

LOS ANGELES QUEER RESISTANCE ISSUE NO. 2



We invite you to help us:



We are a Los Angeles based collective of activists, queer punks, glamarchists, anarchoqueers, and whatever-the-fuck-we-



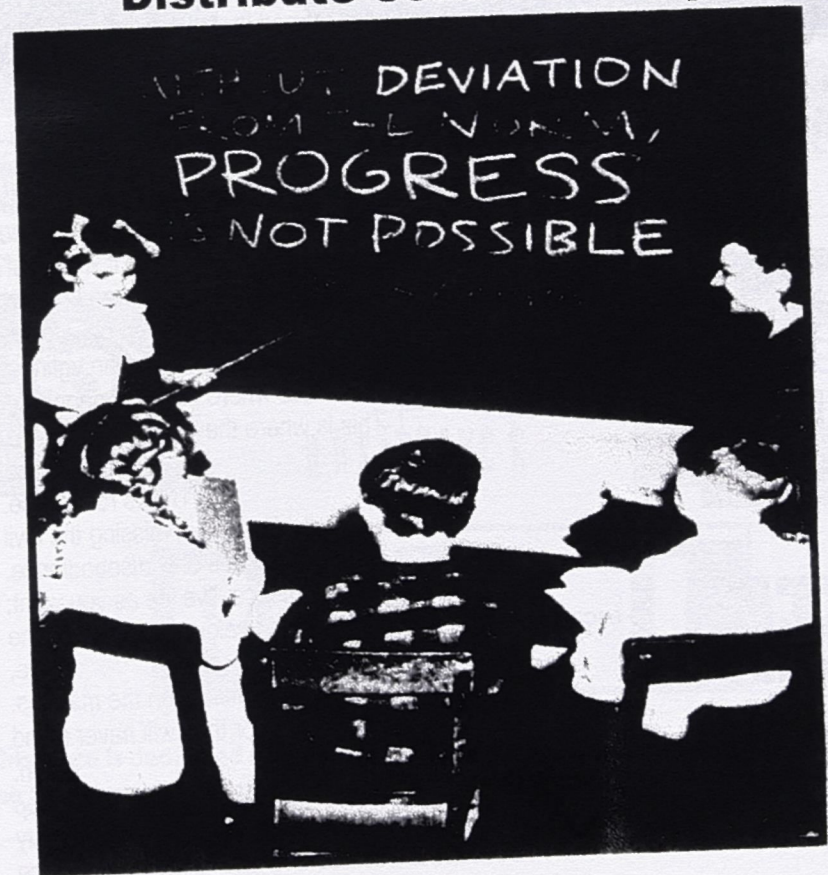
feel-like that-day seeking kindred spirits to build queer resistance. **JOIN US!** calling for all visual art, scribbles, rants, poems, essays, and whatever else you got!

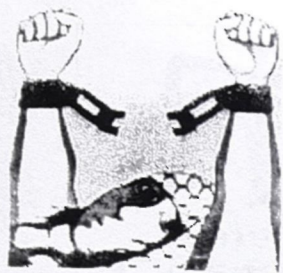
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# On Resistance

We rise up, we resist  
 We never stand down, we stand up in direct contradiction  
 To remain, until...  
 Rage against disenfranchisement, rage against gentrification  
 Brew in anger, never allow for satisfaction.  
 No utopia exists, struggle is the utopia  
 Struggle against conformity, struggle to be different, struggle to  
 struggle,  
 Fight the matrix which eats your brain  
 Zombie apocalypse at your front door.  
 Resist is to refuse; refuse orders, refuse to be told who you are;  
 Design yourself, DIY.



But it's just a word, speech is cheap  
 It is the life we live that matters,  
 Fight back, never give up  
 Fight is to survive.  
 Survive is an unbearable word, to not live is an escape...  
 Exist outside the images burned in a television screen you  
 watch each night

The resistance is faded, it has disappeared into nooks and  
 cranny,  
 Scathed with state brutality.  
 If we resist, we do so to be brave, we do so to be free.  
 We are only free if we resist, but can we be free if we resist?  
 No resistance, only freedom – reads a sign  
 Posted on a fence,  
 Under the street lights of urban ugliness  
 This is where the poor people lie,  
 This is where they piss; in the corner  
 This is freedom.  
 This is resistance.



This is civil disobedience, missing the civil  
 So it's only disobedience.  
 Disobedience, live life as you want,  
 To escape the status quo, escape normalcy as defined by the  
 state,  
 To float on the outside, on the margins.  
 The marginalized are the resistance for they will never stand  
 down,  
 They must only rise up  
 Not out of some fucked morality  
 But because sometimes there is no other choice



This piece is dedicated to all the people who are marginalized, who are homeless,  
 who are queer, who have no other choice but to resist with their bodies every day.  
 Daring to be queer, and to engage in queer relationships is resistance.

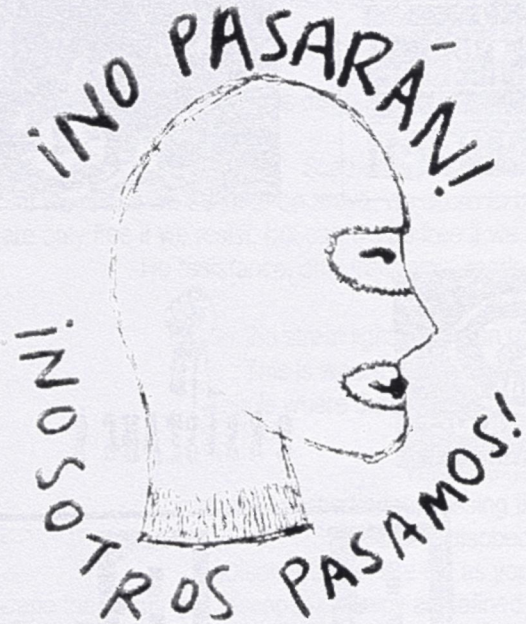
*This generation has given up on growth. They're just hoping for survival.*

- Penelope Spheeris (Filmmaker, "The decline of western civilization", "Suburbia")



## **Pussyriot: Punk rebellion and why being queer is one of the most punk rock things you can do**

"Punk Prayer: Holy Mother, Chase Putin Away" Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Ekaterina Samutsevich three members of the russian feminist punk band "Pussy Riot" sang from the altar of the "Cathedral of christ the savior" in Moscow. They were immediately arrested and charged with "Hooliganism" a charge that carries 7 years imprisonment. A member of the church present at the time claimed she experienced "Moral suffering." The performance, song were an act of defiance and statement against Vladimir Putin.



