

Queer Architecture and the Facade
(how it is used as a defense mechanism and a way of self-expression)

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Abstract

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Within this written thesis and in conjunction with a physical practice I will explore the complex nature of identity as a universal concept throughout humanity. Examining how it develops and changes through time as a fluid thing. From my perspective, as a gender and sexually queer, first generation American from Central Europe, I will speak to my experience within that framework of identity and how that relates to queerness as a whole. I will first focus on the role of othered identities in this society and how the relationship between the normative and non-normative creates tension and danger for these identities. Building a groundwork centered around the use and understanding of the facade as a means for self expression and self defense, as well as the necessity for space that allows for the freedom of identity expression and the physical space to safely do so. A place that I will refer to as queer architecture. To construct a basis for understanding what could potentially constitute queer architecture, I will first outline some of the reasons as to why the necessity of this space is paramount for persons residing within a non-normative identity. Highlighting some of the facets that constitute western queer architecture, to hone in on what places and conditions are

necessary for its existence. In the second half I will focus on the aesthetics of this place while examining the themes, mythologies, histories, materials, and aesthetic decisions that are present within my own physical practice. With this work I want to construct a framework for what could possibly constitute queer architecture and its importance to those of non-normative identities, as well as bring up the politics of the body in relation to the feminine and the masculine as something that is intertwined, existing within a spectrum rather than within a system made up of binaries. Posing this as a place of potential, strength, acceptance, and freedom.

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There is something very interesting about what is created within the combination of rain and sun. With that combination, can come the elusive rainbow. Of course, just the combination of these two things does not guarantee the third. Just in itself, having the combination of rain and sun at the same time is rare, and maybe that's what makes the naturally occurring rainbow special; its elusive nature. When you are present within the conjunction of rain and sun it is hard not to feel an overwhelming feeling of confusion, awe, and wonder. A weather that is having an identity crisis, the mixture of happy and sad. Of course within these things the opposites can and will be found, never dare to assume that one begets the other. This combination of weather is fleeting, ephemeral in its transitory nature. The fact that it takes the perfect combination of elements within this ever changing stage, to create such beauty, that's what's so fascinating about it. There is always a fear that you will miss it in its purest and strongest form, and you will watch as long as you can stand it to experience every single moment of this force's life. To be able to witness the most emblematic of the self-conscious queer experience, is to behold
rainbow: Rainbow=Identity Crisis=Beauty.

1

'The act of self-assigning yourself within the identity of queer is an act of acknowledging and associating yourself outside of the identity "normal." This realization of "un-normalness" is the beginning of a recognition and a defiance/rejection of the mainstream (Heterosexual Cisgendered Western Culture), and an acceptance of the obtuse, the unique, and of self-determination: to exist as queer defiance.' The aim isn't to be admitted to the normal, but to question what the presumption of normal is as a way to navigate and mitigate the potential threats that can come from that mode of thinking.

To acknowledge those differences and be "loud and proud" or just barely exhibiting some signs of un-normalcy, is dangerous. Understanding, or thinking that one understands where one "belongs" is a fundamental notion that doesn't draw attention to itself unless that understanding comes into question. Similarly to the phenomenon of being self-unaware of individual parts of your body until they draw attention to themselves through a glitch in function. Within the heteronormative narrative there is an inherent understanding of belonging within the binaries that have been laid out. I am not suggesting that this narrative doesn't have ridiculous hierarchical structures of perceived "ideal" body image, class, and worth. But there is an ingrained understanding of one fitting into those binaries and being a part of the "norm." But when you are born into a body that has never felt right, or with a sexual orientation that is not accepted, from birth you are forced to engage and reckon with your un-normalness. The weight and emotional trauma (not to mention the potential physical trauma) that can have on a human being is extreme.

An individual that has self-identified as queer and has an understanding of their relation to “normalacy,” must have an understanding of restraint. Why do we pay so much attention to the in-between? Why do we mostly only apply color, glitter, jewels, to our eyes, nails, and hair? Why don't we go all the way? Being able to utilize restraint, accents and pushes forward the non-in-between spaces of the body, leaving the body as a body and not an abstraction. Most importantly it is an act of self-preservation. Restraint validates, allowing the thing (body) to exist within culture. To deviate too far from normal standards removes the ability to exist within (any) culture. Restraint demonstrates understanding of the context wherein your body can and can't exist. Without restraint you transcend seduction and become something else, you remove your humanness and in so doing your ability to belong.

Restraint also comes from a place of fear. *'Queer space is born in the closet, it's the place where interiority starts. It is a dark space at the heart of the home. It contains the building blocks for your social constructions, and the disused pieces of the past. It is a place to hide, to create worlds for yourself out of the past and for the future in a secure environment'*². Betsky positions the closet as only a dark space central to the home, but I argue that it can be much more than that. It can also be a place with much light and support, and can also exist without a home with little to no support. Within this fluid plane of transition is the beginning of an ingrained need for secrecy, a cautiousness to be able to fulfil the primal desire for self exploration, expression, and also self preservation. It is a slow process of understanding, trying new things, venturing away and out from the secure space of the “closet” to see how it's received and how you feel. The more that is changed or acknowledged the more potential there is for backlash. To understand oneself you must understand restraint, to be able to experience what's not enough and what is too much.

Belonging and the need to belong is so important in understanding human behavior. Within every culture exists a normal culture, and because of that there must be a counter culture, or subculture to balance out the societal structure. A counter culture or culture that is defined by its otherness is built off of its desire to exist within the normal culture. Not to be normal, but to be able to flow into and out of that culture without fear and scrutiny.

Between the different subgroups within the overarching 'queer' umbrella, the groups don't necessarily feel safe or can traverse the different spaces equally. Even within every counter culture there forms a normalized standard. Human society is strongly structured from a need for community, creating the need of signifiers to identify one another. *'In this contradictory environment was/is simultaneously welcoming and hostile, we argued that sexual orientation was not the only significant way to differ from heteronormativity - that homo, hetero, and bi in*

fact all depended on similar understandings of 'man' and 'woman', which trans problematized. People with trans identities could describe themselves as men and women too - or resist the binary categorization altogether - but in doing so they either queered the dominant relationship of sexed body and gendered subject. In so doing the distinction between gender queer and orientation queer had to be made to distinguish the experience of a more marginalized experience. In this case homonormativity lies in misconstruing trans as either a gender or a sexual orientation, misconstrued as a distinct gender, trans people are simply considered another type of human other than either man or woman. But misconstrued as a sexual orientation category, because of its inclusion within the LGB - T, the 'T' becomes a separate category within the homonarrative that is different from gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and of course straights. In this model (for the most part) each identity is attracted to its own identity and stays within it. And so in this way the 'T' has become a containment mechanism for 'gender trouble'.³

The misunderstanding between the difference of orientation and gender, causes a divide between the two. However, due to its inclusion this creates a feeling that each classification needs the other, or is the same thing. Quite frequently, someone who presents and identifies as feminine is frequently met by hostility within both queer and straight communities. fem presenting/identifying people have to use seduction to be accepted and seen as non threatening, made possible by the fact that everything is hyper sexualized. Passivity and seduction are presented as another mechanism for self preservation, similarly to restraint. This potential to be objectified and dominated keeps the feminine presenting person continually aware of the masculine presence. *'To be arranged to be on display by themselves and by everyone around them, to celebrate the male voyeur. 'Behind every glance is a judgement, reflected back like a mirror. A woman is always accompanied except when quite alone but even then is accompanied by the vision of herself.'*

There is something to be said about someone who has had an obviously distinct appearance/identity that falls within the binaries of the non-normalcy. People that have an identity that easily falls into one of these categories can and do still have a hard time coming to terms with that difference, sometimes never coming to terms with that difference. But for those that have there is less difficulty to be accepted, instilling a stronger confidence. People need to be accepted, to have others accept them and validate them and their choices. In the experience of the self-conscious queer every decision that you make is questioned, causing a continually present fear of non-acceptance within both hetero/non-hetero communities. Without being able to easily define yourself within some sort of hierarchy of binary, creating uncertainty, leaving the individual little to no possibility for stability and confidence to grow.

