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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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