

Undergraduate Journal of
Performance Creation



Gender & Sexuality in Performance

Concordia University – Department of Theatre, Fall 2018

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We acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community. We recognize the Kanien'kehá:ka as the custodians of the lands and waters upon which we work, create, and learn.

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Welcome to the first edition of the *Undergraduate Journal of Performance Creation* (UJPERC). The aims of UJPERC are to highlight the work of our students and provide a space for both students and faculty alike to critically reflect on creative and artistic enquiry through performance theory and practice. Since the inception of the Performance Creation Specialization in 2016, the Department of Theatre's curriculum has expanded and been enriched with new course offerings and special topic courses addressing contemporary social, cultural, and design performance practices including, among others, oral history performance, site-specific performance creation, spatial and material dramaturgy, and performance studies. This first edition of UJPERC highlights the critical and creative course work undertaken by students in *Gender & Sexuality in Performance*, for which I had the privilege and pleasure of designing and teaching.

Gender and Sexuality in Performance, a hybrid studio-seminar course, introduces students to performance and performative practices that question, reveal, resist and trouble dominant social norms of gender and sexuality. Through course readings, presentations, and in class workshops with guest artists, attending performances, and written and creative assignments, students critically engage with the social tensions and complexities belonging to the performance of gender and sexual identities in everyday life, and the historical and contemporary production of gender and sexuality on stage. A wide range of theoretical concepts and performance practices are encountered, including those drawn from feminist, queer, and post-colonial theory, as well as Indigenous knowledges.

The following texts and accompanying images are a record of student reflections on writing and performance creation projects they developed in response to – and in conversation with – the materials and topic they were exploring. As a result, the individual and collaborative student works reflected in this issue invoke and trace themes of urban queer diaspora, gender binaries, performing disability, identity politics, social transformation, and queer utopias. As a collective project both the course and the content of this edition resonate a shared social space and mark critically the importance of acknowledging and making spaces for pedagogical and learning experiences that celebrate, stage, and are held by non-normative and transformative world making perspectives and practices.

The realization of UJPERC would not have been possible without the sublime talents, creativity, skill, and moxie of guest editor Rachel Kerr-Lapsley (BFA, Theatre 2017), and graphic designer Vincent Potvin – thank-you! A very special thank-you to our fabulous Montreal based guest artists, Jordan Arsenault, Johnny Forever, and Holly Gauthier Frankel, for sharing their creative, radical, and queer inspirations and perspectives.

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Text on recipe cards created in class during a Fear Drag Workshop conceived of and led by Jordan Arsenault.

Gender scares me because I
don't know where gender ends
and I begin.

~~GENDER MAKES ME~~
WONDER IF I WILL
EVER UNLEARN ALL
THE MYSOGENISTIC
WAYS I AM SUPPOSED
TO "BE" A WOMAN.

GENDER MAKES ME
ANXIOUS ABOUT
MY IDENTITY

When I think about gender I feel
afraid because as a vehicle to
fuck and love another body I want
my body to be able to do that
playfully and genderfully but it feels
like I can only connect with people
I want to connect with if I'm perform-
ing on somewhere along the sliding
scale of my biological sex's assigned
gender

Gender is crunchy because I fear
it will trap me, torment me and
deprive me of what I want.

The Wonderful Wunderkabinett of Gender

Albe Guiral

During the Renaissance, cabinets of curiosities were rich men's prerogatives: they would exhibit ethnographic objects or an art collection, displaying not only the objects, but also the power they had over them. Influenced by the work of Mark Dion, my installation takes the shape of a cabinet of curiosities – adding a queer and intersectional feminist perspective. Grounded in aesthetics and playfulness, I arranged mundane domestic objects by colour. Displaying objects found in the home, the traditional environment of women, is one way of queering the museum. In the Wonderful Wunderkabinett of Gender you will find no Ming dynasty ceramics, just Ikea mugs. This choice is also about class. Coming from a working-class background, I have always found museums intimidating, and a little too serious. Don't "normal" objects also have secrets to reveal? Finally, my art practice also wants to engage with strategies of decolonizing dominant perceptions of gender. For example, colours are seemingly neutral, but they are often given gendered values.

Does the simple act of placing objects of everyday life under the spotlight alter their meaning? Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett posits that "[in the museum] objects are not found, they are made" (3). If the very fact of being exhibited causes the objects to perform their meaning, what can be said of the performativity of the viewer? My artwork is participatory because the viewers endow the objects with various qualities and values. Voluntarily kept in the dark at the beginning of the exhibition, they see a pink lace thong on one side and black boxing gloves on the opposite side.

Will they guess that they belong to the same person? That all the objects they are examining belong to two young women? In response to the exhibition viewers were invited to leave comments on sheets of paper. These responses added another layer to the performativity of the objects and document how the viewers might enact a gender, an idea of class, or other sociodemographic notions on the objects.

My Wonderful Wunderkabinett would not have been truly complete without the ultimate performative object: a woman. Thankfully, this curator happens to be one and all I had to do was display myself. Am I a better woman at the beginning of the exhibition, when I am still and compliant, or when I am active and interacting with the viewers? I am interested in the possible awkwardness of gazing at someone who is present, and might or might not stare back. As Johnny Forever Nawaracaj notes: "the stillness of a woman becomes an opportunity to objectify" (121). Yet, precisely because I am both object and curator, I also embody the "refusal of dichotomous models of subjectivity" (Nawaracaj 121). Following Rebecca Schneider's consideration of the commodification of the representations of desire, I framed my own body as the [stage] across which [I] re-enact social dramas and traumas that have arbitrated cultural differentiations between truth and illusion, reality and dream, fact and fantasy, natural and unnatural, essential and constructed" (7). Thus, I am displaying my experience of finding and creating agency for myself, even from places of oppression. ♥



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The Gender Binary

In Conversation with our Senses

Rebecca Bauer & Michael Friend

Our documentary explores the concept that the gender binary is ingrained in us from birth, and is reinforced by the heteronormative society we live in today. We all adhere to the gender binary. We give a gender to everyone and everything, even to the simplest object. We don't only see gender; we hear gender, feel gender, taste gender, smell gender, and sense gender. We remember through gender.

As soon as a human being enters the world, they are given a gender. During their childhood when the brain is in a critical stage of development, they are taught by the media and by their parents that there is a gender binary set in place in which each person is assigned either male or female. How much one chooses to abide to the gender binary depends on several aspects; their home environment growing up, the body they live in, and the community they currently live in. Our documentary demonstrates that regardless of these aspects of one's identity, when you dig deep down into yourself, at every impulse there is the influence of the gender binary. This binary shapes the way we see the world, hear the world, smell the world, feel the world, and taste the world. We can, as a society, work towards being more progressive but if every generation links to the previous one, is it truly possible to find complete neutrality within the gender constructs, or are we doomed to eternal ignorance? Our documentary suggests that the gender binary is a never-ending cycle, perpetuated through what we're taught in our childhood and reinforced by a media that perpetuates this binary on a constant basis.

As researchers, we were very interested in exploring our own gender biases. We asked questions like: is gender neutrality possible? How much is the gender binary true to me versus how much is it imposed on me? Is it truly possible to live your life completely dismissing the gender binary? Is everything gendered? Our documentary presents the results of our object-gender association experiment. The



Gender Experiment Results

OBJECT	MARINE female, heterosexual	ANTHONY male, heterosexual	LIZZIE non-binary, queer	CGEP PERSON female, heterosexual
Perfume	(F) F	(M) F (F) M	(M) F	(M) M
Fluffy	M	M	F	F
Dark chocolate	F	F	F	F
Water dripping	M	M	M	F
Mikey's chin	M	M	M	M
Foundation	F	F	F	F
Match	F	M	F	M
Piano	F	F	F	F
Latex glove	F	F	M	F
Gum	M	M	M	F
Pad	F	M	F	F
Bra strap pulled	F	F	F	M
Cleaning spray	F		F	F
Rebecca's finger	F	M	F	F
Mint candle	M	F	F	F
Kiss sound	F	M	F	F
Ripping paper	F	F	M	F
Condom	M	No gender	M	M
Lip stick	F	F	F	F
Coffe grains	M	F	F	F
Shoe tread	M	M	M	M
Rebecca's firm handshake	F		M	M
Bracelet	M	F	M	F
Barette on cheek	F	F	M	F
Image 1	F	M	M	M
Image 2	F	F	M	F
Image 3	F		F	F
Image 4	M		M	M
Image 5	F	M	F	F

experiment consisted of taking participants through a series of objects that stimulated different sensations. For each sensation brought on by an object, the participant had to associate the sensation with either the female or male gender. We encouraged the participants to talk through any memories or thoughts that the object stimulation brought on for them. This was our method for exploring the ways that the sensations of objects are assigned a gender. As two people who identify as different genders, sexual orientations, and come from different backgrounds, we embraced the differences in our identities when thinking up the variety of objects we wanted the participants to experience. This variety inevitably allowed for a wider range of experiences to take place. Not surprisingly, the experiment revealed that several of the objects were associated conclusively with one gender for all four participants, others were associated almost conclusively with one gender for all four participants. Our documentary highlights these findings, and helps the viewer understand where these gender associations with seemingly neutral objects come from. Various commercials, TV show clips, and ads are shown throughout the documentary to demonstrate the relationship between the media and the way we experience gender through our senses. Additionally, participants' childhood memories that were brought up from the objects are shown in full, demonstrating the impact that the generation that raised us has on our perception of gender within the world. The documentary demonstrates that the gender binary is fully ingrained in the way we see and experience objects because of the influence of the media and the people who raised us.

We charted our participants experience to represent a variety of gender identities and sexual orientations and show that regardless of who you are or where

you come from, everyone sees (and feels) the world through the lens of the gender binary to some degree. Our documentary takes Judith Butler's concept of gender roles and applies it to experiences and objects (Butler, 519). Though human beings rely considerably on our eye sight, we experience through all the senses, and each sense is influenced by our perception of the gender roles Butler discusses. Each sense makes links to the gender binary, and since we rely on our senses to communicate, we essentially communicate through gender. As Rebecca Schneider discusses in *Explicit Body in Performance* our body is a site for social marks, just as the heteronormative gender binary (Schneider, 2). Even if one tries to dress gender neutral, people will still associate this person with one gender or the other. The way one's body is shaped, hair length, the clothes one wears, and how one holds themselves are all aspects that indicate gender and allow for others to make assumptions about one's gender. In our documentary, we shed light on the body as a site for gender critique by using objects that people wear on their bodies every day, such as lip stick. The documentary demonstrates that objects like a pink shirt, armpit hair, or soft socks, are gendered. If you have one of these objects on your body, are you perhaps unknowingly, gendering yourself?

Our vision for this documentary was to highlight the important impact of gender in our daily lives and to spark thought in the viewer about how we can use these constructions to further our understanding of gender. This documentary has demonstrated that the gender binary is present in all of our lives, influencing how we feel, taste, smell, hear, and see the world. All of our senses experience gender, we remember through gender, and we communicate through gender. ♥

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They go out on their own

Kyla Gilbert

I have been thinking a lot about how bodies are moved and funneled through the architecture of cities. In some ways, my body molds to my surroundings; my posture, the space I take up, the way I hold myself, are all in counterbalance with the places and people around me. I often find that I focus less attention on certain parts of my body even though they may be in constant use. This is the case with my hands. My hands are covered in receptors that sense temperature and texture. They are incredibly sensitive and useful. Looking at my hands, I cannot see a specific gender. But the way that I manipulate my hands, both the actions themselves and the way in which I perform them, is gendered. The things I touch, the hesitancy/firmness, even the angle and manner in which I hold my hands at rest, is connected to my idea of myself. I turn a non-gendered body part into a gendered one. My hands also extend more than other body parts into the outside environment, touching objects in public space, such as hand rails on buses, money, coffee cups. I am interested in the relationship between the things I touch and the other people that have touched them; ghosts of imprints left by the thousands of people passing through the same spaces that I do each day.

In designing this project, I thought of a theatre production I'd seen several years ago called *Kiss & Cry*. Creators Michèle Anne De Mey and Jaco Van Dormael projected live filmed video of their hands and different small materials, turning their hands into puppets which navigated many environments and told different stories (*Kiss & Cry*). Up until this point, I had never paid much attention to hands, and was entranced by all of the emotion and movement that they could convey. I was also interested in the fact that the performance featured a heterosexual love story, in which the female performer played the female hand and the male performer played the male hand.

