



El Perro ★

ANGELS AND DEMONS

MAY 11TH 2017

6-10PM

3255A 3RD STREET,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA



# PRESENTED BY



The Human Rights Foundation is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes and protects human rights globally, with a focus on closed societies. HRF unites people in the common cause of defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy.

Our mission is to ensure that freedom is both preserved and promoted around the world, especially where it's most at risk.

The Art in Protest series was created by HRF to promote artists who use their talent to criticize and challenge repressive regimes.



Immersive ART LAB is a cutting edge creative production company founded by Sean Mason & Nabil Musleh.

Immersive designs dynamic environments for events nationwide. The company specializes in architectural and sculptural projection mapping, corporate audio visual, custom content creation, event and stage lighting and custom scenic fabrication.

Immersive ART LAB is the result of Immersive's desire to support the ever growing and expanding art movement in San Francisco. The LAB is based in SF's Dog Patch neighborhood and is an experimental laboratory for temporary pop-up art exhibitions.

The LAB is very excited to open its doors and serve as the location for the Angel & Demon's opening by artist El Sexto. Immersive ART LAB is excited to showcase their artistic and creative aesthetic by building out the LAB for this upcoming show.



Jenny Boyle, owner of JBI Designs, has worked in the Interior Design and Art buying field for over a decade. She brings a highly collaborative spirit to every project and ensures her clients aspirations are recognized and successfully interpreted.

Jenny is a lover of art and social justice issues. She is moved and inspired by art daily. She is thrilled to be working with the Human Rights Foundation, and Immersive ART LAB to produce and design El Sexto's upcoming show.

# PRESS RELEASE

## **May 11: Celebrated Cuban dissident artist, El Sexto, to premiere art show in San Francisco.**

Danilo “El Sexto” Maldonado Machado’s ‘ANGELS & DEMONS’ exhibit will premiere in San Francisco’s new up-and-coming art district, Dogpatch, on May 11th from 6:00pm to 10:00pm. Immersive Art Lab presents the exhibit as their inaugural event in cooperation with the Human Rights Foundation’s Art in Protest series. The collection will include works he completed while jailed in Cuba’s maximum security prison, Combinado del Este, Havana.

ANGELS & DEMONS is the first event in the Human Rights Foundation’s Art in Protest series. Curated by HRF’s chief curator Holly Baxter and produced by the artist’s representative, Adam D’Arcy, El Sexto’s unique paintings and drawings will be on display from May 11th to the 24th. The show is presented in collaboration with immersive Art Lab as the first event at their 3255A 3rd Street location in San Francisco’s Dogpatch district. The exhibition space is designed by Jenny Boyle at JBI designs and constructed by Ben Morgenstern’s team at immersive Art Lab.

On May 11, Angels & Demons will feature a performance by El Sexto as he enters a replicated version of his prison cell at Combinado del Este.

As a message of solidarity with the people of Cuba, as well as other political prisoners around the world, including Chinese, Russian, Turkish, and Venezuelan political prisoners, El Sexto will enter the cell during opening night and remain there for three days on hunger strike, consuming only water. Guests to the exhibit will be able to view El Sexto through the bars of the door as he lives and creates another round of drawings. El Sexto wishes to raise awareness and give thanks to the sacrifice made by other brave individuals, such as China’s Liu Xiaobo, the world’s only imprisoned Nobel Laureate, and Leopoldo López-- the imprisoned leader of Venezuela’s democratic opposition.

Danilo Maldonado Machado, otherwise known as “El Sexto” (the Sixth in Spanish), names himself after the Cuban Five, a group of spies convicted of espionage in the United States and celebrated as propaganda heroes by the Cuban dictatorship. El Sexto considers the people of Cuba the true heroes and acts as a voice for them. He began his devotion to art at a young age -- when he was caught drawing a portrait of a uniformed Fidel Castro with the head of a monkey. His mother destroyed the drawing out of fear for what the Cuban regime is known to do to those who challenge and mock them. She demanded that he never draw anything like it again. However, Danilo’s irrepressible nature would ensure that this was

just the start of his lifelong critique of oppression and authoritarianism and leads us to the subject matter of his work today.

El Sexto is an ace with a can of spray paint and his art has gotten him into some life threatening situations. It has also earned him the attention and respect of international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International --which championed his defense-- and widespread media coverage. His art has 'protected him' when he thought he may not survive another night in jail. El Sexto has been imprisoned four times since the age of eighteen, facing torture, solitary confinement for months at a time, and even threats of execution. His new 'Saints and Martyrs' series of paintings consists of individual portraits of well-known historical figures that have also suffered and perished for their principles. They represent strength, courage and his admiration for their sacrifice.

