



MGT

We Know Gay

MY GAY TORONTO

ISSUE #68 JUN 2020.

PRIDE 2020

At this time of year, we are as a community usually busy preparing for the year's biggest and best event: Pride. From the baby queers eager to come out emphatically, to the veterans who work to make each year more memorable, every letter in the LGBTQ+ alphabet is full of anticipation.

2020 had other plans. Triggering our memories of the plague, a virus has upended everything. We can't gather collectively and show our strength, celebrate our triumphs and demand further change. We will still be proud, we will just be doing it in semi-isolation.

Our allies at Black Lives Matter also need our help, no-one should be left behind. The protests over the senseless murder of George Floyd and so many others have trumped (no pun intended . . .) individual fears of the virus. Injustice must be fought against, called out and eradicated. We do not just intersect, we are the same.

Los Angeles' Pride parade will now be a march, Toronto may follow suit, but wherever you are on that momentous day, 50 years after the Stonewall riots changed our trajectory and remains an inspiration, be proud. And it is never too soon to start planning and anticipating Pride 2021.

This issue of MGT contains many of the ways that the community is staying connected virtually. Pride will live on no matter what gets in our way. There is no virus, no prejudice, no attempts at division that can stop an army of lovers.

Drew Rowsome
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MGT DIGITAL

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RAYMOND HELKIO

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DJ CozmicCat
photo: Sean Leber

RAYMOND HELKIO

Peace Through Protest

“An individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is, in reality, expressing the highest respect for the law” - Martin Luther King Jr.



It wasn't too long ago that rights for the LGBTQ community took a major leap forward by way of what's referred to as The Stonewall Riots but in fact, there never was a riot, not by definition anyway. The looting and destruction were actually caused by police when they raided the bar and the few reports of things being thrown *at the police* hardly amounted to a riot, but it certainly did make for great headlines. With precedent having been set in New York, it was only a matter of time before Toronto queers were to find themselves in middle of Operation Soap, 52 divisions brazen raids on four bathhouses which saw hundreds of men arrested, charged and publicly humiliated. Within twenty-four hours over 1,000 people marched down Yonge Street, changing the course of history for Canadian queers. And then there were (and still are) the public AIDS demonstrations that stopped parades, interrupted city hall and provoked many people with their megaphone reminders of the recent dead. These were significant moments for our queer history that at the time were thought of as riots but in reality, these protests are our way to begin setting things right.

The idea of protests, demonstrations and public displays of rebellion may not sit well with some but it's an integral part of the political system. Historically, push-backs in the form

of protests and demonstrations have proven to be just as valuable. That being said it's also critical to recognize that most, if not all of the looting, rioting and destruction is not coming from the organized protesters but a handful of opportunists, and this holds true for many significant protests that have shaped some of the public policy we enjoy today.

The most outrageous thing about the George Floyd tragedy is not that he was murdered but that he's yet another victim in a long, long, long history of police violence against people of colour. The murder was filmed on multiple cameras so you'd think charging all of the officers right away would have been a no-brainer. But as history demonstrates the level of systemic racism within the force means these crimes often go unpunished and in many cases cops have been rewarded with paid leave. We just can't keep blaming 'a few bad apples' when this stuff happens, because we've been in a simmering pot of water for a long while now and it's just exploded into a rolling, protest that will only get hotter if we try and put a lid on it. Of course that is exactly what many politicians are hoping for, that we all just simmer down. But for any longterm resolution to take place we actually need the water to boil over, a massive outpouring designed to reset the system, or at least shift it forward a big nudge.

