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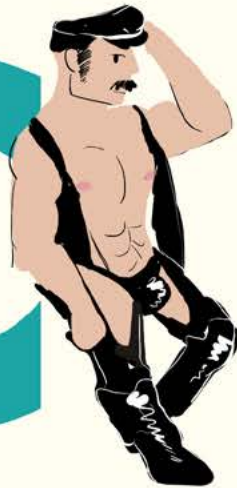


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FLORA XIE (SHE/HER) & NAOMII SEAH (SHE/HER) EDITORS IN CHIEF
editor@craccum.co.nz

JESSICA HOPKINS (SHE/HER) NEWS EDITOR
news@craccum.co.nz

CHARLOTTE PARKER (SHE/HER) CHIEF REPORTER
chiefreporter@craccum.co.nz

OMNI ARONA (HE/HIM) TE AO MĀORI EDITOR
maori@craccum.co.nz

GRACE BURTON-MCKEICH (SHE/HER) FEATURES
features@craccum.co.nz

MADELEINE CRUTCHLEY (SHE/HER) ARTS
arts@craccum.co.nz

NANCY GUO (SHE/HER) LIFESTYLE
lifestyle@craccum.co.nz

ARELA JIANG (HE/HIM) STAFF WRITER
staffwriter@craccum.co.nz

GABBIE DE BARON (SHE/HER) VISUAL ARTS
visualarts@craccum.co.nz

MICHELLE TIANG (SHE/HER) SOCIAL MEDIA
socials@craccum.co.nz

NICK WITHERS (HE/THEY) DESIGNER
design@ausa.org.nz

AARON HAUGH (HE/HIM) ADVERTISING
marketing@ausa.org.nz

EDITORIAL OFFICE
TOP LEVEL
STUDENT UNION
BUILDING
34 PRINCES STREET

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Naomii Seah, Theo van de Klundert, Amanda Joshua,
Actias Evans

COVER **ELLIOT MCKENZIE**
CENTREFOLD **ROWAN THOMSON**

ARTISTS

Chloe Bettina, Sophie Sun, Gabbie De Baron,
Doyoung Koh, Kiki Hall

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In Celebration of The Queer Community

This week, Flora and Naomii pass the mic to Theo, your Queer Rights Officer

From its initial humble historical origins, the social struggle of living proud and queer continues to be a challenging one. Whether we look to Stone Wall, the legislative weaponry passed in Texas and Florida, or the mental exhaustion brought on by the red setting, queer people everywhere continue to hold the line. That is what I truly admire about the Queer Community; despite what civil society or the international system throws at us, we own who we are fearlessly and unapologetically. As Electra Abundance from the TV series *Pose* says, "being yourself takes courage." A phrase that queer folk more often than not personify—sometimes unknowingly.

I reckon there is a spiritual nature to being queer, often difficult to describe if the words do not come naturally. It is that sense of connectivity that all queer people share, bonded by the sense of empowerment that comes with not fitting into the boxes. We witness it at Pride, a wild display of spontaneous colours marking our

membership expansion and political growth. We sense it in our nightlife, a safe space that exists beyond the confines and suffocation imposed by heteronormative society. We see it at university, where the pursuit of knowledge awakens our youth to the truth of who they are. It exists in our hearts; that letter we wish to write to our younger selves, telling them that everything will be okay and that everything works out. Whatever your truth, the spiritual nature of queerness awakens all to the possibilities of life.

I think that is why I ran for the Queer Rights Officer portfolio, to restore that sense of pride and being that was lost by the suffocation of lockdown. Stimulating lost morale requires finding a spark that hopefully exists somewhere beyond the polarity of power, privilege, and entitlement. Next to building a queer social life that lasts, I wish to build memories; something that will last longer than any individual's term in office. The prosperity of queer social life on campus should be built

by queer students for queer students, anyone that wishes to join is welcome.

Lastly, to first-year queer students navigating their first semester of university online, I take my hat off to you. Exiting almost two years of online NCEA, Cambridge, or IB to enter potentially a full year of online university is no easy contortion. Keep an eye on our Queer Student Council and AUSA Facebook pages, we aim to have a strong presence for 2022 Pride Week. Alternatively, should you need anything, my door is always open in Queer Space.

I wish Auckland University's Queer Community a very happy pride week. You are all stronger than you may know or realise. I look forward to seeing you all back on campus at some point.

With love
Your Queer Rights Officer
Theo (they/them)



The birds, the bees, and what's happening beyond the trees: UoC New Sexuality App



CHARLIE PARKER (SHE/HER)

University of Canterbury is currently developing Aotearoa's first Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) application.

The app 'Te Puāwaitanga: Beyond the Birds and Bees' will act as a comprehensive guide that allows young New Zealanders to access information regarding sexuality, gender identity, sexual and reproductive health, and healthy relationships. The RSE provided by the app will have an emphasis on Aotearoa-specific information, and give an interactive platform to access RSE safely.

The project team consists of Jessica McQuoid, Tracy Clelland, Cate Mentink, Dr. Fabian Gilson, and Dr. Adrian Clark. Jessica McQuoid is the Project Director for the RSE app and says, "We see this app becoming an invaluable resource for rangatahi in Aotearoa by providing quality and localised content that will empower them to discover who they are as individuals, and build and maintain happy, healthy relationships with others throughout their lives." Currently, there are no culturally appropriate RSE resources aimed at people aged 13-29.

In 2021 the app pitch received the Social Impact award at the Innovation JumpStart competition which gave the development team a monetary prize to put towards the project, along with confirmation of funding from Pegasus Health. The app development is still seeking additional funding, as they intend to keep the app as a free download and are operating as a social enterprise.

Official development of the app began during the first week of March, and the team are reaching the end of their first two-week intensive app development. The concept of the app is based on

'Sense,' an app accessible via a website that was developed in the Netherlands, which produced RSE in an interactive and inclusive format. The key focus for the Te Puāwaitanga developers is to develop the interactive content. Educational videos and flashcards will be implemented into the app, with some videos giving personal anecdotes of people's experience with romantic relationships, gender identity, and sexuality.

The app 'Te Puāwaitanga: Beyond the Birds and Bees' will act as a comprehensive guide that allows young New Zealanders to access information regarding sexuality, gender identity, sexual and reproductive health, and healthy relationships.

RSE is currently integrated into the New Zealand Curriculum, usually explored in Health and Physical Education classes. In 2020, the Ministry of Education released an updated resource guide for teachers to make the curriculum more diverse and inclusive of different types and aspects of a relationship. The news article on the Ministry of Education website specifically referenced "shifting societal norms relating to sexuality and gender diversity" as one of the main focuses of the revision. The app aims to develop on this concept by drawing "on as much experience and expertise as possible, both from rangatahi and

youth health experts and educators alike, to ensure what we create is relevant to, and representative of our rangatahi, and the world they are navigating today."

However, the app developers are concerned that sexuality and relationship-based conversations are still seen as taboo in many households, and there is an absence of confidence when attempting to engage in these conversations. For students at a tertiary level who are looking for support, the University of Auckland offers LGBTQITakatāpui+, a student and staff network to meet other members of the rainbow community, and gender-neutral bathrooms are available on campus. The University also offers to cover the cost of legal name changes for transgender and gender-diverse students, conditional to them meeting the Equity Office's eligibility criteria.

Aside from institutional support, RainbowYOUTH offers support to anyone up to 27 years of age who is part of the LGBTIQ+ community, and additional support groups can be found on the Heart & Minds webpage under the LGBTIQ+ section. The app should provide a more accessible platform for information and support once development is complete.

Name change service

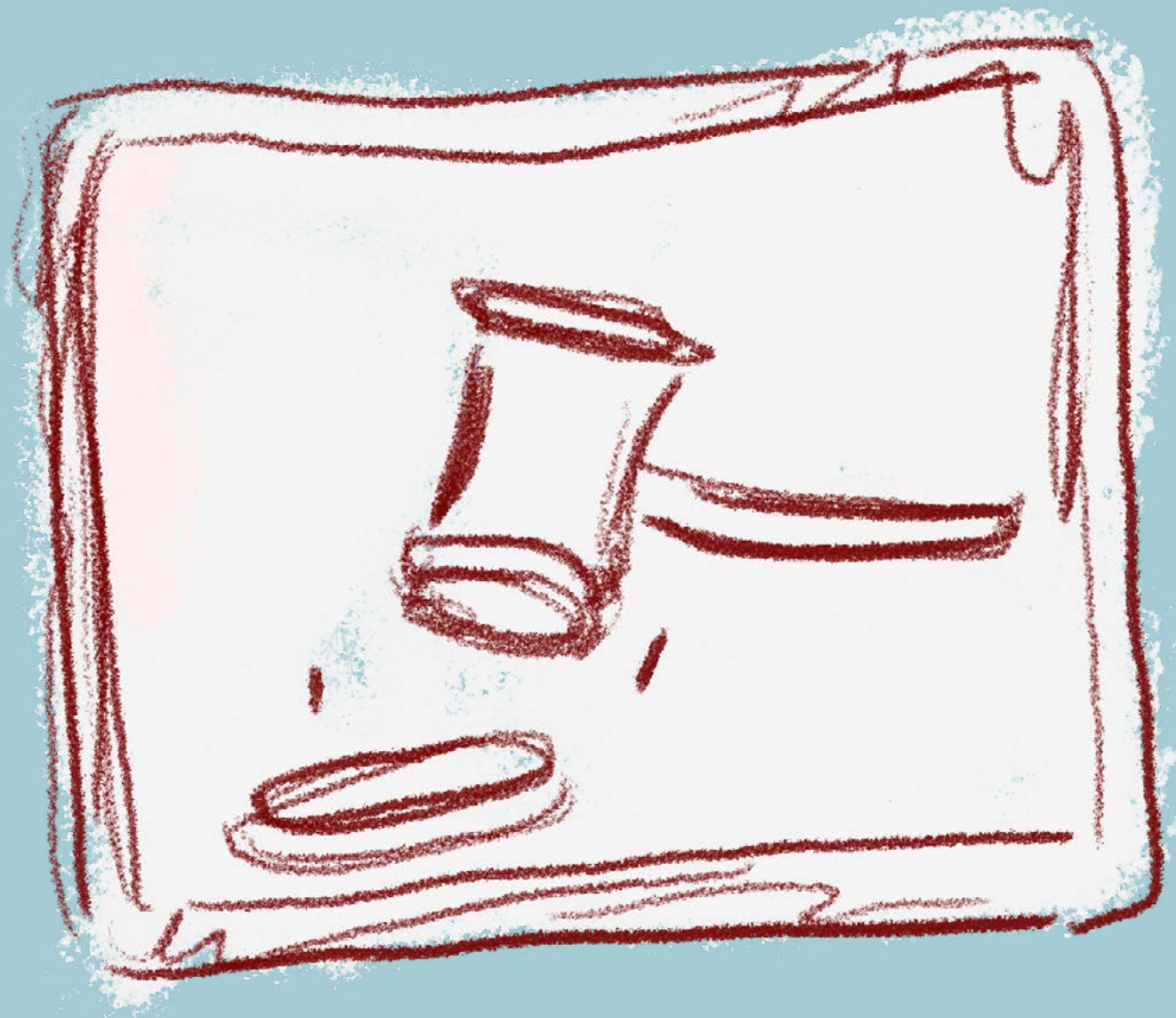
[HTTPS://WWW.AUCKLAND.AC.NZ/EN/STUDENTS/STUDENT-SUPPORT/RAINBOW-STUDENTS/TRANSGENDER-STUDENTS.HTML](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/student-support/rainbow-students/transgender-students.html)

LGBTQITakatāpui+ info

[HTTPS://WWW.AUCKLAND.AC.NZ/EN/STUDENTS/STUDENT-SUPPORT/RAINBOW-STUDENTS/SUPPORT-LGBTI-STUDENTS.HTML](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/student-support/rainbow-students/support-lgbti-students.html)

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Inspera Terror: UoA's Exam Nightmares



JESSICA HOPKINS (SHE/HER)

Students from multiple facilities say they experienced technical issues with Inspera, causing them to lose exam time. But in many cases, the University of Auckland has not granted aegrotat or compassionate consideration or a grade raise.