My work is influenced by Judith Butler's ideas about gender performance and the daily creation of gender, and the idea of the body



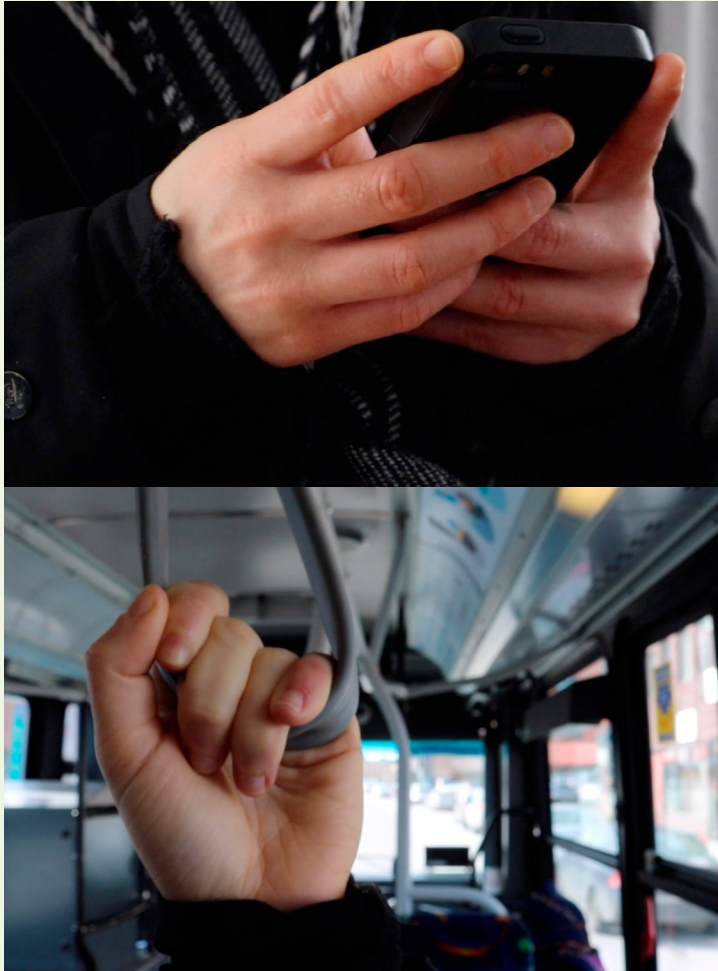
Video – vimeo.com/212615058

as “not a ‘being’ but a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated” (189), and performing for a variety of functions. I am interested in how the architecture of the spaces I traverse every day affects how I physically interact with the world through my extremities. What is the interplay between the hand and the touched object, especially when I am not placing my awareness specifically in my hands? Where are the hands allowed to go and when do they need to be kept to themselves?

My thinking about togetherness/separateness in cities was influenced by Montreal based performance artist Johnny Forever Nawracaj’s ideas about stillness and isolation as colonial ideals. Within Nawracaj’s framework, deviance from the expected or controlled path becomes dangerous (120). There is a power in breaking from one’s solitude and connecting to the hidden community of individuals surrounding oneself in a city. I wanted to pay homage to the spaces that I share with other humans every day and usually ignore and bypass.

Paul B. Preciado’s ideas about gender in “pharmacopornographic” cities also influenced my thought in terms of the “technoliving body as a biopolitical archive and cultural prosthesis” (395), as well as gender as a means of transforming one’s landscape and reacting against the constraints of the city. I was interested in how our society and our bodies are evolving with technology. I’ve realized that whenever I have a free moment, on the metro, on the bus, while walking, my first impulse is to take out my phone. I was interested in exploring the boundaries between technology and biology, and how (often unconsciously) the limits of my body are extended from my hands to my technological devices.

I also wanted to explore the idea of the “gaze.” In having my hands filmed, it seemed impossible not to fetishize them. I was making my own body part my muse through someone else’s eyes. Rather than trying to subvert this, or avoid it in some way, I found it more fruitful to play with the idea of hands as objects of interest, and the idea of being both myself and outside myself looking in. ♥



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Reflections

Allyson Haring

This performance plots a course along critical moments during the creation of my gendered identity and the ways in which I chose to express it. I am fascinated with the history and aesthetic of burlesque performance as well as with the women who perform them.

When reading *Gender Outlaws*, I was inspired by the first story titled “The Big Reveal” by Sherilyn Connelly. While this story was more focused on what Connelly refers to as “She Male Porn”, the idea of revealing something that has always been present or peeling back a façade to show one’s “true” identity really fascinated me. And, much like in Judith Butler’s discussion “From Interiority to Gender Performatives,” my performance piece speaks to the personal journey of bringing the inner soul and personality to the outer surface of my being. In *Reflections*, I use these ideas of the reveal and interiority and exteriority in two ways. The first is through the storytelling motif. These stories have always been a part of me and have shaped the person I have become but the act of revealing them to an audience exposes a piece of the real me and perhaps alters the audience’s perception of me as well. I also use the idea of the reveal in the action of my piece; the action of stripping away incorporates burlesque in my piece while referring to its role in the formation

of my gender performativity. Each part of the performance focuses on a different physical attribute of mine and how I came to terms with it to become the person I am today. For example, I draw focus to hair color and how, for me, going from a natural blonde to just about every version of red has helped me form my own identity. It also speaks to the assumptions and social weight that is put onto a woman’s hair. For me, it was going from the “dumb blonde” to the “wild, kinky red head” when the only thing that had actually changed was the color of my hair. Next, I speak to the idea of the “make up mask” and how something that was initially used to make me feel beautiful, ended up making me feel ugly and insecure. The idea that a woman needs to ‘cover up’ her face in order to be attractive is so present and harmful that many women actually believe it. I know I did. As the piece progresses we are taken along on the road to self-acceptance and awareness. In addition to the nostalgic elements of a classic coming of age story, this piece deals with the societal assumptions of the role women and how women should present their gendered selves through their looks. I may not be able to solve the problem, but at least I can start to address what this means for me through this performance piece. ♥

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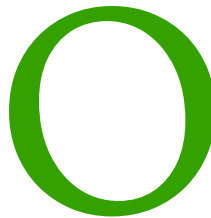
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Privilege, Body Image & Heteronormativity

A Performance Creation Project

Caitlin Stever, Ryan Downey & Anastasios Fraghias



ur group wanted to make a collaborative project based on similar personal identities and the discomfort we shared around certain topics explored in the class. Being three middle-class, white, cisgender heterosexual individuals, we were drawn together by an open curiosity about how each of us could be personally affected by these intersecting topics. We began to create our project by conducting our own individual research on topics (which we explored in class) that spoke to us most in terms of content, form and delivery. We then established the three themes that we wanted to explore: privilege, body image, and heteronormativity. For our performative presentation we focused on making individual personal creations that could tether themselves to an overarching collaborative work. One of the main threads that tied our three monologues together were feelings that circulate through the following questions: “Am I normal?”, “What is wrong with me?”, “What is normal?” and “Am I/Is this enough?”.

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PRIVILEGE

A MANUAL OF BASIC FEMALE WHITENESS (intersections of race, girlhood, cis-ness, heterosexuality, privileged simplicity and good fortune) sub topic: A FUNKY LADY'S AWARENESS AND REFLECTION

A series of relevant phrases: #HOE LIFE, TITS OUT FOR THE BOYS, Do it for the dick, YASSSS JESUS, FUCK DA POLICE, Getting fried, smashed, fucked up, lit, "I want to almost black out and go to the hospital tonight, almost"

SNAP THIS WHOLE PERFORMANCE PIECE, I dare you.

There exists a WIKI HOW article on "how to be a party girl." The highlights of it are as follows:

- ♥ If you must wear pants, make sure they are tight
- ♥ Wear your hair for dancing
- ♥ Know how to hold your booze
- ♥ Have some fun with the party boys
- ♥ Network
- ♥ Practice safe sex
- ♥ Don't do illegal drugs
- ♥ Have a good source of income
- ♥ Be kind to your bartenders
- ♥ There must be nothing natural or comfortable about the way that you look or feel when you party

(start to put on leggings)

Do you really think this suits me? What is wrong with me?

How can we live our life reflecting critically upon our own identity without causing crisis?

I worry that I might be brainwashed because I think I identify with my assigned gender and sexuality. sometimes I think that I may have lost the ability to critically reflect upon my own identity in this label fixated society and the family and community that I come from. Maybe I would know though, maybe I just stop and be

satisfied that my life has been this easy so far, that what I have been given is working out for me. WHAT I AM SCARED OF MOST IS BEING IGNORANT OF MYSELF

Who decides at what times it is privileged to be who I am and at what time it is too much or obnoxious or dangerous?

When I realize that I feel unsafe or deeply uncomfortable in any given space or group of people, I imagine what it must be like to live your life where say 60% of the spaces you could potentially occupy feel unsafe to you, whereas 90% of spaces are safe for me and i did absolutely nothing to deserve that in fact I'd say the opposite. I guess respect isn't earned after all.

If I could have one super power I know for sure that it would be invisibility. It is always invisibly. What is the source of my overwhelming feelings that fluctuate between needing and wanting to disappear and then a yearning to be seen and heard. Why do I want to disappear sometimes. Am I not enough for myself? Am I not enough? What is up with that?



BODY IMAGE

Omnipresent questions: *Hello what's your name? Why are you here?*

Hey, my name is Ryan Downey and I'm going to show you how to achieve the perfect body. **Open bag and drop a bunch of magazines** It's not that difficult. The most important thing is diet and then comes training.

That's great! How many times do you train a week?

It usually ranges from 5-7 days a week of training, but it's worth it because you can't just achieve this body (magazine) by doing nothing. Practice makes perfect and if you want to look perfect, you have to practice weightlifting and cardio a lot.

Want to speak more to your diet?

Of course! I usually eat at least 6 times a day. When training, it's important that you make sure your getting everything you need. I usually try and eat over 3,000 calories a day. It's also good to consider your protein, carbs and fat intake. You want 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight and in terms of fat, it's good to have healthy fats, but remember if you have a cheat day you are a bitch.

Wow. That's rude.

The training I do is no joke. It takes commitment and that means NO OFF DAYS. After you have that down, you're going to want to pump yourself full of supplements, so you build muscle more quickly and you look huge, cut and sexy. See, people only care about looks, that's what comes first. If people didn't care about looks so much than they wouldn't make these magazines! **Flip open magazine... Reads** "The best way to get a wider chest is barbell bench press" FUCK! Well, clearly I don't have one of those here. **Reads** "Alternative exercises... 100 push-ups" Perfect! I'm going to get to it. NO OFF DAYS!

Push-ups until failure and sobbing

I don't know if I'll ever be enough. These magazines are fucked, the media is fucked. WHY DO I HAVE TO LOOK LIKE THAT? YOU KNOW WHAT IS EVEN MORE FUCKED? I want to.

There is so much pressure to be hot. I feel like I'm handsome, but sometimes that's not good enough. I want to be the on the stop so badly that I feel like I'm about to fall apart. I like working out, but the toxicity that it can cause is awful. Why do the standards have to be so high? I just want to be good enough, so... am I?

Anastasios Fraghias

HETERONORMATIVITY

When I was born, I was wrapped in a blue blanket.

My father wanted me to become a jock. He forbids me to take any joy in dancing to the songs of the era. Dancing was unmanly. I liked to listen to David Bowie. My father paid my oldest cousin to take me to the brothels to prove myself that I am worthy of being called a man. I was only 15. I lost my virginity to a mature older woman. I didn't perform the way that it was intended. I lost my erection because I was terrified but disgusted at the same time. Was it wrong?

My father used to say that I am not allowed to. Boys don't cry. Crying is for sissies. I was fondled and sexually taken advantage when I was drunk at a party, where the mother of my best friend touched me... low... that was when I was 14. My friend, she never spoke to me again. My male friends were so proud of this incident, although, they did not take into consideration what happened to me in the later years had traumatized me or confused me somehow. Was it wrong?

My father always uses to say to me: Sit up strong and manly, body posture virile, firm handshake and sit in a masculine way.

In my 20s I had my first threesome with two older women; I was a man, and I was stoned. The same night, I almost got raped by an older man when I was high on cocaine. Was it wrong?

My father wanted me to be a good representative of the male clan of our family. Act like a man, dress like a man, behave like a man.

In my 30s, my gender did not guide me to love, but only to sexual satisfaction. Meaningless sex, entrapped in society's heteronormativity.

