

GIRLS WILL BE BOYS



SAPPHIC MAG

ISSUE III

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

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FOR YOUR EYES ONLY.







Freedom

By Emma Matthews

I thought I knew what freedom was

It was when I finally got to shave my legs for the first time
12 years old feeling the silkiness of the sheets on my bare legs,

Years later at 20 I discovered that real freedom was
Feeling the wind blowing through my long, grown out leg hairs

I thought I knew what freedom was

It was getting dressed in crop tops and mini skirts
The thrill of a night out with my new college friends to hit the frats,
On spring break trip to Canada I discovered that real freedom was
Wearing my cargo pants and boxers to play pool at the gay bar

I thought I knew what freedom was

It was cutting my hair short for the first time in hopes of being more gay
And then crying because I no longer felt like the beautiful girl I had been,
Many months and journal entries later I discovered that real freedom was
Knowing that I didn't need a haircut to be more queer

I thought I knew what freedom was,

But then I realized that I never really knew what freedom was
I tried everything that anyone told me was the key to liberation,
And only through my disappointment of the typical rebellions
Did I end up finding the things that actually gave me freedom

White Girls

By Jordan Massey

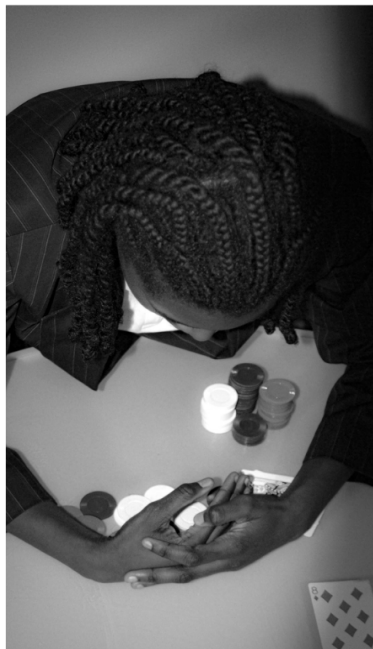
Growing up in a place that was mostly black was a privilege I didn't even know I had, it's one I'm grateful for because we as a people don't have many. For the most part, it shielded me from the sense of shame around my identity that is thrust onto many black children as we develop, and the painful journey to self-acceptance and pride. Having a community that understood me, my struggles, and my needs meant that support systems were available to me whenever insecurities or questions exposed themselves. I was able to surround myself with people that loved me and my blackness and for that I am forever grateful.

The only pitfall that has reared its head after moving away to attend a PWI, is that this community also shielded me from the knowledge of others' ignorance. Of course I knew that racism existed and that it affected me, at least systematically, but I had never really seen it in action, and when I had, my community dealt with it swiftly.. I started to hear white people use words that the white people back home knew not to use. I started hearing white girls call themselves studs. A stud, is a black masculine lesbian, the term first discovered by sociologist Ethel Sawyer in her study of black lesbian communities where she heard many black lesbians referring to themselves as "Studs". Not every black masculine lesbian is a Stud, but every Stud must be a black masculine lesbian.

Being a Stud is not just happening to be black, masculine presenting, and a lesbian. It's a term specific to the black lesbian experience.

Stud is a term that shines a light on how the intersection of our race and gender create different challenges and foster different experiences from our white lesbian counterparts. Stud is a term that celebrates black culture and its reflection on masculine styles and attitudes. Stud is a term that is purposely exclusive.

Can't Stud



“Stud is more than a term, it’s an identity.

Stud is beautiful, and black, and proud.”

To deny the identity's racial background, is to deny the black lesbain experience, it's to deny black lesbains as a whole. This refusal sends a message; that our stories, our words, our history, isn't worth telling. That we have no right to make a place for ourselves in the lesbain community.

Not every black masculine lesbian is a Stud, but every Stud must be a black masculine lesbian. What surprised me the most was hearing “thought stud was just another term for a masc lesbian.” coming from people in the lesbian community. From a community that should understand what it's like to be marginalized, to be ignored, to be misrepresented, to be forgotten. To hear the same lesbains that demand respect and the acknowledgement of our history ignore this history made me miss home so, so much. It's integral that words and phrases are used with an understanding of the weight that they carry, instead of letting them float off the tongue. We have to keep our history alive, instead of brushing it off and washing it away.



Not An Aesthetic

By Maddie Beck

For many in the sapphic community, style goes beyond aesthetics—it becomes a way of exploring and expressing our identities. Fashion is a way to play with gender, and feel more like ourselves in a world that likes to put us in boxes.

