

ISSUE 5 - 2025

CRACCUM

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927

PRIDE



GENDER NEUTRAL
BATHROOMS ON CAMPUS

UoA Students

IS GAY CLUBBING
SHIT NOW?

Tim Evans

I DIDN'T INVITE YOU HERE
TO LECTURE ME

Rose Taylor-Meade

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Did you know 91% of this issue of Craccum was made by our team of volunteer artists and writers?



91%

Ka pai everyone! We smashed our contribution goal for Issue 5!

Scan the QR code to get your writing or art featured in the next issue of Craccum!





EDITORIAL



HARRY SUTTON

Hello and welcome back to the world of CRACCUM! First of all, I want to send my congratulations to the graduating class of 2025! After putting your heart and soul into your degrees or doctorates, or diplomas, you finally had the opportunity to hear your name called and then walk across that stage for about ten seconds, shake someone's hand and then be handed a piece of paper that shows your hard work! Now it's the fun part, do you travel? Do you try to find a job in this economy? Do you move back home and relax? The choices are endless, and once again, congratulations to all the graduates who graduated last week.

We now enter some of the wettest and coldest months of the year. Assignments are slowly starting to get closer and closer to being due, the ski season is about to start, and the crazy part is that we are almost through the first semester, which is insane to think about. We also have my personal favourite UOA events of the year, which is the interfaculty tournament! Go support your faculty in events such as football and basketball. Although it won't matter because **ARTS WILL WIN LETS GO ARTS AND EDUCATION WOOOOOOOOOOO**

Anyway, this is our last issue for this semester, and it couldn't be on a bigger topic than Pride. Pride is now celebrated not just in one or two countries, but is now starting to be celebrated all

across the globe. Whether it's done via festivals, events, or simple shows, Pride is finally being celebrated and talked about rather than being shunned.

Pride is the late-night dinner conversations in a flat, its whole family hugs, it's joyous. It's something to be celebrated and something that is going to get better and better.

In this issue, of CRACCUM you will find stories about what gay clubbing is like, where the origins of queer cinema started and came from, a UOA romance piece, a story about being a transgender girl and many more.

At Craccum, we think student media ought to be chaotic, highly personal,

and politically charged. All of those elements are present in this pride issue. It's not flawless. It lacks polish. However, it is genuine and it's real.

The world isn't perfect, and it probably never will be, but we can certainly try and make it as perfect as we can. By telling these stories, by changing stereotypes for the better, by celebrating, loving everyone, spreading love, not hate, being positive to each other and making sure that everyone feels safe and welcome at the University of Auckland.

Much love guys and keep on being you,

Harry

WHAKARONGO MAI

GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOMS ON CAMPUS

WHAT DO UoA STUDENTS THINK?

CRACCUM NEWS AND ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTORS

For this year's Pride edition, Craccum wanted to find out how inclusive university facilities were, and put this question onto our Instagram story. Thank you to all rainbow clubs who helped share our story for responses! Question: In your experience, how accessible do you find gender affirming facilities (gender neutral/unisex bathrooms) on campus and/or halls? What changes would make them more inclusive?

"NOT ENOUGH GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOMS."

- ANONYMOUS

"I DON'T FIND THEM VERY ACCESSIBLE, THERE AREN'T ENOUGH SO IT'S A HASSLE TO FIND THEM, AND I OFTEN FEEL AWKWARD USING THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE ALSO ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS, AND I FEEL ALMOST LIKE I'M TAKING UP SPACE MEANT FOR DISABLED STUDENTS WHEN I HAVE OTHER OPTIONS, EVEN IF I'M LESS COMFORTABLE USING GENDERED BATHROOMS."

- ANONYMOUS

"PEOPLE NEED TO STOP SPENDING 8 HOURS IN THEM VAPING LIKE GO TO THE PARK 🤔"

- ANONYMOUS

"UNISEX BATHROOMS THAT AREN'T ALSO PRIMARILY DISABLED BATHROOMS."

- ANONYMOUS

"SOME BUILDINGS ARE GREAT AND OTHERS AREN'T. AT FIRST THEY WERE HARD TO FIND. IN TERMS OF CHANGES, MAKING SURE THEY ARE ALL STOCKED WITH MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS."

- RILEY

"IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE. IS THERE A MAP FOR THAT YET?"

- ANONYMOUS

"THE ONES THAT EXIST ARE NICE BUT WE NEED MORE OF THEM!"

- ANONYMOUS

"I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOM, WHICH MEANS I HAVE TO USE THE WOMEN'S BATHROOM."

- ANONYMOUS

"A MAJOR THING IS THAT THERE AREN'T ACTUALLY GENDER NEUTRAL TOILETS IN EVERY BUILDING WHICH MAKES STUDY REALLY INCONVENIENT. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU ARE IN THE GENERAL LIBRARY, THE NEAREST INDIVIDUAL CUBICLE GENDER NEUTRAL TOILETS ARE IN THE EAST WING OF THE CLOCK TOWER. IT ALSO IS NOT RIGHT THAT GENDER NEUTRAL AND DISABLED TOILETS SHOULD BE THE SAME SPACE. WHEELCHAIR USERS NEED EXTRA SPACE AND ACCOMMODATIONS THAT ABLE BODIED GENDER NEUTRAL PEOPLE DO NOT NEED. HOWEVER, OFTEN IF THE GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOM IS ALSO A DISABLED ACCESS BATHROOM, ABLE BODIED GENDER NEUTRAL PEOPLE HAVE TO DEPRIVE WHEELCHAIR USERS OF THAT SPACE JUST TO PISS IN COMFORT."

- LAW/ARTS STUDENT

"A LOT OF THE OLDER BUILDINGS DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY, OR ARE HARD TO FIND (LIBRARY, KATE EDGAR, LAW BUILDINGS). IT ALSO FEELS BAD USING THE SINGULAR GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOM WHEN IT'S ALSO THE SINGULAR DISABILITY BATHROOM."

- MILES

"HAVING MORE UNISEX BATHROOMS IN THE FIRST PLACE WITH CLEAR SIGNS. ALSO UNISEX BATHROOMS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF KATE EDGAR ARE KINDA DODGY, THE LOCK'S ALWAYS ABOUT TO COME OFF."

- ANONYMOUS

EQUAL PAY, BUT MAKE IT HARDER

Workplace Relations and Safety Minister, Brooke van Velden, announced on May 6, 2025, that the government will be amending the Equal Pay Act to make the process and resolution of pay equity claims more workable, sustainable, and robust. The Pay Equity Amendment Bill has passed through parliament at all stages as it was rushed through under urgency on May 7, 2025. The government justified the change by arguing the laws were too “muddled” and not specific enough in terms of evidence being provided to support differences in sex-based discrimination. Due to this, the 33 current claims – representing thousands of workers - would be stopped and then restarted under the new threshold when that is approved, requiring stricter evidence. This has received backlash from unions all over the country, specifically those representing workers in female-dominated professions.

Paul Goulter, New Zealand Nurses organisation chief executive, has called this a “shameful attack on women”. The nurse’s union believes the changes presented would make it difficult for those working in female-dominated workplaces to be paid fairly. Many of the current claims represent works across Aged Care, Primary Health Care, Hospices, Plunket, and Community Health and Laboratories. The E tū union, as reported by Radio New Zealand, has said that these changes are an attack on women and allow the government to pay women less for work that’s at an equal value.

The passing of the legislation allows for the threshold for proving that work has been historically undervalued to be raised. This was supported by the government parties. The Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has said that this change could save the government “billions” of dollars.

All opposition parties opposed the bill, with Labour leader Chris Hipkins saying that this didn’t receive the scrutiny that it deserved. He followed this up with saying “...the government aren’t explaining properly what they are doing”. Here on campus, Princes Street Labour organised a Rally in front of the UOA Gen Lib for staff and students demanding “Girls Just Want To Have Funds!”

Van Velden says, “I’m a woman and I support women who work”, but this abrupt passing of the bill has called that into question. The good news is the government seems committed to equal pay. Just not right now. And not like this.

NEWS



TE HIRA MAYALL-NAHI (SHE/HER)

TE MATATINI IS GROWING UP AND OUT

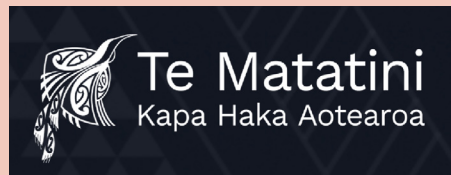
Te Matatini Festival has announced that the next event will no longer be held in Te Taihupo o te Waka-a-Māui (Nelson) in 2027. The decision was made by the Te Matatini board on May 9, 2025, with the announcement made on May 12, 2025. The decision was made as a result of the festival’s growth in size and significance, which comes along with the stress that could have on smaller regions. This has brought into question if Te Matatini in its current format is sustainable enough to continue on its current path, or what changes should be made to allow smaller regions to still be able to host the monumental festival.

Te Matatini in 2025 saw 55 groups qualifying to compete, resulting in a 5-day kapahaka festival—the longest we have seen to date. The festival hosted approximately 67,000 people in New Plymouth, with an online viewership of around 2.5 million people. This raised concerns for the next festival as the hosts were unable to find solutions to address accommodation and transport services but are currently looking to attract investors. Te Taihupo was confirmed to be the host for the upcoming festival back in 2013, although this was shifted from 2025 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Rāwiri Waititi has spoken up and suggested that the festival should look at reducing the number of groups that compete to keep the spirit of the connection within groups strong. Waititi has made it clear that Te Matatini should not be left up to the big cities to run, and that all regions should have the opportunity to host.

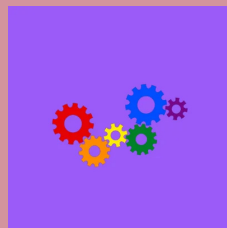
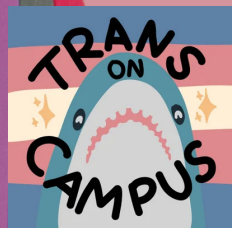
Expressions of interest to host for 2027 have now opened up, but Elijah Pue, the chair of Te Kāhui Maunga in Taranaki, has brought up that a bid for them to host would be “highly unlikely”. This view was shared by the New Plymouth District Council manager venue and events, Chade Julie.

With one of the biggest events in the country suffering from the size becoming too much of a strain on smaller rohe, is the easiest way to rectify that to cut the number of groups? Where should the festival go to next, and why shouldn’t it be in Tāmaki Makaurau?





Check out these three cool clubs on campus, come back for new clubs each issue.



TRANS ON CAMPUS
@TOC_UOA

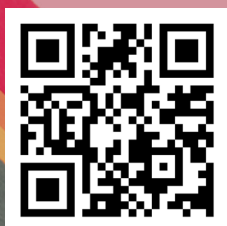
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EVERYTHING'S FUCKED!

... OR IS IT?

#1 PILOT

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS, AND PERHAPS AN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS.



IRENE PARSAEI

Do you ever see news from around the world and want to start hysterically screaming?

The constant headlines reporting on people getting killed, people starving, idiots in positions of power, climate change slowly becoming irreversible. It's enough to make you think, everything's completely fucked.

... Or is it? In the midst of the worst of humanity, positive news still manages to seep through the cracks, and somehow makes everything even more confusing. Are we truly fucked, or is there still hope for us? Perhaps it's both simultaneously, and we are Schrödinger's cat. Doomed and redeeming ourselves at the same time. You simply won't know until you open the box. Or click the next news headline.

Craccum's new weekly segment, 'Everything's Fucked! ...Or Is It?' will bring a selection of recent news from both Aotearoa, and around the globe, and the author (me!) invites you to decide at the end of each article whether you think we're screwed or not.

Welcome to the first edition!

Elections, Elections, and... More Elections!

In recent weeks, both Canada and Australia held elections to vote for their new prime ministers. It's safe to say that after the election last year in the United States that brought back the orange antichrist into office, elections have been a scary time, especially for Canada who shares a border with their insane neighbour, and Australia, who has historically been observed to follow political trends from the U.S.

Canada, who has been the target of annexation threats, and a set of tariffs from the United States held their election on April 28th, and had two main competitors running: Mark Carney, from the Liberal Party, and Pierre Poilievre from the Conservative Party. The result of the election, however, came as a shock to many political analysts, as just months before the election, a landslide victory had been predicted for the Conservative Party. Justin Trudeau, the previous leader of the Liberal Party and former prime minister, had become extremely unpopular within Canada, with statistics and polling showing drops in his approval ratings, and in turn, an increase of support and approval for Poilievre. This also reflected the growing shift worldwide towards right leaning polit-

ical parties.

Spoiler alert: Mark Carney from the Liberal Party ended up winning the election. But... how? The statistics! The signs! The answer is complex, but the two main drivers of the victory were:

1. The resignation of Trudeau and the subsequent succession of Mark Carney, a former governor of the Bank of Canada, as leader of the Liberal Party,

And...

2. Trump, whose rants seem to get more unhinged and unintelligible every day.

Trump's constant mentions (or threats) of Canada becoming the 51st state of the U.S clearly had more of an effect on individual Canadian's voting patterns than anyone could have imagined.

In Australia, the predicted outcome for the election mirrored Canada's. The Labor Party's Anthony Albanese, who had been prime minister since 2022, was expected to lose to Peter Dutton of the Liberal-National Coalition (known simply as Coalition), as up until months before the election, polling

showed favor towards Dutton and his party. The results on election day, May 3rd, however were different.

What some analysts are now calling the 'Trump effect' seemed to sway the favour back towards Albanese and the Labor Party. Labor won 93 of the 150 seats in the house, a historic win for them, and Dutton not only lost the election, but also lost his seat in parliament after 24 years, losing to Ali France of the Labor Party. Perhaps, he shouldn't have run what former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull called "a very Trumpian campaign." Dutton said that he took full responsibility for his party's loss in the election, and has now been replaced by Sussan Ley, the first woman to become leader of the Liberal Party of the Coalition.

(A little explanation, because I was also confused while writing this: due to the Liberal-National Coalition, being, well, a coalition, there are two leaders. By convention, the overall leader is the leader from the Liberal Party. This means that should they be in government, the Liberal party leader would become the prime minister, while the leader of the National Party would become deputy prime minister.)

