

1. the body issue

QUEER QUARTERLY

Spring 2021





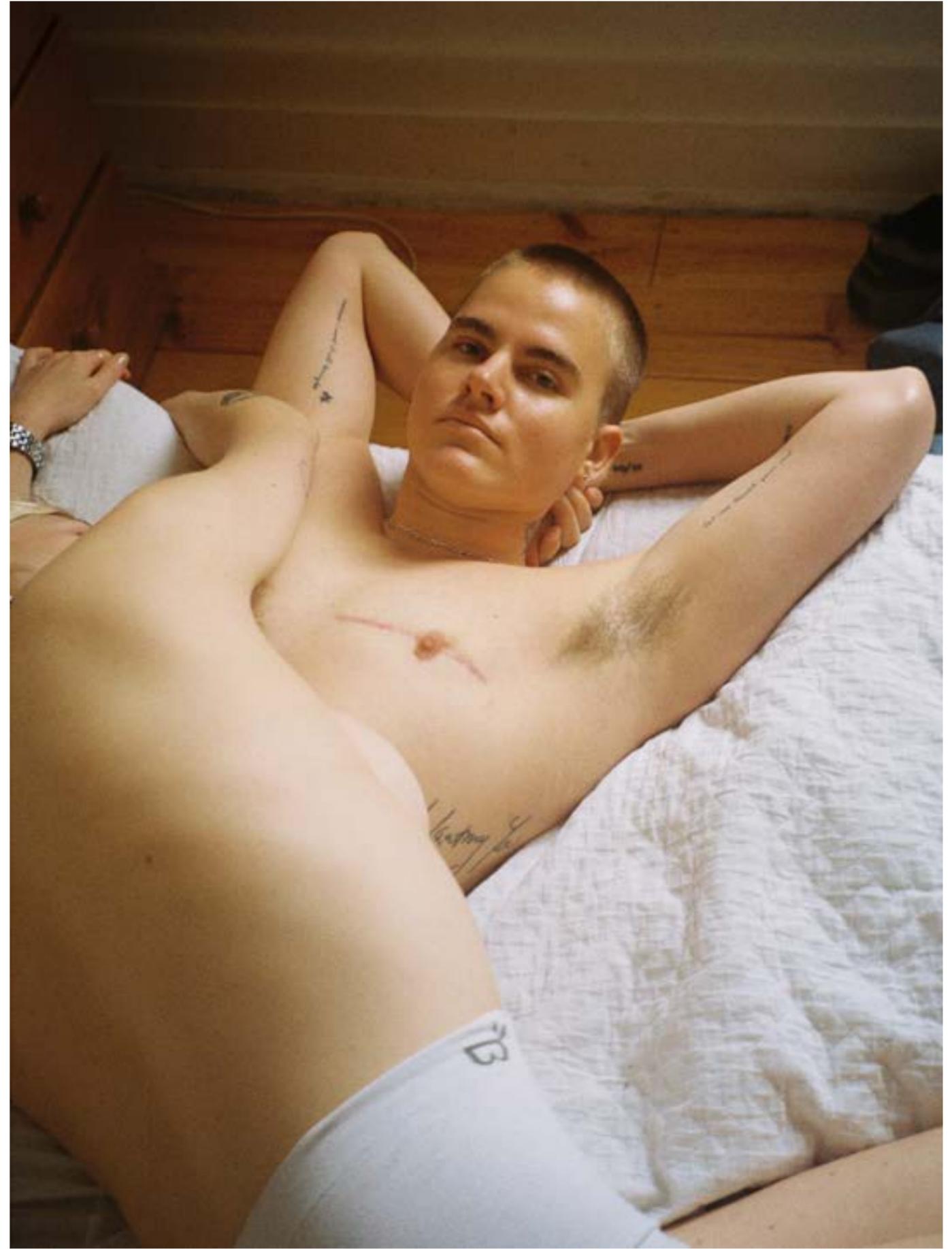
Photo Essay

Prelude

Photographer Jay Davies



My body is _____





My body is _____

My body is _____







My body is _____





My body is _____

My body is _____

Somebody's
gliding & sailing
and getting sailing
and sailing sailing





QUEER QUARTERLY

Issue 1
Spring 2021

the body issue

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Cover: Joseph Moreno. This is Not a Game for Me, But I Might Have Lost My Mind Digital Photograph. Model: Ronald Keaton, [@iamronaldkeaton](#) (next page) (Un)masked, Digital Photograph. Model: Dejuan Powns, [@Dpowns14](#) Back Cover: David Jester. The Dance, Oil. 48 x 60 inches





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from the editor

Hello artists and art lovers, fellow outsiders, Queers of all ilk, and welcome.

Queer Quarterly is a long-running dream that finally decided to come to life. As with stories told by Connie Kurtew, Eugene Huffman, and Tiger Munson in their different articles, a sense of freedom has grown from the tribulations of our past year in lock-down. Dreams for them—and for me—seem much closer than they did before. Perhaps it's because our reality basically crumbled around us, leaving only dreamscapes in the rubble. I often wondered as we moved through 2020, whether the break in 'normalcy' somehow gave proof to its nature: a result of mass hysteria.

These thoughts on the instability of 'normal,' as most of my post-modern, deconstructive thoughts do, led me back to Queer Theory and it's wonderful implosion in critical thought. For those of you who don't remember, Queer Theory charged into the critical and literary scene in the late 90s. The movement, born of Gay & Lesbian liberation (and their predecessors, Feminism and Civil Rights) postulated that 'Queer' was defined as the antithesis of the status quo (I'm paraphrasing AND being rather glib here, sorry-not-sorry). Unfortunately, by defining itself within the paper walls of academia, Queer Theory became the status quo, and therefore anathema to itself.

What the fuck, right?

And where does that leave us as Queer people and Queer artists? Once defined we are no longer Queer? Perhaps

the answers lie in the theoretical poem and essay Marval A Rex shares in this issue. A careful read sings with deconstructive tendencies but also with more. Looking across the spectrum of art in the body issue—written word and visual media—there is a consistent thread. Each of the artists expresses in their own way a quest or yearning for meaning. Maybe then what makes us Queer is our ability to define import in a meaningless world?

As editor, I run the risk of following in the footsteps of Queer Theory or becoming the art world gate keeper Rex warns us against. Certainly it is a fool's task to try to define Queerness. But here I am, gathering artists for a magazine dedicated to Queer art.

Regardless, the vision behind Queer Quarterly is broader than one person's interpretation of Queerness; it encompasses the parts of LGBTQIA+ that haven't been invented yet. It includes the things I've yet to learn as much as the stories we've shared together.

We begin with the body issue because I wanted us to love ourselves for who we are, especially in our variety. We must live, whether locked up at home or emerging slowly back into the world, in the best way we know how.

So, here's to living artfully.

—Ryan



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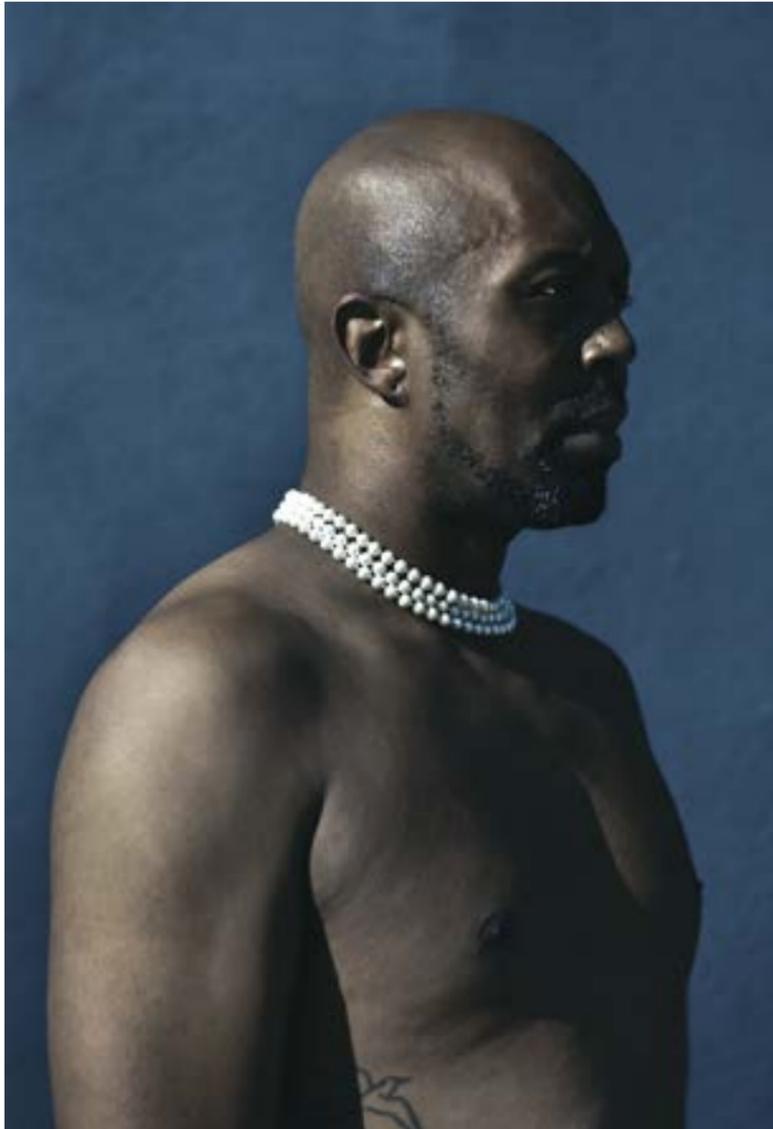
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Photographer Joseph Moreno

Masc Defying

By K Ryan Henisey





a three-string choker of pearls. The necklace operates as foil to the subject's skin and stubbled face just as the delicacy of the strands highlight the broadness of their chest and shoulders.

Moreno loves an attractive subject. Beautiful bodies and fierce faces form a good portion of the photographer's aesthetic. But Moreno looks beyond the physical to compose a complete story in his gender-play photographs—a narrative that often defies societal masculinity by subverting it with costuming symbolic of contemporary femininity.

Moreno's subjects take on ballerina-like qualities in *Pride X*, for example. The rainbow tutus and staging of the models creates a dramatic scene punctuated with black leather and striped tube-socks.

In a demolished setting, *There's a Place for Us* and *I Don't Mean to Confuse Anyone I'm Just Searching* show that indeed maleness is enhanced by what we currently view as overtly womanly. The cut and sheen of the dresses make large the shape of the models, drawing attention to the thickness of their arms and thighs.

Moreno's photography is fully produced. His narratives are told through staged tableaux of queer humanity. Heels, skirts, and pearls are as much a part of his visual narrative as men, muscles, and tattoos. The juxtaposition creates an alternate view of our world where gendered expectations are simultaneously divorced-from and linked-to clothing.

Though wearing societally-defined women's clothing, the models in Moreno's photographs are

anything but feminine. There is a maleness to his subjects that is enhanced by the photographer's intentional gendered play. Crew socks and combat boots align themselves with platform pumps and tulle in a resulting masculinity that defies status quo.

Moreno's photographs serve as a definition of what masculine beauty could be. The photographer imagines for us a world released from the limited expectations of binary gendering. The result is an enhancement of the masculine, rather than its oft-feared detractor.

Queer Quarterly sat for a chat with photographer Joseph Moreno to discuss his work, gender, and defying masculinity.

QUEER QUARTERLY:

What started you on the path of photography?

JOSEPH MORENO:

I stated taking photographs with an artistic purpose a couple of years ago. I took a class at UCLA Extension thinking it would be a good hobby. But in my first class something flipped. The professor had asked, "why do people take photos?" And my immediate response was to tell a story. That's the whole purpose of photography: to tell stories.

I didn't realize how much that would affect my ability to tap into the stories that are mine. You know, the stories that I want to tell. And I thought that was a really important question—what do I have to say?

And there have been some really magical moments with these photographs. Some have been planned. Some have been very spontaneous. And that's kind of the beauty of photographs. You never know what you're going to see. And then something else happens.

QQ:

What about your personal queer experience inspires you to create works on LGBTQIA themes?

JM:

A lot of what I want to show and express is my own experience. I come from a fractured home, an environment of toxic masculinity. I was trying to fit into the gay community—or at least pockets of the community. All of that was peppered with some serious substance abuse issues. I had to pull myself out of some precarious situations and circles. It all fueled this well of experience that I draw from. My images reference the masculine and feminine

Joseph Moreno
I Don't Mean to Confuse Anyone I'm Just Searching. Digital Photograph.
Model: Cameron Denny, [@cameron.creative](https://www.instagram.com/cameron.creative)



Joseph Moreno
What About Us. Digital Photo.
Model: Dejuan Powns, [@dpowns14](https://www.instagram.com/dpowns14)
(previous) *Clothes Mean Nothing Until Someone Lives in Them*. Digital Photo

The mastery of Joseph Moreno's photography is its ability to both define and defy masculinity. There's beauty in his subversion of gendered costuming—one that relies on neither wholly masculine nor feminine tropes but combines them to maximum effect.

In *What About Us*, for example, contrast and comparison drive the visual narration. A three-quarter view of a model, face largely in shadow, wears only

and the beautiful synthesis of both. It's part of me exploring the softer side of Joseph. That's what I love about art. It gives people a chance to see themselves and a chance to identify.

Luckily I am surrounded by others who feel the same. Who are like: "I've got chocolate, you've got peanut butter; how do we get them together."

QQ:

Do you feel the pressures of race and culture play an affect on you work?

JM:

Coming from a pretty traditional, religious Latin family, it was very difficult for me to come to grips with myself—with me as a person filled with dimensions and flaws, ideas, visions, and dreams. And being able to pursue them and not be held back by expectation.

I went to business school in England. And I remember discovering art and thinking that it wasn't sustainable. What would my family think. Flash forward twenty years and I'm now pursuing art.

It's been a real journey.

QQ:

How do you chose your subjects, models, and locations?

JM:

Some of it is driving around like a maniac. I'm surprised I don't have more accidents, really. [laughter]

And then going back to places at different times to evaluate the light and the scene. What is the space that I am trying to find and does it match the message I want to convey?

It's a multilayered and simultaneous process. I have a circle of creatives willing to work with me as models. And then just re-working ideas to find the most effective way to tell a story without words: to find community; feel like an outsider; be confused by it all.

QQ:

Gendered play, often with costuming, is a clear part of your visual narration. Can you explain a little behind your

use of gendered cues?

JM:

I think it's interesting that we come into the world

without bias. And then we are given bias in all these unspoken ways. Playing with clothing is my way of rejecting that.

We've been taught clothes have a quiet meaning to them. But then I have a photo that's titled *Clothes Have No Meaning Until They're Lived In*, rejecting that idea. Why can't someone wear a skirt or a dress or heels if they feel like that? It's a form of self-expression.

You know, if I had access to images like this when I was young, what a different experience my self acceptance would have been. I hope that in some way this resonates with someone who doesn't see themselves or who hasn't seen themselves represented in some way.

QQ:

What are your best successes in "art"? What are your biggest challenges?

JM:

The biggest successes have been feedback from others. Hearing my work resonates with people is the greatest achievement that I can have—that my work has touched someone!

One of my models came back to me and said that their mom had seen a photograph I took of them and that she loved it. This is a mother who had a really hard time accepting their child's sexuality. And she loved it. Loved seeing them as a strong beautiful person.

That's the biggest reward.

