

WEBVTT

Kind: captions

Language: en-GB

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My name is Milizeth Martínez Iriarte, better known in the artistic guild as Pickotera Mily Iriarte.

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I am a feminist pickotera [DJ], the founder of the first and only champeta band with a 100% female line-up.

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Reflections on the subject, on racism, are present in my practice, in what I do in

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champeta, in the sense that, historically, champeta has been stigmatized for being a genre,

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a culture, which is steeped in Afro themes, indigenous themes. They have denied us our own space,

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they have wanted to silence us. Our thoughts about racism are that there is

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structural racism in the city of Cartagena on the Colombian Caribbean, which we have to overcome and

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we overcome it precisely with champeta. I mean  
that the champeta becomes a strategy

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for the assertion of popular rights and  
it becomes an anti-racist practice. And that

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we also want and bit by bit we are moving  
so that it can be seen as a strategy

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against machismo. So in that sense we are thinking  
as women of the popular classes, as women of the

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slums, as racialized women, who have  
to understand and who, above all, have to make use of

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all these new feminisms that connect above all  
to these new logics, logics that are

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completely against colonialism, the  
white feminism, the feminism that still segregates

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a bit those women who come up with new,

totally different proposals, like the

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champeta feminisms. I, like my companions  
in the Las Emperadoras band, have

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experienced the issue of racism in our  
artistic practice, as well as in our

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everyday lives. It's amazing, but still  
today, black people,

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indigenous people are seen as being of lower status,  
as people who have no abilities.

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People perhaps ask themselves, "And this woman - is this who is  
coming here to play? Is this woman the person who in this space,

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speaking as a moderator in a discussion, or as  
an academic?" Because the thing is that we,

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as black women, as indigenous women, we are the ones who have to be  
be ... who are the objects of study.

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I mean, we are ... we are there so they can  
study us, so that they can contemplate us and so that

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they can write about us. But we can't  
be living subjects, people who are like

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protagonists. So that is where the conflict comes, right? Because  
then they say, these guys are not very

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good musicians or these girls are not very good  
musicians, because they have not studied in a [musical] academy.

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Look, this singer does not sing in tune. Because in addition  
this is a fundamental aesthetic issue that has a lot to

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do with the issue of racism. I mean racism  
also gets involved and pervades the field of art,

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the field of musical aesthetics. I believe  
what I do together with my colleagues in

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The Emperadoras and in this whole business of champeta  
connects a lot with what is happening at the

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international level and I think it has been ... ever since  
the creation of the champeta genre itself, it has always been

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that way, a cry of independence,  
a way of showing we are here,

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our lives matter, we are valuable,  
we are important. And so just look at how

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champeta as a musical genre is what  
reaffirms all these cultural and artistic

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expressions; how champeta as a musical genre  
gives life to all these people; how it

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gives voice to these women. I think the same  
way of acting, of fighting against racism,

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of fighting against segregation, against such strong  
discrimination is what has made it

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possible for many people worldwide  
to wake up, so we can analyze and think about

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our racist practices. So champeta  
has always been there, saying we exist, we are

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valuable, we are important, they will not  
shut us down, we have interesting things to say and

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with our musical genre we are saying that we are on another  
level, this is important, this is a wonderful culture

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this is heritage. So, sure,  
we are super connected with what is

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going on and despite there being  
some examples and some songs that are

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banal and that are part of the canon that  
I was telling you about just now and part of capitalism; even so, quite apart

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from all that, we are super connected  
with what is happening at an international level.