Back to the point, in a weird way, Trump's batshit crazy behaviour has

created change in positive directions in other countries, a fact which I'm sure he would love to know.

However, not all elections have felt the Trump effect.

Nosferatu's motherland, Romania, has taken a different path in their recent elections. After the original election in December of 2024 which was annulled after alleged Russian interference in order to rig the votes. This annulment was met with criticism, especially from J.D Vance and Elon Musk, to the surprise of nobody. Fork found in kitchen.

Another round of elections were held on May 4th 2025, and the votes turned out in favor of George Simion, a right-wing nationalist, from the party 'Alliance for the Union of Romanians.' Simion, a self proclaimed admirer of Trump, who is against providing military support for Ukraine (while also maintaining that he isn't pro-Russia), gained 40.96% of the votes in the first round, and is set to face Nicușor Dan, an independent politician that is currently serving as the mayor of Bucharest and won 20.99% of the vote on

the second and final round of voting on May 18th.

While the numbers aren't looking great right now for Nicușor Dan, if the other two elections have shown us anything, it's that politics is anything but predictable.

So... Killing Kiwis is Legal Now?

The word 'Kiwi' has so many meanings. It can be used when referring to kiwifruit, when talking about New Zealanders, and of course, it is the name of the adorable native bird of Aotearoa, which is now legal to kill if in the way of construction, courtesy of the current National government! As everyone knows, the main tourist attractions of New Zealand are our top notch roads and infrastructure.

On Tuesday the 6th of May, the Government revealed that two bills were to be passed under urgency, one of which was an amendment to the Wildlife Act, and essentially states that construction companies and organisations will not be prosecuted for killing native wildlife, as long as it was not in-

tentional. How could the killing of wildlife be proven to be intentional or unintentional? Well, that's the problem.

This comes after a court case between the Environmental Law Initiative and the Department of Conservation after years of them handing out permits to companies that stated they would not be prosecuted for the killing of wildlife, as long as they had attempted to capture and move native species out of the way of whatever project was ongoing. Again, how would it be monitored whether companies actually attempted to do this?

After this court case, it was agreed that no killing of wildlife was permissible for construction of any sorts, and it caused infrastructure development companies to freak out, anxious about facing prosecution for accidentally killing any wildlife, from birds, to bats, to lizards.

National's defense, and the defense of their Conservation Minister Tama Potaka is that this amendment, which allows the DOC to continue issuing the permits that harm and kill native species, is just a way to protect those

working for development companies from being prosecuted for accidents. However, what National didn't realize (*maybe they can't read?*) is that there was already a protection against prosecution for those who genuinely, unintentionally killed wildlife, in the original Wildlife Act.

The bill being passed with urgency meant there was almost zero public input about the matter either, which seems intentional on National's part. If there's any group of people that would get up in arms about any harm befalling their native birds, it would definitely be the people of Aotearoa. Many politicians and public figures have already spoken up about this amendment, and their statements can be found in an article on Craccum's website.

If you're sitting there now, shocked, wondering what the other bill passed with urgency was, don't worry, just keep an eye out on our website. Kiwi birds weren't enough, National came after pay equity as well!

Do you want to scream yet?



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HARRY'S BI-WEEKLY SPORTS RECAP!

FROM CRACCUM'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Alright alright alrightttttttt welcome back to another joyous editor's sports recap and oh boy is there a lot to talk about so let's dive right in!

SUPER RUGBY RECAP: CHIEFS HAMMER CRUSADERS IN TOP OF THE TABLE CLASH

This one hurts to write as a Cantabrian myself. Coming off a bye week and having thumped the Highlanders down in Dunedin, the men from Christchurch now had the massive task on their hands to beat their top-of-the-table rival, the Chiefs, at home if they wanted the top spot. And for the first half, it was a close-knit game with the Crusaders opening the scoring with three tries in the first half and holding the Chiefs to three points for 41 minutes, The Crusaders looked confident and ready to win.

However, the Chiefs showed why they are one of the best teams in the competition them scoring 32 unanswered points, smacking the Crusaders in the mouth and never looking back as the final score showed their dominance 35-19. The Chiefs now take the top spot and will be filled with confidence in themselves after that win.

The Blues handled the Fijian Drua in a must-win game for them if they wanted any shot of making the playoffs, with them beating the Drua by 29 points and keeping their hopes of title repeat alive (barley)

The Brumbies smacked the Western Force and are still the top Australian team in the competition, and the Waratahs lost again, this time to their rival, the Reds.

THE BLACK FERNS DOMINATED IN A WIN OVER THE WALLAROOS

That is how you play and win a test match. Although they had to defend their line for most of the first 15 minutes or so, the women in Black dominated almost every part of the game, Right-wing Ayesha Leti-I'iga's double try early set the tone. Braxton Sorensen-McGee showed her ability to score a couple of tries with the ball in hand during her debut. Their scrumming was looking great, the tackling and the ball skills looked slick and more importantly, they looked like the same team that won it all just a few years ago.

Although at times their lineup was shaky, the Black Ferns put a scoreline to make a statement that they are more than ready for this year's Rugby World Cup, winning 38-12.

THE NBA PLAYOFFS RUMBLE ON TO THE SECOND AND DALLAS GETS THE FIRST PICK.

Just when we thought these NBA playoffs couldn't get any weirder, they did. Boston led by 20 points in back-to-back games with only a quarter to play, and would you believe they lost not one, but two of those games?? Yes, they did. it was one of the most stunning collapses in recent NBA playoff history. However, they did manage to pick up their game and win game three in Madison Square Garden convincingly, silencing the doubters (for now)

Speaking of collapses, this year's Cleveland Cavaliers were one of this season's NBA darlings, winning over 60 games for the first time since LeBron James was on their team, but everyone was waiting to see if their regular season success would translate into the playoffs, and so far, well it hasn't. Up seven with less than 40 seconds left should guarantee a win, but that did not happen. Tyrese Haliburton and the Pacers stormed into Cleveland and took the first two games in their home. Then in game four were up by forty points, forty 4 0. That is absurd. Yes, the Cavs do have injuries, but going out like this, man, it is tough

Injuries even hit the Warriors with Stephen Curry now out until at least game six. Denver and OKC are locked at two games apiece, and somehow, after losing Luka Doncic to the Lakers and injuries ruining the Dallas Mavericks' season, luck finally went their way, with them winning the number one pick in the draft lottery. They had less than a three per cent chance of winning it, and somehow, some way, they did. God, sports is weird like that.

UP THE WAHS! THE WARRIORS PICK UP THEIR FOURTH WIN IN A ROW AND MOVE TO SECOND ON THE NRL TABLE

Well. Just another close win for the Warriors this year. The Warriors hold off the Dragons' comeback and win a thriller 15-14 in Wollongong Australia. After. A dominant first half of rugby league, the visiting Warriors were in control, leading 14-0. However, that lead didn't stay for long as the Dragons came roaring back into the game with tries from Dragon's captain Clint Gutherson, second-rower Dylan Egan, and winger Corey Allan, tying the game at 14 apiece. The Warriors needed just a single point to win to stay in the hunt for the top spot on the table. Luke Metcalf stepped up and slotted the game-winning kick and giving the Warriors the win 15-14. Now they sit in second place thanks to a loss by the Canberra Raiders and are looking like the team to beat. Let's hope they can keep the momentum!

That is it for this recap, until next time, and peace!



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- 📷 *events, photography + videography*
- 🎧 *DJing, archive work and editing*
- 📍 *designing posters etc*
- + plus heeeeeeaps else*



^ sign up here ^

I DIDN'T INVITE YOU HERE TO INTERVIEW ME

AN INTERVIEW WITH WRITER AMY MANSFIELD & ACTOR MIKA AUSTIN ABOUT THEIR UPCOMING COMEDY SHOW *I DIDN'T INVITE YOU HERE TO LECTURE ME*



ROSE TAYLOR-MEADE

I Didn't Invite You Here To Lecture Me is a comedy written by Amy Mansfield. The show is based on real throwaway lines from UoA lecturers she wrote down verbatim during her time studying at the university. Having first been presented in neighbourhood living rooms, the show will be opening at the Q Theatre on the 21st of May. I sat down with Amy and Mika to ask them about their upcoming show.

You mentioned before we met, You used to read *Craccum* a lot before when you were a student here

AMY: Yes, especially my first year when I didn't have that many friends because I skipped 7th form, so I started uni and I didn't know that many people. I used to get the bus in on a Monday morning, walk through the Quad, pick up a copy of *Craccum* and go to the library and read it until my lectures started. I didn't necessarily read the prescribed texts, but I did read *Craccum*.

You've said this is a verbatim comedy based on throwaway lines from lecturers. Was there a particular reason at the time? Did you know it was going to be a play?

AMY: I really didn't know why I was writing them down at the time. I realised when I was going back through them that over time I wrote more and more of these throwaway lines down. Sometimes there was half a page of throw-

away lines and a little bit of lecture content at the top.

I didn't realise until much later that I thought they belonged in a play. Once I started to think about it, I thought, maybe I'll write them into a novel somehow, but to date I have not written a novel.

MIKA: You also talked about that process of thinking about what to do with

them and how they were originally performed in one sense, in the context of a lecture delivery.

AMY: Yeah and I think that's been something I've been thinking about more and more. This idea of the lecture being a performance in itself, in that it's different each time. Even if the lecturer is formally delivering the same lecture as they delivered last year, there's always going to be things that

are different, because it's live. And live theatre is in many ways the same - it's different from one night to the next, and that's why people love it, that's why performers love it, that's why audiences love it.

So how much of the show is direct lines from lectures? Is there much filler, for lack of a better word?

AMY: I think it's about 75% percent verbatim and 25% original I wouldn't call it 'filler'!

MIKA: Connecting material.

AMY: We realised as we explored it towards the beginning that there were a few bits that needed either sign-posting or development or connection. So I did have to do some of the writing myself, which I was originally a little annoyed about, because I wanted to be faithful to the original verbatim lines. If I couldn't find in them what I needed, then I had to write it myself.

MIKA: And certainly, the thematics of the original lines are the thread that connects the whole thing to start with.

AMY: Yes. Otherwise, I would be kind of irrelevant in the process. My role has been to stitch them together in an order and around themes that I think are interesting and that I think audiences will enjoy or find interesting.

MIKA: And which endure, because these are 20+ years old, these notes.



IMAGE: MICHELLE MCLENNAN

AMY: That's the weird thing about it. There's definitely lines that you read now, and they're even more relevant than they were perhaps six or seven years ago, or 25 years ago.

You've said you started performing this in neighbourhood living rooms. How does a play starting there get to Q Theatre?

MIKA: A lot of hard slog and a lot of word of mouth. I was going to say we've been really lucky but actually, people have really enjoyed the work. It started off with friends and family taking a punt and saying we believe in you, we'll give this a go, we'll buy the show and we'll invite 25 of our closest friends and neighbours over and we'll have a fun experience together in our living room with a glass of wine afterwards. And from that, people who have seen it have said, 'This is amazing, this needs to be seen in bigger venues, you must, you must, you must'. We started in Basement Theatre and have just been building from there, and, the more people that see it and experience it and enjoy it, we kind of build our following from that. But yeah, it's taken us 6 years to get from the first living room to this point.

AMY: I think it's fair to say we didn't do that much during Covid, (Mika: that's true, we had a bit of a hiatus...) though we did perform it here at the University at the Business School 2020, and we've performed at the University of Otago in a lecture theatre. When I say 'we', Mika is the one performing of course, I'm just standing there nodding my head. Sometimes I operate the PowerPoint. But I think there's something cool about having a show that you can do in someone's living room or in a lecture theatre or in a theatre-theatre. You can do that when you've got a reasonably low-fi show. You can't really do that if you need all sorts of lighting and set and fancy equipment. There's lots of things to be said for a pared-back show from a technical perspective. In New Zealand most people are aiming for that because there's hardly any funding and the seasons are very short, so people tend not to either have the money or want to spend any money that they do have on investing in big sets.

So how did friends at school and school productions end up doing this?

MIKA: Well, since I left uni I've done corporate roles, 9 to 5, first as a commercial litigator, then I became an HR exec. But Amy called me one day, and literally the genesis of this sort of theatre relationship was she called me one day and said, *I've got an idea. Just say yes.* So I think, technically, I said 'okay'. And the next thing you know I was sitting on the floor of a make-shift performance space in an oversized t-shirt with my hair up and paint smeared on my face, pretending to be a toddler, while Amy was standing outside in a lab coat, taking questionnaires from people who'd just come in trying to feed me yoghurt. [she says while laughing]

AMY: That was a one-to-one show about endurance parenting. It was very interactive.

MIKA: And it all went from there. One audience member at a time, for a ten-minute show, five-minute reset, and we did 40 performances I think.

AMY: But actually, you had been doing various classes, and you did some readings, or some monologues, didn't you? That's what I think made me think you might be up for some of my stuff, which didn't exist at the time. And you did stand-up comedy, as well.

MIKA: That's true, I took an acting class for a couple of years. And Amy's great at bringing people from different walks of life and backgrounds together. Amy and her husband and wider family have hosted probably a ten-year, twelve-year stint of hosting an event called the Green Room.

AMY: Oh, no, that was like 17 years.

MIKA: 17 years, was it? There you go. Time flies when you're having fun. It involved inviting anyone and everyone that Amy and co knew, but the only criterion is if you turn up you have to perform something. And that means performance in the loosest possible sense of the word. Someone performed opening a parachute, didn't they?

AMY: Yeah, someone opened a parachute, someone performed a cake, somebody did a performance of yoga, but there was a lot of music and readings.

MIKA: It took me a couple of years to work up the courage to do some monologues in those events. Then I think from there, then I got the *just say yes* call [laughs], and never looked back. Amy's process is one that requires high trust from her collaborators, ie *just sign up to this, put these dates aside, then start selling this show that I haven't written yet, it'll all be fine in the end*, and thus far she has proven to be correct.

How has your own experience with lecturers informed how you act for this one?