Joseph Moreno
I am a Queen Who was Born a King
Digital Photograph



Joseph Moreno
There's a Place for Us. Digital Photograph
Models: Dejuan Powns & Cameron Denny



The biggest challenge is to find those pockets of myself that still need exploring. It is hard work looking at your vulnerable parts and making plans to share it. The process of creating art can be a humble one. And in many ways this is self-assigning. But the hard work and the challenges make it more rewarding.

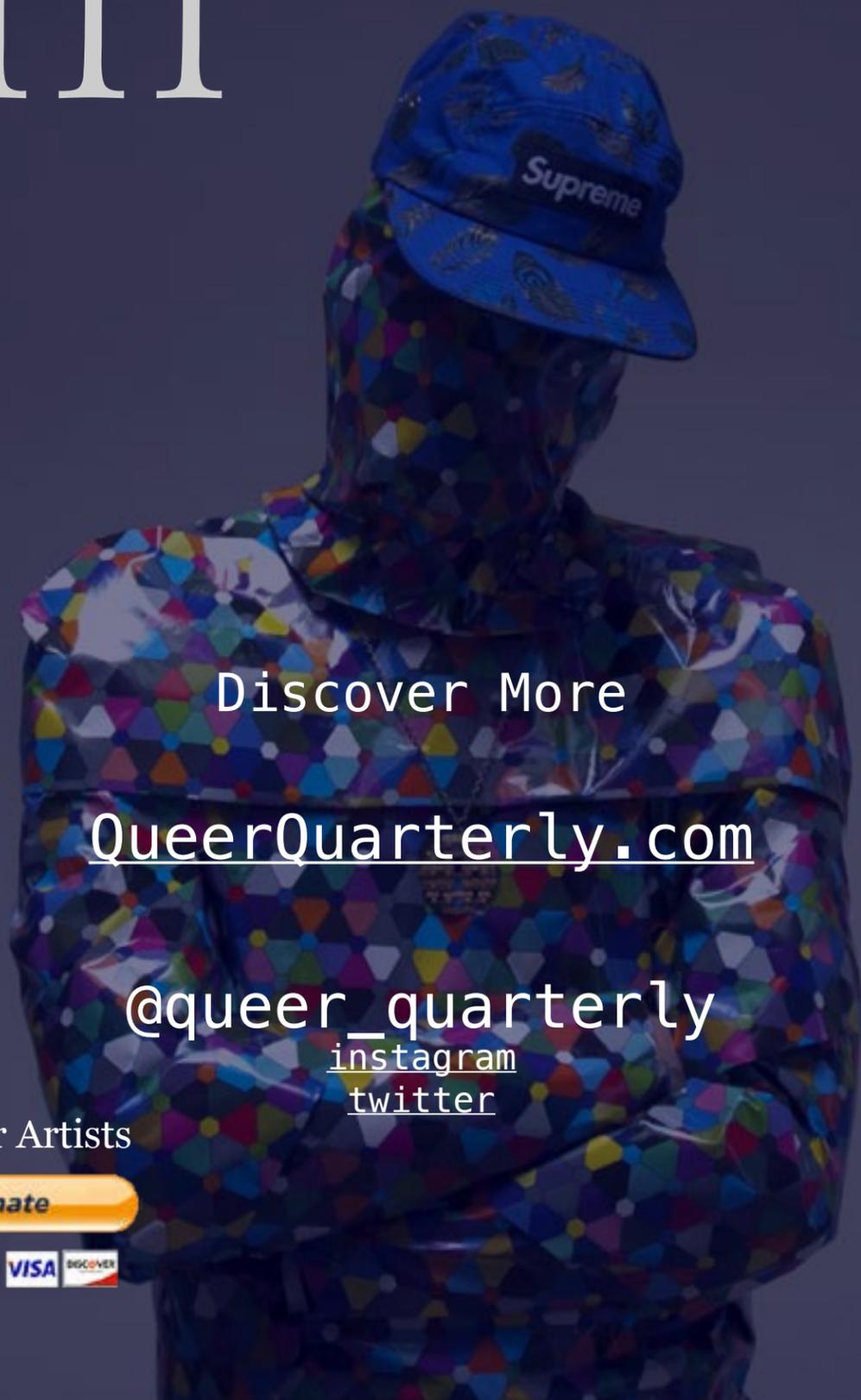
It's important that the viewer see the world from a different point of view. For me, art is an opportunity to escape and experience the world through a different set of eyes. I hope my photographs help others escape from their own reality so that they can understand another one.



Joseph Moreno
Pride X
Digital Photograph
Models: Armando Melendez, [@mandoh](#) &
Ronald Keaton, [@lamronaldkeaton](#)



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Tip our Artists



Baz Kanold
[@artbybaz](#)
Dental Dam
Digital Image

Fiction
Shape
Socks Whitmore

It's beautiful.

Ash stares at the skin, purple-red and puckered in an angry line. The areolas are flattened and dark, an uneven circle of stitches turning them into bruised flowers. Black traces of glue stain the upper parts of their chest. In between a scattering of freckles are itchy pink strips, the ghosts of bandages. Their chest aches with a world-weariness like they have never felt before.

But God, is it beautiful.

And it is *flat*.

Ash traces the incisions butterfly-soft, conscious of the new and delicious empty space. Their hand trails down to their backside as they twist their delicate frame, craning to observe the unhappy curves. Even now, the desire for a different form burns in parts of their body that don't exist.

“Christ, Ash, put some clothes on.” Jason stands in the bedroom doorway, eyebrows raised. He is wearing a white tank top and black boxers himself, his arms folded over a tan torso just shy of muscular. He walks in, his gaze sliding down the short distance from Ash's choppy pixie to their naked waist; the protest is less than heartfelt. “Pretty sure the doc would say it's too soon to—” He taps on his crotch deliberately. “—have a go at it, if this is an invitation.”

“Not every exposed ass is for your enjoyment, Jason.” Ash folds their arms over their chest instinctively, still feeling a bit of a shock when their limbs slip through the newly empty space. They resist the urge to wince from the pain and hold themselves tighter. “Privacy, please?”

“Okay, okay,” Jason says, slightly defensive. “Just let me grab a fresh pair of trunks and I'll leave you to whatever it is you're doing.” He turns to a small pile of clean laundry thrown carelessly across the comforter of the Jason bed. He grabs a forest green pair from the edge of the heap and immediately produces a garbled sound of surprise and disgust. “The fuck!?! Ash, why is there a fucking *penis* on the bed?”

Ash feels the heat rush to their face. To avoid answering the question, they snatch their own clothes from the floor and hastily start putting them back on. Jason's face contorts with suspicion. He slowly raises the trunks to his face and sniffs.

“Goddammit, Ash, my trunks smell like your vagina!” Jason tosses the trunks back on the Jason bed. He takes a deep breath in and releases, doing his best to summon a calming energy. “Look, Ash, help me out here. What exactly is all this?”

Ash doesn't have the words. Their eyes flit from the trunks to the packer to their own chest, which takes more looking down than it used to. Finally, they look at Jason, trying to communicate their desperation through iris and pupil alone. After a long silence, Jason sighs.

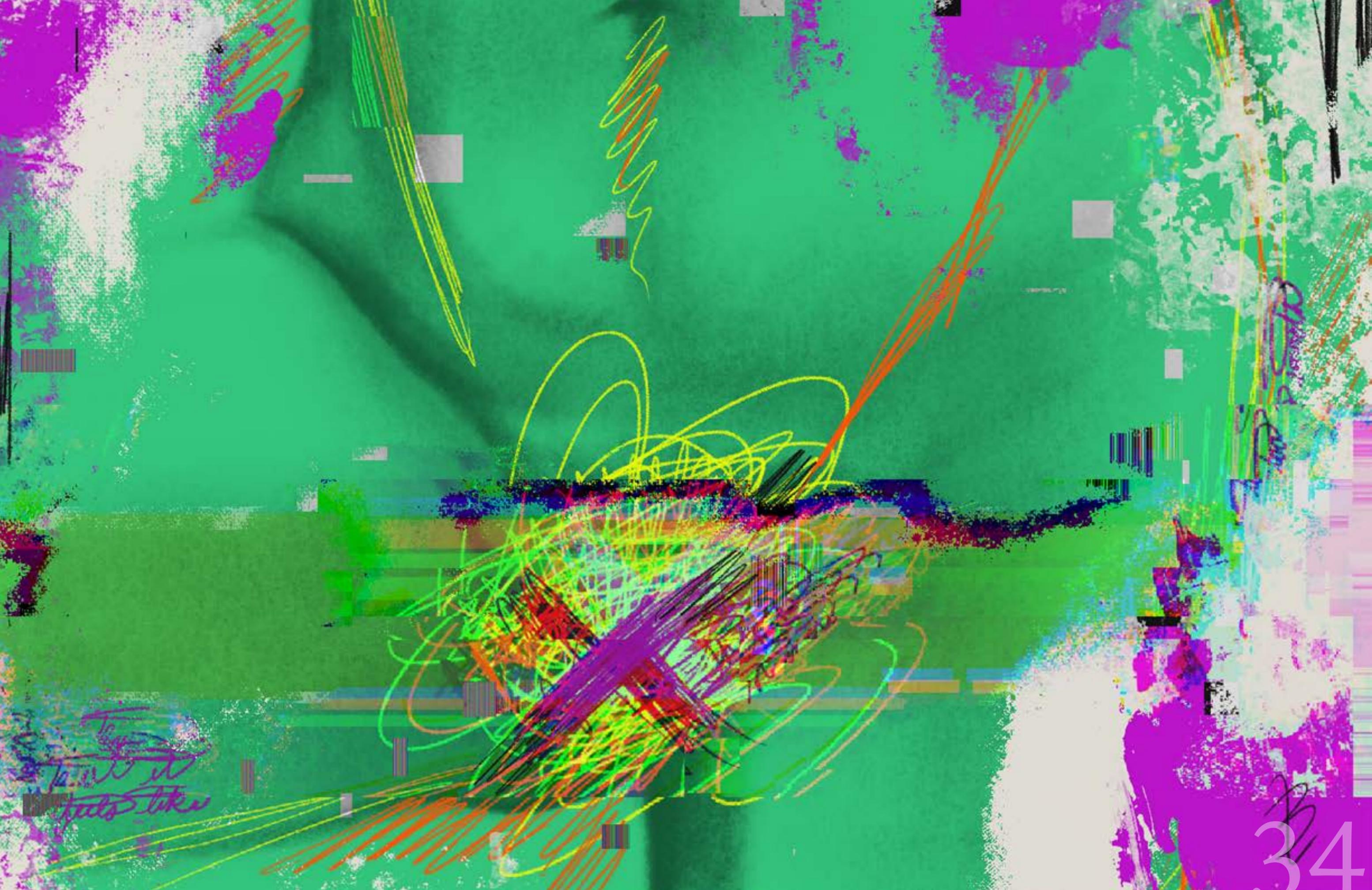
“Could you maybe do this in the Max room next time?” Then: “Let me know when you're ready to go, stardust.” Jason picks up the trunks again and carries them to the laundry hamper. He closes the door behind him when he goes.

Jason Mao had met Ashley Rivers at a local book signing. The event had been for a collection of poetry, the contents of which neither of them could now remember, and the author had been fifty-three minutes late due to a directional mix-up. The pair had struck up a conversation while they waited, first about the poor planning of the event and then about food, philosophy, even feminism. The evening had ended with them signing their names and numbers into each other's books. A month after, they were sharing a scoop of pistachio ice cream and discussing the societal implications of the psychological thriller they had just watched together. Their friends called them the “cultured couple.”

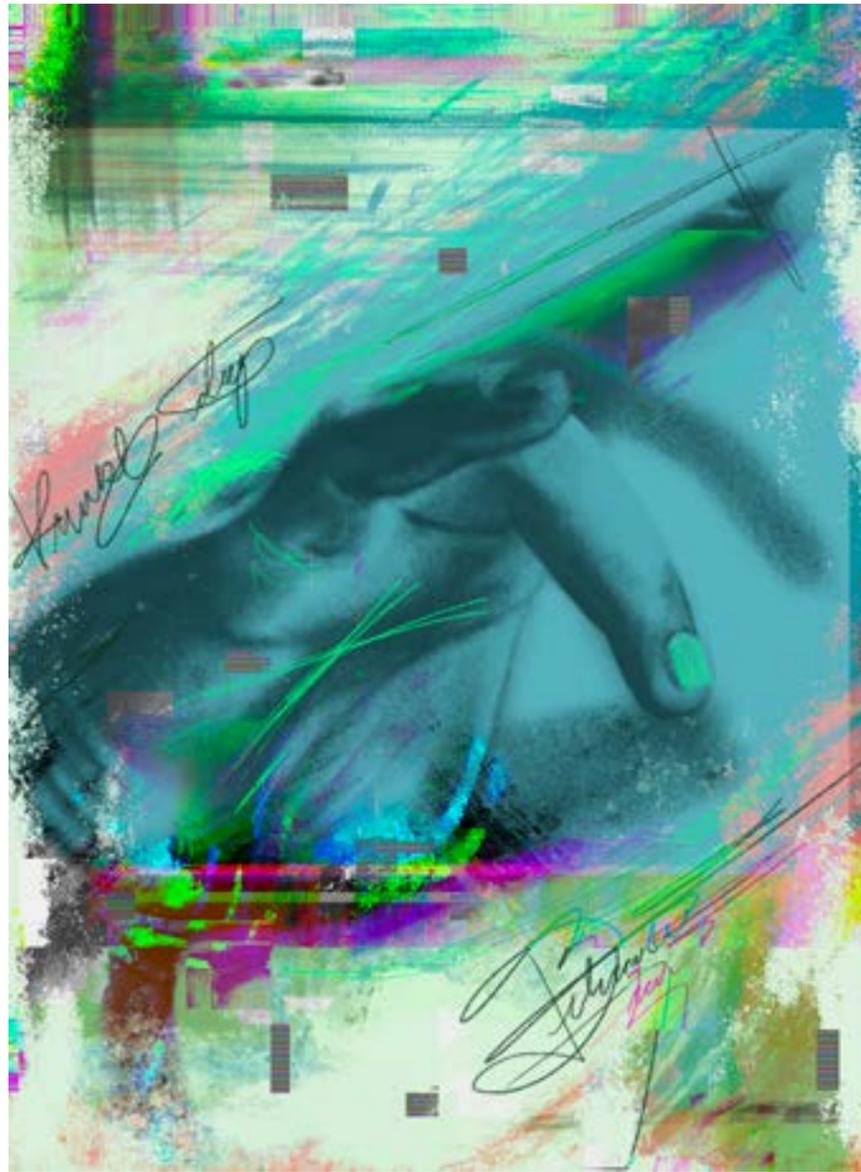
Ashley had met Amy Sims and Max Rashid the next year at the L.A. Women's March (all three presenting as women at the time), and invited them over for dinner. Jason had taken to Amy immediately, as Ashley did to Max. Thirteen dinners later, the four found a two-bedroom apartment. One bed had been designated as Jason's; the other belonged to Max. Amy and Ash, meanwhile, had found a rhythm in how they divided their weeknights. Even three years down the road, the system worked.

Ash sits, fully clothed in a loose mint green button-up and black fatigues, now on the Max bed. As they hold the packer in their hands, they are reminded of how things have changed. Ashley Rivers had become Ash, Amy had finished school, Max had transitioned, and Jason... Jason was essentially the same, but now owned significantly more bowties. Ash stares at the packer blankly, feeling somewhat detached from the moment. Three years ago, they might have had more of a reaction to holding a silicone phallus—it certainly wouldn't have occurred to them to try keeping it in their pants.

