

## Let's Get Physical



You might not believe that somebody who has given herself the F-word as a middle name would be as much fun as Julie Fucking Potter. But it's true. This rapper-comic-performer who hails from Bakersfield, Calif., and currently resides in West Hollywood, has got the good life figured out. With her album, *Exodus*, which came out last year, her recent participation in the Homorevolution Tour and her gig at a three-month inspirational writing retreat in Amsterdam, well, things seem to be coming together for this feisty lady. She's even an underground hit on CDbaby.com.

If you've never listened to Potter's music or seen her with her improv group, Crisis Hopkins, it's important to note that this woman has a serious message, but also has a sense of humor about herself. Her album tackles a range of issues, and you'll find her feeling downright spiteful about everything

from straight women who tease, to anyone who doesn't appreciate Nancy Pelosi's position as Speaker of the House. But the real treat in Potter's music is that it's grounded in the specificity of an unglamorous world.

"It's a crazy thing to work as a server," she says in "Server Homies," her homage to those in food service. "You run around like a mad person, but you have to give good service at the table. I think you learn so much about someone when you go out to eat with them and you see how they treat their server."

Potter's "Run. Bust. Blow." outlines three attainable steps to happiness: running (at least 20 minutes, three times a week), masturbating (it relieves stress) and smoking pot (to slow down and enjoy yourself). Surprised to find a rapper who promotes exercise? Well, Potter isn't your average rapper. In addition to playing softball and football, she runs marathons and has a college degree in kinesiology.

So how did this girl-jock get into rapping? "I've always wanted to be on stage...I grew up in the golden age of West Coast gangster rap...the raw expressiveness and emotion connected to rap is what I fell in love with." But it wasn't until 2004, during her time abroad in Amsterdam, that Potter took some acting classes and actually started appearing on stage. "Improv really gives you that no-fear quality...You realize that you're never going to fail as long as you're doing it, which is the whole entire point of improv: Just do it and you are successful."

Four years later, here she is in your face. Something has to be said for having the kind of drive that's created her success, but Potter is nonchalant about it: "Just believe in yourself. If you don't believe in you, how can anybody else?"

So Potter has returned to Amsterdam, the place where it all began, and is currently working on new material for another album. She plans to produce the beats for this album with her wife, Caroline Dream, whose violin work can be heard on the "San Francisco Values" track. Some of her new lyrics feel reflective, introspective and more personal than her previous work. It's different, but Potter feels confident about it, as she does about most things.

"I have willed so much just by believing it and thinking about it," she says. And it must be working. [KAMALA PULIGANDLA] ■

## Embodied Politic



As the national director of *Sins Invalid: An Unshamed Claim to Beauty in the Face of Invisibility*, and as a queer, disabled woman of color, Patricia Berne (pictured left) is a leader in what she calls "the second wave of the disability rights movement." *Sins Invalid* is a performance project of spoken word, theater, poetry, dance and music that explores sexuality in the lives of people with

disabilities. Now in its third year, *Sins Invalid* has grown from what Berne admits was a "regrettably novel idea" into one of the most revolutionary artistic expressions of sexuality and disability in the United States.

The show was born of Berne and co-founder Leroy Moore's frustration at the lack of positive representations of the sexuality of people. The two were equally disappointed that LGBT people and people of color had been routinely under-represented by most disability advocacy groups. They decided to found a project that would fill these gaps and simultaneously spark the second wave Berne refers to—one that would be inclusive, honest and healing.

The performances explore the intersections of identity and confront cultural taboos head on, without flinching and without resorting to tokenism. They complicate identity politics by presenting situations that are ambiguous and emotionally charged. This year's show, *From Sacrificed to Sacred*, was the most provocative yet. Its objective was to challenge stereotypes that have an overtly religious subtext. The concept grew out of discussions amongst the performers, all of whom had stories of negative experiences with a strongly religious element. For instance, Berne can remember, as a child, having people stop on the street and offer her their prayers. She recounts that even though they were intended to be healing and generous, gestures like this fell wide of the mark. *Sins Invalid* is rooted in politics and bridges several rights movements, says Berne. She sees natural alliances between the disabled community and the genderqueer community. "To deny a person their sexuality is to deny them who they are," says Berne "[*Sins Invalid*] comes from the framing of sexual literacy and sexuality as a human right, and further, as a divine right. That by nature of existence our bodies are sacred, and by nature of existence our sexualities are sacred." [RACHEL BEEBE] ■

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