



BEYOND BLOODLINES



Kin is amorphous.

It's elastic: it spreads, it shrinks, it holds.

Kin is messy.
It's viscous, sticky, malleable at its best. Uncontrollable for sure.

Sweet and bittersweet; so easy to smear. Contagious.

Kin is sexy and sweaty, full of tears—all the various kinds.

Kin is so damn real. It—they—keeps us here.

It's anti-geographical, it's non-topographical.
It's intersectional, intergenerational, transnational.

It's heterogeneous but oh-so-homo.

Kin is non-geometric, neither vertical nor completely horizontal.
An ever changing curvy, non-linear, somewhat circular diagonal in a daydream.

It's ageless and agefull.
It's silent—but not too often.

It can be so joyful and truly the best dancer.

Kin is what keeps us here.

Beyond Bloodlines: A zine about queerness, family and kinship.

In November of 2018 we held the first night of a two part gathering at YBCA focusing on queerness, family and kinship. That night we launched our call for submissions for a zine featuring a wide range of queer voices sharing stories and visions around these themes. We were also moved and inspired by Johanna Breiding's Magic Hour, a video that explores love, intimacy, loss and queer family.

It's now three months later and we are blown away by the perspectives, experiences, and imagination that came our way in the form of submissions. We are thrilled to celebrate the release of this zine with the Salinas Latinx Queer Film fest who truly embody what queer community and kinship can look like.

We are grateful to our wonderful designer Tin Dinh who work so tirelessly to materialize this publication for us, for you.

Our hope is that you sit or lay or roll around and read it as you think about your own relationship with kinship and family, blood or beyond.

We knew we needed to create something that could be held in our hands. Right now it feels like we all could use something to hold on to.

xxo

Irwin Swirnoff & Marcela Pardo Ariza

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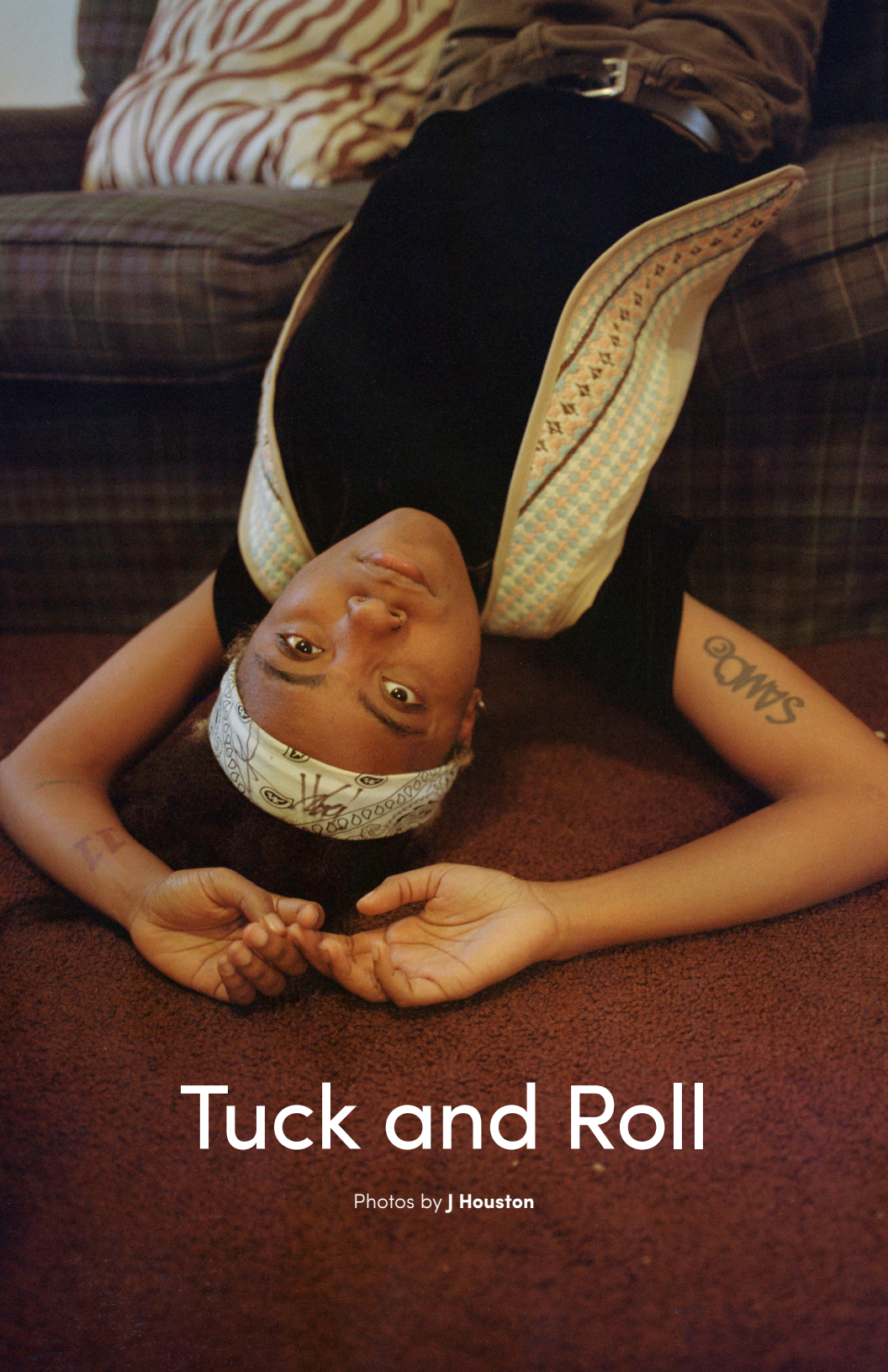
RICE ROCKETTES

Rice Rockettes are a San Francisco Bay Area drag troupe that came out officially in the summer of 2009.

The mission of the RR has always been to champion a fun and safe space for individuals in the Asian & Pacific Islander communities to empower and express themselves through the art of drag and performance.

Since its inception, the group has supported numerous fund-raising events and organizations such as SF Ducal Court, Catwalk, UC Berkeley's Cal Queer & Asian, Transgender Law Center, AIDS Housing Alliance, and the Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center. The Rice Rockettes have also been seen at numerous GAPA functions including Banquet, Runway and GAYmazing Race. 2011 saw the group grace prime-time national tv, with their brief trial on America's Got Talent.

The group currently has a home at the Lookout Bar, where they host a monthly show every 2nd Thursdays.



Tuck and Roll

Photos by **J Houston**



Poems by **Anju Kasturiraj**

1. Kitchen Song

For marble floors in August
for fear of the pressure cooker—a memoir
for the mismatched dining sets, steel wool, and
rice every night,
for burnt tongues
for amma, and the wooden cabinets.
The snakes only she can lull into a trance,
the quiet sting of chilis and hot oil
she turns to a song.
I wrap my arms around her leg and bury my
face.
My first home,
the magic maker.
Standing for hours to give us
all that she sees in the smoke.
Hands stained yellow,
the perfume of leftover prayers knot themselves
into her clothes,
insisting that I am the one
who will let go first.

2. Resting Her Elbows on God's Table

There is a stone I mistook for a seed,
let it make a home in my mouth, where everyone
can be soft and wet.
A browning pear I dreamt into a feast;
I wipe the juice from her lips, watching it turn to
dust in my palm.
Sweat turns to cement, God learns he too can
become hungry.
A body becomes a dining table as my lover
forgets her own name,
and searches for it underneath my dress.
There is dust I mistook for soil.
My father raised me with stories of travelers
who could turn stone into gold and giants who
could squeeze milk from boulders. I was told
they were only fairy tales but they sung like a
warning,
I am unsure if I am the giant; callused hands
whose thirst is met with dust
and more dust.
I am unsure if I am the boulder,
being wrung over
and over.
I release a prayer and taste yet another stone,
I am unsure if I am anything.

As a Child I Knew That the Stars Could Only Get Brighter

Written by
Jan-Henry Gray

Philippines When I was boy, another boy and I took our clothes off together and played house. In bed, I was the mom, he was the dad. We did this for months. I've thought about it for years. Innocent, I say, when I describe it. What I remember most: the smell of soil on his dark skin.

Downtown Chicago Yesterday, a man and I took our clothes off together in his hotel room. He fucked me, then he stopped. He stepped away from the bed, reached for his phone, and played music. To get in the mood, he said. I stayed on my knees and waited. In the mirror on the wall I could watch myself.

Outer Richmond My first boyfriend was 38 when I was 21. He told me to call him Daddy so I did. The day I broke up with him, he said my reasons were inadequate. Next to him on the couch was a book someone lent me that I never read titled Mating. It felt like a prop I had placed there.

Tenderloin I used a fake ID to get in. I sat among a row of pews in a red-lit room playing porn. An old man leaned in close to me and smelled my hair, inhaling me, the way someone might a newborn. He said good boy into my ear. He said this, I believe, because I did not flinch when he touched me.

Chosen Families as Acts of Love and Resistance

Story by
Kevin Widjaja



We all know the story, a young person in their late teens/early 20's moves to a new city struggling to find their space, ultimately to find new friends and a fulfilling new pace of life. While these accounts are plenty, as queer people we aren't exposed to as many that speak to our own experiences or that shed light on them. Thanks to the internet and our community's continuous fight for visibility and representation, however, it's become increasingly easier to be exposed to queer experiences similar to our own on finding our spaces. Lacking in these non-queer narratives that are crucial for queer people to learn about, are chosen families, strong bonds of love and mutual support between non-biologically related individuals. It is critical for all of us to be exposed to media and stories that normalize and validate our unique experiences,

including those that talk about our chosen families.

While it isn't to say that the experiences of cishet young people starting new lives aren't more difficult than our own or that there aren't points to take away from them, many times their personal well-being is less at stake than it is for many of us. For many queer people, moving away from home is a way to escape unsafe situations with our blood relatives and/or communities. Not only do we leave behind our previous lives, similar to cishet people when we move places, but we more frequently than not, do not have a healthy, supportive space to go return to where we can be our authentic selves.

Many queer people rely on their chosen families for the support they don't receive from their blood

relatives, which is why we need to be exposed to more stories of queer people finding and creating these intimate relationships. Blood is not thicker than water for many of us, unfortunately. We need to be made aware that we can find love and support in chosen families, not just in our blood families or monogamous relationships like we are led to believe. Perhaps more importantly, in a capitalist culture with the false notion of "individualism," the existence of chosen families are a direct act of resistance against institutions that uphold violence against our community. Particularly for queer people of color like me, chosen families decolonize us of the nuclear family model that did not originate from our cultures and was imposed upon us. I offer my own personal experiences as evidence.