MIKA: Well, the eight characters are all based obviously on real actual lecturers, because it is their own words. Because we went through uni at the same time and we had some overlap with our subjects, I know some of the lecturers they're based on, and Amy's given me some insight into their sort of character traits. By and large, I've tried to draw on real lecturers as a starting-point, and then evolved it from there. Either for the purposes of amping up the laughs or differentiating really clearly between who these different people are, because obviously I'm trying to represent eight different people in one body and one costume, and people have got to pick up really fast who this person is who's standing in front of them who's different from the one who said the sentence before. I think anyone who's been a student has likely had that range of lecture personalities, from the super-enthusiastic, hyped-up, couldn't be happier to be there character through to the dry - shall we say boring - older characters, and we're trying to represent that full range of experience across all of the different lecturers. I think what's come through quite strongly in the audience feedback through the years is that even some of those ones who, when you're a student and you're sitting there thinking, Oh god, when is this hour going to end - once you come out of your time studying and are remembering back to those days, you actually remember those lecturers quite fondly, and have a soft spot for them. So hopefully I've managed to represent that breadth of styles across the play and across the different characters.

Anything else you wanted to add about the show?

AMY: I think the main thing is that even with remote learning and all the things you can do these days to 'attend' lectures, the essence of it is still the same, which is about sitting somewhere, listening, thinking, and sometimes getting quite distracted. That's what this show stems from: my experience of that, back in the day.

MIKA: If I cast my mind back to how I felt when I was a student, I'm not sure that the first thing I would've chosen to do after being in actual lectures for a week would then be to say *and now I'll go and watch a play about a lecture*, but, being outside of it now I would say firstly it's an opportunity to just reflect and see the humour of the life that you're living, because actually when you're in it, it can sometimes be a bit hard to see that levity. And just to take half a step back and look at it from a birdseye view - as opposed to being *in* it - not only for the LOLs, but also to try to see the bigger picture for an hour is a real opportunity. And it's bloody funny, so that's always just a good thing.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOPE LEMON



HANNAH JUDD

Australian artist Angus Stone has recently released his fifth album *'Golden Wolf'* under solo act *Dope Lemon*. Stone rose to fame in the early 2010's as a duo act with his sister Julia Stone, but since 2016 has been simultaneously releasing sun-soaked indie music under his solo project moniker Dope Lemon. Stone's four previous solo albums have created a dreamy universe drenched in sun, that is glossy and nostalgic at the same time.

'Golden Wolf' offers a further look into the world of Dope Lemon, with a relaxed blend of indie and psychedelic rock, accompanied by contemplative lyrics. Craccum was lucky enough to have a chat with Dope Lemon to ask all of our burning questions and chat about his upcoming tour.

Before we move on to the more in depth questions, I just wanted to ask, if you could see any artist dead or alive, who would it be?

DOPE LEMON: You know I feel so lucky and blessed to have been able to play with the artists that we have, you know? Fleetwood Mac took us on tour recently, we've done tours with Crowded House and recorded with the greats such as Rick Rubin. Recently we were able to perform with Dua Lipa and Post Malone. I think that question pops up, but for me I like to focus on the living and what's happening in real time with the artists that connect with us and bring us along. And I hope I can give that back to younger artists in that way, it's a cool cycle like that.

That's a nice way to look at it, focusing on the present and emerging new talent. So focusing on the present moment, what is your current favourite song?

DOPE LEMON: I've been listening to a song called "Be Good or Be Gone" a lot, by Fionn Regan. It's just a song that I think is pretty special.

I'll have to give it a listen then, and on the visual side of music, reflecting on your discography, what is your favourite music video that you've ever made?

DOPE LEMON: You know it's been a lot of fun [making music videos] and I'm really inspired by films. I think we try to take a little bit of inspiration from that and try to incorporate it into what we are doing. I think, probably, my favourite is this one music video we shot for a song called 'Marinade'. At the time, I was inspired by a film called 'Moonrise Kingdom' by Wes Anderson. We took a leaf out of his book, and we had a lot of fun creating this magical little world telling a story of these two kids falling in love, it was really special.

Where did your journey start for your upcoming album? Was there an initial theme that sparked the idea for 'Golden Wolf'?

DOPE LEMON: You know, I think it changes. For me personally, it's based on your observations and your social commentary and the things we all

go through as human beings on this earth, and through love, loss, discovery, and exploration.

I think the theme for me when making records is exploring my current chapter and where I'm at in life, and my skill set in creating songs. It's hard to pinpoint a specific theme because it's just a window into my next chapter. That's what making records is for me, we all have a story and we all reveal it in certain ways, whether your creation is in your trade or creatively. For me, it's these albums that I get to release and share with the world. They are just little windows into my life.

Did your personal creative process differ in the creation of this new album from your previous work?

DOPE LEMON: You learn new things along the way that you possibly hadn't picked up from past records. I'm forever learning and growing as an artist and as a human being, and I feel like this record has a bit more spark in it, when I listen to it, it gives me this renewal of energy in the way it moves along. I love listening to records when

I'm driving in the country, and for me this album is the perfect setting for that.

I read you love listening to music in the car, is that the main place you listen to music or are you constantly listening to music?

DOPE LEMON: The car is for sure the best place. I mean, you're the protagonist in your own film when you're in the car, flying through time, and the music is the soundtrack.

Do you have any rituals when you are writing and recording your music?

DOPE LEMON: That's a good question. We'll sort of splash out of bed and have a coffee and then go and sit in the studio, either as a band or when I'm recording on my own or just with the engineer. We will just sit there, sometimes it'll be for hours just having a yarn, watching a movie, or getting on YouTube and having a laugh, or watching some standup. If something doesn't feel right when you start recording, those moments are really



important to let the energy creep up on you, and when it hits it's like "Okay let's get stuck in".

I think it's important. We all have to get to work, whatever it is you do for work, but for me, it's nice if you're in that creative bubble to let it creep up on you and then get cracking. It's kind of like pre-drinks before you hit the town. For recording you're creating an energy or just a nice buzz before you get into it.

You've travelled a lot throughout your career, from London to LA, to your current home at Sugarcane Mountain Studios. Do you feel like your surroundings have a big impact on your sound?

DOPE LEMON: It's funny, It's one of those things where your surroundings have everything and nothing to do with your art. I'm lucky enough to have a base, but in the end it comes down to your imagination, and how much you are ready to share an idea with yourself, and with the world, and with that little spinning recording device.

We live in a day and age where we are so lucky to be able to record anywhere. I can be sitting on a bus on tour and have all this incredible technology that you can record at a moment's notice in a hotel room or backstage. Really you could be sitting anywhere, and it all comes down to what is inside of you and if it is authentic and real, and what you can create from your imagination. In that moment you are creating your own environment and world that sur-

rounds you.

Do you record a lot while on the road?

DOPE LEMON: I carry around a little recording rig and we travel in these big double decker tour buses with 14 beds, and there's a bar and a movie room. I have my own room at the back and I'll set up a little rig and if something comes to me I'll have a guitar. I'll tinker with Ideas that I can use when it comes to legitimate recording. When it comes to doing the legitimate recording I like being in the space of complete silence so you can really hone in on what it is you're trying to put down on the recording. But I'm always tinkering and writing notes. I think I'm just always collecting things as I go.

You have said that you're inspired by films, are there any particular films that influenced you in the production of your new album?

DOPE LEMON: I've always been a big Cohen Brothers lover. There's a film called *True Grit* that I watched while making this album. All of their films are incredible, the way they use their cinematography and stories and marry up all their scenes into this beautiful, chaotic story. I'm also a big fan of David Lynch.

Though, I feel when I was younger I was more inspired sonically by the old man. [My Dad] was a wedding singer, so we grew up with him in the garage always playing Dylan or Neil Young, all of those incredible artists, and that

shaped us as kids. But now it's become a more visual representation of me. I get excited about wanting to tell my own story visually, putting a poetic format together so people can fall down a rabbit hole. I feel like Dope Lemon has become this really cool mascot and a way to disappear into being whoever you want to be. I think that has created this really beautiful community of artists, from tattoo artists, to writers, to painters, I think just being around that community is really cool. It makes me want to keep doing what I do and sharing what I do, to grow what has become a really beautiful thing.

With your new album release on the 2nd of May and your Tour starting on the 19th of May, is there a particular city that you love playing in while touring? Or any dream places you would like to play?

DOPE LEMON: I mean, whenever we come to New Zealand it's such a treat. When we go there we get to take the time and go fishing and just be in God's country. What you guys have there is really special, it's such a special place. We are playing Shed 6 in Wellington on the 7th of August and Auckland Town Hall on the 8th of August. Whenever we are there I've had such fun nights.

Coming back to my dream [places to play]. My dream venues are always wherever we are. The fact that people are showing up and are inspired to listen to us live is really cool. I feel like it doesn't get old. I really feel like we're all living parallel lives. When people connect with the music and they tell

you the first time they heard a song or record, and it had a profound effect on them, or they met this person, or someone in their family had passed, and [the music] had a poignant meaning. Those moments, more and more as I get on with it in life, become the most important and special thing to me. Personally, it's just this magical ride that I feel so blessed to be on. It just keeps getting better and better.

Well we are so excited to have you in New Zealand on the 7th and 8th of August. Is there anything else you're excited about that you would like to tell the readers?

DOPE LEMON: I'm just excited to get back over there. Every time I go to New Zealand, I always put aside two weeks after to travel around. So if you see us in the street give us a holler and hopefully we can share a beer or something and chat more about what it is to be alive and live the dream.

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If you are in Wellington on the 7th of August or Auckland on the 8th of August (or even abroad outside of those dates) head to dopelemon.com to grab some tickets to what is sure to be the grooviest and dreamiest night of the year. Additionally, I have to recommend giving Dope Lemon's new album 'Golden Wolf' a listen for some catchy additions to your play-lists. I personally have 'Maggie's Moonshine' on repeat!



United in Purpose

7:30PM, 30TH OF MAY AT KĀHUI ST DAVIDS, TICKETS \$15-20

Whether it be overcoming social isolation, banding together in the face of evil, or forging a connection with the earth, music can unite us across borders and cultures. United in Purpose explores these themes with songs from Italy and Iceland to Aotearoa, and everywhere in between. Find out more at @austudentchoir



Fire and Fable

7:00 PM, 1ST OF JUNE AT DOROTHY WINSTONE CENTRE

Music has the power to tell stories - of heroism and transformation, of destruction and renewal, of magic and legend. Fire and Fable brings together works that ignite the imagination, set the stage for adventure, and take us on exhilarating journeys across landscapes both real and mythical. Find out more at @ua_uniband

IS GAY CLUBBING SHIT NOW??

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY SAFE SPACE?



TIM EVANS (THEY/THEM) | @TIMOTHYRAEVANS

It's your first year and you're feeling lost. Bar101 discounts for O'Week were fun and all, but now that we're a solid chunk into the year, you've realised something. Clubbing with straight people is as close to hell as you'll get as a young queer. The sweat, the music, the 45 year old creep who is way too comfortable touching up on your besties right in front of you - it's all just such a bore. The only real upside I can see is it's good practice for the afterlife, but I don't even think the Devil would put someone through that. Hell is hot, but it isn't running the worst 2000's music on a loop.

So voila, you find the solution. The

gay clubs! That's right, a whole other venue to be a gross, sweaty mess and drink too much - but this time, you're surrounded by other queers, so obviously it's better... right? In theory, sure. Being able to go somewhere in a crop top and dance to Ayesha Erotica (speaking from experience, it was amazing) is totally freeing. It's an opportunity to express your queerness surrounded by like minded potential alcoholics in equally revealing clothes. But the reality is much darker... and comes in the form of the inevitable straight man.

Gay clubbing, for all that it's cracked up to be, is no different from any oth-

er club experience anymore. Family Bar, one of New Zealand's most iconic gay venues, is somehow one of the straightest places I've ever been, and that's not a joke. When you walk in on any given Saturday night, you're greeted with rainbows and smoke machines that do very little to hide the straight girls in the cages that are barely standing and the straight men grifting through the crowd. They're headed for *YOU*, my straight girlies. They know that you think you're safe, and that you've been brought along with your gay friend to have a *lit, crazy party*. These men are shameless and ready to ruin everyone's night. I have never had a harder time at a bar than at

Family Bar with my boyfriend - we were so busy keeping our friends away from creepy guys that we couldn't even attempt any dance floor over-the-pants action. That's fucked up if you ask me, and homophobic too while we're at it.

This issue is so prevalent that I fear no queer space is safe, except maybe the campus Q-Space, in the quad above Uni The Bowl. Straight men have learnt that wherever gay people are, there are straight women having a good time. And what's worse, so many of them are disgusted if they get hit on by a guy. Showing up to a gay spot and being confused when people think you're gay is whack if you ask me. But they keep doing it, because unfortunately it's working. I know too many straight men who claim the only action with ladies they've ever got at a bar was at a gay bar. Are you kidding me?

So what's the solution? I propose a full on gag-fest at these venues. If you're gay and think, *maybe let's keep it lowkey tonight...* Think again! Put on the fruitiest outfit you can find, drink something strong and girly, and get messy on the dance floor. It's time to turn the dark room into the most well lit room in the place. Gay people need to be seen, heard, smelt, and licked from head to toe in a full ditch effort to get gay bars gay again. We can do it, team! Now let's go out and suck the problem right out of our precious venues.



ART BY ELINOR COGHLAN (SHE/HER)
@ELINORCOG

A TAILORED MONDAY IN MAY

A RUNWAY REFLECTION OF THE 2025 MET GALA THROUGH A DANDY LENS



UNIQUE VIERNES

Maybe one of the only Mondays I look forward to, or Tuesday in this case. The biggest event in the fashion world finally sprang. With much anticipation and patience waiting to see who would attend and see what everyone wore, the 2025 Met Gala unfolded on the stairs of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A charity event that fundraises for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. This year's Met Gala theme "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style" played homage to the Black Dandy – with a dress code of "Tailored for You", focusing exclusively on menswear and suiting.