"We understood that to achieve change, including in the sphere of women's rights, it's not enough to go to Putin and ask for it. This is a rotten, broken

acts of political protest are nothing new. On 06/07/1977 Malcom McLaren , manager of the band the "Sex pistols" and their third record label by that time, Virgin records, arranged to charter a private boat and have the Sex Pistols perform while sailing down the River Thames, passing Westminster Pier and the Houses of Parliament two days before Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee celebrations...many individuals associated with the band including McLaren were arrested. Iggy pop performing "The Passenger" on a manchester TV show in 1977 and cursing, Bikini kill a feminist punk band encouraged a female-centric environment at their shows, urging women to come to the front of the stage and handed out lyric sheets to them, December 2, 1994 Pansy division a queercore band from San Francisco opened for "Green Day" during their "Dookie" tour. The "Advocate" would later interview Billie Joel (lead singer of "Green day") on his choice for opening band:

*Since that was your first record for Warner Bros., did they freak out about your choice of an opening act, especially when they had songs like "Fuck Like Bunnies" and "Ring Of Joy"?*

*Billie Joe: [Laughs] "No, nobody said anything. For us, we wanted to bring someone out who truly defines what punk rock is and show some sort of diversity. It would have been to obvious to go out with a band like Pennywise. And considering where we came from, we felt like we owed it to the scene and to our original fans. We ended up getting letters from kids saying that Pansy Division opening for us changed their lives."*



*The couple views the wreckage  
And dreams of home sweet home,  
They'd almost paid the mortgage,  
Then the system dropped its bomb.*

**"Crass" - "Systematic Death"**

Punk music has always been a statement against the ills of society, specifically of complacent existence stultifying day to day living with no real intent to escape. The kind of existence that leads to

indifference on the world, your fellow man. It's hard to determine which came first for this author, being a young NOFX listening punk, or was it attraction to members of the same sex? They say people are wired either towards altruistic existence or a selfish one. Punk music, it's rebellion is a statement against perceived issues with society, the things which oppress minorities, women, homosexuals.

homocore  
homopunk  
outpunk  
queercore

*I'm 100% gay and about 20% in gay society.*

*Sometimes I'm more comfortable in punk rock clubs than gay clubs. There are just as many rules I rebel from in the gay world as the straight one.*

*I'm gaily incorrect, but I do vote gay.*

- John Waters

The thing about the gay world in itself is that it has it's own "norms and guidelines." When this author came out of the closet his mother, in an effort to show she cared without directly acknowledging it asked a friend of hers who was of the non heterosexual persuasion to take assist. "You have to change who you are, you have to change your clothes, you can't do this punk thing anymore, you have to know where all the gay clubs are, where all of the best places to eat are...."

So I chose to rebel against classic ideas of what a subculture felt I should be. I believe the punk scene, it's defiance against conformity and it's advocacy on groups that are marginalized in society spoke to me. 2,800 pages long. That was the length of the formal charges in the indictment against "Pussy riot."

The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill I condemned Pussy Riot's actions as "blasphemous", saying that the "Devil has laughed at all of us ... We have no future if we allow mocking in front of great shrines, and if some see such mocking as some sort of valor, as an expression of political protest, as an acceptable action or a harmless joke."

*"Woman is a holy myth, a gift of mans expression, she's sweet defenseless, Golden-eyed, gift of god's repression"*

- "Crass" - "Smother love"

The reason a political act is viewed as a "Harmless joke" is because of Patriarchy. It seems that society by the large is willing to dismiss actions by members or actions taken upon members of oppressed classes as being less than they are. 05/10/12 Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney apologizes for "pranks" against a young gay man, "pranks" occurring in 1965, where Mitt Romney took part in holding down a young gay man they presumed to be "effeminate" and cut his hair as he cried and screamed for help. Ultimately the price, paid, a two year sentence seemed like more of a message than an actual breaking of any law as described the victims in the incident, and part of the source of protest the church themselves.

*On Friday night, the Russian Orthodox church repeated its criticism of the band's "blasphemous" protest, which it said displayed "crude hostility towards millions of people" but called on state authorities "to show mercy to the people convicted within the framework of the law, in the hope that they will refrain from repeating blasphemous actions".*

- "The Guardian UK 08/17/12

The same day the ruling against Pussy riot was handed down another court decision occurred. The moscow city court upheld it's ruling to ban gay pride celebrations in the city for a century. Both actions are the act of a conservative state which chooses to throw its weight at any group which chooses to challenge traditional ideas of a Male centered Heteronormative state.

Speaking out, challenging societal ideas, defending the rights of women, defending the rights of gays, saying Nazi punks fuck off, protecting a woman's right to decide what happens with her body, standing for oppressed people of the world, that is what the punk scene means for this author. And that is why, I stand a proud queer punk in the face of a society that would prefer to have me silent.....

....Zero



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## On Thinking About Privilege...

and all the "isms" (sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, abled-ism, and the list goes on, and on...)

One of our OLA Principles of Solidarity states:

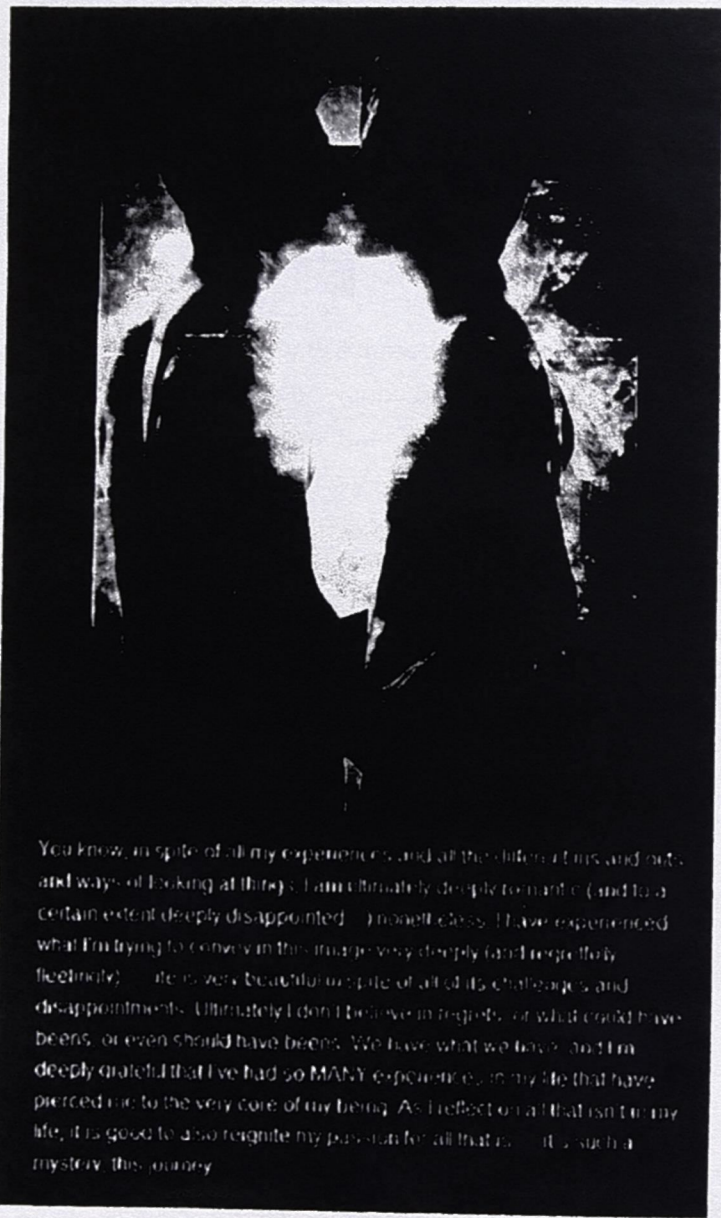
"Recognizing individuals' inherent privilege and the influence it has on all interactions." So, in the declaration of our movement we are asked to recognize and think about its influence on all interactions, so it's not a trivial issue or something we should dismiss. Privilege is very difficult to think about and recognize because it masquerades as the "norm" -- by this I mean it's difficult to recognize a privilege when it is part and parcel of one's unconscious, assumed cultural acculturation, what one sees as the "normal" state of things. It is also difficult to think about, because when one's privilege is called out, or challenged, there is a tendency to adopt a defensive posture. This is normal, since "privilege" by its inherent definition assumes some form of benefit, and who wants to give up a benefit? Nonetheless, if we are serious about wanting to create "another world" that is not full of oppression and marginalization of whole groups of people, I believe it is imperative that each of us looks at how privilege interacts with and exists in our own life framework, experience and interactions with others, to see how we can really come together and create something different, "another world".