Was it wrong? ♥

When I was born, I was wrapped in a blue blanket. My father wanted me to become a poet. He forbids me to take any joy in dancing to the songs of the city. Dancing was unnecessary...
I liked to listen to David Bowie.

My father used to say that I am not allowed to cry. Boys don't cry. Grief is for girls.

I was fondled and sexually abused when I was 14. My friend, after she found out what he man did, she never spoke to me again. My male friends thought I was so happy of this incident, although they did not take into consideration that what happened to me had traumatized me and made me confused. Was it wrong?

My father paid my oldest cousin to take me to the brothels to prove myself that I was worthy of being called a man. I was only 15. I lost my virginity to a mature sex worker. I did not perform the way that it was intended. I lost my erection because I was terrified and disgusted at the same time. Was it wrong?

My father always used to say to me: Sit up straight, manly body posture, Virile and firm handshake, Sit like a man, Walk like a man, Behave like a man, ACT like a man...

In my 20s I had my first threesome with two dear women; I was a man, and I was touched. The same night, I almost got raped by an older man when I was high on Cocaine. Was it wrong?

In my 30s, gender did not guide me to love or make love but only meaningful sex, not casual substitutes.

Entrapped in Society's homophobicity... Was it wrong?

An Autobiography in Part(s)

Sarah Hiseler

This piece is meant as an exploratory, autobiographical work drawing on the style of Jess Dobkin's *Everything I've Got*, and Ivan Coyote and Rae Spoon's *Gender Failure*. A collage of individual vignettes scattered across time and space are connected under the themes of identity, body, gender, and sexuality to create a piece for the audience of the internet age. Multi-media components hold the performance on track and provide pop culture notes and visuals the audience can recognize and connect to. Models of individual vignettes and performance influences come from the "Postcard Secrets" project, *I'm From Driftwood's* collection of "coming out" interviews, and the "It Gets Better" campaign – all projects that should be familiar to a queer, north American, young adult audience.

The dictionary definitions used to transition from one personal anecdote to another play off both identity and disassociation; the historic usages of "bisexual" often rely on cis-oriented understandings of gender that have been taken as exclusionary or transphobic. As José Muñoz describes it "to disidentify is to read one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject. ...it is the reworking of those energies that do not elide the 'harmful' or

contradictory components of any identity." (12) This framework allows for the referencing of potentially problematic material in a way that acknowledges the positive and personally relevant parts without ignoring or being contaminated by the negative or personally contradictory aspects. This allows for the inclusion of pop culture references aimed at heterosexual and homosexual audiences, and accounts for instances where personal identity is dealt with in parts rather than as a whole.

The exploration of body – as object and as experience – underscores the entirety of this piece. Iris Marion Young's writing on "feminine bodily comportment" served as a spring board for understanding the dualistic nature in which women may come to understand their body, both as something they inhabit and as an object of observation. This double nature becomes the lens through which the anxiety surrounding the use of the feminine body and inhibition of bodily movement can be viewed. As a method of interrogating my own relationship to my body as a performer, and juxtaposed with the use of video as a rehearsal and script writing technique, Young's theory becomes the backbone for interrogating "body," providing contrast to Gillespie's writing on the "how" of Dobkin's performance.

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1.

INTRO

Open on solo performer on stage. _____ objects are _____ around her. Audience enters and sits as Icon for Hire's "Theatre" plays.

Several of the front seats contain assorted stuffed animals, posed as if they are audience members ready for the show to start.

I still tell stories the way I always have; speaking to stuffed animals, to myself, to silence. The act of telling is the more important even than the act of being heard. Acknowledging to myself what would otherwise be left unsaid. Sometimes the act of storytelling itself is the thing that brings me joy and comfort.

I write first and foremost for myself. Secondly for those who might find something of themselves in what I have to say.

So, pull up a seat if you like. There's room beside *Dedette* or *Finley* from the looks of it. I'll be quite blunt – I'm doing this for me: for challenge and catharsis. Perhaps though, I can be the mirror for you to see something of yourself.

10.

MANIFESTO-ART

This is to be art that refuses false dichotomies, binary opposition. To straddle the dark and light, the critically objective and the emotional, to be both feminine and masculine and to refuse to accept either of those definitions as applicable to anything but genitalia and chromosomes.

We want to create connections via empathy to ask our audience to step back and answer as to what they would do differently. Why is it that this action must happen? This thing be said? This object represented this way?

We look to everyone who has created before us. We accept as fact that there is no Now without Then but that once acknowledgement is given there are no debts to be paid.

IT HAS ALL BEEN DONE BEFORE

Not a defeatist attitude but a battle cry. We do not make new, we remake.

Bridge contradictions

Create beautiful things for their own sake

Look to art to escape our physical reality and constraints

Hold it up as a mirror to show the dirty, the death and decay, the unspeakable horror that must be spoken to be changed.

We use fictional parallels to the now to cast light into dark corners, to cause the unwilling to confront the uncomfortable

Comfort

Confront

Confirm

Change

Nothing more or less than a revolution of self

We owe no allegiances, no oaths, and no assistance

We choose to align ourselves with life, with the beautiful, the common, the unforgettable, the elemental

We accept subjectivity and scientific exploration, rationality and spirituality

That things can be culturally relative and universal

That dwelling on what has come before will not bring us forward, but that ignorance will push us back

Moderation in all things, with boundless conviction and unconstrained dreams

We will write our epitaphs in pigment and stone, in ephemeral notes and bright lights, in hand-me-down myths and the collective psyche of nations

We accept no facts but constantly search for them

Every day will be an example of this and after the fall of missed days
the struggle back to full reach will not be discounted

Failure is inevitable

This is a soundless scream to half-forgotten god(dess)(e)(s) of ques-
tionable existence

This is red blood, green fire, silver pen, purple thread

This is no thing at all

Isn't that the nature of Art?

13.

DREAM

Sometimes I dream I am a man, complete with the body to match
those I've seen in old anatomy books. Freud would have something
to say about penis envy I'm sure.

I'm betting on a more convoluted path made up of bodily and gender
ambivalence, and rumors of orgasmic ease.

If I woke up tomorrow and found the dream was reality I wonder
what would change.

I look in the mirror sometimes and wish it would be easy to find out.

23.

MIRRORS

*Performer runs through a series of actions in front of a mirror.
Observes, critiques. Changes. Attempts to manipulate self. Poses.
Perhaps copies audience members. Attempts to do make-up. Gets
increasingly frustrated with not getting it "right". "X's" out reflection
with lipstick and walks off/out. ♥*

Touch me where they touched me

Jenna Kaplan

This research creation project was curated for the purpose of exploring how people interact with physical bodies, dealing with consent, and accepting your body after sexual assault. Its aim is to use poetry as a medium to communicate these themes through a very personal lens drawn out by the artist. The artist's aim is to expose herself, her thoughts, her body, and not to be sexualized or judged for it. She aims to explore her own femininity and female body in order to excavate certain ideas about sexualization, gender, and sexuality. Through this performance the artist intends to give the audience a sense of empowerment; even after sexual assault you have agency over your own body and you are still beautiful. Working with her own gender and sexuality the artist's exposé will shine light on bringing power back into a woman's life after she's been sexually assaulted.

The artist has been researching several authors and artists for inspiration. She has been looking at Rebecca Schneider's "Introduction" in *Explicit Body in Performance*, and Jess Dobkin's, *Everything I Got*. These in class readings gave her inspiration to use her body as performance art in order to reclaim agency over her own body. Other sources she's researched are; J. Robert Wills', *Safe Places, Fair Practices, Trust: Sexual Harassment in Communication and Theatre* and Manish Madan and Mahesh K. Nalla's, *Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces: Examining Gender Differences in Perceived Seriousness and Victimization*. These scholarly sources delve into body art, sexual harassment in theatre, the departmental and institutionalization of sexual harassment, and female sexual victimization in public spaces. All of these sources have helped the artist develop her performance through different academic lenses. She also had a lot of inspiration from different artists. She looked into high school artist, Emma Krezner's photography project on sexual assault that circulated the internet. Krezner took a photograph of her female

friend's body and painted hand prints on her body that were colour coded with an index. They displayed the touches from different people who have interacted with her such as friends, family, lovers, and someone who she told "no." Other artistic inspirations came from suggestions from her classmates. She examined Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* and Maria Abramovic's, *Rhythm 0*. These influenced her performance and the audience's role within it. She wanted to create an interactive experience by allowing the audience to read her poetry.

The artist's hope is to gain insight as to how other people interact with her own body. She wants to clarify the difference between plutonic and sensual touch. She wants to clarify what consensual touch is and how it is received, and in opposition, what unwarranted touch is and how that is received. She wants to feel comfortable exposing her feminine body for art's sake and expose her stories to generate a self-revelatory performance. This piece is unlike any previous work she's created. She has created self-revelatory performance art in the past, dealing with mental illness. She has also been an actor her whole life and is regularly involved in performances. She has been writing poetry for most of her life but only began sharing her work in high school. She has yet to explore her writing in a university setting. This performance is the perfect opportunity to combined performance art, poetry, and self-revelatory performance with a topic that she is very connected to emotionally, and has never been able to talk about before this class. She wants to use her own gender and sexuality to spread her message of self-love and appreciation for the physical body, even after tragedy. ♥

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The Space Between

Manolis Antoniou

We are composed from the same primal matter.
A body, a heart, a mind.
We are born, we grow up, we die.
We fail, we succeed.
We hurt, we comfort.
We intersect, we differ.
We feel, we fuck, we love. We love. We love. We love.
We love.

Video is a novel medium for me, that excites me and it gives me the platform to tell personal intimate stories. Being a theatre director, I must work with a multitude of people, whereas the solitude of working with the camera and the computer, allows for me to re-negotiation myself and the creative process.

In 1989 the term intersectionality was coined by Kimberly Williams Crenshaw. It's the idea that a person is a whole, and composed by an array of intersecting identities. As a person and as an artist, I am searching for the ways in which I can situate myself both within and against the various markers I am called to identify with. I wonder whether one can create label-free art; whether it's possible – for the intersectional artist – to create accessible art that doesn't lack representation? Can the particular become general?

The *Space Between* is an attempt to answer the above questions. It is a video-performance montage of visuals and diction, body and universe, internal and external, private and public. I am using the concept of montage by composing material and ideas which if seen alone, don't seem to have anything in common. With the idea of montage, à la Eugenio Barba,

“...one aims at the very principle of motion, at tensions, at the dialectic process of nature or thought.” The late José Esteban Muñoz's concept of disidentification has also been useful to me in the making of this project.

“Disidentification,” writes Muñoz,

“is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations and re-circuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus, disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture.”

In my video work, I am working with this notion of disidentification in parallel to the dense and complicated ways in which sexuality constitutes a nexus of power (Foucault), searching for a balance by creating tension between the materialities and performatives that I am working with: found and filmed, body and voice. ♥



From Desire to Hybrid to Monster: how can we inhabit the space in between? Thoughts on Motus' *MDLSX*

Sophie-Thérèse Stone-Richards

It may not come as a surprise to some, but I was struck by how the most noticeable and memorable accounts of discovering and dealing with one's one gender or lack thereof in Motus' performance, *MDLSX*, were about having to deal with everyone *else's* perception, expectations and gaze. It is not the fact itself that surprised me, but the extent to which that fact can shape so much of one's experience of gender.

MDLSX is a piece created and dramaturged by Silvia Calderoni and Daniela Nicolò, loosely based on Jeffrey Eugenides' novel, *Middlesex*, and Calderoni's own life experiences, directed by Daniela Nicolò and Enrico Casagrande and performed by Calderoni alone.

The piece is performed entirely in Italian, with French and English subtitles projected onto a screen in the same space used to announce what song is playing, all the while Calderini DJs. The performance addresses gender fuckery, gender fluidity, androgyny and intersectionality. Quite suitably it incorporates interdisciplinary artistic approaches. Calderoni DJs, acts, dances on stage, live-streams, but also plays the role of creator and writer in this semi-autobiographically-inspired one person show. The performer and the company, Motus, explicitly use content by Judith Butler, Donna Haraway and Paul B. Preciado.