For this year's co-chairs, of course, *Vogue* editor-in-chief Anna Wintour is simply in it. Alongside Colman Domingo, Lewis Hamilton, A\$AP Rocky, Pharrell Williams and honorary chair LeBron James.

Sharp creases, polished shoes, tighter pants, and tailored suits. The history of Black Dandyism isn't just about looking good, it is a statement and a revolution. It is a movement that dates as far back as the 1700s, and its impact stretches beyond just a yearly fashion show. It is an act of protest, a cultural statement, a homage to history, and, above all, a celebration of individuality.

This year's Met is incredibly significant, not only is it the first Costume Institute exhibition to focus on menswear since 2003's Met Gala "Men's in Skirt". But for the first time in Met history, it is centred around Black identity and celebrating Black designers. On the surface, Dandyism might seem purely about style. However, it is much more than that, it's the challenge of

social and cultural hierarchies, facing the hard realities of race, class, gender and sexuality. The intentional use of dressing up helps push these boundaries and redefine who gets to be seen and remembered. Fashion is to express what cannot often be said.

Heavily influenced by Monica L. Miller's 2009 book *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity*. This year's exhibition can be organised in 12 sections, where each one represents a characteristic that defines the *dandy style*: Ownership, Presence, Distinction, Disguise, Freedom, Champion, Respectability, Jook, Heritage, Beauty, Cool and Cosmopolitanism. The looks from today all exemplify one, if not all 12 characteristics. Reviewing all the looks from actors, to singers, athletes and more, it seems to me everyone is attuned to the theme.

My favourites being –

Co-chairman Colman Domingo with two looks in one

Colman Domingo started the blue carpet out in a royal-like custom look by Valentino. However, halfway through the carpet, Domingo does an outfit change. Switching into a black and white plaid attire, consisting of a tweed jacket with a large floral embellishment over a stripe button-up and a polka-dot tie. Working closely with author Monica L. Miller, this outfit perfectly tailors the theme.

Bad Bunny pays homage to Puerto Rico in Prada

Dressed by Prada, Puerto Rican rapper Bad Bunny dresses in a monochrome brown look. Paired with bedazzled gloves, a shiny brooch, a bowling bag and most importantly his pava. Paying homage to his heritage, a pava is a straw hat made out of leaves from a palm tree that was historically worn by farmers.

Jodie Turner-Smith celebrates Black Dandyism in Burberry

To celebrate Black Dandyism, actor Jodie Turner-Smith wears custom Burberry, a brand that heavily resonates with her. Drawing inspiration from a portrait image of Selina Lazevski, a Black Equestrian who lived in Belle Époque Paris. This reimagined look refers to the traditional Victorian hat silhouette, as well as switching the old tailoring fabrics to all red leather embossed.

Teyana Taylor is 'Taylor'd to You'

Actress and singer Teyana Taylor directly nods to her 2018 song "A Rose in Harlem". Wearing all red paired with a matching durag. This look pays homage to her Harlem neighbourhood. Dressed in custom Marc Jacobs and designed by Ruth E. Carter, the cape symbolised the flowers blossoming and enduring the legacy of Black Dandyism.

Rocking his own design, A\$AP Rocky pays homage to Harlem

Another homage to Harlem, A\$AP Rocky wears his own design and longtime stylist Matthew Henson. A tailored all black suit, Rocky mixed sporty and business together. Inspired by the Marmot outerwear, everyone wore it in Harlem during winter. Rocky states, "That was our teenage jacket". This jacket represents modern-day dandyism, and together with the fine accessories, fits the theme.

Dapper Dan dresses in Dapper Dan

Perhaps the most dandyism look in the Met Gala, American fashion designer Dapper Dan dresses himself in Dapper Dan. Paired with the signature Cartier panther ring to reference the music that came out of the Congo. As well as a zoot suit to capture the Harlem Renaissance, Dapper Dan adds a Sanfo-ka symbol to encourage learning about the past to inform the future.

The 2025 Met Gala delivered a beautiful display of fashion that all captured the theme perfectly. Each attendee showed up in their style while still being on theme, honouring tradition while embracing their individuality. From tight tailoring, bold colour combinations, unexpected silhouettes and fine details. The evening was a perfect celebration of Black Dandy.







DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS (1919)

QUEER CINEMA BEGINS HERE



TREVOR PRONOSO

A man loving another man: A story so universal and straightforward that its historical revulsion and censorship as justifying the continual erasure of its deviant constituents embodies the centuries-long propellants that spark the undying flame of today's queer resistance, solidarity, and affection.

We follow the lives of two men: Paul is a successful violinist, while Kurt, an avid fan of Paul's live performances, musters up the courage and asks to become his protégé. Both inevitably develop feelings for each other, a man loving another man. Paul loves Kurt, and Kurt loves Paul.

We see Paul read the newspaper. The headlines speak of pain and dumbfounding ignorance:

"Factory owner suicide day prior to wedding. Reason remains unknown."

"Judge slain by own hand. Authorities seek motive."

"Parents of cyanide poisoning student remain distraught. 'We had such high hopes for his future!'"

The intertitles immediately following eliminate any psychological ambiguity from Paul:

"Paul sees a common thread to all the stories: Article 175 of the German Penal Code forbidding 'unnatural vice between men,' the sword of Damocles that has made life impossible for these unfortunate individuals."

Unfortunately, we suffer the consequences of our ancestors from the

Garden of Eden. We are cursed with concupiscence; to long for those we know will hurt us and lead to our ostracisation, to find the pain caused by our desires as worth it. Conversely, it is that same desire enabling one to cause others that identical pain towards their will for freedom outside of traditional norms of societal organisation.

Intolerance abetting spiritual trauma. Kurt's parents disapprove of his desire to become a violinist and settle instead for a more 'practical occupation', while Paul is revealed through flashbacks to have experienced a lifetime of sexual oppression and repression. In these flashbacks, we see a younger Paul expelled from boarding school for becoming physically intimate with his classmate. During his university studies, Paul is invited to a party by his male friends and reluctantly attends, only to be sexually assaulted by a woman who forces herself upon him for a kiss.

We are also greeted with cameos from famed physician, sexologist and queer activist Magnus Hirschfeld, who also co-wrote the film. To clarify, Hirschfeld is notable for establishing the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee—the first LGBT rights organisation in history, as well as the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute for Sexual Science)—a research centre dedicated to the education of sexuality and gender as well as offering sexual health services to the public. Hirschfeld plays a fictionalised version of himself, often as the voice of reason on behalf of Paul and his turbulent communication between his parents. After Paul's early departure from a party organised by his parents in an attempt for him to marry a woman, Hirschfeld assuredly explains and justifies Paul's actions to his parents:

"You mustn't think badly of your son because he is a homosexual. He is not to blame for his orientation. It is neither a vice nor a crime—indeed, not even an illness. Instead, it is a variation, one of the borderline cases that occur frequently in nature."

Your son suffers not from his condition, but rather from the false judgement of it. This includes both the legal and so-

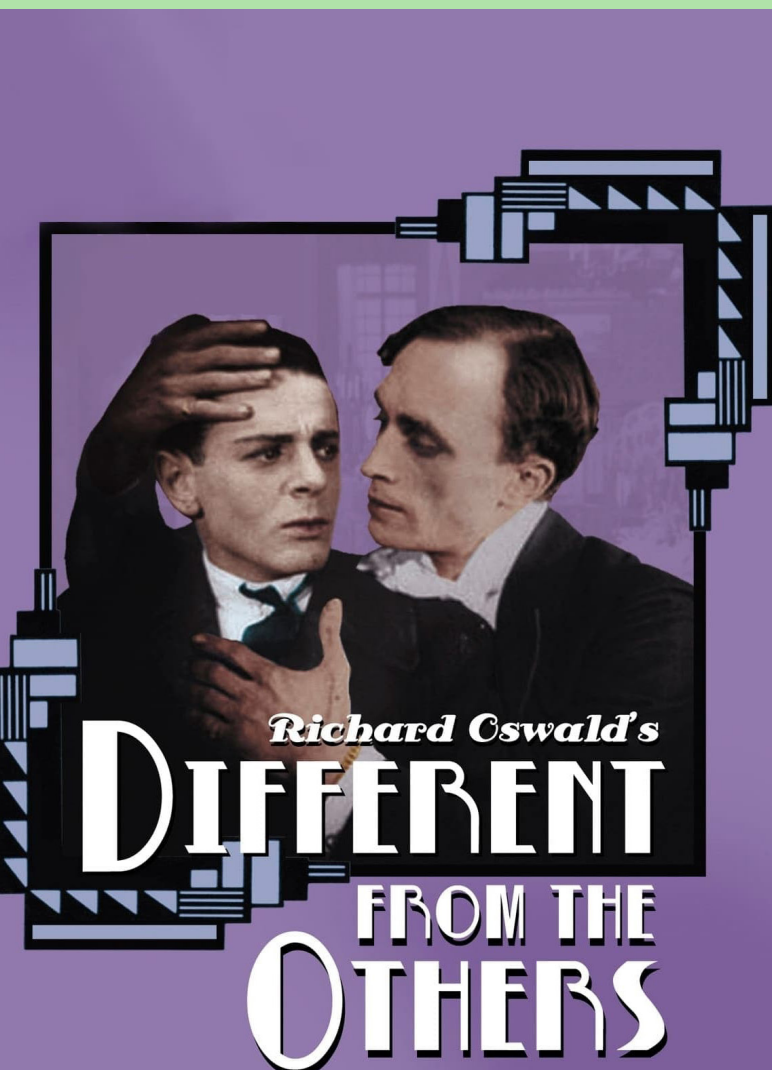
cial condemnation of his feelings, and the widespread misconception about their expression."

Heat requires friction; friction is the force an object produces against another object resisting the former's movement. Love requires friction; it requires the contradictory desires of a person's allegiance between their id (libido), ego (self), and superego (learned cultural norms). Love is loyalty and betrayal. Whichever one picks, there is no lesser of two evils for romance. One element necessitates the other; one betrays to remain loyal, and one is loyal in the hopes that betrayal promises their continued survival. The consequences of love for queer people are grave and life-threatening.

Paul has a stalker named Franz. Franz discovers Paul's brand new lover in Kurt and blackmails Paul into giving him money, lest he reports the two to the authorities for violating Article 175: the criminalisation of homosexual relationships (a law that was only repealed in Germany in 1994, 75 years after the film's release). Paul agrees to pay Franz regularly to keep his relationship a secret from the public and from Kurt. Paul betrays his self-respect and integrity to Kurt so that he can remain loyal to Kurt.

More flashbacks reveal Franz's history of blackmailing homosexuals by frequenting gay bars. This isn't the first time Paul has encountered Franz. Franz first meets Paul in a dance hall and seduces him into soliciting sexual favours. However, at the last minute, Franz demands an exorbitant amount of money, or else he reports him for breaking Article 175. Dejected, Paul allows Franz to empty his wallet, which is full of cash and leaves. Franz emotionally manipulates Paul, hoping that betrayal promises his continued accumulation of capital, no matter how exploitative it may be.

Paul's capability to love requires the contradictory desires of his allegiance between Kurt (libido), his career (ego), and Franz (threat of cultural norms). He eventually fails to negotiate all three. Kurt finds out about Franz's blackmail and deserts Paul in shame. Though Paul reports Franz's blackmail



to the authorities, Franz retaliates and reports on Paul's breaking of Article 175. News of Paul's newfound criminalisation then leads to his estrangement from friends and family, with his concert agency also terminating his contract. He is now alone and stripped of any opportunities to make a living. Paul sees no reason to continue living any longer and ingests a lethal dose of medication.

Polemical without pretension, the intentions of *Different from the Others* couldn't be more direct and sincere. The injustices are as clear as day to the extent that the film especially contains a scene featuring Magnus Hirschfeld giving a lecture about the fluidity of sexual orientation (intersexuality existing within both plants and humans) as well as gender (trans)identity and its historical repression. Hirschfeld laments during the lecture:

"The persecution of homosexuals belongs in the same sad chapter of human history as the Inquisition. For fifteen centuries, homosexuals were met with fire and sword.

In many countries, there was a direct shift from the death penalty to complete freedom under the law. But in Germany, despite fifty years of scientific research in this area, legal discrimination against homosexuals continues unabated."

Heat requires friction, and the initial release of *Different from the Others* was met with friction and virulent opposition. Despite its positive critical reception and commercial success—especially remarkable as a product of the Weimar Republic's growing vocalisation of homosexuality amidst lax censorship—riots broke out during its premiere alongside criticism from conservative religious groups. Antisemitic accusations also arose, blaming Magnus Hirschfeld and film director Richard Oswald—both of whom were Jewish—for promoting the 'Jewish vice' of homosexuality to the public.

The original negatives of *Different from the Others* were not preserved, owing in some part to new film censorship laws implemented a year after the film's release, and consequently, any surviving copies were outright banned or destroyed by the Nazi regime decades later (Hirschfeld's *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* and its extensive library would also be subject to Nazi book burning campaigns, dissolving the institute altogether and forcing Hirschfeld to flee Germany.) What remains are attempted reconstruc-

tions of the original film from extant shortened versions of the original with added intertitles and photos based on German synopses and censorship records.

A man loving another man, love as loyalty and betrayal. I'm reminded of an interview quote renowned German filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder gave on the supposed simplicity of one of his film's story and plot—specifically *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974)—as a potential flaw giving the audience an excuse to disregard its story for its seeming lack of depth and nuance. He responds quite tactfully:

"They have an excuse, or actually they're forced, to dissociate themselves from the story, not at the expense of the film, but rather in favor of their own reality—to me that's the crucial thing. At some point films have to stop being films, being stories, and have to begin to come alive, so that people will ask themselves: What about me and my life? I think this film forces people—because the love between the two comes across as so clear and pure—to examine their own relationships... To me that's very important. You can't make it simple enough."