As I have said before, more often than not fem presenting individuals are met with violence and hostility. However there is a difference in violence between feminine-bodied-fem-presenting being of a more domestic type of violence, whereas someone who is male-bodied-fem-presenting is met with a more immediate type of violence. The level of violence is potentially mitigated by the varying levels of seductiveness, passivity, or passability that the individual is able/willing to exude. Two key things here are passability and seduction. To be able to pass you have to be able to seduce, and with that you need confidence. Objectification is an act of violence through the disregard of the human being. An individual with the identity of a feminine-bodied-fem is born with the understanding that they will be objectified and fetichized for that body. As a male-bodied-fem-presenting individual your level of seductiveness within all of the communities hinges on the level of passability, and even if you're able to "pass" to the point of assimilation there is always the potential threat of fetichization and violence from the masculine gaze.

These things only reiterate the need for queer space. And because queer space doesn't exist within a vacuum, and "queer space" is such an umbrella term to encompass many different things, it is quintessential to have these spaces. Giving space for the manifestation and existence of community. *'The club is the most powerful architecture that I knew, it is a useless, amoral, and sensual place, a place that only lives in and for experience' place of liberation that relied on ritual, role playing, operatic exaggeration - a space of pure artifice.* Within this space the need for restraint is removed. Within this space anything outside of the sphere of the non-offensive (hopefully) and the non-normal (and even then), is expected and desired. An ostentatious display of self, desire, and seduction. *'The goal of queer space/experience is orgasm. It is the space in which your body dissolves into the world, extending the body into space.'* It is within this space where I have always felt the most comfortable and the most accepted. It is the (my) desire to be able to exist, enveloped in this plane of ecstasy for as long as possible, created by being able to be what you are, whatever that is to the fullest extent of what you want. This, is the essence of Queer Architecture.

It is necessary to ground these ideas within a framework that exists on this earth, rather than leaving it to exist only within its theoretical, ethereal form. Queer architecture in its true form is the antithesis of physical architecture. A space free from non-normative hatred as well as the heritage and history of normative architecture and institution. It is a space of fluidity, shifting based on the occupants and conditions that are present at that time. Just because a physical site at one point in time merged with the right conditions to create a happening of queer architecture, does not mean that the space from here on out exists as that architecture. Up to

this point, some of the reasons have been declared pertaining as to why the necessity of this space is paramount for persons residing within a non-normative identity. From this point on, I hope to focus on the aesthetics of what constitutes western queer architecture, identity in a semi-universal way, and if need be, to further elaborate on the concepts that were outlined above.

2

The queer experience more often than not is born in the closet, establishing a need for secrecy. This necessitates the ability to hone the skill of presenting a facade and as a direct result, the world becomes a stage. Within human cultures across the globe there is common reference or practice surrounding some sort of variation to the existence of a version of a utopia, heaven, or paradise. These potential places reference a mixture of motifs, objects, and arrangements that relate back to nature and the body.

A prime example of this is the architecture and design of the Western European aristocracy. The aristocracy became and in a lot of cases remains to be a symbol to the essence of queer space in the western world. Through privilege and wealth, they were able to remove themselves from the duties, woes, and cares of everyday life. That privilege allowed them the time and money to create these spaces that would come to be an aesthetic of facade, opulence, and self-reflection. The birth of the Renaissance through the Victorian era was the epitome of the aristocracy's lavishness, becoming a symbol for the facade, utopia, and the ephemeral.

What the aesthetics of the aristocracy are really doing within the context of queer architecture is utilizing the concept of opulence as a demonstration of a higher social status. Opulence has been used for hundreds of years to display wealth as a trophy or indication of power and success. In this case opulence becomes the aesthetic of wealth. However, to quote the transgender Youtube star, Natalie Wynn, *"you don't need wealth to be opulent, however opulence is not abundance, opulence is the aesthetic of abundance."*¹⁵ Queers have been using this knowledge for most of their existence within western cultures to blend in as well as to embed that identity within common society. This 'fake it till you make it' mentality can be directly linked back to the ballroom scene of the 80's and 90's in the form of "realness." *'Realness has*

*become a beloved password among modern drag queens and their gay audiences. But what is often forgotten in modern use of the term is that, in fact the word 'realness' in Paris is Burning means the very opposite – it is not just a sassy by-word for a convincing costume but a tragicomic disguise of the chasm between what is being emulated and what is absent (namely racial justice, class equality and safety). Realness, in this sense, ought to be as harrowing as it is captivating and enchanting. I think this is an important idea to remember when looking at the film's legacy. The opulent aesthetics of the balls have been preserved and widely distributed in a now-commoditised gay culture where drag and its slang are popular but, so too has the film's central chasm widened.¹⁶ The use of these aesthetics and themes inherently tied to whiteness and high class are used to create the illusion of wealth and success. Through the use of artifice, the ability to defy this structure of class can exist by creating the illusion that a high status, (which has been unjustly kept out reach), has been achieved. For those of a minority identity, it is important to be able to feel like you are living or that you can live a life of luxury. This allows for the individual to know that attaining that level of wealth/status is possible and allows for the upper class to see/imagine those identities included with "their" realm of higher status and success. Dorian Correy from *Paris is Burning* puts it this way, "In real life you can't get a job as an executive unless you have the educational background and the opportunity. Now, the fact that you are not an executive is merely because of the social standing of life. Black people have a hard time getting anywhere and those that do are usually straight. In a ballroom you can be anything you want. You're not really an executive but you're looking like an executive. You're showing the straight world that I can be an executive if I had the opportunity because can look like one, and that is like a fulfilment."¹⁷*

I am sure that there are many that actually desire everything to be bejeweled in diamonds rather than plastic imitations of the thing, the flocked wallpaper to actually be silk, or all the fakes to be originals. But the creation of imitations, and the use of fakes is paramount to the act of queering a space. Within this context you, as the individual, are not duped by that facade of the object's fakeness by thinking they are real. But, by understanding that these objects are imitations of imitations, and understanding the power that these objects have because of that fact. Through the use and understanding of these facade objects one can create the mystery required to begin creating a place of self-construction, self-reflection, and the projection of one's internal and external self. The act of creating one's pleasure palace is the

act of attempting to be able to extend one's body from the proverbial closet, to walk freely in the world.

