

CREATIVE

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What if a play was a living dataset? 'Framed Illusion' looks to find out

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Mónica López-González's new project allows the neuroscientist to "experiment far beyond what I can do in a brain imaging scanner."

© Under Armour basketball app debuts ahead of #NBAFinals

By Stephen Babcock / REPORTER



(Courtesy image)

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In a shadowy interrogation room, a detective interrogates a suspect in an attempt to solve a murder. With two women locking words in the tête-à-tête, the work is designed to deconstruct the expected.

Presented from June 2-12 at [Theatre Project](#), "Framed Illusion" unfolds as an on-stage exploration of memory.

First Full Dress Rehearsal for Framed Illusion Today!!! 🎉🎭🎪🎪 The show opens this week!!! I'm pumped 🙌👉

— Linda Bancroft (@Linda_Bancroft) May 31, 2016

Playwright and lead actor **Mónica López-González** will be recording each performance, and musicians will improvise a score with the work each night.

For the cognitive scientist and artist, the improvisations represent a rich dataset.

“The live laboratory allows me to experiment far beyond what I can do in a brain imaging scanner,” said López-González, a classically trained artist and cognitive neuroscience Ph.D.

The latest work from [La Petite Noiseuse Productions](#) represents her [vision for how art and science coexist in a nutshell](#).

Art and music have long worked within specific frameworks that can be manipulated. In the pure aesthetic sense, that’s called creativity. Taking another step, López-González sees dialogue taking place on stage or musical elements like mode and pitch as variables.

When analyzing the performance, the goal is to “see if there are any patterns or consistent musical variables being used to express certain emotions or concepts,” she said.

In other words, *what* the brain creates can be used to figure out *how* the brain creates.

Premiering at Theatre Project next week.

Playwright Monica Lopez-Gonzalez Weaves Art, Science Into “Framed Illusion” <https://t.co/GhIRvbIUXc>

— Theatre Project (@BTheatreProject) [May 27, 2016](#)

The work puts López-González between two worlds that are increasingly recognizing each other’s importance, but still have trouble communicating with each other. But starting a company provided a space for both. Along with the quest to understand how the brain works, she believes the work can have huge implications for STEAM education and AI.

“If you can break those barriers, pull in elements from each one and weave them together, you get a new element,” she said.



Stephen Babcock is the lead reporter for Technical.ly Baltimore. A graduate of Northeastern University, he moved to Baltimore following a stint in New Orleans, where he served as managing editor of online news and culture publication NOLA Defender. While there, he also wrote for NOLA.com/The Times-Picayune. He was previously a reporter for the Rio Grande Sun of Northern New Mexico.

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