I find it difficult to deny the power and pain *Different from the Others* leaves upon me. Consequently, I see criticisms of its didactic nature or lack of any visually striking or recognisable element akin to the concurrent German Expressionist stylistics of its time incredibly superfluous and insubstantial. No amount of exaggerated, angular

set decor or psychosexual character development can depict to the same degree the fear and disquietude represented by Conrad Veidt's face through Paul, a face both ghastly yet tender, stern yet naïve. Veidt's mannerisms ranging from a leering, gentlemanly stiffness to his furious bursts of desperate physical retaliation against his confrontations with Franz, reflect the turbulent interior of one man's passion amidst the constricting three-piece suit of bourgeois heteronormativity. Labelling Paul as either a 'survivor' or a 'victim' of his time is fatalistic. He is a martyr—a martyr for all the lives lost and those who remain, those whose only sin was their very ontological existence.

Without *Different From the Others*, there wouldn't be filmmakers like Pedro Almodóvar, Gregg Araki, Lino Brocka, Jean Cocteau, Terrence Davies, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Luca Guadagnino, James Ivory, Derek Jarman, Marlon Riggs, Tsai Ming-liang, Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Every queer story draws its foundational narrative and aesthetic elements from Paul and Kurt. A man loving another man, a simple melodramatic story with a social conscience elevated to the level of myth. It is a myth absent any reverential, congratulatory pandering to the paltry concessions queer people make with their oppressors, but hardened anger and seething dissatisfaction. To love is an existential gamble with its tragic dispositif, with its fragmenting Manichean predilection to either loyalty or betrayal, to hurt others or hurt yourself.

On the day of Paul's vigil, Kurt returns decimated by the sight of the only person he's ever loved no longer breathing. He is convinced that he must do the same but is confronted by Hirschfeld who give his final dictum:

"If you want to honour the memory of your friend, then you mustn't take your own life. Instead, live to change the prejudices whose victim—one of countless many—this dead man has become.

This is the life task I assign to you. Just as Zola struggled on behalf of one man who languished innocently in prison, we must restore honour and justice to the many thousands who came before us, those who are with us, and the ones who will come after us. Through knowledge and justice!"

Though the surviving footage of the film's ending depicts Paul during his last moments before his departure from the material world, the original ending is described as such through intertitles:

"Over an open law book of the German Republic appears a hand holding a brush. In a symbolic gesture, it strikes out once and for all Article 175, that horrible law to which clings so much blood and tears."

Queer cinema began with *Different from the Others*, and it will continually construct new beginnings now and forevermore.



THE WATERMELON WOMAN

WHILE THIS FILM'S TITLE IS A PLAY ON THE 1970 MOVIE *WATERMELON MAN*, CHERYL DUNYE'S *THE WATERMELON WOMAN* DOES NOT PLAY AROUND ITS TRAVERSAL OF MEMORY, RACE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY.



GAURI SAXENA (THEY/THEM)

The *Watermelon Woman* ends with an epigraph that reads, "Sometimes you have to create your own history." This encapsulates the film so perfectly in such few words that even a full review article might not do it justice. Still, an attempt must be made to bring it to those who have not yet heard of it.

Directed by Cheryl Dunye, *The Watermelon Woman* was released in 1996 (1997 in theatres) and was the first feature film at the time to have been directed by a Black lesbian, on a Black lesbian. It won the Teddy award at the Berlin International Film Festival upon its release, and an Audience Award for Outstanding Narrative Feature at Los Angeles' Outfest. It is experimental, delightful, and its treatment of its themes is subtle and effortless — one can fully understand why this film is considered by many to be an invaluable classic in the history of filmmaking. The film is a mix of documentary and narration, with segments from Cheryl's life and the film she is making, complete with 'archival' footage, dated photographs and classic films. The 86 minutes of *The Watermelon Woman* feel like the work of a lifetime and a 15-minute chat with a close friend at the same time — specifically that one friend whose rich life experiences make us wonder how much we have taken for granted.

The plot follows Cheryl, played by the director herself, on her journey to make a film about the titular *Watermelon Woman*, an actress who played mammy roles in movies during the 30s. The *Watermelon Woman* is played by Lisa Marie Bronson, and seen primarily in photographs or film material throughout. Alongside her friend and coworker Tamara (Valarie Walker), Cheryl sets out to uncover the history of this actress and to document her life, though this proves quite difficult when she was not even credited properly! A central theme of the film is the opacity of the archival history of Black actresses, and Cheryl runs into several roadblocks during her research — she asks a myriad of people about *The Watermelon Woman*, she consults books, she consults references, she does everything she can think of. It is only when she asks an older Black lesbian who knew *The Watermelon Woman* personally that Cheryl finally discovers her real name, Fae Richards. She also discovers that Fae Richards had been in a relationship

with Martha Page (Alexandra Juhasz), the white female filmmaker whose films she played minor roles in. In the end, even knowing her name is not enough in a world where Black women, and Black lesbians in particular, are constantly rendered nameless and erased.

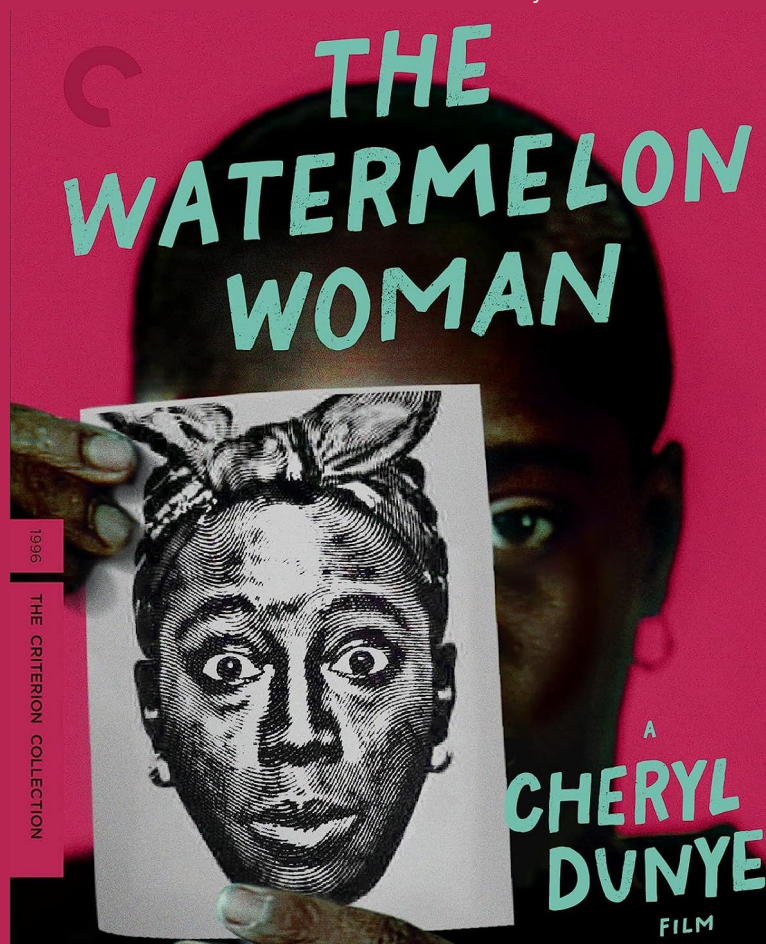
Suppressing information about Fae Richards is not something that happened in the past and is left in the past, because even in the present her legacy seems to be actively prevented from being brought to the broader public. Page's family vehemently denies any relationship between Fae and her, and it turns out that Page herself likely mistreated Fae too. Even when Cheryl and her other coworker Annie (Shelley Olivier) go all the way to New York to look through an archive of lesbian history, they are prevented from documenting it by a white lesbian. The particular intersection of race and sexuality means that the historical experiences of Black queer women are gatekept from themselves, and their agency is made secondary to whiteness even in a queer space. As the plot progresses, we start to see parallels between Cheryl and *The Watermelon Woman* herself: in Cheryl's new relationship with Diana (Guinevere Turner), a white lesbian, and in the obstacles she faces being Black in the filmmaking industry. This is echoed by a scene in the film where Cheryl is shown mimicking a segment played by Fae Richards, not taking herself seriously, and yet seeing herself in a disremembered Black lesbian from the past.

One of my favourite scenes is when Fae Richards, in a movie being played on the television, appears as the dark-skinned sister of a light-skinned woman. The woman is attempting to pass as white, putting powder on her face, and asking, "Why can't I choose to live in this world?" In the scene, Fae slaps her. The broader context here makes it very interesting — it replays when Cheryl is getting together with her white girlfriend — but even on its own it is a poignant scene highlighting the danger of proximity to whiteness. While it can be a way of seeking upward mobility, it also centers whiteness from start to finish, and this very topic comes up in conversations between Cheryl and Tamara. It is also reflective of the relationship between Fae and Page, through whom Fae accessed Hollywood but who simultaneously prevented her from becoming a star.

Despite *The Watermelon Woman* being released almost thirty years ago, it speaks to issues that are still timely and humour that — I imagine — hits much the same. During an incredibly awkward dinner, Cheryl trips over her words, and this goes entirely unaddressed and unedited. This happens at another point with Tamara as well, and while these are all natural things people go through, the film context does make them somewhat funny. Camille Paglia, playing herself, has a satirical scene parodying a white feminist film critic which is also quite humorous. She rambles nonsensically about her Italian heritage justifying her racist views towards Black iconography and history, saying there was no reason for watermelons to be viewed negatively when they had the Italian flag colours (for those unfamiliar: watermelons were used as a racist trope to portray Black people as 'simple minded' or 'unclean' — the Italian flag has nothing to do with anything here). Another scene that is treated lightly, and almost with a sort of mirthful disbelief despite being quite harrowing, is when Cheryl gets arrested for apparently looking like a meth addict, and accused of having stolen her own camera. There

is no elaboration on this, but isn't that the sort of racism Black people experience all the time? She is also called a man for not conforming to cisheteronormative standards of femininity. Just a look at her life as a Black lesbian — which, as Cheryl shows us, can only be documented by others like her. In the changing city of Philadelphia, whiteness interrupts and polices Black and queer bodies, with Black lesbianism being uniquely at risk.

To end, I will not spoil you on what the epigraph refers to so the element of surprise I felt can hopefully be passed on (though you may have a good idea already). To quote Cheryl when she is talking about what kind of film she wants to make, "I know it has to be about Black women, because our stories have never been told." *The Watermelon Woman* raises questions about the processes of tokenizing and erasing Blackness, about who decides what is to be remembered and what is to be discarded, and what are the barriers between Black queer people and their own history. The cast of Dunye's personal lens shows us all of this and more, and answers the question: what do you do when your own history is unreachable to you?



GAMES AND STORIES



CARROT BURGER

I'm lonely
But at least I'm not broken
Being heavily desired
Doesn't make you less desperate
When it comes to being a slave to your urges

They make everything harder
If you can't handle them
If they stop you from being genuine
Or forming emotional connection

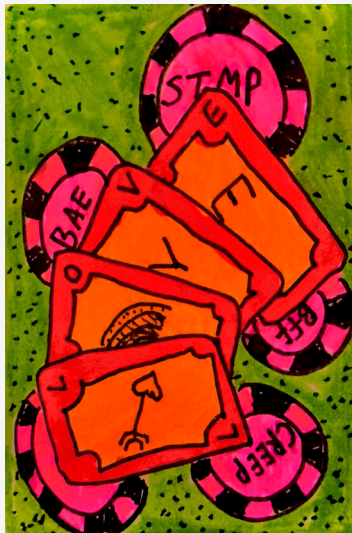
Whether you win or lose in the game of sex
No matter if you're chased or the chaser
How you play matters much much more
Knowing what you want
Versus knowing what you need
Because sometimes, it isn't just a game
It's a gamble
With self respect
And sanity
And safety
And health
And innocence
And love
And purity
As your poker chips

The only way to win is not to play
Keep your cards close to your chest, or rather don't draw in the first place
Make your own rules, play your own game
Tell your own story
And some people will listen

No prize at the end
Just the sweet catharsis
Of having shared a genuine moment with them
Free of regret, but full of meaning
You'll look back on it and think, that had value
That taught me something
That wasn't a mistake
But it was a lesson nonetheless

And maybe, just maybe, you'll stick around for another story. Or tell one of your own
Because the reward is the story
Because the goal is the journey
And maybe you'll join me on mine, if only for a little while
Then our storylines will diverge
We might find each other again someday
Or we might not

But maybe you'll stay
Intwine my arc with yours
We can be each other's deuteragonist
For an episode, for a season, for a series
Read each other's autobiographies
Annotate the margins
And write the next chapter together



ART BY LEWIS MATHESON CREED

I HOPE I NEVER FIND LOVE...



ABRAHAM

Love is the enzymes regurgitated by a fly from its last meal,
A dance in the cycle of decay and the rhythm in the consumption of flesh
and shit.

Love is a martial law lockdown when the government falls apart.
For your own good, it takes your rights away.

Love is a bullet that tears through your chest, penetrating and tearing your
connective
tissues and organs with a beautiful symphony of breaking bones.

Love is a chemical waste storage, the test tubes and beakers unwashed
and broken as
the chemicals mix inside to create a toxic nerve-gas explosion.

Love is a parasite that steals all your money and drains your life force. It
plagues you
with grief and then runs away

Love is a fable of bullshit and grime, a disgusting and hideous basket of
lies.

Love is a monster all the same.

Love is despicable, twisted, and vain.

Love does not give a fuck.
It plays its own game.

Love is a drive to keep the population,
Love is insanity wrapped up in cheesecloth and left to soak in a bucket of
piss.

Love is a lie for us just to get by, love had no meaning and my love has died.



ART BY CINDY LIMANTO

bled like you

ON LOVE, HISTORIES AND THE GENDER DIVIDE



BAILEY LARKIN (SHE/THEY)

When I was four years old, I smashed my head open on my grandparents' fireplace. There was blood everywhere — or at least, I think there was.

I'd been dragging a blanket around waiting for my mum to finish up adulting (kitchen endeavours, I believe,) so that she could play hide and seek with me.

I never did get that game of hide and seek. I did, however, get a lot of gauze, and a scar above my hairline that I can never see.

And I'll always remember the blood — or at least, the idea of it.

But I know I've never bled like you.

And then, when I was eight, my friend Jamie and I wandered out a little too far into the shallows of some bay or another — I sliced my foot on an oyster shell.