With a keen interest in the substance of George Orwell's 'Animal Farm', El Sexto's other signature pieces radiate an anti-regime sentiment, with symbols of authority represented as pigs, monkeys, cows and other animals. Many of the remarkable drawings he made while in prison will be on display. Sometimes textual, these drawings provide an insight into the artist's mind during intense times of captivity. The drawings were, for him, a means of salvation. They were "the angels protecting him from the demons that had him physically surrounded."

El Sexto has received recognition from The New York Times, NPR, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, PBS, Paper Magazine and the Huffington Post, to name a few. He was awarded the Václav Havel International Prize for Creative Dissent for his contributions towards individual rights in Cuba. He has been written about in author Coco Fusco's book 'Dangerous Movements', spoken at numerous international venues including the

United Nations, the Oslo Freedom Forum, the Geneva Summit for Human Rights, and the US Senate Foreign Affairs Hearing. Most recently El Sexto was featured in Julian Schnabel's HBO documentary 'Patria o Muerte'.

El Sexto has been censored, tortured and detained, and yet he remains outspoken, untouched and free. He has watched his art be destroyed and retaliates by tattooing it across his skin. El Sexto is a revolutionary, an artist, and a voice for the people everywhere who refuses to submit to the censorship of arbitrary authority.

Angels & Demons is the first of the Human Rights Foundation's Art in Protest series, which will showcase other artists at the Oslo Freedom Forum, May 22nd to 24th. The Art in Protest series was created to promote and showcase artists using their talent to criticize and challenge oppressive government regimes.

'Angels & Demons' by El Sexto

For more information about El Sexto and his work, please contact us;

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Adam D'Arcy, Artist's Representative +1 (310) 595 6227

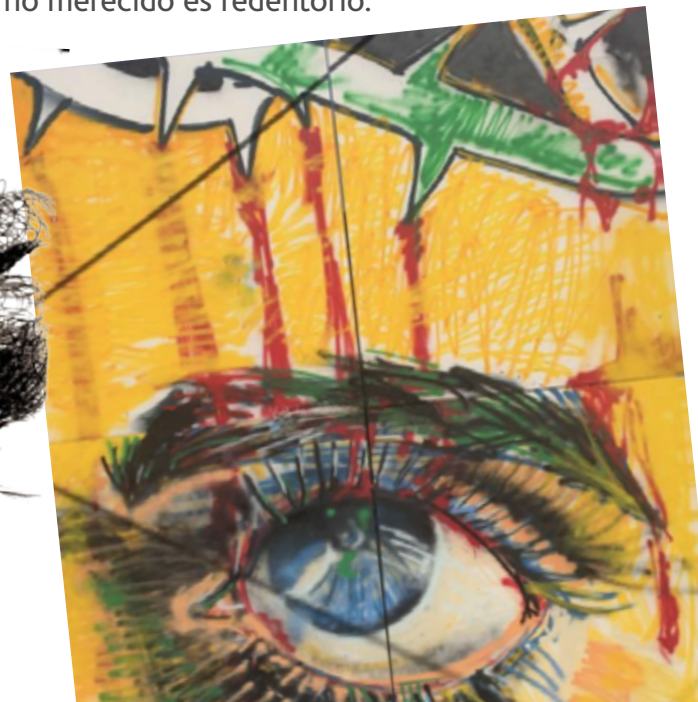




# ARTIST'S STATEMENT

This exhibition is about the demons that landed me in prison, those who kept me company there, and the angels that were protecting me while I was jailed. The art that I made at the time was like a telephone call to the world, and just as that art saved me, now it protects me. I want to present these works as a type of sanctuary for the people who thought of me and showed me solidarity. I want to show them my interior world, my fantasy. Saints and martyrs gave me the strength-- in their moment these beings were people like me, to a certain degree. But, they died, so I am here to demonstrate what I felt in those moments of sacrifice and suffering, inspired by them. The undeserved punishment is redemptive.

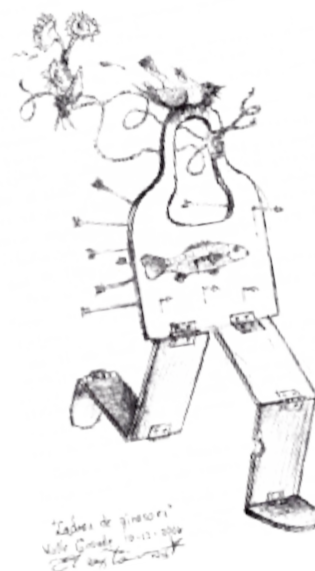
La exposición se trata de los demonios que me llevaron a la cárcel, los que me acompañaban ahí, y de los angeles quien me estaban cuidando cuando estaba yo preso. El arte que yo hacia era una llamada por teléfono al mundo y como ese arte me salvo, ahora me esta cuidando. Quiero mostrar este trabajo como una especie de santuario para las personas quien se preocuparon por mi tambien y se solidarizaron. Quiero corresponderlo mostrándole mi mundo interior, mi fantasia. Los santos y martires me dieron la fuerza, en su momento tambien estos seres habian sido personas como yo, de cierta manera. Pero ellos se murieron, entonces yo estoy aquí para mostrar lo que senti en ese momento de sacrificio y sufrimiento, inspirados por ellos. El castigo no merecido es redentorio.