Two years ago, after four years living in San Francisco, I moved to New York City not knowing anyone. I knew I wanted to make the move because it felt like the place I could better explore my identity, and for the unmatched career opportunities. It was an extremely difficult first year. Between getting laid off for lack of new business for me to work on, and not having a support system near me, my mental health issues were at an all-time high. I relied on the financial support of my single parent, who I love but have a complicated history with like many queer people, and had to deal with the messages from society that consumed me, telling me my value lay in my productivity and career path. This was unbelievably taxing period of my life I am still processing.

During this entire time, I had no knowledge of the concept of a chosen family. In my heart, I knew of it because it was something I had begun to form in San Francisco. I had no chosen family in New York, however. It really wasn't until a year after this low point in my life that I watched the show *Pose* and I became aware of what having a chosen family could do for me. Striking a chord, I cried every episode, having never watched something so moving to my queerness before. The concept of other people having a significant role in my life and me in there's as a queer person felt so beautiful and innate. Today I am fortunate to say I have a chosen family in New York.

Eunice, Keith, me.

After my first year in the city, I finally made some solid friendships through friends of friends back in San Francisco. Two in particular, Eunice and Keith, stand out. Not only do I spend plenty of time with them, but their relationship offers a special level of trust, compassion, understanding, and investment in my well-being that has been critical in my

moments of most need. After being assaulted late last year, their loving actions have been crucial to my healing. They have supported me as my chosen family and I am undoubtedly present in their growth and development -- ride or dies.

To be a queer person of color is a unique challenge. We encounter various systems of oppression more frequently than white people do within the LGBTQ+ community. We are more likely to face financial instability, police brutality, homelessness, systemic racism, and other issues that compound with our queer identity. For us, chosen families are especially critical. To understand why they are critical for us, one must understand the families queer people of color tend to come from. Many non-white family models do not follow the nuclear model, common with white American families. Because of a lack of generational wealth, a missing parent, etc., many families require more than the two-parent model to care for their family members. Not to mention, the nuclear family model is a western concept that isn't part of the vast majority of our histories. In my family, and in many other families of color I know, it is common for aunts/uncles/grandparents/community members to play a role in the care of children or other adults within a family due to their heads holding multiple jobs, having illnesses, cultural practices, etc. When you layer these challenges with the difficulties of being queer in our society, being a queer person of color comes with its unique challenges.

The point here though isn't about queer people of color having it more difficult than white queer people, but that there are unique circumstances queer people of color face that put us at more at risk than the latter, which simply cannot be ignored. Unlike what our oppressors want to lead us to believe, these struggles do not divide us but actually unite us because they stem from the same oppressive systems we all live under. White supremacy and capitalism attack all queer people, and this is why the chosen family is so critical. The significant role we choose to play in the lives of people we're told aren't supposed to be so important to us, white or not, is an act of solidarity towards a better future for us all. Loving one another is resistance because it tells society that our value is in who we are and not in our familial-economic ties. A chosen family communicates that all of our existences are valid and that we are accountable to each other, not just to ourselves. The chosen family is the love and resistance we queer people need to survive. It's the family I wish I learned about sooner.

Rainbow Trout, Steamed and Blanched with Hot Oil, Served with Scallions and Minced Ginger on the Side

Poem by
Griffin Moskowitz

from a window,
i watch Baba
gut gut
and clean
the fish
he caught.

the cleaver
chop chops
away as i
gaze back
to the tv to
watch an
infomercial
on blenders.

slits open
the belly, peels
peels out the
spine,
lops off the
head and drops
it into a bucket.

he finishes,
step steps
up the stairs
past me
and says
nothing until
dinner is
ready.

1. Baba means father in Cantonese.
2. My father is white.
3. But my mother swears, he cooks Chinese better than me!

Chú Thọ

Written by Vinh Nguyen

2 Nov, 2018

My uncle passed away this morning. Liver cancer.

My relationship with him was similar to my relationship with other family members in his generation—my dad, aunts, uncles. They're loving, but aloof. There's a lot about their lives that they don't share. It makes sense that they're a bit reticent. They lived through a war and left fleeing an oppressive government. There's a lot they'd rather not share.

My cousin said, when his nurse practitioner came in to say good bye for the night yesterday, she was visibly shaken. She knew it was the last time she'd see him. They'd built a rapport the past few months since his diagnosis. She said, he's so sweet. Apparently, he was smiling sweetly, when telling everyone that he was ready to go. That he was in a lot of pain. Sweet, even toward the end.

He might have been sweet, but he was *not* the one (to be fucked with). Like all of the men in my family, he had a temper. I remember one time he got into an argument with one of his brothers, his blood pressure spiked and was sent to the hospital. When the Nguyen boys snap, we go off, sis.

He was married and divorced. Never had kids of his own, but he was a family man nonetheless: very protective of his siblings and loved his nieces and nephews.

He came here when he was 29, which is my age now. Started over. Had to learn a new language. He did a lot in his life. In Vietnam, he sold shoes with my grandma in our hometown. He also worked in a restaurant. Here, like many Vietnamese immigrants, he did nails.

But he said, his favorite job was putting microchips in computers. Lol. My cousin told me that yesterday. It made me laugh, and emotional as well. Emotional cause there was a lot that I didn't know about him, that we didn't know about each other. I hope he was happy toward the end of his life. I hope he knows he was loved. I will miss him dearly.

Ngũ yên,
Chu Tho, 1961-2018

A photograph of a man with dark skin and short hair, lying down in a lush, green jungle environment. He has several tattoos on his arms and chest. He is wearing a necklace made of large, green, leaf-like pieces with colorful beetles attached to them. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is filled with dense tropical foliage.

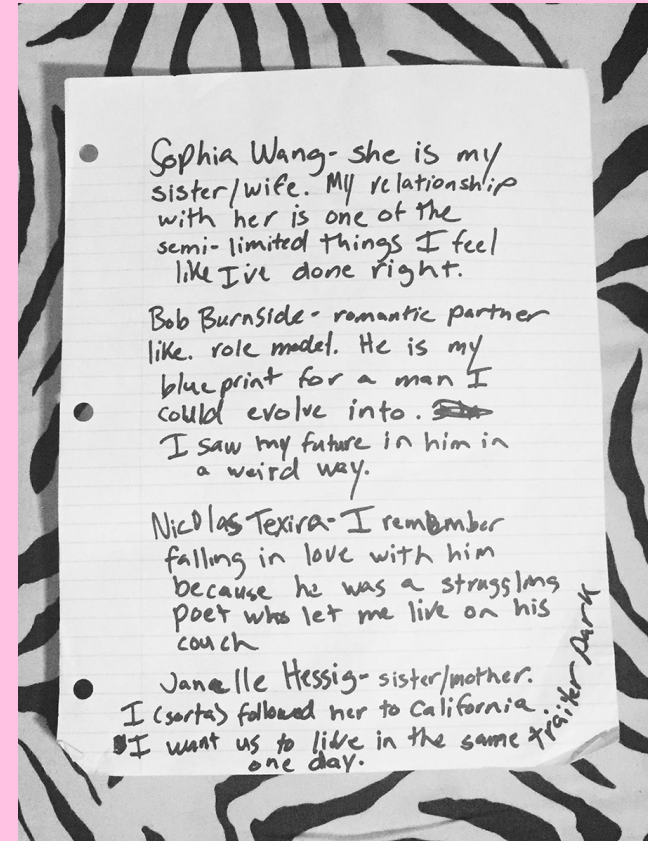
THIRDSEX

Written by
Galen Boone

I'm a gender-variant dyke jeweler working on a series that deifies congenital androgyny. One of my favorite parts of being queer are those moments of knowing between strangers; when I pass an older lesbian or a couple of pretty boys in the street and we acknowledge our sameness. It's almost like a wink between members of a secret society. We're all born into this vast and ancient family, connected by our in-between bodies and the ways in which we've had to grow up at an angle to the mainstream. Queer lineages don't run through bloodlines; they're forged in mutual recognition of alterity.

This Otherness is under threat today, and in this THIRDSEX project I counter the myth of binary gender by offering my own panoply of sybaritic gods, adorning androgynes in strange jewels—anatomical armor, metal pubic hair, enamelled nipples spilling drops of bone “milk”—and posing them in an alternate jungle of Eden.

With my wearables and portraits I want to honor people whose queerness is distinct from “gayness” or sexuality, there's is genderfuckery as biological directive.



The Chosen Four

Written by
Brontez Purnell



Art by PJ Gubatina Policarpio



[untitled]

Poem by **Tal Etedgi**

I forgot my name.
Someone asked;
once, twice, three times,
I managed to say
Becoming.



a love letter to my self // to you

Poem by **Tal Etedgi**

i cannot find a woman
i cannot find a man
in these bones
i swear
the pages have inked themselves
and
my pants read fear
but
my eyes will forever be opened
by the gay deities screaming
and the doors forgetting themselves in the morning closet when the moon
shapes itself into the sun and
transitions

and

i need you to remember this
we say
polishing our glasses into the rain

i will hold you like soft hands and babies cheeks
i will whisper sweet everythings in your ears till you weep
till your jaw sinks
and ill be there
for all of it

for every game of life you lose and pray on your knees for a better time in;
for the worship of a breaking heart, i will be there; every piece slipping like soap
through the fingers
and some days
like sap
like lessons
i have yet to listen to

i need you to remember
this.

((i will be there))



Photos by **Jeanette Spicer**



What
is
SEX

What is an
orgasm, what
is a blowjob?
- How, if they do,
do they relate?

What does
Good pussy
taste like

is eating PUSSEY
good for you.

Is it good to have
a lot of sex

best sex position?

How many sex positions are there?

What are other
sex toys?

Why does it feel so good
when you masturbate??!!

**Anonymous Questions from
Youth in the Bay Area**

can I have sex!?!?!?