I would like to share some of my experiences in being both marginalized and also privileged in other areas to hopefully start some dialogue and thinking about this. I believe that none of us are free from experiencing privilege in both of those forms, and therefore examining this stuff, thinking and talking about it from a non-defensive posture can, I believe, only improve our relationships with each other and strengthen our movement. So what follows are some reflections on my own experiences -- just 2 examples, so the scope is limited, but I hope it can generate some reflection and non-defensive discussion.

### \*\* ON my own marginalization via heterosexism:

So as everyone knows, I am a somewhat gender inappropriate homosexual man, and throughout my life people and society have been very

straight forward and vocal in pointing this out to me (and that would not be in generally loving, supportive ways!). And while there are numerous areas of privilege that heterosexuals take for granted (like not constantly having it pointed out to you in both unsubtle and subtle ways that you are a deviant, abnormal, disgusting, etc.) a specific area that is probably not in the



You know, in spite of all my experiences and all the differences and out- and ways of looking at things, I am ultimately deeply romantic (and to a certain extent deeply disappointed). Nonetheless, I have experienced what I'm trying to convey in this image very deeply (and regrettably, fleetingly). Life is very beautiful in spite of all of its challenges and disappointments. Ultimately I don't believe in regrets, or what could have been, or even should have been. We have what we have, and I'm deeply grateful that I've had so MANY experiences in my life that have pierced me to the very core of my being. As I reflect on all that isn't in my life, it is good to also reignite my passion for all that is... it's such a mystery, this journey.

immediate issue I have to put some serious thought into: Is anyone looking? am I in a safe public space where I can do this? will I get called names,

foreground of any heterosexual's awareness, is the ease and just take it-for-granted ability you all have in displaying public affection to your partner/ lover/ girlfriend/ boyfriend /date/etc. It's just something that you can do without having to give it a whole lot of thought. That's a privilege, one you probably don't think about a whole lot. For me, on the other hand, a holding his hand, giving him a warm embrace, a kiss, etc. becomes an

threatened, beat up, etc.? Imagine what having to process all of that does to the ability to have spontaneous intimacy. Imagine that you've just been spontaneously loving to someone you love very much only to be confronted with name calling and the threat of physical violence... and imagine how you each then feel about each other, and yourself, after you've been called disgusting, pervert, fag, etc. That shit fucks people up. As a heterosexual couple, that's just not something you have to think about in expressing intimacy with each other in a public space. That's a privilege. I'm not saying that it is bad that you have that "privilege" – everyone should be able to be free to express their love in a safe way. What I am asking you to do is recognize the fact that you have that privilege and no homosexual couple does. When I talk about your heterosexual privilege, I'm not attacking you personally, I am asking you to recognize my experience and the fact that I've been marginalized in an aspect of "normal" activity that you simply take for granted. Please don't be dismissive about the fact that that kind of marginalization, that experience, has been very hurtful and destructive to my life. And if you are a "progressive", a "radical" or even a "revolutionary" participant in this movement, I would ask you to take a stand in support of me. Some of that it pretty obvious, like supporting LGBTQ rights. Some of it would be a lot more subtle, like not having an "ick" response if you see two guys kissing, not laughing at a "fag" joke, and maybe even going one step further and telling the person making the "fag" joke that you find that offensive and oppressive. Maybe challenging people who do not make space feel safe for queers – and that goes beyond simply not allowing "fag bashing" in a physical sense, but also not allowing it in an emotional sense. And maybe think about your own internal responses to the idea of two men loving each other, or having sex with each other – why do you maybe think that's weird, or not natural, or "icky" and where did those ideas come from. Again, I'm not attacking you personally (many of my best allies are heterosexual individuals) – I'm asking you to really give some thought to how heterosexual privilege in general works in our society and culture, and what we need to do as a movement to counter that. And when I point out something I see as "heterosexually privileged" I'd ask you to think about it and consider how I might be experiencing it, rather than how you are experiencing it. No need to get defensive – and I'm well aware of the fact that while I directly experience marginalization in this area of my experience, I'm certainly privileged in many other areas of my life, so I don't get a free pass either...

## \*\* ON my own experience of privilege:

For me, one of the many problems with Identity Politics, is that in my view, none of us experience a single or monolithic identity, and therefore privilege and marginalization can't simply be reduced to a single experience/ factor/ identity (ie. being homosexual, a woman, a person of color, able bodied, etc.). One of the things that a less able bodied person's posts really brought to mind for me are all the privileges I take for granted as being an able bodied



individual – like my ease of movement and access to space is so normal to me, that I simply take it for granted and don't give much thought to it in actions I plan, things I participate in, don't often provide much thought to the needs/experiences of those who are not able-bodied. That's how privilege works – it's pretty insidious, it's often manifested via unconscious neglect, it's so easy to not think about. So when someone does bring it up, it's really easy to get up on the defensive about it (I didn't

mean to marginalize you!) and taking it seriously also means you've got to get into action about it, and that's a lot of work. Far easier to just ignore those individuals, because making accommodations can sometimes seem awfully difficult and require a lot of extra work. And there are all sorts of ways to justify that – I know, I've done it. This is the challenge I face in confronting my own privilege. Confronting one's privilege and doing something about it requires some thought and work ... it's easy to say, well I don't have time for that, it's too hard to accommodate, well really, it's just for a few individuals anyway, so is it worth it, etc.



See, I'm finding that it's much easier to challenge people on their manifestation of privilege against me, than I am in responding to my own privilege! Sigh.... So what is one to do?

I would like to suggest that a first step that we can all take, is

that when someone calls us out on exercising privilege, it would be really good to step back and really listen, and really hear their experience. Allowing people to be heard is an incredibly important first step in counteracting privilege, and educating ourselves. Allowing people to be heard and acknowledging them to be heard also empowers them, and that's incredibly important. If all we can do is acknowledge that we have heard the criticism, concern and take it seriously, that's a really important first step. I am certainly going to try to listen better – I often get so wrapped up in my own experience of being marginalized, that I forget there are other marginalizations as well. I am also trying to be real aware that if my initial reaction is one of "getting defensive" I'd really better step back and take a look, lest I be defending something that on further reflection, discussion and examination may really be me not wanting to examine my own privilege.

This shit is complicated, but I think if we really want to build "another world" it's something we all have to take very seriously and continue to educate ourselves about. I would also like to consider that sometimes we need to understand that people need to be "shrill" or "loud" about insisting on their marginalization – it takes a toll on one to constantly have the experience of having to fight against "the norm" and it makes one angry.

I like to think of myself as having given a lot of thought and experience to this stuff, but I recognize as I hear other voices, from other perspectives and communities, I still have a whole fucking lot to learn. I would like to thank all those individuals who bring this shit to my attention. So, as the old adage goes, I'm striving for "progress not perfection." I hope we can keep an honest and thoughtful dialogue about privilege going – we ALL have nothing to lose but our chains.....*Jonh W*



## Poetry Sextion

with much love, resistance, horniness, smiles, and other junk

### Gio

Hello beautiful readers! For those not acquainted with their modern poets, I have included one of my personal favorites out there: Kim Addonizio. Though she is not queer, as far as we know, I feel it's very important to include her "Feeling Sexy" piece, not only because it's fucking awesome but because it covers one of the most important aspects of queer resistance: sexual liberation. The right to be able say how you really feel down there without being deemed a "slut, whore, bitch, etc...". We have all felt as Sexy as Addonizio (if not sexxxier), and we should embrace these beautiful natural feelings, not bury them under socially-constructed shame and puritanism.

