Brooklyn
Best known for: Site-specific, large-scale works that combine architectural and environmental forms with her personal memories.

Roberto Fabelo
Sculptor and painter
Location: Born in Camagüey, Cuba, in 1951
Best known for: Having human or animal forms interact with each other and inanimate objects in strange settings to create unexpected juxtapositions.

**Tania Bruguera**  
*Conceptual performance artist*  
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1968; Based in Havana and New York  
Best known for: Initiating events that question and confront audiences with inherent power structures, both political and personal. She has served detentions in Cuba multiple times for her public performances.

**Tomás Sánchez**  
*Painter*  
Location: Born in Aguada de Pasajeros, Cuba, in 1948; Based in Costa Rica  
Best known for: His landscapes, some of which show allegorical panoramas that are peaceful and harmonious. Others present dystopian scenes such as large landfills, or piles of garbage littering otherwise pristine habitats.

**Viengsay Valdés**  
*Ballet dancer*  
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1976; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Famous ballet dancer Alicia Alonzo discovered Valdés when she was only 17; she went on to become the prima ballerina of the National Ballet of Cuba. She has starred in productions such as *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote* and *The Nutcracker*.

**Yamile Pardo**  
*Painter*  
Location: Born in Cuba in 1971; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Paintings that investigate the form and function of found objects. Much of her work also focuses on the roles that women play in domestic life in Cuba.

**Yoan Capote**  
*Sculptor*  
Location: Born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, in 1977; Based in Havana  
Best known for: Sculptures that examine people and psychological experiences. His works often ask an observer to take a second look at what they first perceive as common objects.
**Yusa**
Singer
Location: Born in Havana, Cuba in 1973; Based in Havana and Buenos Aires
Best known for: With lyrics full of references to Havana and the sea, Yusa’s music echoes contemporary Havana. She is proficient with the Cuban *tres* guitar, which has three pairs of strings.

**José Francisco Casanova Pérez**
Tattoo artist
Location: Based in Sancti Spiritus, Cuba
Best known for: Japanese, realism and neo-traditional tattoos.

**Francisco Griñán Sánchez**
Drummer
Location: Based in Holguin, Cuba
Best known for: Directing La Campana, an Afro-Cuban percussion, song and dance company. He is the leader of this group, which has over 40 members. He is also a drummer.