The relationship that exists between nature, the garden, fantasy, and desire is the core and potentially the genesis of these transglobal narratives that surround the belief of a potential future utopia. The human species has an interesting and complicated relationship with the natural world. There is a back and forth that exists in regards to whether or not humans are a part of, or separate from nature. At one time in history, the human species grew and evolved out of natural processes that inherently balances every species' existence on this planet. But at some point a divergence occurred where humanity began to develop technologies and an understanding of the self. These advances in technologies and philosophies allowed for the movement away from the need for primal instinct to survive. This allowed for time to develop cultures and for the steady growth in population, quickly developing an imbalance within the circle of life on this planet. It is within this imbalance and these advancements that humanity separated itself from something of nature to something different. This separation from, and the loss of the primal self has a similar relationship that exists between the shift from childhood to adulthood in present day life. There is a freedom and connection with the earth and the cosmos that is lost within this transition. *'Childhood inspires moral clarity because it allows us to think back to a time before morality became complicated. As we mature, our moral decisions acquire the baggage of compromise and conflicting principles.'*¹³ What Alter is stating here has a similarity with our relationship to nature. Much of adult life is spent wanting for the time of childhood, before complication; to exist without the consequence of immoral decisions and actions. Human's creation of, and desire for, a paradise or utopia is strongly based off this relationship with nature, and the balance it strikes with itself. This desire drives people to create these utopic enlightened places in the image of our old and lost primal relationship with nature. These places are always based within the future and continually pushes humanity to work towards this infinite potential. Similarly to the shift from childhood to adulthood, humanity's connection with nature is returned back towards innocence and without morality.

So many of the patterns, organization of space, and ideas that were referenced were of that connection to the gardens of heaven and the forests of old. The garden is all about potential, time, the here, and the elsewhere. The garden is a facade in the fact that gardens must always be built and organized, it cannot exist on its own without human hands. These heavily constructed spaces are a physical replication of the infliction of human control on nature. This organization of nature is unnatural, and because of this becomes a replication of our idea

of nature - not a replication of nature, and as such - becomes a paradigm of paradise. The heavily orchestrated garden is a contrived space, implicating it as a stage. Creating a never ending circle of questioning what is real and what is fake. This dichotomy of what is idealized and what is reality creates a duality within the space that is paradoxically both stabilizing and destabilizing. This fluidity forms it as an arena of potential fantasy, nostalgic dreamspace, and mystery. *'It allows us to place ourselves in the world, giving our bodies context in relation to others, and allows us to create an artificial world that replaces the one that we have remade.'*

At the heart of this space (most of the time) lies the fountain, a focal point of this place of artifice. The fountain is a symbol of the oasis, life needs water, water is life, and the fountain is an ode to that fact. A never ending spring of water, that seems to exist without the means of human hands with no beginning or end, exists in perpetuity. Its essence as an object is nurturing; giving and sustaining life, reflecting the similar tendencies of a mother. The fountain is a very feminine object in correlation with that relationship, but doesn't solely exist within that classification of gender. It lives a dual life, existing in a sphere of confused identity, exhibiting both masculine and feminine traits. While this object emanates motherly and feminine qualities, it can't be ignored that the act of the continuously spurting liquid, forming steady streams in a conspicuous display of extravagance and power is a very masculine trait. The combination of these traits within this object makes the fountain a very queer object- if not one of the queerest of objects. It is fitting that this thing exists centerfold to one of the most contrived and staged spaces.

Most of the interior designs, motifs, and objects that were created during the renaissance, rococo, and victorian eras were made to reference these gardens as well as The Garden of Genesis and the various portrayals of Heaven. When examining the interior of architecture during this period, the orientation of these spaces were created to situate the human body within an orientation of earth. The garden surrounding and occupying the horizontal human plane then progresses to the vertical plane of the heavenly skies above. The walls and objects surrounding the room were variations of objects with floral ornamentations, floral wallpaper, and mirrors reflecting the individual(s) within this space of earth and heaven(paradise). These interior gardens mirrored the exterior as a continuous reminder of what was hoped to come within the next life, the ultimate eventuality of the age.



Fig. 1

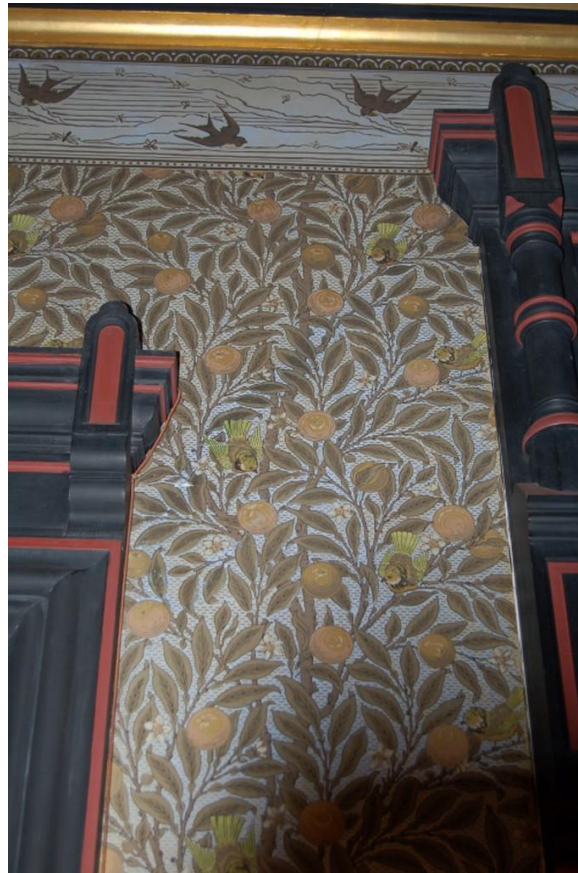


Fig. 2

Repeat pattern, presented through the forms of tapestry, wall hangings, velvet, silk, masonry, murals, and wallpaper. Wallpaper was originally created as a cheaper way for the aristocracy to imitate the more expensive fineries that only royalty could afford. The invention of flocked wallpapers in the late 17th century was used to imitate Damascus and silk wall hangings, and exists as an indication that it originated from an intention to imitate. The ephemeral nature that exists due to its mimicry of things made to last, as well as its fragility and ability to be easily removed, associated it with those who were shallow, false, and frivolous. The relationship it has with deception, illusion, the ephemeral, and when chosen to be used over long lasting objects and materials, wallpaper becomes a metaphor for dishonesty and dissimulation. Demonstrating the aristocracies' tendency to value appearance over substance and indicates a decline in values both moral and social. *"In the old days people built for two to three hundred years. The house was furnished with tapestries to last as long as the building. The trees that were planted were the children's heritage; they were sacred woodlands. Today forests are felled, children are left with debts, paper on their walls, and homes fall to pieces."* But wallpaper's prominence coincided with the invention of the machine printing press, quickly removing it as a commodity making it much cheaper and accessible to lower class households. Its decline from a luxurious and elegant commodity became suddenly commonplace, banal, and cliché. This shifted it from being a representation of wealth to being a cliché of wealth, further solidifying its connection to the facade. Not only does it become a commonly used material to queer a space, it also attempts to transcend class and becomes kitsch in doing so. Most of the styles and motifs used during the Renaissance through the Victorian era became the example of decadence, obscenity, and lavishness for the western world. These imitations reference the natural, generally existing as abstractions of the natural world. Styles and mythological lore passed down from generation to generation, creating a lineage of history and styles that allowed individuals to attempt to assimilate within a higher social class.

The desire to exist within the class of the elite is surely nothing new. Since the rise of the internet and social media, fashion/beauty trends, celebrities' lives, and advertising have become increasingly more accessible and present within our daily lives. This access is only heightened on a massive scale with the rapid development of the smartphone. These devices have allowed for the continual flow of information as well as the continual comparison of oneself to said information. Within the present day, it is no longer natural to exist within the human species without the presence of these devices. This cyborg-esq relationship between human and smartphone allows for convenience, access to the expanse of human knowledge, and self

expression. But it also allows for ease of access to users from ruling bodies, corporations, and data collection of information that is willingly given by the users of these platforms and devices. All of these things, especially the corporations, are the driving forces and entities in control of these trends. While the ability to express oneself is a benefit of many of these platforms, it allows for a curated presentation of that expression. The space that exists between content creator and content viewer is a significant one that can be exposed or totally hidden if the creator chooses. This space between the interior and exterior is where the facade of one's identity can be created, to both the outside viewer and the creator themselves. The personal facade originates from a place of truth and falseness. It is something that is developed, learned, unlearned, understood, and misunderstood. It is here within this space of potential we can see one facet of modern day Queer Architecture.