The structure of the piece itself is somewhat reflective of these writers' theories and practices along with the performer's own experiences. Firstly, it is a performance viewed by an audience in a traditional theatre; in-line with the idea of gender being a social construct built upon years of cultural perception and codified habits. As the audience, we are here to watch and observe what Calderoni unfolds. There is a large silver triangle on the floor, taking up at least a third of the floor space of the stage. There

is a very long table far upstage with props on it or near it. These include a microphone, a handheld video-camera, a laptop, a soundboard, a light ball, a lamp, items of clothing. From what I remember the name of the character which Calderoni incarnates is Calliope, nicknamed “Cal”, the main character in Eugenides’ *Middlesex*. I wish to show how Silvia Calderoni – inspired by the works of Paul B. Preciado, Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, whose work I explore along with some work by Jacques Derrida, proposes in her performance of *MDLSX*, an account of the monster that need not be feared, of a monster that can be loved and accepted, of the monster that need not ever be called monster again.

Judith Butler states in *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*: “When Beauvoir claims that woman is an ‘historical situation,’ she emphasizes that the body suffers a certain cultural construction, not only through conventions that sanction and proscribe how one acts one’s body, the ‘act’ or performance that one’s body is, but also in the tacit conventions that structure the way the body is culturally perceived” (523-524). There can be so many desires at play: the desire to be accepted, the desire to be safe, the desire to be seen or unseen, the desire not necessarily to conform but to not be perceived as different, the desire to be desired, the desire to possess, the desire to know, the desire to recognize oneself in others, desire itself, etc. Difference has often been perceived as a threat throughout history and the “monster” traditionally embodies all that is different and unknown and such is feared: “It frightens precisely because no anticipation had prepared one to identify this figure” (Jacques Derrida, 386).

Very early on in the performance Calderoni talks about Calliope’s physical development: her breasts not “swelling” and she pulls and tugs at her nipples on stage in front of the camera, resting on a stand on the table, their back is to the audience but front and chest projected onto the screen covering the back

wall. The projection does not take up the whole wall. Instead, it is compressed to a circle on the house left side of the screen. The circle aptly brings to mind the idea of a peep hole. There is a distancing effect created by us knowing that Calderoni is really topless and in front of us, yet not being so rough with us in the forward direction. I was deprived somewhat of the voyeurism while my sympathy was magnified. Her flat chest filled the whole circle, I could not see her face or legs in the projection. The circle served to emphasize the “swelling” that was not happening. “Discrete genders are part of what ‘humanizes’ individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished” (Butler, 522). Indeed, *MDSLX* takes the audience on a journey through the various forms of hiding and revealing Cal undertakes, all the while remaining completely in view of the audience. Calderoni does not – to my recollection – leave the stage at all during the ninety-minute performance. She remains and transforms in front of us and with us. The punishment Butler refers to, Calliope also refers to in her mother buying her a bra even though she had no breasts and in her mother taking her to the doctor to find out what is “wrong” with her. It also exists in Calliope herself as she compares herself to other female bodies and wonders why “nothing is happening.” Then finally the dramatic climax of the piece arrives: after a series of tests by the doctor, Calliope is informed that she is intersex. Calderoni shouts and screams the word “monster” on stage. “Proof” the subtitles read. Proof finally she says that she is a monster.

Everything in the play is recounted. The only body we see on stage is Calderoni’s and it is Calderoni’s body again which comprises most of the projections: Calderoni as an 11-year old, as a teenager, as a young adult, as Kasper Hauser (a male character Calderoni performed in 2012). Following this climax, Calliope/Cal runs away from home and struggles to make a living at just seventeen years old and makes money from her/his body while posing in mermaid costume

If I don't know what it is, how can I want it?
Do I have to want it?
If I don't want it, should it be?
Can I let it be?

for people to watch her/him: “men” Cal says, different types of men, men who like to have sex with women who have dicks, men who have sex with men, men who sometimes like to dress like women. What next for Cal? We know already from the program which states “Do not stay still on the edge of the road, do not cool joy, do not love without passion and do not let anybody save you, for there is nothing to fear” (Motus).

This is where the proposition for the future starts. Acceptance and tolerance begin when letting go of fear is allowed to happen, when being able to exist without knowing is allowed to happen, when hybridity is recognized for the space it has always taken up but been repeatedly denied. Calderoni beautifully states in the play ‘We are all made of many parts, many halves’. She visually and graphically halves herself in *MDLSX* with the use of a green light laser whose line of action she intensifies through the use of hairspray (so that the spray particles are caught in the light’s trajectory and reveal its path). She lies beneath the laser line on the floor, already split between the sides the laser has made of the stage and then lifts her body in the light’s path. The music playing is very loud and screechy during this passage. The event is quite visceral to watch as Calderoni looks as if she is being electrolyzed. When water is electrolyzed water molecules are split into the hydrogen and oxygen atoms they are made of. Calderoni also looks as if she is being split or torn into her more basic elements, be they feminine, masculine, neither or both. There is something in the images from this scene that appears to be stripping Calderoni raw.

The literal deduction of being many halves is then that we are more than whole, more than one. Taking this to be true then the performance of a single gender, interpreted as successful in its singularity and wholeness, requires the suppression of all that is more than one – all the “extra” self that does not fit the code or is misleading. Being seen as whole presumably implies that a lot is missing, that the work

to appear whole is out of sight. The monster then, or what is referred to as the monster, could be considered as the “real” whole. The monster does not perform but simply is and is thus misbehaving and causing fear where fear stems from the unpredictable and unknown. For Derrida, who mentored Preciado, writes: “the future is necessarily monstrous: the figure of the future, that is, that which can only be surprising, that for which we are not prepared, you see, is heralded by a species of monsters” (386-387). The future is monstrous and the monster is the future. The question I am trying to address is whether or not something can be monstrous and not fearful or terrifying. Can desire incorporate the monstrous? With respect to my questions at the beginning of the paper, can I want something if I do not know what it is? Preciado says that “the impossible will come and the unthinkable is inevitable” and Motus declares that “there is nothing to fear.” Derrida goes on to write in the same text that: “All experience open to the future is prepared of prepares itself to welcome the monstrous *arrivant*, to welcome it, that is to accord hospitality to that which is absolutely foreign or strange, but also, one must add, to try to domesticate it, that is to make it part of the household and have it assume the habits, to make us assume new habits” (387). This line is particularly interesting in how it blurs the distinction between the monster within and the monster without. The monster is less of isolated object and more of an event/an occurrence one inhabits. The term monster feels more frozen than the term monstrous in that the monstrous(ness) can pass, the experience can diminish, but a monster feels as though it much be destroyed or eliminated. A noun is more fixed whereas “adjectives describe or modify [...] a noun or pronoun” (Meriam-Webster). The future is monstrous, but the future also ceases to be the future once it has arrived, which allows for the possibility of the monstrous to pass along with time and cease to be once it is present. Fearlessness lies in the present: in being present we can better prepare ourselves for the unknown. In domesticating the strange, we domesticate ourselves to adapt

to the strange, to integrate the strange, and then the strange is no longer strange as it is us. We then “assume new habits.” This slowly, but surely is how I imagine change occurs: with the adoption of new habits, small, successive, in such a way that cumulatively adds up. Preciado believes that “before all the existing fragile archives about feminism and black, queer, and trans culture have been reduced to a state of radioactive shades, it is indispensable to transform such minority knowledge into collective experimentation, into physical practice, into ways of life and forms of cohabitation” (349-350). I believe this ‘cohabitation’ is a more relevant (less abstract/philosophical and more concrete) and a practical version of the domestication that Derrida refers to. It is far more demanding of action against a symptom, rather than descriptive of a symptom.

In this sense, there are so many “arrivals” (from Derrida’s *arrivant*) in *MDLSX* that I was surprised by. Two of note are the use of wigs as mega long armpit and genital hair, and the second being how the audience could see themselves reflected in the live video projection. The former was as comic as it was monstrous. The effects of the music and the lights seemed to create an atmosphere where what the performer did and used became quickly adapted and adjusted to. The lights and music literally (if only temporarily) defined everything that occurred in the space as normal. This is the beauty and wonder of theatre. I felt like the not normal. I felt like I was missing out on a side of life with “many halves” in my comfortable and perceived wholeness. The dance of the armpit and pubic hair wigs made me very aware that the only way I could possibly know what Calderoni felt like in the dance would be to dare to do it. My point being that the “arrivals” serve as invitations, as departure points to set off on. Where the boundary between Derrida’s the monster within and monster without is blurred, so is the boundary between an arrival and a departure in *MDLSX*. Where the future is monstrous and a monster is fixed, the present is fluid and boundless.

On the other hand the monstrous is not to be feared according to Preciado, and Motus. The monstrous is only a perception and perception itself is what is monstrous. Donna Haraway writes in *A Cyborg Manifesto*: “Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves” (316). Throughout *MDLSX*, Calderoni plays with the hybridity of gender as she (and the fictional Cal) have experienced it and perceived it. In an interview in 2012 promoting Motus’ *The Legend of Kasper Hauser* the interview asked “she or he, would you say that Kasper Hauser doesn’t have a sex as a very androgynous figure?”, Calderoni says “for me it’s same, I don’t know” (RT News). The response is a hybrid of meanings: it could be that the sexes are the same for Calderoni, that Calderoni and Kasper Hauser are the same, that Kasper Hauser like Calderoni does not know what sex they are, etc. Calderoni, to my knowledge, does not go by his/him or they/them. The inadequacy of pronouns is pronounced here. The term gender neutral seems so misleading and inaccurate to describe Calderoni, Cal or anything I have seen in *MDLSX*. With regards to identity, language has proved inadequate and has failed its promise. Haraway’s statement on cyborg imagery suggests there is a liberation to be found in the future and in the monstrous and perhaps that liberation includes a liberation from the limitations of our current language.

“*MDLSX* repudiates any victim complex and self-pity” (Motus). Amidst the angst and the rawness of the performance itself (on the part of the audience in the former specifically), there lies a very clear message of hope and promise. Emphasized by the cathartic moment when Calderoni lifts and swishes the silver triangle on the floor like a sail into the air and over itself onto its other side: the performed turning of a new leaf. Like Preciado, Derrida, and Haraway, Motus, invites its spectators to inhabit the monstrous, the future, the unknown, the impossible and the unthinkable. ♥

Nicolò and Casagrande are the artistic directors of Motus, a “nomadic” theatre company founded in Italy in 1991. MDLSX was created and first performed in July 2015 in Ancona and has been touring internationally on several different continents for nearly two years. I saw MDLSX performed in Montréal at Usine C in March 2017.

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What does disability look like?

Amanda Goldberg

This project questions our assumptions about the disabled body by viewing a small sample of the multitude of possibilities that are failing to be represented by a single word. Exploring the pictography that is meant to encapsulate an entire community, but sadly only reflects a portion, this project features the space between the able bodied and the disable bodied. In an effort to challenge the traditional way we define and examine bodies, more specifically in terms of the binary that has been created for that body, I am looking to challenge the concept of a “normal body.” This notion showcases able bodies as a point of comparison for all “others” to be weighed against. I argue that “normal” is no more than an idea that continues to alter and undermine the lives of those who are not able bodied. Robert McRuer exemplifies this disability discrimination in his paper examining the exclusivity of compulsory able-bodiedness. “A system of compulsory able-bodiedness repeatedly demands that people with disabilities embody for others an affirmative answer to the unspoken question, Yes, but in the end, wouldn’t you rather be more like me?” (McRuer, 93). This role is solely dependent on the impossible expectations that our society holds. However, what happens to this structure when the normative becomes both the indefinable and the unattainable?

Those that interpret and categorize the body act as our audience, accepting or denying the way in which we present ourselves to the world. Either way, this audience becomes the acknowledgement of our presentation or performativity. Similar to Judith Butler’s theory of gender: “Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed” (Butler, 527). Butler argues that the repetition of acts that build one’s gender is in fact a re-enactment of socially established acts connected to gender, that one’s choice of how they present themselves to the world is in fact not a choice but merely a method of survival.

Disability studies add another layer of complexity in outlining the social model of disability that differentiate impairment and

disability. In a Canadian documentary titled *Examined Life*, Butler speaks to disability activist, Sunaura Taylor, about the practical application of the social model of disability. Taylor explains impairment to be an individual's embodiment of their diagnosis, how it affects their physical body and daily routine. Whereas she defines disability as "the disabling effects of society", in which the society holds more power than the person being directly affected by the disability. It is with this understanding of the word that we can see disability studies and Butler's theories intersect.

Observing the parallels in which our society evaluates and determines our physical performance, we can understand the population that does not fit into the model. For the majority of these members, they have not made the choice to be misidentified; however the current structure on how we see disability has omitted them from the picture. In terms of the disabled community, this applies to people who live with cognitive, psychological, emotional disabilities, blindness, deafness, spinal cord injury and all the "others" who live with invisible disabilities. As we work with a society who's perception relies on understanding the physical performance, those that live with invisible disabilities are excluded from their own identity.