# BIO

Danilo Machado Maldonado, aka El Sexto (the Sixth in Spanish) was born on April 1st, 1983 in Nuevitas, Camaguey, Cuba. Raised in Havana, he spent his youth sharing a home with his mother, grandmother, sister and another family, selling candy in his neighborhood to help his mother get by. Danilo did not receive a formal education in art as a child, but rather from practicing on the street and with the guidance of a neighborhood teacher that took him under his wing. Danilo graduated in 2002 from Técnico Medio Havana in Arts and Crafts and earned diplomas at Havana City University.

At the age of 18, Danilo enrolled in the military. Life on the base was new to him for one simple reason; it had goods and resources that were not available to ordinary Cubans. Danilo's calling for art was such that he decided to 'borrow' some art supplies from the base and take them home. The police showed up at his door and he was imprisoned for 2 years as a result. Upon his release, Danilo defied the Cuban government's demand that he must use his artistic skills in service of the revolution and he was imprisoned a second time for one more year. Danilo would go on to be arrested twice more over the next fifteen years for the increased attention he was receiving for his artistic expression and his opinions about the Cuban government. In 2015 he was detained on his way to Havana's central square where,



inspired by George Orwell's novel, he planned to put on a performance piece entitled "Animal Farm." Danilo was apprehended with two pigs he had named Fidel and Raul--he had intended to set them free in the center of Havana, allowing anyone who could catch them to keep them. 10 months later and following 2 hunger strikes, Danilo was released from prison -- he was never formally charged. Upon his release he traveled abroad where he held a widely celebrated exhibit entitled "Pork" during Art Basel in Miami. He returned to Cuba in late 2016.

On November 26th of last year, following Fidel Castro's death, Danilo spray painted the words "He's Gone" on the outer wall of a prominent hotel and signed his name to it. He was arrested at home, beaten, and then transferred to Cuba's maximum security prison Combined del Este where his imprisonment received international attention, with the Human Rights Foundation and Amnesty International calling for his immediate release. Danilo lived through mock executions, torture and solitary confinement in the maximum security prison for two months.

Danilo has been described as "a graffiti artist who does not forgive the Cuban regime."

# SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2011	'No son Cinco, El Sexto' - La Paja Recold Independent music production. Havana, Cuba.	2015	Miami Basel Artfair performance of 'Rebelión en la Granja' cancelled. United States visa delayed by Cuban authorities. Miami, USA.
2012	'Dos456 espacio' , Havana City, Cuba. Exhibition Closed and banned by authorities on opening day.	2015	Live painting on the streets of NYC with Garry Kasparov, chairman of the Human Rights Foundation.
2012	'Este Año quemare dos muñecos viejos' - State of SATS alternative TV. Havana, Cuba.	2016	'Rebelión en la Granja' – Performance for opening reception of 'PORK' exhibition. Miami, USA.
2012	'Parcha Rosa Socio /2% el octavo pasajero.' - Havana Graffiti Exhibition, Christo Salvador Independent Gallery, Havana City, Cuba (jointly with José Ernesto Rodrigues).	2016	'PORK' solo exhibition of paintings and drawings with screening of Andy Warhol film The Life of Juanita Castro kindly granted by Warhol Museum. Miami, USA.
2013	'5 años de vida artística, Arte inútil' - Exhibition closed and banned by authorities on opening day. La Paja Recold Independent music production. Havana City, Cuba.	2016	Live painting at Oslo Freedom Forum in May, and at the San Francisco Freedom Forum in September.
2013	'PAX' - Resident artist at PAX, University for Peace. The Hague, Holland.	2017	Live painting at the Geneva Summit for Human Rights.
2014	'Rebelión en la Granja' - Christmas day Puerco Encebado performance art stopped for over a year by Cuban authorities. Incarceration for performance.		
2015	Fifty drawings created secretly while in Valle Grande prison, Cuba.		
2015	In May, while still in prison, El Sexto is awarded the Václav Havel International Prize for Individual Rights in Cuba.		





# GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012 Humor Politico, State of SATS  
alternative TV. Havana, Cuba.

