

MANUEL MENDIVE

Manuel Mendive Hoyo is among the defining figures of modern and contemporary Cuban art. Born in Havana in 1944, he graduated from the San Alejandro Academy in 1963 and later studied ethnology, folklore, and art history in Havana.

Across painting, drawing, sculpture, body painting, performance, and installation, Mendive developed a singular visual language rooted in Yoruba-Lukumí cosmology, Afro-Cuban spirituality, and the relationship between human life and the natural world. His practice is at once mythic, political, ceremonial, and deeply personal.

Over more than six decades, Mendive has exhibited internationally in museums, biennials, galleries, and public institutions across Cuba, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and the United States. His work is held in major museum and institutional collections, and his importance to Afro-Cuban art history and postwar Cuban visual culture remains foundational.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 With the New Day the Sun Shines and Leads Us, Latin Art Core, Miami, USA.
- 2018 Nature, Spirit, and Body, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, USA.
Nature, Spirit, and Body - de Cuba para el Mundo, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC, USA.
- 2017 Mendive, Obras del Museo Nacional, Galeria Arte Provincial, San Jose de las Lajas, Cuba.
- 2015 El sonido del agua me recuerda..., XII Bienal de La Habana, Galeria Collage, Havana, Cuba.
Los colores de la Vida, XII Bienal de La Habana, Galeria Victor Manuel, Havana, Cuba.
- 2014 Ire, Centro Cultural Las Rozas, Madrid, Spain.
Imagenes Vivas, N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, Detroit, USA.
El sonido del agua me recuerda..., Museo Fernando Ponce (MACAY), Merida, Mexico.
- 2013 Things That Cannot Be Seen Any Other Way: The Art of Manuel Mendive, Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, USA.
Things That Cannot Be Seen Any Other Way: The Art of Manuel Mendive, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, USA.
- 2012 La Foresta Magica, Galeria de Arte Estudio Artizar, Tenerife, Spain.
La Foresta Magica, UNEAC, Matanzas, Cuba.
- 2011 Conversando con la Naturaleza, Galeria de Arte Estudio Artizar, Tenerife, Spain.
La Luz y las Tinieblas, Museo Jose Luis Cuevas, Mexico City, Mexico.
- 2009 El espiritu, la naturaleza y las cabezas, Galeria Origenes, Havana, Cuba.
- 2008 El color blanco, el azul, el verde y el color de mi piel, Museo Regional de Antropologia e Historia de Merida, Yucatan, Mexico.
- 2005 Feeding the Spirit, the Light, the Ancestors, Olodumare, the Most Beautiful Things, Gary Nader Gallery, Coral Gables, USA.
- 2003 Los Ancestros, orisha, la naturaleza y el pensamiento, Museo de las Americas, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- 2002 Las Aguas, lo cotidiano y el pensamiento, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
Shango y la Vida, Sala de Exposiciones La Recova, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain.
- 2001 Shango y la Vida, Centro de Cultura Sa Nostra, Palma de Mallorca, Spain.
Santa Barbara - Shango en nuestras Vidas, Galeria de Arte Universal de Guines, Havana, Cuba.
- 1999 Gary Nader Gallery, Coral Gables, USA.
- 1998 El agua, la luz, la sombra, Ville de Chanteclerc, Fort-de-France, Martinique.
- 1997 Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena de Indias, Cartagena, Colombia.
Galeria Joan Guaita Art, Palma de Mallorca, Spain.
Le Monde de l'Art, Paris, France.