When I came back to shore, I was absolutely enthralled by the cut — it was perfectly straight, a beautifully thin red

line — the blood oozing like watercolor, dripping down a canvas.

I still have the scar. It's faded now, admittedly.

Though, if I stretch the skin back, I can still see it — and if I try, I can still recall the sting of salt, and the iodine his mother gave me.

Still, that's just a mark, and a day at the beach.

I know I've never bled like you.

But, hell, let's spin it back — I was born with a hole in my heart.

Doctors would describe it as a ventricular septal defect — I would describe it as something that just... happened to me, and would continue happening, and would always be there.

The hole was sewn up. The surgery was a success. But it would always be there.

They call us 'zipper kids.'

Because in the weeks following open heart surgery, you're stuck with a thick red stripe down your sternum — from, you know, where you've been 'zipped up.'

And that thick red stripe will turn into a thin pink line, about the width of a matchstick.

And that thin pink line will turn into white. And then, it turns into the rest of your life.

Because if you tell a child that the moment they over-exert themselves their heart could explode, and that it will, in part, be their fault, well.

It has impacts.

You develop a weird relationship with life, because of your idea of death, and a weird relationship with grief, because of your understanding of life and death, and a weird relationship with pain — because you know you've already been through a bunch and could sure as hell go through more.

And those scars stick with you in ways your flesh couldn't fathom.

But still. But still.

I know I've never bled like you.

Because I never had to hide my blood, or feel ashamed of it.

Well, that's not true. Not entirely.

But no one else ever quite made me bleed.

(Well, that's not true. Not entirely.)

But still. But still.

I know I've never bled like you.

(I can't negotiate with that.)

Because I had my mother, and other people's mothers, and a wonderful surgeon (also the ex-wife of my psychiatrist) to sew my heart up as an infant.

And no one ever told me that my blood came from who I was — it was a reward for accident, and mistake, and developmental mishap.

As a teenager, in my second-to-last year of highschool, my mum took me aside and gestured toward the bathroom.

'There's condoms and pads in there,' she said, 'for you and your friends.'

And I remember thinking that was silly.

That girls carry around their own pads, and that none of my friends were having sex yet.

And, yes, all of those products marched to their expiry, unused — but, in retrospect, I'm so grateful that they were there. Because I was very clearly in the wrong.

And because this was the same woman who'd apologize any time she'd talk about 'girl stuff,' and yet, wanted to go out of her way to make sure all my friends and guests were comfortable.

And because this was the same woman whose 'talk' with me was 'so, you know what sex is, right?' (in fairness, true,) and who had seemingly no personal investment in making sure anyone kept it wrapped; except, obviously, she did.

I know she did, because I'm here.

You don't have a kid at twenty-two, and not learn something about unplanned pregnancy. Especially not when your child is born with... complications.

Or congenital heart disease.

And now, I'm twenty-two — and I'm a woman.

And she had a boy.

So that's new.

And when I turned twenty-two, I became unbearably fixated upon the fact that my mum, who had always looked so adult and wise in my childhood, was kind of just a kid too — a kid who had something



really, really difficult happen to her.

If you asked me to raise a child tomorrow morning, all expenses covered, I would offer you money to go away. I would go so far as to put myself into debt.

But she did it for me, and mostly by herself for a while – and that's a gift that I don't think I could ever really match.

So as I was walking home the other day, I found myself thinking that maybe I'm doing something wrong for not carrying pads around with me.

Maybe I'm not doing womanhood right.

And often, I'll find myself thinking that for other reasons.

In my friendships with women I always find myself faltering – less so than I do around men, sure. But in a very different way.

I worry that I'm not compassionate enough – that I'd go to solve problems

rather than listen.

I worry that I'll get angry before I can acknowledge any sadness or hurt.

I worry that I don't know how to be considerate in the right ways, or caring in the right ways, or show up in the right ways, full stop.

And I worry that I can't discuss the things that are really important to me; my relationship with the world, with my selfhood and body, and with all of my thoughts and ideas – without these being immediately being mitigated by the fact that I used to be a man.

By the fact that I couldn't acknowledge the value of a bathroom drawer filled with products that can make or break a life.

By the fact that I was always the one in the sea, the one holding the blanket – and not the one cooking dinner, or pulling out a first aid kit.

Because the more I speak to and learn from the women around me, the more I realize that I've hardly bled – that I've been sheltered and tended to.

I see womanhood, and I too often see a dominant refusal for acceptance – I see neglect, and blocked ears, and an array of voices crying out to be heard.

And I know I didn't listen, for a long time.

I know I was more than willing to dismiss things I didn't feel like I could understand.

But now I do want to understand – more desperately than perhaps anything else.

I want my relationships with the women in my life to be bold and bright and fulfilling – I want to be a place of absolute safety and respect, of mutual care and nurturance.

And I know that for every drop of blood I've spilled, and for every scar across my



heart and body, the women around me could go blow-for-blow.

And I know I'll never truly understand – at least, not entirely.

But I can try.

And I should.

Because I've never bled like you.

OPEN LETTER

CLOSET CLUTTER

A REVIEW OF WARDROBES



LORI ALLISON

The closet is getting crowded. This might be a very surface-level metaphor, but I'm going to wring it dry- it's laundry day, and I'm trying to clean everything out.

My wardrobe's a mess and nothing fits anymore. If you're lucky enough to have been who you're meant to be since you were born, you don't have to worry about it. But I think the vast majority of us change and outgrow our old things - whether you dress the opposite of how you used to or whether you just need a different size.

I've never liked heels. They're not so hard to walk in once you practice - and I practiced - but they're too elegant. Barbie-wear. Shoes are too expensive in general. I mean, everything's expensive, but I got a men's button-up shirt for \$6 at a hospice shop. How many of us have felt watched when we walk into the 'other' side of the second-hand clothing store? Is it easier to never try at all, to wear things that fit

all wrong forever, or is it better to stick out and maybe feel like yourself for the first time?

We throw everything we don't want to deal with in the closet and shut the door, and this works, because that's what they're for. But a wardrobe only has so much space, it has to get full eventually. You might realise the girlish dresses that you never wanted in the first place don't need to be there, and the corset fits tighter than it used to. You might realise a suit you wore to a wedding two years ago is too fitted, too formal. You realise you stuffed yourself in there, too, in amongst the grating, unnatural fabrics. Do you prioritise familiarity or happiness? It's an age-old question. It's not really as simple as it sounds.

I have friends with organised closets. They observe from the outside, peering in at the neatly hanging clothes and ordered rows of boxes they've arranged in psychological tidiness. Aesthetically pleasing and completely

comfortable. It's alien to me, to many of us. Whether it's accumulated over time or has always been there or hits you all at once, so many of us deal with messy closets.

I propose an open-plan wardrobe. It's easier to deal with clutter when you throw the doors wide open and have

the space to explore. Open up your ribs and let your heart show. Your closet will breathe a sigh of relief, and so will you.

Thank you to haircuts, thank you to role models, thank you to thrifting, thank you to queer people everywhere. Let's get rid of closets.

DRESS UP.COM



make-up!
jewellery
shirts
pants
boots
wigs



ART BY PIA @PIANOMOUS

IT WAS LOVE, LOOKING BACK

“PAPA, HOW DID YOU MEET DADDY?”



ROSE TAYLOR-MEADE

Lucas:

“Papa, how did you meet Daddy?”

“We went to university together, we used to study together in the library before class.”

“Oh. Is that where you learned to be a teacher?”

“Yeah, it was. Come on then, finish brushing your teeth, it’s bedtime.”

“Where’s Daddy?”

“He’s in the kitchen, doing the dishes. Do you need help putting your pyjamas on?”

“No!”

“Okay. Any more questions?”

“Can I have a bedtime story?”

“Of course, we always have a bedtime story.”

Once the little ones were finally in bed I came back downstairs to find Noah loading the last of the dirty mugs into the dishwasher.

“50 questions again?”

“Always. Tonight she was asking how we met.”

“Oh, was she? What did you tell her?”

“Something about a cute engineering student in an Ed Psych Gen Ed,” I joked.

“Oh really?”

“Nah, I told her we went to uni together, and we studied in the library together. I stand by the first part though.”

“I remember a physics nerd who was really good at putting psychology into less wordy psychology. He was also kinda funny.”

Noah:

“Top-down processing is where you fill in the blanks from what you already know. Like, you know something about it and you’re starting with that and

adding. That make sense? So then, bottom-up processing is building a brick wall from the ground. When you start with nothing and you build from there,” Lucas explained.

“Oh, right, okay,” I said, starting to make sense of things.

“Most of the time people use top-down because it’s easier, except it’s not easier if there’s nothing there,” he finished before the tutor continued to the end of the tutorial.

“So is education your major?”

“No, I’m a physics student.”

“Oh shit, really? You should teach, you’re really good at explaining things, it makes it so much easier.”

“Really? Uh, thanks, I hadn’t thought about it. What’s your major?”

“Engineering. I don’t know what specialisation yet. I’m gonna head to the library to study now, did you maybe wanna come?”

“I’m sorry, I’ve got another class now,

maybe tomorrow? I don’t have much on til our 121G lecture.”

“Yeah, of course.” Lucas turned to leave. “Wait, uh-”

“Yeah?”

“Can I, um, maybe, could I get your number?”

“Oh.” He paused for a moment, I couldn’t tell if he was picking up what I was getting at. “Um, yeah, ok.” I opened a new contact and handed him my phone.

Lucas:

After a few weeks of studying together before some of our classes, sometimes in the library, sometimes at Kate Edger, we’d often end up sitting together in our 121G lectures. I’d be getting the bus home, then he’d walk back to halls, O’Rourke I think it was. One week we were walking out of OGGB together after a lecture.

“You got plans after class today?” Noah asked, as we turned onto Symonds st to head towards the bus stop.

“Yeah, I’ve got a ballroom class tonight.”

“Ballroom dancing?”

“Mmm,” I nod.

“Really? Like, you do actual ballroom dancing?” he asked eagerly.

“Yeah, I do.”

“Is it just me or is a guy that can dance immediately attractive as fuck?” I knew I couldn’t have been the only one thinking that.

“Mm, this is true. I mean, who doesn’t love a man that can lead?” I teased.

“I...I can work with that,” he smirked a little.

“Do you dance at all?” I asked, he was talking a big game if he couldn’t.

“Yeah, rock’n’roll, my mum taught me as a kid.” *Hello, he can.*

“Oh cool, I keep thinking I want to learn. You wanna try fitting much around a physics timetable.”

“Like engineering is a walk in the park? The club runs lessons sometimes. Could be fun.”

“Yeah, could be.” *Is he flirting?* “My studio runs a beginner class? If you want to learn.” *He’s surely not like this with other guys.*

“I’m down if you are,” he responds. We got to the bus stop where the NX2 was waiting.

“Hey, uh, do you wanna go for coffee together, maybe drinks?”

“Are you asking me out?”

“Well, yeah, if you’re free.”

“Of course. You go, don’t miss your bus.”



ELSON TAN'S TOP 3

EVERY MONTH, I PUT DOWN THREE SONGS RELATED TO THIS ISSUE'S TOPIC. THE ARTISTS PRESENTED BELOW ARE ALL RAINBOW ICONS WHO MADE WAVES IN THE MUSIC SCENE- SOME COULD SAY IN THREE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MUSICAL ERAS.



ELSON TAN



Chappell Roan - Good Luck, Babe!

This song features Chappell vengefully addressing a queer girl who had feelings for her but decided to suppress them to enter a compulsory straight relationship, caving to pressure regarding her sexual orientation. It's quite relatable towards those who have had rainbow romantic relationships broken off by someone who willfully went or was forced off the rainbow by peer pressure of any kind.



Lady Gaga - Born This Way

An oldie but a goodie, Born This Way became a pride anthem all the way back in 2011 before gay marriage was even legal in New Zealand. According to Gaga, who came out as bisexual in 2010, the song was partially inspired by 1977's "I Was Born This Way" by Carl Bean, and was described as a "magical message" song towards the LGBTQ+ community. The lyrics make it more wide-reaching as well- they, in fact, are intended to express empowerment for all.



Prince - Purple Rain

While Prince may have caused a lot of controversy in his final years, this queer icon was the one that inspired many other musicians' work, including that of Harry Styles, Beyonce, and even The Weeknd, as well as fashion choices that sent waves through the world of stage performances. His androgynous appearance and racy lyrics appealed to the young and misunderstood, and he ended up becoming a poster child for sexual liberation. Purple Rain's lyrics, which go lengths to let the song's characters be practically genderless, talk about experiencing the end of the world with the one you love, and its final iconic instrumental sequence gives the listener time to reflect.

Meanwhile in
Winnie's World



A biological woman...



... a biological man...



...a biological disaster.



FILM

THUNDERBOLTS*

FINALLLLLLYYYY A MARVEL MOVIE WITH A VISION!

ANYA JOHN-FRANCKE (SHE/HER) | @ANYA.JF

Thunderbolts* arrives at a time when the MCU desperately needs it, after a long streak of green screen-heavy multiversal giant scale giant scale slop that has left viewers completely disinterested in what and who comes next. This focused and relatively grounded movie is a welcome change from most of what Marvel has been producing since the end of phase 3.

This was almost a breath of fresh air ... almost. That intro is fantastic, and the tone and serious subject matter they committed to was impactful. I wish they leaned further into this - it was so close to that chilling, haunting, coldness of a psychological thriller. These characters have deeply dark pasts, and there was so much potential in reminding us of that. The metaphor at the centre of the story did feel a little on the nose and could have benefited from some more depth. Not that this needed to be the A24 film that everyone was dreaming of, but the bones of something a little less superhero-esque and more artsy were there. It could have been that kind of film, and that is the let down. But it is distinct enough for me to appreciate the artistic stab that it is - this is what we got and I am grateful for it.

