

# Poetic Justice

*Artistic practices in territory in Mexico and Latin America*

*Lecture by Rubén Ortiz*

In Mexico and Latin America, the transformation of the living arts - and the arts in general - has been marked by the economic, political and social conditions of the region.

More specifically, in Mexico, since the so-called *War against drugs* launched by the government in 2007, it has so far left at least 70,000 people disappeared, 400,000 people dead, and hundreds of displaced communities. It's almost impossible to engage in thinking about the arts in the abstract when the military is patrolling the streets of most of the country. This state of war that is repeated in different intensities throughout the continent has left empty towns, broken families and mothers who take up the shovel to look for their children in mass graves made by organized crime, the police, the army or all three together.

Thus, many artists exercise their practices to wonder about the genesis of the state of affairs, about the spaces where life is sustained or to push the imagination towards other horizons. For this, a great majority work in a situated way, either articulating with groups of victims, or taking testimonies to the scene or meeting with people in their own communities (making artistic practices on territory).

In this talk, I am interested in presenting an overview of the Latin American and Mexican situation and going through the work of some artistic collectives, especially that of La Comuna: suelo vivo to which I belong.

I would like to underline the role played by research, fiction and artistic technique and, finally, leave suspended the question about a possible poetic justice.

## RUBÉN ORTIZ

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He is a member of La Comedia Humana collective; researcher at the National Institute of Arts; professor of the master's degrees in Stage Direction and Theater Pedagogy at National Theatre School; member of the iberoamerican researchers group ARTEA and collaborator of the contemporary art magazines *La tempestad* and *Jerónimo MX*.

He has done more than 50 stage jobs in Mexico and other countries, in which he has covered a wide spectrum of stage styles. With the social laboratory La comuna he has worked in México, Ecuador, Uruguay and Spain.

He has given conferences, seminars, workshops and scenic creation laboratories in various cities in México and abroad. Likewise, he has written articles and essays on theater in magazines and cultural supplements in Mexico, Germany, Argentina, Spain and Ecuador.

He has written, among others, the books *The Master Without a Kingdom*, *Expanded Scene*, *Theatricalities of the 21st century* and *In Search of the Spectator*.