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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HerPic Performances “Moving Bodies, Moving Audiences” *presents*

Walls & Doors

Featuring choreography by Irva Hertz-Picciotto

October 20-28 at ODC Theater (San Francisco)*

**Complete calendar listing on last page*

(San Francisco, CA – October 5, 2006) **HerPic Performances** presents "**Walls & Doors**," a program that follows two seemingly divergent threads. Underlying each individual piece, is the notion that our limits are defined as much by the cultural and psychological as by the physical.

"**Dorothea's Doors**" (20 minutes/premiere) is based on the paintings and sculptures of Dorothea Tanning, the only living surrealist artist. "Dorothea's Doors" focuses on Tanning's sober rendition of pre-pubescent girls and their associated 'ghosts.' Tanning's paintings taunt us with an enigma: what is this weightiness that characterizes so much of child's play? Why are they so intense yet so uninhibited. Moreover, why are Tanning's girls so often in hallways or surrounded by tall Victorian doors?

The second and third works are interwoven. "**Side Unseen**" is a reprisal of HerPic Performance's original work from 2003, concerning (in)visibility. In "**Side Unseen**" the audience both sees, and does not see, this dance! "**H-2-Owe**," a commentary about the inequities in access to water in the Middle East, first premiered at the Yerba Buena Gardens Choreofest 2005 as a site-specific piece.

more

"Side Unseen / H-2 Owe" includes live music performed by **Debbie Fier**. The piece will run 40 minutes.

"Walls & Doors" will feature the dance talents of **Kristin Cheng, Gretchen Garnett, Kate Law, Chantal Sampogna, Brittani Karhoff, Felice Ana de Ni Aodagain, and Jaime Rangeley**. Light design is by **Allen Willner** and Set Design is by **Kim Ehler**.

HerPic Performances has been described by the Raleigh News & Observer (2001) as "...bewildering authority, anger, beauty, and power. Humor remains an ally."

ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER: **Irva Hertz-Picciotto**, choreographer for HerPic Performances, has produced several evening-length dance-theatre performances that explore real-world themes of private and public life: mother-daughter tensions; mental health and social taboos; and the experiences of cancer survivors. Her works have been commissioned/presented/produced by the Durham Arts Council, the University of North Carolina, Bay Area Choreographers' Performance Alliance, North Carolina Dance Alliance, San Francisco Bay Area Dance Coalition, Amaranth Dance, Manbites Dog Theatre, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, among others. She trained with Eugene Loring, Aaron Osborne, Clay Taliaferro and David Dorfman. Her pieces have been performed on the east and west coasts and outside the U.S. In 2003, she established HerPic Performances, "Moving Bodies, Moving Audiences" to challenge dance-goers to grapple with and reflect on our individual and communal ghosts.

HerPic Performances has been funded by The Puffin Foundation, Ltd., The Berkeley Civic Arts Commission, with support from The Vanguard Foundation, and is fiscally sponsored by Dancers' Group.

CALENDAR LISTING (high-res photos are available upon request from NEQA/PR)

WHAT: "Walls & Doors"

WHO: HerPic Performances "Moving Bodies, Moving Audiences"
Choreography by Irva Hertz-Picciotto

WHEN: (two weekends): Fridays and Saturdays, October 20-21* and 27-28 at 8 PM
Matinee: Sunday, October 22 at 2 PM

WHERE: ODC Theater (3153-17th Street @ Shotwell, San Francisco)

TICKETS: \$18 general and \$12 seniors/students/children 12 and younger
Group rates for 10 or more: \$10 per person

BOX OFFICE: (415) 863-9834 www.odctheater.org

***Special Event:** The October 21st performance will be followed by a discussion with Whitney Chadwick, world-renowned art historian and author of "Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement," and "Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation."