This project aims to live outside of this "normative" structure within the presentation of self by putting multiple sides of this conversation in direct dialogue. It shows three people with disabilities presenting their bodies, in contrast with the allies who play witness to bodies that differ from their own. The audience acts as the third party, engaging with their own assumptions of disability and its' binary. Ultimately the audience is witnessing a performance of bodies that fosters individuality and the rejection of definitional clarity. ♥

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Perched in my young bed on the Heathcliff of my mind I would starkly feel the rock face body far in the fear of ineffability. And past that, what if there was nothing to iterate, even if the sounds could take shape? But what if I was perched in the crags of my body? I could feel that, so there was an alternate route, a longing to spread it across space, to explore alone, the freedom in lack of tether. It felt as if only my name held me securely to my sternum and sutured mind to body to world. And even then I could exhale and unfurl.

But as weight is alleviated in water, the slow release of malediction made it so I could not feel each anchor until it mired body in the muck, Diabetic at 8, Chrons at 15, and Bipolar just recently at 22. Each of these hold a dual tension. There is the weight of each word as I walk through the world, as I hear what they mean and gyrate in and away from meaning and representation, in enacting or embodying. And then there is the private lived experience of how these things play out in my body and whether I acknowledge them or not. There is the fact that I look, to all and to myself like I could have no diseases at all. That I have to remind myself I am different, and when I forget to I am reminded by my bodies tension snapping back. I am not able bodied, despite a gym membership and the *many* privileges afforded to me from looking like I am. I say this because the able bodied community is not the community where I am at home.

But disabled is not right either, and I am grappling with this contentious definition. A starting point to understanding for me was an article written by artist and disability culture activist Petra Kuppers. She probes the status quo of this label in her work saying

"Disability is a strange label (like most words in identity politics: woman, black, queer, etc.). It adheres to individual bodies and to a social scene, to a structural position as well as an embodied, lived experience... Disability experiences are individual. They are often lonely." (Kuppers, 97)

I feel this loneliness. It's something I already felt when I was younger, the sensation of being in a body, in a bed, in the wideness of the world was enough to insight panic attacks. And each disease has brought this on in a more textured way.

I feel as though this textural layering has created its own universe and that is what each of my beds and my ritual was encapsulating

during my performance. My body moved in an en-route dance, tying the universes of all my diseases together, overwhelming with textures and sounds and writing and action and technology. Me moving through, both engaged and disengaged, centered and unearthed. All of these elements felt tied to the concepts presented in Rebecca Schneider's reading. I wanted to "peel back layers of signification... to expose not an originary, true, or redemptive body, but the sedimented layers of signification themselves" (Schneider, 3). Except in my case, these layers of myself, my diseases, need to be understood as apart from myself, not essentially me, but also as things that I must wear forever as the soul must wear the body (or vice versa). Instead of shedding these sediments I recycled them, and ended up wearing them refashioned as a sort of sickness drag. As my body moved through its motions, I was also somewhere else entirely, with katya Zamolodchikova, a drag queen who also tethers their performance of drag in their experience with mental illness. I added this element for two reasons. I wanted to show the place I go when I am not in either my mind or body and the labour enacted to sustain life in these things; watching drag often assuages me when I am treading through. I also wanted to open the idea of drag being about using the body as a canvas (or maybe playground is more apt) to talk about a body politic, whether it be gender or wellness/ability, and see how transferable that would be in practice (Katya, for example, performs their instability through their drag).

I wrote "Art isn't therapy / I need therapy more than I need art, / I need the terseness of imperative to untether" in the written portion of my piece and that statement reverberates through it. The terseness of

imperative when it comes to many aspects of my life, my diseases and what I need to do to be okay in my body, will never untether, but the way I can be with this pain and the way I can make art around it can. I wanted to show that I am trying to be ok and am not ok, am in my body, and desperately want to be somewhere else, am going through the motions, and am embodying and owning them. Kuppers encapsulated this duality succinctly, as it relates to pain and by extension to all these tensions:

"The experience of pain can resonate with a rhizomatic conception of multiple simultaneous gazes intertwining... In this way of thinking *pain* with a Deleuzoguattarian toolbox, a thought, a movement, or a state can code-switch, move simultaneously on different tracks, one '*with pain*' (as in '*in pain*'), the other '*with pain*', as a companion, an observer onto the self." (Kuppers, 96-97)

As I observe myself, I am aware of a loneliness. There is much busy work to maintain it. I am not afraid of it, I just want to be at rest with it, *with it*. ♥

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Hosanna, or How to Shatter a Drag

Michel Tremblay's Approach to Gender Identity and Social Change

Anthony Simard

The premise of theatre is generally perceived to be a reflection of life, or exposing society as it is. For the purpose of my approach to Michel Tremblay's *Hosanna* and my viewing of the filming of Théâtre de Quat'sous's production of the play in 1991, it is important that I affirm my approach to theatre and, as an art form, its potential for transformation. *Hosanna* proposes a certain social change, a way that engages audiences to reflect on their position about sexuality and performing gender roles. In this play, everything is shattered, as well as stereotyped, both in the text and the performance.

Claude Lemieux is a hairdresser during the day and performs in drag at night, under the alias of Hosanna. His/her husband, Raymond Bolduc, alias Cuirette, is a jobless biker / stud. They are in an unstable relationship that is explored by Tremblay in what seems to be the cliché depiction of homosexual couples, where one is more 'feminine' and the other more "masculine" (at least that is what I perceived from the 1991 performance) and one "clearly" bottom and one "obviously" top. However, the premise of Tremblay's *Hosanna* is to completely shatter the performative norms that society has attributed to gay couples. Its relevancy is poignant, even today. The identity of the gay man is widely explored in the piece and Tremblay's work makes the audience learn about Hosanna / Claude and empathize with her / him to accept her / his identity.

The first clear approach to Hosanna is that she is clearly not in control of her life anymore. We see her completely vulnerable at the very beginning of the play and, throughout, she seems to be uneasy about what she is and what society perceives her to be. The complexity of Hosanna makes her a rounder character and, I would argue, more relatable for the audience. Hosanna is not understood as a human being and she wants the audience to, primarily, learn more about her identity. We see that she is a French-Canadian male who is gay and wants to be a woman, or, more precisely, Elizabeth

Taylor as Cleopatra. Since “society” does not accept her as a woman, she is made to act as a man during the day. Judith Butler would perceive this society to understand “the construction of the gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials” (Butler 184), not accepting Hosanna as a woman but indubitably a man since Claude possesses male physical traits. More precisely and in context of the play, that “society” is depicted as the Jewish ladies at the salon who will not let women touch their hair, making it a necessity for Claude to perform male during the day. Also ridiculed by the group she is thought to be safe in, the drag queens at Sandra’s bar, Hosanna encounters conflict with both her female and male identities.

Following Judith Butler, I would argue that Hosanna has the “three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance” (2010, 187). Hosanna is a multi-dimensional character who is stuck in the body of a male, struggling with her assigned gender and performing the opposite gender which she sees herself in. This drives the audience to empathize with Hosanna’s struggle with identity throughout the play. Later, the audience learns that she would like to “fuck” Cuirette sometimes. It is clear that Tremblay wants to shatter gay stereotypes and he does so with the end of act one: “Well you know, sometimes I’d like to fuck you, Cuirette! Sometimes I’d really like to fuck you” (Tremblay 24). Who we believed to be the effeminate bottom, Hosanna, reveals herself as the versatile gay who would like to top sometimes. Clearly, her identity is more and more defined as we go along with the play.

At a certain moment, I realized that Claude wants to be a woman who wants to be Elizabeth Taylor playing Cleopatra. With that approach, Tremblay leaves a clue that this play might be about more than just Hosanna’s identity. As Turbide explores in “Hosanna ou la quête d’une territorialité,” there is a higher-serving purpose of the theme of “identity” in Tremblay’s famous play. The use of Elizabeth Taylor who *transforms* herself into Cleopatra suggests that the Quebecois society in general has lost its identity and transvestite itself, in a way: “Nous arriverions peut-être alors aux conclusions qu’Hosanna est plus américaine que québécoise, ou encore, si nous extrapolons, que la société québécoise est culturellement américaine de par ses choix d’objets de désir” (Turbide 310). Since the play suggests that Hosanna is confused in her identity, both sexually and physically, gender and sexuality in Hosanna are two approaches used by Tremblay to express the confusion in Quebec

society: “Hosanna [...] un coiffeur se travestissant en actrice anglaise qui joue une reine égyptienne dans un film américain tourné en Espagne! C’est très colonisé comme attitude. Pour être quelqu’un il faut d’abord être soi. [...] Encore maintenant les Québécois ont de la difficulté à comprendre ça” (Schwartzwald 59). This notion is leading me to see gender and sexuality as merging and made to be confusing for the audience. However, that is mainly a statement made by Tremblay in his play to demonstrate the shattered identity of *la société Québécoise*. Overall, Tremblay confirms that it is a political play. He writes:

“I do not mean that they [Hosanna and Cuirette] are Quebec symbols or images of Quebec. But their problems with the wider society are political problems. Because they are the fringe group in society, this society in a way hates them. But they want to be happy and they want to be somebody. Hosanna is a man who always wanted to be a woman. This woman always wanted to be Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*. In other words, this Québécois always wanted to be an English actress in an American movie about an Egyptian myth in a movie shot in Spain. In a way, that is a typically Québécois problem. For the past 300 years we were not taught that we were people, so we were dreaming about somebody else instead of ourselves. So Hosanna is a political play.” (Anthony, 283)

My argument is that approaches to gender and sexuality in *Hosanna* work as a political attribute. Indeed, gender norms are controversial issues and create a stronger political argument that Tremblay uses to create a catharsis for audiences about gender performativity while emphasizing the imagery that Quebecois society is transvestite in its own identity. Nevertheless, gender and sexuality should both be analyzed in deeper approaches to help confirm that they are used in *Hosanna* to create a catharsis on its audiences.

This play is heavy on finding an identity and the previous argument sets the foundation of how Tremblay makes this play connect with diverse audiences. Indeed, gender attributes and sexuality are subjects that were somewhat less controversial issues in 1973, when the play was first produced, but there were

still conservative views at the time. However, the play helps any sort of audience members to connect with the character of Hosanna. Almost 19 years later, the René Richard Cyr’s personification of Hosanna demonstrates that Quebec society has indeed grown more conservative since the “obscurity” of Hosanna – completely undressing Hosanna to reveal a male Claude Lemieux – had been taken away. The 1991 version of *Hosanna* is a statement that gender and sexuality are still taboo subjects in Quebecois theatres since they decided to censor male nudity which in turn demonstrates the plays continued relevance. Drawing from Butler again, the character of Tremblay’s drag queen “serves a subversive function to the extent that it reflects the mundane impersonations by which heterosexually ideal genders are performed and naturalized” (1993, 231), and that is the primary reason why Tremblay uses a drag queen as a main character in *Hosanna*. Drag disrupts the aforementioned *impersonations* of gender norms. The taboo is present since a man acts in the gender ideal of a woman – an extreme considered unnatural for society’s construction of gender. Shattering gender norms is a tool that makes the piece fascinating and incites the audience’s attention. Furthermore, and to show the importance of sexuality and gender norms in *Hosanna*, Tremblay uses literary tools that help the audience have a sense of catharsis and empathy for Hosanna.

The first tool was to make *Hosanna* a reflection of Quebec society’s own struggle with identity, but it goes even deeper as Hosanna’s humiliation emphasizes the overall drama of the play while she creates an automatic audience attachment. The play shows Hosanna is entirely vulnerable as nothing seems to ever work out for her. She wants to be a woman but can only act like a man in daytime. She is in a dysfunctional relationship with Cuirette who treats her terribly. She is getting old and unattractive. She is not out to her mother about her sexuality and identity, and is completely humiliated by those who she thought were her friends. Hosanna does not have

a life one would like to have and Tremblay emphasizes the dramatic tension through the exploration of a character's emotional fall. The protagonist of the play, usually the one an audience roots for, is believed to be at the bottom of the barrel from the beginning. However, as we follow along, Hosanna is unexpectedly worse than she was at the beginning of the play. The audience has no other choice but to empathize with the drama in Hosanna's life. Tremblay uses this to make the audience accept Hosanna as she is, a woman in the body of a man. Throughout the play, I found myself wanting Hosanna to finally be accepted as a woman because it would perhaps bring happiness to her already miserable life. However, Tremblay shatters this premise and turns everything for the worse. She ends up in a relationship no one would like to be in and her dream of being Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra is forever broken. As a constant reminder of her tragedy, the costume of Cleopatra will rest on a hanger in the closet. The latter is another use of dramatic imagery that Hosanna will never be free to be who she wants to be, forever closeted.

