



FUNDARTE PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF 'BIO'NGO,' AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STAGE INSTALLATION

Written By Miguel Sirgado
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"Bio'Ngo," by Mexican creator Lukas Avendaño, will premiere Friday, Aug. 23 and Saturday, Aug. 24 at the Fantasy Theatre Factory at Sandrell Rivers Theater, Miami, presented by FUNDarte. (Photo by Huracán Films/courtesy of FUNDarte)

Dance, theater and the visual arts in general often blur the theoretical boundaries that separate them to create integral works that defy definition. From Martha Graham to Merce Cunningham, Marina Abramovic, Joan Jonas, Paul McCarty, Steve McQueen and Pina Baush, many are the multidisciplinary artists who have consolidated their ideas through multi-sensorial performances that follow the aforementioned premise.

Following this interdisciplinary tradition is the show "Bio'Ngo," by Mexican creator [Lukas Avendaño](#). Presented by [FUNDarte](#), the piece will be on stage Friday, Aug. 23 and Saturday, Aug. 24 at the [Sandrell Rivers Theater](#). In addition to Avendaño, participating in this project are dancers José Ramón Corral (also Mexican) and Miami-based Charlene Francois, Enrique Villacreces and Lize Lotte Pitlo.

The director states that this "stage installation" with an anthropological look revolves around several axes, the first one being the Bio'Ngo -or what in the Caribbean is known as the Ceiba tree. "The symbolic value of this tree in many of the cultures or settlements in the Caribbean seemed to me an important gluing element that symbolically unifies many imaginaries (of different cultures)," says Avendaño, whose most recent work consisted of a queer performative intervention of traditional female images, particularly those related to the Zapotec Tehuana woman.

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Another axis of the project is the exploration of the ancestral cultures of his native Mexico and, at the same time, of the indigenous people who once populated the Caribbean. "The piece is a sort of time travel to the past before the geopolitical borders that today give name to the countries (that) were built," says Avendaño.



Lukas Avendaño says that this "stage installation" is a sort of time travel to the past, before the geopolitical borders that today give name to the countries were established. (Photo by Huracán Films/courtesy of FUNDarte)

"If we start from the Caribbean as a cultural ecosystem, we could speculate about the time when there were no borders, and how it would have facilitated crossings and exchanges between these cultures. We would be living in the time before the divisions between heterosexuals and homosexuals, the avant-garde and the rearguard, all those dichotomies that have appeared and have been imposed throughout the history of mankind."

According to Ever Chávez, executive director of FUNDarte, who together with the International Cultural Partnership (ICP) program of Miami Dade's Department of Cultural Affairs are presenting this project, the work fits perfectly with the vision and trajectory that has moved this organization since its inception. "We are facing the fusion between the vibrant cultural diversity of Miami and the deep roots of the native peoples of Mexico. What motivated us to bring it was precisely that unique blend of cultures and expressions," explains Chavez. "For us it's something completely new and authentic. It's a journey that goes from the jungles of Oaxaca to the swamps of the Everglades, where music, dance and nature intertwine in a unique experience."

As for the structure of the work, Avendaño decided to collaborate with artists from various specialties and backgrounds: dancers, designers, filmmakers, musicians. "The music was created by percussionist artist Yissy Garcia. We also collaborated with Huracán Films, with some stunning footage of the Everglades," he says. "All the performers are creative people who bring a very particular and fresh look. It's like, despite the exodus and diaspora, it's still possible to find them and make a community."



Percussionist Yissy Garcia, shown here in a 2018 concert with Bandancho at the Fabrica de Arte Cubano, a multidisciplinary space in Havana, collaborated on the music for "Bio'Ngo." (Photo by Larisa López)

For FUNDarte, the project is important because it shows, in an artistic way, the connection between two worlds that, although distant, share a common essence. “Oaxaca and South Florida, two places separated by thousands of miles, meet in this work through their ancestral cultures: the Zapotec and Miccosukee. As a spectator, you witness how these cultures have survived and flourished, keeping their traditions alive in a changing world. For us, it is a testament to our dedication to celebrating cultural diversity and exploring the roots that connect us,” concludes Chavez.

Avendaño’s presentation closes the season of the “Out in the Tropics” series, featuring works by some of today’s most innovative and relevant LGBTQIA+ artists.

WHAT: *Bio’Ngo* by Lukas Avendaño

WHEN: Friday, Aug. 23 and Saturday, Aug. 24

WHERE: Fantasy Theatre Factory at the Sandrell Rivers Theater. 6103 NW 7th Ave., Miami

COST: \$20, \$15 seniors and students; tickets.ftfshows.com

INFORMATION: (786) 348-0789 or FUNDarte.us

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