- 1996 Galería La Acacia, Havana, Cuba.
Lam y Mendive: Simbolos cubanos de ayer y hoy, Galería Arte Actual, Santiago de Chile, Chile.
- 1994 Ekuabo Ekundire, Centro Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba.
- 1989 La Naturaleza y el Cuerpo, Grupo SEIBU, Tokyo, Japan.
- 1988 El Pavo Real, XLIII Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy.
- 1987 Para el ojo que mira, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Panama City, Panama.
- 1985 Conversando con los peces, Galería Plaza Vieja, Havana, Cuba.
- 1980 Un pintor de lo Real Maravilloso, Galería L, Havana, Cuba.
- 1964 Primera muestra personal, Centro de Arte de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Cuban Art, Artegrafika.
A Curated Group of Latin American Prints, Artegrafika.
- 2024 Gift of Art: A Thoughtful Holiday Exhibition, Shari Brownfield Fine Art.
Faces and Places, Shari Brownfield Fine Art.
SON DE LA HABANA III, Galería Artizar.
- 2023 Rock, Paper, Canvas!, Shari Brownfield Fine Art.
- 2022 SON DE LA HABANA - Diago, Bedia, Mendive, Cordero, Pena, Galería Artizar.
CHILL: Afro Caribbean Figuration, Pan American Art Projects.
- 2017 Sin mascararas, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
- 2016 Feria Internacional de Chicago, Cernuda Arte, Chicago, USA.
La Bandera, Pabellon Cuba, Havana, Cuba.
- 2015 Art Basel Miami Beach, Cernuda Arte, Miami, USA.
Detras del Muro, collateral XII Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
HB Arte Cubano Contemporaneo, XII Bienal de La Habana, Pabexpo, Havana, Cuba.
- 2014 Three Centuries of Afro-Cuban Artists, Cernuda Arte, Coral Gables, USA.
One Race, Havana - Key West, The Studios of Key West, USA.
El peso de la idea, Galería Collage, FCBC, Havana, Cuba.
- 2012 Beyond the Frame: Contemporary Cuban Art, The Lighthouse Gallery, Glasgow, UK.
Beyond the Frame: Contemporary Cuban Art, Gallery 27, London, UK.
- 2011 Pinta: The Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art Fair, Galería La Acacia, New York, USA.
- 2010 Son Cubano, Galería de Arte Estudio Artizar, Tenerife, Spain.
ARCO, Madrid, Spain.

- 2009 Spirit Worlds, Center for Cuban Studies, New York, USA.
- 2008 Surrounded by Water, Boston University Art Gallery, Boston, USA.
- 2006 Confluencias Inside: Arte Cubano Contemporaneo, Palacio Clavijero, Morelia, Mexico.
- 2005 Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami, USA.
ARCO, Madrid, Spain.
- 2004 Art Toronto, Toronto International Art Fair, Toronto, Canada.
- 2003 Art Miami, Miami, USA.
Art Chicago, Chicago, USA.
- 1998 Maferefum Cuba, Metropolitan Pavilion Gallery, Center for Cuban Studies, New York, USA.
ISLAS, Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain.
- 1997 VI Bienal de La Habana, Centro Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba.
- 1993 Ouidah '93, First Festival of Vodun Arts and Culture, Benin.
Art Vaudou, Galerie Nesle, Paris, France.
- 1992 La Ronda Cubana, Van Reekum Museum, Apeldoorn, The Netherlands.
Color de Cuba, Pabellon de Cuba, Sevilla, Spain.
- 1991 Pintura Cubana 1820-1991, Polyforum Siqueiros, Mexico City, Mexico.
- 1989 Arte de America Latina, Hayward Gallery, London, UK.
III Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
- 1988 Singuliers, Bruts ou Naifs, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France.
- 1986 II Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
- 1984 I Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
- 1977 Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1975 Cuba, Peintres d'Aujourd'hui, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France.
- 1970 Expo Japon '70, Pabellon de Cuba, Osaka, Japan.
- 1967 Expo '67, Montreal, Canada.

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

- 2018 Nature, Spirit, and Body - de Cuba para el Mundo, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC, USA.
- 2017 Nature, Spirit, and Body, body painting and performance, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, USA.
- 2015 Los colores de la Vida, Plaza de la Catedral, XII Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.