2012 Public Exhibition and Sales. Talento  
Cubano, Plaza Roja. Havana, Cuba.

2012 Parche Rosa Sucio. Havana Graffiti  
Exhibition, Christo Salvador  
Independent Gallery. Havana, Cuba.

2013 El Veto UNIDO. La Paja Recold  
Independent music production.  
Havana, Cuba.

2015 ATG exhibition as part of the  
philosophical festival IDEA. Art  
Tree Gallery, Lloyd Hotel.  
Amsterdam, Holland.

2015 Live painting for New Orleans  
Museum with Amnesty International.  
Painting is in permanent museum  
collection.

2016 Public Exhibition at Miami Cuban Art  
Club titled "Manteca".

2017 "Arte Con Vida" presented by AXS  
Law. Wynwood, Miami.





# AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS & RECOGNITIONS



Cuban writer and artist Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo has praised Maldonado as “a free artist widely hated for his courage and his genius.”



Maldonado had been selected as a winner of the year's Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent in 2015, awarded by the Human Rights Foundation at the annual Oslo Freedom Forum.



Cuban dissident Rosa María Payá has said that although born under totalitarianism, Maldonado has somehow managed to be a free spirit and “the Cuban regime does not forgive that.”



Featured in Coco Fusco's book 'Dangerous Movements'.





Testified at US Senate Foreign Affairs Hearing on human rights in Cuba.



Speaker at Geneva Summit for Human Rights 2017.



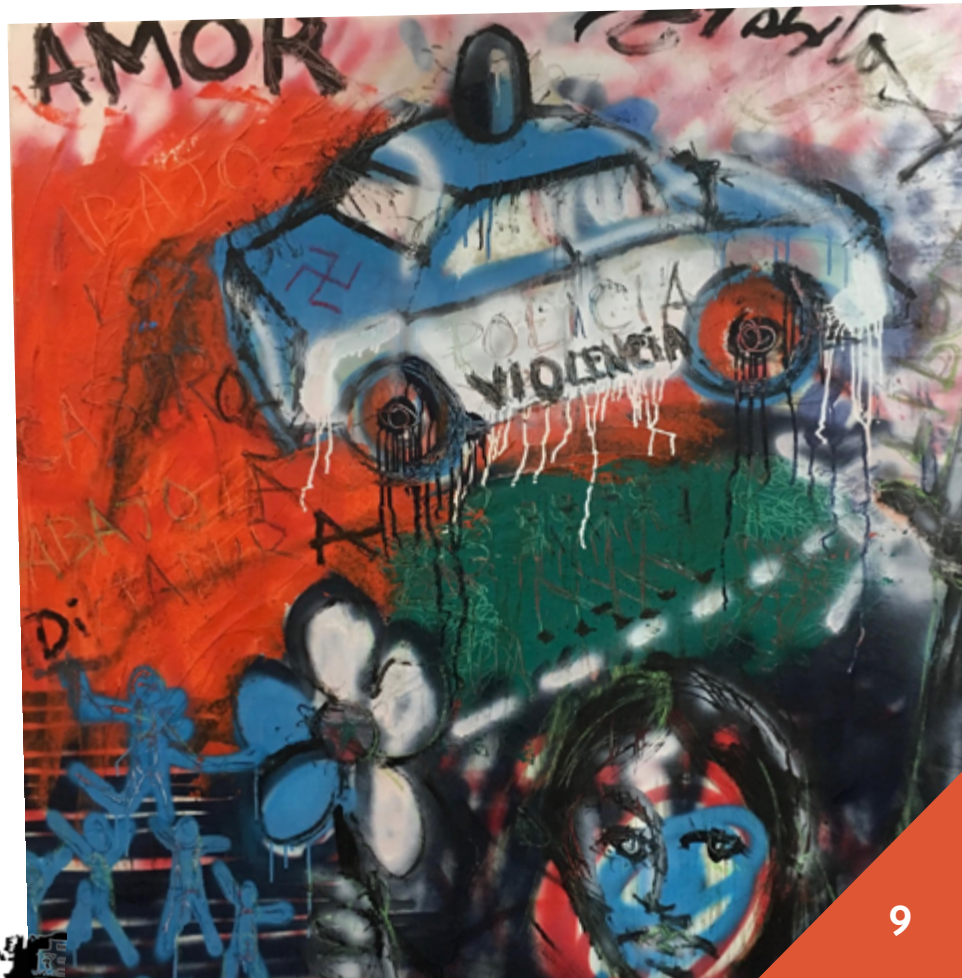
Featured in the HBO documentary 'Patria o Muerte'.



Speaker at Oslo Freedom Forum 2016.