To get a closer look at the importance fashion plays in self-expression, I spoke to three beautiful people from the sapphic community who each take a distinct approach to their style. Whether they go for a more masculine vibe, a feminine look, or mix it up depending on the day, their stories show how fashion has played a huge role in self discovery and showing who they are.

An interview with Chrissy James (she/they):

Are there certain fashion choices that make you feel the most yourself?

“There are specific accessories that I like that make me feel the most confident and pretty. I’m a big fan of incorporating a pop of red or a pop of color in a look. Also jewelry and necklaces. I like knowing that when I walk or wave

to someone that you can hear the jingling of my hands. I also really like wearing soda tabs—I feel like it’s something that’s very me.”

Do you ever struggle to navigate between personal style, and what is considered stereotypical fashion choices within the queer community?

“For me, I don’t have to really worry about the balance because there are some times that I am going to fit into the box. You’re gonna be able to tell my identity based on the way I express myself, but that doesn’t really bother me because I’m not doing it with that intention.”



An interview with Megan Halsey (they/she):

Have you ever felt an internal or external pressure or expectation to dress a certain way?

"When I was in high school, there was a girl who first informed me of the stereotype that lesbians or queer women wear flannels...so for Christmas I asked for a flannel. I was like, 13 years old wearing a camo short

sleeve shirt with a flannel over it and leggings. I looked ridiculous. I felt that I needed to prove to other people that I was queer through the clothes I wore. But I've learned that I don't really need to prove to people that I am a certain way based on my clothes. I can just be what I am."

Have you ever felt like you had to "pick a side" when it comes to gendered fashion?

"Sometimes I feel like if I dress a certain way, or if I dress more masculinely, or if I dress more femininely, that I will be kind of betraying some aspect of who I am. If I dress more masculine then I'm betraying the fact that I

was born a girl. Or if I dress more feminine, in my head I'm like, well are you even queer. I feel like I need to prove to myself that I am queer through my clothes, even though there is no doubt in my mind that I am."

An interview with Julia Labbate (she/her):

How do you navigate dressing in a way that feels authentic, while also dealing with societal expectations around gender and sexuality?

"I do not hide myself in any way, especially now that I have gone through an up- and downhill battle between my sexuality and gender expression through clothing in the past. I am confident enough to know that I can dress the way I want, and I'm comfortable enough to be okay with the judgment from others. I don't listen to any of these gendered societal norms. I just dress the way I feel comfortable."

Are there any accessories or clothing pieces that make you feel the most yourself?

"I really like jackets. I think it's a fun way to add to an outfit. My hairstyle is also very important and I like wearing it differently depending on the outfit I'm wearing. I feel like braiding hair is a little more feminine and I feel like that's how I can express my feminine side even though my clothing is more masc."



At the end of the day, the clothing we choose to wear each day is all about wearing what makes us feel like our most authentic self. Whether that be with bold accessories, oversized clothing, or putting a more feminine take on a stereotypical masculine outfit, there is no rulebook for "dressing gay." The only thing that matters is wearing what makes you feel the most you.



PINK

I fondly remember the first time my dad took me to work. Being paraded around the clean maze of cubicles, very different from the chaotic classrooms I was used to. I was always bullied by the other girls my age, so it was refreshing to be a celebrity of sorts when I would visit the office. I felt special, even though I was just a silly entertainment to the male-dominated field. Ironically, garnering better treatment from adult men than kids my age manifested itself as intense internalized misogyny. I learned to hate girly things, and my clothing of choice more closely mimicked office wear than that of a typical kid. I (very vocally) rejected the popular girls' clothing styles of the time, as embracing it would mean having something in common with the very girls that bullied me.



By Mimi Birnbaum



It wasn't until much later that I grew to embrace the girly things I once hated. Pink was once a symbol of conformity for me—a typical “girl” color, and thus was out of the question. I soon learned that pink could be a rebellion of its own. Following Trump's initial inauguration in 2016, I found myself in a sea of pink, marching alongside my mother at the Women's March. The streets pulsed with energy, a defiant parade of pink which showed me that to be a woman was to be strong. I realized that rejecting femininity hadn't freed me; it only reinforced the idea that to be a girl was to be lesser. I no longer wanted to reject femininity, but embrace it, going so far as to dye my hair a bright, unapologetic pink.

Despite all that growth I find myself in familiar territory. Now as a woman in my 20s navigating a male-dominated career of my own, I am still just a little girl in an office. But with hair brighter than bubble-gum, I still have my quiet rebellion.