Then, there is the antagonist, Cuirette, portrayed by Gildor Roy who performs in a manner that makes the audience despise his attitude. Roy's performance can only increase my rooting for Hosanna. Cuirette is a despicable character, going behind Hosanna's back to pull a humiliating trick on her. He is portrayed as an ungrateful and unfaithful lover. We learn that Claude is the breadwinner of the couple, shattering gender norms, but we also learn that Cuirette would rather get rid of his sexual urges in Park Lafontaine with strangers than with his own lover. Hosanna accepts the fact that he is unfaithful to her. Cyr portrays Hosanna in a sassy manner that is easily understandable since she has been betrayed. It is clear, that Hosanna has been insulting her peers and husband for quite some times but – in the universe of this play – the audience has not seen that and can only accept that she is ridiculed throughout the piece. Her lover also insults her numerous times and most significantly about her aging: "You're getting old the way a woman gets old... Fast! And it won't be long before you start getting all your crummy jokes about old queens right back in your face. It started tonight, and let me tell you, that's only the beginning. Just a few more wrinkles on your lovely puss, and then, believe me, baby, the fur's gonna start flying" (Tremblay 24). Hosanna's defense mechanism is 'bitching' or insulting in a sassy manner and Cuirette uses that to face her with what she's been doing to other people. Cyr chooses to portray her that way because both the text and the

stereotypical effeminate Hosanna character suggest that. We realize that Hosanna, with that gender and sexual stereotype, has flaws, but she seems to be more reasonable than Cuirette. Although I find that this is a bad representation of homosexual behavior – having a transvestite character being insulting to everyone – this stereotype plays an important role in contrast to Cuirette. He is the complete opposite stereotype. He is the unappealing gay fat stud biker who is always sexually driven. The duo Cuirette-Hosanna is extremely stereotypical and I was inclined to root for the one offering the less harsh representation on homosexuality. I believe most audience members will root for the less “disgusting” stereotypical character. Since Cuirette is represented as always needing intercourse, his sexual representation for the gay community is badly portrayed and makes audience root for his opposite: the rude effeminate drag queen. Sexual representation in Hosanna is rich with meanings and that is how the 1991 performance of Cyr and Roy interprets it. Performing stereotypes at their extremes is effective, it helps the audience shape a sentiment of catharsis towards sexual representation of homosexuality on stage. They are bound to choose the less damaging stereotype and root for the hero of the piece.

The last thing that makes the audience root for Hosanna is her final epiphany at the end of the play. Throughout the piece, we see Hosanna/Claude referred as a woman. Someone with a less open-minded understanding of drag and gender bending would be confused and uneasy referring to Claude with “she,” “queen,” “her” and “woman,” particularly since in the 1991 production, Roy wears black clothes instead of undressing from the Cleopatra dress indicated in the stage directions. This choice emphasizes the confusion of gender identity for Hosanna since we see her with a male body wearing makeup and performing the female gender. However, an audience would indubitably accept the fact that she is referred to in the feminine as the play goes on. The final scene is as follow:

Hosanna gets up and sits down at her make-up table. She removes her wig, and takes off her make-up. She looks at herself in the mirror.

HOSANNA

Cleopatra is dead, and the Parc Lafontaine is all lit up!

She gets up, takes off her underpants, and turns slowly toward Cuirette.

Look, Raymond, I'm a man... I'm a man, Raymond... I'm a man. I'm a man... I'm a man...

(Tremblay 35)

As the audience is made to understand that Claude Lemieux prefers to be Hosanna and identify as a woman, the final moment comes as a shock. Claude's final realization demonstrates the tragic nature of the piece and shows the main character in his most vulnerable state. It is clear that the tragedy that befell Hosanna creates a catharsis for audience members, leaving them angry that Claude cannot be who he wants to be.

Hosanna is rooted in gender performativity and the exploration of sexuality. These two aspects are explored using literary tools that make the audience root for the flawed Hosanna, a highly unexpected protagonist. Tremblay portrays Hosanna and Cuirette in a manner that helps audiences accept the gender identity of Claude and reject certain damaging sexual stereotypes assigned to the gay community. The play creates a certain socio-political engagement with its audiences, making them more informed about gender identity and sexuality in performance. ♥

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ALL NIGHT ALL NIHGT Aal niht Al nh

Kit McKeown

< a picture of me breathing slowly through my nostrils >
< a picture of all night i been drinkin all night i been drinkin all night ay ay >
< a picture of me almost puking diet coke on the studio floor >

ALL NIGHT is a performance piece containing body art, slideshow, allusions, demands, frustration, memoir, questions, questions, questions. It is about queerness and sobriety: more specifically, the place of queer identity within sobriety and, inversely, sobriety's impact on expressing and embodying queerness. Montreal's queer scene unfolds and undulates within alcoholic spaces, which can prove inaccessible or unsafe to those recovering from addiction. As a 21-year-old nonbinary transmasculine queer with two years of recovery from alcoholism, I wonder how I am meant to forge connections and bond with this community when I am in recovery and they are not. *ALL NIGHT* is a foray into endurance art, attempting to create a sense of intoxication among spectator and performer, pushing the body's limits while the text onscreen gradually deteriorates as drunkenness impacts body, image, and language.

It begins when the performer enters the space wearing a white dress, clearing the space, pulling a Diet Coke from a plastic bag, pressing play on the video which is projected onto a screen beside them. The performer chugs the can's contents, crushes it, chucks it to the floor, and bobs aggressively to the instrumentals of Chance the Rapper, gaze directed at the projections to their right. The screen depicts three "chapters": *SLIDESHOW*, *GHOST*, and < *A PICTURE OF THE BURNING HOLE IN MY STOMACH* >. The first chapter describes, and never shows, photographs of the performer throughout their drinking career and of nightclubs and queer spaces that have suffered hate-fueled violence and destruction. The second

**III. < a picture of
the burning hole
in my stomach >**

Video – vimeo.com/241418600

grant me the serenity

chapter describes the performer's introduction to drinking through the desire to fit into queer culture, and their eventual cessation and subsequent feelings of loss and isolation. The third expresses loneliness, frustration, and anger through increasingly incomprehensible text, mirroring the gradual and creeping effects of intoxication. The performer is planted, bobbing, until the moment they ask the audience to leave the space after the third chapter.

Their groundedness, in conjunction with their "dancing," creates a juxtaposition between stasis and movement, stability and unrest. In *Myths of Stillness*, Johnny Forever Nawracaj discusses the physical state of stillness in performance and how "the perceptible stillness in all things masks the constant turmoil of rapidly vibrating particles." (Nawracaj 121) Although the performer does not seem to be "doing" much, they are efforting: the Diet Coke they have ingested is not sitting well and the white dress they wear represents a phantom-self that is long dead (and yet haunts). There is labor in abstinence: it is not always as simple as removing oneself from a situation.

And yet here I am, *performing* intoxication: by chugging approximately four cans of Diet Coke until I have to stop the performance or I will surely vomit.

< a picture of me trying to be a femme-y lesbian who can get fucked up and it's fine >
< a picture of me saying the serenity prayer to myself before coming into the studio >
< a picture of me heaving my heart into my mouth >

I am warned by a well-meaning individual that I should be careful about chugging that much Diet Coke in eight minutes or I will develop an ulcer. Never mind the years we poisoned ourselves and paid

our bodies no mind. Judith Butler says that "gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self." (Butler 519) *ALL NIGHT* alludes constantly to the past: the first time I got drunk, the first time I went to a queer party, the first time I went to a queer party sober, the outfits, the bewilderment, the angst. I wear a white dress as an homage to the self who wanted so badly to be a cis girl, to normalize binge drinking, to be an *abiding gendered self*. The performance is about desperation to fit into the binary, the gay bar, the AA meeting filled with old white men. Both the performance and the performer exist between selves, past and present, control and loss of control.

I ask the audience to leave the studio and they think something is wrong with me. When they are invited back in, they sit in a semicircle of chairs, and I am chugging more Coke, the music distorts, and the screen prays to be granted the serenity. It is the point of *ALL NIGHT* when nothing matters anymore. I drink Diet Coke until I am about to throw up, and then I stop and breathe, and it is over. *ALL NIGHT* has become *Al nh*, there is no longer any use for language nor body. We are at that point of the night. ♥

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What does a queer christian look like?

Ceci Macdonald

A lot of people probably recognize that who they are and how they present themselves is based on a collage of personality traits, of natural and environmental influences and every choice they make on the day-to-day. This includes the small rituals and habits we fall into, our favourite shoes, the primary colour in our wardrobe, how we do our hair, the people we engage with, what we pay attention to on the news (or what we ignore) and how far we will go to defend our occupation of space within the context of societal structures. For some, this is a turning point when breaking from the yoke of childhood, to turn away from or follow the way we were brought up. I fell along both paths. Through a comparative look at queer theory and queer theology, I am hoping to find concrete reasons why I feel a personal limbo between my queerness and my faith and discover a way to resolve it.

I was raised in a Christian household. My paternal grandmother was an Anglican priest, my father studied to become an Anglican priest before discerning a different vocation and my mother grew up in the Roman Catholic faith. We went to church every Sunday, we prayed as a family, I went to a Catholic high school and chose to fulfill numerous sacraments of passage in the Anglican church. I was 16 when I came out (to be honest, my parents did it for me because apparently “they just knew”) and this is when I started feeling a bit divided. The Catholic catechism considers any action in a non-heterosexual manner to be a sin. This is not my belief, it is different in the Anglican church, but learning the catechism in high school was the first resistance I felt from one community towards another even

though I felt welcomed and loved wherever I went and with whomever I interacted. So where does this divide come from? Why did it feel like these two “worlds” couldn’t be connected? Something that comes to mind is that while we repeat acts to become the normal, we may still feel wrong being an “outsider.” I may have a strong queer community around me but we still encounter hatred and obstacles in place within society (not to mention internalized homophobia as a result of exactly that) and I am a minority within that queer community who are primarily secular non-believers, making me somewhat of an “outsider.”

What I want to explore is the stability or structure provided by both identities and how they can communicate with each other. To do that, a foundation in both queer theory and queer theology will be made. Queer theory concerns itself primarily with gender and gender performance as markers of identity. Judith Butler writes to this pointedly, “...gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.” (Butler, 519). This brings in a historical aspect to the building of gender and gender norms as a response. The structure of a gender norm is based on acts performed by persons in the past that became normalized and are being recognised now. The actions were both personal and public – the



I was baptised as an infant, that's my mother holding me, my paternal grandmother is on the left with my aunt Katie and on the right is my paternal great-grandmother. All infants who are baptised wear a white dress like that regardless of gender.

more people saw it, the higher the chance of it being copied and repeated and the more likely it becomes a standard. In terms of gender, the understanding has been that gender matches biological sex, but in reality gender and sex are two separate things, sex being based purely on biology and gender influenced by public action and performed acts. Gender, in the grand scheme of things, is "...at once a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established..." (Butler, 526). This grants new meaning to "all the world's a stage" since rehearsals are repetitions of acts established in a script or devised score. Elizabeth Stuart considers Butler in theatrical terminology, "We learn to become a woman or a man by following the gender scripts that our culture hands out to us and each performance re-inscribes that gender upon our bodies." (Stuart, 376). If we are all performing, what is our true nature? If gender is constantly shifting and moving, is there even a foundation to start from?

Elizabeth Stuart is the forerunner in the studies of queer theology and has traced a history of its development through Gay and Lesbian theologies before the AIDS crisis, the fall of this theology as a result of grief for so many persons lost to the crisis, and now its return in the form of queer theology as a response to Butler's work in queer theory. The way to understand it is as a "free-floating relation between sex, gender and desire [that] seeks to reflect theologically from that perspective. It need not be done by lesbian or gay people or necessarily be purely concerned with issues of sexuality and gender." (Stuart, 376). In this way, she is queering theology by removing biological sex and gender as markers of identity within identities of the

Something that comes to mind is that while we repeat acts to become the normal, we may still feel wrong being an “outsider.”

faithful. Stuart's point of departure is baptism in the body of Christ by saying that "...gender is destabilized by baptism and decentralized in Christian morality." (Stuart, 378). The sole act of baptism as a means of destabilizing a whole understanding of gender feels pretty radical but there is a hierarchical structure of identity at work here. Stuart quotes theologian and queer theorist Kathy Rudy on this hierarchy of identity where "...for Christians the only stable identity is that of a member of the people of God... No identity should take precedence over Christian identity and hence within the church gender cannot be a determining factor in assessing what kind of sex constitutes moral sex. Baptism and not biology is the means by which one becomes Christian and in Christ there is 'no male or female': gender is radically decentralized." (Stuart, 376-77). This is a very strong and sure stance on the place of gender in a person's identity. In a culture where a lot of marketing and choices are being made daily (ie. which bathroom people are 'allowed' to use) based on gender as the universal defining factor, this is a refreshing change.