### Queer

by Frank Bidart (1939- ) (American)

*Lie to yourself about this and you will  
forever lie about everything.*

Everybody already knows everything

so you can  
lie to them. That's what they want.

But lie to yourself, what you will

lose is yourself. Then you  
turn into them.

\*

For each gay kid whose adolescence

was America in the forties or fifties  
the primary, the crucial

scenario

forever is coming out—  
or not. Or not. Or not. Or not. Or not.

\*

Involuted velleities of self-erasure.

Quickly after my parents  
died, I came out. Foundational  
narrative

designed to confer existence.

If I had managed to come out to my  
mother, she would have blamed not  
me, but herself.

*The door through which you were  
shoved out  
into the light*

*was self-loathing and terror.*

\*

Thank you, terror!

You learned early that adults' genteel  
fantasies about human life

were not, for you, life. You think sex

is a knife  
driven into you to teach you that.

### Feeling Sexy

by Kim Addonizio (1954- ) (American)

There's an arrow wound in my amygdala  
leaking honey into my parietal lobe.  
It makes me want to say things  
disallowed from serious poetry  
and employ instead the lexicon of porn spam.  
I want to make crude statements involving  
fluids.

Obscenity, expletive, body part.  
Imperative verb, possessive pronoun, body  
part.

I want push to show up at shove's office.  
I want to change my address  
to last night's wet dream,  
I want a plot in that cemetery.  
Come and unearth me anytime.



\*\*\*Hey people don't forget, if you want YOUR beautiful words and poetry on these pages, don't be shy and send us your stuff to [laqrzine@hotmail.com](mailto:laqrzine@hotmail.com) ☺

You are a stranger to me, bright one  
Something shines from within you  
which attracts me



(Moths drawn to the porch light in the evening;  
wings flutter, beat wildly, and  
they die)

A passing infatuation, maybe.  
OK, so we take it from there and it leads nowhere...  
so what?

(the light of the moon, and the stars  
seek me, but psses through me,  
goes nowhere)

So, in the end  
maybe our lives lead elsewhere,  
or perhaps, even somewhere.

(the river flows towards the ocean,  
but it comes back again,  
leaves again....  
never for elsewhere, or even somewhere)

... jonh w

## **Artist Hector Silva Interview:** (by Gio)

Hector Silva's art is an eclectic mix of everything that Hector is: Queer, Latino, Politically Conscious, Amorous etc... I don't want to keep running my mouth praising his art, you should really check them out yourself!! I asked Hector for the privilege of an interview, which he happily agreed to through e-mail. Hector gives us an insight on what makes him and his art so different (personally, I've never seen anything so blunt and beautiful) in this interview!

### **1. Can you talk about your childhood/ upbringing? Where are you from Mr. Silva?**

A. I am from Mexico i grew up in a small town, Ocotlan, in Jalisco near Guadalajara. At 17, I moved to the US. As a child in Mexico, I studied up to the 5th grade, but i had to quit in order to work to help my family, but i have been self-educated since then. My father was a musician and a taxi-driver and my mom was a home-maker. There were 11 of us siblings. I had 5 sisters and one brother survive, but 4 of my siblings did not live past infancy.

### **2. What inspired you to create that art that you make?**

A. Many things: my culture, politics, being gay, being an immigrant. struggling to make ends meet, dreams of success, injustice, the struggles of different peoples, sexy men and beauty. Let's not forget beauty.

### **3. Your art carries a beautifully strong Latino/ Chicano & Queer presence, can you talk to us about that?**

A. As i said before being latino and queer we can really disappear. i think my art works against that disappearance. We can have Latino presence, but queerness is hidden. Or we can have queerness, but it's always white. When I insist on both, that breaks a silence. That gets attention.

### **4. Latin@ art has a history of being presented in the streets as murals & other forms, do you think we'll one day see a Silva piece follow in the streets of LA?**

A. Sure why not. i can almost vision my art in a high building i am working on make it happen

### **5. Any thoughts/ comments on the Queer Movement/ Community? Where do you see the future of the Queer Community going (if anywhere)?**

A. Now that we've had some success in the same-sex marriage and gays in the military issues, which is a very conservative agenda, I would like to see the more renegade aspects of queer culture become more prominent. For example, the transgender community has made a lot of strides. Maybe more discussions of polyamory and other ways of bonding, a deeper critique of monogamy. And as always how queerness intersects with issues of class, , gender, nationality, race, of course, and other categories of otherness. And of course more sex, more queer sex we haven't even imagined yet.

### **6. What do you do when you're not working on art?**

A. I am always working around my art, either promoting it doing exhibitions stores to sell it, networking. As a self-employed person, I am always at work.

i guess what i do most is look around me for my next image, for that next inspiration.

### **7. When is your next gallery showing?**

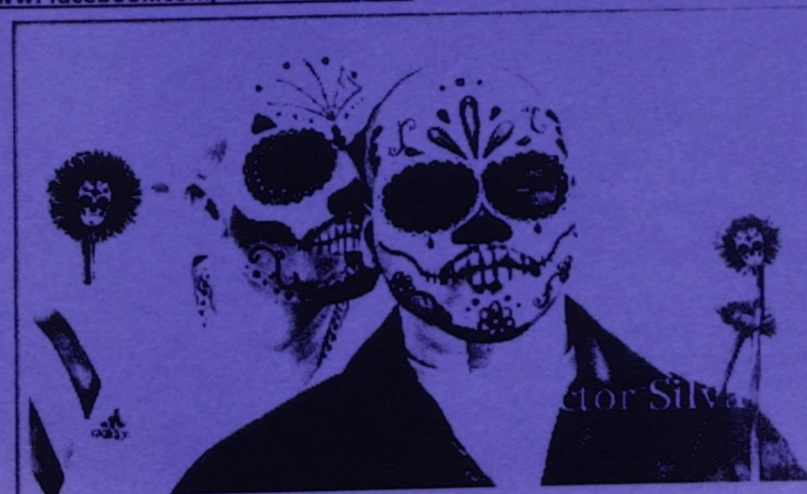
A. My solo show just ended. for now i am in a few group shows. I have an upcoming Dia de los Muertos show at Tia Chucha's cultural center in Sylmar on October 7.

### **8. Any final thoughts/ comments/ things you'd like to say?**

A. As I'm getting older I feel like all the young queer Latino/as that are coming up are my children. I just want them to keep their inspiration alive, and to keep fighting their place in the world and for justice for all people.

Find Hector on the internet here:

<http://www.facebook.com/artisthectorsilva>



# I Read this fucking book!



## Insult and the Making of the Gay Self by Dider Eribon

This is a brilliantly written and important book for any male homosexual who is seeking to better understand the formation of his identity. Didier Eribon provides a fascinating perspective on and extensive information about our history and how to think about our place in society and our relationship with ourselves and each other. This is a scholarly work, but well worth the effort!

As a biographer of Michel Foucault, Didier is of course interested in the formation of the "homosexual identity" and provides a very thorough and perceptive discussion on the whole social constructionist perspective and a very thoughtful analysis of both the strengths and limits in what I consider to be the "Queer Theory" approach to understanding ourselves. The book begins with Didier's discussion on how INSULT is the basis of the homosexual's first recognition of himself. As one comes to recognize that "I am" who is being named by the INSULT ("faggot", "homo" etc.), one must immediately determine how to deal with one's own interior "secret" recognition that the insult applies to

How Faggot  
Created &  
Informed MY  
world...

and then  
becomes a  
call to action  
and a NEW  
SELF!

