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# With *History House*, Niurca Márquez Steps Into 'Nu' Flamenco Territory

By Artburst Miami

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Niurca Márquez is rewriting the history of flamenco. Each dance-step the Miami-native plants marks a new direction for an art form cemented in Andalusian tradition. Her work simultaneously references and breaks from that tradition to create new contexts for both flamenco newbies and aficionados to consider, in a sub-genre known as "nu flamenco."

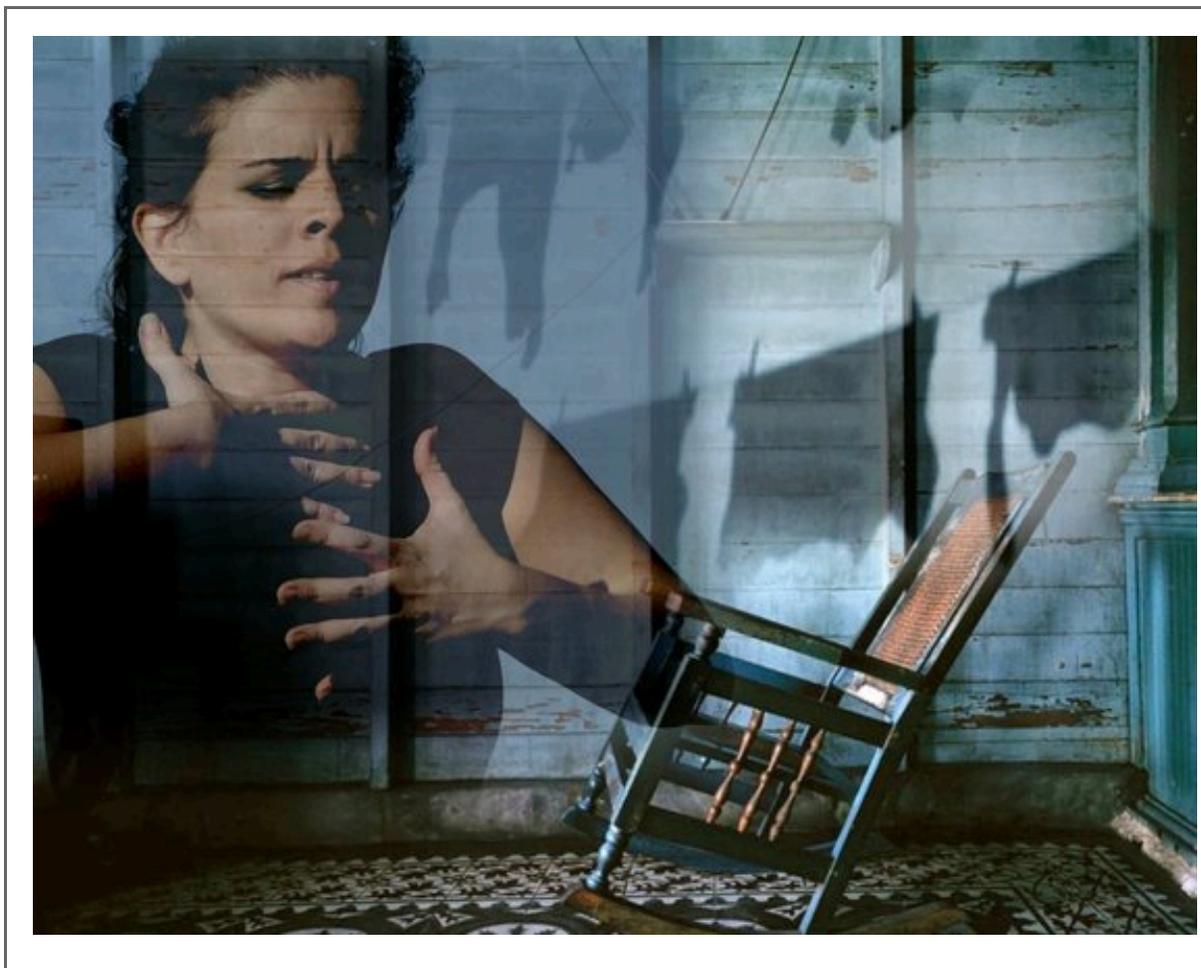
In her latest work, *The History House*, which opens Thursday at the Miami Dade County Auditorium [On Stage Black Box Theater](#), Márquez explores the intersection and fragile nature of ancestral and cultural memory as it exists in contemporary expression.