HerPic Performances
Irva Hertz-Picciotto, Artistic Director

Key Collaborators

Irva Hertz-Picciotto, choreographer and Artistic Director for HerPic Performances has produced several evening-length dance-theatre performances that explore real-world themes of private and public life: mother-daughter tensions; mental health and social taboos; and the experiences of cancer survivors. Her works have been commissioned/presented/produced by the Durham Arts Council, the University of North Carolina Department of Dance, Bay Area Choreographers' Performance Alliance, North Carolina Dance Alliance, San Francisco Bay Area Dance Coalition, Amaranth Dance, Manbites Dog Theatre, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, among others and have been performed on the east and west coasts and outside the U.S. Her training includes Cecchetti Ballet and modern dance luminaries Eugene Loring, David Wood, Aaron Osborne, Clay Taliaferro and David Dorfman. In 2003, she established HerPic Performances, "Moving Bodies. Moving Audiences" to continue to challenge dancers to grapple with and reflect on our individual and communal ghosts.

HerPic Performances has been funded by The Puffin Foundation, Ltd., The Berkeley Civic Arts Commission, with support from The Vanguard Foundation. HerPic Performances is fiscally sponsored by Dancers' Group. Website: www.HerPic.org.

Debbie Fier, musician, brings over 25 years of experience as a performing vocalist, drummer, pianist, composer, percussionist and teacher. She has performed internationally and throughout the U.S. She has studied numerous drum and dance styles for over 25 years — Middle Eastern, Indian, Afro-Cuban and N. African to name a few, and has taught drumming to individuals and groups, as well as led diverse community drumming circles and vocal and body percussion workshops. In the past 5 years, she has found a home at Kehilla Community Synagogue as a spiritual leader through drumming. Her original compositions are available on three recordings — *In Your Hands*, *Firelight*, and her most recent, *Coming Home*. Website: www.DebbieFier.com

Kim Ehler set design, received her MFA in scene design with Andrei Both at UC San Diego and recently returned to the SF Bay Area. Her designs in San Diego included *A Cabal of Hypocrites*, directed by Barbra Berlovitz of Jeune Lune; *A Dream Play*, adapted and directed by West Hylar; *The Hopper Collection* by Matt Smart and *The Weight of Paper* by Rachel Axler, both world premieres at the Baldwin New Play Festival '04; and *Fucking A* by Susan-Lori Parks. Amongst others, past design adventures in the Bay Area included *Joe Louis Blues*, directed by Tony Kelly at Thick Description in 2000; *In 3's*, *Act without Words 1*, *Breath*, and *Ionesco 1-4*, all directed by Meredith Eldred at the Exit Theatre; and *TV*, an installation-performance at CCAC.

In 2005 Kim briefly returned to her native country, Germany, for scene design residencies at the Maxim-Gorky Theater in Berlin, and at Städtische Bühnen in Münster, where she assisted on the opera *Eroberung von Mexiko* by Wolfgang Rihm. In June 2007, Kim's design for *The Tempest* will be part of the Prague Quadrennial Exhibition in the Czech Republic. Website www.kimdesign.info.

Allen Willner, lighting design, is a director, designer, writer and musician. He has recently returned to the Bay Area after collaborations in New York City with Kenn Watt's 5th Floor on "K.", Richard Schechner's East Coast Artists on "Yokastas" and Tanya Calamoneri & Cassie Terman on "Art of Memory." He continues to work with Shinichi Momo Koga's inkBoat and has created and collaborated on inkBoat performances of "Heaven's Radio," "Onion," "Tasting an Ocean," "Cockroach" and "Glass Head".

In 2003 Allen directed and designed inkBoat's "Heaven's Radio..an absurdist butoh play" which received 4 Isadora Duncan dance award nominations including the 2004 Isadora Duncan Award for the Lighting and Stage Design. He also directed and designed The 2002 Faun Fables production of "The Transit Rider, an underground musical set on a subway train" and Cassie Terman's 2004 physical theater fable "Citizen of Trees". Allen was also nominated for an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for the "Visual Design" of inkBoat's Butoh Performance "Cockroach" and received a Dean Goodman lighting design award in 2000 for his design of Ingabor Weinmann's "Don't Look, Don't Ask." He has received Meet The Composer Grants for his music compositions for Richard Schechner's "Yokastas" in 2005 and "Heaven's Radio" in 2003. Allen has designed lights and sound for many artists from the SF Bay Area and New York City including Richard Schechner, Karen Finley, The Joe Goode Performance Group, The Billy Nayer Show, The Dresden Dolls, Renne Harris, Kim Epifano, Angus Balbernie, Lunatique Fantastique, Kraft & Purver, Megan Nicely, Scott Wells & Dancers, Dance Brigade, World Arts West, RAPT and The Rova Saxophone Quartet.