Last year, it was reported that students taking the Part II Law of Torts paper lost up to an hour and a half of exam time due to technical glitches. But this was not just seen in Auckland's Law School. Multiple students told *Craccum* that despite not being able to access their

papers, resulting in a delayed start, the examinations office rejected their application for a grade change. The University of Auckland started using the Inspera online assessment platform during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspera has been criticised for accessibility and technical issues.

One student, Nikita, could not access both her stage three Criminology and Sociology exams and had to wait ten minutes to get support. "I was just in shock because I was already stressed for the exam and then the issues just

put me so on edge, I was bordering on a panic attack which I'm prone to."

Nikita was approved for compassionate consideration, but was told her application was not sufficient to amount to a grade rise. "I didn't take it any further because I had already just passed so I was grateful and didn't want to waste my holidays arguing my points for a grade raise."

Law student Michelle told *Craccum* the problems with Inspera need to be addressed. "The system is not a good

fit with essay type law exams." Michelle had been waiting since last year to see if she would receive a grade bump due to similar problems. At the time of writing this article, she received a grade increase from B- to B+.

Another student, Ola*, who reported issues taking the Law of Torts exam online, told *Craccum* that the situation took a significant toll on them. "Because of the high academic standard I hold myself to and the (probably excessive) preparation I had done for the exam, the emotional impact of not being able to access the paper and feeling

completely powerless was devastating."

"The call centre staff showed little to no empathy, which did not help my situation, and I was expected to hang up and immediately go into my exam. I definitely feel my performance was hindered due to a failure on the part of the University." The University denied Ola's* application for compassionate consideration, stating there were insufficient grounds to raise their final grade.

The examinations office says that applications are considered by a representative of the Senate, with reference to a student's coursework, academic record in other courses, and an assessment by the University Health Services'. However, there is no stated consideration of technical challenges, something you think boomers would understand.

Ola* says that while they passed the exam, the marks on their transcript do not accurately reflect the work they put in or their capabilities. Ola* has now dropped out of Law, which they say is partially due to the lack of compassion and the response they received from the Law Department and the University.

"I was just in shock because I was already stressed for the exam and then the issues just put me so on edge, I was bordering on a panic attack which I'm prone to."

Student, Theresa, experienced a similar situation taking her exam. "I felt sorry for the student centre and IT staff who fielded my extremely frustrated and grumpy phone calls—they genuinely tried to help. The University did everything they possibly could. But, at the end of the day, failures on the part of the invigilated software meant some students failed papers they otherwise would not have in 'normal' exam conditions."

Theresa was granted an aegrotat pass. But she says that using Inspera has been "terrible". "My situation had a reasonable ending, but I'm still gutted that my transcript now shows aegrotat pass."

*NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT STUDENTS' IDENTITIES.

The University of Auckland started using the Inspera online assessment platform during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspera has been criticised for accessibility and technical issues.

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Putting the 'Pan' in 'Pandemic'

How has the COVID-19 outbreak affected the LGBTQIA+ community in Aotearoa?



MIK BREITENBACH (THEY/THEM)

Covid has brought upon us an abundance of time. In between the long hours of watching lectures and soul-sucking walks around the same old block, there's no better time for exploring your identity—right?

I found that with more time for self-reflection on my hands, I was able to explore my identity. During the lockdowns, I came to terms with the fact that I'm a non-binary queer person. While that was/is great and all, I experienced existential crisis after existential crisis—will I succeed in this world as a non-binary person? What if I just cosplay as a straight chick?—that's how I'm perceived anyways.

After having lived away from home for two years, I returned for the first lockdown. Being at home reminded me of how gendered family dynamics are—at least among my Afrikaans household. While studying full time, I helped my mum cook and clean, and I served my dad like I was his personal maid. Constantly experiencing this dynamic and being referred to as “she” and “her” made me uncomfortable. I realised that I didn't think of myself as a woman, but rather as a person just existing. I thought to myself that I'd feel more comfortable in society, and in my own skin, if I went by they/them.

As a Human Geography student, I connected this awakening, in part, to the notion of sense of place. Although sense of place sounds like it could be about physical locations, like a point

on a map, it's instead more about our individual experiences. Our sense of place is affected by the people who surround us, our social connections, and even our daily routines. For me, spending time with my queer friends at places like the beach or park, positively impact my sense of place. These spaces and people validate me as an individual and encourage uninhibited self expression. Therefore, our sense of place can either affirm or deny our identities.

Thanks to Covid, I was no longer surrounded by other queer people. Suddenly, I was living within a household dynamic that didn't align with my identity and in an environment that wasn't particularly accepting. This change of environment had a negative impact on my sense of place, but, as it turns out, it was what it took for me to realise who I truly was.

As I said, exploring my identity and coming to terms with it was wonderful. But it's still a mystery as to why it took me coming to terms with my identity to feel like a more valid member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Although there are dedicated queer spaces, knowing my identity has unexpectedly given me a confidence boost to engage with the discourse around LGBTQIA+ issues. Perhaps it's because I'm now clear about how the L, T, and Q fit with me and how I perceive myself within society? There are seemingly more questions than there are answers—I guess I will have to keep studying?

Because I am by nature a question-asker and because I want to share with others that we're in the same boat, I became interested in how COVID-19 impacted the sense of place of other people who also live in Aotearoa and

I felt happy [and] liberated to finally be at a point in my life where I could openly take part in queer relationships.



belong to the LGBTQIA+ community. I took to Google Forms to find this out.

Maybe unsurprisingly, the responses were a mixed bag; lockdowns made people feel both connected and disconnected to the LGBTQIA+ community in Aotearoa. Many people were able to connect to the LGBTQIA+ community via the internet. In my case, I explored my identity and queerness through TikTok and Instagram. I read a number of articles online too, which were mostly about how being queer can be an isolating experience.

Gracie shared that they took part in "online zoom sessions and chat groups." Krystyna similarly expressed finding "strong connections online more so [than] kanohi ki te kanohi." Shannon (she/her) shared that dating apps were a way for her to connect with others. She said:

"As being freshly out of the closet, it was somewhat scary pursuing people in person. Also with the restrictions of Covid, it was a lot easier to make connections with others [who were] part of the community online. I felt happy [and] liberated to finally be at a point in my life where I could openly take part in queer relationships."

On the other hand, some respondents did not feel connected to the community during lockdown. Jay* (they/them) says "I didn't actually realise I was LGBTQIA+ until some time into the lockdown—thanks Covid?" Claude* had a similar experience stating, "I discovered I was part of the [LGBTQIA+] community during [the] lockdown era and so [I] am quite isolated in my experience." Claude also expressed that they were fearful of engaging with the LGBTQIA+ community online unless they were "totally anonymous".

In-person interactions also caused injury to respondents' sense of place. Family dynamics seemed to play a significant part in this. Lauren (she/her) expressed that she feels "like a bit of an outsider" due to not having been able to attend any LGBTQIA+ events prior to the lockdown. On top of that, her parents told her that she "should still end up with a man so that we could have biological kids."

These feelings of isolation and distance from the LGBTQIA+ community can have a negative impact on individuals' sense of place and, in turn, their overall wellbeing. For example, Joon* shared that they were not "able to find [their] people or a community where [they] belong

Lauren (she/her) expressed that she feels "like a bit of an outsider" due to not having been able to attend any LGBTQIA+ events prior to the lockdown. On top of that, her parents told her that she "should still end up with a man so that we could have biological kids."

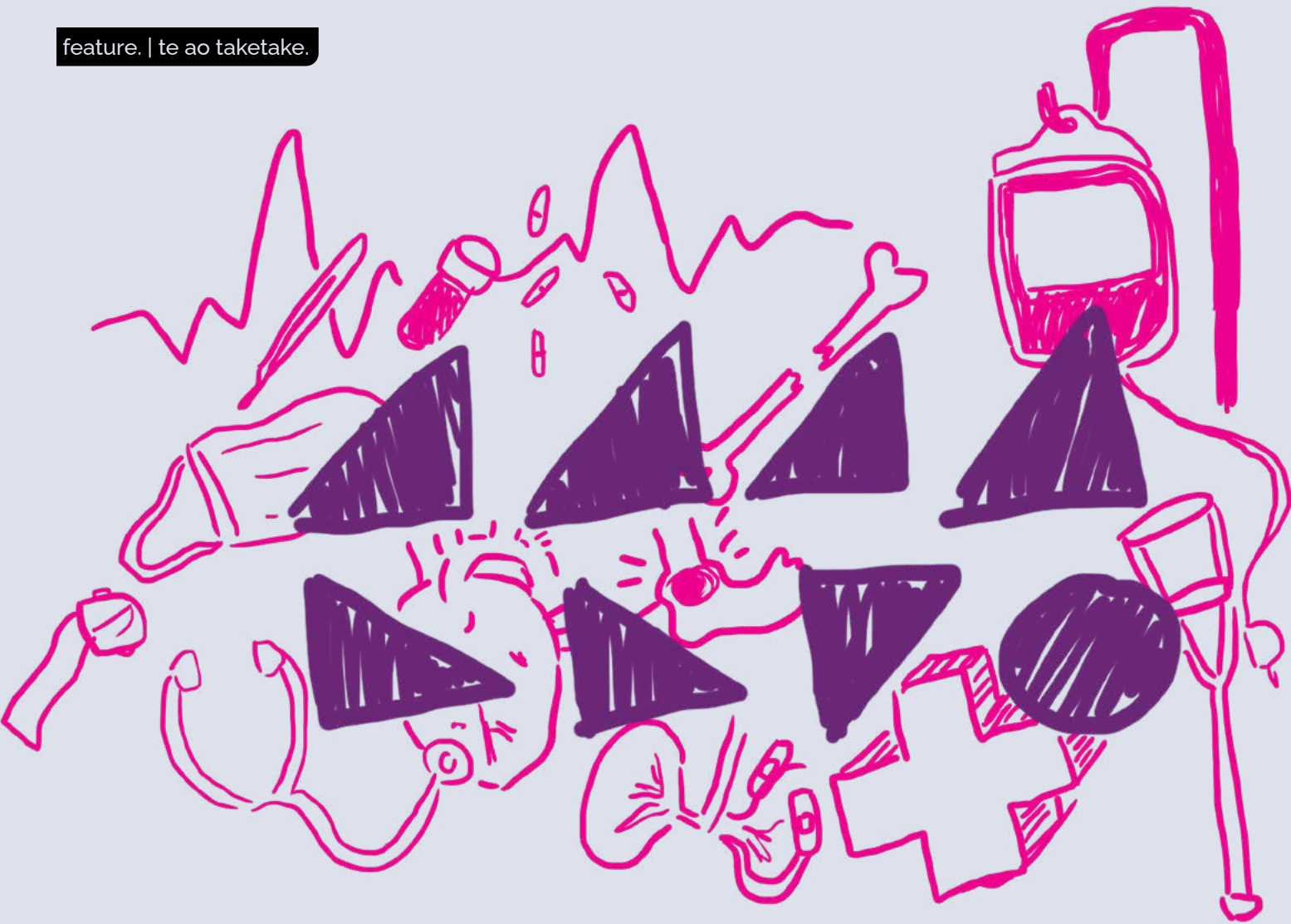
because of the lack of in person events". Not being in a place that affirmed their identity made Joon doubt themselves—"It [...] makes me feel like I am not where I should be, in terms of truly expressing myself and my sexuality."

Living with family members, or in environments which weren't accepting, had negative impacts on the sense of place of individuals. Not only did this reinforce the isolation that many were already experiencing (pre-lockdown), but led to some only feeling comfortable online when they were anonymous.

Although, lockdowns weren't all bad. For some, like me, Covid ultimately had a positive effect on LGBTQIA+ community members' sense of place and identity. As Alex* (she/they) describes:

"Spending so much time alone over lockdown and learning to exist peacefully with myself made me realise that I didn't want to keep interacting with the world as anything other than my authentic self."