STUD FAM

Ben, Cabure, Cary,
Go-Go Dancer, Hollywood, Jasmine,
Jillian, Phillip, Siobhan

by John Foster Cartwright

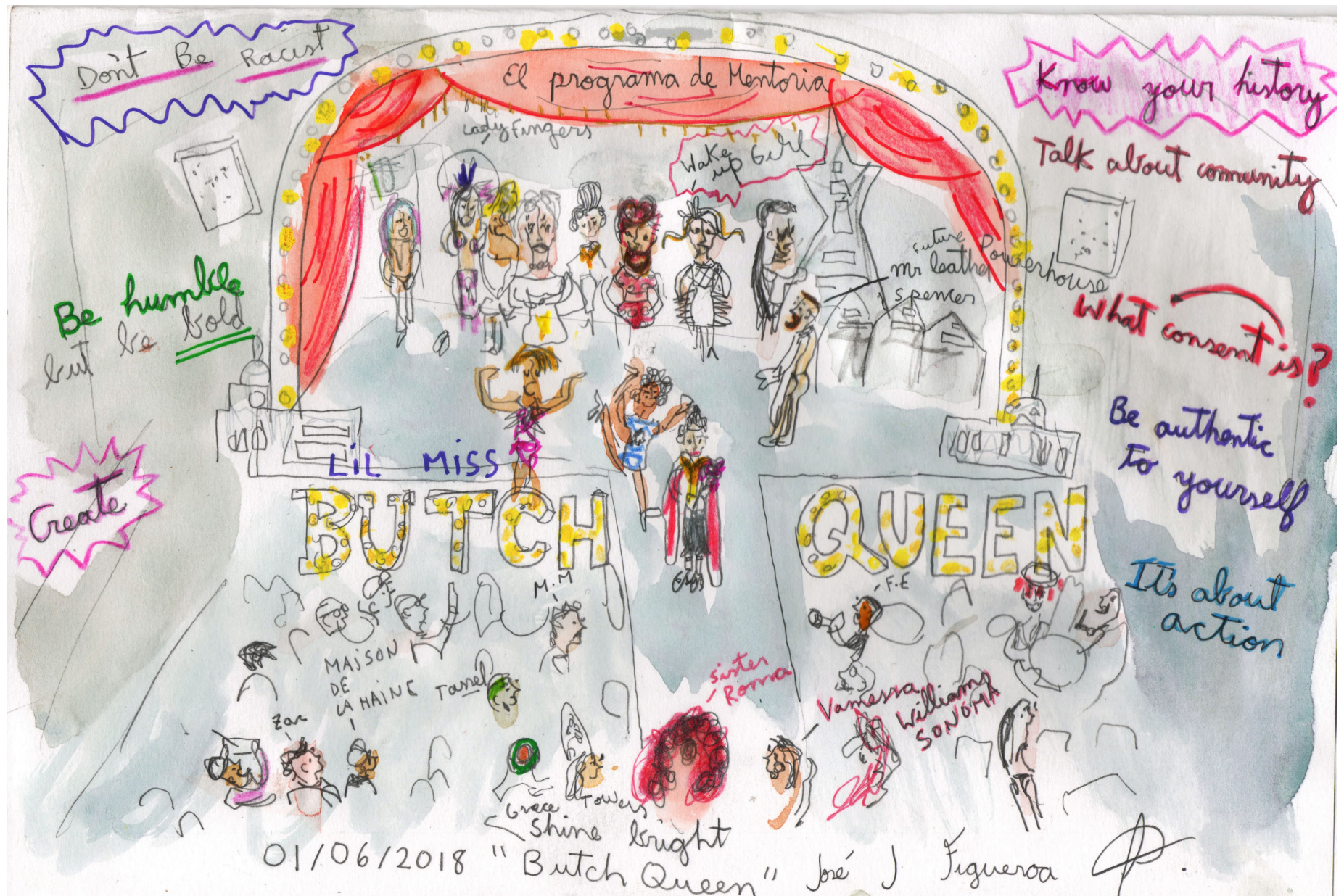


These polaroids from an evolving and ongoing series began as what I thought were test shots, experiments to see how snapshots from (mostly) behind the bar looked.

What they are becoming, is a family photo album of a queer family. Stud Fam. A family bartenders, performers, promoters; FRIENDS who all work at and occupy the STUD bar.

Queer bars are often noted as more than just bars due to the history associated with hiding queerness, and keeping it a secret within these sacred walls. Queer bars are church. Queer bars are where we family, where I family, where we stay queer.





HONOR
THE TRANS CESTORS

#QUEERS

4 FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE
HONOR NATIVE LAND

what do you
think about when you think
about farmers?

QUEER
ECOLOGY

FORCES
OF
NATURE

@crypta woman

FORCES
OF
NATURE

SILENCIO
= MUERTE

INDIAN
CANYON

IMAGINE QUEER FUTURES

ABOLISH ICE HONOR TWO SPIRIT LAND

- DON'T ABOLISH ICE

DECOLONIZE

YOUR RELATIONSHIP
TO LAND

FORCES
OF
NATURE

BLACK
HISTORY
IS WORK
HISTORY

JUSTICE
FOR CLIMATE
CHANGE

PEOPLE ARE GOING TO RISE
LIKE THE WATER

WE ARE HERE
WE ARE QUEER
and we deserve a
FUTURE TOO

09/09/2018 "This is Ohlone territory" Jose Figueroa

ARE YOU A LESBIAN?

ARE YOU A LESBIAN?"

Poem by Eddy Funkhouser

"Are you a lesbian?" my grandmother asked

I had short hair
My grandmother hadn't
seen me
in four years
I had just
gotten out of the car
She had yet to greet me

"Are you a lesbian?" my grandmother
asked

no yes sort of
gay bi pan queer
above all trans
Could she digest my answer
if I gave it
Would she digest it

I just laughed
awkwardly
looked away
didn't own up to
my identity

My mom told her I was trans a day
later
My grandmother disowned me

I haven't talked to her
Since

ARE YOU A LESBIAN?"

ARE YOU A LESBIAN?"

"ARE YOU A LESB

Now she has cancer
Now she's dying
Now she's reaching out
Now she calls and
leaves me voicemails demanding
I call her back

She doesn't say anything
in the voicemails She just
deadnames me and gives me the
hours she is available
to take my call
After the first few voicemails

"ARE YOU A LESBIAN?"

"ARE YOU A L

I started deleting them
without listening
My mom says
my grandmother is learning tolerance
My mom says
my grandmother is coming around
My mom says
my grandmother maybe wants to know me

I say
my grandmother shouldn't merely
tolerate me
I say
my grandmother once told me
before the short hair
"homeless people don't deserve homes"
"gay marriage should have stayed illegal"
"I don't trust black people"
I say
my grandmother is not worth
knowing

DECOLONIZING CHILDHOOD: A STORY OF TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION, QUEERNESS, AND TRANSGENDER IDENTITY

BY ANDRÉS LEÓN

When I was five, my White adoptive mother asked me if I wanted to wear a traditional Mexican dress to school because it was Cinco de Mayo; she said my biological father would have wanted me to be proud of this holiday. As an adult, I reflected on this moment as the first time I understood I was an adoptee and also, Mexican-American. My adopted father, on the other hand, didn't appreciate me telling people I was adopted and cringed when I mentioned I was biologically mixed-race. He taught me that my identities were something to be ashamed of: that being brown was inherently inferior and being adopted was the result of rejection. Thus, I spent much of my childhood suppressing my racial identity and questioning why my biological parents put me up for adoption, and why they chose a transracial family.

In high school, I was conscious of my brownness. At school, I remember wanting so badly to hangout with the Latinxs, the folks my skin reflected, but I felt I didn't belong there; partly because I didn't speak or dress like them, but mainly because my racial identity carried so much shame within my family, and Whiteness was truly all I knew. As a transracial adoptee, I felt cultureless, like I belonged everywhere and nowhere, and unfortunately, the feeling of unbelonging was only magnified when I came out as queer.

The bulk of my teenage years were spent surviving physical abuse at the hands of my father who thought violence would "fix" me. At 18, however, I made it out of the Central Valley of California and moved to Los Angeles where I attended college and, for the first time, found a group of people that made me feel safe and loved. My time in LA was mostly spent exploring my sexual and gender identities. I think the trauma I endured as a teenager around my queerness made that part of my identity more urgent to heal and empower. It wasn't until I moved to New York City and began

working in the public school system with Latinx kids that I began addressing the pain surrounding my racial identity once again. NYC was the first place I recall being embraced by the Latinx community. I started going to QTPOC parties, I came out as Transgender, and in some ways I felt that I even "came out" as Xicanx after intentionally making a part of me that was once repressed a proud piece of my identity moving forward. A couple years later, I moved to Oakland and was in a relationship with a partner that was deeply connected to her Nigerian ancestry. This sparked an insatiable need for me to dive deeper into my own ancestral heritage. I knew that I was brown, queer, and trans, but I needed to know more. So, I decided to move to Mexico: to connect deeper to the land of my ancestors, to take in the culture and the language, and to finally begin decolonizing a childhood I had no choice in.

I spent six months in Quintana Roo, Mexico and learned enough Spanish to build a community founded on respect. I connected with the land and with my spiritual practice; I worked with native plants and healing ceremonies. I also experienced hostility surrounding my trans-masculinity and queerness. I witnessed the kind of Machismo I want to combat and avoid embodying. Furthermore, I had to grapple with my own racial, class, and educational privilege within the Latinidad as a bi-racial Xicanx. Being adopted wasn't my choice. There was trauma; there was unique "othering." But, nevertheless, the experience gave me a societal privilege many of my Latinx peers were never afforded.

As I've navigated the roadmap of identities I've embodied over the last decade, a major part of my healing journey has been supported by yoga, meditation, and therapy. Through these commitments to my self-care, I've developed a sense of awareness and compassion that has allowed me to take the risks necessary to explore my identities and traumas in greater depth. I am growing and changing; yet, I have never felt fuller or more certain of who I am and the path I want to pursue.

Family is complicated. I know now that homeland is also complicated. I thought living in Mexico would help me to find the missing piece of my childhood I've yearned for all my life, and although it was an amazing and deeply healing experience for me, I returned to the U.S. still feeling a void. I believe now that I may always feel that way. Transracial adoption, although often perceived by the world as philanthropic, can be damaging. Some questions will always remain unanswered for us. Home really is the transracial experience: adoptees are each other's homeland. Together we hold the nuance of living between worlds.

