

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***CORPUS DELICTI: JUST DESSERTS***  
**Produced by Local Infinities Visual Theater**  
**Presented by Washington University in Saint Louis**  
**October 24-25, 2006**

Following a sold out, critically acclaimed run at the University of Illinois Chicago, **Local Infinities Visual Theater** brings ***Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts*** to **Washington University**, on Tuesday October 24 and Wednesday October 25 at 7:00 pm. *Corpus Delicti* refers to the body of a crime, not just to the corpse itself but to the related body of evidence. In this original production of visual theater, Local Infinities invites the audience to witness the dissection of a life-sized cadaver, cast in gelatin.

According to the Chicago Tribune, *Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts* is "a jaw-dropping look at the multifarious cultural implications of the historical act of dissecting a corpse...one of the most intellectually absorbing theater pieces of the year." *Corpus Delicti* begins as an investigation of the art and science of anatomy, as practiced in Holland during the Age of Enlightenment and immortalized in Rembrandt's 1632 painting "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp". Dr. Nicolaes Tulp (Larry Underwood) guides audiences through the taboo territory of the body's interior, inviting them to witness the dissection of a life-sized cadaver cast in gelatin. Sister Luyt (Meghan Strell) interrupts Tulp's lesson and challenges the ethics of this emerging field of research, revealing her identity as the first woman to be condemned to death and public dissection in Amsterdam. In the ensuing debate, both the living and the dead reexamine their relationship to the human corpse. The anatomy lesson is accompanied by Kennedy Greenrod, whose darkly humorous accordion tunes entertain while reminding us of our own mortality. Sage Reed, production designer, sets the stage with period costumes, elegant set pieces and larger than life projections.

Underwood, Strell and Reed formerly collaborated on Local Infinities' critically acclaimed production of *Wax & Wayne* (2002), a retelling of the Pygmalion myth, in which Strell emerged from a waxen shell, and Underwood was spectacularly submerged in a vat of molten wax. Reed designed costumes and sets for *Wax & Wayne* and received accolades in the Chicago Reader for *Corpus Delicti*'s clever designs and large scale projections. Greenrod joins the collaboration with for this production with original music and soundscapes.

Performances of *Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts* run Tuesday October 24 and Wednesday October 25 at 7:00 pm at Washington University in the Clopton Auditorium, Wohl Clinic. This show is not suitable for some children. A postmortem, panel discussion with researchers, ethicists, artists and members of the cast will be held in conjunction with the performance. For more information, visit [www.localinfinities.com](http://www.localinfinities.com)

Local Infinities Visual Theater, a not for profit organization, is supported in part by a CAAP grant and CityArts Program I Grant from the city of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.



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## **ABOUT THE CORPSE**

The corpse is made out of ballistic gelatin and organic matter. Because it has longer protein strands, ballistic gelatin is sturdier than the gelatin you buy to eat. It is used by the FBI to simulate human flesh in ballistics testing and forensic pathology. The gelatin is cast from a life-size mold taken from Larry's body. Internal organs in the corpse are made primarily from vegetables: a pomegranate heart, a cauliflower brain, and bones made of gnarly parsnips. We recast the body for each performance.

## **ABOUT THE TEXT**

*Corpus Delicti* is inspired by a number of texts on the topics of art, anatomy and the Enlightenment. A substantial portion of the script is adapted from the writings of Dr. Richard Selzer. The good doctor has kindly given us permission to adapt his text for this production.

Surgeon and writer Richard Selzer (b. 1928, Troy, New York) was educated at Union college, Albany Medical College, and Yale University. He practiced surgery in New Haven, Connecticut, for thirty-one years until retiring in 1985 to write full time. His eleven books, including *Mortal Lessons* and *Raising the Dead*, contain essays, short stories, plays, and memoirs written in a deft and metaphorical style, making them suitable for use in medical school training as well as in the English classroom. Dr. Selzer, a popular lecturer and teacher of writing, is currently working on three-volumes of his diaries, *A Mile and a Half of Ink*. His greatly anticipated *Letters* and a biography will be out soon.

## **LOCAL INFINITIES COMPANY HISTORY**

Currently, Local Infinities is touring *Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts*, a show about the art and science of anatomy, to anatomical and operating theaters around the country. We have been invited to perform *Corpus Delicti* at the Waag in Amsterdam and take Dr. Tulp back to the original anatomical theater where Rembrandt immortalized him in the famous painting "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp".

Recent productions include: *Infinitesimals: A Brief Look at the Immeasurable*, a month-long festival of visual theater at Links Hall (2005); *Mother Earth* (2004), *Lot's Wife* at the PAC/Edge Festival (2004), and *Wax & Wayne*, which enjoyed sold out runs at the Chicago's National Pastimes Theater (2002-03), the PAC/Edge Festival (2003), the New York International Fringe Festival (2003), and Netherland's Oerol Festival (2002).

Local Infinities has toured nationally and internationally, representing the United States at Kiev Travnevy Theater Festival of Ukraine (2001), premiering new work at the Netherlands' Oerol Festival (2002), and gaining recognition at the New York International Fringe Festival (2003) with an Excellence Award for "Unique Theatrical Experience."