*SOME NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT STUDENTS' IDENTITIES



Pasifika Queer People are Here, Brown, and Queer—and Not Going Anywhere

New Zealand's first Pacific Rainbow+ Health and Wellbeing Project investigating healthcare-specific experiences of Pacific Rainbow+ / MVPFAFF+ communities in Aotearoa.



ALLYSSA VERNER-PULA LEPEA (SHE/HER)

"My hunch is that, sometimes when you're brown and queer, you think you're the only one and too often that becomes shrouded in secrecy." That hunch, by Pacific Studies postgraduate student and Samoan queer woman, Olive Wilson, is one shared widely among Pasifika queer communities in New Zealand.

The queer Pacific experience in New Zealand is scarcely acknowledged. While recently there seems to be plenty of eyes on the history of

Pasifika peoples in New Zealand, particularly with last year's Dawn Raids apology, queer Pacific communities are rarely represented or included in these narratives. As a result, being Pasifika and queer, or a member of our MVPFAFF+ communities can feel isolating—a behind-closed-doors happening. A queer Pacific identity is not one that policy makers, organisations, or even just the general public seem to want to affirm and fully invest in.

However, the Manalagi Project is willing to put the work in and change that. Having launched in December 2020, the Manalagi Project is a three-year research project, funded by the Health Research Council and is based right here at the University of Auckland. To create a safer research environment for Pacific queer/Rainbow+/MVPFAFF+ communities in Aotearoa, the Manalagi Project is working to examine *why* we need to consider the intersectional identity a Pacific queer person holds and the barriers that these individuals

and communities face to reaching fullness of wellbeing.

In the year and a half since its launch, the Manalagi Project has achieved a considerable amount, including the launch of the Manalagi Repository, an online, open access archive that centres literature, art and work created by and for Pacific Rainbow+ peoples in Aotearoa and the wider Pacific diaspora. However, the most notable achievement is inarguably the recently launched Manalagi Survey. The online survey is the first of its kind in Aotearoa, its objective is to investigate the general, and healthcare-specific experiences of Pacific Rainbow+ communities in Aotearoa. The survey is open to those over the age of 15 who identify as Pasifika and queer/ MVPFAFF+ and/or Rainbow+. The survey is also open to our family, friends, and allies who are willing to share their own experiences and support for our communities.

The survey was community co-designed as the Manalagi research team carried out a series of community consultation talanoa throughout Aotearoa in 2021. The research team travelled across the country, from Whangarei to Dunedin, holding space with members of MVPFAFF+/Pacific Rainbow+ communities and our allies; engaging in these talanoa facilitated a better understanding of their specific needs and experiences. These talanoa were held to ensure that as many of our communities' voices were heard as possible. They also served to create a survey instrument that acknowledges the multifaceted nature of the various Pacific queer and MVPFAFF+ communities that exist in different regions of the country.

The gravity and importance of this survey are not lost on those following the Manalagi Project. Iatua Taito attended one of these aforementioned talanoa in Auckland and shares that he feels the Manalagi Project and its survey will positively impact many individuals within MVPFAFF+ communities throughout the country. "It is the first of its kind in Aotearoa that centres around the research of Pasifika Rainbow people in New Zealand... This will be groundbreaking, and being a part of this survey can help people

like myself be included in data moving forward."

While the Manalagi Project is important in generating data and resources to support our Pacific queer peoples and communities throughout the country—and hopefully beyond—it has already done so much more than that. Manalagi has had a profound impact on how Pacific queer people see themselves and are seen. As a queer Pacific person myself (who also happens to work as a research assistant on the Manalagi Project), pre-Manalagi, I often found it difficult to see my *whole* identity reflected back at me in spaces like academia or my wider communities. It often felt as though my queer-ness and Samoan-ness were two separate things, activated at different times in very different spaces.

This feeling is mutual for Wilson, who shares these feelings of invisibility and upset at her position with the queer Pacific community in New Zealand.

"For the longest time, I just thought that queer Pacific women didn't exist because we aren't talked, represented, or normalised, and that's not all good. Despite the creativity, fluidity, and courage that so many queer Pacific people bring to the space, there is a fight to be heard over the dominant palagi voice of being queer."

However, with the force of Manalagi, it seems as though this perception and common feeling is changing. The Project has offered queer Pacific peoples and communities the chance to come to the fore without having to cast their Pacific heritage aside in order to highlight their queer-ness and vice versa. In doing so, it also offers Pacific Rainbow+ communities the chance to see themselves, while also being seen by others. Taito agrees, sharing, "I can only imagine our young Queer Pasifika rangatahi coming up seeing what Manalagi offers will allow more help and insight for them being in the crux of their intersecting identities."

Wilson powerfully adds, "The Manalagi Project in a very big way sends a message that queer Pacific people deserve to be heard, seen and celebrated. I can't stress enough how important it is to be able to bring your full self, your brownness *and*

your queerness—whatever that looks like for you."

While the Manalagi Survey is open now, until 31 August 2022, the Manalagi Project has already sent a strong and unrelenting message that our communities are here, brown, queer, and not going anywhere. By taking the Manalagi Survey, Pacific queer communities have the chance to continue in this strength and progression of representation and recognition in all facets of New Zealand's society. You can take the survey at manalagi.org now.

Glossary

MVPFAFF+: Acronym that acknowledges the diverse gender identities that exist within the Pacific. Mahu (Hawaii and Tahiti), Vaka sa lewa lewa (Fiji), Palopa (Papua New Guinea), Fa'afafine (Samoa), Akava'ine (Rarotonga), Fakaleiti (Tonga), Fakafifine (Niue), with the + representing the many other gender identities that exist within the Pacific. It is NOT a Pacific equivalent to acronyms like LGBTQIA+.

Rainbow+: Term used to inclusively describe Rainbow, LGBTQIA+ and queer communities' inclusive of diverse gender and sexual identities; throughout this article, queer and Rainbow+ are used interchangeably.

Manalagi: A term coined by Manalagi's Principal Investigator Seuta'afili Dr. Patrick Thomsen to acknowledge the truly innate, spiritual, and connected nature of Pacific Rainbow+ communities to their cultural and familial genealogies. 'Manalagi' roughly translates to *mana* (spiritual authority and essence) from, and sanctioned by the heavens (*lagi/langi/rangi*).

Talanoa: Both a cultural concept that exists within various Pacific cultures, and a Pacific Research Methodology, talanoa can be defined as a conversation, in which people share their stories, realities, and aspirations, exchanging ideas and opinions.

The Great Gender-Neutral Toilet Review



CRACCUM EDITORIAL TEAM

Look, bathrooms are bathrooms are bathrooms. The toilet in your house is gender-neutral, and so is peeing in the ocean. At this point we don't need to tell you how silly it is that bathrooms are gendered—who among us hasn't accidentally wandered into the “wrong” bathroom once, or twice, or actually-a-bunch-of-times-on-purpose-at-that-gig-because-the-line-was-long. Degendering bathrooms just makes sense. Not only are they affirming for our non-binary, gender diverse, and trans whānau, it also means binary-conforming people don't need to climb up three flights of stairs to find a place to piss. Looking at you, General Library.

Luckily, the University of Auckland does actually have gender-neutral bathrooms, which you can find on their website.¹ And as we soon found out, a lot of them are actually great. All of them come with a sanitary disposal unit, a toilet, and a sink, and a lot of them are accessible. So, no matter what gender you are, pop in for a spot of business, write in to the student board rep, and let them know we want more degendered thrones, monarchs. Just be respectful, and remember that for many of our rainbow community, gender-neutral bathrooms are essential; not just for comfort, but for security, and safety. In other words, don't hog 'em, okay?



OGGB

Forget the first and ground level. There are too many people there. Instead, take the elevator to the very fancy third and fifth floors, where you'll find two sets of gender-neutral bathrooms. The one on the fifth floor is extremely hard to find, and involves navigating a rabbit's warren of terrifying hallways that are reminiscent of a budget hotel horror movie. However, when you find the promised land—the gender-neutral bathroom hidden around a corner—you'll be rewarded with the best bathroom experience you could ask for at a public university. This toilet is utilitarian as fuck and very clean. It's got polished, black decor, and moody lighting. The ones on the third floor are easier to find, being right around the corner from the elevator, and they're accessible too. There's just a little more traffic through these, but they carry the same vibe *and* they're flushed with rainwater for extra sustainability points. These toilets are the toilet equivalent of that sexy minimalist influencer you guilt-follow on the 'gram. Simplicity is hot.

Engineering

There are a few gender-neutral toilets in Engineering, and as far as I can tell, they're all fine. Except for the one on the first floor. My friends, the Engineering building, true to its high-tech form, has a gender-neutral toilet with a *bidet*. Round of applause for improved accessibility, first of all, and second of all, why aren't there more of them?! I was too scared to attempt any of the functions, as I have the technological capacity of an infant. That, and I was wearing all-white. You get the gist. But you bet your ass—pun intended—that I sat down and had a wee. And now I know where I'm going in the icy ravages of winter, because that seat was heated. If you want the height of luxury on a student budget, take your toilet break in Engineering.



Biology

The Biology building boasts three gender neutral bathrooms, one in the basement level right next to the "men's cloak room", where I imagine swanky dudes with sideburns hung their dining jackets 100 years ago. The bathrooms aren't that flash, with sticky blue lino and a very strong chemical disinfectant smell (you know the one) but they get the job done. My favourite is the basement toilet, because it comes with its very own helpful study guide: two bits of paper stuck to the wall that simply say "scallop".

Clocktower East Wing

These toilets get bonus points because there are like, five gender-neutral toilets in a row. See, it's not that hard is it? You'll also have a great view while you're waiting, as the toilets are opposite those pretty architectural windows the building is known for. Unfortunately, all that marble and grandeur does make it feel like you're guiltily using the bathroom at some rich relative's house to get away from them for a second.



95bFM

This gender-neutral bathroom is exclusive access, only available to UoA's most serious student journalists. Not really, but you do have to be a bFM volunteer to use it. This happens to be the shitter I frequent the most since I'm a staff member. But apart from the Graffiti wall, you're not really missing out. It has pretty shit lighting, so it's not the best for mirror selfies. But I guess we work in radio for a reason, so that's not a problem (KIDDING!). I'd give extra points for cleanliness, demonstrated by the readily available Janola Power Clean. Overall, I give it a 95bFM Top Ten out of 10.

Law School

Down the hill, past the law cafe, and under the stairs lies a safe haven away from the LinkedIn vultures and law school zombies. The best part is that it's so hidden no one can hear you cry or your asshole recreating Annalise Queefing's greatest monologues. Even though the lighting is a bit harsh, it's just like your lecturer's marking so you'll feel right at home. It's got a sexy mid-length mirror for those social justice Instagram rants but I'm docking points for the lack of natural lighting. It's definitely one of my favourite places on campus to sit on the floor and feel like I'm in a sensory-deprivation tank (a boy's gotta do what a boy's gotta do :/). If you're into the whole sterile and secluded, the bowels of 810 has got to be the nicest place to clear your bowels.

¹<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/student-support/rainbow-students/unisex-toilets-on-campus.html>

Through queer-tinted glasses

The gayification of straights isn't your yass queen moment



ARELA JIANG (HE/HIM)

"Omg did you see how they were eyefucking each other in that music video? Holy shit they are soooo gay, slay me sis!" If you've been around hardcore K-pop or One Direction stans since maybe 2016 you've probably heard variations on that. Since the rise of fandoms, queer folk, or more specifically gay men, have been the objects of teen fantasy—but with (seemingly) straight people as props. And what the fuck is up with that? I've always found the whole finding the gay between real life people weird, and honestly, a bit perverse.

Fans, mostly young women, are really out here scrutinising every innocent interaction like they're the gay FBI combing for scraps to prove the fake romance they've made up. Banter, touches, even clothing can be turned from innocuous to gay subtext. God, I'd hate to be a silly goofy guy just showing human affection to one of my guy friends (admittedly, a rarity), only for Twitter user @zaynsasshole to write a 100-tweet thread "exposé" on our lives as gay lovers. They say any publicity is good publicity and the same can be argued for representation, but homoeroticisation just co-opts queer people's own narratives out of their control. In reality, queer folk are just trying to get through the day—our lives aren't hobbies or entertainment for voyeuristic straights. But, I know it's not as simple as saying, "Stop fetishising gay lives!! Leave straight and queer people alone!" As much as it's problematic for queer folk, it's also a symptom of societal neglect young women are trying to address in their own way.

