
Fátima Patterson, 2017 National Theater Prize winner

18/01/2017



The panel of judges, presided by Carlos Celdrán, decided to award this year's prize to Fátima Patterson who, for years, has brought various works dealing with issues of gender, marginalization and death to the stage.

A poor black woman born in the infamous Los Hoyos neighborhood of Santiago de Cuba. That is how director of the Macubá Theater studio, Fátima Patterson, describes herself. The playwright was awarded this year's National Theater Prize, on the basis of her long-standing and solid career, founded on her strong cultural roots and unique essence.

During a press conference held January 11, it was announced that the jury, presided by Carlos Celdrán and featuring other outstanding figures from the world of Cuban theater, decided to award the accolade to the actress who, for years, has brought various works dealing with issues of gender, marginalization, and death to the stage.

Patterson's artistic career began in 1970, as an actress on radio and television programs, which she later directed. After that she joined Santiago de Cuba's Cabildo theater company, where she came into contact with elements of traditional popular culture and Afro-Cuban religion.

In May, 1992, she founded the Macubá collective – a play on the words *Madre* and *Cuba* (Mother Cuba) – renowned for its investigative work and use of theater to confront life experiences; explore popular religions, traditions, and elements of Cuban folklore such as *patakinés* (religious laws based on historic teachings and stories) and oral traditions of the *palo monte* and *vudú* belief systems, as well as Caribbean poetry.

Her vast array of works include **Santiaguerías**, **Ayé N'fumbi** (World of the dead), **Repique por Mafifa**, **Iniciación en blanco y negro para mujeres sin color** and **Ropa de plancha**.

Oral narrative plays a fundamental role in the playwright's work, which is why she considers herself to be an actress who tells stories, rather than a story-teller. What is more, her love of oral traditions led her to found and

direct the International Biennial of Oral Traditions.

The well-deserved recipient of the Raúl Gómez García Medal, José María Heredia plaque, 2004 Villanueva Critics Prize and Ibero-American Creative Women's Award, Fátima Patterson, will receive the national accolade this January 22, on Cuban Theater Day. (**Juventud Rebelde**)