PRIDE STILL HAPPENS

even without a parade

CELEBRATE OUR PAST

and create a better future

**DO SOMETHING TO BE
PROUD OF**

every single day



HAPPY PRIDE 2020

be strong and celebrate

Revry Launches First LGBTQ+ Cable TV Platform for Pride

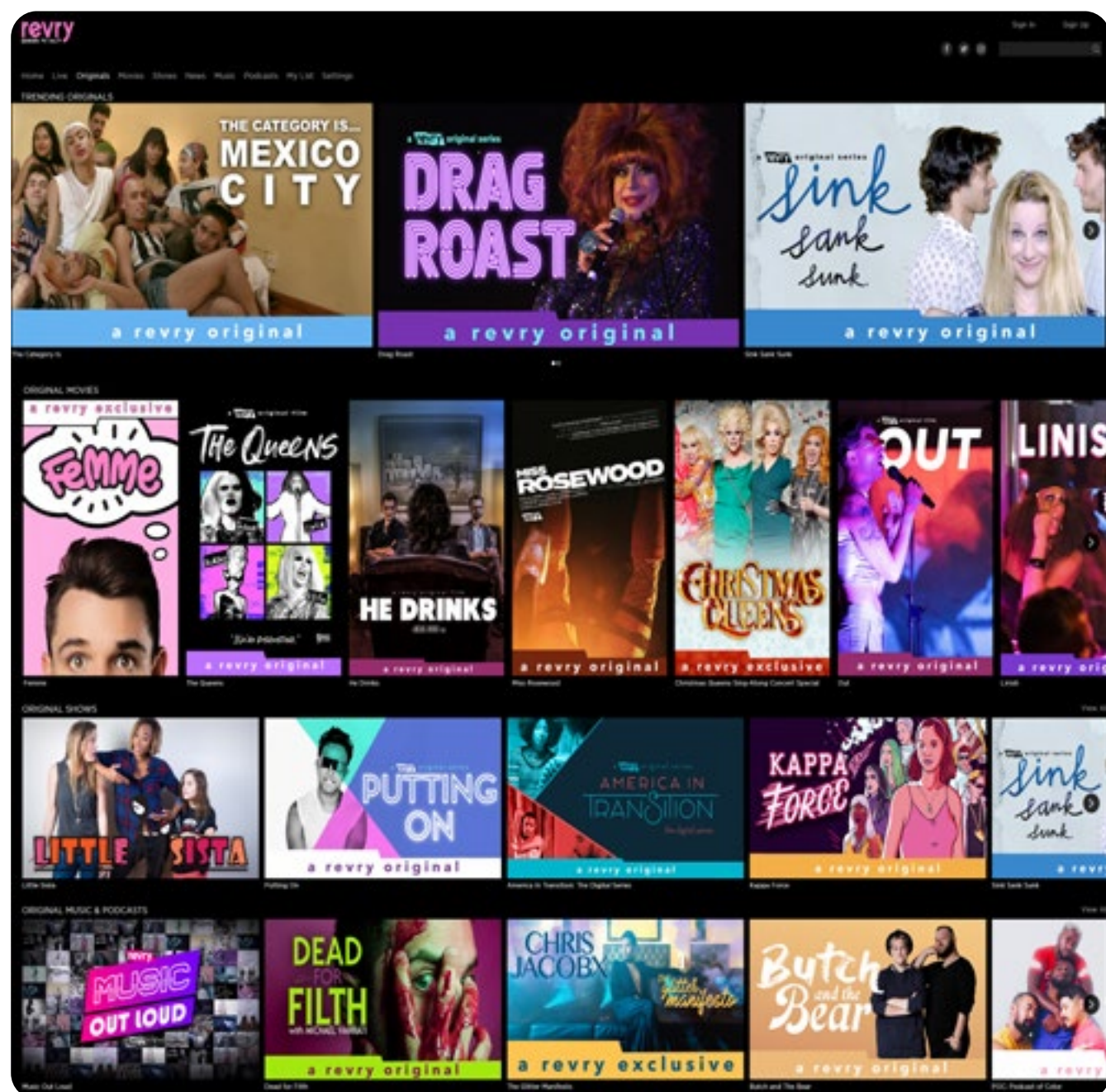


Revry, the first global LGBTQ streaming network, has partnered with Brightcove Inc. (NASDAQ: BCOV), global provider of cloud services for video, to launch a first-of-its kind cable TV platform amid widespread cancellations of major Pride events and LGBTQ+ film festivals. The new platform provides an option for those in need of community during this pandemic: a free, truly "always on" TV experience made exclusively for LGBTQ+ people.

The new Revry apps create a cable TV-like environment streaming multiple live TV channels in real time to its diverse and multi-faceted audiences. In addition to offering full access to its On-Demand library with a Revry Premium Subscription, and limited access for free with ads, now users can watch Revry's "unapologetically queer" movies, shows, music, podcasts, and originals on four free live TV channels, including the first 24/7 LGBTQ global news channel, Revry Now.