Your problematic fave

I love queer shit as much as the next person. It's liberating seeing more queer media, queer stories, more queer *people* in the world. But I can't say the same with the imposition

of queerness on straight people. Obviously, queerbaiting is rife in media and queer and straight members of fandoms feed on it, but reading in queerness often relies on stereotypes that bolster traditional ideas of gender and sexuality. The media industry is increasingly presenting male celebrities as ideal men who are the antithesis of toxic masculinity. It's great until fans latch on and co-opt it. Men who are more feminine or otherwise break the masculine manly-man mold are automatically presumed to be gay; friendships that aren't completely stoic are elevated to romantic. It reduces queer men to tired monoliths and prevents straight-cis men from the expressiveness we keep telling them to own.

We tell straight-cis men "Why aren't you soft? Be vulnerable! Be

feminine! There's no such thing as a gaydar!" whilst also using these same behaviours as evidence for queerness. It's counter-productive: no one wants to be something they're not.

It gets messier when we add the culture into the mix. The rising popularity of K-pop has increasingly subjected Asian men to Western expectations: K-pop stans see their favourite idols acting against Western ideas of masculinity and male friendship and suddenly they're gay for each other. But non-Western cultures have different ideas about masculinity and femininity that get overlooked. Sure, not all of them are great—but in many ways they're leaps ahead of the West. To use queerness as an explanation for these behaviours erases non-Western understandings of identity and gender performativity, and



usurps them with Western ideals.

Asian societies are unfortunately pretty queerphobic, and the queer struggle to live authentically in these places gets undermined by fandoms who see these imaginary relationships through rose-tinted glasses. It objectifies queer people and their lived experiences to be made props in someone else's fantasy. When you separate the real person from their context to suit your narrative, especially when their societies are queerphobic, it alienates the individual from their experiences. You're not normalising representation—you're commodifying queer lives.

Why oh why is it guy on guy?

For some fans, the reasons for forcing homoeroticism can be pretty superficial. They either catch on to certain sexual tensions brought on by uncharacteristic warmth between men, or by imagining them in such an intense, intimate way it brings the fan closer to the objects of their affections.¹ To either I would say *fuck off*—queerness isn't for your entertainment, end of conversation. But there's another

reason that deserves discussion: counter-cultural subversion.

I know fandoms (particularly those with mostly young women fans) aren't just doing this to hate on the gays. With toxic masculinity so rife, it's a fair call that female fans want to see positive male relationships.² Queering male relationships can be an expression of idealised heterosexuality that provides fans an out from the same old heterosexual romantic storytelling. By reworking the narrative, female fans get to fuck with the heteronormativity and gender roles aimed at them as consumers of mainstream media. It's a safe, seemingly harmless way for fans to reclaim their autonomy and challenge oppressive expectations of femininity in their own weird way.³

When it comes to the homoeroticisation of Asian male relationships, I get that gayification can serve as a middle finger to surrounding queerphobic societies. The few queer relationships we see are mostly between white men. The act of finding queerness between Asian relationships can be that much needed outlet for Asian folk desperate to see traditional attitudes be overturned.⁴ It subverts the stereotypes of all Asians being nonsexual, repressed, and defaultly straight—and reimagines a sexually liberated Asian identity. And this can be a reparative practice for any non-white fan. By imagining a world where the intersection of ethnic and cultural identity with queer identity isn't relegated to the closet, fans can create their own narratives to fight against marginisation.⁵

Queer to go from here?

There's real power in queerification: it lets individuals challenge heteronormativity, gender constructs, and racial stereotypes in the mainstream—that's important stuff. It's a genuine need they're trying to fill—but not at queer people's expense. Queer experiences are lived experiences and shouldn't be co-opted by voyeuristic fans who treat them like a cheap narrative device. Nor should queer people and their stories be the only way straights to learn to change their attitudes towards

There's real power in queerification: it lets individuals challenge heteronormativity, gender constructs, and racial stereotypes in the mainstream—that's important stuff. It's a genuine need they're trying to fill—but not at queer people's expense

inclusivity because they ship two straight guys together they find hot. This isn't a jab at those who gayify their faves—you're not automatically a homophobic monster for doing it. But, there are more constructive ways to combat the multifangled problems homoeroticisation is trying to address that don't use queerness as a prop.

If young women need an outlet from the overwhelming expectations patriarchal mainstream media pushes, then let's fucking give them an outlet. We need healthy examples of heterosexual relationships that are aspirational and aren't worn-out clichés. We need normalised queerness that doesn't skulk in background ambiguity or conversely lavishes praise around the one gay character—cut that queerbaiting bullshit out and don't tokenise us, mainstream media! Practise what you preach by ignoring your “gaydar” (whatever that means) when a man wears a pink shirt or listens to Lady Gaga. In the everyday, allow expression without expectation: when you say “gender isn't real” or “there's no way to look gay” make your actions mean it.

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¹SARAH GOODING. “HOW THE WOMAN WHO GOT A DEGREE IN ONE DIRECTION IS LEGITIMIZING TEEN FANDOM”

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³CLARE SOUTHERTON & HANNAH MCCANN. “QUEER-BAITING AND REAL PERSON SLASH: THE CASE OF LARRY STYLINSON”

⁴LINDA KUO, SIMONE PEREZ-GARCIA, LINDSEY BURKE, VIC YAMASAKI & THOMAS LE. “PERFORMANCE, FANTASY, OR NARRATIVE: LGBTQ+ ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY THROUGH KPOP MEDIA AND FANDOM”

⁵JENNIFER DUGGAN. “FANFICTION: REMIXING RACE, SEXUALITY AND GENDER”



How Hard did straight to gay hit?



In high school I was closeted and didn't want to be singled out. I think my clothing definitely reflected that—shit I even had a snapback phase—loose simple clothes. But now I know I'm a sexilicious gay hunk I love wearing form fitting but comfy clothes!

Xavier Harnett (he/him)

High school me and current me look pretty similar. We still have terrible flyaways and rosy cheeks, and we definitely don't know how to smile without it looking like a grimace, but unapologetically queer me has a much better fashion sense and is much kinder to myself. Pre-glow up me would've been terrified and proud.

Sophie Sun (they/them)



When I first started experimenting with fashion/makeup/photography it started out with just me and my sister loading up the car filled with clothes and just driving around to different places and taking photos! This look (photo left) was one of those times.

This photo (right) was quite literally the turning point for me and my style evolution. Irony isn't it, because I'm not actually wearing anything, but there was something so liberating and freeing, I felt immensely comfortable in my own skin and wanted to showcase that.

Ryder (@theprecfectdoll_)



There was a time in my life when all I wanted was to appeal to cis-het-men. I shaved everything religiously, tried to look effortlessly chic with my 'no-makeup-makeup' routine that took me an hour every day, and my hair was long, because it was 'feminine'. And then I got older and realised not only that I didn't have to shape my personality around appealing to the male gaze, I didn't want to do that. Shock. My queerness has empowered me to make decisions, dress, and do my makeup as an outlet for me, myself, and I. And that's hot, if I do say so myself.

Naomii (she/her)

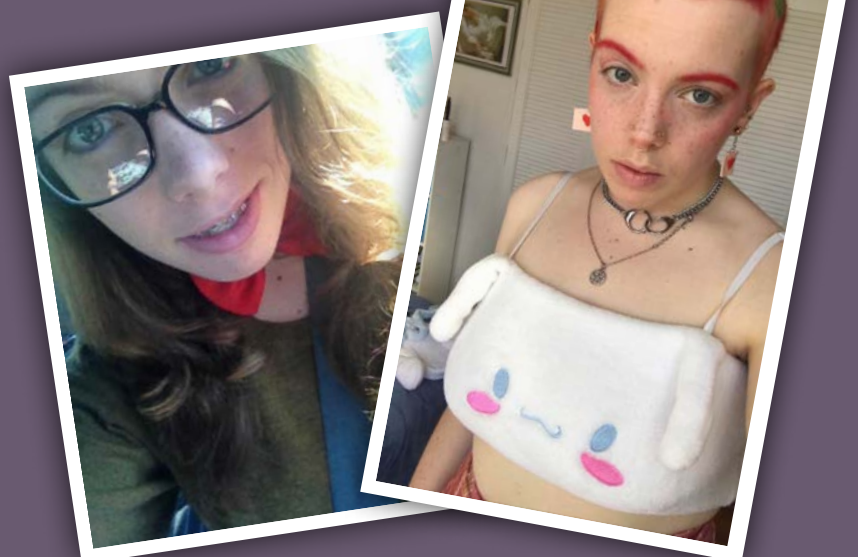


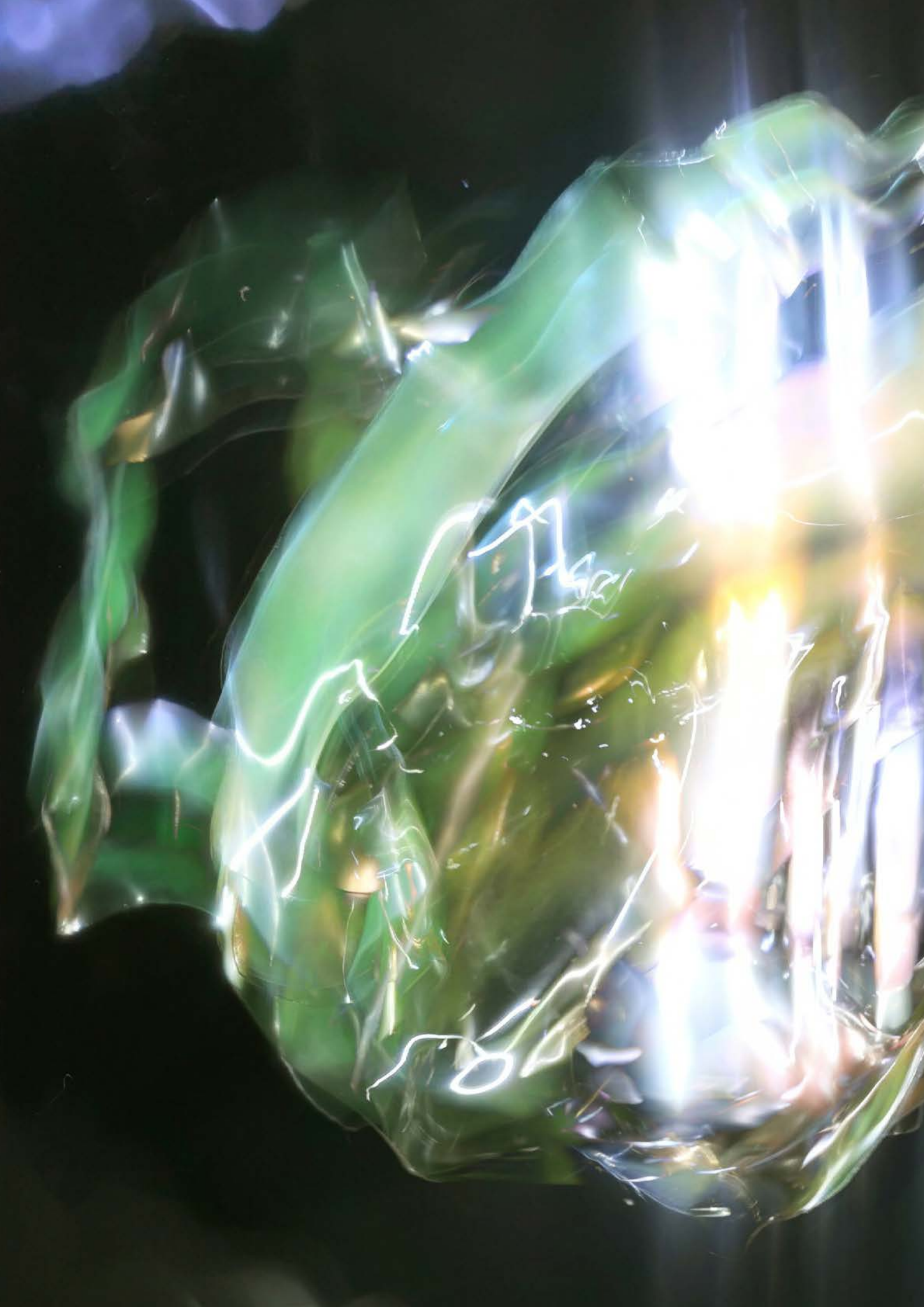
I used to be so scared to wear what I wanted, because people would say I "looked bi". I dreaded people seeing me as 'different' or being too much. In a way, I'm still the smiley girl in the old photos, there's just more confidence behind me now. I realised makeup in my pyjamas is hot, and that I don't need to justify myself with constant basic outfit pictures because if you ever see my outfits on campus, you'll remember them.