**ArtBurst: What was your impetus for *The History House*?**

*Niurca Márquez:* When I first moved back to Miami from Spain, my intention was to [CONTINUE](#)  creating a work that I had begun there. It became evident that there was a void I needed to address:

lack of context for the work. There was a void of information about what it was I was doing and why I was even calling it flamenco. That is what made me go back to the drawing board and create *The History House*.

I realized that if I wanted the audience to move past the discomfort with the structure and movement-language of the work, I needed to explain how I had arrived there. I needed to speak not only to the idea of how cultural memory is passed down, but to how this very same process has led us to inherit what is considered "flamenco" outside of Spain, as well as how it has led to the different approaches to flamenco we have today.



### **Is it difficult to find collaborators who get this context?**

For *The History House*, I purposely surrounded myself with a group of collaborators who understand the distortions and stereotypes surrounding flamenco. They understand and can collectively speak to the essential elements of the form and the essential elements of those stereotypes.

### **Memory plays a vital role in your creative process. What does it add to *The History House*?**

Memory is what anchors us. It connects us to a time and place, an experience, or set of experiences that have made us who we are. I am fascinated by cultural memory in particular and all of the recent discoveries in the fields of physics and genetics. I am fascinated by what people do in their daily lives

and why they chose to do it.

### **For those who are familiar with traditional flamenco, what are the ways in which the audience can connect to nu flamenco?**

What is understood in the United States is that flamenco many times is a mixed bag of "typical Spanish" or "lo español" as we sometimes say, with two l's for emphasis, left over vestiges of a political move by [long-time dictator Francisco] Franco's regime to export an image of an ideal Spain... distortions that have little and everything to do with what the form is today. It is a history that is marked by very powerful imagery that has given us partial ideas about what this art form is about.

It's like the story of the blind men and the elephant. Each concluded the characteristics of what an elephant was based on the area of the animal they could touch and sense, but not one of them had the full picture. I've lived with the animal, and this piece is about that relationship.

Both musically and in the movement, we reference styles and tendencies that are easily recognizable to those familiar with traditional flamenco. We also dive head-first into where this has taken us, and into the fact that flamenco is a very personal art form with as many interpretations as there are artists performing it.

It makes me smile each time I see the term nu flamenco. It's a term we came up with to explain what we are doing. When I arrived from Spain, I used the term Contemporary Flamenco, a direct translation of Flamenco Contemporaneo, because it is the school that I come from. The problem is that in Spain the term Contemporary Flamenco is like saying Post-Modern Dance in the U.S. It aligns you with a series of artists, links you to a discourse and informs people of what your intentions are in creating work.

Unfortunately, that context is non-existent here and the term loses weight. What we are doing is not new, it is not nouveau, it is simply the continuation of a very specific line of inquiry.

In *The History House*, all the artists involved have been put to the test. We've been asked to examine our own histories, both personally and artistically, and to put on stage what lies underneath -- what is the cultural memory that lives in our art and in ourselves?

-- Neil de la Flor, [Artburstmiami.com](http://artburstmiami.com)

The History House by Niurca Márquez, Thursday and Friday, at 8:00 p.m., at the Miami-Dade County Auditorium On.Stage Black Box Theater; [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com). Tickets are \$25 general **ADMISSION** , \$20 students and seniors. Call 786-252-1544.

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