SEASON TO TASTE

Poem by
Dena Rod

poured into your mouth salt
purifies when thirst addles
your brain loss wrapped in
grape leaves stuffed with rice
and lamb fuel and
nourishment together.

revealing hidden history,
Hasha women publicised
where the deep seated need
to belong came from me

how ocean tides rolled into my loins
as two birds emerge from a nest
and cater to their young
mountains misting in the background with
no homosexuals in Iran

my parents say "we're in this country
we have to accept it"
what they mean
no wedding alters glistening
with eggs and sugar for all to witness
your unholy matrimony,

perpetuating lineage
imperative for survival,
spreading seeds unearthed
the binary roots watered
with blood and tears
a prostrate form
smashed open on a rock
stoned to death for

did women love each other before me?
kept illiterate, homebound
chopping steaming stewing
amongst swept cobwebs

take 2 tbsp of dried mint
grind with your thumb
in the palm of your hand
develop your political consciousness
as you stir it into a liter of yogurt



Photography by **Nico Reano**

Excerpts from a photo series showcasing queer couples. 35mm and 120mm.
New York City, 2018.



HUES by Jamil Hellu



Chase Conrad started playing sports when he was 6 years old. As an athlete from Pasadena, CA, he didn't have any gay role models growing up.



Chalwe Ranney grew up in Zambia. Homosexual practices have been present in his Bemba tribal culture for centuries. Homosexuality is otherwise illegal in the country.



Justin Hall is an American cartoonist who grew up in Rhode Island. "I came into contact with Mexican lucha libre upon traveling to Latin America in my mid-20s back in the 1990s. I was immediately captivated by the masks, the sweaty intensity, and the extra layer of super-heroic elements."



"I hope to underscore with this image the absurdity of fitting a round peg (queers) into a square hole (the heteronormative paradigm), while highlighting the personal tension between what society expects/demands of me and my actual dreams and desires," Jader told me.

Ghosts have been ever present in my life. I grew up in a family that stressed the importance of memory as an act of resistance, a word that has been appropriated by American liberals; it has become a catch phrase, limp in the age of Trump, so I will add to it the word resilience. Memory is an act of both resistance and resilience and remembering slain heroes was especially important.

I was born in Damascus, Syria and grew up in Karachi, Pakistan to a Lebanese mother and Pakistani Iranian father. My mother had grown up in civil war Beirut, my father, in an intensely political family, he had seen both his father executed and his younger brother assassinated by the time he was my age now, 28. When I was 18 years old and left Pakistan to study and eventually live abroad, my father and aunt had also both been assassinated. In the absence of my father's entire generation I learned how to find family in ghosts, how to say 'Good night, I love you' to imaginary translucent smiling spirits, my grandfather, my uncle and my father in particular.

Today, I call the Bay Area home and continue to build queer family among the living, they are my friends, people I can never hide anything from, people I trust and love. Yet, the morbid child that still lives in me cannot help but look for that kind of love beyond the grave.

As an artist my practice is concerned with reviving histories of collective resistance (and resilience) and queering them through a futurist re-telling. In my

Finding Queer Family Among Ghosts.

Story by
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

research I chanced upon Jean Genet's *Un Chant d'amour*, a film made in 1950, as well as Shaheed Sana'a Mhaidli, a martyr of Lebanon's civil war. Mhaidli and the characters in *Un Chant d'amour* became a part of my queer family, a necessary extension into both imagination and resurrection.

In *Un Chant d'Amour*, Genet recreates a French prison with a substantial population of queer male Algerians, given the time the film was made – at the height of the Algerian resistance to the French – and the anti-imperialist writings of its creator, one can assume that these folks are in prison for being less than cooperative with the French government. Sexual frustration is rife but so is a deep yearning for love. There is no dialogue, only music and buried deep among the heat of men masturbating alone in their prison cells are two inmates who strive for a relationship despite the walls between them. They communicate as best they can; they smoke cigarettes blowing the smoke into straws they delicately slide into the tiny hole in the wall they share passing smoke from one mouth to the other without ever touching.

Watching the two men is the French prison guard who peeks through an *z* in the door, moving from one cell to the other. The guard is enraged, anger builds up inside of him and you realize it is jealousy that drives his resentment. He desires one of the two lovers but knows it is a love he can never obtain and so it turns into a destructive energy,

consuming him. Imagining them outside of the walls of this prison, together, in love, free and being able to actually touch one another infuriates the prison guard even more. He charges into one of the cells and begins beating the older more Algerian looking lover, whipping him with his belt as the prisoner laughs in defiance.

The struggle here is not simply one of nationalism but also of sensual love, of the revolution that lives inside pleasure and joy despite the all the barriers. The fact that two brown Algerian men can love each other even through the walls of their solitary confinement angers the white French warden, it encapsulates the very essence of resistance against the patriarchy. In my mind, the unnamed Algerians in this film become my queer elders, they are teachers, instructing by example and providing precedent to the possibilities of queer liberation outside of the Anglo-Saxon world.

While the figures in *Un Chant d'amour* are queerly presented, Shaheed Sana'a Mhaidly died before the world could have been aware of any of kind of sexuality. I ask the reader to join me in seeing queerness in a broad sense, a social and political word that is less about who you fuck and more the systems you are willing to fuck up.

Mhaidly was from the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, an ancient port that came under Israeli occupation in 1982 at the height of the Lebanese civil war. The Israeli occupation was brutal and reared its ugly head to the world after the twin massacres of

Sabra and Shatila, two Palestinian refugee camps on the outskirts of southern Beirut. The Israeli army and its local allies – Lebanese ultra-right wing militia – sealed off the camps and killed 3,500 civilians. They kept the genocide a secret until the stench of the rotting bodies wafted into the surrounding neighborhoods.

This of course wasn't the only horror of the Zionist occupation but it was likely one of many that convinced the teenage Mhaidly to join the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party, a secular and irreligious party that was among many groups fighting the Israeli occupation. She gave up a life of familial and religious expectations to join a movement she saw as bigger than that. In 1985 she was sent on a mission: to drive a car filled with explosives into an Israeli convoy carrying weapons to strategic Israeli outposts in Southern Lebanon. She succeeded in her mission, killing herself and destroying the convoy. She has been called the world's first ever suicide bomber.

What makes her queer? Everything. In a video she recorded before her death she sits casually, her voice unbroken and lucid. She implores her family not to be sad as the day that she dies should not be mourned as a death anniversary but her wedding day, she is marrying the soil of her home. In 2008, during a prisoner exchange between Hezbollah and the Israeli government her remains were returned to her family. Instead of a funeral, her family held a wedding procession, both Christians and Muslims took part, churches rang their wedding

bells and imams symbolically read her rights as if she were getting married.

Mhaidli chose not to marry a man, she chose not to be absorbed into a society that would have defined her through who her husband or who her father was but instead she chose the earth, Mother Earth. The soil is her bride and her groom and in so doing she rejects expectation and mainstream society, intentionally placing herself on the margins of what it means to be a woman, she becomes politically queer. In the eyes of much of the West, even to liberals and progressives, her actions may be dismissed as unnecessary agitation again placing her on the margins of resistance.

Queer family is everywhere, not only have been people been searching desperately for it through the ages, it also the ability to transcend time and speak from one generation to another. While the events of Genet's film may not have happened, they are an ode to what may have been and these mythic characters lay the foundations for many young queers to come in a sense taking the place of elders. Mhaidli too is an elder but also an eternal sister, a queer ancestor whose life was cut short. This is not to say I condone violence, or suicide bombers for that matter but I cannot scorn it either. Mhaidly proved something that most oppressors would find profoundly frightening: in the face of constant genocide and occupation sometimes the only weapon left is your own body.

Written by
Jai Lola Corona

I'm a 5th generation Mexican Transgender artist from Los Angeles. I was raised in 2 households where my gender was under constant surveillance. At 5 years of age, I'd admire my grandmother knitting me presents. When I asked to learn her craft, I was shamed for showing interest because "its not for boys". My machismofather, who spent 5 years in jail, had higher expectations of my gender. My Dad had intentions to teach me the ultimate trait of masculinity; boxing. I was a quiet demure child afraid of everything and also had early signs of gender dysphoria. My hands became tools that released years of internalized phobias. Crafting became my medium that channeled my gender expression and challenged gender norms. I use art to dismantle masculinity and create dream like pieces that people can relate to.



Our Selfie Moment

Art by **Xiang Gao**

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED MY 11 YEAR OLD, NON-BINARY CHILD'S POETRY

FOUND

BY YONA KRONFELD

I was once lost and confused, unsure of who I was or if it was right.

Then I found myself through a hard fight. Then I found people like me.

They made me feel strong and un-alone. I felt powerful because I had my community, my family, the friends I had made along the way, and even my faithful animal companions.

The hate I hear in the hall only makes me stronger, gives me inspiration to spread the truth. This is what I must remember when it brings me down and makes me feel weak. Because our community, our family is stronger than every hater in the world. Together we are stronger than anything, and eventually there will be no hate, for we will be able to safely love who we want to love and be who we want to be and with that everything will be okay.

I was once lost and confused, unsure of who I was. Then I found myself and my people and now I feel strong.

I looked across the gym during my daughter's Catholic Youth Organization basketball game in April. She was sitting on the bench laughing with her friends. Their legs were crossed like little ladies in a pew at Mass. Nobody asked them nor reminded them to sit like that, not that anyone would in San Francisco in 2018.

I thought I clearly remembered all of the times I was reminded to "sit like a lady" as a child. Parenthood is funny like that: your own childhood memories sometimes encroach upon your attempts at being present in the moment when you least expect it. I also played CYO girls' basketball.

At age 38, I sat in the brightly lit echoey gym at my daughter's school recalling my 6th grade playoff game in our local high school gymnasium. We had terrible polyester basketball uniform shorts that were inches shorter than the boys' teams and not at all like the real basketball shorts of the 1990's. One year our shorts were white. I was horrified. In 6th grade, I believe our entire uniform was red, like our school colors. I'm not sure I trust my memory entirely on that detail. I do have a keen recollection of the ill-fitting uniform on my changing body as I constantly fidgeted with it trying to achieve some level of comfort; it was illusive. The shorts always felt too short and the shirt too tight in the wrong places. My body was quickly betraying me and the uniform highlighted this. There was no place to hide in it.

Wide Stance: Boy on a Bench

by Nate Naylor

The year prior I was chronically and famously admonished in cotillion, a "finishing" type class for young ladies and gentlemen to learn manners and basic couples dancing, like the Foxtrot. I got in trouble every class for not sitting properly, like a lady, while waiting for the boys to ask me to dance; I wasn't a popular choice on the dance floor. The boys who always picked me first for my wall-like stature in Red Rover avoided me at cotillion.