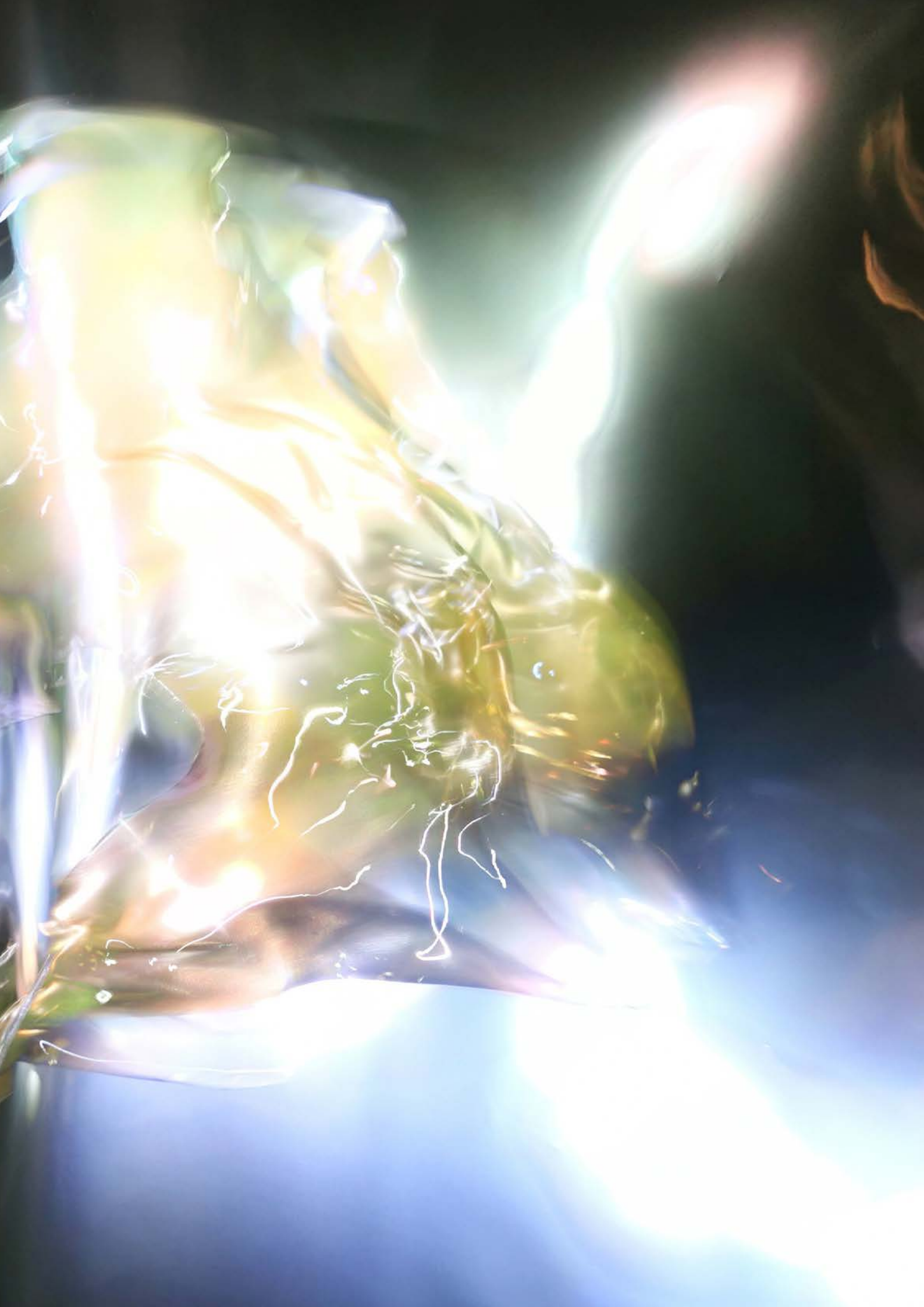
Charlie Parker (she/her)

For me, to accept my queer identity was to reject the mainstream expectations on gender and expression, helping me feel more comfortable in my own skin.

Actias Evans (they/them)









The Sharing of Stories

A review of *Out Here: an anthology of Takatāpui and LGBTQIA+ writers from Aotearoa*



ELLA SHEPHERD (SHE/HER)

This is a book I was hesitant about reviewing. It sat on my bedside table and every few days I would pick it up, read a few lines, put it back and then mull them over. It is a book with a clear and present need: to celebrate LGBTQIA+ writers and broaden the spectrum of voices speaking about gender and sexuality issues in Aotearoa. It is one that should absolutely be spoken about and promoted within university circles. However, reviewing such a collection comes with a lot of responsibility: to handle things honestly, to read new, intersectional perspectives with an open mind, but also to acknowledge my limits in what I could comment on. Put simply, I was scared. I didn't want to be confronted by what I was about to read, and I didn't want to get it wrong.

Opening and reading *Out Here* was like opening the door to a vibrant world that previous generations of the LGBTQIA+ community could only have dreamed of. I wish I hadn't hesitated in starting it for many reasons. First, it is an achievement not just for rainbow voices, but for literature in Aotearoa. The pieces are beautifully and delicately woven and have been compiled with the utmost

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Aotearoa. The pieces are beautifully and delicately woven and have been compiled with the utmost care and consideration

care and consideration. An anthology is inherently disjointed and diverse. Despite this, editors Chris Tse and Emma Barnes have managed to create a sense of community and shared purpose amongst the contributors. This is a particularly notable achievement given the aim of the book: to expand our understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community. Tse and Barnes managed to do this, while still preserving the threads that bind the community together and the threads that have helped lead us to a point where this anthology was possible.

The second reason why I wish I had started this anthology sooner is that it is a serious collection. Anger and despair shine through the pieces. While powerful ways to grip a reader, these are not pieces to be binged. This is not a book to rush so you can finish your GoodReads reading challenge or hurriedly quote it in an essay. True appreciation of this collection is only possible if you read it across multiple sittings and can let the pieces sit with you. The final reason I wish I had started this book sooner is that enough time has gone by without a collection of stories from the LGBTQIA+ community in Aotearoa. Not from the US, not from the UK, but from Aotearoa. From home. It is a collection of stories where everyone can find something to relate to, but also can find another piece where they learn something new. Delays are unnecessary: start this book now.

Once I did pick up the book it was like joining a community where I could talk with friends and learn from elders. Reading this book was like sitting with friends and sharing stories of love and loss, community and courage, heartbreak and home, and pain and pleasure. I chatted with pioneering lesbian writer Heather McPherson

Reading this book was like sitting with friends and sharing stories of love and loss, community and courage, heartbreak and home, and pain and pleasure.

about how companionship is like art: bursting with colours and textures that are entirely unique and up to you. I watched as Jessica Niurangi Mary Maclean reflected on how takatāpui in te ao Māori challenges the binaries that divide white society. I listened (and laughed) as Ray Shipley outwardly mocked gender and those who work so hard to enforce it. This book both teaches people about the LGBTQIA+ community and provides a space for members of the community to sympathise with each other.

Once you do pick up this book, it will last a lifetime. Not because savouring each piece will take that long, but because it will command your attention and you will come back to it again. And again. Until another edition is released with new stories and perspectives and the process starts again. And perhaps that edition will include your voice too.

Delays are unnecessary: start this book now.

It's Time to Revolutionise Queer Representation

Let's change things from within



JAKE TABATA (HE/HIM)

Every single queer person is the same. Obviously!

We love to fuck peaches. We love to fall in love with straight people. We love to say "YASS". We love to talk shit about you. Our lives are sad, depressing, and full of sex. We exist only to add a bit of flamboyant flavour to our straight peers' lives. That's it. That's all we are.

Of course, that's not true.

Okay... maybe some of that rings true for some people but not ALL queer people are the same. The community's like a wonderful coral reef, populated with different people and identities. So, why is our media *still* failing to reflect this?



Don't get me wrong, queer representation in film and television is worlds ahead of what it used to be. In 2022, there are more queer characters being represented on screen than ever before. You've got queer storylines in shows like *Sex Education* and *Elite*, while films like *Moonlight* and *Carol* offer an insightful look into queer peoples' lives.

The LGBTQIA+ communities are increasingly seeing themselves reflected on screen. This representation is much more nuanced and varied than we've seen in the last few decades. Which is fucking awesome!

Why then, to me, does it feel like it's all still wrong? Somehow, we continue to miss the mark.

I think it's high time we revolutionise queer representation.

Let's start with what we're doing right. You only have to go back five years to see how far we've come. Looking at the problematic representations in *Call Me by Your Name*, it's clear we've made some major strides (see my other article 'To All The Straights I've Loved Before', where I shit on it). Just look at *Pose*, *The Half of It*, *Feel Good*, or NZ's own *Rūrangi*, which all present nuanced and authentic portrayals of queer characters and the journeys they go on.

I was curious what others thought too, so I asked the *Craccum* team to chuck up an Instagram poll asking people what their favourite queer representation on screen was. There was a variety of responses, ranging from *Schitt's Creek* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* to *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* (SO fucking good) and even *Anne+*

If we keep just inserting queer characters into films and television, even if they are good representations of the community, we'll never get to where we need to be. The only way we can get authentic representation is if the stories are being made by queer people.

(a webseries I had no idea about, go check it out). These are all great picks that show the burgeoning queer representation on offer nowadays.

You might be thinking... what's the problem? Everything seems fine! It's easy to be tricked into believing that. However, I know we can achieve better representation. We *need* to achieve it.

That starts with addressing the key issues. Unsurprisingly, these issues are the same that we've had for decades. These include stereotypical portrayals of queer people (gay guys are ultra femme and lesbians are pretty confused girls or tomboys), straight actors playing queer characters, and queer characters reduced to the funny sidekick role (not front and centre).

In one of the biggest shows at



the moment, *Euphoria*, there's still representation that often pushes queerness, particularly for men, into something grotesque and hypersexual. Should I give it a pass though because I'm in love with Hunter Schafer?! No, snap out of it.

Even shows like *Sex Education* and *Never Have I Ever* face issues in their queer representation. While they mostly do a great job, they still fall into some of the usual problems. *Never Have I Ever*'s queer character Fabiola is always relegated to awkward sidekick, while *Sex Education*'s main gay character Eric starts a problematic relationship with his closeted former bully, Adam.

Don't even get me started on the upcoming Paul Mescal and Josh O'Connor film, *The History of Sound*. Do we really need to keep seeing straight-presenting white men pretend to be gay and sad?