Review of  
this book...

A brilliant,  
highly  
recommended  
read!

me and negotiate how to navigate this "secret" through the heteronormative world. Thus, one's initial self-recognition is defined by this difference from the existing order (what is defined as natural, normal, expected and good) and this recognition is by INSULT. It is not simply different: it is perverted, unnatural, sick, the butt of a joke, and for a boy, the worst-of-worst insults that can be thrown at you. So this is where we start - with the recognition that "I am" a member of this most despised and despicable group. Didier then goes on to provide some roadmaps on how the "gay self" expands and actualizes itself through understanding, resisting, negotiating, and challenging this reality.

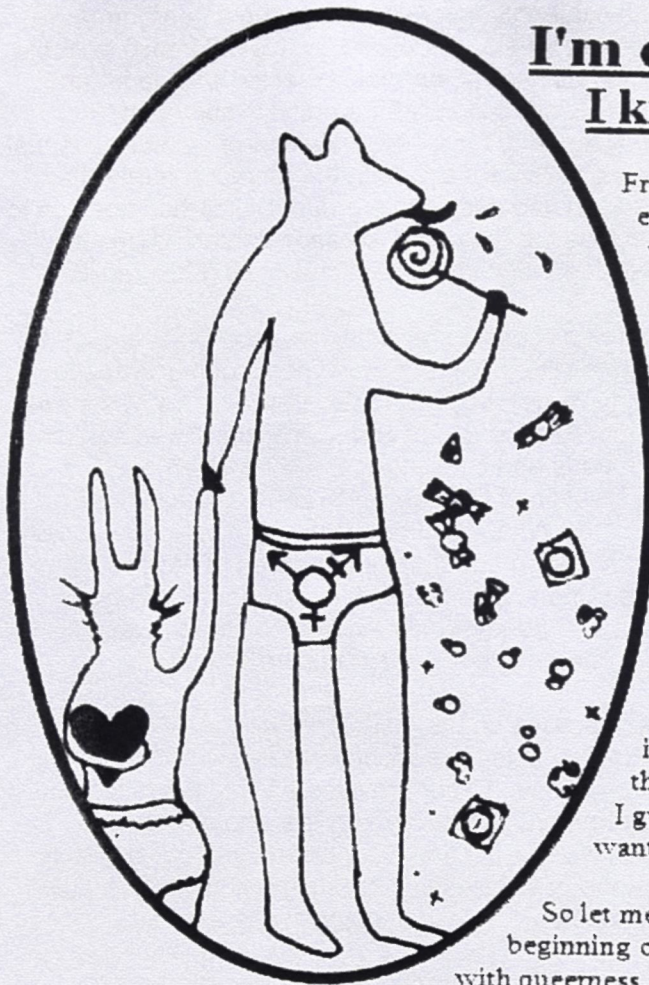
The middle portion of the book discusses the initial construction of the homosexual identity through the literature and movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries (primarily Wilde, Proust and Gide). While this was slow-going for me, it contained important concepts and history that I was not fully familiar with. Didier both supports and challenges the proposition that homosexual identity was a creation of the early 19th century discourses around medicine and psychiatry. What was most interesting to me personally, was Didier's considerable discussion about the intersection of concepts, contradictions and spaces around a virile, assimilated homosexual versus the effeminate homosexual who is a "dandy" and navigates on the fringes of normal society and within a differentiated "gay subculture."

The final section of the book focuses on the theoretical work of Michel Foucault and its development within the historical realities of the 70's sexual revolution and gay rights movements. Didier provides a very interesting and useful European (especially French) perspective on the whole American discourse of Queer Theory. This final section, very clearly and passionately laid out, is an exploration of the possibilities for creating a new homosexual identity and politics and its potential for changing society as a whole.

Didier's book was both intellectually and emotionally fulfilling for me and I recommend it with enthusiasm. I will end with a direct quote from the book which I believe very nicely illustrates Didier's perspective:

*"And so, at the end of this look at Foucault's writings, we find ourselves back at our starting place: where personal experience is the crucible for theoretical and political inspiration. In that crucible we can surely find explanations for the various hesitations, evolutions, and limitations of Foucault's thought on gay issues. We can also understand something of their ability to startle us: what is played out in his thought is the existence of individuals shaped by the entire history of homosexuality, a history of subjugation, but also of resistance and of a consistent heterotopic impulse that encourages gay people to invent different, improbable, unforeseen ways of life -- or at least to be continually wondering about their invention."*  
(page 333)





## I'm queer. I know this.

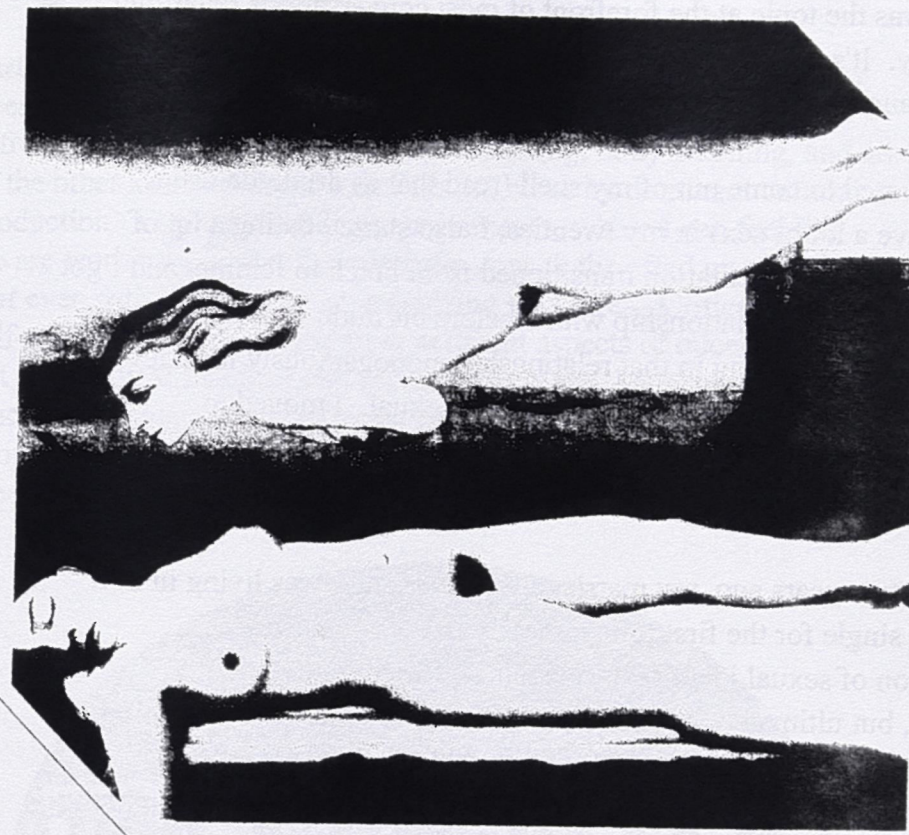
Frequently however, I experience some unease when laying claim to a queer identity. Why? Because I am a cis woman, and yeah, I date mostly cis dudes. I was even married to a heterosexual cis man. If the radical queer elite ever found out, I could be run out of town! Oh wait, that's some privilege-guilt-induced-paranoia right there, and I guess, that is what I want to talk about.

So let me start at the beginning of my relationship with queerness.