Several of the girls in my grade and a few older siblings attended these classes; it was expensive and a privilege in our middle-class community. I was frequently reminded that my participation was my choice and a gift. I think I was already keenly aware of what would become my lifelong battle to be the best and most feminine girl I could possibly muster. In short, I likely

already suspected something different in me and accepted the social pressure to participate with a hope it might normalize me. One of my friend's mothers sat across the dance floor in the small audience of folding chairs. She would engage me in purposeful eye contact while putting her hands on her spread knees and then jam them together as a not so subtle reminder to sit like a lady with my legs closed. The cotillion teacher kicked my foot in to close my legs. She would loudly whisper, "this is not a sports bench." I always found it hard to cross my athletically thick and muscular thighs. I never could remember

how girls are supposed to sit. One of the boys complained that I wasn't letting him lead and that I kept trying to control him as he led. I find that amusing now but was mortified at the time. I did not cut it in cotillion. I wasn't a little lady.

Certainly a basketball court and later a science class were far more appropriate places for me to sit. The cotillion teacher had said so herself; it wouldn't prove to be true.

My face grew hot as my daughter's team played and I remembered watching an adult rush over from the stands during my own playoff game and whisper in my ear: "You aren't a boy sitting on this bench. Back straight, ankles crossed." I'm sure I made it into a joke as I often did/ do. I was a funny kid and am still a funny adult. You cannot be bullied if you are the joke of your creation. Cultivating humor from shame gives you control of a situation in which you ostensibly have none. I spent the rest of the series trying to remember how to sit like a lady while waiting for my turn to play. I hadn't thought about that experience in over 25 years.

I've always precisely recalled my 7th grade science teacher who frequently commented on my gender performance failures. Boxer shorts and V-neck t-shirts weren't supposed to be clothing; they were men's underwear. I tried to explain that my shorts were actually shorts, but she never believed me. On days when I wore something different, she would proactively remark that it was nice to see me in real clothing. The "lady-like" monitoring began when she handed me a small note during a rock dissection lab. "Please sit with your legs closed. You are

sitting in a way that is vulgar and not lady-like." I snapped up. I remembered cotillion. It was hard for me to be a lady and focus on the rocks, but I tried. My beautiful lithe friend who sat next to me did it all with ease. I tried to be like her when all I wanted was to be her boyfriend. The teacher mentioned my lack of sitting like a lady to my mother; I'm sure she was mortified. I promised to try to remember to not sit like a guy. But I often forgot. The science teacher took to calling me out from the front of the classroom. She disturbed a test once. I rarely, if never, wore dresses or skirts. My pre-teen mind could understand that you shouldn't show off your underwear, but I wasn't and it felt unfair. Despite her treatment of me, I craved the teacher's positive attention and wanted to please her. I really did try. After each embarrassing class-wide reprimand, I looked around to notice most of the guys were sitting like me. I once attempted to argue this point in order to highlight the inequity of her attention on me. Her reply: "well, are you a boy?" I sat in silence as my friend tried to shrink away from me. It ingrained a certain shame that despite my best efforts, femininity just naturally did not exist within me. By 7th grade I knew there was undeniably something wrong with me.

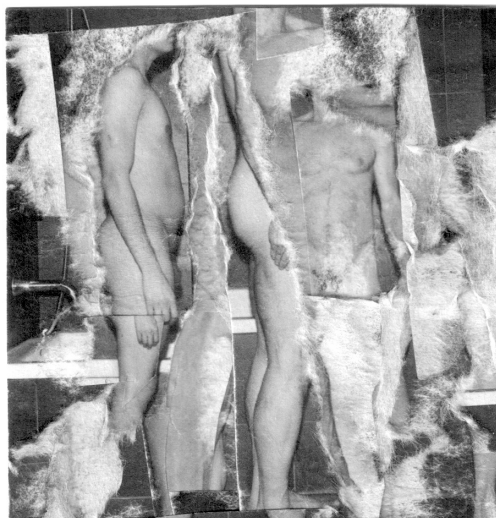
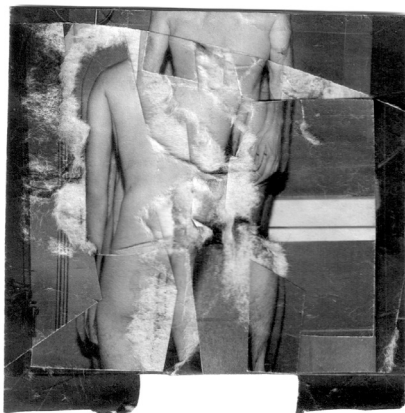
It is only after parenting for over a decade, and watching with great shock how and when natural "femininity" occurs that I hold any understanding or emotion other than shame for the little version of me who fruitlessly and painfully tried so hard and eventually grew into a big person who spent far too many years continuing that effort. I'm so grateful to finally be an adult who can sit like a boy on a bench and comfortably watch my daughter play basketball. Parenthood is funny like that.

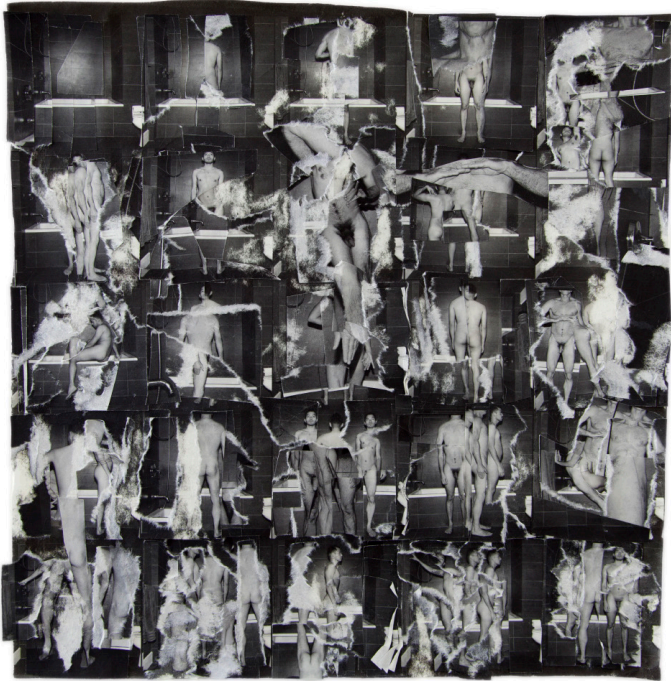


THE BETHESDA BROTHERHOOD



Photography by
Jonathan Molina-Garcia





LATINX FILM FESTIVAL

"Why a LatinX LGBTQ+ Film Festival in Salinas, Ca?
This event is not only important- it is necessary.

To see ourselves as out, as questioning, thriving and in community.

To see ourselves as the organizers, the keynote speakers, on the screen and
on a local panel.

To see ourselves as the leaders, the lovers, the students and the tender
warriors we all needed when we were growing up.

To see ourselves as healers and those who need healing.

This event is an event with the possibility to cultivate all of that. And we humbly
organize in order to achieve healthy cultural shifts for our communities that
never cease to grow.

Thank you for your support.

Lots of love and in solidarity.

ART OPENING

I went to the Sarah Lucas opening. It's ok if you don't know who Sarah Lucas is. You can look up her name or I can tell you that she's an artist, she's British, and she had an exhibition opening at the Legion of Honor. That's an art museum in San Francisco, with a mummy exhibit, old masters, nudes in marble, those sorts of things. At the entrance to the museum, in a square open-air courtyard set in a peristyle, Rodin's bronze Thinker is thinking. He is six feet and six inches tall, but because he is sitting on a pedestal and leaning his chin on his fist and his elbow on his knee, you end up not knowing how tall he is. To see him thinking you have to tilt your head back. I walk in. Expensive looking people in the halls: skins stretched or painted, fragrances heavy, wigs human, shoes shiny, heels that let you take tiny steps. I'm walking around, looking at her pieces — clinging to Rodin's sculptures or resting on a washing machine, presenting first this angle, then that, a boob-dick on legs, a hanger with sunny-side up eggs. The artist's friend is playing the museum's pipe organ, she's next to him and facing away from the keys, their arms linked at elbows, she's holding a glass of wine, and laughing, and her feet in funny looking socks and giant comfort sandals are dangling from the wooden bench. From the side, I am looking at the organist's hands on the keys. From behind his back, her face swims in. She's smiling at me and waving me over. I walk through a dense crowd taking pictures of her, of the organ, of the organist, of themselves. When I'm close, she pulls me in for a hug and a kiss and says your face you have a good face I'm glad you came. I say thank you are you Sarah Lucas she says yes yes and I say your work is crazy I love it she says good and her eyes are happy and laughing and insane and deeper than most and she has no defenses no walls it's like talking to a lover and it would be best not to talk at all but I panic and say can I ask you a question and she says yes yes and I ask her two questions both stupid just to say something so scared of silence not used to silence with a stranger and she answers the questions as if they weren't stupid and still she has no walls and I ask her how it is here for her and she says she loves it so far this is her first big American exhibition and she has her friend with her and he can make good music and she rubs his back gently as she says it and I say good yes he makes good music it's true and she laughs and I laugh and I say thank you and she hugs me again like you hug a friend you haven't seen in too long and then she pulls me away and then pulls me closer and looks me in the eyes and laughs and I see her eyes and I say what I see in them I say you're a good one and when I say it I don't even say it in the sense that it is not me saying it the words say themselves.

Written by
Yula Paluy



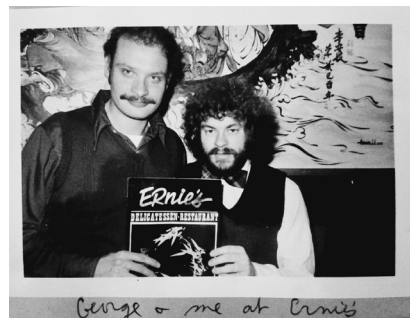
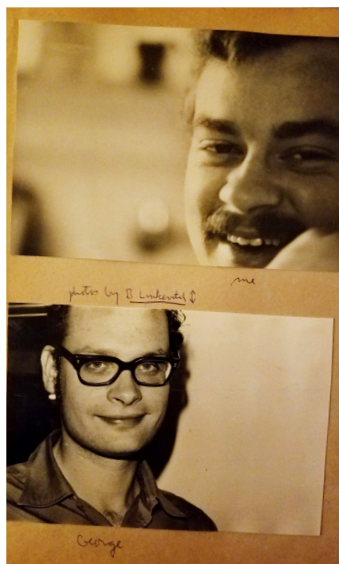
Art by
Jeffrey Cheung



MELINDA McDOWELL'S FAMILY PHOTOS

While Curt McDowell died in 1987 those that loved him as a person & a groundbreaking filmmaker/artist and as a person continue to keep Curt's spirit alive.

