

Sins Invalid

Sins Invalid is a disability justice based performance project that celebrates artists with disabilities, centralizing artists of color and LGBTQ and gender-variant artists as communities who have been historically marginalized. Led by disabled people of color, Sins Invalid's performance work explores the themes of sexuality, embodiment and the disabled body, developing provocative work where paradigms of "normal" and "sexy" are challenged, offering instead a vision of beauty and sexuality inclusive of all bodies and communities. Creating high-quality artistic work as disabled artists of color and queer/gender non-conforming artists, we use cultural work as a medium for building within and across communities. In our 11th year, Sins Invalid is seen as a thought leader in Disability Justice and continues to alter the cultural context in which people with disabilities are seen and experienced, nurturing an aesthetic vision in which all bodies are recognized as valuable and beautiful.

Established in 2006, Sins Invalid was founded in response to the pronounced scarcity of spaces in which disabled artists are able to determine the cultural message of the work, shape the aesthetics, and create powerful, body-affirming work. The success of our performances speak not only to the artistic integrity of our work, but to a community need for a space where non-normative bodies and sexualities are celebrated, not as a fetishized spectacle, but as a proud reclamation of humanity.

Our Cultural Program includes:

(i) Home Performances

Artists with disabilities create all of the content for our home performance, which is directed by a disabled queer woman of color. Performances reflect multiple art forms including performance art, spoken word, dance, song, and video. While there are multiple performers, there is one narrative and emotional arc in each performance, with each piece building a component of that arc. Sins Invalid has developed and produced seven sold out performance runs in the SF/Bay Area to nightly audiences of 300.

(ii) Touring performance excerpts

In response to community demand, Sins Invalid tours excerpts by invitation from universities, community based organizations and conferences.

(iii) Film

A 32-minute documentary by and about Sins Invalid is being distributed through New Day Films, and, while educational institutions are prioritized, the film is also distributed through events, screenings at film festivals, and individual purchases.

(iv) Performance workshops for community members

Sins Invalid offers high quality workshops in a wide range of artistic disciplines for community members with/out disabilities, led by disabled arts educators and performers.

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(v) Webstreaming performances

As a mixed ability organization, Sins Invalid recognizes that a live performance is not always possible. To reach as many of our community members as possible, we regularly schedule weeklong on demand webstreaming events of our prior performances.

Sins Invalid's Movement Building Program includes:

(i) Intern Program

Since 2010 Sins Invalid has offered substantive opportunities for interns to flourish including internal political development discussions as well as opportunities for professional development – prioritizing the leadership development of young disabled people of color and queer/gender variant people with disabilities in the intern selection process.

(ii) Capacity building in support of Disability Justice

A great deal of Sins Invalid's work involves supporting allies, community partners and educational organizations in developing and deepening an analysis of disability oppression, its relationship to other forms of oppression and marginalization, as well as ways of practicing greater accessibility. Sins Invalid does this through workshops, on-going project collaboration, and curriculum support.

(iii) Cross-Community Dialogues

Held amongst cultural activists and movement builders from different sectors, "Making Connections" explores the intersections of disability, justice, performance and the body.

(iv) Communications

We send newsletters to 2,200+ subscribers; publish posts to 4,300+ Facebook followers and 975+ Twitter followers; in 2016 there were 46,000+ pageviews by 11,000+ viewers to www.sinsinvalid.org (which had a total of 352,000+ page views by 77,000+ viewers since we began tracking in Oct 2008); in 2016 there were 16,000+ views of Sins Invalid's YouTube channel entitled *cripjustice* (out of a total 155,000+ since it launched in Aug 2007). A Disability Justice primer entitled "Skin, Tooth and Bone" was released in Oct 2016 and was downloaded over 700 times in the first month. It is currently available in both hardcopy and electronic form at <https://www.flipcause.com/secure/reward/OTMxNQ==>