Baz Kanold
(next page) What it Feels Like
Digital Image



*The
kind of
pals like*



“Hey, star.” Max sits next to them, observing their silent rumination. He is wearing a dark purple muscle shirt and gray sweats, as well as the brown leather bracelet Ash had given him two Christmases ago. He absentmindedly tugs at the ends of his fluffy black hair, a habit he had picked up after he stopped wearing a hijab. “So did you like it? Do you want to wear it today?”

Ash continues to stare at the packer, conscious of the cool silicone in their hands.

“It was...” Ash trails off, unsure of how to articulate their thoughts. “I don’t know. It was weird and dif-

ferent and maybe I liked it but I don’t actually know how to tell if I did. You know?”

Max nods with sage understanding. The display of solidarity does not make Ash feel better.

“Jason didn’t like that I borrowed his undies. And he certainly didn’t know what to make of—” They wave the penis around. “—this. I forgot that he doesn’t see you naked as much as I do, so he’s not used to disembodied dicks on the bed.”

“What a world we live in, that some people still aren’t used to disembodied dicks.” Max laughs, eliciting a smile from Ash. “Jason was deprived of dildos as a child so now his sexual knowledge is stunted, we’ll have to forgive him. I can take the packer back for now and if you ever want to try it out again, just ask. But all dicks aside... how are you feeling?”

Max gestures to Ash’s chest. The motion instantly sparks pain as Ash’s body remembers the amount of flesh that has been amputated.

“Like I’m simultaneously having the worst and best trip of my life.” Ash gives their neck a few rolls in each direction, triggering several loud cracks. Max sidles a little closer to massage them between the shoulders. “I haven’t thrown up since the bandages came off and I think the creams and stuff are helping, so physically the worst is over. Mentally, my brain bounces back and forth between HOLY SHIT YOUR BOOBS ARE GONE and... holy shit. They’re really, actually, finally gone. So there’s that.”

“But you did it.” Max gives their back one last gentle rub. “You survived. And you’re that much closer to being the you-est you. I’m proud of you.” Ash leans into him, resting their head on his shoulder and wrapping their arms around his solid frame. He kisses their forehead. The two sit in comfortable silence.

“Come over here, look at this one!”

Ash earnestly tugs at Jason’s hand in an attempt to tear him away from the painting he has been planted in front of. The piece depicts a slender person with a red headed mane perched atop of a rock, knees bent and arms extended almost like wings. The subject’s face is not visible; their back is turned to the viewer as they look out at the swath of colors ahead of them, shades of sunset and flame bleeding into each other and threatening to swallow the fiery red hair.

“I think it’s a self-portrait,” Jason muses, rubbing his shaven chin. He is now wearing a white and blue plaid collared shirt, dark blue jeans, and a green watch modeled after a (conventional) alien’s head—a birthday present from Amy. “She clearly wants to fly, but there’s also something steadying about the way she holds her arms, like she knows how much there is to lose if she falls.”

“She?” Ash shoots Jason a look, waiting for him to perceive his error. It takes a few moments.

“They. They, sorry,” he corrects himself belatedly. “Mr., Miss, or Mx. Painting, I apologize for assuming your gender.” Ash beams at him to express their pleasure. Then, with his guard down, they give his arm

another yank and successfully uproot him from his spot.

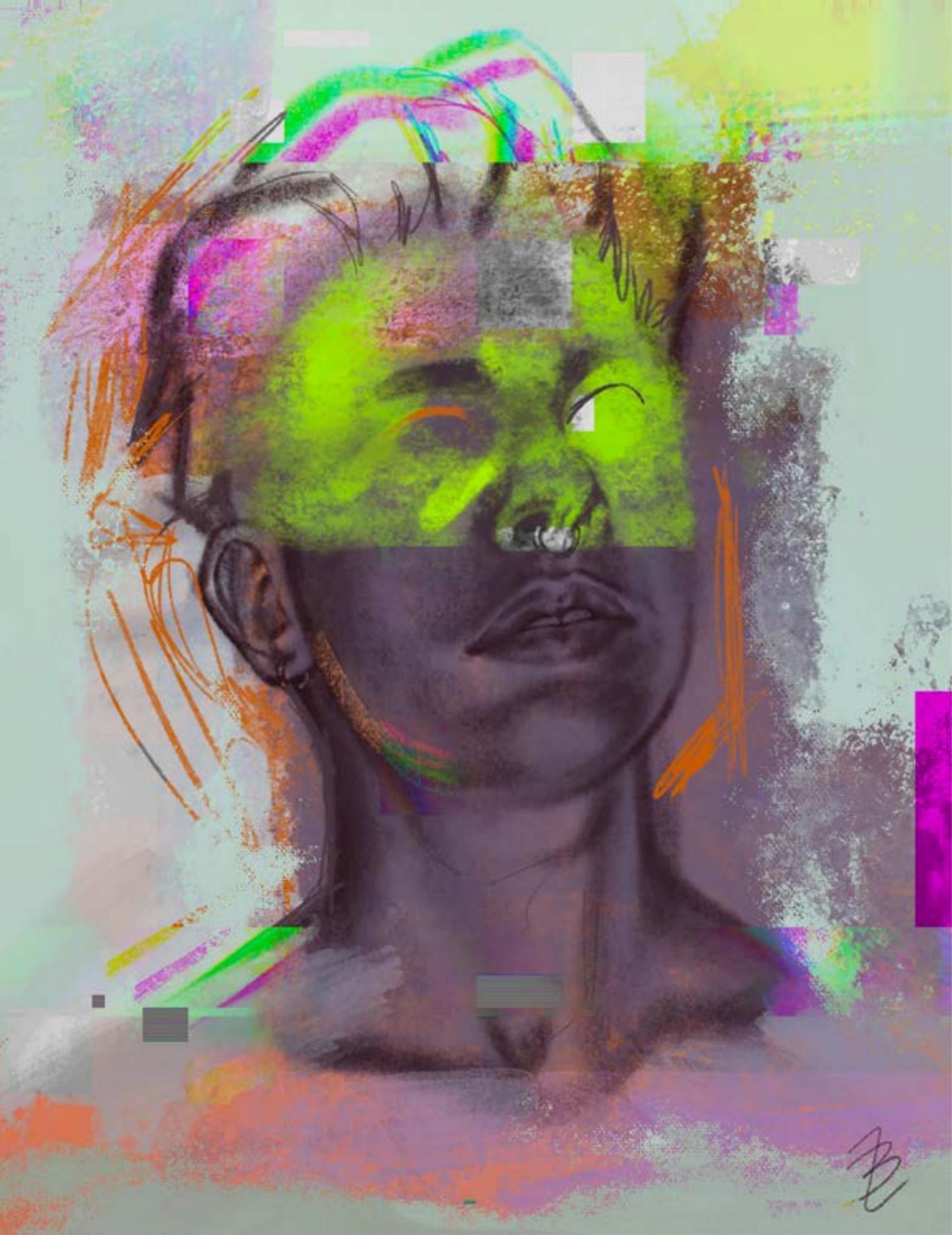
“Now come on, check out this sculpture!”

Soon after they had started dating, Ash and Jason had discovered one another’s affinity for visual and performance art. It had quickly become a tradition to visit small showcases and auctions by local Californian artists—they rarely bought anything, but felt that their presence and free advertising of the events to friends was support enough.

Ash had worried that the undies incident would deter Jason from the day’s planned pilgrimage, but they could see a sparkle in Jason’s eyes that told them he was enjoying himself; the familiar activity was a good way to forget the tension from

Baz Kanold
Knuckle Deep (left) & Double Fisting
Digital Image





earlier. He was in such a good mood, he had even let them wear his *Great Wave of Kanagawa* bowtie (one of the nicest ones in his collection) when they asked. He didn't know that Ash had scooped the green trunks from the laundry and was wearing them underneath their fatigues with a few balled-up socks in the front.

Ash pulls Jason over to a sculpture that appears to be a life-size crucifix constructed entirely out of wire tentacles and talons. The cross is made of silver wire, while Jesus Christ is a polished bronze. Ash notices a gleam on Jesus's face. When the two get closer, they realize that the face of the Son of Man has been coated in Extreme Glitter Mod Podge.

"It's definitely a metaphor," Jason remarks, pacing around the sculpture with an air of seriousness. "Jesus... is a party animal." Ash snorts with laughter, then covers their mouth in embarrassment.

"Guess Jesus was more like us than we thought," they add through muffled giggles.

"An octo-avian hybrid who likes to sparkle? We must be related."

Ash bursts out laughing again, savoring it despite the pain that spikes in their torso. Laughing feels good. Being with Jason feels good. This is how things should be. In a moment of passionate impulse, they pull Jason's face down to lock with theirs.

When the two finally separate, Ash spies a couple standing near the red hair painting, staring in their direction. They appear to be a cis man and woman, both white, blonde, and in their twenties. The

Baz Kanold
Deep Throat
Digital Image

woman is wearing a silver cross necklace large enough for Ash to see from the distance. Her smooth face wrinkles with thinly veiled disgust. Ash takes Jason's hand.

"Hey, want to look at the erotic pottery in the back?" they ask, hoping to lead him away from the couple's nasty looks.

"Hold on, there's a photo collection over there that we haven't seen yet." Jason pulls free of Ash's hand and heads towards the exhibit, walking right by the white couple. Ash hurries after him, passing the couple in time to hear one mutter:

"Which one do you think gets it up the ass? Or do they take turns?"

Ash feels heat flood their cheeks, though they can't be sure if it's from embarrassment or a warped sense of validation. They catch up to Jason. Ash goes to take his hand again, but the fingers quickly pull out of reach. Jason runs his hands through his purple-silver hair without missing a beat. He stares at the photos, still images of bridges catching fire, and says nothing through tightly pressed lips.

Ash and Jason call it a day early and are back at the apartment by three. Amy gets home a little after five. Ash, looking for some way to be useful, offers to help make dinner. Amy cheerily accepts, and the two of them get to work in the kitchen.

"How was your day, moonbeam?" Ash asks. When Jason and Ash had originally picked out terms of endearment for themselves—sweetie and pumpkin were too cute, babe and doll too flippant, the list went on—Ash had determined that Jason would be known as "sunshine," and he had subsequently christened them "stardust." Once Amy and Max had joined the household, Amy had insisted that they pick out additional celestial pet names as a sort of bonding exercise;

thus, Amy had become “moonbeam” and Max “cosmic.” Ash did their best to use Amy’s pet name because it made her happy, but they always felt a little distant from the romantic attachment it implied.

“Busy, as usual,” Amy sing-songs from the stove, stirring a rainbow of vegetables and oils together in a pan. “There were a LOT of patients today, and soooo many phone calls. A bunch of people came in with nausea and stomach aches, and one guy vomited in the waiting room. You know, I said to Deb, ‘there must be a plague going around—but hey, in our line of work, the plague is good for business!’” Amy lets loose a full-bodied laugh. She is a tall, curvy collage of golds and browns, and almost single-handedly responsible for the cleanliness of most of the apartment. She is in general a larger than life kind of person, 110% woman, which is why Ash sometimes struggles to carry a conversation with her. Amy is usually happy to carry the conversation herself.

“And how are you today, star? How was your trip downtown?”

“Good.” It doesn’t seem worth it to mention the neo-Nazi couple to her.

“Did you have any trouble with—” Amy pats her DD-cups.

Ash shakes their head. Their twin scars throb in disagreement.

“You’ve been putting on the scar creams and massaging the area, right? I know this whole process has been quite the physical ordeal, but trust me, following all of the steps will save you a ton of grief in the long run. A double mastectomy isn’t something you walk off in a day.”

Ash nods in response. They have noticed that while their lover-in-law is constantly encouraging them to take proper care of themselves, she always talks about the surgery as if Ash had a family history of breast cancer. (They do not.) Amy continues to chatter as they prepare the food. Ash sets the table for five and briefly excuses themselves.

While Ash is gone, Kai arrives. Kai and Max had been in contact for a few weeks since encountering one another at a walk for AIDS—Ash had meant to go, but had gotten sick at the last minute—and the quad had finally invited them over for dinner and introductions. Max greets Kai at the door with enthusiasm, wrapping them in a tight hug.

“Whoa there!” Kai laughs. “All that testosterone flooding through your veins means you might actually have the strength to squish me!” While they match Max in height, their smaller build supports the claim. Their hair is bleached and gelled up into small spikes. They have three piercings in each ear; on both sides, the holes are filled with (in ascending order) a star, moon, and sun. They wear an open light blue button-up shirt, a darker blue tank that says “I’ve Got 99 Problems

Baz Kanold
Split Me in Half
Digital Image





and White Heteronormativity Is Basically All of Them,” and black jeggings rolled up to show off socks depicting the night sky. It is easy to see why Max likes them.

Max releases Kai and shows them to the dinner table. Jason appears from his bedroom, now wearing a striped bowtie, to join them. After a brief introduction, the three quickly get into a friendly conversation about the ethics and capitalist nature of zoos.

Ash emerges from the bathroom and sits down at the table across from Jason.

“Hi, Kai!” Ash says warmly. “I’m Ash. They, them, theirs.” They reach out to shake Kai’s hand.

“Kai, although I suppose you knew that already,” Kai replies with a firm handshake. Their hand is pleasantly soft and smooth. “They, them, theirs.” The two share a smile. From the corner of their eye, Ash notices that Jason is staring in the direction of their chin. Ash avoids meeting his gaze.

“So Ash and I were thinking... want to join us in some frivolous bonding games after dinner?” Max proposes with a grin, already in high spirits. “We have video games, card games...”

“Jason has the best poker face, but Max almost always wins!” Amy throws in from the kitchen.

“OR, we have board games—would you prefer a long, high-stakes game of Monopoly?” Kai considers the choices for a moment.

“I’m an adult, so... what kind of video games do you have?”

Baz Kanold
Circles Not Squares
Digital Image

Max grins even wider and hops up, dashing off to the Max room to retrieve a selection. Jason takes the opportunity to cut in.

“Ash, could I grab you for a moment? I might have a few games in my room that Kai would like.” Ash knows what this is really about. Max pauses in his door frame and glances back. Ash shoots him a look. He shrugs, his eyes saying: *your call*.

“Sure,” Ash decides, and leaves the company with Jason. As soon as they are in the Jason room, he turns on them.

“Ash, what the hell is on your face?”

“It’s stubble,” they answer with some defiance. The technical answer to Jason’s question is black greasepaint make-up borrowed from a friend in special FX. Ash knows that the technical answer is beside the point for Jason.

“Ash, why would you even want that shit on your face? Men everywhere spend countless time and energy trying to get rid of it.” Jason sits down on the Jason bed and runs his hands through his purple hair. “Look, Ash, we’ve got a guest over. Now’s not the time to—”

“To express myself?” Ash interrupts. “To experiment with what makes me happy?”

“Happy? How does a half-assed fake beard make you happy?” Jason stabs back. Ash throws their hands up in exasperation, causing pain to shoot through their stitches. They’re too upset to care. “Why does it matter what makes me happy as long as I’m happy?”

“I want you to be happy, but I don’t want you to be a different person!”

“So cutting off my boobs made me a different person? Heaven forbid that I want to grow a real beard someday!”

“But you’re not a man!” Jason exclaims.

The silence that follows is deafening. Ash turns their back to Jason, feeling more vulnerable than when he’d walked in on them naked.