Costume designer **Raquel Barreto** has been designing for theater and dance since 1998. Recent collaborations with Bay Area companies include designs for The Magic Theater (*Nero*), The San Francisco Lyric Opera (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), The Cutting Ball Theater (*Macbeth*, *AvantGardarama*, *The Vomit Talk of Ghosts*, *Roberto Zucco*, *As You Like It*), Campo Santo (*Hamlet – Blood in the Brain*, *References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot*), and the UC Berkeley Center for Theater Arts (*George Walker festival*, *Seven Lears*, *The Three Sisters*, *Shrew You!*, *Great Men of Science*, *Pterodactyls*, *Talbot's Box*). In San Diego her dance designs have been on the stage at La Jolla Playhouse for Yolande Snaith and at the San Diego Museum of Art for Allyson Green. A native of Brazil, she received an MFA from UC San Diego and currently teaches Costume Design at UC Berkeley.

Dancers Gretchen Garnett, Kristin Cheng, Kate Law, Chantal Sampogna, Brittani Karhoff, Felice Ana de Ni Aodagain, and Jaime Rangeley have performed throughout the Bay Area and beyond, including in the recent Summerfest 2006.

HerPic Performances
Irva Hertz-Picciotto, Artistic Director

What the Critics Say...

“Breast-taking.”

- “...bewildering authority, anger, beauty and power.”
“Humor ...remains an ally” “unique production”

Byron Woods, Raleigh News & Observer, November 8, 2001

“Mind Undermined.”

- “Powerful” and “broad-ranging”

Byron Woods, Raleigh News & Observer, May 18, 2000.

“Motherhood and Other Moods.”

- “A New Talent” “highly evocative,” ... “a rich and luxurious memory, with great depth” “riveting...[when] the two danced together”

Alan R. Hall, Chapel Hill Herald, Wednesday, March 15, 1995.

HerPic Performances
Irva Hertz-Picciotto, Artistic Director

Artist's Vision:

September 2006

Creating dance is my way of making sense of the world and the people who inhabit it. As a consequence, I choose my subject matter based on what intrigues, puzzles, or confuses me. Conceptually, I usually begin with distinctively dramatic content: mother-daughter tensions, mental health and social taboos, ordinary obsessiveness, experiences of cancer survivors, and physical and psychological walls, as in the Middle East. In lofty terms, my vision is to create transformative performances that explore real-world themes arising from our private and public lives. But I'm selfishly trying to find that elusive 'truth' with a capital T, and hoping that along the way I succeed in challenging both the performers and the audience to grapple in fresh ways with our individual and communal ghosts.



I prepare for the creative process through research into both primary and secondary sources; the final productions integrate diverse visual and aural materials. In an evening-length work about women's mental health (*A Temporary Nervous Depression*), I incorporated images and text from "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Gilman (published 1890); a medical abstract from the 1950's about differences in treatment of men vs. women with mental health disorders; photos and text from "Let's Take Back Our Space" by Marianne Wex (1970's); and drawings from a 1920's surrealist magazine depicting stages of a so-called 'hysteria attack.' The score included voices from a focus group of four women of diverse ages and ethnicity talking about their own and family members' experiences with mental health/illness. In one section, I asked dancers to mimic the bizarre postures shown in the drawings, but also to improvise and to vocalize text from the focus group discussion.

My choreography melds dance, theatre, and performance art, with additional collaborations involving sculptors, mask-makers, video artists, musicians and composers. Some works use voice motivated by physicality, based on a technique developed by theatre directors in London and France. I personally spend considerable time at art exhibitions; by observing how visual artists work with images in their media (oils, acrylic, textiles, bronze, whatever), I find choreographic inspiration for movement ideas, for staging, and for unexpected connections.

Irva Hertz-Picciotto