No one has made sure of that more than Curt's sister Melinda who starred in many of Curt's films and continues to adore her brother. She has made it her mission to make sure new & future generations get to see the honest, raw and salaciously endearing films her brother Curt made as well as his subversive & bold visual art.



Over the last several years she has helped facilitate shows of his visual art, screenings of his films, and recently the Academy Film Archives restored and made brand new 16mm prints of all of Curt's films (some of which had never really been seen). In doing so she has shared her brother's vision with an entire new generation who resonate with his sex positivity, warped humor, and sincere heart & soul.

Also a part of Melinda's family became George Kuchar, the legendary underground/queer filmmaker who Curt first met when he took George's class at the San Francisco Art Institute. Curt & George would go on to be lovers (sometimes), collaborators (lots of times), and family (all the time), which included Melinda who also graced the big screen in George's 1975 feature Thundercrack which was described as "the world's only underground kinky art adult horror film, complete with four men, three women and rampaging circus animals..."

Melinda was kind enough to dig through her books & boxes of family photo's to share these gems of her, Curt, and George.

SERENDIPITYYY

Art by
Naz Coguoğlu

How do we archive feelings? Imagine an archive that does not only preserve knowledge but also feelings. Queer history needs not only an archive but an archive of emotion that can document intimacy, sexuality, love, and activism¹. An archive of emotions that cares for you and me. An archive that deals with our melancholies, our traumatic loss of histories. Following the cracks that are opening up in this man-made history, can we get to the essence of our being?

Addressing traumatic experience requires retelling, it requires storytellers, future-tellers. And it is true that the task of the archivist to collect emotions is an unusual one. Still, this might be the only way to celebrate idiosyncrasies that hide deep behind our crooked realities.

These are archives of mourning—although nobody died, at least not yet. And the archivist rushes to document the archive itself before it is too late. Because you never know these days when the time will arrive. We carry this feeling of fear in our vulnerable hearts. And we are still too young to die. The archive of feelings grows in the land of the personal and the intimate. The cold concrete of the institution does not provide enough water and sun.

As Joan Nestle whispers:

"If necessary, the archives will go underground with its people to be cherished in hidden places until the community is safe."²

¹For more on the archive of feelings, see Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003).

²Joan Nestle, "Notes on Radical Archiving from a Lesbian Feminist Standpoint," *Gay Insurgent* 4-5 (spring 1979): 11.



Nook House Cultural Center Family Portrait Series (1-4)

Photography by **Lukaza
Branfman-Verissimo and
Shushan Tesfuzigta**



GO BANG!

Story by
GO BANG!

Nightlife is a major part of the LGBTQ community and always has been. From the early drag balls to the network of bars and dance clubs, nightlife provides sanctuary. After the Stonewall Riots there was a change taking place in major cities where LGBTQ's were ready to fight for their rights and demand full equality. LGBTQ neighborhoods were growing where people were finding power in numbers. We sensed it was our time to win our freedom and we were determined to have it. There's so much to talk about socially, culturally and politically about this period but for my purposes here I want to talk about the importance of the disco movement and more specifically the sanctuary of the dance floor.

It's astonishing now to think that there were laws in the U.S. that prohibited same-sex dancing up to the 70's, but they existed and were enforced at the whims of police departments. However, there was a tipping point in the early 70's when the LGBTQ community gained the power to stop most of this harassment in dance clubs. The Disco phenomenon had already started and people were enjoying the bonding experience of dancing together all night. This was very special because we were finding community and family on the dance floor. It was an exciting new ritual we could experience almost any night. It was about freedom and more. As the scene grew larger in the bigger clubs like the I-Beam and Trocadero the dancing ritual seemed even more dynamic.

The vision of Go BANG was always to come full circle with the spirit of the clubs of this liberating time. Over the years there have been times when it has been harder to find connection. Gentrification's effect on LGBTQ neighborhoods, Apps like Grindr and Scruff and the homogenization of some LGBT. But even though the Castro is too expensive for most younger LGBTQs, many people live all over the city and beyond and still find community as a destination in the clubs. Community in the SF nightlife is vibrant!

Go BANG is beyond grateful for the coming together of generations seeking a dance floor as an inclusive sanctuary for being free, feeling connection and being part of a family! The music has always been and always will be what brings us together!

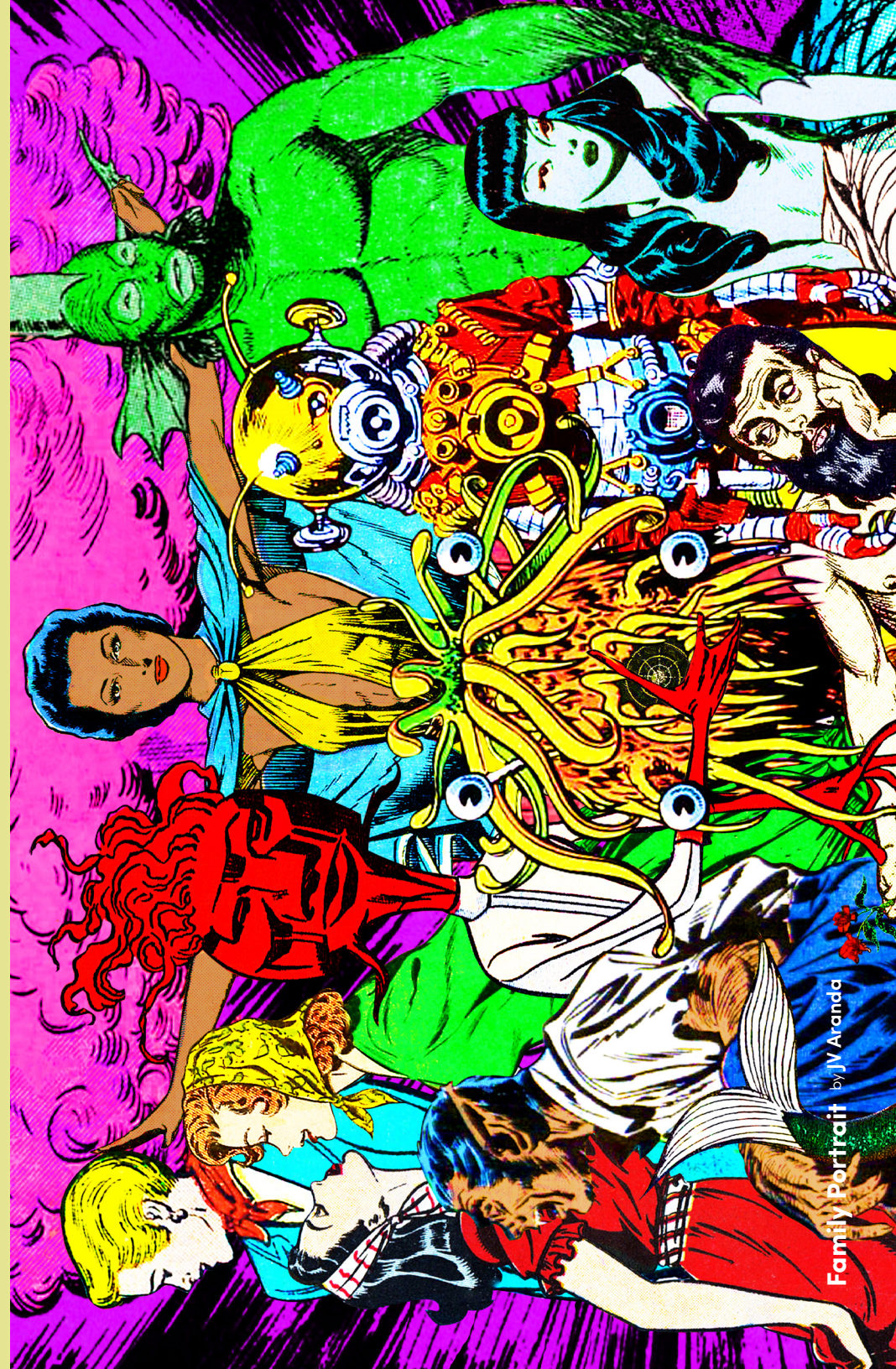


PLAYLIST ::

We Are Family - Sister Sledge
If My Friends Could See Me Now - Linda Clifford
Earth Can Be Just Like Heaven - Two Tons
Village People - San Francisco
Free Man - South Shore Commission
We Got The Power - Pointer Sisters
Do What You Want to Do - T-Connection
Souvenirs - Voyage
The Boss - Diana Ross
This Time Baby - Jackie Moore
Heaven Must Have Sent You - Bonnie Pointer
Feed The Flame - Lorraine Johnson
Sylvester - Can't Stop Dancing
Gayle Adams - Your Love Is A Life Saver (12" Mix)

And we have our years of mixes posted at
<https://www.mixcloud.com/gobangs/>

Love,
Go BANG!





Art by
Juan Carlos Rodriguez Rivera

The Dialogue is Endless

Written by
Harry Tafoya

"Queer" is a great paradox of the English language, a word that actively resists its own definition. It is as perfect in ethos as it is shifty in practice: a descriptor that gains its power from the person who wields it, even as its individual meaning resists total widespread consensus. To wit "queer" means - 1. A gay man, 2. A rejection of "gay" as a static, all-encompassing identity, 3. An allusion to the broader LGBTQIA community, 4. A non-binary gender identity, 5. A non-binary sexual orientation, 6. A verb to describe making a space less binary, 7. Ruining or spoiling, 8. Something unusual or odd.

Herein lies the complication that made Maggie Nelson wonder across her book, *The Argonauts* whether words were good enough to speak to the finer points of a queer life. Unlike so much theory, which speaks from a certain "othered" distance (whether that exile be forced or self-imposed), Nelson's revelations were sparked by engaging with the most normative institutions in modern life - marriage and motherhood.

But Nelson's questing was far from conventional. Throughout the book, she took on the project of depicting a queer marriage and maternity without using invented or clinical language to qualify her experience or her family's. Instead she opened up a dialogue that took on thinkers living and dead, straight and queer, that could speak bravely and honestly to notions about partnership and care without fortifying against historically prejudicial institutions. In doing so she collapsed the distance between what it means to be "queer" - to live gracefully with one's contradictions even when the language to define oneself literally means "unnatural."

