

# Sins Invalid

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<p><b>THE 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF POWERFUL BODIES, SEXUALITY, AND THE DISABLED BODY</b></p> <p><b>SINS INVALID</b></p> <p><b>AN UNSHAMED CLAIM TO BEAUTY IN THE FACE OF INVISIBILITY</b></p> <p><b>FEATURING WORLD-PREMIERE PERFORMANCES BY:</b> <b>AURORA LEVINS MORALES, ANTOINE-DEVINCI HUNTER, LEAH LAKSHMI PIEPZNA-SAMARASINHA, ELLERY RUSSIAN NOMY LAMM, ALEX CAFARELLI, JUBA KALAMKA, LEROY F. MOORE JR., SEELEY QUEST, MARIA PALACIOS</b></p> <p><b>VISUAL ART BY TODD HERMAN, RALPH DICKINSON, PATTY BERNE</b> <b>SCULPTURAL ART BY RYON GESINK</b></p> <p>Please Note: show contains explicit content</p> <p><b>Z Space</b> (formerly Theater Artaud) (450 Florida Street @ 17<sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco, 94110) Wheelchair accessible. Please refrain from wearing scents although Sins Invalid cannot guarantee a scent-free space.</p> <p><b>Friday-Saturday, April 8-9* at 8pm; and Sunday, April 10 @ 7pm</b> *April 9 performance is Audio Described; ASL interpretation by Stage Hands</p> <p><b>Tickets:</b> \$16-\$25 (no one turned away for lack of funds) <b>Box Office:</b> <a href="http://brownpapertickets.com">brownpapertickets.com</a> and cash at the door; <b>Information:</b> <a href="http://sinsinvalid.org">sinsinvalid.org</a></p>
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(San Francisco, CA – February 25, 2011) **SINS INVALID** is a singular performance event and the nation’s only ongoing performance project dedicated to the themes of sexuality, embodiment and the disabled body. Each performance event has stripped taboos from the topic to offer a vision of beauty that includes all bodies and communities.

Conceived and led by **Patricia (Patty) Berne** and **Leroy F. Moore, Jr.** SINS INVALID has developed and presented cutting-edge work by artists in all creative genres. Each unique work challenges the normative paradigms of “normal” and “sexy”, offering instead a transformative vision of beauty and sexuality.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SINS INVALID is a major event entitled “**Knotting Stories Over Time and Geography**”. 13 artists working in theater, dance, literature, and film contribute to what – in the words of Artistic Director, Patty Berne describes as – “The strongest show yet.”

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“Knotting Stories Over Time and Geography” is a performance event that arcs from historical events about social violence against people with disabilities to empowered personal viewpoints and sensory experiences. Every story told in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SINS INVALID lays the foundation for a collective claim of liberation and beauty.

Dancer/choreographer **Antoine DeVinci-Hunter** opens and closes the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SINS INVALID with two works set to the spoken words of author, **Aurora Levins Morales**. Her prose encapsulates the show’s theme about transcendence and the storied body. Drawing from an excerpt of the pieces she wrote for the collaboration with Mr. DeVinci-Hunter, Ms. Morales writes:

“...Our history is in our bodies—what we do to breathe, how we move, the sounds we make, our myriad shapes, our wild gestures, far outside the boundaries of what’s expected, the knowledge bound into our bones, our trembling muscles, our laboring lungs—like secret seeds tied into the hair of our stolen ancestors, we carry it everywhere. Our stories erupt in the dances we invent, in the pleasure rubbed from our bodies like medicine from crushed leaves, spicy, astringent, sweet...

... Listen with your body. Let your body speak.” – Aurora Levins Morales

Patty Berne observes *“the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SINS INVALID delves into the violence and disregard for our sexuality. It starts from how we’ve been treated historically and looks forward to where everyone can be seen as whole.”*

In the first act **seeley quest** performs two theatrical pieces written and directed by Patty Berne about the body politic. The first work investigates eugenics and the forced sterilization of Carrie Buck. quest’s second piece simply asks the timely question “who has the right to decide”.

**Todd Herman** and **Patty Berne** premiere “Other People’s Stories,” a film about the sexualized torture and murder of Jennifer Daugherty, a young disabled woman whose recent killing rose to prominence in the media.

Other works in Act I take on a personal twist. Both **Aurora Morales-Levin’s** and **Maria Palacios’** spoken word pieces are affirmations about learning to love and accept one’s body. **Alex Cafarelli’s** work takes rough play to stage in an engrossing work that demonstrates “this is how we negotiate our sexuality.”

Act II of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary SINS INVALID explores the physical side of “Crip Sex”. **Nomy Lamm** (who last year wowed audiences with her solo operatic piece set in a bird’s nest of prosthetic limbs) wrestles with **Alex Cafarelli** to explore the connection between spirituality and sexuality in “God Wrestling.”

**Maria Palacios** and **seeley quest** premiere “The Peep Show.” **Leroy F. Moore, Jr.** and **Juba Kalamka** take a frank look at black men’s masculinity through the lens of disability and queerness. **Nomy Lamm** closes the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SINS INVALID with an unforgettable musical number.

Interspersed throughout Acts I and II are “Crip Sex Moments” by **Ellery Russian** and **Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha**.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Performance SINS INVALID** will premiere at **Z Space** (formerly Theater Artaud) April 8- 10, 2011. The space is wheelchair accessible, and the Saturday performance will be Audio Described; Sign Language Interpretation will be provided by Stage Hands.

