



One Month After President Obama's Cuba Visit, Cultural Partnerships Forged

President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announces film, program, and artist exchanges at the close of U.S. Cultural Mission to Cuba

Washington, D.C. (April 22, 2016) – At the Gran Teatro, just steps from where President Obama finished his visit to Cuba by offering the hand of friendship to the Cuban people, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) joined Cuban cultural ministers announcing collaborations in film and youth arts programs. The collaborations come at the close of a three-day cultural mission to Cuba with some of America's most distinguished writers, artists, musicians, as well as arts and cultural figures including leaders of the top three U.S. cultural agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Smithsonian Institute.

"Throughout our trip, this amazing group of artists soaked in Cuban culture absorbing its influences with relish," said George Stevens, co-chair of the President's Committee. "Smokey Robinson said it best: he called it the beginning of a 'love relationship.'"

Usher, Dave Matthews, Kal Penn, Smokey Robinson, Alfre Woodard, John Lloyd Young, Joshua Bell, Adele Chatfield-Taylor, Martha Clarke, John Guare, DJ IZ, Lourdes Lopez and Larisa Martinez explored barrios, visited schools, and engaged with Cuban cultural leaders at dance studios, artists' galleries and the many Cuban cultural institutes and museums.

Along with personal, creative moments, the delegation agenda included extensive meetings and planning sessions with government leaders. After many collaborative sessions, on the final day, both Cuban and American officials met to publicly announce intentions to move forward with a variety of initiatives. At one point in the announcement ceremony, Cuban and American art leaders turned to each other and gave an extended standing ovation that filled the hall.

Among announced programs are two from the President's Committee. PCAH will work with organizers of the Havana Film Festival to offer film screenings and discussions this summer through PCAH's [Sundance Film Forward](#), an international touring program. PCAH in partnership with cultural agencies of the Cuban government will send two acclaimed films and actors from the films to Cuba for screenings in July 2016. Films will be announced soon.

In addition to the film screenings, the President's Committee announced it will recognize Cuba this year with its [National Arts and Humanities Youth Program](#) International Spotlight Honor. While in Havana, the Committee observed four of the many after-school arts programs available for Cuban youth. The Spotlight honoree will be announced in Washington, D.C. in fall 2016.

The delegation included U.S. cultural agency and committee leaders: the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities Co-Chairs George Stevens, Jr. and Margo Lion; National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu; National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman William Adams; and Smithsonian Secretary David Skorton.

“Over the course of these last three days, we have laid a stronger foundation for future partnerships and collaborations rooted in our mutual appreciation and respect for the arts, ideals and cultures of both countries,” said President’s Committee Co-Chair Margo Lion.

Support for the delegation’s visit to Cuba has been generously provided by Airbnb, American Airlines, The Betsy-South Beach, the Ford Foundation, Inktel Holding Corp., and Libra Capital. U.S. American Airlines is the airline partner of the 2016 U.S. Cultural Mission to Cuba. The Center for Democracy in the Americas worked with the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to organize the itinerary.

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About the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities

The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities supports collaborations and partnerships that advance cultural cooperation and understanding. The April Cultural Mission to Cuba supported the President in his goal to chart a new course in Cuba. With visits, performances, collaborations and exchange of ideas and philosophies, the President’s Committee is employing people to people diplomacy to lay a foundation for future cultural exchanges through a series of a new partnerships, drawing on signature programs at the PCAH, as well as our federal cultural partners the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Smithsonian.

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