When critics of marriage advocate for its abolition, they often weaponize the charge of "unnaturalness" against them - the forced adherence of monogamy, the emphasis on childbirth, the pressure to wed, the exploitative history against women, and the pantomime theatre of love ceremonies. In my estimation, the unnaturalness of hetero-

sexual marriage is its inability to reckon with partnership and care as honestly as Nelson. But then they have the burden of "naturalness," centuries of tradition that must be dispossessed of sentimentality and addressed with clear eyes and open hearts.

Among queers there is much celebration of one's "chosen family," the kinship ties that queers have developed with one's partner(s) and community to foster love and care. It looks to be something worth celebrating, that should be held-up as exemplary to millions of people. I wish I could argue for it, but alas it is outside of my experience.

Rather than form queer family, I've witnessed my own family queered. The nuclear ties still persist, but they have been separated from gendered roles and expectations by an aversion to the casual violence inflicted by our extended clan, who are very much stuck in their pretensions to an honor that commands the tiniest kind of respect. But they have also been liberated by language. Few moments have warmed my heart more than my brother discuss "toxic masculinity" with my father only to see his eyes well up with tears. They do often now, usually in response to watching musicals. My sister and mother feel similarly free to follow their ambition and have done so, my mother has become an acclaimed novelist. The dialogue is endless.



Fairy Garden

Story by
Stuart W. Leung

Shortly after getting married to my father in an arranged marriage, my mom emigrated from Hong Kong to the United States in 1971.

Like most Chinese immigrants, my parents came over to America in search of better opportunities. I say “opportunities”, but they barely qualified as plural. Chinese immigrants from very little means had only a couple real tried-and-true career paths when they arrived in the United States (mostly due to discriminatory practices and anti-Chinese laws, but we’ll talk about that another time).

With a little to no English and no specialized skills, Chinese like my mom and dad had essentially three choices: they could go into the laundry business, work in a garment factory (if they lived in a large city), or take on a job at a Chinese restaurant either in a Chinatown surrounded by all Chinese or in a town where they were the only Chinese people.

None were easy jobs, nor glamorous, but if you had spent years with your mom and sisters hand-sewing buttons onto clothing and being paid very, very little for it, “glamorous” depended on the context and the circumstances of your life.

Of the options in front of them, my parents chose to work in Chinese restaurants mostly because my dad and uncles had some experience in it.

My dad had come into the U.S.A. through Ellis Island a couple years before meeting my mom. In his first stint in the United States, he worked in a Chinese grocery store in Chicago stocking shelves, lifting boxes and other grunt work. He also spent a short

time as a cook in New York learning how to prepare Americanized-Chinese cuisine such as chop suey and sweet and sour chicken.

While working in Chicago, my dad heard that there was better pay to be had in Detroit working in Chinese restaurants. He eventually left his job in Chicago and headed to Michigan.

My mom had come over with my dad after they were married. She had taken mandatory English classes during her schooling in Hong Kong, so she took that, the name “Maria” (inspired by watching West Side Story in high school), and started waiting tables at Chinese restaurants in the Detroit area.

Between my dad’s ability to cook a mean chop suey, my mom’s English skills, and their desire to fulfill the promise of “Gold Mountain”, they leveraged those developing skills to create an eventually “successful” but mostly-isolated life in their adopted country.

So those first years, they worked and saved with a goal of owning their own restaurant. In 1973, less than two years after my mom emigrated, my parents dove in. They took what little savings they had along with some borrowed money from my uncle (who had saved a decent sum working in a restaurant) and purchased a struggling Chinese restaurant business in Jackson, Michigan for \$8,000.

That restaurant was called “Fairy Garden” and was the first Chinese restaurant in that city. Originally opened in 1928, it was located on the second floor; a flight of stairs from a furniture store

Having taken over the business from the original owner’s son and daughter, Fairy Garden had a decades-long history of success, but in the years prior to being sold to my parents, it was doing very little business and the family was looking to get out. So when my mom and dad took over the 45-year old restaurant, it wasn’t a given that it would be anything but what it was. In other words, it was a huge risk. They had everything riding on Fairy Garden.

With my dad’s recipes in an updated menu and my increasingly spunky mom taking orders, they worked day and night to ensure that investing their life savings wouldn’t be in vain.

That first year, the restaurant was able to make just enough money for them to live on. Barely. To an outsider looking at the books, the numbers may have looked like Fairy Garden was a failing business, but in many ways, it was a marked improvement in the quality of life for those who came from next to nothing.

That need for context appeared a year later when my parents received a letter informing them that they were being audited by the IRS.

A little over three years removed from Hong Kong, my mom walked into the IRS building in Detroit carrying folders filled with receipts and paperwork.

She wasn’t sure why the IRS would want to speak to her. Not until afterwards did my mom realize that the income she reported had set off red flags. Basically, the IRS couldn’t believe that a family that owned a restaurant could earn, much less live on, less than \$6,000 a year. Especially when more than half of that money was going back to the landlords to pay rent on the restaurant and the upstairs apartment.

Through her broken English, my mom just told him the truth as best she could with her limited vocabulary. She explained that living like that wasn’t easy, but was necessary for them to survive.

They were excited because lunch times were busy at Fairy Garden but come dinner time, the restaurant was completely empty. They were lucky to have one table come in after 3PM. There were countless evenings where my mom quietly sat for hours looking out the second floor window of the building with my brother on her lap.

She detailed to the auditor how the family managed to make it on approximately \$2,500 a year and how no penny of that \$2,500

was unaccounted for. Every single meal was made and eaten in the restaurant. My dad did everything in the back; prepped, cooked, cleaned and ordered all the supplies. My mom took care of the front of the house by being the hostess, waitress, accountant, answering the phones all the while taking care of my brother, Selwyn.

The bean sprouts they used in the chop suey and other dishes on the menu were grown and cultivated in their upstairs apartment that had no air conditioning – not that they would have used it anyways. All of Selwyn’s clothes were hand me downs courtesy of my aunt in Boston.

My mom explained that she rarely ever left the building nor had any reason to. When she was done taking customer’s orders with my brother slung across her body, she tallied the checks, cleaned the tables, folded napkins and restocked the soy sauce and the salt and pepper shakers.

When my mom was done with the restaurant work, she would go upstairs to pay bills, try to comprehend what the mail they were receiving meant, take care of my brother, while trying to further acclimate herself to American culture and continue to improve her English.

My mom and dad officially worked as much as 14 hours a day, 7 days a week at the restaurant, but those hours didn’t stop when they closed the doors. With no friends in the city, they lived and breathed Fairy Garden even when they weren’t open for business. They had no choice. They had left Hong Kong and put every penny and their hopes into the restaurant.

After asking just three questions and ten minutes of listening to my mom’s description of their daily lives, the auditor heard enough, “You’re free to go” he said as he waved my mom out.

To the IRS, their life didn’t look like much or anything to be proud of, but Fairy Garden was the start of everything for my parents.

My mom smiles and laughs when she talks about it now, “He felt sorry for us.” She acknowledges that those years in Jackson were full of “suffering,” “crying” and “loneliness”, but that it was the first and very important step in their pursuit of their American Dream and a better life.

My mom and dad would go on to spend 30+ years in the Chinese restaurant business.

INTERVIEW WITH JOSH CHEON/DARK ENTRIES

Josh Cheon started his record label Dark Entries a decade ago, and it's now one of the most beloved & respected labels by music heads across the globe. With a special focus on unearthing obscure synth heavy gems from decades past the label has put out an insane amount of releases since it began. The artist that Dark Entries has released the most amount of material from (all of which had never been released before!) is Patrick Cowley.

Cowley was a San Francisco musician who collaborated with Sylvester on some of his best records and helped lead the pack for the HI-NRG scene that would blast off in San Francisco and beyond. The label began to share another side of Cowley's work that most had never been aware of. Much of which was recorded for porn films in the 70's, these show a way more avant garde/experimental side to Cowley's music yet still are as satisfying as his dance floor burners. Much like the renaissance Arthur Russell's music began to have a decade or so ago, the last few years has seen similar happen to Patrick Cowley's music, which was so unapologetically queer ((check tracks like "Menenergy" and "Leather Bound"), it makes perfect sense he was one of the first dj's at The End Up. Like too many other brilliant queer artists of that time, Cowley's life was cut way too short. he was one of the people to die during what is often referred to as the 'first wave' of AIDS casualties in 1982.

Cheon has a fierce commitment to making sure the stories, sounds, spirit & soul of many of our queer ancestors who have left this realm continue to live on through blasting stereos across the globe. Not one to only be looking in the past, his label also releases current artists and next time you are at a show, the person who made sure to get right up front and is dancing and connecting to the music with such joyful abandon might very well be the man behind Dark Entries.



When was the first time you felt a real sexual connection to music or a particular artist?

JC: Dead Or Alive! The cover art for their 1989 album "Nude" gave me a sense of sexual freedom and taboo. Even listening to this album along with Soft Cell, the vocals were so performed and over the top. I would have both cassettes in my car as the soundtrack driving into NYC going out for a night of dancing. I would park my car on West 4th street near Christopher Street and would walk around at night and absorb the city.

Was your family supportive of your obsessive love of music and going to so many shows when you were younger?

JC: My mom was supportive and allowed me to drive up and down the east coast to see The Cure and Tori Amos as a 16-year old. There was this one time Marilyn Manson was playing in New Jersey on Mother's Day and I was down the shore at my aunt's house with my entire family (my grandma had 5 daughters!) My older male cousin told my family that Manson fucks chickens on stage and cuts their heads off and of course my very Catholic aunts started praying and forbade me to go to the show. But somehow I snuck away and went anyway after dinner.

Do you remember the first person you came out to? Was there any music connected to your relationship with them?

JC: Gosh, I guess it was my friend Joni, we shared a passion for Silence of the Lambs and the song "Goodbye Horses" by Q Lazzarus. One time I wanted us to act it out! I spent a few hours transcribing some of our favorite scenes on a yellow legal pad at my dad's house. We went to my friend April's basement, chose our roles and re-enacted the film. We loved the scene when Buffalo Bill is in his basement studio sewing a suit of skin and cues up that song to apply his lipstick and dances around, stopping on point to tuck his bits between his legs. I bought the film soundtrack only to discover the song from this memorable scene was absent. I remember eagerly watching the end credits and pausing during the list of music used in the film and to write down every song in hopes of discovering the song for that tuck scene. I was on a hunt to find it and it turned up on another soundtrack by filmmaker Johnathan Demme, Married to the Mob. I bought

the cassette version of the soundtrack at Venus Records on St. Marks Place in the East Village. I would rewind over and over again in her car just to hear this song and eventually wore the cassette out and had to buy a second copy.