SAPPHIC IS OUT,



ARE YOU?



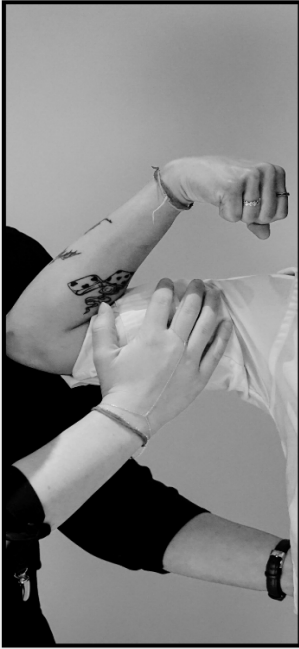


The Beginnings of the Queer Bar Scene, The Formation of the LGBTQ+ Liberation Front, and Where We Are Now

WWII was an eventful time in both American and LGBTQ+ history. Fundamental aspects of queer culture were simultaneously developing within the United States homefront. The newly-established underground lesbian bar scene allowed communities to form and connect. Labels that encompassed both lesbian sexuality and gender identities began being used by the community. Documented evidence shows that titles like “butch”, “stud”, “fem” and “femme” began being used by the lesbian community around the 1930s. Such titles were used to define identities and were worn with pride in underground bar settings throughout the United States. These bars allowed lesbians to congregate, explore their identities, and ultimately strengthen the LGBTQIA+ liberation front. The queer community’s demand for civil rights and freedoms only grew in these empowering settings.

One of the most recognized queer bars in American History is The Stonewall Inn. It is the site where one of the most pivotal uprisings in LGBTQ+ history occurred. On June 28th, 1969, The Stonewall Inn was raided by the New York City Police. Most underground gay bars were owned by the mafia, so violent police raids were common due to the queer clientele and the bars’ ties to the mafia. Patrons of all orientations, genders, races, and identities attempted to prevent the police from further invading the property.





This raid wasn't the only instance of a bar community defending their space, but it is a significant conflict due to the events following that morning. Throughout the neighborhood for the next six days, productive activism efforts ensued. The days of protests ultimately inspired the queer community to exist in their identities more publicly and form social and political activism organizations. Though Stonewall is noted as the most significant turning point in American queer history, there have been numerous other influential events such as the Compton's Cafeteria Riot and the Annual Reminder demonstrations. The events which provoked the LGBTQ+ liberation movement of the late 1960s and beyond were possible because of the communities that were strengthened in underground spaces.

The LGBTQ+ bar scene has transformed significantly since its beginnings **during World War II**. Queer bars are now discernible to the public and welcome large crowds of LGBTQ+ individuals and straight allies. The last half of the 20th century was a time where exclusively lesbian and gay bars flourished, though many have shut down since then. Now, bars solely for the gay or sapphic community are often seen as unfairly exclusive and cannot make a profit by only inviting specific customers. These specialized bars are undeniably important to queer American history, and they've sheltered the fundamental communities involved in the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Many sapphics **yearn for the revival of these exclusive spaces**, and though these establishments may not be financially possible, they've always formed due to the inherent need for a community to exist within. Be it a bar, a venue, or a friend's bedroom, sapphic spaces provide a refuge where individuals can connect and feel valid in their identities and community.

This is what it's supposed to feel like

No longer do I suffocate under the realization of waning interest that drifts
only when the bass leaks away from my voice

No longer do I rake my day's performance with a fine toothed comb like a
movie behind my eyes as I drift to sleep

Now, memories of the only community I knew,

who taught me to build walls that cast a shadow over anything
bright, new, or curious

and fortify them in terror of tipping a scale balanced on
fragile expectations,

are now stripped down to their barest state, a ghost of its past ornament and
looming authority

and left behind in reflection of my rearview mirror

Now, once hidden behind a flexed jaw and forced apathy, the power in my
sensitivity has proven to be stronger than any mold of a storybook prince

Every flutter, every double text,
every apology and soft reassurance,
every daydream, every reality, every
quiet moment,

Every swell of something deeper
that flows without hesitation or
question from my true solace and
home, tells me what I know but
have fully grown to believe

This is what it's
supposed to feel like,
how could I pull away?

Vanessa Basame





Unchecking boxes

Within the queer community, we treat labels as spaces of affinity, invitations to explore identity and expression. While this can lead to a sense of connection, it can also deepen the idea that to be queer means to be part of a monolith or to fit neatly in a box labeled “not straight” in some way or another.