Vice President of the German Parliament, Ulla Schmidt, declares herself as his "Political Godmother".



# PRESS COVERAGE

## Los Angeles Times

### Danilo Maldonado Machado, the dissident artist called 'El Sexto,' on art and liberty in Cuba

By Carolina A. Miranda. April 7 2017

At the tail end of 2014, Danilo Maldonado Machado, the graffiti artist known as “El Sexto,” was detained by the authorities as he made his way to a public park in Havana to stage a work of protest art. In his vehicle, he was carrying a pair of pigs that he had painted with the names of the Castro brothers — one “Raul,” the other “Fidel.” His plan was to release them and let members of the public catch them and take them home.

But the piece, titled “Rebelión en la granja” (after George Orwell’s “Animal Farm”) never happened. Instead, Maldonado spent 10 months in jail. His case drew international headlines. As did a subsequent detention in which he publicly celebrated the death of Fidel Castro on a Havana street.

Maldonado now finds himself in the United States where he is promoting human rights in Cuba in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation, which helped fund his U.S. trip. (The Visual Artists Guild and various private donors funded the L.A. portion of his travels.) He is also at work on a pop-up exhibition that lands in San Francisco in



Cuban dissident artist Danilo Maldonado Machado, known as “El Sexto,” was in Los Angeles recently for a show and a screening.

mid-May. “It will feature a variety of things, like a reconstruction of the cell I was in in Cuba,” he says. “There will be drawings and paintings.”

The artist was in Los Angeles recently for a one-night show of his prison drawings at the Stay Gallery in Downey. He also participated in a panel at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, in conjunction with a screening of the documentary



"Patria o Muerte: Cuba, Fatherland or Death," directed by Olatz Lopez Garmendia and executive produced by Julian Schnabel, that looks at the difficult economic and political circumstances facing everyday people in Cuba. (Maldonado is featured in the film.)

In this edited conversation, he discusses why he is drawn to graffiti, what inspired him to attempt to release a pair of pigs in Havana, and the children's book he would one day like to write for his daughter.



Danilo Maldonado Machado ("El Sexto"), the artist who has been jailed for acts such as painting a pair of pigs with the words "Raul"

*You have made your reputation as a street artist. How did you get your start?*

I always drew as a kid — always. And I had lessons because my uncle was an art critic. As an adolescent, though, I got bored with the formal education in school and wanted to get away from that.

I started noticing the importance of visuals, of propaganda, of how those things can affect people. [The Cuban government] has appropriated everything. All of the TV shows are by the government. All of the newspapers are by the government. All of the billboards are by the government. I wanted my art to relate to that. I was interested in graffiti because it was a type of street propaganda.

*What were your earliest actions?*

"Rewind" — I used to paint the rewind symbol, the two little arrows, using a stencil. I put it all over the place and they started to erase it, so I could tell they were keeping an eye on the streets. But I still chose the street because I didn't have to ask anybody's permission.

*How did the name "El Sexto" come about?*

It's a joke. Like I said, I'm interested in publicity and propaganda. In Cuba [in the 1990s], there was this gigantic publicity over this group called the "Five Heroes" [the Cuban Five] — these five spies that were arrested in the United States. I thought, if they are the Five Heroes, then the sixth hero is the people. So I became "El Sexto" — The Sixth. I started putting it all over the place as a joke, as propaganda.

*What inspired "Rebelión en la granja," the performance piece with the pigs?*

I'm always looking for a way of grabbing visual space, not just by graffiti. That's why I do things like transmit live on social media. I'm trying to invade the visual spaces of others.

Well, in Cuba they do this thing with pigs where it's like a game. They release some pigs and you pay 20 pesos and you go into this area and whoever gets the pig, gets the pig. I was like, "I'm going to paint these pigs green and write their names "Raúl" and "Fidel" on them.

I had them in the truck on my way to the park. I told a friend to get on the phone and publicize it, so they found out about it and they picked me up. They accused me of desacato — which is having a lack of respect for maximum authority. And well, the maximum authorities are the Castros. They talked about putting me away for three years. I did 10 months.

*Your work has a sharp political message, but also humor.*



For me, the humor is so important. People want to laugh. And with humor, you can demystify these people. They have these uniforms that they've invented for themselves, this status; with humor you can pick it apart.

*How do you and your work fit into the broader art scene in Cuba? What connections do you have to some of the island's better-known artists?*

The only thing that is recognized as art there are the things that are within government institutions. If you are outside of that, it's not art, it's not anything. The galleries are theirs, the museums are theirs, the institutions — the ones who will do the paperwork so you can travel — those all belong to the government.

