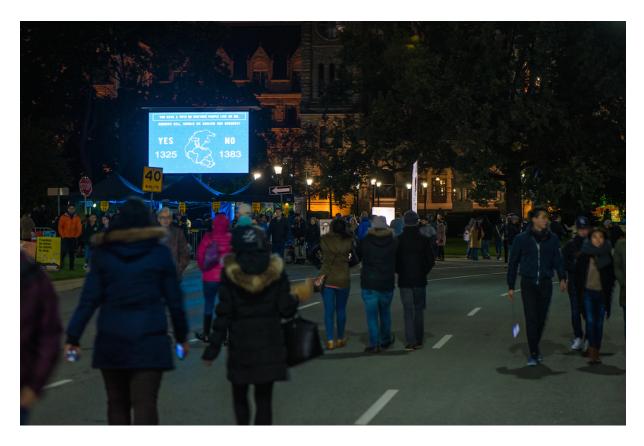
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IN THE AIR

Tania Bruguera to Stage "Referendum" in Union Square

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Primary season — America's quadrennial boondoggle of democratic mediation — may be well underway, but one artist intends to stage a symbolic return to an older form: direct democracy. Tania Bruguera, the renowned Cuban-American dissident and practitioner of a kind of activist art, is bringing a daylong "referendum" to New York's Union Square on March 6. Titled "Referendum," the work solicits votes "on questions surrounding immigration and borders," according to a release. It was previously staged in Toronto in 2015, where the question posed was: "Borders kill, should we abolish our borders?"

That this kind of leading question is more <u>push poll</u> than referendum is beside the point — Bruguera's exercise traffics in civic gestures, her "arte útil" (useful art) operating at a different register than political polling or, for that matter, the mechanisms of electoral democracy. The Union Square outing is part of Bruguera's participation in <u>When Artists Speak Truth...</u>, an exhibition on view at The 8th Floor event space under the auspices of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation. The public poll specifically accompanies "<u>The Francis Effect</u>," 2014, a work by Bruguera that appears in the exhibition and similarly deals with matters of immigration and citizenship.

"Referendum" will run from 10am to 8pm on Sunday, March 6; the Rubin Foundation exhibition is on view through March 18.

- Mostafa Heddaya (@mheddaya)

(Photo: Tania Bruguera, "Referendum," 2015. Commissioned for Nuit Blanche Toronto 2015, curated by Agustin Perez Rubio.)