This plane of potentiality is forever bound within an understanding that the role of desire is a fundamental component of its construction and existence. Oscar Wilde states it perfectly within this quote; *“A map of the world that does not include utopia is not worth glancing at.”*¹³ I strongly believe that to be able to live without desire is the key to existing within a place of bliss, and in essence, utopia. Desire is something that always exists attached to something within the future. Whether in a material or experiential way, once that thing has been achieved, consumed, or attained it can no longer be desired. The thirst for the thing is always satiated within the present. Once that thing has passed or is no longer in existence, that thing can now only be desired through the memory of its experience, situating that form of desire within the past. The anticipation of the potential to experience it once again, places the other form of desire within the future. Jose Munoz states that the existence of this queer utopia is something that can only be within a future place. As referenced earlier, queerness has become this universalized, categorical lexicon of the anti-normal, or in other words a rejection of the here and now through the existence as queer. *“Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future.”*¹⁴ This reading of what queer architecture is, structures it as this imaginal understanding or construction of a balance or harmony between the non-othered and othered identities. It is something that is always being worked towards and acknowledged, but will never be achievable by humanity. I agree and disagree with this ideation of the existence of this space. If this understanding is what is to be solely applied within the context of reaching an equilibrium of acceptance and equality within the entirety of the universe, eliminating any identity as an other

and removing the current structure of classification by identity groups. Most likely Munoz's statement above is true, but this leaves us with a level of futility and disconnection with the agency that we do actually have to work towards this better potential future.

Most of the world, and certainly the western world's socio-economic structure is built on the keystone of the disparaging differences between different identity groups, but more importantly the differences between classes and wealth. The possibility of attaining wealth, is the promise and the driving force of this capital system that we call America. We are inundated with examples of these "came from nothing" celebrity stories within the media and advertising. This is exacerbated by platforms like Youtube and Tiktok which are designed for young adults and teenagers. These endless voids of content produce a few internet celebrities such as Jeffree Star and Gigi Gorgeous, but leaves most viewers without this promised wealth. These celebrities use the self-made rags-to-riches narrative to keep them relatable to their fans and as an inspiration to many while still being able to flaunt their newly acquired wealth, demonstrating their escape from the lower class that they were born into.

This understanding of the differences between social classes is so deeply ingrained within western society, that the role of desire within our existence is deeply experienced and taught at a very early age. This grooms the populace to accept a lack of agency for being able to work towards a more balanced future. It is necessary to be able to understand the importance of what Munoz is saying when examining queerness and queer architecture but it is also important to take a more circumscribed approach as well. The journey to achieve any level of utopia or enter into some form of queer architecture starts with the self and grows outward from there. It begins with a questioning of that self and grows into an ever shifting understanding of identity. Hopefully reaching a level of acceptance that the individual can move through the world with less fear and desire. It is in these small displays of triumph that an impact is made onto the community, near and far. The world needs those individuals to do that internal and external work to show what is possible. Inspiring and instilling hope into all the young and old queers and creating space to embrace the exposure of othered identities. Normalizing their existences within heteronormative culture.

~ May God Have Mercy On Your Lip Gloss ~



Ok Gorgeous, so time to spill the tea. This fucking institution won't let me write my "real" name on this "official" document. Let me tell you now bitches, the name is Jazzy and don't you forget it. Now that you have made it this far we can be on a first name basis. Either, you were committed to reading this because you like me as an individual or because you were genuinely interested in reading it and it was worth it to you to wade through this academic-ie sludge. But I felt that it was necessary to write only in that way because most of my life I believed that it was the only way to be seen as valid within the institution and as an artist? (if that is what I am at this point). Imposter syndrome isn't as present as it once was, in relation to my inclusion and acceptance within the LGBTQ + cultures and communities. However, I still feel like an imposter within the institution. But honestly, I think that is a good thing, and I don't know if I will ever stop feeling like an imposter within that space. I can, and to some degree have, learned how to talk and present myself like them. But, maybe it is because no matter how hard I try I will never truly be one of them. This is where intentions matter. I don't think that it should be the priority for a minority or of an othered identity to try to actually become one of them and exist within the institution without feeling othered. Because, let's face it sis, it's never going to happen. You should be subjecting yourself to the torment of the institution only if you want to better yourself, it's free, and to learn how it functions so that you can use that knowledge to critique and hopefully change it from within or something. Building up a facade around yourself requires some degree of fluency on how to walk and talk semi-freely among them.

Pleasure Palace is a work that I have been thinking about for a long time. The final form and understanding of what this thing represents has shifted and altered over the years as a fluid, ephemeral thing, shifting as my understanding of my identity has grown stronger. I knew coming to the University of Washington for graduate studies would force me to deal with some of the stresses in my life that I could have continued to avoid if I had stayed away. Like...coming out to my parents. LOL. 🌈🍑🍆🍌🍑🌈 I had reached a point in my life where I couldn't hide it anymore, nor did I want to. Whether or not they knew, this still is a mystery to me. My work existed as a place and a framework for me to be able to explore identity and sexuality. But this choice to make art wasn't really an acceptable one within my family, forcing me to push myself to feel valid in both their eyes and my own(also I have obsessive work habits and am pretty particular so all of these parental pressures are self imposed to some degree). As the practice

has progressed, more of the secrets that I had held close or didn't even know I had, were being exposed and released into the world. Culminating at this point within my seven year practice as a pretty ridiculous coming out story. I don't know about you queens, but that seems pretty extra, and let's say it, pretty gay of me (also pretty fabulous, obviously) to feel the need to get a masters degree, write this document, and make some art(or whatever) about it.

Some of the reasons for the aesthetic choices that I make within the two works have been examined and laid out in previous chapters. If necessary I might touch on them again but I don't really want to, so you will probably have to be ok with what you get. Also, I have been saying a lot things like othered, heteronormative, and non-normative....but from now on if it comes up I will refer to the difference as normies and non-normies, because I can only say heteronormative-cis-white-blah-blah-blah so many times before my eyes explode.

What I love about *Pleasure Palace* is that it simultaneously speaks to what is a turning point within my making practice. A denouement of a practice that was caught in an in-between, a transitional or liminal space. I have always felt that my work has been accessible on some level to any viewer, but it was mostly an inward facing practice. Focusing on hyper personal moments or things within my life, while also trying to scratch the surface of the greater, underlying issues that these moments or things represented. This way of working was necessary for me to grow as an individual, and be able to develop a practice that could be both inward and outward facing. *Pleasure Palace* represents both a beginning and an end, still retaining the references and themes that I have used before and will continue to use. Congruently being able to speak to the themes of identity, self, body politics, class, art, etc without explicitly using my own hyper personal narrative.

Pleasure Palace is made up of two separate spaces, north and south. These two spaces must work in tandem, speaking to two different facets of identity that couldn't be shown together in the same space.

