

I do original theater because it's the chance for a shy woman like me to get heard at the dinner table damn it! And I've got a lot on my mind!

My performance days started innocently enough as a kid trying to get attention in a big Mexican family. Talk about *challenges*. But their love, support and slight dysfunction are some of the richest ingredients I utilize to share my real life stories today.

I studied theater classically in New York at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and until age 29 performed other people's plays. I enjoyed those experiences but the freedom I get from exploring my own stories has enabled me to embrace new skills and grow as an artist.

I usually begin every piece asking myself, "*What do I want to say? What really pisses me off? or What if...*" I then create the characters, put them in crazy situation and record myself improvising each scene. After several improvisations, I transcribe the recordings; go into massive editing and voila, I have a script! My performances delve into issues such as gender/race discrimination, atheism and sex.

For the past few years I have been cultivating my solo show, *The AIDS Lady*, based on my work as an HIV tester. But recently I've been challenging myself with a topic completely foreign to me. *My Arab Fall* is a multi-media theatrical performance drawn from my experiences traveling in Egypt months after their Arab Spring. Seen through the eyes of two women - a naïve yet eager Chicana tourist and a young Egyptian activist fighting to change the world she lives in – this piece is a sometimes comical, sometimes harrowing exploration of gender, religion, sexual assault and everyday life in the Middle East amid the dramatic political changes taking place.