As I grew into my queerness, I found myself desperately wanting my appearance to reflect a specific label. I stopped wearing dresses and skirts, insisting on wearing button ups to emulate androgyny. I cuffed my jeans and begged my mother to let me buzz most of my hair off (which—thankfully—never happened). Even as I did these things, made these changes to my outward appearance and inward perceptions, I still never felt “queer enough.” More than that, I never felt satisfied with the way I looked and acted. I longed to be femme, to be masc, to be easily defined so much so that I ignored what I actually wanted to do and wear.



Boys Will Be Boys--Unless They're Girls



Aligning with an identity or label can be a validating experience— but it's not everything. As I got older and surrounded myself with people who truly saw and understood me, the pressure to fit into a rigid definition of queerness faded. I learned that my expression didn't have to conform to an expectation— After several years, I choose how I present based on how I feel rather than how I think I should. The most freeing and validating experience has come through the realization that the label should fit the person, not the other way around. Sometimes this means finding a word that reflects your authentic style, others it means honoring personal change and remembering that identity is dynamic. For many, it means doing away with labels altogether and understanding that it is not wrong to exist in that undefined space or identify with several different types of queerness at once.

Chandler McCoy

By Sophie Wheat

WORLD WAR II was a pivotal moment for lesbians, and the military played a key role in providing a space where they could express their sexuality in ways that would have been difficult on the home front. The military's role as a safe space for lesbians during WWII was complex. While it allowed for a certain degree of freedom in expressing one's sexuality, it was still a space shaped by the norms and prejudices of the time. Elizabeth Kenney and Madeline Davis have written what is considered one of the most significant accounts of what lesbianism was really like in WWII. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* is a collection of 14 years worth of collaborative works from over 45 different authors providing insight on lesbian life during World War 2. By centering the voices of these women, the book challenges mainstream narratives of LGBTQ+ history and offers a deeply personal and politically significant account of lesbian life before the gay rights movement.

LESBIANS IN THE MILITARY had to keep their relationships hidden to avoid being ostracized or removed from service. Despite the risks, the military environment allowed many lesbians to experience a sense of community and intimacy that would have been impossible for them in the broader, more restrictive society. As spoken about in *Boots of Leather*, "Homosexuals and lesbians found themselves under virulent attack: purges from the armed forces; congressional investigations into government employment of

"perverts"; disbarment from federal jobs; widespread FBI surveillance; state sexual psychopath laws; stepped-up harassment from urban police forces; and inflammatory headlines warning readers of the sex "deviates in their midst" One reason for this is that military service allowed women—especially those who didn't fit traditional feminine roles—to live, work, and form close bonds with other women in ways that civilian life often discouraged or even prohibited. While yes, these relationships would still face negative repercussions if exposed, but in the military they are less "hunted and exposed" than many lesbian relationships in America at the time. On page 175, of *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, Jacki

"HUNTED AND EXPOSED"

lesbian communities in the military, "In addition, the increased social emphasis on isolated nuclear families and rigid gender roles made it hard for young women to spend time together except in single-sexed institutions like the military. Those who joined the Army and Air Force at the beginning of the decade found lesbian community both in the U.S. and abroad and for a while had a generally positive experience." This delicate balance created a paradox for many lesbians, because while the military gave the opportunity to meet other lesbians and express themselves, and even be romantic socially, they still could not be public or vocal about these relationships without risking getting discharged.

BIG THANKS TO OUR TEAM

WITHOUT YOU NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE

EDITORS IN CHIEF -

Jenna Sents & Maya Dupuis

HEADS OF WRITING -

Mimi Birnbaum & Isabella Carter

HEAD OF PHOTO -

Ellen Metwalli

HEADS OF SOCIALS -

Erin Nordstrom & Ellen Metwalli

HEAD OF WEB -

Magdala Klein

HEAD OF VIDEO -

Eva Ball

STAFF WRITERS

Vanessa Basame
Maddie Beck
Chandler McCoy
Jordan Massey
Emma Matthews
Sophie Wheat
Kaiva Yanoski

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Gilian Arend
Kylie Martin
Delia Pickart
Olivia Valcourt

& REVAMPED !!!



All clothing was
sourced by them !

STAFF MODELS

Shalom Acheampong
Eden Eby
Megan Englehart
Aeowyn Fields
Ames Gerstenberger
Jiya Gumaste
Emma Matthews
Kaiva Yanoski

STAFF GRAPHICS

Maya Dupuis
Maddie Beck
Clara Kelley
Olivia Valcourt

STAFF STYLING

Charlotte Chu
Nithilaa Rama



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