In the northern space a thin steel ring hangs from the ceiling with a diameter of twelve feet. From that ring hangs a length of semi-reflective holographic vinyl with a pattern resembling a wallpaper made of hand pressed and dried daffodil flowers that fully encloses the shape. From the bottom of the vinyl there is a distance of free space that is about knee length, making the height from floor to steel ring to be about half a foot over average human height. The diameter isn't much smaller than the diameter of the room, providing the viewer about three to four feet to walk around, giving it a strong presence within the space. Projected over the ring is a video that spans the entire width of the wall that runs for around thirty minutes within a relatively seamless loop.

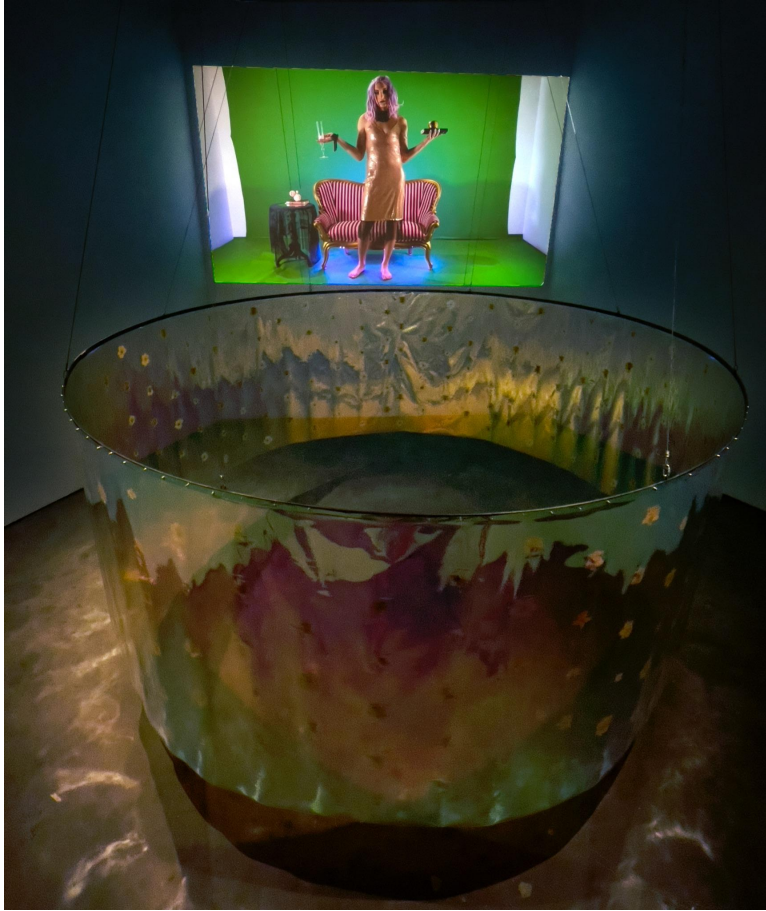


Fig. 3 & Fig. 4





Fig. 5

The circle is an important shape when looking at what constitutes queer architecture. It is a symbol of the passage of time, or really, it is the passage of cycles. Time is a human construct that tries to frame that passage as a linear progression, rather than the way that nature demonstrates it, through naturally repeating versions of itself. The circle is a never ending thing that encompasses the totality of the universe, letting everything in and everything out simultaneously. There isn't a starting point, nor is there an ending point. And let's be honest folks, we all know what the circle or at least the oval represents within human symbolism, and it's clearly the best shape, duh. 🙄👉

The sheer size of the ring in comparison to the room, not to mention the gorgeous (if I may say) reflective and distortive quality of the material forces the viewer to consider their body in relation to it. The artist Math Bass considers their work as a means to interrogate the role of the body in art and in the act of gender performance. Bass believes that "A lot of queer practices

hover over the “thingness” of the body as a way of exploring the weight and history of that body to be able to explore the politics of making bodies into ‘things’ and making things into ‘bodies’. This prompts us to see material in a different way, to show against or to the side of its intended use is a queer tactic.¹⁰”



Fig. 6

Part of what Bass is saying is intertwined with theoretical queerness and its relation to the art world. This objectification of the self or implication of that objectification, and you know me, objectify me whenever you want daddy, but I will want something in return. No free rides for that kind of behavior, unless I want it. Anyway..., objectification within an art sense places that identity or body as something that is valuable in the context as art. This also removes some of the individuality within the body allowing for more of a general level of accessibility to be able to project themselves onto the work as well as removes some of the conditional constraints that a specific body could carry. Queerness as an identity has become so universalized for the

LGBTQ+ situation (even us gays struggle with that mess of an acronym, you are not alone normies!), that it has removed itself as an identity to some degree. Bass goes on to say that *“The body is a location, an action or a possible action. Queerness not as an identity but more as a space to interrogate the contours of identity itself. (queerness as a space of generosity, giving space for people to enter the work and in some cases project themselves onto the work)¹⁰.”*

The delineation of queerness as a concrete identity is one of the important connective facets to understanding queer architecture. This positions it as something that exists both physically and mentally as a means for interrogation, experimentation, and habitation. It exists on a spectrum that travels with you through time, developing and changing as you do.

Let's be real, I probably just want to be a beautiful, hot, straight white girl externally, and internally. And as a beautiful white girl, you know what I love? You guessed it, 🌻🌻🌻 , I can be a basic bitch sometimes too, and giving me them def won't harm your chances, if you know what I mean. Flowers are the perfect symbols for time, life, death, beauty, and the grotesque. They are abundant within the lore and mythologies that have been passed down through cultures and time since the dawn of human time. One story that I love in particular is the Narcissus story. Narcissus is a character from greek mythology, existing as a young, male hunter known for his beauty, aloofness, and lack of interest in his many female and male suitors. Eventually, after one particularly harsh rejection of a nymph or spirit, Narcissus was cursed to only be able to fall in love with an impossible love. One day, he is wandering through the forest until comes across a small pool, seeing a reflection of himself. He immediately falls in love with his reflection, transfixed with the individual that he sees staring back at him. He dares not leave the side of the pool, for the fear of losing his one true love. Try as he might he could not make any physical connection with the reflection in the pool. His will was unshattered and eventually withered away until his death next to the pool, to be replaced with the flower of Narcissus aka the daffodil.

Ok sisters! Story time. I have a lot of interest in this story, because all of the different versions that originated from different cultures and subcultures end up concluding with the same ending. It has an importance throughout history and art that continues to evolve and present itself in contemporary art. The pool is most likely the first way that the human species was confronted with a reflection of itself. Comparing that initial encounter with the rate that social media and technology is moving in a direction of total curated transparency is an alarming comparison. The state of our appearance must be considered at all times to be able to present what we think is our ideal image reflecting back at us.

Narcissism can be traced back from this story, and this story is generally exhibited and told as a cautionary tale, giving a warning of the negative effects of vanity. But like most things, there exists a level of fluidity and duality within this story of reflection. The tale of Narcissus is also linked as a symbol or metaphor for cis gendered gayness. In this story we see a beautiful young man who falls in love with a reflection of a beautiful young man. This interpretation of a gay narrative is supported by his consistent rebuttals of any advances from the opposite gender. Gayness framed in this narrative gives us an entry point for seeing the good side to what the mirror, as a reflective void, can offer. As a tool, the mirror is the place for self examination, self criticality, acceptance, and rejection. It is here that I reject this story as a cautionary tale, but as a tale of self acceptance, love, and self understanding. Bringing to light an example of gayness within a commonly told mythology.