In the silence are images of Jason, his large brown hands cupping Ash’s pale breasts, caressing Amy’s curves and drinking in her bountiful femininity, the disgust on his face when he had pulled the trunks off the packer.

In the silence is the unspoken addendum: *And I’m not attracted to men.*

You’re right. I’m not a man, Ash wants to say. But I’m not a woman either. I’m an artist who cleaved flesh from their body, sacrificed it to the queer devil so they could transcend the chains of man and woman. Like it or not, I am more the person you fell in love with, more myself, now than ever before. And so help me, I will be a badass bearded nonbinary bitch whenever I damn well please.

Of course, Ash doesn’t say any of these things. Instead, they turn to Jason and say:

“I’m going to go back to dinner now.” And they do so. They return to the dining area where Kai, Max, and Amy are pouring over a number of different Mario games as well as *Super Smash Bros.* and *Splattoon 2*. The stove sizzles in the background.

“I’m really good at the racing ones,” Amy says as Ash sits down. “Of course, Max is the one who taught me to play. Hey, stardust, did you and Jason find any of those other games?”

“Jason’s still looking for something,” Ash replies. “He might be looking for a while.”

The stove beeps.

“Dinner’s ready!” Amy exclaims, jumping up to grab it. Soon, there are heaping portions of stir-

fried rice and veggies on every plate alongside glasses filled with rosé. Jason arrives at the table.

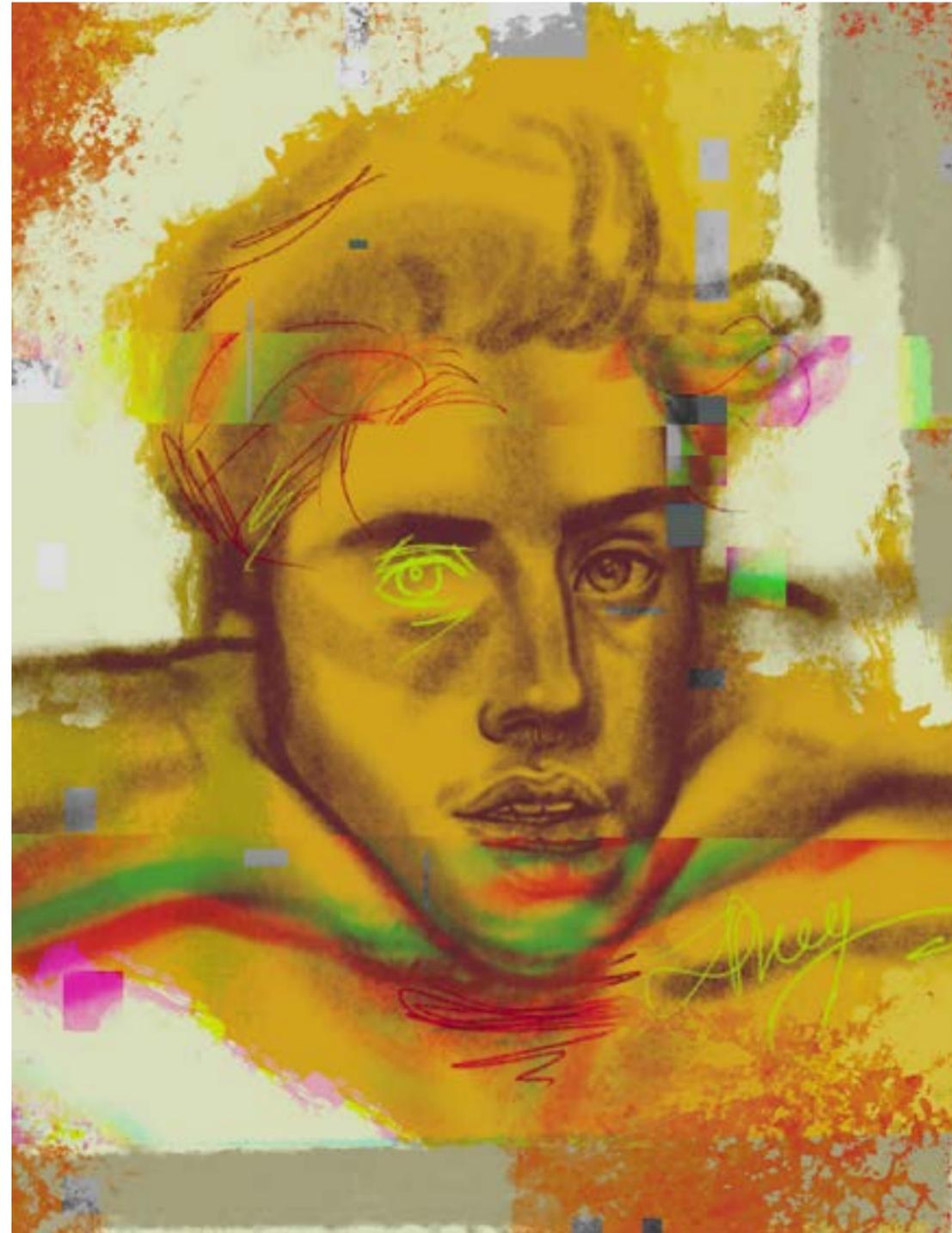
“No luck in the bedroom,” he states. Then, realizing his phrasing, he quips: “So unusual.” Everyone laughs (Ash too) and the festivities commence. Over bites of red bell peppers and eggs soaked in hoisin, the five drink, share, and chuckle.

“Deb actually just got another piercing,” Amy tells them, referring to her butch coworker. She pops open another bottle of wine so she can top off everyone’s glasses. Ash declines a refill, the beginnings of warmth in their chest reminding them of doctor’s orders. “But she can’t have them in at work because of the patients.”

“Yes, I too have found that with each new hole in my skin, my ability to tolerate people weakens,” Kai jokes. Everyone drinks to that.

After all the available wine has been downed and the stir fry consumed, all five relocate to the living room, settling themselves across plush gray furniture around the television. Amy sits in between Jason and Max on the couch, while Ash and Kai end up on the loveseat.

A rock-paper-scissors battle between Jason and Max (Jason is the victor) determines the game for the evening to be *Smash*. Jason and Kai, both excellent players, select Yoshi and Pikachu respec-



Baz Kanold
Self Asphyxiation no. 2
Digital Image

tively for the dueling of the night. Amy chooses to play as Kirby so Max teams up with her to give her a fighting chance. Ash plays as Link. Even though Ash is the most sober of the group, they still find

themselves cackling with the rest of them as various characters self-destruct.

In an unexpected turn of events, Kirby comes out on top—in no small part due to Max’s aid. Amy and Max cheer, breaking out ice cream for all. The evening winds down over bites of chocolate syrup-coated vanilla and cookie dough. At the end of the night, Kai gets ready to leave.

“I’ve had a really lovely evening,” they say, giving each member of the quad a friendly embrace. “Max, it’s been a pleasure to have your company as always. Amy, the food was wonderful. Jason, I love your sense of humor. And Ash—” Kai is careful not to hug them too tight. “—I love your beard. I know you’re still in a bit of a recovery stage, but you shared so much energy with me tonight I’d hardly know it. Thank you.”

Ash’s face reddens under the greasepaint. Kai waves as they go. Before long, their Uber has driven away, and all that is left of them is a pile of dirty dishes.

After the clean-up part of the evening is over, Ash heads to the Max room. Faint sounds carry from down the hall; Jason and Amy seem to have left their door open, perhaps on purpose. Ash sits on the Max bed across from the mirror, staring at the being within using their right eye, then their left. In the dim lighting, the flat chest and beard seem to indicate one thing; the roundness of their hips and the slender tapering of their limbs suggests another. Ash’s right eye can see the inescapable female-ness that Jason sees. Their left eye knows that female-ness is a made-up idea.

“Everything okay?” Max asks, coming behind them to soothingly stroke their hair.

“Maybe not,” Ash shrugs. “Some people haven’t gotten used to the fact that nothing has changed.”

“He might just need time,” Max suggests. “For him, this *is* a change. When you’re happy in the body you’re born with, no one has to relearn how to think about you, how to interact with you and help you feel valid.” Ash looks down at the floor with both eyes. Their body shrinks inward, instinctively forming a shield around their heart.

“But if my ‘me-est me’ isn’t the me he prefers... what happens to us then?”

Max gently slides his arms around Ash, lightly pulling their shoulders back to unfurl them.

“Then you’re still the most first class, badass, sassafra Ash-est Ash I know. Try saying that three times fast.”

“You did not just make that up.”

“You got me. Been saving it for a special occasion.” Max kisses Ash’s nose. “No matter what, I promise: we’ll still be in good shape.”



Art Explained

Dysphoria

Baz Kanlod

Being queer and non-binary clearly influences your art. What are the flashpoints that get you inspired about these subjects (both the good and the bad / personal and universal)?

The fluidity of my identity and the community as a whole are a huge inspiration for me. My current work deals heavily in living within the area outside of the gender binary, and while that experience is incredibly freeing, it also can be lonely as well. That’s why being connected to the community and seeing other queer people thriving, creating, and growing is so important and inspiring. Even when I create pieces based off of negative experiences, like I do in the *Dysphoria* series, I know that I’m not alone in the feelings of confusion and grief I have in regards to my body. It allows me to connect to that experience in a different way, as if I’m not grieving (or celebrating) alone.



Baz Kanold
Take Aim
Digital Image

body for an extended period and focus on parts of myself that trigger my dysphoria. There have been some pieces that I’ve had to work through with tears in my eyes, just from being alone with the reality of my own body. That being said, sometimes sitting with my body has also been freeing for me as well, helping me to work through some of those dysphoric feelings. It really depends on the part of the body I’m focussing on and how vulnerable I’m feeling that day.

Could you explain a little bit about that and the purposeful use of “glitches” in your visual style?

The glitches were extremely important to my conceptualization of these pieces, which made the switch to digital art really beneficial for me. I see my dysphoria as a glitch—a disconnect between mind and body that produces an aberration—so the glitches themselves are visual representations of dysphoria. However, I also see glitch and glitch art as a distinctly modern method. By combining it with a more traditional-style drawing, I create a contrast that is also representative of the concept of dysphoria, and one could argue, the gender binary itself.



Tell us about your fine art process. How do you create your images?

Prior to Covid, I worked fairly large-scale in oil paint. However, due to constraints in my location, I’ve had to scale back and find different ways to work. Currently, I’ve gone back to digital artwork, which I dabbled with in my early twenties, and it has ended up being a very fun experience for me.

When planning my pieces for this series in particular, I take reference shots of specific parts of my body on the day I plan to work, with a focus on parts that I feel particularly dysphoric about. Using the reference image, I do the “charcoal” sketch first, then slowly begin layering in different elements to texturize the piece. Finally, I use several layers of glitch effects and erasing in order to finalize the pieces with the distinct glitches added in.

What are the most challenging aspects of your work? Do these challenges relate to challenges you face as a queer, non-binary person?

With this series, the most difficult part has been having to sit with my naked



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Digital Collage & Essay

Another Time, Another Place

Tiger Munson

The images for *Another Time, Another Place* stem from 35mm film photographs of restrooms in Los Angeles gay bars. I had taken these images between 2000 and 2005. Over this past year, I combined them with historical illustrations of men in various pose and circumstance.

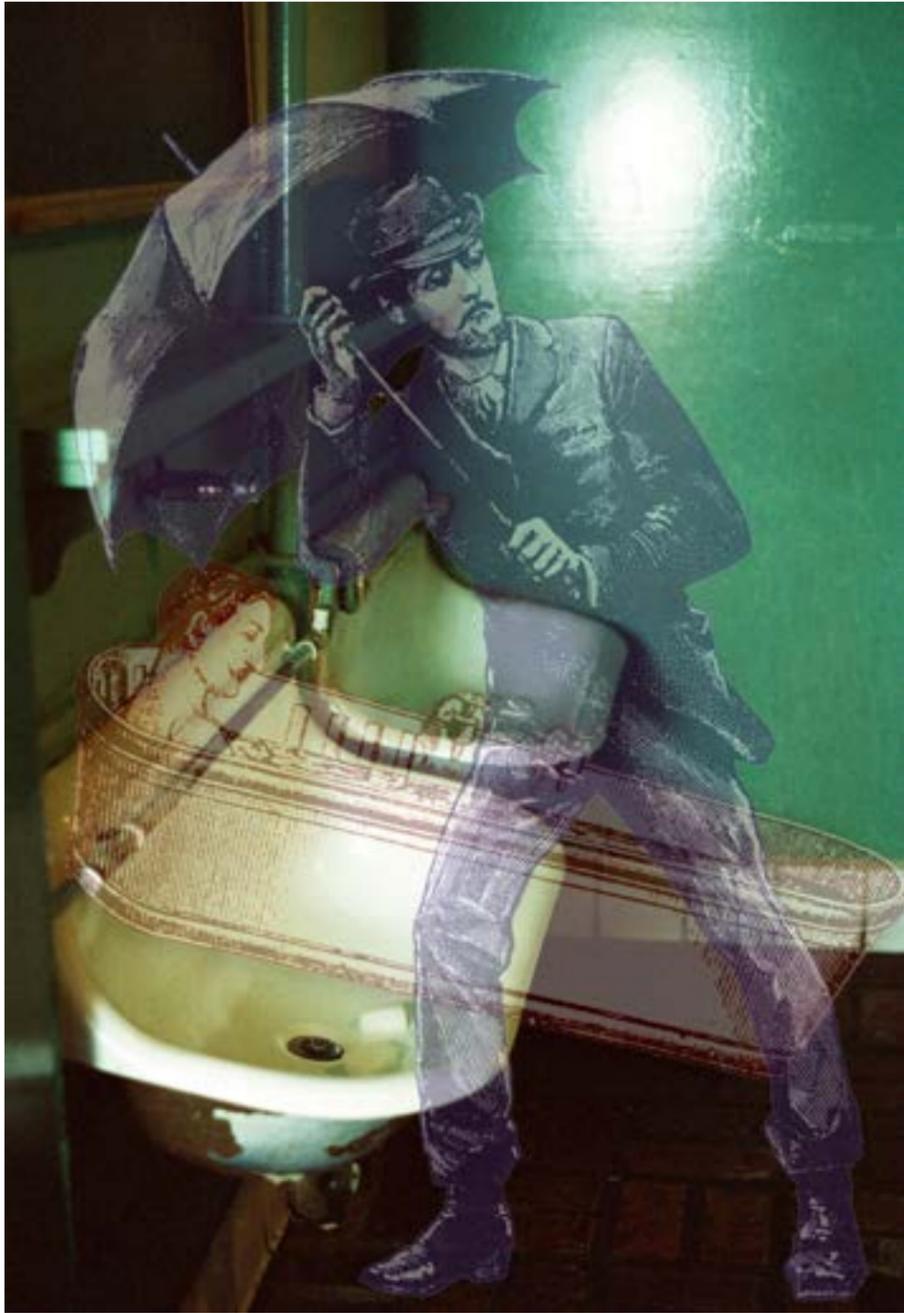
Gay bars and gay bar restrooms have always been safe spaces. The development of persona, desire, raw sex, narrative history, and even spirituality transpire in these public/private rooms. Sadly the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated this fact: many of these locations no longer exist—their numbers dwindled by the shift to online hook-up apps, closed as clientele aged, painted over, gentrified, turned into “straight” bars, damaged by fire, one reason or another. With all these bars gone and closed, 19th century illustrations of men inserted into contemporary gay sites of desire, play, and community reanimate the facilities into an imagined space/scenario.

