

Sins Invalid

Sins Invalid 2009 Artists

Patty Berne, Director, is a contributing writer for many *Sins Invalid* shows. Berne's background includes advocacy for immigrants who seek asylum due to war and torture; community organizing within the Haitian diaspora; international support work for the Guatemalan democratic movement; work with incarcerated youth toward alternatives to the criminal legal system; advocating for LGBTQI community and disability rights perspectives within the field of reproductive and genetic technologies; offering mental health support to survivors of violence; and cultural activism to centralize marginalized voices, particularly those of people with disabilities. She has facilitated writing workshops for multiple communities, including youth, writers of mixed racial descent and survivors of sexual violence. Her participation in film projects includes the films *Haiti: Harvest of Hope* (1998), *System Failure: Violence, Abuse and Neglect in the California Youth Authority* (2004), *I Cannot Speak Without Shaking* (2007) and *SINS* (working title, in post-production). She is pursuing a Psy.D., focusing on trauma and healing for survivors of interpersonal and state-sponsored violence. In 2008, she had a chapter published in the Routledge Press book, *Telling Stories to Change the World*, on the work and history of *Sins Invalid*. She currently chairs the Board of Directors at San Francisco Women Against Rape (www.sfwar.org) and is the 2009 recipient of the Empress I Jose Sarria Award for Uncommon Leadership in the field of LGBTQI and disability rights by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

John Benson, Kinetic Sculptor, has worked extensively in community-based non-profits specializing in low-income housing, local arts and music, and various services for disability communities. He has toured extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe and released three albums with his band, *A Minor Forest*. John also created an alternative show space simply called "The Bus." Subject of many print and web articles, two film documentaries and three radio interviews, the bus is a mobile music and art venue that has done two U.S. tours and about two hundred shows in its two years of existence. The bus has been a part of many events, including the Miami International Noise Festival, the Milwaukee Fun Festival, San Francisco's Pride Week, and the "Outside the Lines" Arts Festival in Boston. Approximately 600 groups have performed inside the bus. Since 1992, John has worked closely with the founders of Easy Does It Emergency Services for the Berkeley disabled community, where he is a board member and employee. John is also a co-founder of Pink, Inc., a non-profit organization committed to community based low income housing. John transferred ownership of his house to Pink, Inc., and the house is now known as "The Purple House." It provides a space for meetings, art and music events, and community groups, including Food Not Bombs.

Ralph Dickinson, Performer, is a videographer and a new performer for *Sins Invalid* shows. He is a queer actor and video producer and a long-time Bay Area resident. His video work has appeared on the Online News Hour with Jim Lehrer and has been on tour with Artists' Television Access. As an actor, he has appeared in Bennett Miller's (Capote) music video for Scarlett Johansson and Investigation Discovery's *Extreme Forensics*. He has taught video production at the Bay Area Video Coalition, San Francisco State University, Academy of Art University and Washington Primary School, to name a few. He recently survived a yearlong stint as a producer working in postproduction in Los Angeles and is happy to be back in the Bay Area working with socially and artistically relevant organizations like *Sins Invalid*.

Mat Fraser, Performer, is recognized as one of the United Kingdom's best-known disabled performers. His work includes creating televised documentaries such as *Born Freak*, his study of freak shows and disabled performers in history, *Happy Birthday Thalidomide*, and *Unarmed and Dangerous*. His acting work includes his leading role in the BBC's feature *Every Time You Look At Me* (2004), his role as Calchas the Seer in US TV's *Helen Of Troy* (2004), and the title role in a new cult action film, *Kung Fu Fliid*. His written work includes his award-winning one-man play *Sealboy: Freak* (2001 and 02), his nationally touring show *Thalidomide!! A Musical* (2006 and 07), and his numerous cabarets, notably his popular series of shows *Mat Fraser's Sex Variety Cabarets*. Mat is the title holder of the Erotic Award (U.K.) for Best Male Striptease artist 2007.