In an effort to fully support its audience, SINS INVALID will have counselors from San Francisco Women Against Rape in-house during each show to help anybody who may be triggered by the explicit content of the program. And to accommodate people with multiple chemical sensitivities, SINS INVALID will have a fragrance-free section in the audience.

**BACKGROUND: SINS INVALID's** mission defines disability broadly to include people with physical impairments, people who belong to a sensory minority, people with emotional disabilities, people with cognitive challenges, and those with chronic/severe illness. SINS INVALID advances the understanding that the experience of disability occurs within any and all walks of life, with deeply felt connections to all communities impacted by the medicalization of bodies, including trans, gender variant and intersex people, and others whose bodies do not conform to our culture(s)' notions of "normal" or "functional."

The organization's performance work explores the themes of sexuality, embodiment and the disabled body. Conceived and led by disabled people of color, SINS INVALID develops and presents cutting-edge work where normative paradigms of "normal" and "sexy" are challenged, offering instead a vision of beauty and sexuality inclusive of all individuals and communities.

SINS INVALID is supported by the generosity of the Aepoch Fund, the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Community Foundation (Boulder), the Carpenter Foundation, the Horizons Foundation, Dancer's Group New Stages in Dance Program, and the Left Tilt Fund.

### **SINS INVALID 2011 PERFORMERS BIOS (ALPHABETICAL)**

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**PATTY BERNE, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONTRIBUTING ARTIST,** is a Co-Founder and Director of Sins Invalid. 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 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 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.

**ALEX CAFARELLI** is a genderqueer femme Jewish Witch whose solo and collaborative work encompasses crafty wordsmithing, internal martial arts, music, and ritual performance that inspires sexual healing, spiritual awareness, and a mad dash of feisty femme resistance. Alex co-founded the Minneapolis-based performance group, the Psycick Slutz, in 1993, and is a member of Body Heat, a femme artist collective that tours nationally. She has performed in venues across the Midwest, on both U.S. coasts, in Canada and the U.K. In 2010 she self-published a chapbook of her personal fiction titled "Survivor Desire." Since 1992, Alex has been studying martial arts with her current focus being in Bagua and Xingyi. In addition to teaching martial arts, she also facilitates workshops on Body Mindfulness and Sex Magick for survivors of sexual trauma.

**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.

**TODD HERMAN**, Project Advisor, is a filmmaker, photographer, and co-founder of Sins Invalid. His film and photographic works, often exploring relationships between documentary images and poetic texts, range from a newly released photography book about several marginalized communities in Kathmandu, Nepal; to film and book projects exploring the connections between birth, memory and mourning; to video productions and visual art exhibitions exploring aspects of disability, sexuality and eugenics. He was the recipient of the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery's 2004 Emerging Curator Award, and was the 2008 winner of the 51st Annual San Francisco International Film Festival Golden Gate Award for best bay area short film. Todd has facilitated filmmaking workshops for adults with disabilities for nearly ten years. He exhibits his work internationally. For more information, visit [todd-herman.com](http://todd-herman.com).

A recording artist since 1988, Chicago native **JUBA KALAMKA** is most recognized for his recent work as a founding member of "homohop" crew Deep Dickollective (D/DC) and his development of the label Sugartruck Recordings. Noted for his dialogues on the convergences and conflicts of race, identity, sexuality and class in pop culture, Kalamka has written and illustrated articles for numerous publications and served as a speaker, panelist, and curator for organizations and conferences across the United States, Kalamka served as Festival Director for East Bay (Oakland) Pride (2003) and is the curator/director of PeaceOUT World HomoHop Festival (now in its seventh year), which features heavily in the Alex Hinton documentary Pick Up the Mic. Deep Dickollective's fifth and final disc, *On Some Other*, was released on Sugartruck in June 2007. His second solo recording, *Oogabooga under Fascism* will be released in late 2009. Kalamka holds a BA in Art/Secondary Education from Chicago State University (1993) and completed an MFA in Poetics with emphasis in Queer Performance at New College of California in San Francisco in 2007.

**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".

**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.

**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.

**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, visit her at: [www.myspace.com/goddessonwheels](http://www.myspace.com/goddessonwheels).

**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.

**LEAH LAKSHMI PIEPZNA-SAMARASINHA** -continued

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.

**SEELEY QUEST** has been actively performing, organizing shows and m.c'ing around the Bay Area since 2001, and has also featured at the last True Spirit Conference in D.C., at *Trans/Giving* in L.A., in Vancouver, Toronto, and many U.S. cities and colleges with the "Tranny Roadshow". She's initiated and co-facilitated disability workshops at queer and feminist arts conferences, is available for hire as an art model, and has a self-published chapbook for sale.

**ELLERY RUSSIAN** is an artist, writer, performer, makeup artist, comic artist, professional book nerd and physical therapist living in Seattle, WA. Ellery is the author of the zine "Ring of Fire", Co-Directed the documentary "Third Antenna: A Documentary about the Radical Nature of Drag", has performed across the country and internationally doing drag, integrated dance, and reading poetry. As a long-time admirer of SINS INVALID, Ellery is honored to perform in this year's show and would like to dedicate her performance to the memory of Vic Chesnutt.

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PLEASE NOTE: HI-RES JPEGs are available for download from the [SINS INVALID](#) press room and upon request from Brechin Flournoy, Sagacity Communications.

Interviews and guest appearances may be arranged through: Brechin Flournoy, Sagacity Communications, [sagacity.co@gmail.com](mailto:sagacity.co@gmail.com) and 415/935-5138.

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