Trapped inside for such an extended length of time during the past year, I began looking at a body of my previous artistic work: photographs, film negatives, and other collages I had made, as well as many of the materials I use in these processes: periodicals, books, product packaging, and other ephemera. I bought a new film scanner and started scanning negatives that had never been saved

Tiger Munson
[@tigrefino](#)
(previous) The Abbey
(right) Mickey's
Digital Photo Collage







Tiger Munson
(previous) Fullerton
(above) Mother Lode
Digital Photo Collage

digitally. The illustrations used in the projects are all images collected from historical newspapers, flyers, and magazines.

Looking back over this photo series from the early 2000s, I couldn't help compare the differences between then and now. At that time, I was shuttling between many

gay bars in the Los Angeles region and photographing their restrooms. These were places that I frequented professionally, as an event photographer, but also personally as a patron. I would go to these places to photograph, but also to dance, see shows, meet up with friends, hangout, meet people, sometimes hookup, and so on. These places were important to my developing sense of self.

Sometime between then and the pandemic, my relationship to gay bars and restrooms changed. I had lived in an amazing courtyard apartment complex in MacArthur Park (that was really the first place I could make my own). It was a real community of different types: queer people, Latinx families, artists, designers, musicians, dj's, architects, yoga and alternative health practitioners, teachers, community activists, city government employees, social workers, skater kids... there was even a voodoo priestess living there at one point.

We all socialized together, living in separate cheap units. Some were long term residents, and there was turnover as people moved in and out of this 1915 historical courtyard apartment. There was a wild garden of tall eucalyptus and palm trees, cactuses and succulents, and other flora. We used to have these great events and

parties, very under-the-radar, where people could just be themselves.

With social media now, that seems impossible. A friend in the complex introduced me to an amazing collective of artists called Solids and I did some art shows with them. I joined them at Burning Man in 2005. That just blew my mind open in every conceivable way: how I approached life, what I photographed, how I expressed myself in creating art, in spaces, and a focusing of my skills and talents.

I had worked in education and taught before, but it was at this point that I made the decision to sustain myself by pursuing teaching in a formal environment. My frequency in going to these bars diminished, unless I was going for work, or to see friends perform, or for some kind of benefit and the like.

In 2014, the thriving artist community my neighbors and I created started to come to an end. The property was sold, and there followed a period of landlord surveillance and harassment that included the destruction of every plant on the property, removal of my personal and the community installation artwork, and tenant evictions. I went through the process of attempting to get landmark status for the complex but that was unsuccessful. In researching the building, the architect and his influences, as well as learning about the history of development in Los Angeles, and familiarizing myself with navigating the various city departments and forces that approve and shape development, I made a connection with how shifts in society change and impact public/private spaces and the self.

We don't know what gay or queer bars will survive as we hopefully come out of the pandemic. The Abbey is surviving, and seems to be flourishing but almost all of the other bars I photographed, and those I am still using in this project, have closed. Underpinning this series of work is the previous epidemic that gay men went through. The experience of growing up, and all of the attendant explorations of self and sexuality during the 1980s inform these images.

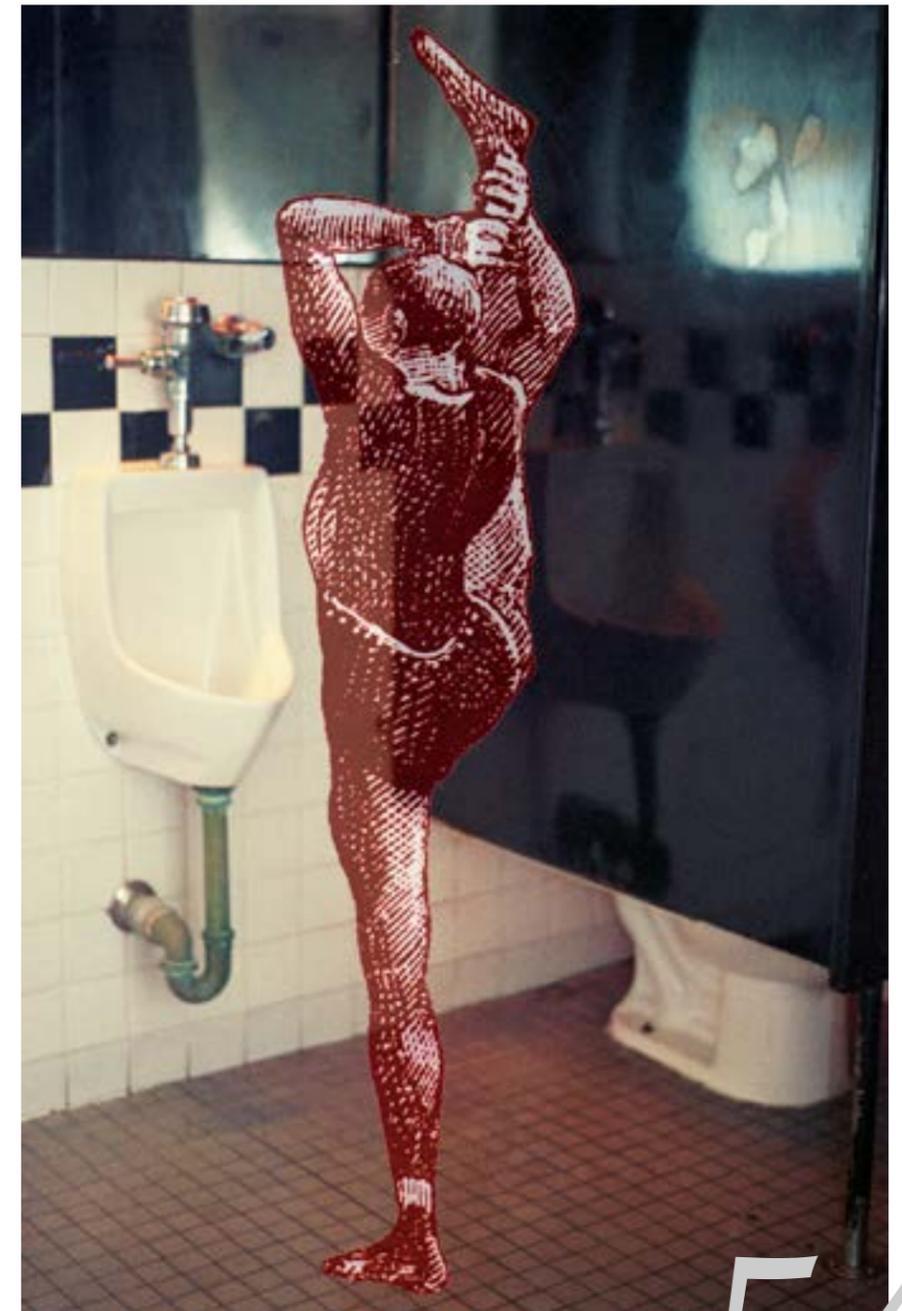
The territory that has been marked by queer people has vanished, but you need queers, or queer presence, or artifacts of queer presence to make a space a "queer space". These photo collages are from two different eras and communication forms: 19th century illustration and 20th century photography. They are combined

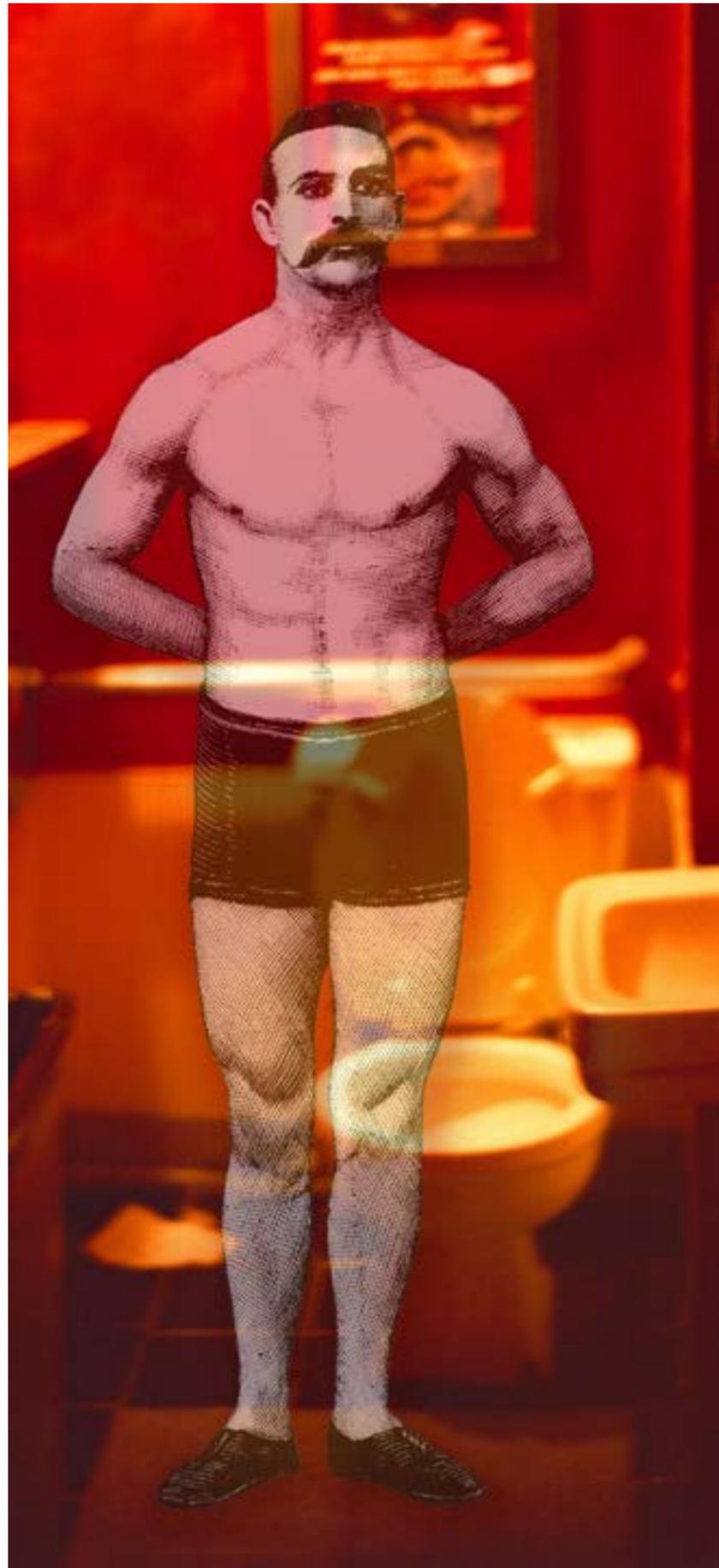
in digital collage. It is my goal that some essential animating queer spirit emanates through the combination of both. The human figure can be seen and thought of as a surrogate representation of experience/aspect of personality/encounter/circumstance/moment/scenario.

Many of these locations no longer exist.

Ultimately, everyone needs a place to express themselves in a complete-

Tiger Munson
Revolver
Digital Photo Collage





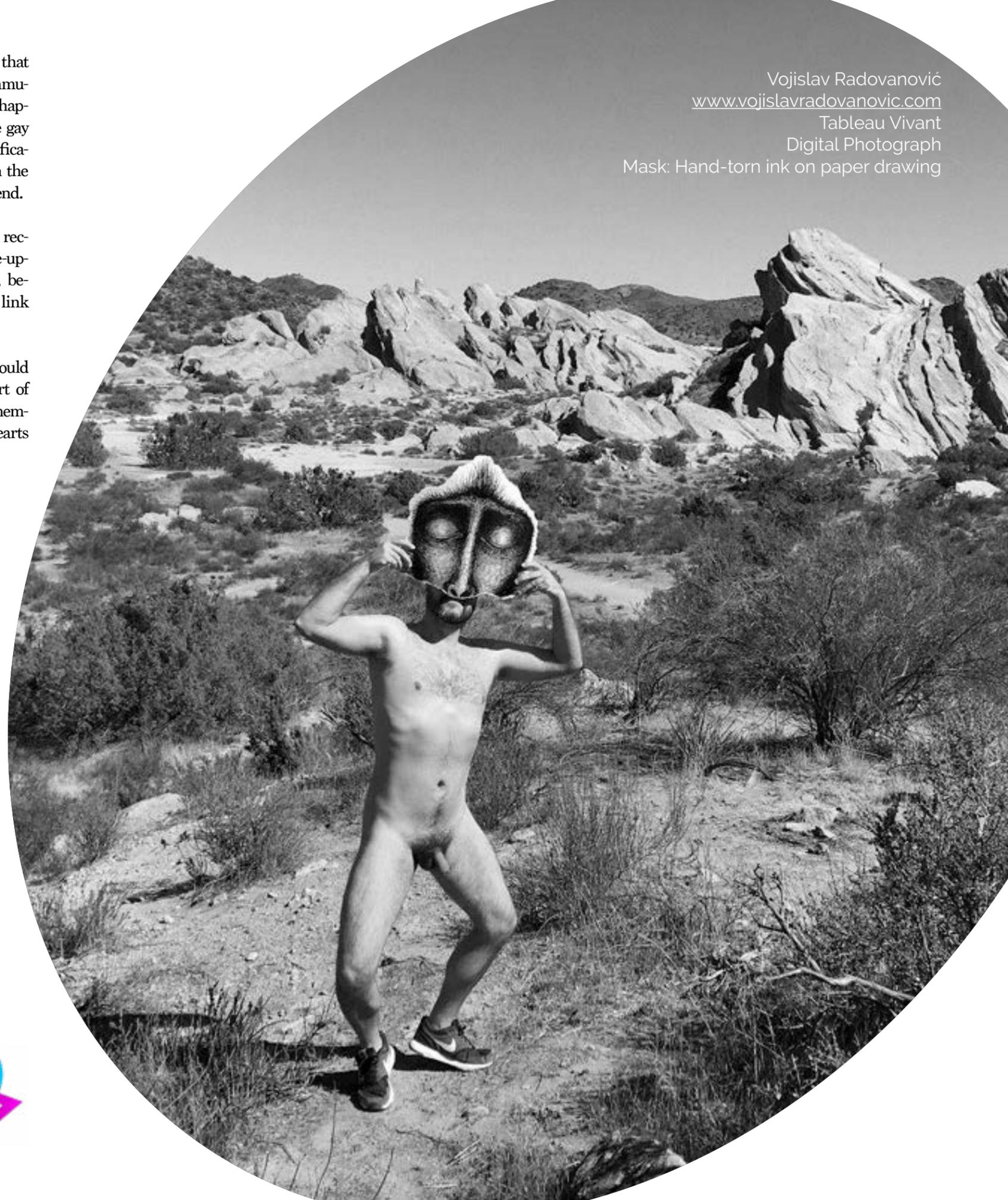
ly unencumbered way. The devastation that happened to my MacArthur Park community complex is connected to what was happening (in less dramatic fashion) to the gay bars in the region. Real estate, gentrification, and development forces—and then the pandemic—has only accelerated this trend.

Maybe these images can prompt some recollection or memory in those who once-upon-a-time frequented these spaces. Or, become some sort of cultural or artistic link in that lineage for those who have not.

It would be satisfying that the viewer would enter each image, prompting some sort of recognition of self or space and in remembering that space, they hold to their hearts the importance of allyship.

Support Black Lives Matter.