I have some relationships with some of the "official" artists, but given my condition, as someone who has been a prisoner, they can't expose themselves too much by helping me out. I don't judge the decisions that someone makes in this regard. They have families that they have to take care of. Everyone has stuff they need to do. I also have family, but I choose to be free.

*How connected are you with Cuban artist Tania Bruguera (who was also detained for attempting to stage a performance in Havana)? And how do you feel about international artists becoming involved in Cuban politics?*

She's a friend. I worked in a school that she created in Havana [Instar, the Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt]. The level of what she represents, it's so important. It's like Julian Schnabel [who spoke out on my case]. These are people who have international recognition and they managed to spread the news of what was happening to me in Cuba. That's what people like Tania can do: They can draw attention to the cause. Cuba needs the solidarity of the world.

When the dictator died and they picked me up,

everyone got right on social media supporting me. It was really beautiful.

*As Cuba and the U.S. reestablish diplomatic relations, has there been an economic and political opening in your view?*

Not really. You have all of these foreign investors, but it doesn't make much of a difference in the life of the average Cuban. If some company comes



A photograph made inside Cuba's Valle Grande prison in 2015 by Danilo Maldonado Machado, known as "El Sexto."

and opens a cafe, they don't pay the employees directly. They pay the Cuban government, and the government pays the people. And the official average wage is still \$20, \$25 a month. People say, "Oh, we have relations with Cuba now." No, you have relations with the government of Cuba, not the people.

*What works were you exhibiting in Downey?*

I was showing some drawings I did in prison — some from the first time around, when I was arrested for painting the two pigs.

There are some drawings from this last time I was in jail, when [Castro] died. I had gone out into the street and written "Se fué" (He's gone) as a graffiti on the building where the revolutionaries had installed themselves after the revolution triumphed. It was the Hotel Habana Libre, which

before was the Havana Hilton. That graffiti cost me two months of jail time.

And there were drawings from a small book I started making for children — for Renata María, my precious girl. She will turn 4 in July.

*A political book?*

No. It's not about inserting politics. It's very imaginative.

Where I live there is the issue of propaganda and dogma, and they start it from the youngest age. They are constantly manipulating — there are these books with drawings that say things like “En manos buenas, un fusil es bueno” (In good hands, a rifle is good) and feature images of people dressed in fatigues.

I wanted to do something different. This features magical elements. It has things about flying through the clouds. It has things that are very childlike.



## Cuba frees ‘prisoner of conscience’

By Nick Miroff. Oct 20 2015

HAVANA — A jailed graffiti artist whose case became a rallying cry for opponents of the Cuban government was abruptly freed Tuesday after 10 months behind bars, according to Amnesty International.

Danilo Maldonado, known as “El Sexto,” was arrested Dec. 25 while riding in a taxi en route to an art show. Cuban security agents searched the trunk and found two live pigs that Maldonado

*What did being in prison teach you about Cuba?*

It's that the majority of people who are in jail, even though they wouldn't consider themselves political prisoners, they are political prisoners. They are prisoners because they don't work for the state — and that's dangerous to the state. If you sell peanuts because you don't want to work for the state's miserable wage, you can end up in prison.

But [the Castros], they've never been held responsible for the crimes they have committed. On the contrary a lot of people think [Fidel] is cool. There are a lot of people in Latin America who think he is cool. But that's not cool. Cool is Ghandi. Cool is Martin Luther King Jr.

was planning to set loose, painted in garish colors with the names “Fidel” and “Raúl” on their backs.

The planned performance, meant to evoke George Orwell's “Animal Farm,” never happened. Maldonado, 32, was accused of disrespecting Cuba's leaders, but he never faced formal charges, according to Amnesty International. He was the only Cuban activist left on the group's list of “Prisoners of Conscience.”

The list once carried dozens of Cuban names, but in recent years the government has opted to use short-term arrests and detentions to disrupt attempted protests by the island's small opposition groups.

“Danilo's release is great news but he should have never been jailed in the first place. Peacefully expressing an opinion is not a crime,” Erika Guevara-Rosas, the Americas Director at Amnesty International, said in a statement.

"This long awaited positive move must open the door for much needed political reform in Cuba, where people are routinely harassed, arrested and thrown in jail on spurious charges for speaking their minds," Guevara-Rosas said. "This needs to change urgently if Cuba is serious about respecting human rights, including the rights of people opposing the Cuban government."

There was no statement from Cuban authorities, but they consider activists such as Maldonado to be paid lackeys for the U.S. government and Miami exiles trying to bring down the Castros' socialist system.

Maldonado's cause was championed by international rights groups and Cuban American lawmakers such as Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), who argued that his imprisonment was proof that President Obama's engagement policy has failed.

Before landing in jail, Maldonado was not a well-known figure among Castro opponents, but the simple, cursive graffiti tag "El Sexto" was a common sight in several Havana neighborhoods.

