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## United States Cultural Mission to Cuba 2016



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**CONTACT:** Victoria Hutter, [hutterv@arts.gov](mailto:hutterv@arts.gov), 202-682-5692

### **NEA Commits \$100,000 for U.S./Cuban Artist Exchange Programs**

*Havana, Cuba*—For the first time, the U.S. Government will support artistic cultural exchanges between U.S. and Cuban artists, thanks to a commitment by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) made while in Cuba this week. Following three days of artistic events and meetings in Havana, NEA Chairman Jane Chu announced two artist exchange opportunities totaling \$100,000. These are among the first awards made by the U.S. government to support artistic and cultural activities with Cuba and Cuban artists and represent a milestone in the journey towards deeper cooperation between the two countries through the common bonds of arts and culture.

Speaking at Havana's Gran Teatro Alicia Alonzo, Chairman Chu noted that the two exchange opportunities build on existing NEA programs that promote artistic exchange, education, and cross-cultural connections; USArtists International and Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America. Each program will receive \$50,000 to fund the expanded activities.

"This \$100,000 is not a one-time contribution. Instead, it represents the beginning of a long-term investment which will strengthen the cultural connection between our two nations," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "Both of these exchange opportunities will further enrich the conversations between our two countries. It will provide even more opportunities for personal interaction. By sharing our art forms with each other—person to person and community to community—we are creating new paths for understanding, appreciation, and fraternity."

USArtists International (USAI) and Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America act as a symbiotic pair, USAI sends American artists to arts markets abroad while Southern Exposure brings artists and groups from Latin America to tour in the United States.

USAI is the only national grants program available for American music, dance, and theater groups invited to perform at international arts markets and cultural events. Although artists have traveled to Cuba through USAI in previous years, this is the first time that U.S. government funds can support American artists' appearances at Cuban arts markets. American artists who apply for the October 2016 USAI deadline and are selected to receive a grant may be able to perform as part of Cuban events in 2017. USAI is managed by Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and funded by the NEA and the Mellon Foundation.

Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America funds organizations presenting contemporary and traditional dance, music, or theater from Latin America. Tour engagements are required to include at least one public performance and a complementary activity that provides audiences with greater appreciation for the touring artists. Previous countries represented in Southern Exchange tours include Brazil, Argentina, and Columbia. Cuban artists will be eligible for inclusion in the program in 2017.

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### About the National Endowment for the Arts

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the agency is celebrating this milestone with events and activities through September 2016. Go to the 50th section at [arts.gov](http://arts.gov) to enjoy art stories from around the nation, peruse the Facts & Figures section, and check out the anniversary timeline.