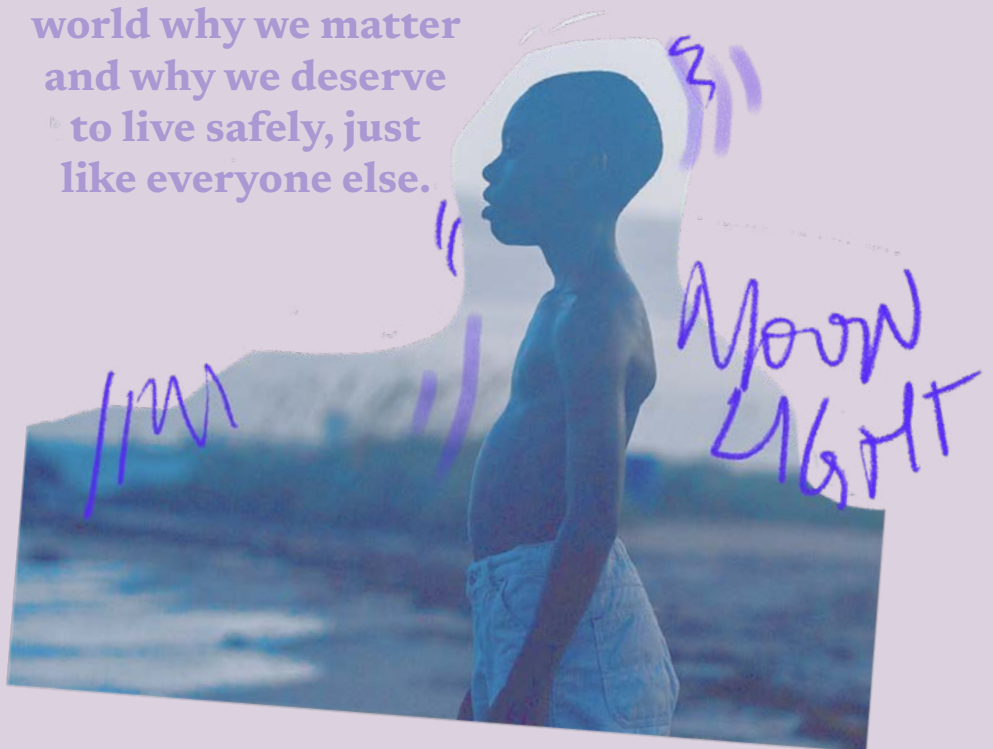
Not to mention the biggest issue of all is that we are seeing just a small slice of queerness on screen. Where are more queer BIPOC stories? What about queer disabled stories? Different queer body shapes seen on screen? Or how about queer people in different facets of socio-economic circumstances? These stories are still hard to find anywhere.

So, what do we do then? Well, that's

where the revolution part comes in. We need to revolutionise the film and television industry.

Okay, hear me out. If we keep just inserting queer characters into films and television, even if they are good

The community still fights everyday just to exist. We continue to have to convince a heteronormative world why we matter and why we deserve to live safely, just like everyone else.



representations of the community, we'll never get to where we need to be. The only way we can get authentic representation is if the stories are being made by queer people. This means changing things from the ground up. The systems in the industry need to undergo holistic changes in order for queer artists to prosper and create the art that's needed.

The ecosystem that is the film industry constantly relies on all the various parts that make it up to function. You can't simply change one thing and not address the other aspects. This means we need to look at uplifting and training our queer writers, directors, producers, and anyone that is involved in getting the idea into production. Then of course, we need to empower our queer actors and give them all the skills they need, so it's never, "we had to pick the best person *cough* *straight guy* *cough* for the role." We can't forget about the crew either... we need to encourage queer creatives behind the camera, too!

Then, we have to work on who's at the top. It's necessary to shift up who's funding and getting work onto our screens. We need more fresh voices in funding, distribution and at the executive level.

This isn't even taking into account people like the casting directors, agents and marketing teams. Each aspect needs to change. We need to gay everything up!

If we create pathways and put money into uplifting more queer creatives, then we can solve many of the issues of representation in the industry. It's definitely possible, but it will take a while for these institutions to change. However, if we focus our energy on this and never settle for less, then we can absolutely do it. It's vital because the issue here isn't just about film and television. It's about the queer community's place in society.

The community still fights everyday just to exist. We continue to have to

Each aspect needs to change. We need to gay everything up!

convince a heteronormative world why we matter and why we deserve to live safely, just like everyone else. The recent 'Don't Say Gay' Bill in Florida is evidence enough on how much oppression queer people continue to face.

If we have better representation in the media, we not only give voices to queer creatives to make the community feel seen, we also move towards making the world a safer place for queer people.

This revolution is slowly happening with more queer creatives being brought to the forefront. Distributors are recognising the importance of authentic representation. Audiences are craving different stories on screen. Maybe we'll get there sooner than expected.

I hope we see a beautiful cinematic world full of vibrant queer characters and their stories, a world that reflects

I hope we see a beautiful cinematic world full of vibrant queer characters and their stories, a world that reflects the incredible queer communities that I recognise in my own life.

the incredible queer communities that I recognise in my own life. Maybe then we'll see in real life, a society that better serves queer people. I hope so.

Let's keep striving for it. Let's only move forward because, at the end of the day, not every queer person is the same.

But we all love Hunter Schafer. Obviously.



Effortlessly Queer

A playlist for the new frontier



ARELA JIANG (HE/HIM)

Let me make this distinction real quick: Queer music vs Music that is Queer. Queer music is aggressively GAY, a fuck-you-fuck-me challenge against society about riding dick and worshipping women. It's **King Princess**, it's **girl in red**, it's **Lil Nas X**. We all love an anthem, but sometimes you need tunes reminding you that queerness is lived simply in the everyday. Music that is Queer is all that: it's subtly subversive, almost utopianistic where queerness isn't noteworthy—it's just good fucking music.

Kissing Lessons | Lucy Dacus

This song is truly *queer* in every sense, in the best way. **Dacus'** characteristic tongue-in-cheek lyrics spins a yarn relatable to many young queers: learning how to use your tongue by putting it in your same-sex bestie's cheek. And liking it *a lot*. With garage band-like drums and heavy guitar, no chorus, and nostalgic lyrics, *Kissing Lessons* makes you feel like a teenager again: experimenting, fumbling, realising.

Happy Together | Pickle Darling ft. Skirts

Pickle Darling proves with *Happy Together* that tweekpop can be nonsensical without being nonsense.

The Ōtautahi native takes the listener on an intimate ride into their stream of consciousness with an endearing nervousness that seems to disappear as the delicate instrumental builds. It's a genuine sweetness that's hard to find in queer music dominated by love and sex, made sweeter by the song's casual queerness.

Snail | Cavetown ft. Chloe Moriondo

When I first heard this song the lyrics seemed a bit juvenile. And that's exactly what **Cavetown** and **Chloe Moriondo** were trying to do on *Snail*. Through witty wordplay and folksy, childish instrumental, you've got to love the ambiguity they've woven. Are they talking about gender dysphoria (imho, yes)? Childhood mental health? The general fear of growing old? For anyone who's felt weird in their body, these beloved staples in the queer indie scene have combined forces to bring you an utter delight all up to your own interpretation.

Sappho | Frankie Cosmos

How can someone sum-up the gay struggle of trying to figure out if the person you're into is also queer so perfectly, all under two minutes? **Frankie Cosmos** does that and more with an anxious charm that'll make you



wince with a "Fuckin' been there, bro". What I love most about this song is that it in itself is so subtly queer-coded, it's that deliberate Sappho of Lesbos reference which adds a whole 'nother level of delicious wistfulness to the song.

To You | Andy Shauf

After *To You*, you may be off parties for a while. Placing the listener as the straight rejector 'Jeremy', **Andy Shauf** is all vulnerability as he confesses his feelings in a way many queer people know all too well. You can feel his discomfort, his longing, but also his indignation laid bare by the realism he constructs. It's sad, and it's tragic—but it's that vulnerability that keeps you coming back over and over again.

It's Only Sex | Car Seat Headrest

Car Seat Headrest never misses a chance to be blunt, and *It's Only Sex* is no different. With deadpan-delivered lyrics over a beat that sounds like dropping a shoe in an oil drum, CSH laments on his weird relationship with sex and sexuality and how fucking confusing it all is. As an asexual anthem or just a wacky song about something pretty gross, either way you won't forget: it is only sex.

Gay Bar | Rosie Tucker

In my mind, gay bars are permanently sweaty and seedy—nothing at all like the bar **Rosie Tucker** croons about. Tucker offers up both nostalgia and possibility embedded within the gay bar: one of queer community, innocent bliss, and those few actually good nights in town. With teasing lyrics and vocals dipping between spoken and soaring, *Gay Bar* feels like a conversation with an old mate reliving the fun of Family Bar's non-problematic days.





Te Tīmatanga—Takatāpui Festival Art

Auckland Pride celebrates the nuanced lived experiences of Takatāpui through public and digital art



OMNI ARONA NGĀPUHI, NGĀTI WAI (HE/HIM)

On the 50th anniversary of the first gay liberations march, Auckland pride celebrated with the launch of its first-ever Takatāpui Festival. Seven Takatāpui artists were commissioned to showcase their art through public installations across Auckland CBD, all within walking distance of each other. These artists celebrate their shared lived experiences as Takatāpui as well as their own Pakiwaitara (personal history). Through their art, these artists express their truths, grace, and resilience as they navigate between worlds.

Due to Covid, many parts of the festival were delayed. This meant that some pieces were taken down early or moved online, but this didn't stop these artists from coming up with a way to showcase their art and tell their stories. Originally planned to show at Albert Parks Caretakers Cottage in a traditional gallery setting, the art of 10 Takatāpui artists now exists in the form

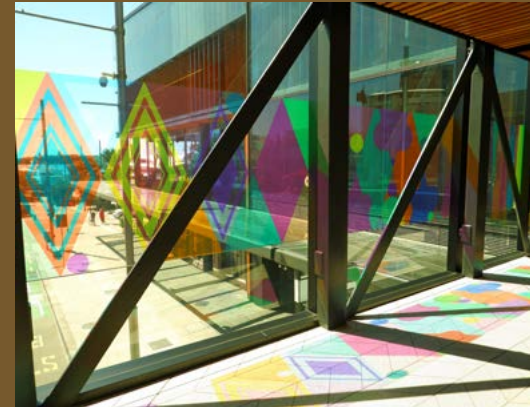
of a digital art gallery. Artists **Abigail Aroha Jensen**, **Atarangi Anderson**, **Matariki Bennett**, **Quack Pirihi**, **Tīhema Bennetm**, and many more contribute to a digital art experience that tells personal but shared stories in hopes that other Takatāpui may relate.

Infinite formations were the first of these pieces I saw. **Hana Burgess** showcases an A5 zine dedicated to her love, Haylee. Hana explores love through whakapapa. An interconnected aroha that passes through whānau, tuākana, friends, and extends to non-human relationships. The aroha passes through our land, moana, maunga, and awa. Hana reshapes texts and images that reflect "colonial imaginings of our worlds." Infinite formations is a retaliation to the way settler colonialism has damaged our "complex and expansive ways of relating to one another." Hana reshapes and redesigns the colonial perspectives that damaged

and destroyed the expansive way in which Māori relate to the world and the people around them.

Located on the air bridge that hovers over lower Albert street between PwC and Commercial Bay is *Waharua Kōpito*. The name refers to "the points people or events cross" and the happenings at such places. Artist **Kopeke-Te Aho** and **Novak** concentrate on bridging BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and non-BIPOC rainbow communities. We can see the sunshine through this beautiful art that then gleams on the floor that makes you feel like you're walking on a real rainbow bridge. Many people cross the link and go about their business with a little more visual Takatāpui art that bridges the gap between them and us.

Te Tinana, located in Britomart atrium, chronicles the queer experience through the lens of artist **Liam Brown**.



Their work is centred on the experience of queer POC and how they navigate the world. Liam says, "As a plus-size Takatāpui Māori, I never saw my body represented literally anywhere." These artworks resulted from them spending time in their studio space and "finding comfort in all the cracks and crevices that I hide on a daily basis." It also serves to decolonise their lens and help the viewer decolonise how they see themselves and the world.

The artwork displays creativity through multi medium pieces of Takatāpui brilliance. Many other pieces make up Te Tīmatanga to tell a collective story of resilience, trauma, and healing. Still, we'll let you see them for yourselves. I only wish we could've had these pieces for a little longer, but here's us looking forward to next year's celebration of Takatāpui and the art that comes with it.