I was a pretty fucking lucky teenager. Sure, I was never comfortable in my own acne-afflicted skin, and I even had some pretty serious plans to end it all when I was 17, but I did have an escape route. That escape route was queerness. I was privileged to grow up in a 'liberal' city – Portland, OR to be exact. Portland in the late nineties was alive with grassroots organizing, protest, and alternative cultural enterprise. In the Spring of 1998, at the age of fifteen, my friends and I had already marked out difference as a point of pride, but we were just discovering politics.

One of the spots that we hung out at was the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center. SMYRC was awesome; they had a copy machine, a pool table, some old couches – it was a teenage anarchist's paradise.

Politically, rejecting normativity in all of its forms was very attractive to me, but sexually, I was pretty clueless. I was actually fairly asexual in retrospect, but I had a butch presentation, and dated a few girls – which was both fun and terrifying.



Eventually, I decided to go to college, which I felt like a bit of a sell out for. I would have preferred a global revolution take place, the pavement of every other street ripped up and turned into communal agricultural space, and education made accessible to everyone regardless of age, standardized test scores, or financial means. But that didn't happen, so I took out a bunch of loans and went to college, thinking that it was my surest bet in the quest for stability in my life.

My experience in college felt extremely normalizing. Couching fluid human experience into poorly understood precepts of "identity

politics” and theory by a mass of over-stressed, over-sexed, and over-privileged twenty-somethings had the somewhat ironic effect of making fixed identities the norm. Who one dated, or would potentially date, was the topic at the forefront of most conversations regarding identity. It's not so surprising I suppose, as I too spent a lot of time gauging who would be most likely to fuck me during college.

As I started to come out of my shell (read that as drink, do drugs, and have a lot of sex) in my twenties, I also started dating a lot of cis guys. My presentation transitioned from butch to femme, and I got into a long-term relationship with a hetero cis dude who I eventually married. After being in that relationship monogamously for a few years, I started joking that I was an ex-bisexual. I moved to Chicago, where I no longer had strong ties to a queer community, and eventually started identifying as straight.

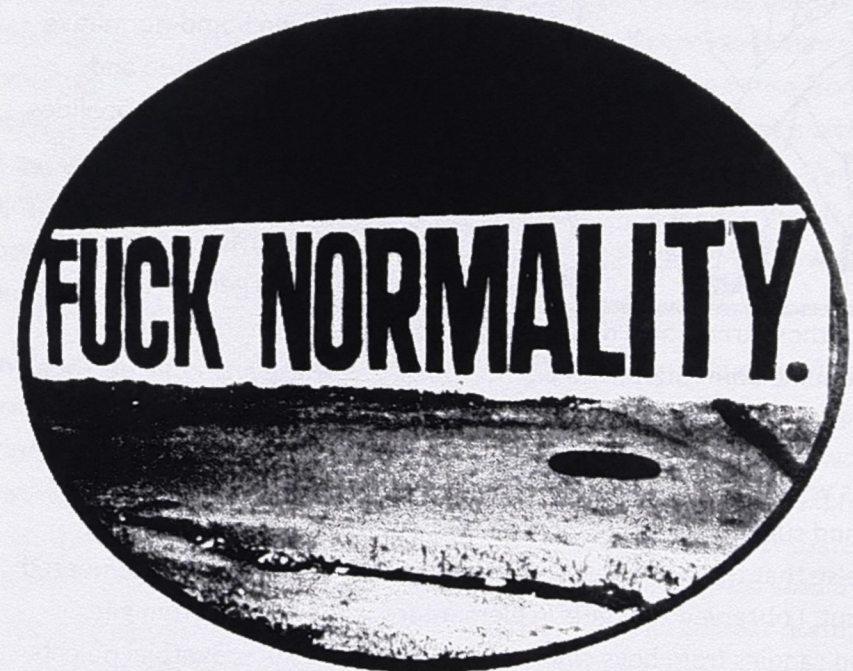
Cut to two years ago, my marriage was over and I was living in LA. Being single for the first time in nearly five years raised the question of sexual identity once again. I flirted with a lot of ladies, but ultimately, found that I was not very interested in dating women. However, I never felt comfortable saying that I was heterosexual either. Sure, the removal of norms was what brought me to queerness, but I always worried that my queerness was a sham in some way.



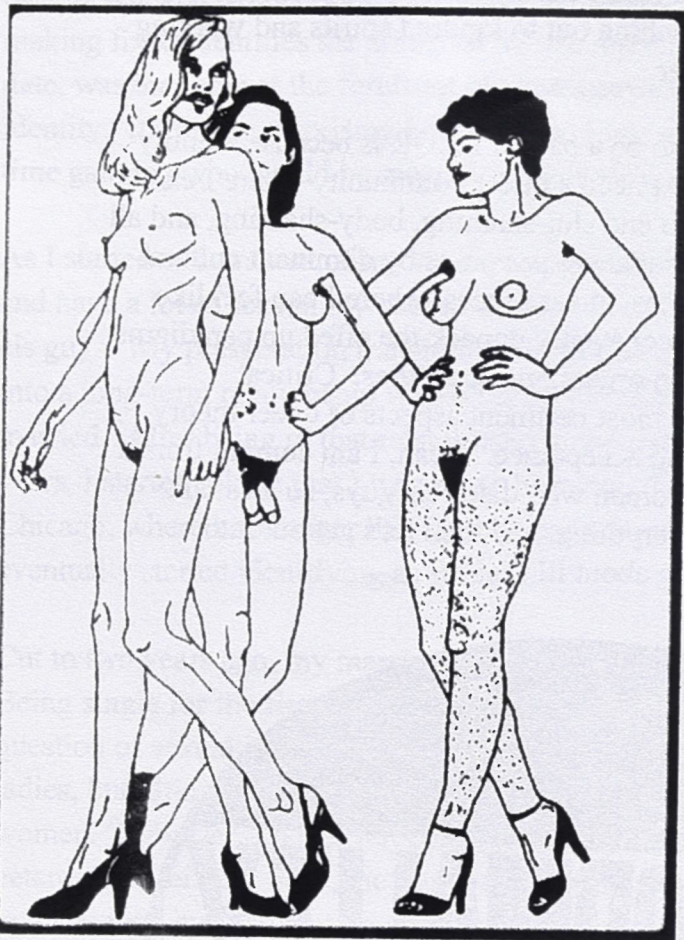
But then I realized that queerness for me is all about smashing norms, be they hetero or homo. Queerness is political; it is about recognizing that our sexualities, our bodies, and our minds have been colonized by a bunch of fucked up rubric, and that we have the agency to dismantle systems of oppression through critical analysis and community building.

A part of that dismantling needs to come in the form of frank discussion of privilege. My feelings of inauthenticity stem from the discomfort of... discussing uncomfortable things! Oppression causes real pain, and this is but one small example. The real cure is in the catharsis one can find in reaching out to kindred spirits and working through these issues together.

Part of why I am so stoked to be a part of LAQR is because identity does not exist in a vacuum. I need a queer community where I can actively work with people to end slut-shaming, body-shaming, and all of the other kinds of shames that are put on us by dominant cultural production. I need safe spaces, queer spaces, where I can feel like we are working together to constantly unpack the effed up paradigms that even activists recreate in organizing structures. Critical self-awareness is one of the most pertinent aspects of queer theory, but so is radical self love and acceptance. Yeah, I am coming from a place of privilege as a cis woman who dates cis guys, so let's talk about it. Let's talk about everything, and then let's get out into the streets and do something about it!