It would be remiss of me, and probably make me a bad, white gay if I did not reference Oscar Wilde at least twice in this writing. There is a direct link between the stories of Narcissus and the story of Dorian Gray. Wilde wrote six parables within his book *Poems as Prose* directly referencing Narcissus. The writer Gregory W. BredBeck suggests a similar thing that I am suggesting above about the narcissus story as one of “sexual inversion.” *“For the present it is sufficient to recognize that the mere invocation of Narcissus suggests the potentiality of sexual inversion, and that this is potentially further activated within Wilde’s text, The Disciple, by its linkage with sexual inversion through him the writer.”*¹⁸ I don’t think that you can read *The Picture of Dorian Gray* without taking into account the tale of Narcissus as an obvious influence. These two stories exist on opposing ends of the effects of vanity. Where Narcissus exists, demonstrates the benefit of vanity, whereas Dorian Gray exemplifies the negative and opposite side. Narcissus’s relationship with his reflection or his self image is one that is based out of love. His wants and desires are made clear in the enraptured moments with his reflection. The inability to desire anything other than what exists in those moments eventually brings about his death, demonstrating that his desire's strength will never supersede the present. Dorian Gray’s relationship with his self image is one of naive confidence, quickly developing into a fear of the passage of time and the inevitability of his aged self image. The fear develops with a certain futurity, for the inevitability of aging, as well as the being consumed by the desire of what would be lost. The fears Dorian Gray has removes any chance to be able to live in the present. He will live forever as an iconic symbol for white youth and beauty, but the ability to experience human desire will fade as will his ability to experience what it is to be human at all. But, I mean if it were up to me, I would want to be a symbol of feminine beauty for eternity, but what do I know. That’s just the basic coming out again.

The use of the daffodil to construct a pattern that mimics wallpaper links this work to the difference of these two stories. Each real, hand picked flower is pressed, and dried. Encased within the semi transparent vinyl, each flower is preserved in the height of its beauty. If the daffodil is what was left behind when the life of Narcissus ended, then the vinyl is the shimmering pool that we all stare deeply within. Always distorting the viewer's reflection back at them while allowing for the ability to see past their reflection and preserved flowers into the interior of the ring. Causing the gaze to be simultaneously directed upon and within.

The distance that exists between the floor and the bottom of the vinyl potentially allows for the viewer to enter the interior of the space. If the desire is present enough, the requirement of getting on hands and knees, and maybe even the stomach becomes evident. And you know we love crawling on the floor. This desire forces the viewer to assume a position that is associated with the primal as well as a return to infancy. From outside of the ring, the vinyl will always get in the way and distort the massive video that is projected behind and above it. This forces the viewer to either look through the vinyl, reflecting themselves while also distorting the video. Unless they walk around the ring until directly under the video. Forcing the gaze to come from underneath, removing any power they may have commanded. The interior of the ring has a feeling of lightness and openness that the outside does not. This vantage point allows for the choice to watch unaltered or altered by the circular membrane that encapsulates them depending on their position.



Fig. 7

This unavoidable reconciliation that happens with the body works in a very similar way to the Andy Warhol piece, *Silver Clouds*. Originally created to exist as set design for Merce Cunningham's *RainForest*, this piece has since existed as its own installation and continues to do so. Not only does this piece reflect the participants' image as they bounce the silver mylar balloons, but it activates the body within the performance of the work. *"I would add the silver pillows to this list of experiments in portraiture. Onstage during Cunningham's RainForest they represent reflective pools to all the dancers who interact with them. In a similar fashion they offer museum visitors their very own portraits of self and their own private pools of contemplation, thus allowing the audience to enter the "stage" themselves. The sway of the airborne pillow represents the animating force of the unreality that is promised by the Narcissistic, an unreality that is most poignant for the way it promotes a poetic contemplation of the world that can see past the screen of a coercive performance principle that rigidly structures*

*both our work and play.*¹⁹” Jose Munoz links this work within the lineage of a gay reading of Narcissus as well as tying this work to the concept of the stage. The stage in this



Fig. 8

sense, positions the work and what the Narcissus story represents as a reflection of real life and as a performance.

Video, portraiture, and performance have been used extensively as a way to express identity, especially identities of us non-normies. These three mediums have the ability to exist within the world with a boundarylessness when representing the presence of the body. The history of portraiture is one that is explicitly connected to the representation of the western upper classes, existing as one of the earlier avenues of expression that visually represents the idea of world making, or in other words, the “wish-landscape.”²⁰ These two facts about portraiture is also what makes it so useful when representing non-normies against and within normal culture. Similarly to how opulence can be employed, the iconic nature associated with representationally massive oil painting allows for the insertion of a queer body into that space demonstrating that non-normies can and will exist in that space. Flipping the iconic and traditional use of the medium on its head to critique the system and class that historically lays claim to it. And you know, we love turning heads honey.

Now, I am going to be honest, I have always been obsessed and infatuated with hyper femininity. The look of it, the process of it, the existence of it, It is the most amazing and most powerful thing on this planet. And when I am able to exist within some semblance of my true form, I am hot 🔥🔥🔥. *snapz*. Over the years I have formed my understanding of who I truly am through interpersonal relationships and from emulating icons. A lot of my influences come from pop singers like Ariana Grande and Lady Gaga, roles that are played by actors on tv, or internet celebrities from Youtube like Jeffree Star and Natalie Wynn. I have always been interested in how role models, especially celebrities, influence how people act and present themselves and how they can help or harm one's confidence. Liz Taylor is a transgender character in the American FX show: *American Horror Story* played by the actor Denis O'Hare. (unfortunately O'Hare is not actually transgender, but seeing such a strong transgender character on popular TV gave me hope when I needed it.) Through the emulation of the real actor Liz Taylor, who is a timeless, hyper feminine icon, this character exudes a level of confidence, grace, and comfort that anyone should wish to express and feel in their own skin. I see them as a role model and as an example of how I wish to present myself.

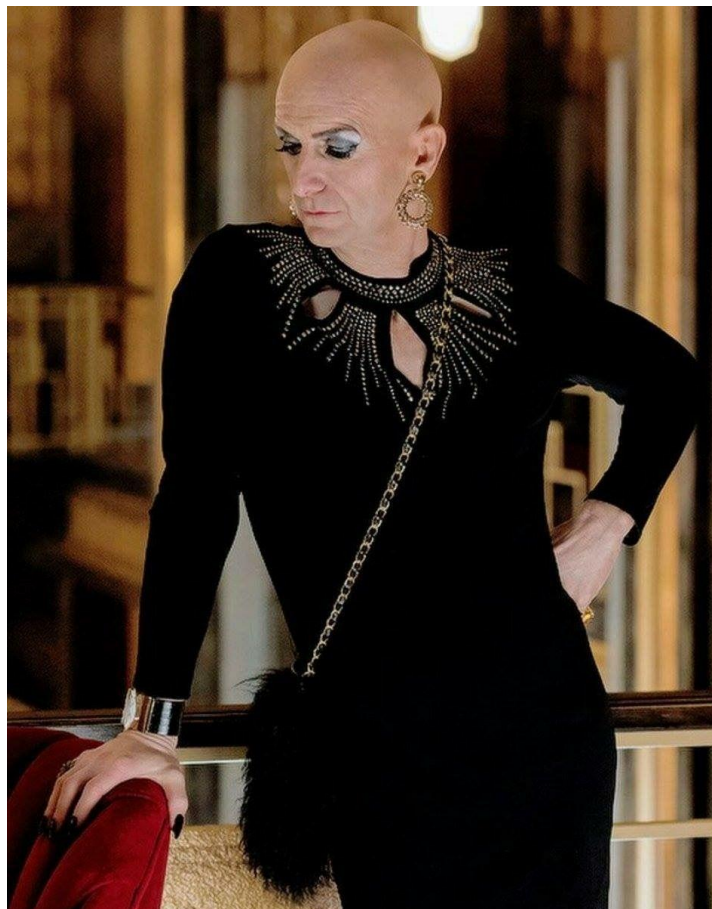


Fig. 9

If you worried that I wasn't going to mention Lady Gaga or Ariana in here, well, I will not disappoint. These women are pillars as examples and Icons of femininity, using that part of themselves to create an aura around themselves. The way that they use their femininity and the performance of femininity is part of the basis and strength of their brand. Through this aura and performance that they have created they have become symbols. But in that creation and existence as a symbol, when they are performing, when they are being that DIVA Honey, they no longer exist as an individual. Stepping up and dominating that stage dehumanizes them. In those moments when they transform and exist as a separate entity they transcend their humanness.