There are parts of the Anglican tradition that the faithful are encouraged to take part in. There are seven sacraments to participate in at various ages. Sacraments are external expressions of the inward and spiritual grace given to all of us through Christ. The first is baptism, usually infant baptism but there are many exceptions, and this is a ritual of inclusion into a relationship with Christ and with the church. The ritual includes washing the head with water and anointing with oil in the form of a cross on the forehead. This cross is a blessing and an invisible marker of the faith on the body.

The second is the Eucharist, sometimes ritualised as First Communion. The Eucharist is where we eat the bread and drink the wine that has become Christ's own body (or symbolize His sacrifice depending on the church). First Communion is the first time a person takes part in the full Eucharist. There is a specific way to take communion; the body of Christ should

take the most direct route from the priest to the congregation, we take it in our right hand then consume it, we lead the chalice of wine to us rather than grab the whole cup, we cross ourselves before and after. It becomes almost habit when you do it every Sunday+ for years. After that is confirmation. Confirmation takes place in a person's adolescence (or later for those who have joined the church later in their lives) and is a ritual to recognize the full and conscious commitment to Christ. This is almost an extension of baptism where we confirm our beliefs for ourselves. The ritual service includes communion and a series of affirming statements and prayers as well as the laying of hands by a bishop. The fourth sacrament is that of marriage. No one is forced to enter into marriage but for those who do this is a ritual to exalt the relationship of the parties involved and the relationship with Christ. Marriage is an example of what being loving and faithful to another human being looks like. The fifth is the Anointing of the Sick. This is a sacrament devoted to healing of the body, the mind and the soul (physical, emotional, spiritual). When praying, we ask God to release the hurting person of whatever pain they are experiencing that prevents them from being whole. One thing that is recognised in the Christian faith is that healing is not the same thing as curing and everyone can become whole again but this is not necessarily through a cure. This is something that I have struggled with, it is hard to believe prayers are answered when loved ones are not cured of illnesses. However being whole and full is a whole different kind of grace to be blessed with. The sixth is known both as Reconciliation or Confession. Reconciliation is a way to remove obstacles that prevent us from growing spiritually in a relationship with God. Christians believe that God knows everything about us and our thoughts so reconciliation may feel redundant but it is for the person and the practice of repentance which is so important in our relationships with each other. Reconciliation is not done in Confessionals like in the Catholic church rather it has a place in the service. Before receiving the Eucharist, one can confess their sins to be fully

open to receive Christ but again, no one is forced into it – everyone can do it, some people should do it, no one has to do it. Our relationships with God are very personal and only we can discern for ourselves what our relationships need. The final sacrament is that of ordination. There are many levels of ministry that I will not delve into at this point however this is a very important sacrament that involves a lot of discerning of vocation through prayer and community support. Now everyone takes on ministry because we are all called by God to be present in the church but the kind of ministry I refer to here is that of the clergy (laypeople, deacons, priests and bishops). One of the most beautiful moments of an ordination is the laying of hands. The person being ordained is kneeling and everyone present surrounds them and lays hands on their head and it kind of blooms out from there. It is a powerful moment of silence and stillness through spiritual connection with God and with each other.

One of the main things that happens in every instance is prayer and the Eucharist. The body of Christ is present at every event that we take part in. Other ritual aspects include kneeling for prayer, the laying of hands in baptism, confirmation, healing, ordination, etc. and the spiritual growth of our relationships with God. By the time I was finishing high school, I had memorised the whole service at my church and was instead focusing on the spiritual aspect rather than the words because the words and prayers would tumble out of my mouth. Ritual, in this sense, is a stabilizing and centralizing factor in this identity. If I ever walk into a church that I have never been in before it can feel like home because the environment is consistent in the atmosphere being created and the ritual is the same or similar wherever I go. I attended an early morning prayer service in Scotland last year at a small Anglican chapel and though it is a world away from my current parish, I felt comfortable and welcome. The community is so extensive that I can find home wherever I go.

On the flipside, my queer identity is ever changing and ever influenced by the community and my environment. Montreal is very different from my hometown of Sudbury. College was different from high school and university is also a whole other ball game. I came out as a lesbian in grade 11 and dated my first girlfriend for 2 and a half years. I had the plaid, the converse and the rainbow bracelets like every other LGBT kid I knew at school. These were actually the identifier for my first girlfriend. The high school I went to was all-girls catholic school. We were not required to wear kilts but it was part of the uniform. After graduating I did a year of university. This was a really hard time for me, my grandmother and mother had both been diagnosed with cancer the summer before school started. I felt lonely and unsure of myself. I dated on and off this entire time, never really focussing on myself and allowing my identity to be built up by what my partners projected onto me. I played with how I dressed, I bound my breasts both as a revolt against my biological body and against the breast cancer plaguing my mother. Many children I interacted with during theatre workshops and performances would ask me if I was a boy or a girl because my presentation was so androgynous. This still happens to this day depending on how I wear my hair and the clothing I choose. In college I started dating a man. This was a long relationship and an unstable/abusive one. Our friends told us we looked alike and that played weird tricks on the relationship I had with myself. My grandmother passed away during this time and I sunk into a deep depression. My partner did not understand what was going on with me and instead of being supportive became emotionally abusive and gaslit me for a really, really long time. At this point I had completely lost who I was and had completely turned from my faith because I felt betrayed and abandoned. I moved to Montreal (which may not have been a good idea looking back on it now but it was the best choice in the long run) and began anew in a city where I knew no one. I felt the call back to my relationship with God. I prayed and prayed for healing and my partner broke up with me a week

later while I was planning to end the relationship and I was free. It has been a long process of healing from the grief of loss and the pain of the abuse, but I have been seeing the light.

Not long ago it hit me hard that I had missed out on my best years of identity searching being in relationships. To this day, I still feel wishy washy about the way I present myself and how I perform my gender. I choose to use they pronouns as a reaction against stereotyped gender norms, sometimes because I am hurt by them but also because I see others around me hurt by them. Some days I feel gross for feeling overtly feminine because I cannot figure out if the root of that need is based on societal influence or not. I do not want to feel wrong in my body but with all the shifts in gender understanding, I think it is hard not to feel a little out of touch. I still bind some days and I wear 'men's' clothing, but I also delve into the hyper feminine and sit in androgyny every once in awhile. I feel more okay with sailing all of these performative aspects while having my Christian faith as a stable foundation. As I build my faith back up, I accept and am reminded that my gender and my biological sex do not matter: the first thing I need to be concerned with is ensuring there is love in the world. That sounds cheesy but it is so true. Queer theology has allowed us to focus on the internal performative actions we perform rather than the external, immediately visible ones. I am consciously accepting that my identity should be founded on my ability to love others and build a spiritual relationship before

solidifying how I perform my gender and because I do not recognise it as the most important part of my identity. I can play with gender. I have more freedom as a result and I think that is what we all want.

I know that this is not the case for everyone. I know that Christianity does not have a place in everyone's lives and so I speak purely for myself when I say that it is important for creating identity. Having a fuller understanding of queer theology and a broader picture of the actions that have led up to now, I am understanding how the ritual of my spiritual practice has allowed me to explore every other kind of practice around it while still coming back to my foundation. What I thought was a limbo between being queer and being Christian was thinking that they could not speak to each other, that my queerness based on changing performed acts and my faith based in ritual were on completely different wavelengths. In reality they are harmonious. ♥

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The Things You Left Behind

Leyla Sutherland

The process of dying is an eruption
an advent and disintegration
the breakage

destruction is preserved (embalmed)

Cured with salt
Healed with salty tears

Perhaps the most frequent – a loss that is not your own but
someone else's
A death that you are adjacent to

You know of this loss; you see it filling others
A strange weight
Like piles and piles of damp laundry
Somewhere between a spring breeze and musty mildew
Somewhere between the earth and the sky
Somewhere between crying for someone you lost and someone
someone else did

health is life in the silence of the organs
when I don't sense my stomach
my heart
or my viscera

The smell of death
Sickly, masked with flowers
Ropey veins under powdered skin

The dying body erupts; it speaks; it comes to us.
Shattering, as the excess is revealed



Video – vimeo.com/241424288

In death bodies are mostly the same
They're gone but here
Something fractured
In her

In us when we saw her
And somewhere in between

That sound of a soul leaving the body
I don't know if I buy it
But the tearing in the fabric of their very materiality
their absolute being

its excess producing an elemental intransigence
a material facet that escapes and haunts the subject.

I want to be haunted
To hear people in empty spaces
For echoes to reverberate inside of me

A deep knowing that they are present
That in some angle of the light we can both be seen

the dying body does not merely haunt
but breaks the subject

The I comes to be a placeholder for that inconceivable excess

never fully located but always open, coming to, protecting,
attacking, stitching, and ripping itself apart.

In death, the body comes to itself precisely as it breaks apart

In this performance, I am exploring several concepts through the lens of the AIDS crisis and the relationship between the body and the corpse, abjection and what remains, closure and divinity. The piece uses sound, focusing on evoking emotion and a collective awareness of a presence/absence.

This performance emerged from a desire to explore death in relation to queerness, temporality and material traces. Following the death of my maternal grandmother, I found myself questioning the permanence of one's identity through memory, and the necessity of "coming out" as a means to affirm one's identity – this affirmation being not just for one's self, but also for the coalescence of one's memory in the mind of another.

I had many questions emerge after my grandmother's death – wondering what the significance of her body, her ashes, her furniture, held in relation to her existence. I began to wonder what it meant to have never "come out" to her. In considering these traces that remained, and in studying Kristeva's concepts of abjection, I became intrigued by the idea behind these traces and the fracturing of the self in the moment of death. The idea that abjection exists overwhelmingly in the recognition of the self as object AND subject, that it "preserves what existed (...) in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" creates this gap that I wanted to inhabit in my performance (Kristeva 10).

I became deeply inspired by several texts, ones that placed queerness on an axis with the body and death, which led towards the conceptualizing of what I call the queer corpse. A concept still in development, I would define the queer corpse as one that forces us to confront our bodies, our identities, our materiality and our temporality. This body is perhaps never seen, but its presence is sensed and its absence is noted. With queerness as a means to bridge binaries, to propose alternatives, to disrupt, the queer corpse

straddles these gaps. It exists as material but also as a concept and pushes us to question our own matter in the performance space.

A text that was especially influential, and from which I drew to create the text for the soundscape of my performance, was Richard Coble's *The Body as Touch: Speaking Death and Dying in Queer Theory and Religion*. This article drew both from the personal and the vastly academic, and touches upon the paradox of speaking of death. As the material body collapses signification, speaking of death effectively obscures the body, which is the very material of death. Coble asks how we can even hold this concept in speech, when the dying body is in a state of collapse (Coble 621).

I wanted to create a performance that would keep these dense, academic writings at the surface while evoking an undeniable sense of mourning, absence, loss. The cathartic processes of mourning, of funerals and of packing up what remains (both in materials and bodily traces) became a focus of the performance, and led me to the need of "objects", items that were not mine, but had once belonged to someone else. Kristeva states, "The various means of purifying the abject – the various catharses – make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art, both on the far and near side of religion" (Kristeva 17). In my performance I aim to remain on the borders of ritual, religion and performance, evoking this process of purification.

The ritualistic wrapping of body and object evokes mummification and embalming – the preservation of something that has already dissipated in so many immaterial ways. In wrapping my objects, pieces of someone else's material existence, I have focused on Butler's concept of performed identity, one solidified through "stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 519). This comes to be understood as a stylization of the body, and so in my performance these "enactments" take shape in the treatment of these objects. What does

it mean to handle objects previously used by someone else? Butler highlights “the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (Butler 519), but of these objects, which speak gender? How do these objects speak to memory and absence? How will a plant survive if it is not watered? What alternative gendered acts, gendered selves, movements, gestures are possible with a finite amount of material?