Antoine-DeVinci Hunter, Performer/Dancer, is a deaf African American choreographer, dancer and writer. He is the founder and director of Urban Jazz Dance Company and Iron Triangle Urban Ballet. Antoine has performed numerous forms of dance with well-known artists and companies, including Nuba Dance Company, Reginald Ray-Savage and Zafra Miriam-Savage Jazz Dance Company, Ramon Alayo, Robert Moses' Kin Dance Company, Kim Epifano, Raissa Simpson, and Ross Dance Company. Antoine studied West African Dance with Master C.K. and Betty Ladzekpo, and studied at the Paul Taylor Summer Intensives in 2003 and 2004. He performed in London with the Sign Dance Collective, where he performed with Mat Fraser, among other dancers with disabilities. He tours with his own company and with others - currently five of them - and he teaches children and adults in over 13 locations, including East Bay Center of the Performing Arts, Dance-a-Vision Entertainment, Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Youth in Arts, and Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Performer, is a Worcester raised, Toronto matured, Oakland-based queer Sri Lankan writer, performer and teacher. She is the 2009-10 Artist in Residence at UC Berkeley's June Jordan's Poetry for the People and the co-founder and co-artistic director of Mangos With Chili, North America's only touring cabaret of queer and trans people of color performing artists. Her one woman show, *Grown Woman Show*, has toured nationally, including performances at the National Queer Arts Festival, Swarthmore College, Yale University, Reed College and McGill University. The author of *Consensual Genocide*, her writing has appeared in *Yes Means Yes*, *Visible: A Femmethology*, *Homelands*, *Colonize This*, *We Don't Need Another Wave*, *Bitchfest*, *Without a Net*,

Dangerous Families, Brazen Femme, Femme and *A Girl's Guide to Taking Over The World*. She is proud to be the queer femme mixed slut schoolteacher Sri Lankan granddaughter of her queer femme mixed slut schoolteacher Sri Lankan grandmothers. She is finishing her second book of poetry, *Love Cake*, and her first memoir, *Dirty River* and is happy about the forthcoming publication of *The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Partner Abuse in Activist Communities*, which she co-edited with Ching-In Chen and Jai Dulani, by South End Press in 2010. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College, focusing on creative nonfiction and community-based teaching by writers of color.

Nomy Lamm, Performer/Vocalist, is a writer, musician, and activist whose work has been featured in magazines (*Ms.*, *Punk Planet*, *Make/Shift*), anthologies (*Listen Up*, *Body Outlaws*, and most recently *Word Warriors and Working Sex*, all from Seal Press), and onstage across the U.S. She has toured with Sister Spit, the Sex Workers Art Show, and the cabaret showcase Dr. Frockrocket's Menagerie and Medicine Show. She has released two solo albums (*Anthem*, 1999, and *Effigy*, 2002) and co-wrote, co-produced and performed in *The Transfused*, a post-apocalyptic rock opera about multigendered animal-human hybrids, in 2000. She teaches voice lessons, and is currently working on her first novel, *The Best Part Comes After the End*.

Leroy F. Moore Jr., Performer, is a contributing writer and performer for many *Sins Invalid* shows. He is a Black disabled writer, poet, community activist, and feminist. Leroy is the author of a spoken word CD and chapbook entitled *Black Disabled Man with a Big Mouth & a High IQ*, and his poems and articles have appeared in numerous publications. His film-based collaboration with Todd Herman on disability and sexuality resulted in the internationally award-winning work *Forbidden Acts*. Leroy lectures regularly on the intersection of race and disability and is the founder of the Krip-Hop Project, which produces hip-hop mixtapes featuring disabled hip-hop artists from around the world.