Tiger Munson
Apache
Digital Photo Collage



Vojislav Radovanović
www.vojislavradovanovic.com

Tableau Vivant
Digital Photograph

Mask: Hand-torn ink on paper drawing

Visual Essay

Living in Masks

mask
/mask/

noun

a covering for all or part of the face.
a likeness of a person's face.
a person's face set into a particular expression.
the face or head of an animal, especially of a fox, as a hunting trophy.
an expression that hides one's true character or feelings; a pretense.

verb

to cover with a mask.
to conceal from view.
to disguise or hide.
to protect from a process.

Joey Chiarello
[@joey_chiarello](#)
New Haircut
Digital Photograph
Mask: Hand-built ceramic





Chuck Hohng
@chohng
Norujeon, Roe Deer Play
Digital Photographs
Mask: Roe Deer Skull and Mixed Media





Miss Brightside
katiebrightside.com
Tragic Kingdom #3
Billboard and performace installation within a
performace installation
2000 x 1000mm
Mask: Marilyn/Snow White painted face
Credits: 1st Billboard, Mark Pepperall; 2nd
Billboard, Christopher Gonta; 3rd Billboard,
William Carter.



Steen
[deviantart.com/dodoexpress](https://www.deviantart.com/dodoexpress)
Tempest Harpy (left) & Red Death
Digital Photograph
Mask: Hand-made Production Pieces



Alexander Wojcik
[@mr_alexhollywood](#)
Faceless Beauty Garden (left) &
Faceless Beauty Jewels
Digital Photographs
Mask: Fabric & Mixed Media



Charlie Wood
@charlieprobablywood
The Apocalyptides: (from left) Cordycephone, Angleris , &
Urchinaera
Digital Portraits
Mask: Liquid latex, polymer clay, & mixed media



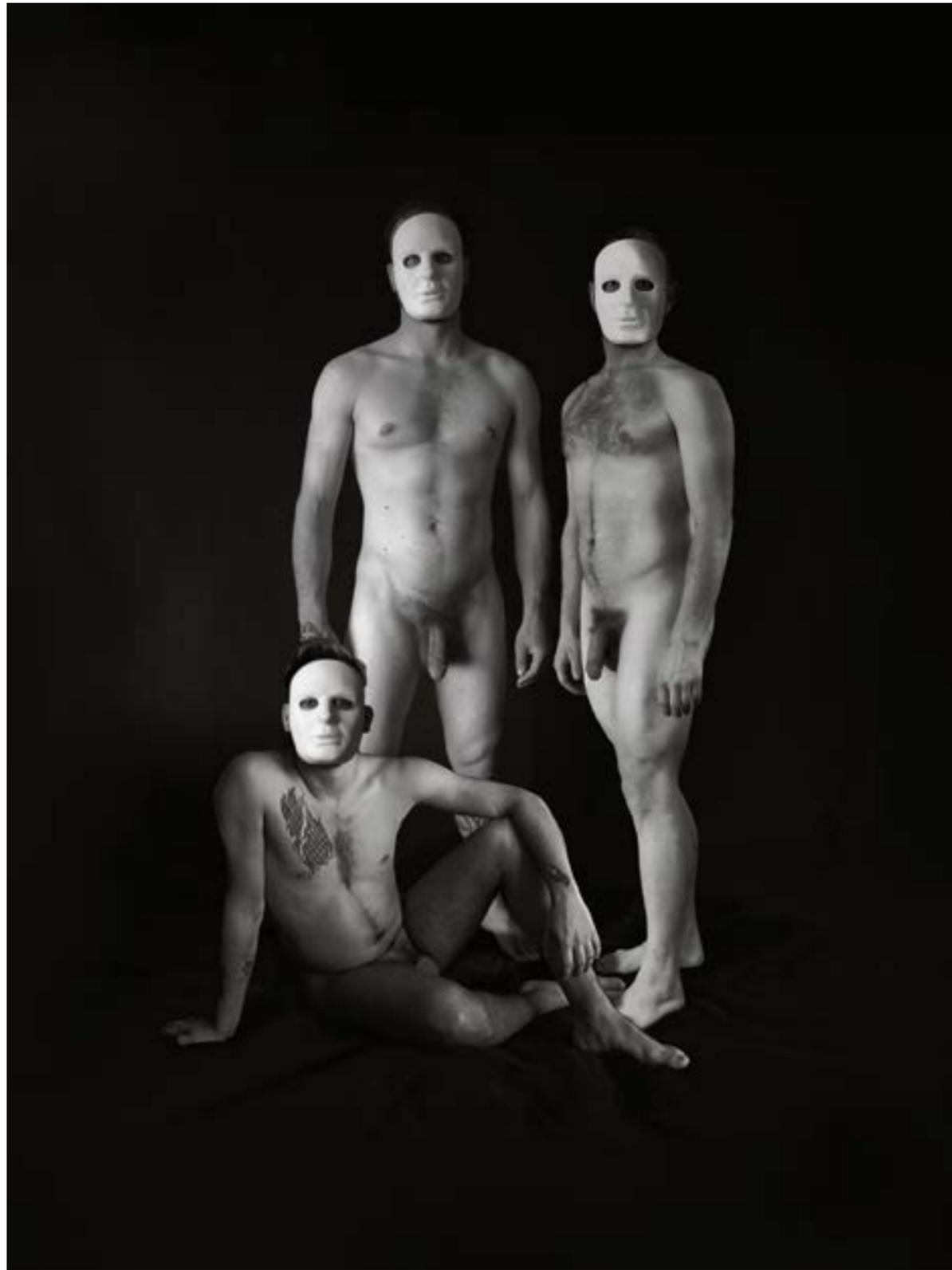


De Kwok
@de_kwok
Swish (left) & Masked
Digital Photographs
Masks: Vintage Mask & Leather Hood



Keith J Saari
[@saarikeith](#)
Clown & Alebrije (right)
Digital Photographs
Masks: Paper Mache





B Jeppson
BJeppsonArt.com
Three Masked Men
Archival Pigment Print
16 x 20 inches





Criticism

Treading

Artist David Jester
Written by K Ryan Henisey

David Jester
(previous page) Open Arms
(left) Monsters Above
Oil
36 x 36 inches each

Water

Crisp glacial blues and refracted ripples accompany warm bodies under a summer sun in the beautifully haunted paintings of fine artist David Jester. A deft and precise hand carefully creates distorted underwater scenes in each of his works, building on a narrative of queer consciousness.



David Jester
The Passing
Oil
48 x 60 inches

The genius of Jester's work lies in his ability to transport viewers through the suffocating pressures of challenge and loss to a place of tranquility and joy. In his oil paintings, Jester invites us to drown with him in the aqua, cobalt, turquoise, and ultramarine underworld of Southern California suburbia, creating an entire universe with three simple ingredients: gay men, swimming pools, and light.

Jester's cosmos is contained beneath the calm surface of backyard pools, where the artist acts as psychopomp leading us in our own Orphean quests for love, meaning, and salvation. Submerged, all of Jester's men echo the turbulent relationship of the 'other'—in this case gay men—against heteronormative hegemony. The weight of the cerulean water perpetually holds Jester's subjects beneath the surface. Lungs full and bared from crown to sole, Jester's men are simultaneously contained and unencumbered. The

David Jester
|
Oil
36 x 36 inches

water presents a pressured weightlessness that Queer peoples will find familiar, for it is akin to the burdensome freedom of self acceptance we all experience as survivors in an intolerant world.

Jester invites us to drown with him in the ultramarine underworld of California suburbia.

Indeed, Jester's painted narrations are queered in the most technical of ways. As a formalist who paints what exists, Jester has quietly mastered abstraction. His stroke, calculating the distortions of moving

water, obscures the figures yet carefully captures them and the pools. Even his use of bright lapis hues is subversive. Where the





David Jester
Balance
Oil
36 x 36 inches

glacial colors should seem cold, Jester has filled us with the warmth of summer.

In *Monsters Above*, Jester's subject sinks beneath the surface of the pool, arms out in a near religious posture. Amorphous reflections and refractions bounce along the mirrored surface of water. The source of Jester's monsters are what's important: reflections of the self and refractions of the outsider. Masterfully, Jester places the viewer in both positions. Existing external to the painting, we are like the watchers (monsters) above, aloof and malformed (to the subject). But the affect of the painting allows the viewer

to enter the subject's point of view, mirroring our own monsters back at us in the same way his subject's are cast back from above. We are, in Jester's telling, both captured and capturer, bound by bars of liquid and light.

The refraction of the sun adds depth to Jester's narrative, creating stories through the use of bending light. The broken faces of *I*, for example, can be read as a representation of the hybrid nature to living within queered self-awareness. Moving from pain to peace, the many faces of *I* illustrate a Janus for the contemporary age, constantly tread-

ing water between the want of being true and being part. True to the self. Part of the group.

All of Jester's subjects walk the line of hybridity, plunging their queerness into the normative representations of the pool. The warm tones of their bodies are a contrast to the coolness of the azure pools. They are men of breath and blood, forever submerged beneath the cool waters of their cosmology, just as we, queer souls, are forever enclosed in the grasp of cultural dominance.

But the magic of Jester's work isn't locked in his subversive and introspective criticism of our reality. His sorcery is the masterful way he makes that criticism sing with beauty. The Windex-hued cosmos Jester presents is also

a baptism of sorts—for the subject and the viewer. Religious and near-spiritual visual cues echo through many of the paintings; from the surface-breaking *Baptism* to the oft

The Windex-hued cosmos Jester presents is a baptism of sorts.

used balancing crucifix of arms spread wide in pieces such as *Open Arms* and *Monsters Above*. Within the paintings, Jester invites us to join him as one of the unencumbered. The artist (or at least his paintings), seem to understand that the key to release is to allow yourself to be buoyed by the pressure, rather than pulled down. And in the effluvium of his underwater symbolism, Jester washes us clean with crystal-hued grace, love, and camaraderie.

Jester's men, otherworldly beneath their aquamarine confines, each embrace their own unique awakening, finding weightlessness in their imprisonment. Like Kate Chopin's description of the sea, Jester's pools are "seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in

abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation." We too are invited—perhaps even entreated—to enter into the pool with Jester's character's and to awaken ourselves. Jester's underworld, after all, is one filled with summer. "The Gay's" moved in and gentrified, bringing with them brightness and light. Embracing the pressures of the pool, Jester's men make themselves free. In *Open Arms* the titular spread entreats us to grasp the waters—and by extension their pressures—to join the Adonises of Jester's underworld in their play.

David Jester
(below) Deep End
(next page) Confluence
Oil
36 x 36 inches each







David Jester
(left to right) *Isolation*, *Oh Mary*, & *Baptism*
Oil
36 x 36 inches each

Even in the *Deep End*, Jester's men find solace. In an interlocked embrace, they hold each other up, treading together. *Confluence* presents a similar scene, with a group of men frolicking together at play. Jester's underworld summer is a land of beauty, filled with the beautiful. The very act of obscuring his model's comeliness through the refractive qualities of the pool underscored the richness of his subtext. Jester consistently reminds you that the sun still shines, but allows only slivers of escape from the confines of his waters.

The paintings are reminders that as Queer people, we are only as free as our self allows. For there is no freedom from the ever-present impact of the macro culture. The mastery of the art is that it points us to a path of joy—one forged in the ever present pressures of heteronormativity. Jester reminds us to rise above (and within) and to continue to tread waters in the best way we know how: beautifully.



Artist Profile

David Jester



David Jester was always drawn to the pool. The artist currently resides in Palm Springs, where he spends the majority of his time with his passion—painting. Often found near the turquoise waters of Southern California backyards, Jester holds an MFA from Rutgers University.

“Viewpoints and views are often distorted to those who are inside and those who are outside of the water,” explains Jester. “The pool is another world that is part of the world around it—just like the gay community is an integral part of our overall society.”

Website:
davidmjester.com

Instagram:
[@d_jester_art](https://www.instagram.com/d_jester_art)

David Jester
(right) On Reflection
Oil
36 x 36 inches

(next page) We're Here
Oil
60 x 48 inches





ALGORITHM FOR AN INVISIBLE MANY, ALSO KNOWN AS 1
 MARVAL A REX, ETC. 2
 3
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 6
 a faithful gesture towards queer embodiment would be its obliteration 7
 but how do you obliterate something that doesn't quite exist 8
 [quite] 9
 that constantly unravels itself 10
 resists definition 11
 and why be faithful? 12
 when what you are is 13
 a perpetual 14
 un-doing 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 /I speak these lines atop a porcelain glory of a toilet, wiping my pussy 20
 of urine. I grow tired and crave coffee, which I like black, and which, 21
 as a diuretic, forces me over and over again to re-acknowledge my pussy 22
 splayed open, pissing, on an ivory throne/ 23
 shame 24
 25
 in her book Becoming Human, Zakkiah Iman Jackson argues. 26
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 "I argue that the severe limitations of liberal humanism 28
 and notions of 'the human', the conscripting 'humanity' 29
 imputed to black people, has led to radical questioning of 'the human' 30
 and in particular the status assigned to animality in key works 31
 of black cultural expression [ie. certain black art]... this questioning is 32
 suggestive of a desire for perhaps a different 'genre of the human' or may 33
 even signal, as I propose, an urgent demand for the dissolution of 34
 'human' [altogether] ..." 35
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 urgent demand for dissolution, a faithful gesture 37
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 break shame/ cycle 39
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 the vessel you embody is not-here-yet 43
 and yet you embody it 44
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 perhaps you call yourself queer and feel queer 46
 and perhaps this is only a limp-wristed reach towards a thing 47
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 /I ask myself, as I thrust two dildos inside my body at once, propped up 50
 on an expensive white chair I actively stain with lubricant, what does it 51
 mean: to be neither here 52
 nor there?/ 53
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the term hauntology 55
 sounds near identical to "ontology", a concept it haunts by replacing- 56
 the term hauntology 57
 can be described as "the priority of being and presence 58
 with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present, 59
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 /I feel real/I feel real/I feel real/I feel real/I feel real 68
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Marval A Rex
Digital Photo

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mostly lost in the screen 94
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a yell! that queerness is valid 114
that it deserves recognition and thus spaciousness 115
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fist shoved in flesh holes 119
is that all sex identification 120
is that all gender identification 121
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+
+

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 /i have always said two¹ things: a collective openness to regular and 140
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 Marval A Rex [YOU!] can be in two or more places at once/ 142
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Marval A Rex
Digital Photo

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Amanda Majors
 Portfolio
 Digital Photo



the art world sucks 0 dick(s) OR How I Learned to Stop
Worrying and Love this State

channelled by *Marval A Rex, etc.*

I! I place the analytical act of musing over queerness and its machinations and manifestations in the same shitty doghouse as art history. This brand of ivory tower navel-gazing can be called queer theory. I have, over the years, developed a subtle yet palpable distaste (the sensation of milk on the cusp of spoiling) for anyone who attaches themselves to dying epistemological institutions and claims any authority whatsoever over what constitutes queerness [or, similarly, what constitutes art]. I sense some popular designation of my body as a “queer body”, and thus the detritus of queer theory begs for me to carry it. This begging elicits disdain within my spectral mettle, and so I write this proscription in some vain effort to rid myself of it, this pedagogic slime, as if these words published now become a spell. . . as if I can sing one simple phrase to ward off the evils of dying arts+academic institutions forever:

I am an unruly exhibitionist who desires for a pure voyeur. A pure voyeur. A *pure* voyeur. Emotionally open and conceptually retarded. I do not want an academic to imbibe me and then later, in their safe scholastic architecture, slice open my ghostly queer body, even if the act of slicing is guided by the same deluded belief of grandeur, the same insane notion of valiance, afforded to the centuries of colonizers as they “observed” and destroyed indigenous other peoples.