The north and south spaces of this installation both serve a very specific purpose. The north space focuses on regality and the performance of the symbol, the insertion of myself and my identity within the same canon as these stars that I have chosen as my idols. Presenting a gender queer body (my hot bod 🔥👤) within that same sphere, vindicates the gender queer body within that realm, as well as who I am for myself, and to all else that experience it. Part of the performance is constructing that aura. This is not coming from the same place as the facade which is born out of fear and a desire for protection, but from a place of authenticity, as a projection of what is both within the body and soul, to exist as a sensation of the essence of both the interior and exterior.

The diva is always associated and enclosed within the act of performance. And girl, I am always a diva, otherwise it's boring the house. And I love fashion, especially fem-glam-fashion. I'm not saying a big draw to doing this work was to be able to have the excuse to buy a lot of clothes and makeup that no person other than a diva could wear on a daily basis, but I'm also not, not saying that... 😊🐱👉👮👗. Fashion works as a signaling device, and each of the presented looks in the videos are meant to embody and give space (almost a coming out?) for each of the chosen facets of my identity. Each actuation focuses on a different part of personal influences that have been pulled from pop culture, mythologies, personal desires, and history. Each individual present exists not as a persona or a character but as one part of my identity, each existing as parts of a whole. I am not saying that I wouldn't do drag, honestly it would be really fun to be able to boss and dominate hetero gay men at gay clubs, wearing eight inch stripper heels looking snatch at the same time 🏰💰. But this is not the impersonation or characterization of femininity, this is me existing as my true form.

Every Icon exists as a dehumanized symbol, but they are also people. While the north space dehumanizes me, the south re-humanizes me. The variation of close ups, angles, and subject matter works together to show a raw side of humanity: human desires, human actions,

and sexuality. The south space exists within the past and as a transition out of the present. There is an undeniable presence of a stasis and waiting by the lounging bodies, and the never ending tapping of stiletto nails. While this space lies mostly within the realm of the interior, the acknowledgement of the viewer through the audio as well as the moments of locking eyes with the camera searching for eye contact on the other side speaks to a desire to be seen, foreshadowing what is to come within the near future.



Fig. 10

This is the part where I get to talk about gogo dancers Hun-Ney! 🌟💎 And we love that. If you have made it this far you will be rewarded with some pictures of hot bods, and I never need an excuse to look at hot bods.



Fig. 11 & Fig. 12



Felix Gonzalez-Torrez's work *Untitled (gogo dancer platform)* takes the literal stage out of the gay club and brings it into the gallery. Legitimizing and acknowledging queer space and queer bodies within the realm of art. Once the performer enters onto the stage they exist as both human and artwork and are immediately dehumanized. Synchronously, the artwork is humanized from the dancers' activation of the stage and the performance of the viewer, achieved by their interaction with the space. This work was originally created by the artist in 1991 and since his death in 1996 it has continued to re-exist, evolving through the different dancers and how they choose to perform the work. The continuation of the work in this way further humanizes and expands its impact as a constructed space allowing for the exposure of queer bodies.

Video is such a fascinating medium because of its near boundarylessness, as well as its connection and disconnection to photography and portraiture. The moving image has saturated itself within society to a point that it has transcended away from its original context and exists solely as moving image. The editing of the videos and audios contrast each other between the north and south spaces. The video in the north is edited in a fashion that positions it somewhere between cinema, music video, and art film. The saturated colors, full glam, audio, underglow couch, and objects present within the video speaks to a very apparent over-the-topness. This over-the-topness projects the video into the realm of the surreal and the ephemeral, associating itself with the nature and role of the aura. This is juxtaposed by the frequent use of the glitch as well as the intermittent layering of scenes on top of one another. The glitch holds an important place and frequently is present within gender queer ideologies. It is within the glitch that the gender queer identity can be easily reflected. Something tied to the digital realm as a visual indication of an interruption or an error in the performance of technologies, serving as a space between the physical and digital world. The connection of the glitch is very similar to how Aron Betsky states the goal of queer space.⁵ Legacy Russel wrote *Didigital Dualism And The Glitch Feminism Manifesto* in 2012 and defines the Glitch in relation to queerness as such. *"The glitch is the digital orgasm, where the machine takes a sigh, a shudder, and with a jerk, spasms. These moments have been integrated into the rituals and routines of our own physical action, impacting how we interact with our own bodies, and how we explore our deepest fantasies and desires, spurred forth by these mechanized micro-seizures. The glitch is the catalyst, not the error. The glitch is the happy accident. When the computer freezes mid-conversation, when the video buffers and refuses to progress, these moments are a new mode of foreplay, something that needs to be acknowledged not as a fetish, but as a*

*new possibility for foreplay within sexual routine. We want what we cannot have; whatever the material we are aiming to access, the glitch makes us wait and whimper for it.*²⁰” These failures bring to attention its attachment to the digital world, reminding us that it is human made technology, repositioning the body to the thingness of the screen. This interruption of an expected seamlessly functioning normalcy reminds us of the non-normal, initiating the possibility of an alternative to present societal structures.



Fig. 13

As the thirty minute looping video runs, the audio cycles through heavily edited fragments of sounds, songs, movie audios stolen from the internet, and recordings of my voice reading my own writings as well as quotes from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and various versions of the Narcissus story. The video doesn't indicate a beginning or an end, but within the audio, a beginning and an end can be found. A composition for the violin composed and performed by my sister, Lea Fetterman 💜💜, gives the indication. This composition was composed specifically for me, based off of the *Dies Irae* sequence. *Dies Irae*, also known as the day of wrath or judgement day is a requiem mass that emulates the cycles of life and death. The indication of a reckoning or the judgement day speaks to a new beginning, as well as the potential of what's to come from this new facadless display of the self. In between these two

unaltered versions of that composition, sounds of fountains and bird song indicate the connection of utopia to the garden and nature. Interrupted by loud fragments of lady gaga songs and voice recordings that are both humorous and dark. The tempo, frequency, and content of the audio fluctuates, melding the different facets to be creating a continual shifting between cacophonous sound to singular recognizable tracks. This treatment of the audio both destabilizes the viewer as well as grounds the viewer within the winding narrative that exists.