# Memoir of an Anomaly



The life of a gender nonconformist is an intriguing struggle indeed. It is a lonely and dangerous tightrope walk towards social equality. Though I've personally had the privilege of being comfortable with the body and genitalia I was born with, I have little in common with the homo-normative cis gendered and similar commonalities with the transgendered. Blurring the lines of the gender binary and

playing with those traditional dynamics have been met with threats of violence, genuine admiration, and painful loneliness. Here are some personal reflections of my life, as such.

When I was younger I quickly understood that under the veil of all things biological and superficial, the surface of things matter so much to most everyone else that the marionette of the social order can be pulled, tampered with, and cut. I observed that girls in elementary school would often get trinkets and candies from boys who sought them to be the proverbial objects of their affection. So the more feminine (only in attitude) I would present myself to the other young gender conforming boys, the more I would receive from them while flirting with this demeanor. These experiments with gender

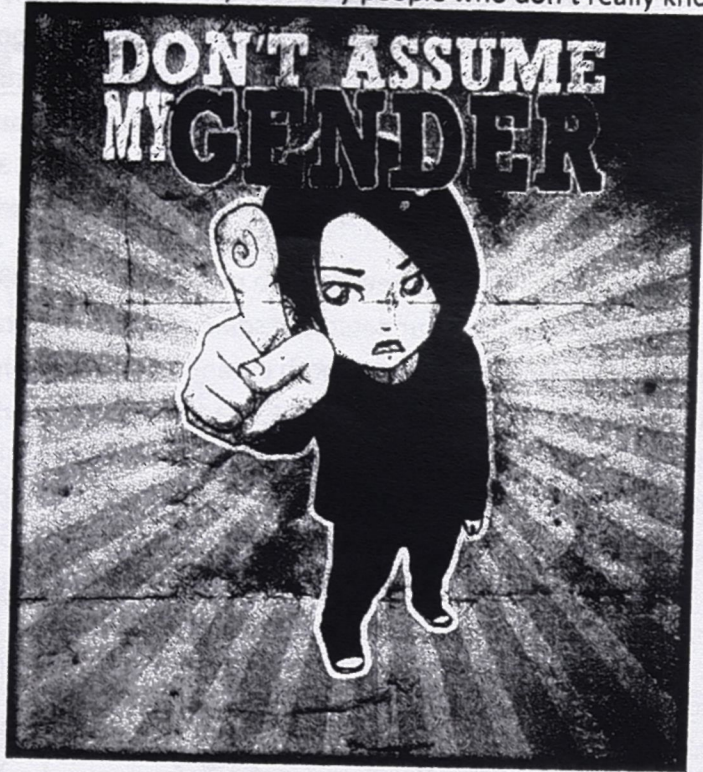
dynamics got me good treatment, protection, some light ridicule, and many material rewards of affection in elementary school. Most were positives I wanted as a child, but as I grew older and developed more sensitivities and empathy, I quickly realized that I didn't want to be treated as a man or even a womyn. Even though I identified as male I wanted to be treated as a person, no marionette attached, regardless of my perceived gender or sexual orientation.

High school was met with varied reactions to my gender nonconformity. Some positive, some negative. Some understood, some hated. Some stalked, some wanted to kill me, and one expressed both in tandem. I can truthfully say that I do not know how much of how I was treated had to do with what I looked like. I'm certain of the controversy; I've always been an androgynous individual in physicality and in spirit, since very young. Sure, my physical attributes contributed to how I was treated and perceived, that's a given for everyone, but that also took clout over my observations and inclinations despite my interests in things that deviated from the social gender norm.

I felt uncomfortable as a youth, as most youths do. Teachers or students I didn't know too well would call me improper pronouns whether intentional or accidental. I would especially feel pressure and feared violence in boy's locker room situations because of the glares I would get, glares of surprise from students that my genitalia matched their own. Of course I was given nicknames like Catwoman in elementary or Mermaid in high school swim class. Partly, I felt, because of efforts towards belittling me and partly because they felt this anomaly deviating from a regular gendered spectrum was worth drawing some attention to.

I have always shared a sisterly camaraderie with womyn growing up. They never saw me as a drooling threat to their comfort or interest to their own attraction. I valued this. Difficulty prevailed when I would find certain womyn attractive. I've always felt I would lose that trust or camaraderie if I expressed any attraction, as unfair as that was to me. I never wanted to perpetuate that uncomfortability that men are known for. Since the gender queer would rather not be seen as any one particular gender in accordance to popular norm, and since I don't want my sexual orientation to lead the narrative of who I am or who I'm perceived to be, it is a constant struggle to truly be seen and heard.

I'd say that I am often inadvertently hit on by people who don't really know why they're attracted to me or why they're hitting on me. Its interesting witnessing people do this, and stop midway what they're doing because they deem it inappropriate themselves. Or if it's a self identified straight male he'll retract and

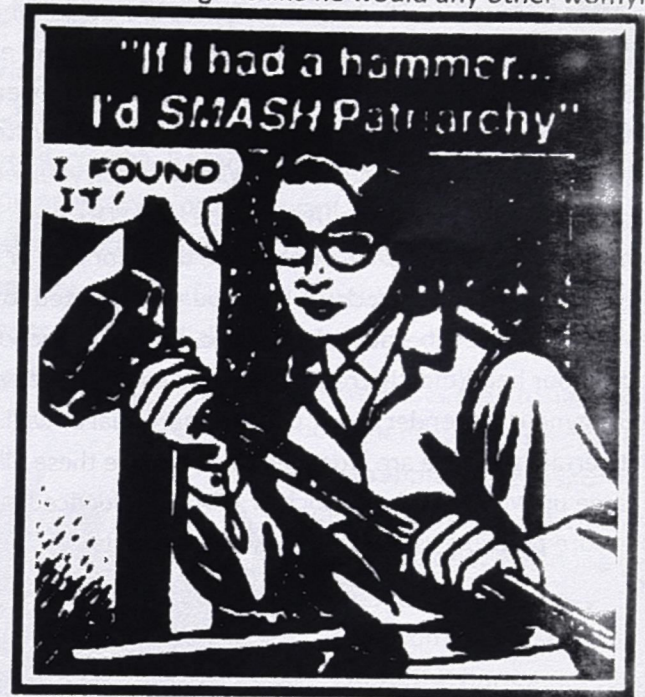


say he means what he said and did in the most heterosexual of ways, EVAR. Attraction is a very profound thing. I often find that the men who are attracted to me aren't attracted to the hetero standard masculinity that many gay men are usually presented with and attracted to, but instead are attracted to the opposing feminine qualities. It is my observation that when straight men see other men with those feminine features it can be unnerving and confusing for them. These feelings are real and valid, and it is not up to that individual that you may have confusing feelings for to appease you. This applies to everyone. We are humyn. Accept these feelings. Talk about them, but do not let your urges or feelings get in the way of mutual consent!

There's a lot of social pressure on the self identified straight man, less than the LGBT or gender nonconforming communities, of course. But anything that differs from the rules of the norm are not allowed in the self identified straight male social perspective, especially when their side often qualifies as Questioning. This is hetero supremacy that can lead men and womyn to be ostracized by their seemingly 100% straight male and female counterparts. So, no. I don't expect the questioning, self identified straight man, who may be

attracted to me to tell me with his words how he's feeling and why. Instead, he might go through the complicated and even inadvertent steps of showing me with his furtive glances and treating me like he would any other womyn he's covertly attracted to, WITH PATRIARCHAL VALOR AND CHIVALRY. There are even labels for men and womyn who are attracted to any and all feminine qualities, or any and all masculine qualities, in any given individual regardless of gender, which is called

Hypersexuality. Being attracted to roles, attributes, behaviors, and trans individuals that follow these traits is common, but this frame work of attraction still permeates and conforms to the preconceived standards of what is masculinity/femininity and how these qualities are defined through the biases of patriarchy.



