

República Dominicana:

TEATRO MALEDUCADAS, transformarse de manera interna.



Theater transforms realities
Maleducadas (Misbehaved) Theater

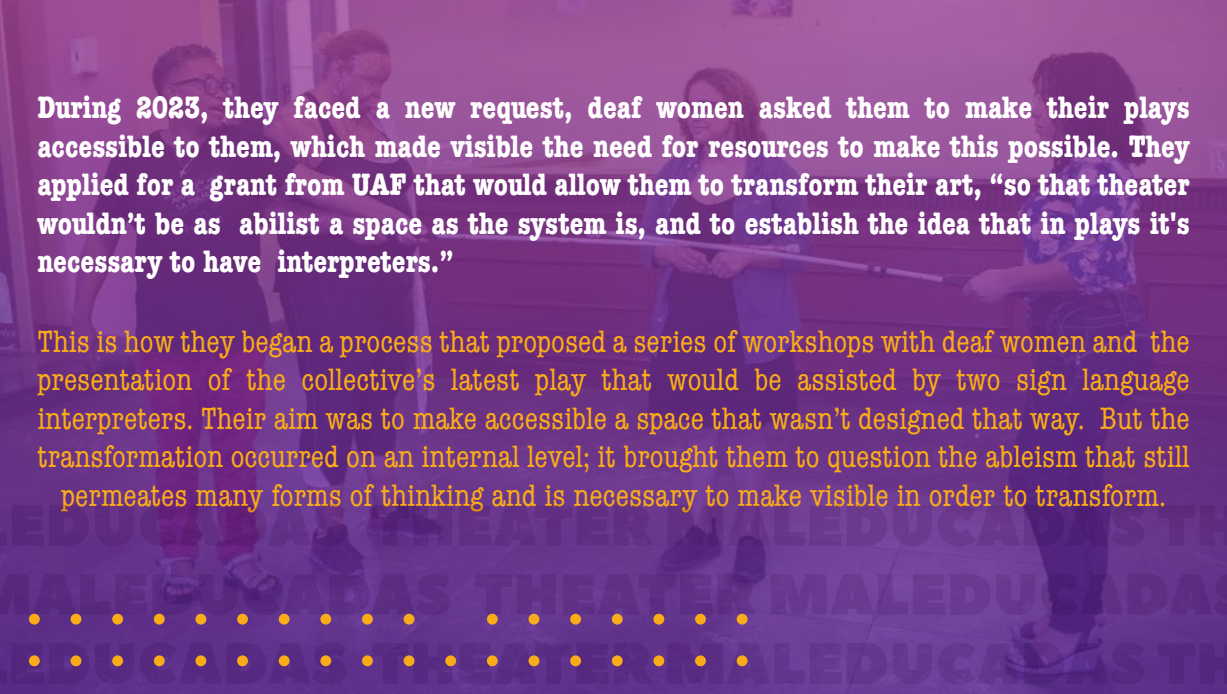
URGENT
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**In the Dominican Republic,
pursuing theater
is not a simple task;**

you need to really want to do it in a context that prioritizes other forms of expression. But those who do commit to it, experience in theater other forms of creation, expression and individual and collective connection.



The **Maleducadas theater collective** emerged in 2012 out of the members' deep necessity to tell stories to represent and identify themselves. Comprised of women who've trained as performing artists, the collective **aims to bring theater closer to many more people, especially women, trans and gender dissident people and also women with disabilities.** Therefore, they have given workshops and put on plays with these populations.

A photograph of four women in a rehearsal space. One woman on the right is holding a boom microphone over the others. They are all looking down or towards the center. The background is a plain wall with a door.

During 2023, they faced a new request, deaf women asked them to make their plays accessible to them, which made visible the need for resources to make this possible. They applied for a grant from UAF that would allow them to transform their art, “so that theater wouldn’t be as ablist a space as the system is, and to establish the idea that in plays it’s necessary to have interpreters.”

This is how they began a process that proposed a series of workshops with deaf women and the presentation of the collective’s latest play that would be assisted by two sign language interpreters. Their aim was to make accessible a space that wasn’t designed that way. But the transformation occurred on an internal level; it brought them to question the ableism that still permeates many forms of thinking and is necessary to make visible in order to transform.






“We issued the call for the workshops on two occasions and we weren’t able to attract the number of people that were required. We prepared the space, the interpreter came, and very few deaf women came, so we had to pause the process to reevaluate what was happening with the call and with us,” recounts Isabel Spencer, a representative of the collective.

For the collective, theater is a tool that transforms realities and on this occasion it was their own reality that changed. They weren’t only interested in the results but also in the process and the pedagogical experience. The members of the collective thought they had failed in the call because it hadn’t reached the desired public, that was how “we realized that we were issuing a call from our own ableist universe.”

Accepting that those biases still exist wasn't easy, but it was necessary. They reached out to a deaf woman who did respond to the call and she explained to them that the reality for many deaf women is that they do not know how to read. Therefore, they need other types of outreach, such as a video with sign language interpretation.





“We don’t belong to the deaf community, we didn’t think about this particular detail, we acted based on what we wanted to communicate and not with the information that is useful to them.” For the Maleducadas theater collective, the grant allowed them to lay a foundation that will help them make theater not just accessible but to examine it, and themselves, from a less ableist perspective so that they can build other realities and representations.