TE TĪMATANGA ARTWORKS AND LOCATIONS CAN BE FOUND HERE:
[HTTPS://AUCKLANDPRIDE.ORG.NZ/TE-TIMATANGA/](https://aucklandpride.org.nz/te-timatanga/)



The Complexities of Being Authentic and Brown

Brown, Proud, and Loud



IATUA RICHARD FELAGAI TAITO SALAILUA, LANO (HE/HIM)

As a queer brown person employed as a tutor at uni, I find myself submerged in a Western space that does not reflect the complexities of being authentic to my identity. Pacific and sometimes Samoan people view me as fa'afafine (gender fluid— androphilic male). To the haters who judge me based on how I speak and walk, I'm a faggot. To my loved ones and aiga, I am a loving brother, son, cousin, and uncle.

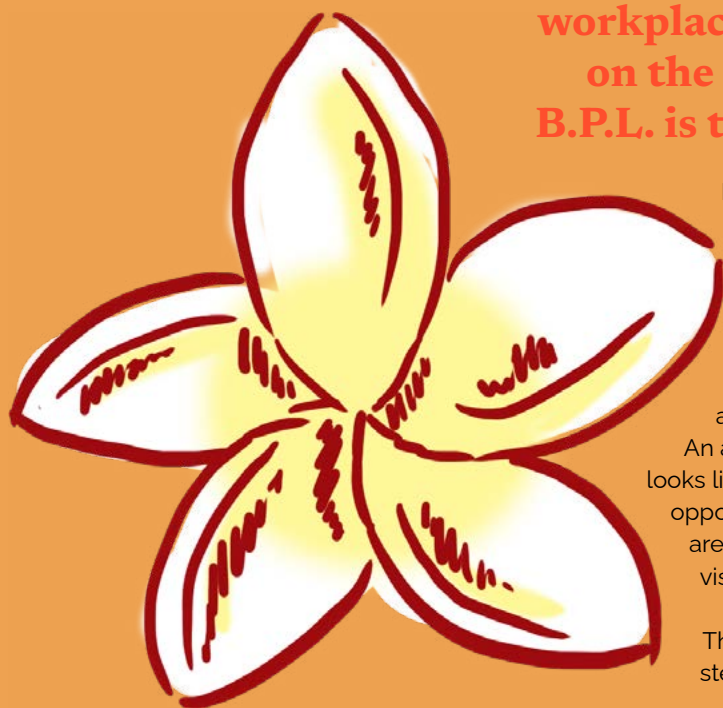
Despite labels like an abomination in the Bible's eyes, a feminine male for those that tried to unpack my identity, a sis to my queer community, a bro to certain friends who see me in that way, through a politically correct term in the Samoan language viewing me as tauatāne (Homosexual—brave men), and how I view myself as a child of God—however, with all the complexities aside, I am human first and foremost.

Being B.P.L. (brown, proud, and loud)—when I say that, I say that from lived experiences of subtle and even blatant racism within institutions, workplaces, and even on the internet—B.P.L. is the way to go. Not all the time, but the values it perpetuates is celebratory despite the struggles we go through from the dominant culture. Dominant culture is the majority that fits that race category, that within a historic lens had its massive shares in colonising the Pacific and the world, but before I go on...

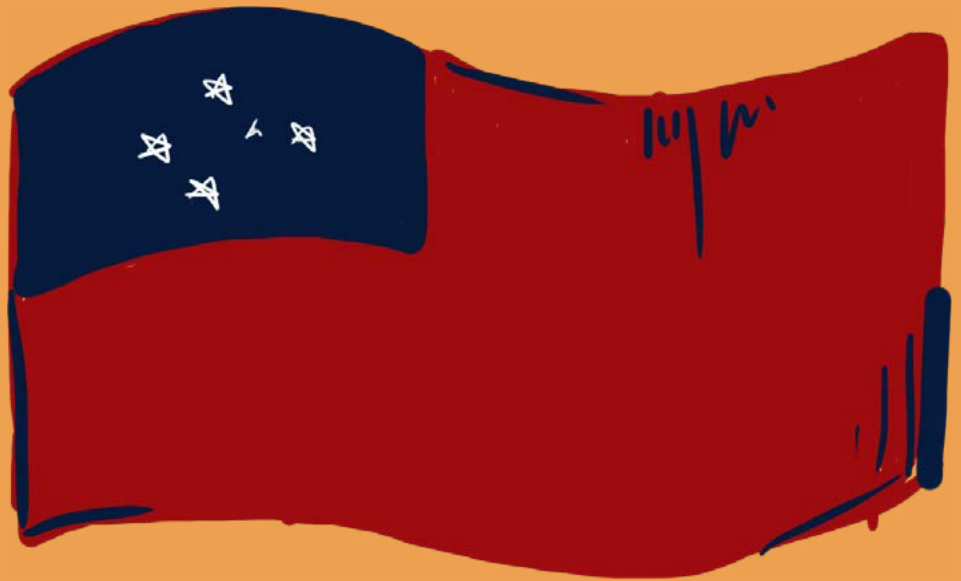
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I just want to preface that I'm not here to bash anyone's race. It's more so to give people a reflective moment of truth and honest critique. An allyship of privilege looks like 'passing the mic' or opportunities to those who are oppressed and less visible in society.

There are many stereotypes that are



with all the complexities aside, I am human first and foremost.



enforced and ingrained in our biases for being brown. In my view, the current discussion of 'unconscious bias' in regards to race, to put it bluntly, is racist. Imagine being like the only brown person in the room. Imagine being unintentionally, or even intentionally, iced out and excluded from others. Why does this occur? It's down to cultural reasons like conforming to the 'humble Pacific person complex'. The humble Pacific person complex is observing and not voicing how you really feel because it'll cause a disdain of some sort. Furthermore, when you speak out passionately, or just go against the grain, it's seen as aggressive, ghetto, rude, or as 'hood rat behaviour'. Although there is a huge population of Pasifika individuals in Tāmaki Makaurau, I don't see enough of my brown brothers and sisters represented in 'high' spaces. That is isolating and scary.

Stepping into authenticity and being unapologetically brown is vital. It ain't easy because if it was, everyone would do it with grace. However, it takes another 'g' word, which is grit, to disrupt, decolonise, and be present in the space where ultimately growth will occur.

Growth is occurring and it might be slow, but it is indeed steady and happening. From the Dawn Raids that severely affected our Pasifika peoples and Pacific leaders in 'high' spaces voting against the same-sex Bill, to a change where now we have a Dawn Raids apology from the Labour

government as they take some form of accountability and some Pacific leaders changing their mind about Rainbow issues and stopping conversion therapy altogether. When I speak about authenticity, I am referring to being true to who you are—whether you are a part of the Rainbow community, or simply pretending to be someone you're not. Authenticity is being faithful to who you really are.

Being brown in my context is being Pasifika—which is another shade, another community where the intersections of being authentic and brown create nuances that some people will never understand. But one thing people should note is that within all the complexities of people trying to 'figure me out'—at the end of the day I am, WE are, all human first and foremost.

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I'm Not Your Hetero-norm Porn

A Note on Being Bisexual



CHARLIE PARKER (SHE/HER)

A year ago my ex-boyfriend yelled at me in the car to admit my bisexuality when I wasn't ready to tell anyone, and then he wondered why I was crying. That was the beginning of my coming out story. The majority of the sexual activity in life happened when I was heterosexual, and in complete honesty women make me shapeshift into a life-size adoring heart-eye emoji with shaky knees and the inability to string together a sentence. After finally telling people what I'd known since I was six years old, I experienced what I'd seen all my non-heterosexual friends go through; being sexualised for my sexuality.

The weirdest part of it all was being sexualised into scenarios I'd never even been in myself. The most common of these was the threesome. Anyone can feel attracted in different ways to different genders, and can have a variety of preferences. For example, after telling someone I'm bisexual and having them respond with "so can we have a threesome?" makes me feel absolutely zero attraction and preference towards them for the next Millennia. There's nothing wrong with a threesome, but there's everything wrong with assuming someone is interested in having one because of their sexuality. Individual boundaries will always exist within a person, and



what's drool-worthy for some can make others want to throw up on the curb like a fresher outside Bar 101.

After gossiping with my non-heterosexual friends it's clear that it's not just the pushy bar-goer, or the slightly creepy friend, who push their fantasies onto us. In reality, some of the worst experiences we have come from our nearest and dearest—our partners. The idea behind what I like to call 'partner-exclusivity control' is that it's okay to fool around with a different sex to your partner, as long as they get all the juicy details or can "watch". If that works for you, go for gold! It's an amazing thing to have mutual trust and feel comfortable in your sex life with your partner. For others who don't enjoy that, our sexuality shouldn't be an experiment. Don't make a hypothesis of what you want to happen, don't try to control a methodology to reach your desired conclusion. Stop putting constraints on people's sexuality just to make it enjoyable for you.

At the most basic level, hearing "just don't have a crush on me!" from someone of the same gender was never a phrase I thought would become my pet peeve. Well, here we are. If I liked you I'd paint a picture of you and adore you until my impending doom, Dorian Gray, but I don't even like

your tone right now. Bisexuality doesn't mean you're hypersexual or fall in love with every same-sex person you meet. We're just people, we love who we want how we want to, and no part of our sexuality is ever going to change the extremities to how we do that.

At the end of the day, we're all sitting on a little rainbow spectrum, and you should never assume what someone is interested in doing from where they sit on it. In the words of Zanele Muholi, "If I wait for someone else to validate my existence, it will mean that I'm short changing myself", because it's not up to anyone else except you and Paris Hilton to decide what's hot and what's not. And before you say it, I will: It's not all heterosexuals. But, if it's enough to make me feel I have to write this, then start respecting that other people's attraction is not for your pleasure... it's for theirs.



I Had a Septum Piercing, But It Got Infected. Now I Just Look Straight.

The curse of being 'straight-presenting' in a world dominated by oblivious cisgender men.

APRIL FINNIGAN

I may be unintentionally flirtatious and up for some banter, but I am so over being hit on by men. Maybe it was silly of me to think that short hair and tattoos would be enough to show the baby queer in me—but clearly not. Despite being attracted to the person and not the gender, I find myself gravitating to cis men. There are just so many of them, but could I just not? Here's a list of the challenges I've faced being 'straight-presenting' and things I've done to counteract my straight presentation.

The Challenges

Owning rainbow coloured clothes but never wearing them

I have a drawer reserved for all the rainbow-coloured items I own. Socks. Tights. Shirts. Jumpers. I have it all. I once accidentally wore a multi-coloured tie-dye top with a cap that had a rainbow on it. My sister said, "you look so gay, I love it!" Despite the many times I've tried to wear them, I could never live up to that again. So, the drawer remains closed.

I have a sister who's gayer than me, like "fuck off"

I'm all for empowering other people in the LGBTQIA+ community, but this is getting out of hand. It's difficult when there's more than one queer child in the family, but she's the parents favourite little bitch. Although she dealt with her recent break-up with her long-term girlfriend well, I'm the one who convinced her to have a gay glow-up. At least give me some credit.

Having a hairdresser that tells you "short hair doesn't suit your face."

Buzzing my hair was the best experience of my life. I loved everything about it, apart from all the haircuts. While the buzz cut was growing out, I started going to a barber. But you add short hair to a person with tits and they flip out. I had a square head for a little over a year. Now I go to a way-too-expensive hairdresser who lets me know how much short hair doesn't suit me. I don't know what she wants me to do with that. So, I shove it up my ass.

The Solutions

Button-ups: a clear signal that something queer is going on

There's a lot to be said about how we dress. The choice of colour or cut can be a hard decision to make, but if you're a straight-presenting queer like me, you've got the button-up option which honestly just screams LGBTQIA+. If you choose the right one, perfect collar and all—you will be the sexiest queer around. Buttoned-up or not, it has many styles. So, if you want to send some more of those subtle hints to your crush, wear a button-up!