The only problem with academia is that it isn't dead yet. The only other problem with *queer* academia is that the onto-surgeons attempt to penetrate a body(s) that is not quite yet here and perhaps never will fully be here or anywhere. All there is... is infinitely (mis)understood residue. Some gay ghost sloppily sayin':

I fantasize over future high-profile interviews that are like my queer body, not-quite-yet-here and also Right Here Now. (I'm talking like a time-space collapse, baby.) In these spirited interviews, these future reflections, these here-and-not-here exposés, I tell the eager interviewer, who gets higher and higher off the effluvium of my newfound fame, I tell 'em: “yeah I made it”, and “the art world can *SUCK MY DICK*”. I tell 'em, high on my own fame-effluvia multiplying, that the gallery/collector/university controller-matrix, known shorthand as “the art world”, can never BY DESIGN really *see* or *witness* or *give any real shit* about young and dangerous (talented)

and soon-to-be-expensive artists without their very own archaic paradigms mucking it all up. And so, I tell the dream-interviewer, “amidst all my late-capitalism ‘success’, despite all their freeloading, I have one final, generous offer:

the art world can *SUCK MY DICK*.”

I have a tiny tasty *schmeckle*, which fake-testosterone made a hefty inch and change, so they'd really have to get tangled up in my pubes-jungle and midday pussy sweat to get a good nursing in.

(Big nods of agreement from the blasted interviewer.)

All I want is a pure voyeur. All I need. Is someone who sees.



Marval A Rex
marvalarex.com
SHAT NOIR (previous)
Marval A Depo-Rx or (A hole is a hole is a hole)
Mixed Media Collage





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13



MisterOsborne
misterosborne.com
You Say I'm Thriving,
I Say I'm Flowering
Archival ink on paper
19 x 24 inches



Art Call with Kunsthaus RoZig

Body Oddly Oddly

Connie Kurtew & Eugene Huffman

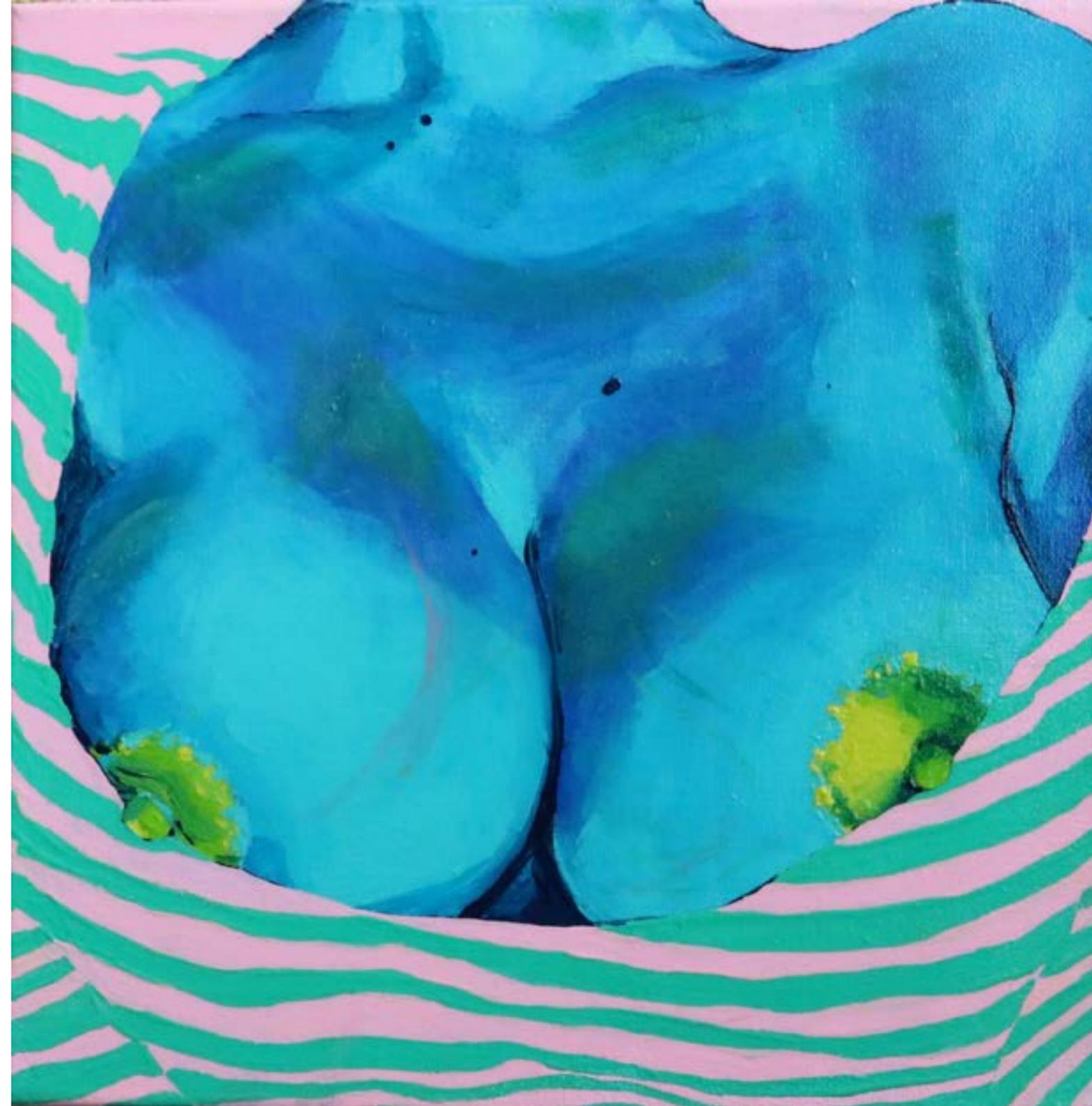
[Zoom recording. 03/19/2021. 19:06 Pacific.]

Queer Quaterly [QQ]:

It was really funny, Connie: there was this couple walking around the gallery and I had the spreads [for the magazine] laid out. And the man kept staring at your photograph.

Connie Kurtew [CK]:

[Guffaw! Laughter] I was like: ‘you know, should I or shouldn’t I?’ And of course I had to ask Dalila’s permission. But I thought to myself: ‘these gay boys—they always show, you know, all these parts all the time.’ And I said to myself: ‘damn it! We need some lesbian stuff in this.’



QQ:

We do! Hahahah. And that’s one of the great things about a paired curation, like the two of you have set up with your online art space, Kunsthaus RoZig.

Danica Svanborg
[@danicamarie](#)
If These Girls Could Talk
Acrylic on Canvas
12 x 12 inches



Gwyneth Bulawsky
[@gwynethbulawsky](#)
The One Who Suffers
Colored Pencil
9 x 12 inches

Self Portrait (right)
Acrylic on Wood
24 x 36 inches

How do you deal with differences in opinions and making decisions to include things you may not like on a personal level?

Eugene Huffman [EH]:

That's one of the things about Connie and I. And I

like that about pairing up with someone as a curator. She's got the photographer's eye and I've got the artist's eye, but it's pretty amazing how our process works out.

Typically, we view and select separately, and come together to compare our results. There will be things that she likes that I thought, 'no,' and vice a versa, but that's where we engage each other in the conversation. Okay: what do we like about it. Or the other person has a different viewpoint on a piece that the first wouldn't have thought of. And there's even some where we've thought: 'even if this isn't something that we like, it has to be in the show.' Having the different viewpoints helps because sometimes we didn't see things in a certain way but now we do thanks to the help of the partner curator.

CK:

Yeah. I agree. Like Eugene said, if we don't like a piece, we go by—what was the theme of the show? Did it have a theme? How far can you stretch the theme? This is what we are looking for.

QQ:

So let's talk about your online gallery. Both of you launched Kunsthaus RoZig together. Tell me more about that and how you got started.

CK:

First, I want to actually share about the name. No one ever asks about the name!





QQ:

I thought it was just something German!

CK:

Hahaha! Well, Kunsthaus is German. And I am German. Eugene is from German descent and is probably more German than I am! But RoZig is actually the first letters of my dog's names, Roxy and Ziggy, and I just put them together.

[Laughter].

And also, it's a play on words. If you change the letters to 'rosig' it actually means 'pink' in German. And I liked the pink reference to queerness. And when I talked to Eugene about it, he loved it.

Candcie Dalsing
www.or.@social
(left) Fan the Flames
Digital Photograph

George Dinhaupt
georgedinhaupt.com
(right)
"Untitled #2," (Self with Pink Feather)
Autoportrait

Paul Bryan
[@p_k_l_b](https://www.instagram.com/p_k_l_b)
How Do I Know You're Not Malking All This Up
(next page) & I Long for Its Touch (following page)
Digital Photographs
90 x 80 centimeters each

EH:

In German too, the 's' is pronounced the way we say our 'z' in US American English, so the word play totally works.

QQ:

And there you are, Eugene! Proving you ARE more German than the actual German.

[Laughter]

**Damn it! We
need some
lesbian stuff
in this.**





CK:

Eugene and I actually talked a few years ago about one of my experiences in East Germany. I had really long hair—to my butt almost—we did performance art. So, one of the guys had tied my hair—it was really long then—to a frame and he made forms with a blow dryer based on music that was playing. It was really cool.

Shane Allison
[@sdallison01](#)
Untitled
Collage



The art is
really fun.
Gays are fun.

In Germany, we had abandoned buildings that we'd use for parties, most of the time in the basement. Techno parties that would last all night. But in the rooms above, artists would go crazy with their installations and performances. I said to Eugene that I loved that and he had mentioned some similar experiences. So, we started talking about and looking at warehouses where we could create these experience here in Los Angeles. But the spaces were all too expensive or just not right for what we were looking to do. So we put that on ice, looking for future opportunities.

And then Covid. I had nothing to do. So I did some research and found an idea for online galleries I liked. I reached out to Eugene and said: 'hey. If we were to do this together, it would be possible.' And he was just like: 'Go for it! Let's do it!'

QQ:

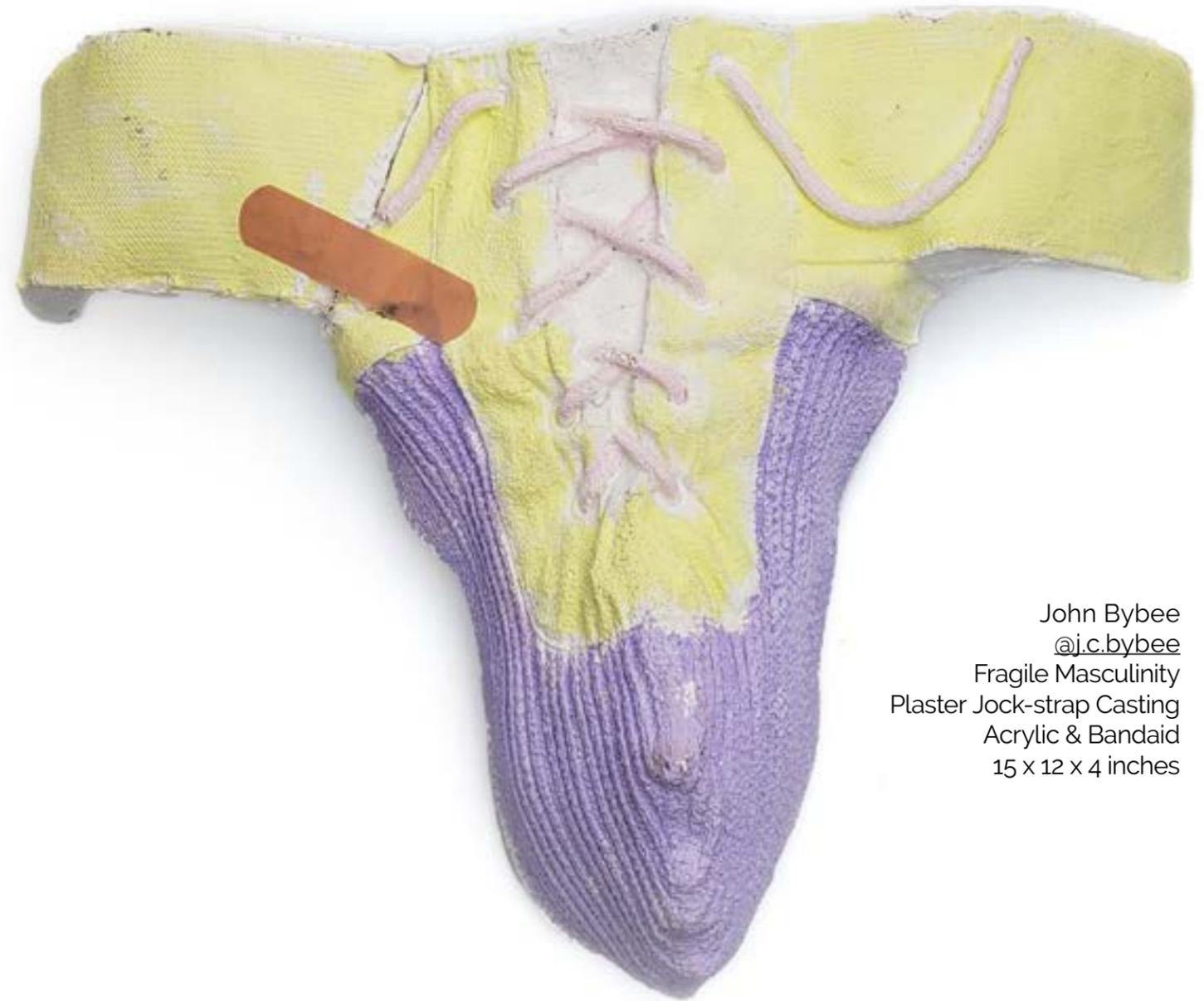
So the decision to move to a fully online space was a result of Covid?

CK:

Oh, yeah.

EH:

Absolutely it was. But one of the interesting things when we investigated the idea, was that we didn't see a lot of other people doing the same thing.



John Bybee
[@j.c.bybee](#)
Fragile Masculinity
Plaster Jock-strap Casting
Acrylic & Bandaid
15 x 12 x 4 inches

And one of the big things for us is making connections with other people. Of course, Zoom was a big part of that. One of the things that we immediately did was put together the online receptions to pair with the virtual galleries. It was a completely new experience. Instead of the gallery setting, where you'd introduce an artist and let them talk for five

seconds, we instead could really listen to the artist and talk about their work. The other artists are often interacting with each other. It has become a really big connection—which has been hard to come by this past year. And that's what made it all the more special.

QQ:

You've done amazing things with all of your shows. You've drawn great artists. What's ahead next for Kuntshaus RoZig?

CK:

Well, we'd like to keep going with the once-a-month curations. And we are focused on furthering the sense of community the gallery brings. There's a Zoom call, and a gallery showing that gives everyone a common interest. It's almost like happy hour. We want to keep that going. And we want to reach out more to underrepresented communities.

We've also just signed up with Clubhouse, so join us there.

