



SMASHINGTIMES
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
THE ARTS & EQUALITY

Press Release

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International Women's Day 2021

The UN theme for International Women's Day, 8 March 2021 is Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a Covid-19 World.

The day celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and highlights the gaps that remain.

According to the UN:

Women's full and effective participation and leadership in of all areas of life drives progress for everyone. Yet, women are still underrepresented in public life and decision-making, as revealed in the UN Secretary-General's recent report. Women are Heads of State or Government in 22 countries, and only 24.9 per cent of national parliamentarians are women. At the current rate of progress, gender equality among Heads of Government will take another 130 years.

Women are also at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, as front-line and health sector workers, as scientists, doctors and caregivers, yet they get paid 11 per cent less globally than their male counterparts. An analysis of COVID-19 task teams from 87 countries found only 3.5 per cent of them had gender parity.

When women lead, we see positive results. Some of the most efficient and exemplary responses to the COVID-19 pandemic were led by women. And women, especially young women, are at the forefront of diverse and inclusive movements online and on the streets for social justice, climate change and equality in all parts of the world. Yet, women under 30 are less than 1 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide.

Artistic Director Mary Moynihan says

'Women need 50/50 equal representation in politics and in all levels of society. Representation is not enough, women need, desire and demand equal access to power and 50/50 positions in all power-making structures in society. The stories told to our young people need to be representative of all women from across diverse communities and we look forward to the day when there is equality, dignity and respect for all people equally.

Smashing Times are committed to using the arts to promote a world filled with equality and peace and believe the arts have a key role to play in creating a world that is sustainable, peaceful, diverse and equal. As the UN says 'to get us there, the world needs women at every table where decisions are being made'.

The UN are holding a Generation Equality Forum, an important convening for gender equality investment and actions, taking place in Mexico City from 29 – 31 March, and culminating in Paris in

June 2021. It will draw leaders, visionaries, and activists from around the world, safely on a virtual platform, to push for transformative and lasting change for generations to come.

Key to achieving an equal future for all is tackling the issue of gender-based violence. Orla O'Connor, Director of the National Women's Council of Ireland has said,

'The lack of attention paid to gender-based harassment so far shows just how normalised this form of violence is within our society. The harasser may be viewed as a 'pest' or a 'nuisance', or worse as just very 'eager'.'

This type of behaviour must no longer be normalised in our society, and people of all genders must recognise that it is not down to women alone to hide, adapt, or disengage in order to avoid instances of harassment. Men and women alike must work together to combat this issue and create a safer world for us all to live in.

Read inspiring stories of women leaders from across Europe today by looking at the Smashing Times book **Women in an Equal Europe** [here](#)

Look at biographies of inspiring women political leaderships in the **EU 1979 A People's Parliament** digital art exhibition [here](#)

You can find the spoken word performance of **God is a We** by Luis Bracamontes [here](#)

Luis Bracamontes is an award-winning queer feminist poet based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands whose work centres around topics such as mental health, the queer experience and safe(r) spaces. He performs in storytelling and spoken word. He is the Creator of Unwanted Words (@UnwantedWordsProject), a platform for up and coming queer voices in spoken word and poetry, host of the Queer Poetry Nights and a member of Poetry Circle Netherlands since 2019.

Luis says 'I started writing when I was thirteen or fourteen years old as a way of making sense out my feelings and thoughts and ultimately my queerness. Growing up I felt the need to be censored in order to portray the appearance of a good boy and keep the expectations of what I was supposed to be. For me writing, and in this case poetry, was an outlet to start figuring out who I really was and what my true thoughts really were.'

God is a We

by Luis Bracamontes

Hear the spoken word performance [here](#)

Growing up I was told to pray to God
and that God was a "He"
and that "He" was almighty
above and beyond, omnipotent

I was taught that power was masculine
with a world history of prominent male figures
and daily reminders of who is on top
and who shall be feared

But in the tradition of the women in my roots
I found that power comes from community
the kindness and resilience merge
to create a new source of strength:
Feminine, Matriarcal

I grew up seeing my mother wearing
the skin of their oppressors
and building a legacy
for herself and my sisters, for all of us

So I learned how to read the signs of the times
womxn taking up space
womxn of color holding positions of power
trans womxn raising their voices
trans womxn of color thriving
non-binary folk being celebrated

We need to teach children how to read these signs
a literacy of self-fulfilled prophecies
a relentless hunger to go out
and breath power, hold power, share power

Because representation matters
Nakate, Ocasio-Cortez, Thunberg,
Malala, Moore, and the many more immortalized stories of womxn and queer folk
that fight and conquer to reshape the world we are living

A world where politics become a space to nurture kindness
where we grow flowers from the corpse of corruption
a world where God is a "She", where God is a "They"
where God is a "We"