

# Hit solo show *Deconstructing Holly* comes to Hollywood Fringe!

*Writer and Performer Holly Sidell uses candor and humor to explore how breast cancer and losing her reproductive organs due to the BRCA cancer gene helped her discover what it truly means to be a woman.*

**LOS ANGELES** – What happens when everything you're told makes you a woman is taken away?

At just 38, that was the question writer and performer Holly Sidell was faced with when she had to endure a double mastectomy and chemotherapy to fight Stage 2 Triple Negative Breast Cancer, as well as the removal of her reproductive organs to help prevent her high risk of ovarian cancer due to the BRCA gene mutation. During this time, she wrote about her journey in an honest, humorous, and raw blog, and soon felt a deeper calling to turn those writings into a solo show in the hope that sharing her struggles and healing would bring solace, hope and some laughter to anyone who may be suffering.

*Deconstructing Holly* will now make its Hollywood Fringe debut this **August** at the **Broadwater Stage Black Box Theatre**.

In the critically acclaimed solo show *Deconstructing Holly*, Sidell asks what happens when everything you're told makes you a woman is taken away? While undergoing cancer surgery to remove her lady parts, Holly floats in the space between life and death. Unsure if she wants to return to a life in which she feels she has failed as a woman, Holly is led on an eye-opening journey of relationships past, present and future—by a cheeky British angel, no less. With humor and raw honesty, Holly embodies a cast of characters who have come and gone in her life, leaving their footprints on her soul. Along the way, she is forced to tear apart, piece by piece, her beliefs, her sense of physical self, and the crushing gender expectations and pressures society can inflict. Because, sometimes, we have to be completely deconstructed in order to find who we actually are...and the love we so desperately seek.

“Facing the loss of all the biological organs that deem one a woman, I was forced to take a look at, and deconstruct, many of my programmed beliefs, and I realized I had been putting too much of my value and worth in what society and culture expects of, and says, makes an attractive and successful woman, rather than actually being my own woman,” said Sidell, an L.A. native, actor, writer and health advocate. “Femininity and womanhood, I soon learned, are not based on those things, but rather on who we authentically are, inside; and I felt like that is an issue that desperately needs to be addressed.”

Directed by prolific and award-winning regional theatre director Jonathan Fahn, *Deconstructing Holly* made its official debut as part of SoloFest 2020 and sold out two months before the show. All subsequent performances were shut down due to COVID, except for a special online presentation and Q&A to raise money for cancer research and patient support programs.

Some of the praise for Sidell's show centers on her presentation as an actual play, rather than the monologue style of many other solo shows. Critics and patrons alike also applauded Sidell's performance, her entertaining mix of comedy and drama, as well as the journey of discovery in real time that Sidell takes the audience on. The show, which was also partially inspired by her Huffington Post pieces on dating and relationships, is about much more than just identity and survival; it also explores a myriad of topics, including love, self-worth, societal expectations, pressure, and the fight between disappointment and triumph.

Sidell is thrilled to bring this work to the Hollywood Fringe, and hopes this is another big step in raising awareness about female identity, breast cancer, and the BRCA gene. Beyond more shows, she hopes to use *Deconstructing Holly* as a vehicle to partner with non-profits and organizations to continue to raise funds and awareness for breast and cancer survivors.

"I'm inspired by how people's hearts and bodies can be broken, but how they heal that brokenness and re-build to become something new, even better than before, possibly beyond what they ever originally imagined," she said. "I am a breast cancer survivor and ovarian cancer pre-vivor, and even though sharing that journey is part of what I write and talk about, it's only part of my story. Who we are can't be properly defined by one word or label, no matter how hard life tries to make it that way and I hope audiences come away with that knowing in their gut. I hope audiences leave a little more connected to their true and authentic self than when they walked in, and with a little more self-love and self-acceptance. I hope audiences leave not only entertained, but also knowing they are not alone in whatever suffering or struggles they are facing, and I hope they walk away with hope."

## ***Deconstructing Holly***

Written and Performed by Holly Sidell  
Directed by Jonathan Fahn

### **SYNOPSIS:**

In the critically acclaimed solo show *Deconstructing Holly*, writer and performer Holly Sidell asks what happens when everything you're told makes you a woman is taken away? While undergoing cancer surgery to remove her lady parts, Holly floats in the

space between life and death. Unsure if she wants to return to a life in which she feels she has failed as a woman, Holly is led on an eye-opening journey of relationships past, present and future—by a cheeky British angel, no less. With humor and raw honesty, Holly embodies a cast of characters who have come and gone in her life, leaving their footprints on her soul. Along the way, she is forced to tear apart, piece by piece, her beliefs, her sense of physical self, and the crushing gender expectations and pressures society can inflict. Because, sometimes, we have to be completely deconstructed in order to find who we actually are...and the love we so desperately seek.

**DATES AND TIMES:**

Sunday, August 8 – 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, August 14 – 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 21 – 5:30 p.m.

Friday, August 27 – 8 p.m.

*\*Performances will be a hybrid, patrons can either stream online or come to the theatre and watch it live. In person performances will follow the latest Hollywood Fringe, L.A. County and CDC guidelines. Check [www.hollywoodfringe.org](http://www.hollywoodfringe.org) for updates.*

**LOCATION:**

Broadwater Stage Black Box Theatre  
6322 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90038

**PRICES:**

\$15 for in-person or livestream

*\*\$5 tickets for all Fringe Participants*

*\*\*10 tickets for all cancer survivors and warriors*

**FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://hff21.co/6687>

<http://www.deconstructingholly.com>

**PRESS CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Jim Martyka

(818) 497-3701

JimMartyka@gmail.com