Another note on the aesthetic of the performance – a fascination with kitsch, comfort, nostalgia. These things sit adjacent to death, mirrored in the hoarding of sentimental objects and memories that stitch together the fabric of a person’s materiality. The use of soft tones and fabrics in contrast with the sterility of saran wrap serves as yet another junction that the corpse, the body, and death straddle. The objective is to evoke strong and unspecific memories of comfort and nostalgia, for the text to wash over, for the presence to be felt.

An important lens through which I wanted to consider this queer corpse was the history of death in the queer community, most specifically in the height of the AIDS crisis. The treatment of bodies at this time and the creation of a “specific kind of dead body that offer[ed] political possibilities for both the concept of a queer body and the broader subject of human death” (Troyer 129). The specific of this corpse as a site on which politics are enacted is sickening and amplifies the complex feelings of disgust and repulsion around death, corpses and illness. Health as demonstrated through the silence of our organs, Coble describes, “the ideal of health is the denial of the finite body, allowing its displacement.” (Coble 624). Coble goes on to state that this denial is no longer possible in the face of death. Denial takes an important part of the grieving process, as well as an important part in how the AIDS epidemic was treated by the Reagan administration. Bodies, identities, do not exist in a vacuum. The context of a corpse within queer history,

within the narrative of HIV/AIDS is undeniable – yet denial is a quintessential part of death itself. These investigations into the changing landscape of the body in the face of AIDS also informed much of my investigation into the sanitation and purity of the corpse, the need to clean even the most abject. This manifested itself within the performance in the use of plastic and clinical costume. Though the explicit conversation of the body and AIDS is not part of the performance, it is part of the process and larger context within which a performance about sexual identity and memory exists.

A final point of investigation for my performance was that of a haunting. I am intrigued and strangely envious of hauntings, of the echoes of selves that seem to resonate inside of different people. I was particularly inspired by a piece by Rebecca Schneider that described one such haunting,

“My ghost, however, was making no academic claims. In fact, there was no body to be situated. Absent, invisible, she stood quietly by my computer. (...) An invisible body makes a strange impression – especially to an academic preoccupied by theories of bodies made explicit. I had no idea who this absent presence was. I had no idea what she wanted. I felt I must be overtired, stressed out, I tried to ignore her, ignore my fear and sleep. But then as suddenly as I’d become aware of her presence, I became aware of her identity – scratch, glitch – she was my mother’s father’s mother.” (Schneider 156)

In my performance I am trying to establish how this haunting occurs, and in what ways we can bring ourselves to be haunted. These objects hold memories and meanings, and in performance perhaps they can be awoken. I am especially intrigued by the stability of the performance in relation to this haunting and found myself seeking out sounds that evoked peace, transcendence, stillness. But death, in all of its absolutism, represents a rupture, in many ways an instability and incessant motion – one of grief and absence but also one of transition for both the dead and those left behind. Johnny Forever captures the difficulty and impossibility of this stillness, stating “The pressure to ‘be still’ within one [identity] or the

other as though each were absolute, stable and singular categories with immutable characteristics is surreal to me” (Forever 123). The idea that the queer corpse proposes is one of constant movement – that stillness is impossible. This performance attempts to capture something that is not here, *someone* who is not here. Who they are is not important, but their absence is noted, their presence is felt. Some of their possessions are here with us and something has to be done – someone must speak, eulogize, mark this “unstill” moment with words that will never fully capture them, their body, their identity; perhaps even obscuring it entirely. ♥

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There's Still Time Sister

A Zine About Heartbreak

Rachel Kerr-Lapsley

There is “— MOTUS —” on page 80 more Jewish than a broken heart. Inherent in my DNA – האבה הנשב מילשוריב, next year in Jerusalem, we repeat every year come spring to retell the first great exodus of the Jewish people that would establish a trajectory of movement. We know we won't be in Jerusalem next year and yet each year we repeat: *Lashanah haba'ah biy'rushalaim*. Each spring we are still wandering; a utopic vision of a repaired identity unfulfilled, hearts left cracked.

Jackie is everything I missed.

This zine is a collage of what I yearned for and what happened. Jackie 60 was a homeland of creation and queerness. In my imagined past Jackie embodies the New York that was, to use Paul Preciado's words, “the sprawling pharmacopornographic empire... a vortex of networks of emerging critical and political strategies that transcended frontiers and languages in their attempt to resist and dismantle the dominant order” (Testo Junkie 2013, 334) I was born too late for a very powerful party.

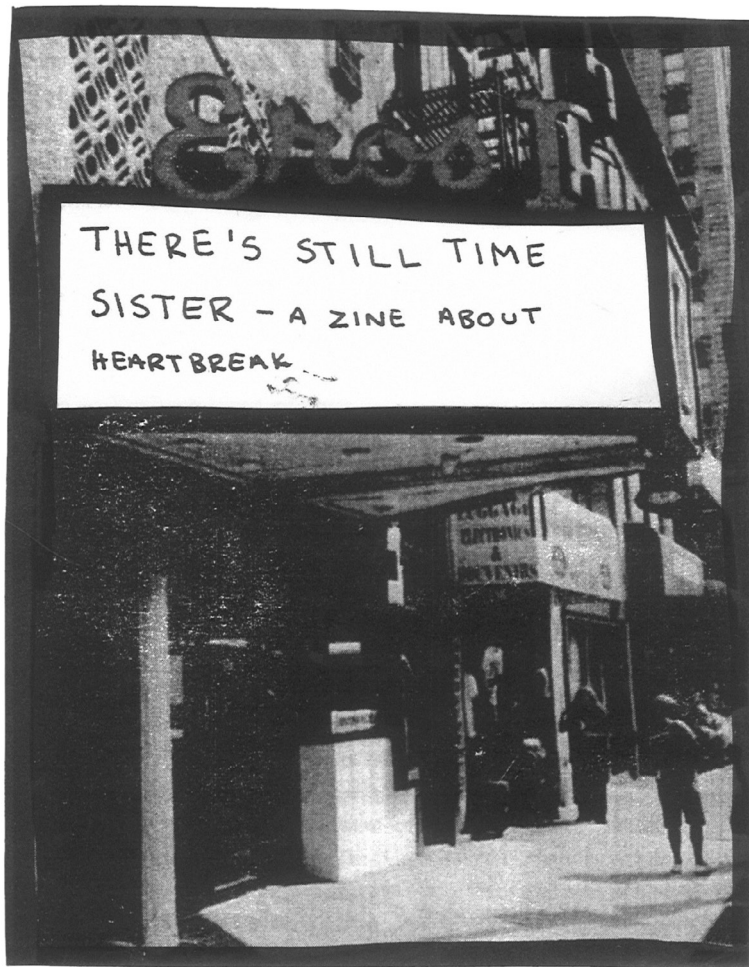
My queerness, all queerness, is as diasporic as my Jewishness. They weave through each other and become indistinguishable (dis)identities. Shattered pieces of my queer/Jewish heart are held by moments left in the past. In a Jerusalem where the gender that is “put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly with anxiety” (Butler 1998, 531) is danced and drunk and fucked away. I want to experiment with the city, with the body. I want to be wild. I want

to feel at home but move so quickly through space and time I never have to buy furniture. I want a new cartography for understanding the past. I want to go to a really good fucking party.

How glamorous an experience to be surrounded by people so deeply confronted with displacement and mortality that they have permission to love intensely in the nightclubs that substitute for Zion.

Stand on the shoulders of Jan Smither, of Laam Hae, of David Bell, of Chi Chi Valenti, of Bobby Miller, of Nan Goldin, who shifted your insides the first time you went to New York. You remember the footage of Mark Lowe Fisher's corpse being carried to city hall. David Wojnarowicz, lips threaded shut. Sue Golding. The Velvet Underground. Jane Jacobs. José Esteban Muñoz. Paul B Preciado. Judith Butler.

I will rebuild this party and come so close to fucking, touching, and tasting it I will feel my insides fill up. I will be home. I will be hom. I will be ho. I will be h. I will be. ♥



Jackie 60

Jackie 60 (1990–1999) was a famous weekly party held every Tuesday in New York's Meatpacking District. Founded by DJ Johnny Dynell, writer Chi Chi Valenti, fashion designer Kitty Boots and dancer/choreographer Richard Move, who were later (c. 1995), joined by Brian Butterick AKA Hattie Hathaway. It served gay, fetish-dressed, straight, transvestite and poetic clubgoers for a decade. The party was so successful that it allowed Johnny and Chi Chi to purchase the nightclub, "Bar Room 432" from Anthony DePalma in 1994. They renamed the club "Mother."

• **Jackie 60 Source:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackie_60?oldid=741007291

Text and image sources

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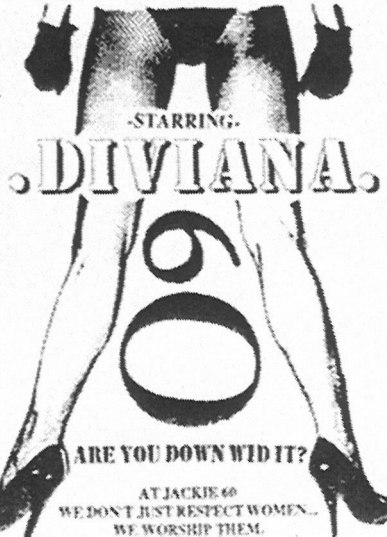
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"To be blonde and conscious in Amerika is to be in a constant state of rage." Mad Dog Domination

F.O.A.B.P. FEAR OF A BLONDE PUSSY



BODY BY MUTT DOMINATION

ARE YOU DOWN WID IT?

AT JACKIE 60
WE DON'T JUST RESPECT WOMEN...
WE WORSHIP THEM.

"The art of the future will be the overthrow of situations, or nothing." — Guy Debord, 1952

LIPSTICK TRACES THE SITUATIONIST MANIFESTO



"As the 1960s, it's a far better thing to be a school like me than the side of a fascist like Constantine." Debauched photo of Christine Keeler by Situationist J.C. Sartre, upon the marriage of Princess Anne-Marie of Denmark to King Constantine II of Greece. — C.R. no. 8, August 1964

TRASH METAL



60

Sept. 10-16

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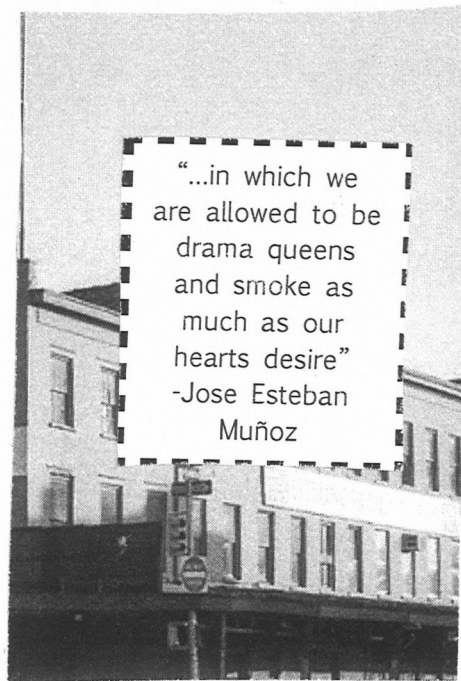
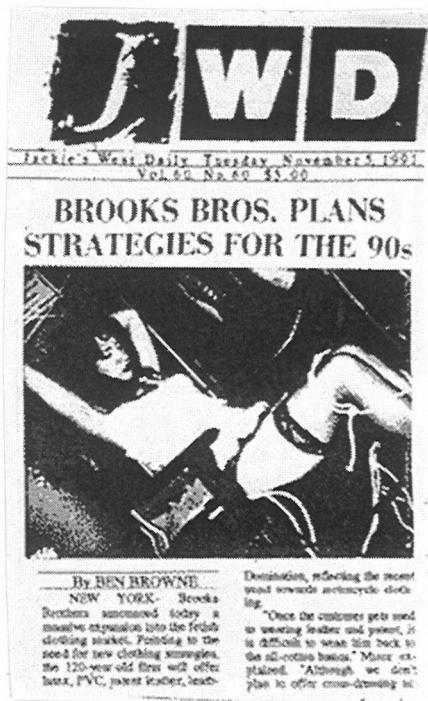
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JACKIE 60 RE-OPENS

DUELLING BANKHEADS
TO HOST 60 MINUTES



BRAND NEW JACKIE 60 SEASON BEGINS TUES. SEPT. 17





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