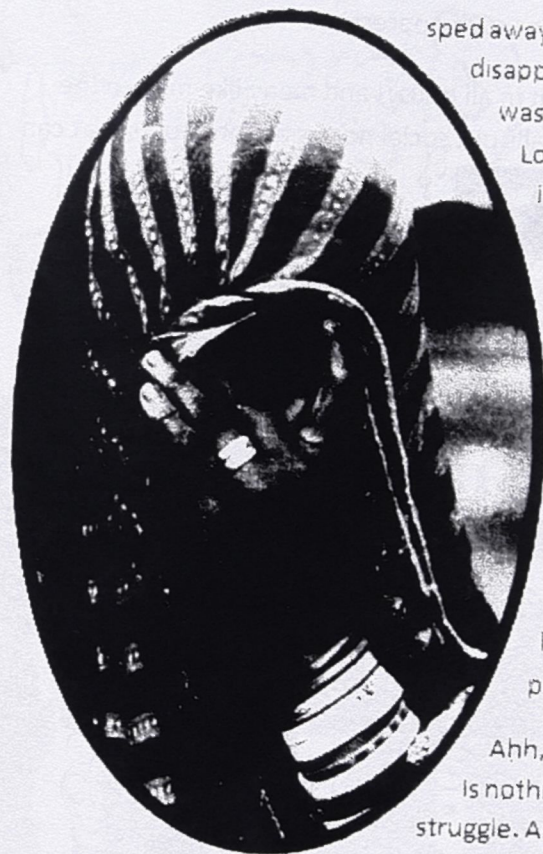
These issues are even more prevalent in activist circles, where privileges should be checked and balanced. I was recently abruptly asked by a half drunken heterosexual white male comrade when out on a sleep- in action, "Why do you make me uncomfortable?..." My response was, "...I'm not the one who knows the answer to that question. So? Why do I make you feel uncomfortable?" He brushed it off as irrelevant and that the question had no real meaning. I just didn't realize that the role for me and everyone around him as activists/organizers



was to make him specifically feel comfortable. Because I look, act, and dress like me, and it confuses his male ego, that's my issue? Unacceptable aaaaand fuck that! Sure he was tipsy, but let us get back to why questions like HIS make ME feel uncomfortable because usually in circumstances like these, where the confused and socially protected straight man is doing the inquiring and expressing his "uncomfortability" to an individual like me, it doesn't usually end well for people who share my propensities. What a blatant disregard for my struggle and his own privileges! It is ALWAYS up to you, the individual, to ask yourself, why you're attracted to someone and anyone. And maybe why YOU are attracted to someone who is seemingly the same sex and not blame them for that or project your insecurities out on them. Break down why you are attracted to some physical attributes and not others because those same rules of attraction, the standards conceived in your head (mostly created by social constructs anyway), apply to every androgynous or gender queer or trans individual as well. Yeah, you can argue that certain genitalia are a deal breaker, but are these all qualities you yourself came up with? And how much of THAT is influenced by societal pressures vs. the pleasure principle vs. actual experiences? Sexuality is not so easily black and white.

As a cisgendered, gender nonconforming, graysexual, person of color, humyn meatbag, aka queer for short, I've found it impossible to disregard and ignore the dangers of being who I am and easy to depersonalize and remove myself from being on the defense in terms of my privileges. Prime examples, like in the last paragraph, of men not recognizing why the vast majority of men make me feel uncomfortable is indicative of the trivialization of the threat of gender violence and harassment. I find that my insecurities reflect those who are most marginalized by the escalating rape culture. For instance, while waiting at a bus stop at night or walking through the unlit streets of Los Angeles alone, I'll admittedly make efforts to seem less "feminine" or less "desirable". I will go as far as pulling my hair or covering the majority of my head and face with a hood, walking every single shadow, prepping for assault by holding onto a defensive tool in my bag, even going as far as changing my stride or saunter to match that of a more aggressive or confident male, because the risk of being perceived as a woman or even feminine places my safety at risk. These are issues LGBT people & women will face and calculate on the day to day. This is why we talk so much about privilege and patriarchy because we do not have the privilege to safely roam our streets at any given time. It is the sickness in society that

expresses that the cause of sexual assault is often the result of a person's appearance. In another of many instances, years ago, I was approached by a male in his car around 3am while waiting at a bus stop after work. I was knowledgeable of the fact that his car slowly passed by once before and driving past again he proceeded to ask me the standard questions men cruising the streets at 3am ask, "Uhhh... Dyou know where Blank street is?" (The actual street was straight ahead, roughly 8 blocks away, I knew this) I answered, "No." He then asked, "Do you need a ride or dyou want some company?" As I slowly gripped the defensive tool hidden in my bag, I replied with, "No thanks, I'm saving myself for when I get raped." (Quoting a movie where the womyn saying this proceeded to murder her potential assailants)



sped away in what seemed to have been disappointment in my assertion. This wasn't an appropriate response. Looking back, it was an extremely insensitive one. But in the heat it was just a reactionary reflection of my darkened attempt at humoring myself in a potentially dangerous situation. Cat calling, pick up offers, and other variations of harassment are not new to me or any other person that doesn't outwardly portray or conform to the hetero male gendered persuasion.

Ahh, then there's the loneliness. It is nothing new to anyone in this struggle. As far as struggles go, there is an unsung pain that resonates in those who are born or resist to be different. There's the chokehold on your very existence and how you are not free to be. I often feel like I'm drowning in this sewage of assumptions, ignorance, hetero- AND even homo-normativity. Even within some LGBT communities it is hard to be accepted when it is so very

influenced by social stigma that the pressures to assimilate into certain less orthodox cultures are even greater. It says conform to something because even the most marginalized are guilty of shunning those not ascribing to their obscure social dogma. Are you or aren't you? In? Or out? Are always the questions. So to address those in struggles like mine, or who understand how difficult it is to be hated for such traits, I assure you, you are not alone, in this. Even though he or she won't tell you how they romantically feel for fear of being ostracized themselves, you are not alone in this. Even when every individual around you is berating you for who you are, you are not alone in this. There are those who have been and will always be in solidarity with you and will fight alongside with you as we rage against disenfranchisement and strive for our voices to be heard under such oppression.

This critical consciousness is inherent in all of us. I and many like me are the anomaly in the gender matrix that calls out social norms as constructs that can

be questioned, ignored, and deleted for liberation. This has the ability to provide cognitive dissonance within those who follow and propagate



patriarchy blindly. We spit in the face of indoctrination. In terms of resistance, the gender nonconformists take on a role of not adhering to their provided social framework of gender as it is, and to resist being compelled by conformity as the only liberating option for all people.

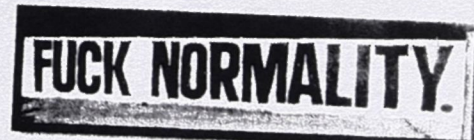
## GENDER OUTLAWS



Will I follow the existing long lived preset roles of gender and veer away from true



liberty by way of coercion conformity, falling into despair? Or will I resist? We agree on resistance because this rebellion is paramount to our very existence. You are worth it. I am worth it. Resist to exist.



# Queer



# the World

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