Aurora Levins Morales, Contributing Writer/Vocal Performer, is a nationally known writer whose work has been widely anthologized and taught. She was a contributor to the groundbreaking 1981 collection *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Her fiction has appeared in *Ms.* and *The American Voice* and four collections of Latina/o writing. She is also a frequent contributor to the Jewish feminist journal *Bridges*. Her first book, *Getting Home Alive*, (Firebrand Books, 1986) written with her mother, Rosario Morales, was hailed as "a landmark in Puerto Rican literature," and "the most important book to come out of the diaspora in a generation." Her most recent books are *Remedios: Stories of Earth* and *Iron from the History of Puertorriqueñas* (Beacon Press, 1998) a prose poetry retelling of the history of the Atlantic world through the lives of Puerto Rican women and their kin, and *Medicine Stories*, (South End, 1998) a collection of essays. Her 9/11 poem *Shema* was broadcast on Pacifica and other radio stations, distributed online and read at anti-war events and religious services across the country in the wake of September 11, 2001. Her poetry commentaries on the news are aired regularly on Pacific Radio's *Flashpoints* news magazine. She is currently working on a novel.

Cara Page, Performer/MC, is a Black Queer Feminist multimedia performance artist, playwright, poet, healing arts practitioner & organizer based in Atlanta, GA. Her communal work has included mixed media fiber arts installations to transform public spaces for, by and about women and youth of color including: juvenile detention centers in North Carolina, homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters for women in Washington DC; community centers and public schools. As a trainer and independent artist through her company, Deeper Waters LLC, her work has always focused on uses of writing, performance, images and cloth to create multimedia workshops, retreats and exhibitions for individual and communal transformation to explore redefining ourselves through our legacies of struggle, resiliency and transformation. She is a recipient of the Rockefeller Next Generation Leadership Fellowship (2000-2002) awarded for her contributions to communities through the arts. She was a co-founder of the West End Arts Institute, a neighborhood arts and economic justice project in partnership with the West End Community Center, 2002 - 2004, in Durham, NC. As a writer she has written several plays, and poem narratives, including her recent performance in partnership with *Sins Invalid* in 2008. She continues to create spaces for social justice artists and healing arts practitioners to create transformative bodies of work that impact the reflective and creative leadership of organizers and communities nationally. Currently she is pursuing the use of storytelling as a tool for social change and healing. Her recent work on the storytelling project, 'Depo Diaries' organized and produced by the Committee on Women, Population & the Environment, has been featured in the recent anthology: *Telling Stories to Change the World*, co-edited by Rickie Solinger.

Maria R. Palacios is a feminist writer, poet, author, spoken word performer, polio survivor and disability activist whose message of hope and empowerment pulsates and breathes through her work. In addition to two self-published books, Maria's work has been featured in anthologies, articles, audio interviews and other multimedia publications. Known in the artistic world as The Goddess on Wheels, her multicultural background and passion for onstage performance have made Maria R. Palacios one of Houston's favorite spoken word artists. Her work embraces self-acceptance, empowerment and social justice surrounding women with disabilities, gender and sexuality and a wide spectrum of issues as they relate to diversity. Maria R. Palacios is currently involved in the production of two spoken word CD collections, a series of women empowerment workshops and presently serves on the Advisory Board for CROWD (Center for Research on Women with Disabilities) in Houston, Texas. To learn more about Maria R. Palacios, please visit her at: www.myspace.com/goddessonwheels.

Seeley Quest, Performer, has been featured at the 2002 First international Queerness and Disability Conference; the 2003 national True Spirit Conference; the San Francisco Center's opening week gala; Some Kind of Queer; the 2003Trannyfest; the 2002 and 2004 Bay Area Ladyfests; the '05, '06, and '08 SF Anarchist Cafes; the 2007 SF Sex Worker Film and Arts Festival; *Sins Invalid* 2007 and 2008; SF Bay Guardian 'Best of the Bay' event "Writers With Drinks"; 848 Community Space and Counterpulse; in residency at the Jon Sims Center; in the *Trans As Fuck* shows she also co-instigated; the 2008 National Queer Arts Festival in *TAF* and *Marginal Bodies*; L.A.'s Trans/Giving; on tour with the 2005 and 2006 Tranny Roadshows and elsewhere.