Abandoning the typical method of 'coming out' altogether

Usually coming out is the first step of introducing your sexuality to the world, or maybe the last. But whether it's the first thing you do or not, it can be awkward. Even when I came out to my parents, their way of telling me they were proud was with jokes. "Are you attracted to pans?" is both funny and unique, not. Now, I have the problem of coming out to people I've met at Halls. Didn't think I'd have to do that, but here we are. But instead of confronting it head on in a conversation (yuck), I've come up with some creative ways to do

it instead. I've become a queer bandit, slipping pride flags under people's doors—signed, yours truly. As well as using the Confessions Page to fulfill my queer agenda. Am I playing the long game or just avoiding it?



It's Not a Closet; It's a Whole Walk-in Wardrobe

Battling the Lions and Witches in Our Heteronormative Narnia



SOPHIE SUN (THEY/THEM)

Coming out is rough, man. It's not like coming-of-age Hollywood where one day you wake up, decide to wear all your rainbow clothing and rock up to school confidently. It's an anxiety-ridden process of sitting in your parents' car on mufti day to see if everyone else is also wearing mufti. Except this time, you've packed multiple backup outfits in your bag, including your uniform and you're definitely wearing your hoodie as you walk in because you're too self-conscious about your outfit even though it's 28 degrees. There's a lot of emotional baggage (backpacks included) that comes with coming out. We don't spend all that time in the closet for nothing. Do we have emotional damage? Yeah, but at least now we can be fashionable and queer.

Getting Dressed

In the ideal world, coming out is so easy that there isn't even a need to anymore. I keep waking up hoping that people will get my pronouns

right without me having to over-explain that aesthetic and identity are only partially linked. While society has become less hostile (in the Western world) to LGBTQIA+ communities, it still seems like they expect to put in minimal effort into actually understanding the community. Everything is a tick box of gay, straight, she/her, they/them, instead

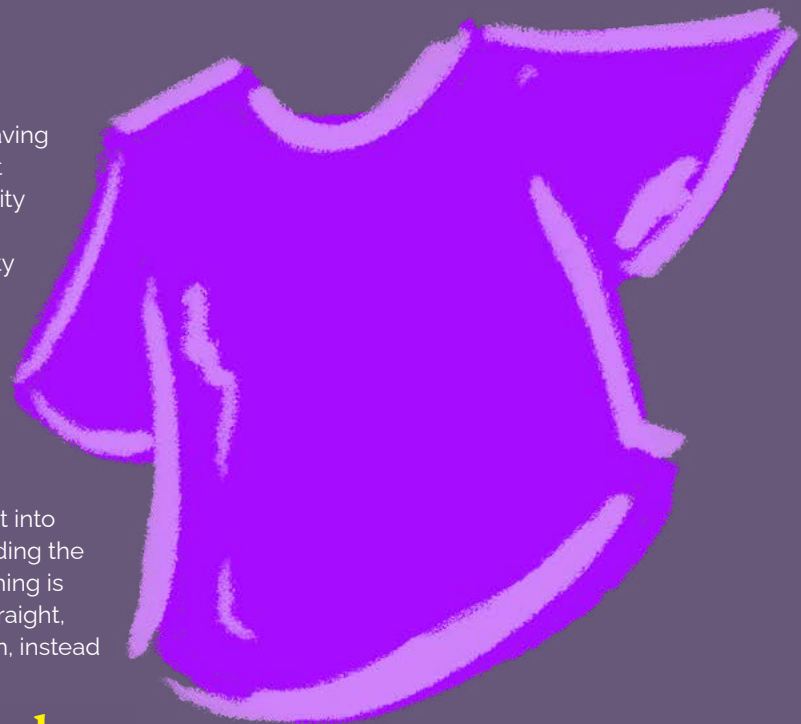
Just like when you decide what to wear, non-cishet identities emerge when we try different combinations based on how we feel.

of recognising sexuality and gender identity as various fluid gradients. I'm sure you've heard this before but it's not just a switch that turns on overnight. Instead, it begins as a small idea—an inkling. Just like when you decide what to wear, non-cishet identities emerge when we try different combinations based on how we feel. Like our tastes for fashion, our taste for partners (or lack of) and what pronouns we choose develop

gradually over time. Sometimes the parts that we look for are hidden away in the back but that doesn't mean they're any less valid than the newest addition.

Does this top make me look gay?

A big indicator of my queerness was my obsession with women growing up. My dad was extremely out of touch with Western pop culture leading to an 8-year-old me obsessively watching *Glee* and playing *Bratz* on the Playstation 2. I watched every *Barbie* movie religiously, ooh-ing and aah-ing over the outfits and princes. It wasn't until a few years ago that I realised the princes were as boring as white bread and I was just crushing on Barbie. Unsurprisingly, I crushed majorly on Kim and Shego and I didn't realise that not everyone likes Ben AND Gwen Tennyson. I could never voice these thoughts though. I went to a primary school where you got laughed at if you





laughed at by my peers, I was scared that my dad wouldn't react well to my queerness. It didn't help that he had grown up in an extremely conservative era where queerness was shunned.

Also, I didn't know how to explain all I was feeling in Mandarin. So, I sucked it up, ignored it, and proceeded to never think about it again. It took me the greater part of the past 10 years to finally become comfortable with my sexuality. It took me nearly all 10 years to realise that positive responses to my sexuality were not ALL

were different (kids were mean) and even though no one said anything, I knew I was meant to love Gwen because she was cool and badass and a girl but not in a "I have a crush on you" kinda way. So, I kept very quiet about my queer awakenings and watched Britney Spears videos in bed after my parents went to sleep.

No mum, I don't need a jacket.

Your parents think they know best and sometimes they do. Sometimes they don't though (which as I'm getting older, I've realised is totally normal). Growing up, my dad was my world and much like how I feared being

It took me the greater part of the past 10 years to finally become comfortable with my sexuality. It took me nearly all 10 years to realise that positive responses to my sexuality were not ALL people fetishising me.

people fetishising me. To everyone who is still in the closet and figuring out their sexualities—I see you. I'm sorry if you feel like you can't be honest about who you are and I'm excited if you're still figuring out who you are. I hope you remember that your presence is an honour, and that people are so lucky to be in your life. Being a part of someone's coming out process is such an honour and not a right that people can buy based on how long they've been in your life. You don't owe any of your friends or peers anything.

Outfit Change!

I did, however, come out to my friends in high school and that was a beautifully liberating process. Even if I no longer talk to them, I want them to know that coming out to them as a small(er) awkward 14-year-old was a pivotal role in my security in my identity today. A less wholesome yet still pivotal role was realising that half of me lives inside the closet and half of me lives outside it. While I have my pronouns tattooed on my hand and openly share about my partners, sometimes it feels like society's been conditioned to put in that effort when it's easy. I end every email with my pronouns in brackets hoping that people will read the signature yet also bite my lip when people use feminine coded language like 'girl' or 'queen' or 'lady'. Sometimes existing out of the closet means picking your battles and it is not

Sometimes existing out of the closet means picking your battles and it is not your responsibility as a queer person to educate your peers.

your responsibility as a queer person to educate your peers.

Okay I'm ready...

I don't think I'm ready to leave this closet yet. Not in a way where I'm not anxiously checking for spots and stains every 5 minutes. I hope to one day be at this point where I'm comfortable enough to correct strangers about my pronouns and to finally come out to my parents. Is it weird that my work misgenders me despite the fact that we are rainbow approved? Yeah, a little, but being in the closet is varying degrees of undress and that includes being comfortable in one's gender identity yet not being publicly open about it. Pride comes in many forms. Mine just happens to be oversharing in a university student magazine to an audience of strangers, peers, and friends.

To all my gays, baes, and theys: get dressed, we've got things to accomplish.



What is it that makes you feel ashamed?

Do you feel dirty pulling down your sleeves in summer
To cover black skinned-forearms, to cover
The feeling you've had since you were six years
Old wish to scrub the brown off for some
Clean, white skin

And you thought you left it behind
When you wrote that paper in sociology
Called it 'black is not an insult'
Called your mother and told her you were
Sorry for sobbing that you hated
The way you looked when
You have always looked so much like her
How could that ever be
dirty?

What is it that makes you feel ashamed?
Do you feel dirty for loving women, is it
That you preach the 'love everyone' bullshit but
You can't help but shudder when you picture kissing her, taking her
Home to meet your homophobic family, do you
Feel dirty for looking like your mother today?
yes

But on mornings like this
When the sun is warming your bare shoulders
And your only job is to brush the stray hair
From her face, hold her hand
Down the road to her parked car, does it
Feel okay to look the way you do, feel
The way that you do?
Despite everything
yes



Amanda Joshua (she/her) has writing published or forthcoming in *Starling*, *Sweet Mammalian*, *The Friday Poem*, *blackmail press*, *Kate Magazine*, *foam:e*, *Turbine*, *LondonGrip* and *Poetry NZ*. In her spare time, she likes to read and contemplate dropping her law degree.

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Queer
Sexuality
Marsha P. Johnson
Diversity
Yassification
Movement
Representation
Pride
Celebration
Stonewall
Liberation
Freedom
Sylvia Rivera
History
Identity



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HOROSCOPES

After a 3-day whirlwind romance with an alluring nurse and a handsome dairy farmer in the charming town of Thames, Craccum's Polly Prophet is back from her sabbatical leave to decode your near future...

ARIES — ELTON JOHN

Get ready to skyrocket to new heights this week tiny dancers! Twinkling glitter and glamour awaits you in the bright horizon as you bid goodbye to the yellow brick road...



TAURUS — LI SHANG, MULAN

Taurus, you're a strong and dependable warrior that others rely on. This week, you'll be leading the troops through their respective emotional turmoils. You make a man out of them, and by that I mean you'll respect their vulnerability and create tighter bonds as a result. Aw.



GEMINI — ANIKA MOA

My Geminis, this is the time to dabble in every creative pursuit that flows your way. Like Anika, you not only have the gift of the gab, but so many other talents that deserve to be cultivated. Whether that's music, or starting your own talk show—the world is your greenshell mussel!



CANCER — CHLÖE SWARBRICK

Although the world has had you screaming "OK Boomer!" internally, remember that the grass is green where you water it. So, set aside the leisure time to go for a walk, advocate for drug law reform or even housing rights to spice things up!



LEO — LADY GAGA

Yeah, you were born this way but that's not the end of your story. Take time to reflect on how far you've come and what you need to work on. Don't stick to the shallows and go deep: how are you holding yourself back?



VIRGO — MARSHA P. JOHNSON

You've just about had enough this week, Virgo. Like Marsha you'll be instrumental in leading your very own uprising: giving yourself and your friends a break. In this day and age radical action also involves taking a nap and sticking it to the capitalist man.



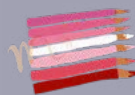
LIBRA — TAMATI COFFEY

Everyone's unproblematic fave is about to run into a major fork in the road. A big decision looms, and for Libras, that's always a bad time. Whether the decision is which boo to hit up come Saturday night, or a major career decision, only time will tell. Choose wisely.



SCORPIO — GRANT ROBERTSON

Like our beloved Minister for Finance, Grant Robertson, you'll have to remain calm in the face of pressure this week, Scorpio. There are clapback on all sides, but staying calm and trusting your gut will get you through.



SAGITTARIUS — ERIC EFFIONG, SEX EDUCATION

Wash your hands you detty pig! Channel your inner Eric Effiong this week and cleanse your environment of all the toxins that are weighing you down. Once your energy has been scrubbed squeaky clean, your vibrant and extravagant energy will resurface and bloom.



CAPRICORN — CAPTAIN RAYMOND HOLT, BROOKLYN NINE-NINE

Hot damn! This world may be full of Captain Wuntchs scheming to knock you down but fear not Capricorns! Like Captain Holt, your impeccable work ethic and pragmatism will see you smiling from ear to ear (on the inside of course).



AQUARIUS — VIRGINIA WOOLF

Something on your mind? Don't keep it in the closet! Whether it's a hot take you've been scared to share or just telling your flatmate to do their fucking dishes, speak up this week and see where it takes you.



PISCES — JULES, EUPHORIA

So, you've been a bit messy this week, huh? You shine bright, but give yourself a break before you burn yourself out. Maybe clean your room or wash your face—just don't fuck someone's dad (unless that's your idea of a break, then go for gold!).



RED BULL PAPER WINGS.

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