While in jail, Maldonado refused to eat for several weeks. He ended his hunger strike this month after Cuban authorities said they were considering his release.

Maldonado told the Reuters news agency that guards at the Valle Grande prison instructed him to gather his belongings on Tuesday morning and that he was set free within 30 minutes.

"Now I am going to try to recover my energy and be with my daughter," he told Reuters. "I want to travel to the United States in the future and thank all the people who supported the cause to have me freed."

Maldonado was taken into custody just eight days after Obama and Cuba's Raúl Castro announced their plans to reestablish diplomatic

relations and work toward full normalization. As part of that deal, the Cuban government agreed to release 53 inmates whom the United States considered political prisoners.



Cuban dissident Danilo Maldonado, known as "El Sexto," was arrested Dec. 25.

Cuba insists that it has no political prisoners. The illegal-yet-tolerated Cuban Commission for Human Rights and Reconciliation, a Havana dissident group that keeps its own tally of jailed activists, said it has about 70 names on its list, but they include airplane hijackers, militants and others convicted of violent attacks.

Obama has urged Cuban leaders to embrace democratic reforms and broader tolerance for dissent, saying that is key to building support in Congress for ending U.S. trade sanctions imposed by the Kennedy administration 55 years ago.



# The Economist

## The iconography of Fidel Castro

By Prospero. Nov 28 2016

*A man of charisma and tyranny, it is little surprise that the “commander-in-chief of the Cuban revolution” has inspired artists*

FIDEL CASTRO, Cuba’s communist former dictator, died on November 25th 2016, aged 90. After a bloody revolution in 1959, he ruled his country with an iron fist until 2008, when his brother Raúl



A mural depicting Fidel Castro.

replaced him as president. The imagery of Mr Castro—particularly his beard and green fatigues—has long stood for heroic rebellion for many. But not all: in the hours after his death, Danilo Maldonado Machado, a Cuban graffiti artist and dissident, was reportedly detained by authorities after spraying a simple message on a wall in Havana: Se fue (“He’s gone”).

It seems the regime that Mr Castro installed still understands the power of propaganda. It tightly controls all aspects of the media, even the walls of public spaces. Political slogans (particularly “Patria o Muerte”—“Homeland or Death”),



For 57 years, iconography featuring Castro has stood for socialist rebellion. Here, Cubans walk past a mural in Havana in 2008

combined with arresting visuals, quickly became a rallying cry from the government to its people after the revolution. Dissenting voices, such as Mr Machado’s, are quickly scrubbed away. And Mr Castro’s face has also cropped up on murals in friendly Latin American countries, from Venezuela to Nicaragua.



A worker in Cuba Square in Managua, Nicaragua, sweeps the floor in front of a mural depicting Castro and Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega



## Fabiola Santiago: For a true Art Basel VIP, look to Cuba's El Sexto

By Fabiola Santiago. Dec 1 2015

After spending 10 months in prison without a trial for making art the Cuban government considered defamatory, graffiti artist Danilo Maldonado, better known as "El Sexto," is visiting Miami. Bienvenido.

Freed after Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience, the young Cuban artist came to accept a human-rights award for work



Danilo Maldonado Machado, alias "El Sexto," receiving the Václav Havel Award for Dissidence in Miami on Monday.

that pushes the boundaries of censorship on the island. He couldn't have arrived at a better time. As top artists, galleries, exhibitors, museum curators and collectors gather for the 14th edition of Art

Basel Miami Beach, we're once more feasting on the best contemporary art in the world.

May this be the oxygen El Sexto needs for the next stage of his life and work in Cuba. May his presence give the issue of artistic and personal freedom in Cuba the exposure it merits at this crucial time in history, when the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuban governments seems to have done little to quash human-rights abuses.

The Ladies in White and other dissidents marching to church on Sunday are routinely harassed, beaten, and detained across the island. Artists such as internationally renowned installation and performance artist Tania Bruguera — an Art Basel regular — and the lesser known Maldonado have paid a high price for testing the limits of what rapprochement means for the Cuban people.

Both were arrested for attempting performance art projects — she an open mic on Revolution Square, he letting pigs he painted with the names Raúl and Fidel roam in a Havana plaza. Bruguera was temporarily detained and put under house arrest repeatedly, her passport confiscated. She was monitored, harassed and banned from the Havana Biennial. After eight months, thanks to her high profile abroad and appeals by entities like the Guggenheim Museum, she got her passport back and was able to leave Cuba.

Maldonado was released in October with the warning "not to make the same mistake" or he'd be returned to prison.