In the company's 10 years, Local Infinities has collaborated with over 50 artists and always seeks to connect collaborators of diverse media and skill sets. Dedicated to cultural exchange, Local Infinities has been host to many visiting international artists. We are consciously engaged in fostering friendships and conversations that cross cultural boundaries. Part of our mission as a company is to carry the flag of Chicago's extraordinary performance community wherever we go, connecting artists and people and ideas.

Local Infinities believes in a process of investigation and invention that is highly collaborative, involving performer, designer and director alike in the creation of the whole performance. As a producing organization we understand that a long and dedicated process of discovery yields work of true depth. To that end, we initiate our projects as short theatrical investigations, which ultimately evolve into polished, transportable and remountable productions.

Local Infinities was co-founded in 1996 by Meghan Strell and Charlie Levin, out of a desire to create a dialogue between the visual and theatrical arts. Local Infinities incorporated as a non-profit in 2001.

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## COLLABORATOR BIOS

**LARRY UNDERWOOD** (Dr. Nicolaes Tulp) is the Formgiver for *Corpus Delicti*, he conceived the idea while working in Holland, initiated the project and continues to guide its development. Larry brings to Local Infinities a wealth of experience in the creation of spectacle and site-specific performance. Larry has helped realize performances in shipyards, airplane hangers, beaches, and forests, using theater to take his audiences to many strange places, and on exotic journeys. Between 1994 and 2000, Larry worked in Holland with Dogtroep and Theatergroep Hollandia. Sâlt (1997) was Larry's first initiative for Oerol, an international festival of site-specific and spectacle-based performance in the Netherlands. With Smeedwerk in Arnhem, he helped create a historical play in the middle of King Willem's 17th century hunting forest, complete with a meal under a leafy canopy. In Chicago, Larry portrayed Wayne in Local Infinities' acclaimed production *Wax & Wayne* (2002-03). He was recently seen in Walkabout Theater's *Psycho-so-Matic*, a site-specific performance set in a laundromat, and has previously worked with Redmoon Theater, Plasticene, and Manifest Theater. Larry believes that audiences should take risks and that theater companies should be bold in their choice of playing spaces as well as in the material that they tackle.

**MEGHAN STRELL** (Sister Luyt) is the Artistic Director and co-founder of Local Infinities where she has created and produced original theater for the past ten years. In January 2005 she curated a festival of visual performance at Links Hall, where she served as a 2004-05 Artistic Associate. Meghan created the character Wax for Local Infinities' acclaimed production of *Wax & Wayne* that traveled to the Netherlands and New York. She teaches performance and writing workshops based on techniques developed within the company. Meghan has a BFA in Performance from the Theater School at DePaul University and has created original theater with a number of Chicago companies namely, Redmoon Theater, Curious Theater Branch, the Organic Theater, Lucky Pierre and Walkabout Theater. She has also collaborated with the Odd Company in Maine and the Fulton Opera House in Pennsylvania. Meghan is a Cheerleader with the circus-punk marching band, Mucca Pazza, visit [www.mucca-pazza.org](http://www.mucca-pazza.org).

**SAGE REED** (Set, Costume & Projection Designer) creates, finds, designs objects and costumes for theater, film, photography and art. Sage first collaborated with Local Infinities on *Wax & Wayne*, for which she designed sets and costumes. Her work has been seen on Broadway, and locally at the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Currently she is the Prop Master at Court Theatre and a Production Affiliate of Lookingglass Theatre. She was also a founding member and co-producer of DeCorps, a performance based costume collective. Sage's film credits include Art Director for the independent feature *Manfast* and Assistant Costume Designer for the Project Greenlight Film *Stolen Summer*. She was also the Assistant Costume Designer for a touring film installation by Catherine Sullivan, which is now in the permanent collection of the Whitney Museum of Art in New York. Though, throughout her career Sage's proudest work has come in the form of little gifts, themed dinners, and home made weddings.

**KENNEDY GREENROD** (Musician, Composer) Born and raised in England, Kennedy moved to the U.S. when he was 17. He settled in Chicago in 1998, and formed The Thin Man, in which he sings and plays guitar and accordion. Their third album, "Greasy Heart" was voted one of the top 30 local releases of 2005, and the song "An Undertaker Muses..." appeared in Spin magazine's year end issue as one of the top 20 songs to download. For more information about the band, visit [www.thinmansongs.com](http://www.thinmansongs.com) and/or [myspace.com/thinmansongs](http://myspace.com/thinmansongs).

**DR. NORMAN LIESKA, Ph.D.** (Expert Advisor, Anatomist) is an Associate Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology at the University of Illinois-Chicago College of Medicine, where he teaches Gross Anatomy to first year medical students. Dr. Lieska has been a supporter of *Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts* since he saw an early excerpt from the performance at Links Hall in January 2005. He has welcomed Local Infinities into his Gross Anatomy Lab, answered all of our questions about corpses, and has sparked many discussions about the history and ethics of the study of anatomy and about what Rembrandt *really* saw when observing and painting Dr. Tulp's anatomy lesson.

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