

"I hate Political Correctness," states Penny Arcade during a brief telephone interview that left me wanting to experience her performance as well as entertain her socially during her week long stay on South Beach. In short, it doesn't take long to develop an addiction to the vibrant, open, intelligent woman that calls herself Penny Arcade.

Penny Arcade has been a member of the East Village's downtown art community since 1967 when she was a member of The Playhouse of The Ridiculous and Andy Warhol's Factory. Her significant body of work is a cultural link between the 60's and the 90's, and has attracted a loyal underground following. Currently in it's 10th month, Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore! is awarding Penny the national recognition she deserves.

BIDIFIWI is a staggeringly emotional show which originated as Penny's audit piece for her National Endowment of the Arts fellowship during the 1990 Helms/NEA crisis. Penny Arcade first presented her censorship show as a work in progress in 1990. At that time the show's central themes were censorship and sexual freedom of expression. These themes have evolved to include the most recent developments surrounding issues of freedom, intolerance, AIDS, puritanism, feminism, family and love.

Anti-political correctness is only one of Penny's unique traits. When other performance artists in New York City were setting themselves apart from their audiences, Penny was delving into hers. For the first ten weeks of BIDIFIWI, in New York City's P.S. 122, Penny gave the audience her home telephone number. Truly a brave act for any New Yorker. "I make myself accessible to the audience," says Penny. She boasts never having received a crank call or a hangup during that time. Instead, people heralded Penny for helping them get in touch with their own rigidity.

It was during that time that Penny Arcade received a telephone call from a young man wanting her to perform in his hometown, Tampa. Unfamiliar with the Florida area, Penny consented to fly down to Tampa if this young man would set her up with a gig. Nine months later he called Penny to confirm the gig and discuss the details. In the Summer of '92 Penny flew to Tampa for a 5-week gig that sold out after the first week. Not since then has Penny Arcade returned to the Florida area for another bare-all performance.

What exactly will Penny Arcade have in store for us with Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!? Besides some of Miami's juiciest go-go dancers, we can expect Penny

Penny Arcade

Arcade to shock and surprise us not with her performance but by introducing us to ourselves and our emotions. "It's a very confronting show," says Penny. Historically, Penny's performances have brought together diverse members of the community. Drag queens, "sweater fags," angry dykes, housewives and investment bankers sit side by side and sneer at each other while Penny goes to work on their emotional psyche. Rarely does a dry-eye make it till the end. Penny reassures me that, "while we are very different we are overwhelmingly similar." During the dance break segment of the show, the angry dyke and investment banker dance side by side sharing a brief moment that will either be cherished or feared but rarely forgotten.

Before you go on with your daily life keep in mind this brief sentence from Penny Arcade's monologue: "You should love someone, and let someone love you. It's the most political act you can make - it's the only one that really changes the world."

Penny Arcade will be performing at the Colony Theater on South Beach Friday, May 28th and Saturday, May 29th as part of the NAYA Canadian Spring Water Performing Arts Series. Tickets are available at the box office on the night of the performance or call 532-3491 for reservations. --Iris Linares