There is a charm to the admittedly familiar anti hero team that I thought would not penetrate. Each character's desire to help each other and be a team, while still being guarded and refusing to admit it, is so cute. The moments of tenderness and camaraderie do work. Still, it falls into one of the repeated MCU traps. We are once again expected to care about characters that are entirely uninteresting, sometimes through no fault of their own, just the result of being another name in this sprawling world of gods, geniuses, and super humans. Walker and Ghost unfortunately fell really short here for me. Go to <https://boxd.it/9BT0xJ> to read the rest of my review.

From the wise words of the editor-in-chief of Vogue, Anna Wintour, "Sometimes you just need to tear everything up and start over." This was indeed representative of the 90s; a time of nonconformity, creative industry convergence, and the commencement of a true fashion revolution.

In Vogue: The 90s, is a documentary that revisits the decade in all its excitement and glory. We learn of transformative fashion events - from the "warholian enigma" of Anna Wintour's arrival and the Madonna cover, to Kate Moss's debut. Though controversial and provocative, the 90s saw the breaking of rigid societal molds, ultimately

paving the way for the redefinition and rejection of fashion, and the normalisation of so-called, "anti-fashion."

Despite these revolutionary shifts, we are also introduced to this dichotomy- the devastating impact of the HIV epidemic within the 90s fashion industry. A time of trepidation and uncertainty, we are told of the collaborative efforts of Vogue and the fashion community, and the way a "cornucopia of couture" was used to combat the disease.

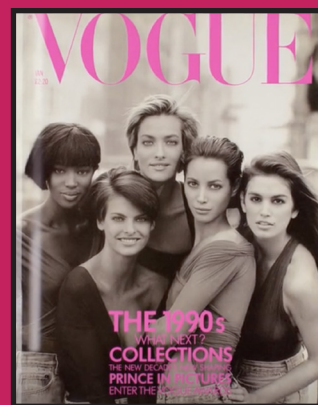
If you're someone who wants to see an awe-inspiring showcase of 90s fashion and creativity, I definitely think this documentary is worth a watch. If you

DOCUMENTARY IN VOGUE: THE 90S REVIEW

BIANCA KOLEDA-YAMAMOTO

are, however, looking for an in-depth study of Vogue as a magazine, this may not be the right series for you, as the focus was much more on pivotal cultural events.

Overall, a highly informative series, reinforcing how modern fashion doesn't just equate to clothing, but is a creative outlet of self-expression; a way to 'stitch' humanity into a shared fabric that can unite and connect us.



THEATRE • SPOILERS

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

"ONE MURDER, EIGHT SUSPECTS AND A WILD RIDE THAT'S ABOUT TO GO OFF THE RAILS."

ROSE TAYLOR-MEADE

If you love a murder mystery, you'll love *Murder on the Orient Express* from the Auckland Theatre Company. The play is adapted from the Agatha Christie novel by the same name, adapted for the stage by Ken Ludwig.



The set design of the Orient Express and its various compartments was particularly well executed. And the accent and dialect coach worked wonders with all of the cast.

The play follows detective Hercule Poirot who has just closed an unfortunate case in Istanbul, on his way back to London. On the train journey, a passenger is killed in his bed so, naturally, Poirot is tasked with solving the murder.

The murder on the train, Bruno Cassetti, turns out to be related to the kidnapping and murder of a three-year-old girl Daisy Armstrong. Over the course of the play it is revealed that every single person onboard train had a connection to Daisy Armstrong, her

family and the Daisy Armstrong case. One was the nurse, one was the governess, one was the brother of the nanny, one was the son of the attorney on the case. One was the aunt, one was the grandmother, one was the mother's godmother, one was in the army with Daisy's father.

In the most unexpected of plot twists, Poirot reveals that all eight people onboard the train were in on it. Bruno Cassetti was stabbed eight times, once by each of the eight people on board. Each for their own reasons.

Overall, an amazing show, you've got to see it if you get the chance. There's now a return season been announced for February.

ART EXHIBITION

INTIMATION OF ENDLESS SPACE GIVEN IN A SMALL WINDOW OF TIME (AP- PROXIMATELY 10 MINUTES)

IS LANGUAGE LARGE ENOUGH?

MAAZ KAZI

How do we interpret language? Well, we don't, interpretation exists insofar as language is simplified and condensed to its simplest means of communication.

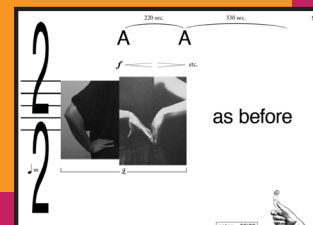
It's the use of AI to simplify, the blocking of external sounds, the loss of tactility and feel of the items we interact with. *How does X make us feel?* Is rarely posed. We are numb to the exerts of information that don't serve an apparent purpose, lost to the sea of total language we experience.

Ethan Braun and Lisa Grumm's Intimation of Endless Space Given in a Small Window of Time (approximately 10 minutes) considers language and the enormity of its interpretation. Artspace Aotearoa asks "*Is language large enough*" to which Ethan and Lisa reply, are we large enough for language?

Within the endless sonic spatial space, we encounter language in its entirety,

not as a means to an understanding, but the understanding and the endless capacity for understanding itself. Language as music, gesture, notation, art, programming and design interact exist in this space, overlapping, contextualising, presupposing meaning over each other.

It's the way you look down and spin around following the classical sheet music with the sounds. It's the way you raise your hand and intentional gesture to the Guidonian and Solfege gestures. It's the way you follow the sounds around the space, the way you cup your ears to hear a different frequency, the way you stand in front of an object and truly ask yourself what it could mean through every possible context.



The piece allows for "*deep listening, a practice that feels extremely timely at this moment*" For the first time in a very long time I realised I was listening, profound in its ability to allow you to hear the languages which have always been spoken.

THE EXHIBITION IS OPEN MAY 3RD-12TH JULY AT 292 KARANGAHAPE ROAD.



MADMAN NEW RELEASE

MARLON WILLIAMS: NGA AO E RUA – TWO WORLDS

STILL A FAN, DESPITE THE FEET.

LEWIS MATHESON CREED

Charming, insightful and breezy, *Ngā Ao E Rua – Two Worlds* is more than a behind-the-scenes documentary on Marlon Williams' 4th solo album (and chart topper), *Te Whare Tiwekaweke*. Inside, you'll find a career-spanning retrospective of the Kiwi crooner, featuring live performances, honest reflections, interesting encounters, and off-the-cuff remarks. Between the humour, the loneliness and struggles, the docu-

mentary gives a glimpse into where Williams' genre-defying soundscape emerges; a limbo *Ngā Ao E Rua*, where his identity and artistry return home to find new housings for his angelic voice to shimmer in Te Reo. Well-edited, and beautifully filmed, it is a must watch for Te Marama Puoro o Aotearoa – NZ Music Month.



MADMAN



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TEN QUESTIONS

WITH BEA FROM TRANS ON CAMPUS



CHAZ TYLER CHO (HE/HIM) | @THEREALFINCH9933

Describe yourself in three words.

"Gay gay homosexual"

What is Trans on Campus?

"Trans on Campus is a university-wide group for trans and non-binary students and staff to socialise, seek advice, and discuss issues facing the trans community in the university space. We set up in-person events every so often, like movie nights and greet/meets! Always keen on members and best wishes to any trans friends!"

What is the best anime, and why isn't it One Piece?

"RWBY. Has the best fanfiction. I am emotionally attached to it as a comfort show. I have never watched One Piece."

What kind of movies, shows, music, or books do you enjoy?

"My favourite film is a toss between Evil Dead II and John Carpenter's The

Thing, love horror stuff! For TV shows, been more recently into It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, like "waow terrible ppl, more plz". With music, I usually vibe with listening to whatever but mostly vibe with punk and metal. Books? I should read more stuff but have been lately going through a friend's A Song of Ice and Fire collection. I dunno if fiction podcasts count here but I've also really been enjoying The Magnus Archives!"

Which movie/TV show gets rainbow representation the best?

"Not a movie or tv show but SCP: Find Us Alive is an awesome fictional podcast that has a huge cast of queer and neurodivergent characters, love their dynamics with each other, one of the characters is a sentient potato named 'Dumptruck'. Also some mean trans characters in the most recent episodes!"

What is the most drastic change you've seen in the rainbow community?

"Eh probably how chill I've found kids to be with queer people, or how many more kids openly present as queer compared to what I remember from being a kid. I'm training to be a secondary school teacher right now and have been working at a school as openly trans this year. It really is heartwarming with students not batting an eye about me dressing fem or even being outright supportive of me. I think the queer community is in good hands for the future."

Where do you see your club in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years?

"In 5 years we'll all still be slaying and gay, in 10 years we'll still be doing this but also kicking ass, in 20 years we'll be even more great. Each year will be consecutively more euphoric than the last."

What do you think about the Minecraft movie being shot in Auckland?

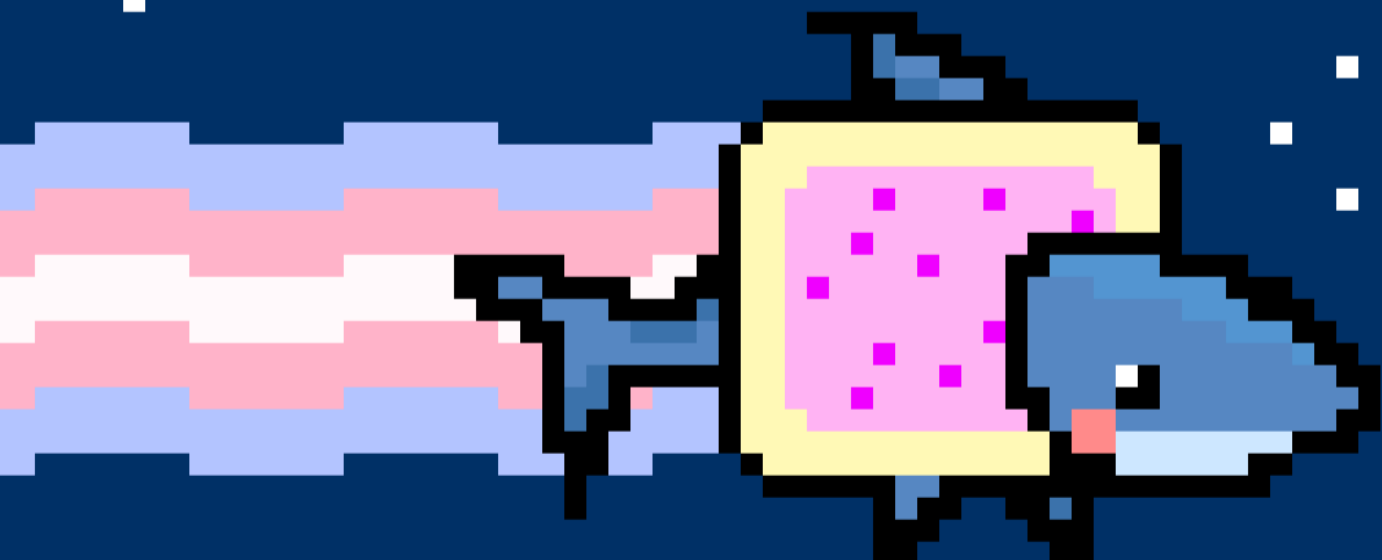
"I played the bee in the Minecraft movie."

What do you think of New Zealand not being on the world maps?

"That sucks, how will more queer people find us?"

For any Trans students coming to UoA, what is one piece of advice you'd like to give them?

"While it can be intimidating, look for other trans students and make friends with them. There's a whole community of us here at UoA and always more the merrier. When you make one trans friend here, you make five trans friends. Also, best wishes to you, whoever you are, I'm proud of you and believe in you (believe in the me that believes in you)."



WHERE ARE ALL THE GAY PEOPLE?

AUCKLAND'S ENDANGERED LESBIAN PROBLEM.



ANONYMOUS

Where are all the gay people? No, like literally Auckland, where are all the lesbians? After recently coming out of a two-year, straight, relationship, I've tried to pick myself up and explore a side of my sexuality I hadn't engaged in for two years. I was excited. Nervous. Hopeful. Ready to kiss a woman and feel something shift in the cosmos.

But instead of a cosmic shift, I've most likely encountered... crickets.

Back in my all-girls school days, everyone was a little bit gay. Kissing a girl back then was basically a rite of passage. Back in the early 2020s it was a world of acceptance, exploration and tolerance. But what has happened in the past two years? Have we all turned straight? Have we all gone into hiding?...or just moved to Wellington?

Because it's really starting to feel like Auckland is running dry. In real life, it's almost impossible to tell who's into women anymore. Queer-coded fashion is no longer a reliable sign. Nowadays, these fashion girls are everywhere. I'll stare into the soul of a woman going back and forth debating whether she's fitted up because she's gay, or maybe she just has Pinterest. Dyed hair used to mean munch. Now? It has lost all meaning, and I have to play guessing games just to figure out if she even likes my gender, let alone likes me.

So, what's a lonely queer girl to do? We venture into a graveyard of hope and filtered selfies, the horror of dating apps. However, setting your preference to "women only" on these apps is like signing yourself up for war. First, you find her: pretty girl, dreamy eyes, exactly your type. You tap to the next photo and your staring down the barrel of her neck beard ass boyfriend posed up in a mirror selfie. They're looking for a fun, easygoing, open-minded third. You swipe away, disappointed but not surprised.

And once you've swiped through all of the 15 girls in your area that aren't looking for an experiment, it's time to chat! Which brings along the back-and-forth compliment exchange with women on dating apps that never leads anywhere. Where is the female version of Grinder where we can openly say "yes, i like you, let's make out behind a bar." I'M TRYING TO CRACK!

It really feels like there are no lesbian spaces in Auckland at all. No guaranteed venue where you can show up and feel like the room might actually have people you could connect with romantically or even just socially. You kind of just... hope. You hope tonight's random event will attract your people.

Most of the city's queer nightlife caters almost exclusively to gay men. And while I love them, it often feels like we're the side characters in someone else's story. And to be very honest, even gay men's bars are becoming a beacon for straight women who then bring their straight boyfriends and completely straighten up the whole goddamn place. Have you been to Family Bar lately? Straight boys in their checkered button-up shirts eyeing up the place in disgust with an "every gay guy in here wants me" look in their eyes. PLEASE.