EH:

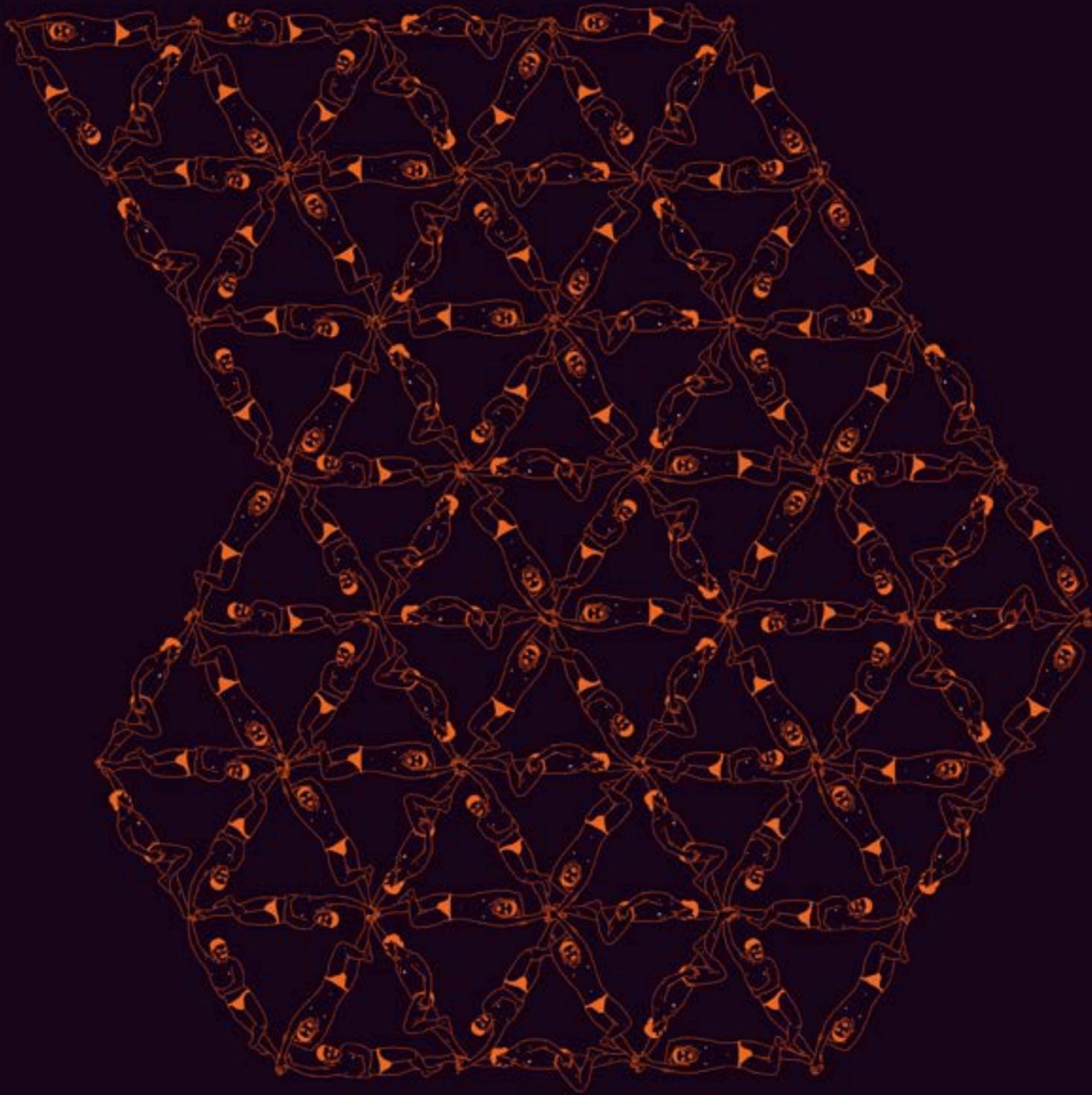
We've been constantly learning new things. Starting the gallery was something new we had to learn. Now Clubhouse is a new platform we're able to explore. We're getting to the place now, where the shows and the events are part of a well-oiled machine, so moving forward is where we are going.

CK:

It is really nice. Eugene has certain things he takes care of. And I have certain things that I do. Eugene is really organized, which is great because it makes working on everything much easier for me too.

Veru Narula
[@verunarula](#)
Laptop Boy Searching
Oil on Canvas
30 x 40 inches





Nelson Munares
nelsonmunares.com
Interwoven 1
Digital Print on Paper
30 x 30 inches

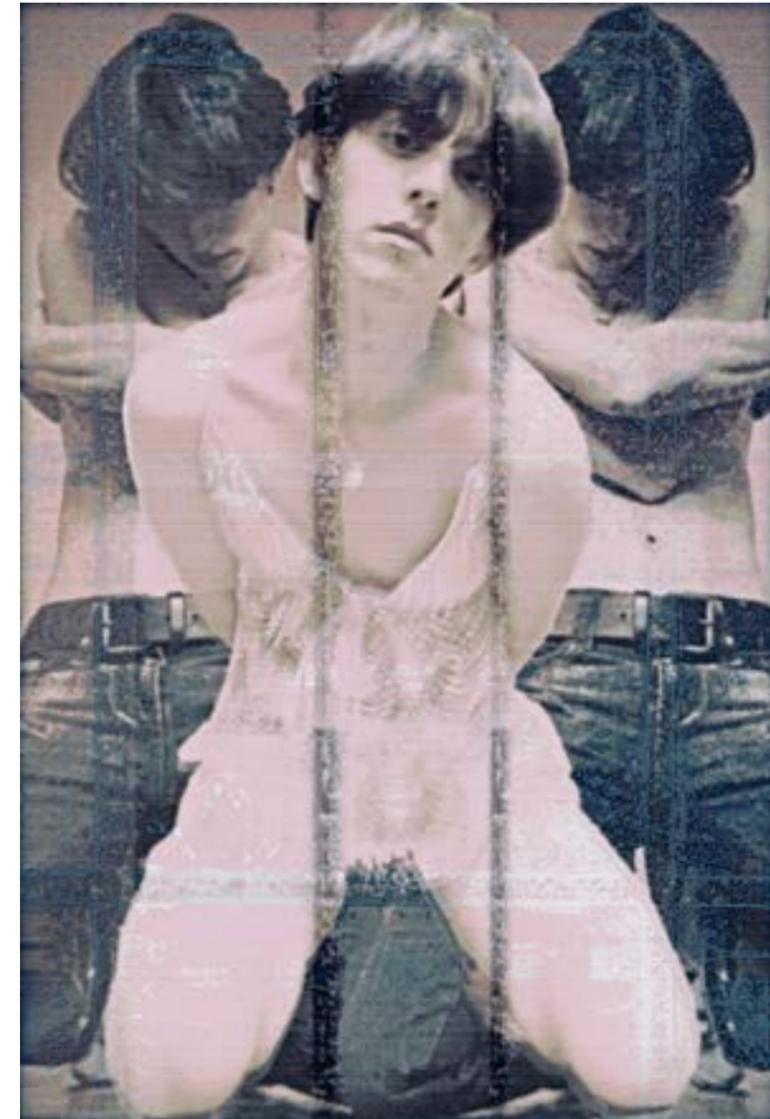
And what I like about the website where we host, is that it's a German website. I was calling them asking if it was okay to post nudity and they were all confused. They were like: 'we don't care.' So we won't have any problems there, which is great. And it's great for our queer artists too, because we don't have any content issues with what we host on the gallery 'walls.'

QQ:

And speaking of queer art, you both curated the collection accompanying this interview. Thank you. Body-oddy-oddy had a great range of submissions and you made excellent selections. I remember the parameters being pretty loose. What were you looking at when you were thinking about the selections?

EH:

Well one of the things is, as with most curators, composition. And, I don't think people bring this up often enough, feeling. What is your response to the artwork? What does it make you feel? And did I say composition? How it's put together. And how you take the theme.



John Waiblinger
johnwaiblinger.com
Garçons qui sont jolis
Post Photography on Gloss Metallic paper
13 x 19 inches, 1 of 5
Model : Louis Quatorze

We're open to abstract readings of a theme, but you have to tie it in somehow. And is the way you do that within the parameters of the show or the other artwork that presents itself?

CK:

In addition, we see in most shows artwork that is very similar, sometime from the same or different artists. And in those cases we typically narrow them down to the ones that are the best, both in quality and affect.

QQ:

As the owners of queer bodies, how did it feel to make selections that were specifically focused on queer themes?



CK:

For me, it was very freeing. I really enjoyed the variance in bodies and interpretations because we don't often see those. So it was a really positive surprise. I thought it was lovely.

EH:

Well, we're used to censorship on platforms like Instagram. And we know Queer artists get censored all the time for stupid shit. But the submissions we got were amazing and the interpretations of queer bodies were wonderful. It was nice to know that we could put it out there on a platform where it wouldn't be censored.

QQ:

Well, QQ is a place designed for us to speak to ourselves. A space that is for us "outsiders" only.

What were some of the things you found surprising?

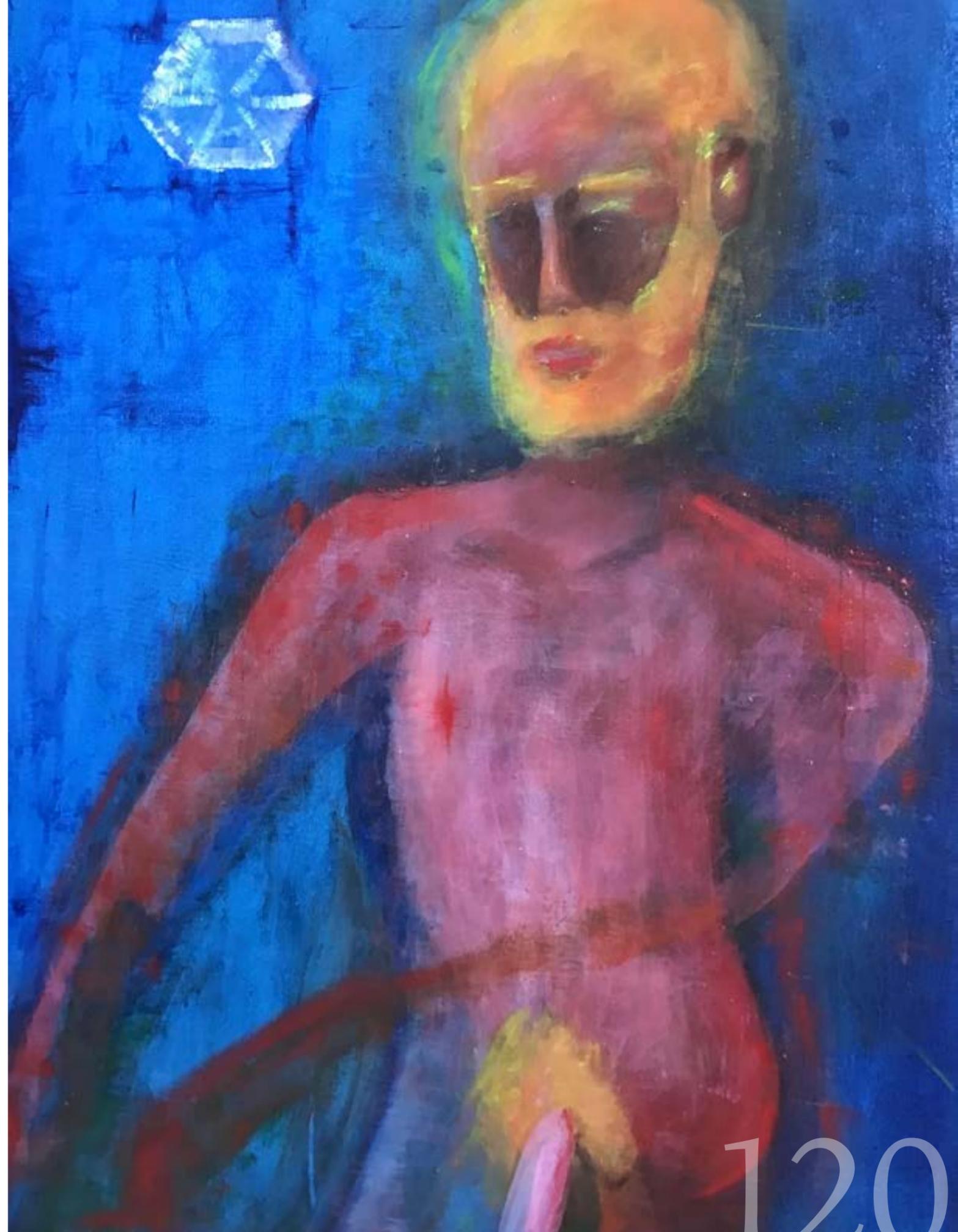
EH:

Maybe "surprised" isn't the right word, but I was really delighted by the breadth of interpretations on queer bodies. I was really happy with the variety of the call. You always wonder

Fred Woo
fredwoo.com
(left) Untitled
Ink on Paper
14.8 x 21 centimeters

Alessandro Barbarossa
[Website](#)
(right) The Picture of Dmitri Strauss
Oil on Canvas
100cm x 80cm

Danica Svanborg
[@danicamarie](#)
(next page) Her and the Cycle of Love
Mixed Media on Canvas
24 x 30 inches





with an open call, what you are going to get. In this case I suppose the surprise was the range of interpretations that we judged.

CK:

Jumping on what Eugene is saying, another surprise to me was the amount of color. There's so much color. And most of them are really fun. Gays are fun. And most of it just translates so well.

I was also pleasantly surprised that we didn't see "body issues" read in a negative way. The bodies were all representations of positivity in their variety.

EH:

You know. That's what I loved about this. It gives a great snapshot of positive queerness.



Jeff Iorillo
[@jeffiorilloart](#)
The Shadow Men
Acrylic and Mixed Media Mural on Paper
96 x 120 inches





More About
**Kunsthhaus
Rozig**

Kunsthhaus RoZig - founded by visual artists and curators Cornelia Kurtew and Eugene Huffman - is a 3D virtual gallery that highlights the works of traditionally marginalized and underrepresented artists with a focus on inclusivity.

Joseph Abbati
josephabbati.art
(clockwise from top left)
Crossed Paths, Adonis & Anemones,
Two Together, & Male Gaze
Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 24 inches (top left) & 30 x 30 inches



Floyd Frazier
 @fdfraz
 Torso
 Acrylic on Canvas
 24 x 30 inches

Cornelia "Connie" Kurtew is a published, award winning visionary artist from East Germany. She now lives in Los Angeles with her wife and child, 2 dogs, a cat, and more to come. She is a portrait photographer and visual artist.

Eugene Huffman is an established Queer, HIV-positive Los Angeles artist, curator and advocate. Eugene's catalog includes a diverse roster of artists and shows with powerful and innovative themes. He often addresses the topic of HIV/AIDS to creatively end stigma and promote prevention and awareness.

Kunsthau RoZig's upcoming schedule is listed below. More information on each month's call for art may be found on both Connie and Eugene's websites and social media.

Connie Kurtew
kurtewphotography.com

Eugene Huffman
eugenehuffmanart.com

Kunsthau RoZig
[Website](#)

Kunsthau RoZig 2021 Spring Schedule

April 11-30
 Aberglaube (Superstition)

May 8-28
 Rosig (Pink)
 Submission deadline April 17

June 05-25
 Blau (Blue)
 Submission deadline May 18

July 10-30
 Feuer (Fire)
 Submit by June 18



Corinne Lightweaver
corinnelightweaverstudio.com
 (below) Vision
 Pastel on Paper
 29 x 32 inches

Connie Kurtew
kurtewphotography.com
 (next page) Bettgeflüster- Pillow talk
 Photography
 20 x 30 inches