- 2014 Aguas, One Race, The Studios of Key West, Florida, USA.
- 2013 Meditaciones, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, USA.
Las aguas, Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, USA.
- 2012 Las Cabezas, collateral XI Bienal de La Habana, Gran Teatro de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
- 2009 El espiritu, la naturaleza y las cabezas, Galeria Origenes, Havana, Cuba.
- 2004 La Naturaleza y el Cuerpo, Romerias de Mayo, Holguin, Cuba.
- 2003 VIII Bienal de La Habana, Proyecto La California, Havana, Cuba.
- 2002 Las Aguas, lo cotidiano y el pensamiento, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
- 2001 Shango y la Vida, Manto Blanco, Tapaste, Havana, Cuba.
Shango y la Vida, Centro de Cultura Sa Nostra, Palma de Mallorca, Spain.
- 1999 La Odisea Africana, The John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, DC, USA.
- 1997 Se parece a la Felicidad, VI Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
VI Muestra Internacional de Performance, Ex Teresa Arte Alternativo, Mexico City, Mexico.
- 1996 Aguas Profundas, Galeria Arte Actual, Santiago de Chile, Chile.
Cabezas y Corazones, Galeria La Acacia, Havana, Cuba.
- 1994 Aguas Profundas, Festival Internacional Cervantino, Guanajuato, Mexico.
- 1993 Ouidah '93, Benin.
- 1991 Shango, Memorial de America Latina, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
Shango y Oshosi, Teatro Castro Alves, Bahia, Brazil.
- 1989 La Luz, III Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.
- 1988 Iroko / Eggun / Elegua, ICA London and The October Gallery, London, UK.
El Pavo Real, XLIII Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy.
- 1987 Para el ojo que mira, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
- 1986 La Vida, II Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba.

AWARDS

- Doctor Honoris Causa, Universidad de las Artes, Havana, Cuba, 2015.
- Distincion Machete de Maximo Gomez, Havana, Cuba, 2015.
- Medalla Jose Maria Heredia, Santiago de Cuba, 2004.
- Hacha de Holguin, Holguin, Cuba, 2004.
- Profesor Consultante, Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, 2004.
- National Prize for Plastic Arts, Ministry of Culture, Cuba, 2001.
- Hijo Ilustre de la Ciudad de La Habana, Havana, Cuba, 2001.

- Fort-de-France Medal, Martinique, 1995.
- Felix Varela Order, First Degree, Council of State of Cuba, 1994.
- Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters, France, 1994.
- Alejo Carpentier Medal, Cuba, 1988.
- International Prize, II Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba, 1986.
- Distinction for National Culture, Cuba, 1983.
- Adam Montparnasse Prize, XXIV Salon de Mai, Paris, France, 1968.
- National Fine Arts Salon Prize, Havana, Cuba, 1968.
- First Prize, Salon de Dibujo, Havana, Cuba, 1967.
- Sculpture Prize, Circulo de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba, 1962.
- UNESCO Morinaga Society Prize for the Exaltation of Motherhood, Tokyo, Japan, 1955.

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, USA.
- California African American Museum, Los Angeles, USA.
- Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, USA.
- Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.
- Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
- Museo Emilio Bacardi, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba.
- PANARTE - Museo de Arte Moderno de Panama, Panama City, Panama.
- Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena de Indias, Cartagena, Colombia.
- Museo Etnografico de Budapest, Budapest, Hungary.
- Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France.
- Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain.
- Fundacion Sa Nostra, Palma de Mallorca, Spain.
- Fundacion France Liberte, Paris, France.
- The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC, USA.
- Centro Cultural de Manila, Manila, Philippines.
- Galeria Nacional, Kingston, Jamaica.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Mendive. Ediciones Collage Habana and Arte Cubano, Havana, 2015.
- The Myth in Mendive. Text by Gerardo Mosquera; originally published in Art in Colombia, no. 37, 1988; republished by Mendive Art Project, 2024.
- The Topics of Tomorrow. Text by Pierre Restany; Mendive Art Project.
- The Ancestors, The Orishas, Nature and Thought. Text by Guillermina Ramos Cruz; Mendive Art Project, 2023.
- Rebel Angel. Text by Edward J. Sullivan; Mendive Art Project, 2023.