Still, I know we're out there. We're watching indie films at the Academy Cinema, browsing the shelves of Unity

Books, and drinking oat lattes at cafés with bad lighting. We flirt with eye contact and awkward conversation, not shirtless mirror selfies. Maybe that's why it's so hard to connect, our signals are subtle. And maybe that's kind of beautiful, in a tortured sapphic sort of way.

Though I'm sure the girl of all our dreams is waiting in the aisles of a K-Road thrift store right now, the universe conspiring for a perfect meet cute. Maybe we'll reach for the same pair of low rise jeans and fall in love over our shared impeccable fashion sense. But until then, I'll be on Bumble, trying to avoid another couple named Jacob and Emma who want to "experiment."



TAKE TAKE TAKE IT ALL, BUT YOU NEVER GIVE

HOW TO GIVE BACK TO AOTEAROA'S LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY



HANNAH JUDD

From “Slay” to Chappell Roan, you’ve taken enough from the queer community. It’s time to give back. Here is a rundown of local charities and initiatives that you can get involved in to help the LGBTQIA+ community in Aotearoa.

InsideOUT

insideout.org.nz

About InsideOUT: InsideOUT is a charity that focuses on providing support for LGBTQIA+ and takatāpui communities through providing resources, counselling, and education. They aim to create an Aotearoa that is a safe space for rainbow youth.

How to help: InsideOUT takes youth volunteers (anyone under the age of 27) to help in multiple areas, from helping with the workshops they run, to helping with filming and editing content, and aiding with graphic design for all you creatives out there. They also have a board of trustees that is made of youth volunteers to help InsideOUT operate on a ‘for youth, by youth’ basis. If you want to help support InsideOUT and receive something in return, you can head to their online store to purchase a range of merchandise such as stickers, tote bags, and pride flags. They also accept donations through card or bank transfer, or you can set up an automatic donation on a weekly / monthly / yearly basis!

Gender Minorities Aotearoa

genderminorities.com

About Gender Minorities Aotearoa: A nationwide organisation that focuses on supporting New Zealand’s Transgender community, including binary, non-binary, irawhiti takatāpui, and intersex trans people. Operating on a ‘for transgender people, by transgender people’ basis, they provide a range of services for Transgender people such as: free counselling, social events, free facial hair removal, aid in finding housing (including emergency housing), legal advice, and so much more.

How to help: You can get involved on a small scale through sharing their posts on Facebook or recommending a healthcare provider (only if you know a great trans safe healthcare provider). They also accept monetary donations, donations of old clothes, or you can buy items on their wishlist available on their website! If you would like hands-on involvement, GMA has a guide on how to host a fundraising event, or you can browse through their calls to action under the ‘activism’ section of their website.

Rainbow Path NZ

rainbowpathnz.com

About Rainbow Path Aotearoa NZ: Rainbow Path is an advocacy and peer support group for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees in New Zealand. They provide concise information regarding accessing healthcare, where to find financial support, and how to change your name and gender in NZ. They advocate for legislative and practical changes to support rainbow refugees and asylum seekers, and aim to improve allies’ awareness of the issues facing LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers.

How to help: Engage with Rainbow Path on Facebook to keep up to date with their campaigns and share posts to boost awareness. They also share specific calls for support on their Facebook which range from helping someone move houses or aiding someone to practice their driving. You can donate to Rainbow Path via bank transfer, the details are available under the ‘get involved’ section of their website!

RainbowYOUTH

ry.org.nz

About RainbowYOUTH: Committed to creating diverse and inclusive environments, RainbowYOUTH works with 13-27 year olds to support queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex youth. RY provides confidential peer support regarding gender and sexuality that considers “hauora, resilience, cultural identities and individual journeys”. They also run a drop-in centre on Fridays from 2 pm to 4 pm at 10 Abbey Street, Auckland CBD where they host workshops, activities, and just provide a safe space to hang out and socialise. At the drop-in center, you are also able to access their community wardrobe for gender affirming clothes, and

can use Gender Minorities Aotearoa’s hair removal service for Transgender people that runs in collaboration with Rainbow Youth.

How to help: RainbowYOUTH accepts donations of “clothing, new or quality makeup and skincare, and gender-affirming items like binders” for their community wardrobes. These donations can be done as an in-person drop-off or can be sent via courier by purchasing a ‘wardrobe clear-out kit’ available on their website under the ‘community wardrobe’ section. You can also start a fundraiser for RainbowYOUTH, or make a one-off or monthly donation by heading to ry-community.raisely.com

OutLine NZ

outline.org.nz

About OutLine: OutLine is focused on supporting Aotearoa’s rainbow communities’ mental health by running a confidential support line (0800 688 5463) and an online chat support service every day from 6 pm to 9 pm. They are committed to supporting “Takatāpui, MVPFAFF+, Rainbow communities, their friends, whānau, and those questioning”. Additionally, OutLine runs two peer support groups. One is a Transgender peer support service in Auckland that is available to all transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse people in Auckland. The second is a Conversion Practices Survivor Network that is facilitated by OutLines trained staff. Providing a space for survivors of conversion practices to share their personal experiences and provide support to others.

How to help: Head to the ‘donate’ section of OutLine’s website to make a one-off, weekly, or monthly donation. If you want to help on a larger scale, you can start a fundraiser for OutLine by heading to: donateoutline.raisely.com



ART BY CINDY LIMANTO

AM I STILL GAY?

CONFESSIONS OF YOUR FRIEND THAT'S TOO WOKE...



TIM EVANS (THEY/THEM) | @TIMOTHYRAEVANS

When I came out as non-binary, it's hard to say that anyone was particularly surprised. While yes, there were a lot of confused friends who were navigating a new set of pronouns after knowing me for some time, and my sister who used the word "human" too many times to sound natural, I think a lot of people could see it coming a mile off. But the real shock that hit me when I came out was a well meaning (drunk as fuck) straight guy friend asking "So, like if you're not a guy how can you be gay?"

I was stunned, to say the least. Being gay has been a core part of my personality for so long that I'm known as the horny one from Craccum who taught people how to douche! You can find that one in the Archives ;) But he was right, all of a sudden my gayness was

in question. At the time, I somewhat drunkenly told him that it still felt pretty gay when I was sucking dick. It shut him up pretty quickly.

Flash forward to a few months later in Wellington and another friend pulls out the same thinking. Technically speaking, this was the straightest my boyfriend and I had ever been. I wasn't a man (anymore, at least), so how could our relationship be gay? Again, I was stunned. He might not be in crop tops with a fan at all hours, but my boyfriend is a big ol' homo if you asked me. I laughed it off, but since then he's never been the same. He started referring to me as his girlfriend at work, he says yes ma'am when I ask him for things, he jokes that he's been secretly straight all along. It's very gender affirming, but are we seriously not gay anymore? I wouldn't stand for it.



ART BY MARIE MEINDL

I knew the challenge then, I had to somehow get even gayer! I embraced the crop top aesthetic, I grew long hair and kept my beard, I taught people how to douche in the student magazine... What, I can't reference it twice? I did everything in my power to make sure that I was as queer as they come. Soon enough, I realised I was definitely gay the whole time - but what I was thinking when I said gay was so narrow. Gay for me is what queer is to so many

others. Gay is a flexible word, and I was stuck in a world where it wasn't. In the words of my oracle, Kay Poyer (aka LadyMissKay), my relationship is gay on a level y'all could never understand.

So yes, I'm making the executive decision that two things can be true at the same time. You can be gay and trans, you can also be gay and awful. Me and my woke mob couldn't care less. Life is funny like that! Be who you are... for your priiiiiiiiiide.

IDENTITY

BEING A (TRANS) GIRL



EVA LIN

Okay. It might come out as a surprise to some of you, but... I'm trans. Don't know how many of you noticed, but consider this as my public coming out. Because this just so happens to be the Pride Edition, and I want to talk about something that's very personal to me.

There's a lot I could say about being a trans girl, but most of it can be summed up as being a girl in general. Y'know, stuff like having the bathroom be super close to the main entrance in the Library but

having it be eons away in the Science block. Stuff like knowing all the girl gossip, and poking fun at boys who have obviously tried too hard to attract one of us. (Spoiler warning: it doesn't work.) Stuff like being yelled at out of a - actually, I won't go there. This is the Pride edition, and I think it's far more interesting to talk about how I got here.

I was born opposite Grafton, but grew up in Wellington, in a (still somewhat) traditional Taiwanese family. I still consider Wellington as my home: It's walkable, it's on the cooler side, it's all the things I wish Auckland was. It's great, if you can get past the stench of all the politicians roaming round. It also has this little high school called Wellington College, which is where I went before I came to Auckland.

Now when I tell people this, they go "oh, you're from Wellington?"

They almost never go "wait, hang on, it's a boys' school!" (which I am eternally thankful for.)

And this is where the story begins. I've always known something was off - I could never socialise with the boys, the girls would be uncomfortable around me, and I would hate the sight of my own reflection and wonder why on earth I just couldn't be happy like everyone else. I finally got the answer in mid-2022 through a Discord chat, but being from a traditional family and going to a boys' school there was little I could do about it at the time. You know that feeling? Knowing what the problem is and not being able to do anything about it while it tears you apart? Now add seeing someone of another gender when you look in the mirror and you get a perfect recipe for depression and madness. I spent that one and a half years desperately waiting for uni to start. Because I was coming to Auckland. Because I was gonna be out of my parents' house.

Because university was accepting and inclusive of people like me.

You can see it in my writing record. I started seriously writing about half a year before the whole grand reveal, when my

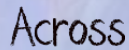
English teacher got us to write a creative writing piece. I loved it, and I've been writing ever since. But between that point in mid-2022 and the start of uni, most of my writing has been focused on the concept of being trapped. Being stuck in the confines of a body and world that did not fit me. Waiting, wanting to fly free. To be free. To be who I am on the inside. I remember writing a piece once where I finally woke up as a girl, only to reveal it was all a dream. It didn't win any awards (literally - I submitted it to a writing competition) but I still feel it encapsulates a lot of what I was going through at the time. Hell, if I get enough demand I might rework and publish it. That might be fun.

So now that I'm at uni, am I a happier person? Well, yes, I get to live as a girl now, but the problem hasn't vanished, it's merely changed. I'm still writing about wanting to be free... from uni.

(And if you want to read *that* piece, it's scheduled to release online on Wednesday)



ART BY CINDY LIMANTO



- Down

- ## Nanogram

Theme: The Prism's Prize

[illegible]

ARIES

MAR 21 - APR 19

You'll feel an unstoppable urge to rearrange your furniture at 3 AM this month—don't fight it. My instincts say lean into it! Attempt to create a space of positive energy and good vibes. This month will be lucky for you: a twenty-dollar note on the floor? Just for you. A free meal? Yes, please.



TAURUS

APR 20 - MAY 20

Try to hold space for yourself this month and **relax**. I'm serious. Go to the movies alone, Uber Eats a sweet treat in the evening for an insane 50 dollars—be free, Taurus, I'll allow it. Just watch out for those who try to ruin your month of peace with ideas of 'jobs' or 'future pathways'—disgusting.



GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUN 20

Am I seeing double, or are you just everywhere? **Slow down—you'll take someone's eye out!** You're running around like a headless chicken, and something's gotta give. Maybe limit your hobbies to two instead of fifty undeveloped interests. (Why did you sign up for underwater hockey?)



CANCER

JUN 21 - JUL 22

Time to **clean up**, Cancer. Your roommates are tired of your mess. That pot you left soaking in the sink two weeks ago is coming alive—and it may eat YOU next. Oh, how the tables have turned. You may have to learn to use a vacuum and a dishwasher this month. These are key life lessons for you—I'm proud.

LEO

JUL 23 - AUG 22

This is your time to shine, Leo. No, I'm serious—you're **literally glowing**. Wait, are you burning up? Book a doctor's appointment, babe, and down some vitamin C—just don't sit in the quiet section of the general library coughing intermittently for three hours.



VIRGO

AUG 23 - SEP 22

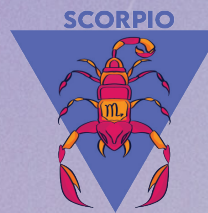
You aren't always right, but **this month, you might be**. An unfortunate haircut has left you with a bob that could challenge Dora the Explorer. I challenge you to go one step further—ask for the manager when a restaurant gets your order wrong. I know you want to complain. The Karen in you is screaming to come out.



LIBRA

SEP 23 - OCT 22

You'll struggle to make a single good decision this month. My suggestion? Say **yes** to everything—except if that guy from the club wants to buy you a drink. They look **dodgy**, and you certainly don't need another dose of alcohol, Libra.



SCORPIO

OCT 23 - NOV 21

Someone will test your patience this month. (Is it **Sagittarius?**). I swear they aren't doing it on purpose, but time will tell. When you feel like screaming, try journaling instead—or other self-help methods. Ice baths in the morning? Overnight oats? Whatever takes your fancy, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS

NOV 22 - DEC 21

You have crossed the line—become truly **insufferable** in every way. Don't look at me—everyone's thinking it. The only fix? Take some time off to reflect, reconnect with nature, **touch grass**, if you will. I suggest Albert Park—roll down some hills and sing *The Sound of Music* with Julie Andrews.



CAPRICORN

DEC 22 - JAN 19

You may indeed be **losing your mind**. A midlife crisis has struck early, and now your time is spent standing in line for student hubs and career advisors. Crying on campus is allowed this month. Spending ten dollars on an overpriced iced latte that tastes like watered-down wastewater is **not**.

AQUARIUS

JAN 20 - FEB 18

Winter is coming—please put on a **jacket** and check MetService before you head out. Being cold and complaining about it to every person you meet is not a good look. I also sense a **bad decision** coming. What will it be? I have absolutely no idea—but maybe avoid alcohol?

HOROSCOPES

BENNIEANDTHEJETTS

PISCES

FEB 19 - MAR 20

A television show has you **hooked**. I doubt you've done anything but click "Next Episode" on Netflix for the last month. I'm in support—just maybe get your own account because borrowing your friend's family account is **embarrassing**.





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