One of the current artists on your label is Bézier, who is Robert Yang. Besides being his record label, the two of you have had such a sweet friendship with each other & have spent countless hours together. Your relationship feels so brotherly/sisterly...Can you tell us how you first met & what you love about him.

JC: We had both seen Maurice Fulton DJ for Gun Club at Moulton Studios on Polk Street and the next day I was walking to Dolores Park and we were both in the same corner store buying beer and he struck up a conversation about the gig. We both had moved to SF a few months apart from each other and were fresh meat. We started hanging out and geeking out about new music discoveries and food. I love Robert's ability to break down the most complex situations into clear and concise ideas for everyone to understand. I also love his determination to see projects through and create the most beautiful music that speaks to people's hearts.

You share a birthday with Yoko Ono as well as your friend, the great photographer, Daniel Case. Can you talk a bit about your relationship with him...

JC: I met Danny at the weekly Honey Soundsystem parties and one year we discovered our mutual birthdays that always fall on Presidents' Day weekend. So those Sunday nights would be extra wild at Honey and we turned it into our joint birthday celebration. We share a love for 90s r&b, house and a diva vocal, so if I saw Danny on the dance floor I would play songs for him. I love how open and honest I can be about all facets of my life with him and spy on all the cute boys every time we hang out.

Do you have blood related siblings? What's your relationship like with them?

JC: I have a younger brother and sister who live in New Jersey. I love and get along with well when we get to see each other. I guess as teenagers we fought with each other since our identities were pretty much all polar opposites. I would make my brother memorize by all my Cure cassettes by release year and quiz him whenever I gave him rides. Whenever I gave my sister a ride to high school she would make me drop her off a few blocks outside the school because I was too much of a "freak" haha!

What was coming out to your family like when you were younger?

JC: I didn't come out to my family until after I had moved to San Francisco for 2 years, I think I was 27 or so.. So not that young. I was an extra in the Gus Van Sant movie about Harvey Milk and I got a screener copy and brought it with me to New Jersey and watched it with my mom. I was crying pretty much the whole way through. The next day when she was driving me to the airport I came out to her in the car. She said she would always support and love me.

You've donated the proceeds of several of your releases to efforts you find very important. Who has Dark Entries

been able to help financially in this way since you started the label.

Project Open Hand, AIDS Housing Alliance, Ghostship Fire Relief fund, Bubbles Bubblesynski Memorial Fund, St James Infirmary, Lyon Martin, Planned Parenthood, Trans Lifeline, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and donating records and more to independent radio stations like KXLU, WFMU, WPRB, KALX.

You have made strong relationships with many queer people who were making work and contributing to queer culture before you were born. Why is it so important to you to make those links/relationships...

As a queer person you are constantly the minority and when you work with other queers you share experiences and stories and learn to grow and pave a way forward. I find so many amazing stories from queer people who passed away far too early and feel the need to share these stories with the world. We learn from our queer ancestors as well as our present day friends/allies.

If you had to pick a song that for you captures the magic/beauty/mystery of queer kinship & family what would it be?

Patrick Cowley & Sylvester - Stars





Photo by **Việt Lê**

So often kindred spirits never get to meet one another. Việt Lê was born in Vietnam in 1976. Nerve Valerio was born in the Philippines in 1997. Both are queer artists & scholars & activists. Việt is Assistant Professor in Visual Studies | Visual & Critical Studies at California College of the Arts. Nerve is Assistant Professor of Geography & GIS at City University Of New York. Both make work and do writing and research that is often highlighting the impact of borders & the importance of creating & maintaining community. Both of them are super smart, refreshingly humble, so passionate in what they do, and they both have super infectious smiles which really do portray the incredible amount of kindness & warmth they both possess in all aspects of their lives.

We thought we would introduce them to each other as they find themselves on opposite coasts of the country. They decided they would each send each other two photos they took and have the other person write a short piece of jumping off of those images.

Nerve said he has purposely not looked online so he still has no idea what Việt looks like. We hope one day they get to meet in the flesh.

Việt Lê

February, 2018

Balloons and bubble wrapped like a fender bender. A cavalcade of long days tender parade, Fellini's silent facades. The cab driver says of his lover, "our melodies melded, that's how I knew." "My ball and chain," his eye catching the road in the rearview, "but before, my heart swelled like a balloon." Static, roadside, resistance; a love-song on the radio (Wait a minute, it's too deep): ("Night and day, you are the one...") Don't burst my (caviar dreams, champagne) bubbly.

(Night and day, you are the one; Only you beneath the moon, under the sun. Whether near to me or far...That this longing for you, follows wherever I go...In the roaring traffics boom; In the silence of my lonely room")

How can we ever know the abstractions of desire, despair; never just black and white: cold click of the camera's heart—granular, lenticular, todos los días. Mỗi ngày, anh và em, enraptured, distance, intimacy—our desperate drives— impending disaster; nothing, everything; we loathe, love: that's how I knew.

Nerve Valerio

February, 2019

how do we reclaim the night
sweaty and still between whispers
neon-flavored flowers
diaphragms of golden flesh
we tease the dawn
with empty hands but endless fantasies
mimicking a rising sun
we make an announcement
the night is ours
so long as everything
stays up and running
buoyed by the fog the moon floats
we see a visible trace
of eyes, lips, neck and spine
a homage to you, me and all of us
we exist for the same reason
the way constellations only
sparkle in the dark
night casts a shadow
making a contrast
deep enough
to withstand the limits
of our near-universal coded lives
pre-determined and memorized
by algorithm and prejudice
same calculus that unites
state and market
our times are uncertain
yet no one speaks about the hell we're in
for we know
the devil nests
in the details
of lease agreements
fraudulent subscriptions
free wifi
auto-payments
matched likes
mutual friends
discount codes
free trials
and tonight we claim what's ours
standing together
our portrait reinvents
family, nation, self, being, other
transforming the night
to a horizon
heavy
with the full force
of our total freedom

Photo by **Nerve Valerio**



5pm

Written by
David Aristizábal Urrea

Intimacy has no metric. Neither does kinship. Bonds can last a lifetime and so does the violence of stickiness. But bonds can also stick for just a second, a minute--and with glue other than blood.

Everyday Benjamin walks the same 1000 steps to the Chapultepec metro station in Mexico City. Down the stairs, right on Veracruz, passing the rotisserie chicken-stand he turns left--then-right--right again. Stairs down, five pesos, and onto the semi-crowded pink line.

One transfer onto the blue line. 35 minutes from point A to point B. It is relatively simple.

It was only a few months back when he first arrived in the city that such calculation required of him multiple Google Maps consultations and several stops for hand sanitizer. As if not knowing where he was or where to go turned the more than human communities that encounter him into existential risks. Unknown station names, bacteria, pollution, bodily fluids, viruses, and body parts.

Overwhelmed by the intrusion of the public in a strange city, all Benjamin can afford are small acts of refusal. It takes time to let yourself be crossed by what's strange. We all refuse some things even if we can't. He'll get used to it, though. We all do.

4:59 pm
5:01 pm
4:55 pm
5:17 pm

After every repetition of the Chapultepec choreography, Benjamin forgets about some of the communal (s)kins that he comes to inhabit. He's gotten used to the intimate proximity in which people ride the metro. Somehow, the price of belonging is always a kind of blindness.

5 pm again. Blue line. Direction Tasqueña. Last wagon.

There are only men. Close to each other. A very ordinary scene up until Benjamin begins to feel the very pull of their togetherness. A magnetism enhanced by the moving train and the stagnant tunnel air coming through the opened windows. Not your typical attraction. No. Just the pull of hands holding onto a handlebar so close to each other, wanting to reach out but resisting. The potential joy of being touched by what's strange. The risk of misunderstanding; of confusing an accidental thumb-rubbing for desire. The risk that an accidental thumb-rubbing will take you places.

First stop, Revolución.

Benjamin's heart is racing, blood flowing, should he get off now? The doors are a way out of this feeling but they close while his eyes look down left stuck with indecision. It is already too late. His cock pressing against his tight pants, rising. Arousal non-concordance that leads somewhere. It happens, some say. But does he want it? He is nervous and excited, not knowing what his body can do nor what can be done to it in public. A hand gets closer to his thigh.

Second stop, Hidalgo.

Another two men join in the periphery. The electric pull they add with their eyes is so strong that it leads Benjamin to take a nonchalant leap of faith with his pinky, looking for something to hold. Other men are looking, expecting something, looking at him looking at them. They move collectively, closer, together.

Third stop, Bellas Artes.
A mother makes her way in with three kids.
Can this really happen here?

Benjamin's pinky with a will of its own climbs up the shorts next to him, breathing deeply to get the courage to seep through a boxer brief. How can the mother not see? Or if she sees, does she care? What Benjamin does not fathom are all the hands the mother has managed to avoid in a lifetime. And the ones she couldn't or didn't want to avoid. Little does he know that to enjoy being touched by what's strange is not something everyone can afford on equal terms. He'll never know.

Witnessing such fleeting intimacy and giving a fuck is a different story, though.

This time, the mother didn't give a damn, even if she noticed. So why was he so focused on her anyway? Weren't there other untouched bystanders? That line of thought quickly broke his confidence, bringing his entire world into the wagon. Bringing attention to the security camera above him, the imaginary reapproval of the mother, the confusion of the kids, the judgment of his aunts, the sadness of his sister; the disappointment of his boyfriend as Benjamin walks into the apartment and finds him looking at a still image of his face in a giant screen.

I'm sure you all know the drill when we imagine our worlds ending.

But as if reading and sharing Benjamin's apocalyptic vision, the others--veterans in preserving the veil of normalcy in their own terms--turned their backpacks into frontpacks to provide shelter from public scrutiny. A wall of sorts. Believing in such simple protection can bring reassurance even if it doesn't work. But it does. An intimate spell.

Benjamin takes a deep breath. Blood flowing. Hands all in, helping their way through Benjamin's ass with pre-cum and spit. Rimming. Fingers asking in. Eyes closed.

5 pm later

He can still smell his fingers
Still feels his ass wet
A way to remember
But for how long?

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Cover images by Marcela Pardo Ariza

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