

Elisa Monte Dance
481 Eighth Avenue, Suite 543
New York, NY 10001
www.elisamontedance.org

Intensely energetic, the virtuosic company, Elisa Monte Dance eagerly returns to the Kaatsbaan International Dance Center from September 2-21, 2008 for a three-week residency program. Performances for the public will take place at the Kaatsbaan Studio Theatre on Saturday, September 20 at 7:30pm, and on Sunday, September 21 at 2:30pm.

With dance *The New York Times* calls “captivating...both surprising and urgent,” the company will spend time during its Kaatsbaan residency developing two new pieces, *Zydeco Zaré*, inspired by the Zydeco culture and music of Southwest Louisiana, and *Arrow’s Path*, a romantic duet featuring renowned modern composer, Kevin Keller. The company will also be at work on revivals of *Feu Follet*, which celebrates Cajun culture, and *Audentity*, an exploration of identity through sound.

From January 21-25, Elisa Monte Dance will celebrate its 2009 season at The Joyce Theater in New York City. The company’s Annual Gala will take place at the Manhattan Penthouse on Wednesday, January 21, after the Joyce performance. The Joyce Theater’s *Humanities* series, which includes a Q&A session after the performance with Elisa Monte and her dancers, will take place on the evening of Thursday, January 22. For information on obtaining tickets to the company’s Joyce Theater season, please visit www.joyce.org. Inquiries on the Annual Gala may be directed to info@elisamontedance.org.

During their three weeks of residency at Kaatsbaan, Elisa Monte Dance is excited to participate in a number of outreach activities with the local community. These outreach activities will include open rehearsals, company classes for local dance students, and master classes taught by Elisa Monte. The company will focus on the revivals of *Feu Follet* and *Audentity* as springboards to reach local audiences during this outreach.

One of Elisa Monte Dance’s projects in development at Kaatsbaan, *Zydeco Zaré*, was formed from the desire to showcase the indigenous Creole culture and Zydeco music of Southwest Louisiana. The piece is being choreographed by Elisa Monte and company members Tiffany Rea and Joe Celej, with a musical score by Jonno Frishberg. This innovative work is inspired by the style of folk music originating from African American and Creole descendants of freed slaves in southern Louisiana in the late 1800s, and incorporates the syncopated sound and movements that are found in Zydeco. This project, which was commissioned by the Performing Arts Society of Acadiana (PASA), will be part of PASA’s 2008/2009 season, and will debut its world premiere at the Heymann Performing Arts Center in Lafayette, Louisiana on October 11, 2008.

In December 2008 and January 2009, Elisa Monte Dance will tour France and Germany. This dynamic journey will mark over two and a half decades of the company’s European touring.

Elisa Monte Dance, founded in 1981, bridges cultural barriers through the universal language of dance. From its earliest recognition on the world stage in 1982 as “best company” at the International Dance Festival of Paris, the company has succeeded for over two decades. The work of Elisa Monte is widely recognized for its highly athletic and sensual style, as well as its technical and physical acuity, exploring a multitude of topics and themes. Elisa Monte Dance celebrates diversity through the work, its artists, and its staff. The company’s artists have hailed from all corners of the globe, including the US, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

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ELISA MONTE – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER

“The choice to dance is completely instinctual, completely compelling. We all struggle through life trying to understand why we’re here and what we’re doing. For me, dance has always been my way of communicating of finding answers. There was just no other path.”

ELISA MONTE entered the world of professional dance early, making her professional New York debut dancing with Agnes DeMille in various stage and television projects at the age of eleven, and attending the prestigious School of American Ballet. Monte worked as a principal dancer with Martha Graham Company for eight years, as well as Lar Lubovitch and Pilobolus, among others. Fifteen years into her professional career, Monte turned her attention to choreography and founded the company that bears her name.

Monte’s first choreographic work, *Treading*, created in 1979, immediately identified her as an important innovator and contributor to contemporary dance. Her signature style – daring, intense, passionate – is filled with a classical, athletic virtuosity. Initiated in sensuality and sustained by an underlying, steady energy, Monte’s work is especially notable for the expansive range of movement upon which she draws. Monte has acquired an eminently wide vocabulary as a choreographer, at the same time refusing to conform or be confined by the parameters of stylistic constraints.

Monte has created over 40 works in her years as a choreographer. These works have been performed by Elisa Monte Dance and other notable dance companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Boston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Ballet Gulbenkian of Portugal, Teatro alla Scala Ballet, Philadanco, Dallas Black Dance Theater, North Carolina Dance Theater, the Batsheva Dance Company of Israel, Contemporary Dance Wyoming and the PACT Contemporary Dance Company of South Africa. Her signature work, *Treading*, was actually created as part of a choreography initiative to develop new work from artists of the Martha Graham Dance Company. The work helped Elisa Monte Dance win “best company” at the International Dance Festival of Paris in 1982 and has also been adopted as a long-standing favorite into the repertory of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Monte was among the first choreographers awarded a commission by the National Choreography Project, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, Exxon Corporation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This resulted in Monte creating *VII for VIII* for the Boston Ballet, which was restaged for their 1996 Fall season. Monte has also been a choreographer-in-residence at various venues around the country and abroad, including Robert Redford's Sundance Institute in Salt Lake City, Southern Methodist University in Dallas, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Now into her third decade of choreography, Monte's stunning *Volkman Suite* and recent works *Hardwood* and *Slope of Enlightenment* have received widespread acclaim and represent her continued contribution to dance.