There is a lot of power within video and sound, and in my practice it is important to me to ground the mediums of the digital with the mediums of the earth and vice versa. This pairing of mediums serves as an indication of the link between body and soul and try to achieve a balance within the work. The first thing that is encountered when entering the south space is a very intense pink UV light that is fixed above a grouping of mirrored, plastic, kinetic flowers. This fake garden of bouncing flower caricatures activated by the UV light, instills a sense of humor while also using the intensity of the light to alter your vision. As the corner is turned, a symmetrical layout of videos are projected into the corners causing a distortion of the rectangle form that video normally exists in. The couch from the videos is placed in the center emanating a green light from the bottom, heavily intensified by the uv light. The green screen is a present recurring symbol within all the work as a symbol for the infinite, and a placeholder for a never ending potential. Within all the videos it exists as only itself and what it symbolizes. Within this space the green screen is present two fold, within the videos that surround the room as well as the green light that is cast from underneath the couch. Frequently exposing what it is by the numerous shots showing the edges of the fabric, paper, and the bare walls beside it, as a reminder of the continual presence of the stage.

The physical presence of the couch grounds both the viewer and myself as the object of consummation within the very saturated space. It is the supporting character (potentially another facet of my identity) and serves as the central symbol of opulence. The very staged nature of the couch with the carefully placed gold lustered scepter and fruit on top of the mirror couples the videos, objects, and myself deeper within the lineage and context of traditional portraiture.

Ok gorgeous, we have some T to spill 🍹💧. I am very proud of what I am about to say, it is pretty fab, and remember, you heard it here first. With the slowly increasing amount of queer people that finally feel that they are able to identify themselves, there is a new aesthetic arising. We are in the beginnings of the Neo-Victorian-Hyper-Glam-Goth-Pop© era. This aesthetic has developed from the increasing exposure of queerness, especially through social media platforms. The DIY movement reaching an all time high in popularity. Pop culture continuously topping each new thing with something better, crazier, and more exciting, to create an all new

level of over-the-topness. As well as a return to old aesthetics and music from the seventies and eighties. And let's face it, probably because of phones, we exist in a society that has been trained to be hyper aware of its physical appearance, signifying that the human race has entered into the Cyborg/Post Human era. This couch, (especially in relation to the space it was shown in) is the complete and utter example of this new movement. It serves as the keystone to this whole work.

I would be committing a true sin if, in a thesis where someone who uses clay and was also the genesis of their practice, did not mention Duchamp. Oh God am I tired of looking at and hearing about the urinal 🙄💩, and how he was the genius that brought us into the age of conceptualism. Boring The House! He literally curated himself into a museum....Girl, it doesn't get much more self-masturbatory than that. This urinal, of which there are many, since the original doesn't exist anymore, has become a symbol for the birth of conceptualism. (But originality is dead, so they say, and art is the last financially unmonitored frontier, and is run by rich normies, so no surprise there). The act of a gender queer body tearing out pages of a book about Duchamp above a frankensteined (queered) version of his urinal grounds the work within the artworld. Rejecting its lineage, speaking to the new generation of artists that are on the rise, that reject and understand the domination of the artworld by the masculine, straight, and rich.

The pairing of clay and ceramics, especially unglazed terracotta, with video is a provocative and powerful one. Each technology exists on opposite ends of the spectrum that is the time span of the human species' existence. Clay and ceramics was one of the first technologies that helped push humanity to the level that it is now. Juxtaposed by video existing on the other end as our transcendence into the digital realm. Each medium exists as the most honest record keeper of everything. Both are a symbol of the infinite potential for creation. The humbleness of unglazed terracotta asserts the *Quadra-Urinal* within a certain level of class and identity. This queered object indicates a duality of identity within the masculine born body, and its relation to the spaces that it specifically has to exist in. The duality that exists within those spaces, are both hyper personal and extremely detached. Masculinity is indoctrinated with an inability to be objectified, while constantly objectifying the feminine. This is made painfully evident within the space of the public bathroom. The urinal is designed specifically for the use of male born bodies, and in the development of a male person's identity they become a rite of passage into "manhood." In itself the urinal is just a vessel or depository for human being's by-product, but in its placement, design, and usual proximity to one another forces a confrontation and examination. The public bathroom becomes a stage and an arena for the level of performability of one's masculinity, forcing comparisons. The stacked and mirrored



orientation of these objects turns the male gaze upon itself to impose a reconsideration of designated masculine space and masculinity in general.

Fig. 14

What both the north and south portions of *Pleasure Palace* do in tandem that they could not do alone is speak to a new way that identity can be understood. The never ending loops, layers, and distorted representations of my identity, both are participating in a performance and existing as I truly am. This continual transition between the facets of my identity that are represented establishes identity as a multivalent or multiplicitous thing that exists on a spectrum, rather than bound to the-either-or binary that identity is based on in western societies. This system that we live in is so constrained and obsessed with categorizing every individual and thing within separated groups. The more and more pronouns that we add on to try to alleviate the pronoun problem does the opposite. The only way to progress into a future without the divides that we are entrapped within now is to completely and utterly wipe the notion of classifying individuals by gender from the lexicon of identity. Advancing the human species into a new era of existing as one species with one gender where each individual exists on a spectrum of common but different traits that all make up one gender. Where each human is defined by their actions, their desires, what they stand for, and how they understand their own self. Not by a series of human constructs and theories that are forced upon us at birth.

It is my hope that this document can exist to clarify and expand upon the ideas, theories, and aesthetics of my practice, as well as a didactic for those not able to understand an othered experience in an experiential way. This document only begins to scratch the surface of a pandora's box of issues, but I hope that it gives a point of access to these questions and concepts for the reader or viewer. And for all those other non normies who read this and experience my work, I hope that these can serve as examples of what's possible from someone who had lost all hope multiple times. May this exist as a place of strength and reference. If this thesis and my work can give hope to just one individual normie or non normie, then the work has succeeded.

The future is queer, the future is fem, and we are here.



Fig. 15

If you can never truly live, then you can never truly die. Most people experience time in a linear way, but in this place, time flows however it chooses, acting upon the cosmos in a cyclical way. Simultaneously repeating itself while simultaneously creating and experiencing new and unexplainable things.

This body is a vessel for my soul. My true identity exists within that soul. Within the life of this body I have lived two lives, but my soul has lived for an eternity of time. Passing from one body to the next. A body can not exist without a soul, just as a soul can not exist on this earth without a body. They come from two different planes, the soul from the cosmos, and the body, from this earth. Without the soul the body will cease and wither away. Without the body the soul will be lost forever. Each has what the other needs; to be grounded and to be free. This is why the relationship between soul and body exists.

I know that my soul is tied to the feminine, I know that my soul is female, bound to the yonic auras that encapsulate this universe. But something went wrong with the connection between my body and soul at the genesis of this life. Resulting in what you see before you.

I am a queen of this life, and I am strong, I am powerful, and I will prevail.

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Images

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2. Chateau-sur-Mer; ImageID:ASAHARAIG_111211357690 https://library.artstor.org/api/download?imgid=ASAHARAIG_111211357690&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstor.artstor.org%2Fiiif%2F2016%2F05%2F28%2F06%2F160f8300-d71d-4e78-9d5b-5bafcc1e0cb1_deflate.tif%2Ffull%2F%2C1024%2F0%2Fdefault.jpg&iiif=true. Creator: Bradford, Seth (1801 - 1874), American, architect; Hunt, Richard Morris; Hunt, R. M (1827 - 1895), American, architect; Pope, John Russell (1874 - 1937), American, architect; Date: 1852-1918; Location: Newport, Rhode Island, United States

3. Pleasure Palace, Aerial View, 2021
4. Pleasure Palace, Floor Side View, 2021
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13. Pleasure Palace, Video Still of Glitch, 2021
14. Pleasure Palace, *Fuck You duchamp, Your Time Is Up*, 2021
15. Pleasure Palace, *Queen of Gold*, Video Still Portrait, 2021