During a Miami news conference on Monday to accept the Human Rights Foundation's Václav Havel Award for Creative Dissent, Maldonado focused attention on the latest exodus of disaffected Cubans. Some 4,000 are stranded at the Nicaraguan border in a bid to reach the United States.

"I want to say to those stranded in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama that you're not alone, that

we're not going to leave you alone to come into harm's way. But we cannot give a prize to immigration or to stimulate Cuban immigration. We need to seize this moment to make people see that this is not the solution for Cuba — to leave, to escape. We need to be responsible for our own destiny, our own country. That same energy spent shouting 'Libertad!' in Costa Rica we need to spend shouting it in Cuba. ... No one is going to

the guardian

## Cuban artist El Sexto released from jail for planned art piece criticizing Castros

Associated Press in Havana. Oct 20 2015

The Cuban artist known as El Sexto has been freed after spending 10 months behind bars for attempting to release two pigs painted with the names of Raúl and Fidel Castro, in a case that international human rights advocates called an attack on freedom of expression.

Danilo Maldonado's case was taken up by international human rights groups who called it a sign of the Cuban government's continued intolerance of criticism, despite the declaration of detente with the United States a week before Maldonado's attempted piece of protest performance art.

He told the Associated Press that he had been held without charge since 25 December "simply because I made fun of the highest leaders of this revolution".

"I was in prison this morning and they told me to get my things and I obeyed," Maldonado said.

do for us what we ourselves need to do."

People without artistic sensitivity, people who think art is only a hobby of the wealthy, often ask me why art matters.

Maldonado easily answers that question.

For his boldness, his conscience and heart, he's the year's true Art Basel VIP.

"Afterwards, they told that they were finally going to set me free."

Amnesty International and other human rights groups had been calling for Maldonado's release for several months.

He was arrested on 25 December as he drove toward a central Havana park in a rented car with two pigs slathered with green paint and the first



María Victoria Machado wears a T-shirt with her son Danilo's image on it. El Sexto's imprisonment was seen as a sign of the Cuban government's continued intolerance for dissent.

names, in red, of Cuba's revolutionary leader and his brother, who has led the country since 2008.

While never formally charged, he was accused of the crime of disrespect toward government officials, a violation that rarely results in long-term detention.

## Meet El Sexto, The Performance Artist Fighting For Cuba's Freedom

By Alexandra Ma. Mar 22 2016

"I don't want my daughter to grow up without dreams the way many people from my generation did," he told HuffPost. "If they kill me, I won't be the first or the last."

That's what prominent Cuban dissident and performance artist Danilo Maldonado Machado told The Huffington Post's Alyona Minkovski when they met in Havana on Sunday.

Maldonado, also known as El Sexto or The Sixth, has for years been advocating for regime change



Cuban dissident and artist Danilo "El Sexto" Maldonado Machado has been detained multiple times by the Cuban government. In an interview with The Huffington Post in Havana, Maldonado shares his hopes and dreams for Cuba.

and freedom of expression in his country. He is fighting for liberty, which he defines as values



Maldonado was recently detained after he took part in an anti-government protest in Havana on Sunday, hours before Obama's arrival to the city.

ranging from the freedom to go online to the freedom of citizens to form political parties and elect their own president.

Maldonado uses performance and graffiti art to demonstrate against his government. For him, painting on walls and other objects around Cuba is a way of "robbing space from that dictatorship," he told HuffPost, referring to the Castro regime that has controlled Cuba since 1959.

Cuban dissident and artist Danilo "El Sexto" Maldonado Machado has been detained multiple times by the Cuban government. In an interview with The Huffington Post in Havana, Maldonado shares his hopes and dreams for Cuba.

The artist has been detained multiple times by the Cuban government for his activism. In December 2014, he was imprisoned for 10 months after planning a performance involving two pigs painted with the names "Fidel" and "Raúl," the Castro brothers who have ruled Cuba for almost six decades. The performance was a direct reference to George Orwell's book *Animal Farm*, in which two pigs assume control over the farm's animals to prepare for a revolution against the farm owners.



He was once again detained, along with some 50 other activists, on Sunday after taking part in a peaceful, anti-government rally in Havana hours before U.S. President Barack Obama's arrival to the city. He was later released along with several other protesters. HuffPost spoke with Maldonado before his detention and has not met with him since.

Maldonado was recently detained after he took part in an anti-government protest in Havana on Sunday, hours before Obama's arrival to the city.

Maldonado is determined to keep fighting — for the sake of the next generation.

"I don't want my daughter to grow up without dreams the way many people from my generation did," Maldonado said. "I want my daughter to see me in history books and that she knows that I did the right thing."

"If I die, if they kill me, my daughter will know that I was doing it for her," he added. "So that she can be free, so other people can be free."







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