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## Ecuadorean Dance Company Fights Gender Violence

**IN PICTURES:** A new work by a Quito-based dance company is exploring the visible and invisible forms of oppression faced by women.

A new performance by Ecuadorean dance company Frente de Danza Independiente is exposing the institutionalized violence faced by women across Latin America.

The work, "Habitando Memorias" or "Inhabiting Memories," choreographed by Terry Araujo, follows the stories of six female protagonists and their struggle with both the visible violence of femicide and the hidden trauma of everyday oppression.

The show, set to be performed Friday, June 2 in Quito's Casa de la Cultura, comes amid spiralling femicide figures across Latin America. Of the 25 nations with the highest rate of violence against women, 14 are in Latin America. According to the United Nations, 98 percent of femicides go unprosecuted in the region.

In Ecuador, more than 33 women have been murdered since the beginning of 2017.

teleSUR spoke with the dancers about their personal experience with machismo and the power of art to change social consciousness.



*María Augusta Espin (L), professor of political science at the Universidad Central de Ecuador: "Equality still does not exist between men and women ... We have achieved a lot but there is still much more to be done. And it's not going to happen by itself. Women need to rise up and visualize the fact that we don't live in an equal society."*

*Photo: Paula Ortega*



*Anna Jacome, dancer and choreographer at Futuro Sí: "Issues like gender violence have always been present but are hidden under many layers of indolence and indifference and this has meant they have not been able to be resolved politically or socially ... My position as a dancer, choreographer, woman and mother is to visualize this violence, this hidden oppression through dance."*

*Photo: Paula Ortega*



*Ekaterina Ignatova, sociologist and dancer: "Every day, we experience moments of machismo. Professionally for instance, women are relegated to the sides – both implicitly and explicitly ... Dance may not be a traditional political or social forum but it allows us to inhabit a parallel world, a symbolic world where we can bring these subjectivities and emotions to an audience and provoke them to reflect."*

*Photo: Ricardo Centeno*



*Lara Jeussen,  
professor of social  
science in the Latin  
American Department  
in Faculty of FLACSO:  
“Femicide, domestic  
violence are still great  
challenges we have to  
overcome. I worked  
with a not-for-profit  
organization that  
helped survivors of  
sexual violence in  
conflicts of war.  
Sexual violence  
against women  
destroys the  
psychology of a  
community. It is now  
recognized as a war  
crime.”*

*Photo:Ricardo  
Centeno*



*Jessica Mabel  
Gutierrez, dance  
teacher and  
performer: “Unspoken  
discourses on  
femininity are with me  
all the time. They are  
with me from the way  
I dress to the way I  
speak and how I relate  
to other people. Dance  
opens a door to more  
poetic and abstract  
languages where I find  
the possibility of  
speaking about these  
issues in a way that is  
much more powerful.”*

*Photo:Ricardo  
Centeno*



*Carolina Bejarano (R), visual artist and dancer: "It is about finding a balance within the female body between our feminine and masculine sides. The idea is to do away with social codes which say femininity is flowers and delicacy."*

*Photo: Paula Ortega*

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