

# Performance Artist Penny Arcade Is In Miami With A Show That Yearns For A Lost New York

By [CHRISTINE DIMATTEI](#) · 19 HOURS AGO



*Performance artist Penny Arcade comes to MDC Live Arts with her one-woman show "Longing Lasts Longer"*

PENNY ARCADE / COURTESY

If you're a transplanted New Yorker and you haven't been back to the Big Apple in a while, performance artist Penny Arcade is here to tell you that the city has changed.

A LOT.

During her one-woman show, "Longing Lasts Longer," Arcade tells the audience:

"People used to come to New York from all over the world. And we were inspired and intoxicated by the palpable feeling of freedom in the streets. We wanted to reinvent ourselves in the face of that amazing, magnetic energy. Now people come to New York -- and they want to clean it up! They want New York to be like where THEY'RE from -- the suburbs!"

Arcade's show, which comes to downtown Miami for a three-day run at the MDC Live Arts Lab, is equal parts stand-up comedy, cultural critique and classic-rock revival meeting. Just don't call it "nostalgia."

"Nostalgia is a wistful, sentimental yearning – not only for the past – but for who you were in that past," says Arcade. "Longing is a constant sense of loss that attaches to ourselves, our values and our history."

For Arcade, what's been lost is that hardscrabble existence that eventually turns out artists the way a churning ocean transforms a broken bottle into sea glass. Her show decries the gentrification she feels has pushed the edgier quality (and people) out of a city that's traditionally been a Shangri-La for social misfits and artists of every stripe; all the while singing a paean to a New York that's quickly vanishing.

One example are those so-called "artisanal shops" springing up everywhere. Another line from the show:

“There are 100 cupcake shops in a 10-block radius of my apartment. People are staggering from one cupcake shop to another. A trail of cupcakes crumbs across the city! The cupcake is the narcotic of these new infantilized masses!”

Millennials are not spared (Arcade says they scoff at history but adore anything 'vintage'); neither are the new breed of New Yorkers (she says they walk 'Sex And the City'-style -- several people abreast on the pavement, even if they're in a group of 15).

Arcade posits that it's not only whole neighborhoods but ideas, art, activism and even rebellion that are becoming increasingly gentrified – or commodified, to use her term.

“We're being controlled. It's not just out there in the world – it's inside our own heads. We've been colonized,” she says.

So how do we get cities to hold fast to their cultural identities?

“You do not have an 'arts scene' because you have a bunch of artists,” says Arcade. “You have an arts scene because you have one-third artists to two-thirds people who will never write a play, never paint a painting, never make a movie. But they are people for whom art is vitally important. They are the midwives of art.”

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IF YOU GO:

Penny Arcade in “Longing Lasts Longer”

8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday

November 8 – 10

*Miami Dade Live Arts Lab*  
*at the Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus*  
*300 NE Second Ave., Bldg. 1, Miami;*  
*305-237-3010*  
[mdclivearts.org](http://mdclivearts.org)  
Ticket via [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com).