

Fresh Meat Festival Moves to Bigger Venue

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After 6 years and 20 sold-out performances at ODC Theater, the Fresh Meat Festival is making the move to big, beautiful Project Artaud Theater. The bigger-than-ever 2008 Fresh Meat Festival - the 7th annual transgender & queer performance series - bursts onto the stage June 19-22 at Project Artaud Theater. It features gender-bending opera, hip hop, hula, modern dance, clogging, gospel music, theater, Colombian dance, live music, and more. The Fresh Meat Festival is the only event of its kind in North America. Fresh Meat Productions has gained an international reputation for its powerful, groundbreaking performances and for its unprecedented gatherings of first-class transgender and queer artists.

Artistic Director Sean Dorsey is a critically acclaimed Bay Area choreographer and the founder of Fresh Meat Productions. Recognized as the nation's first out transgender modern dance choreographer, Dorsey has blazed a new trail for transgender and queer bodies and stories onstage. He has received commissions from the San Francisco Arts Commission, the National Queer Arts Festival, Highways Performance Space (supported by the Irvine Foundation), and is currently creating a new concert of work with a prestigious commission from the Gerbode Foundation. Dorsey's work has been presented extensively in the Bay Area and on tour throughout the US and Canada.

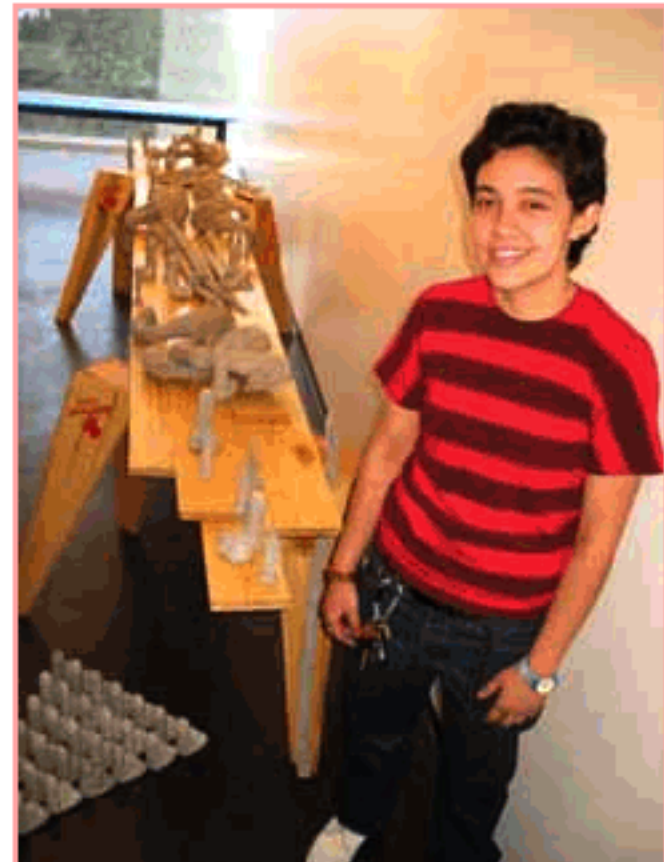
"This is SUCH a very very important and exciting year for us," curator Dorsey tells Bay Times. "There is the big move to the huge new venue (since we pre sell out every show) and our first commissions, which are historic, commissioning queer master artists of traditional dance ensembles." He elaborates, "Our audiences have grown so large that they really demanded a larger venue. People will love Project Artaud Theater - it's such a gorgeous space!"

Dorsey boasts, "We're celebrating our expansion with an out-of-this world, powerhouse lineup of artists who will astonish audiences with their innovation, skill, heart, and strength." To celebrate their expansion, they have commissioned five world premieres from cutting-edge transgender and queer ensembles who challenge the boundaries of traditional art forms: the Transcendence Gospel Choir (world's first all-trans chorus belting out fierce gospel music); Na Lei Hulu I Ka Wekiu (dynamic Hawaiian dance company with trademark hula mua style, paying homage to tradition while bringing hula into a modern realm); the Barbary Coast Cloggers (all-male Appalachian clogging); Colombian Soul (Colombian folkloric dance); and Mestizo writer/singer Prado Gomez and Nejla Baguio (stunning classical guitar and singing). These commissions are supported in part by the Alliance for California Traditional Arts.

The special lineup continues with five outstanding, nationally celebrated artists: Scott Turner Schofield (trans theater from the deep South); Sean Dorsey (award-winning modern dance with my favorite piece, where a trans-man discovers a young boy's diary and humorously and poignantly tries to re-imagine his own boyhood through it); the incomparable Shawna Virago (nothing less than trans rock legend); Jose Luis Munoz (gender-bending opera countertenor with amazing, powerful expression); and Freeplay Dance Crew (sexy hot hip hop).

The Fresh Meat Festival also includes a month-long art show: Fresh Meat in the Gallery, celebrating its 5th anniversary exhibition, "Riots and Revelations" (through July 12 at the SF LGBT Community Center). The art show and the Fresh Meat Festival are featured events of the National Queer Arts Festival).

Opening night reception is June 19. Tickets are \$15 at the box office: (415) 863-9834 or at ticketweb.com or brownpapertickets.com. Buy ahead or lose out. They can only cram in so many people at the Artaud!



Fresh Meat in the Gallery, the annual TG visual art exhibit at The GLBT Center. Jillian Soto showed provocative and imaginative sculptures. Lots of fans attended the June 7 opening.