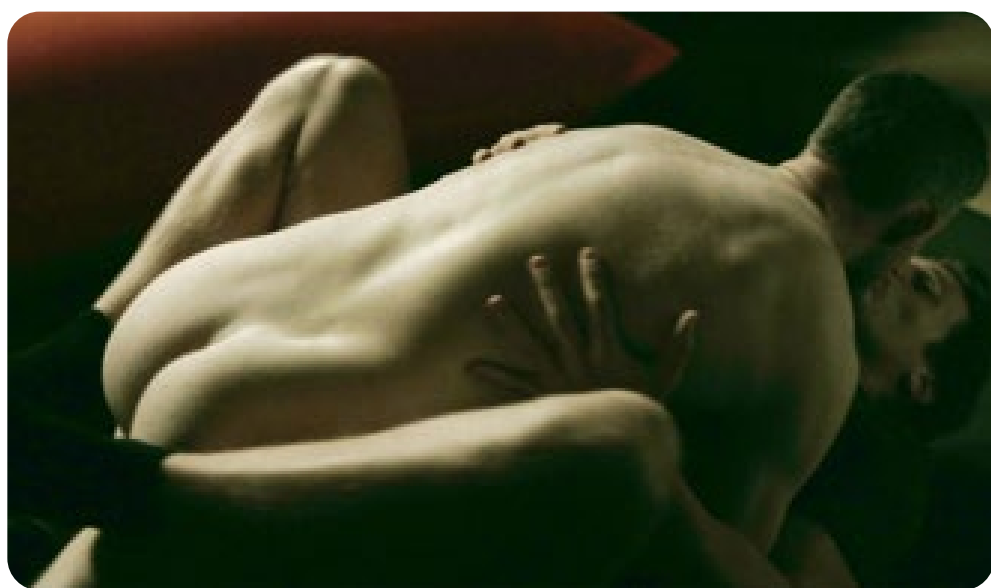
Revry.tv - Queer TV - offers free live TV channels and On-Demand viewing of its global library featuring LGBTQ+ movies, shows, music, podcasts, news, and exclusive originals all in one place! Revry is currently available in over 225+ million

households and devices, and available globally on over nine OTT, Mobile, Connected TV and Desktop platforms. Revry can also be found on Comcast Xfinity X1, XUMO TV, Zapping TV, STIRR and TiVo+.





In celebration of June's Pride month, Mr. Man, the world's leading online library of every male nude scene in the history of film and television, has revealed its *Hottest Gay TV Scenes of All Time*. "This follows last year's Pride celebration that featured the Ten Hottest Gay Scenes in Hollywood History," says Phil Henricks of Mr. Man. "Since movie theatres remain closed due to the pandemic, we thought we would focus this year's list on the guys heating up the small screen."



The top ten winning scenes were selected through a comprehensive process that included the editorial, production and marketing teams from Mr. Man. The end result is a diverse list, featuring several men of color (Billy Porter, Omid Abtahi and Dyllon Burnside, among them) and Ryan O'Connell, an out actor with cerebral palsy who starred in the Netflix series, *Special*.



HBO reigns supreme among the paid TV networks with the greatest number of shows on the list. Four of the ten scenes featured on *Hottest Gay TV Scenes of All Time* are HBO productions: *Girls*, *Looking*,

High Maintenance and *True Blood*.



ABC-TV is the only major network to appear on the list. Jack Falahee and Niko Pepaj's love scene in *How to Get Away with Murder* comes in at #6.

The #1 *Hottest Gay TV Scene of All Time* features a *Game of Thrones* star before he appeared on the hit show.

"The talent and the networks featured on the *Hottest Gay TV Scenes of All Time* list should be applauded this Pride," says Henricks. "They are pioneers who dared to portray gay sex on the small screen, many times in the face of adversity."

"Gay intimacy on TV is not a trend that's going away anytime soon," he continues. "Mr. Man has noticed an increase in scenes over the last few months. Who knows? We may need to make this an annual list!"

For more information and the complete list of the *Hottest Gay TV Scenes of All Time*, visit: <https://www.mrman.com>. All ten scenes are viewable in their entirety with free signup.



DREW ROWSOME

Twisted Brothers: My Lost Uncle MissingSince1979's newest collection is hot camp testosterone



Fashion designers/art project My Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979 have a new collection Twisted Brothers Set No 1. Those of us who are devoted fans, or fanatical fashionistas, need to act fast as the previous collections - Hustler White, Paul Goes to Hollywood, POP and Hustler White Unidentifiable Collectible No 1 Shades - have consistently sold out, with only a few pieces still available for order on their website. However, in relation to the current pandemic, there is a big banner on My Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979's splash page warning in all caps that: "The World is Closed. New Orders Will Be Shipped After 20th April 2020. Stay Safe!"

My Lost Uncle has never played it safe and their unique blend of fashion and art has been covered in previous posts though their manifesto and biography is in constant evolution. As usual it is difficult to determine what is factual, what is tongue-in-cheek, and what is awkward translation from

the Finnish. No matter. Who could resist clothing that is an "homage to pop culture and art, irony of serious manhood, gender blending and collaborations with the real life superstars such as drag queens, porn stars, visual artists, Scandinavian contemporary dancers, musicians, geeks and men found on the streets."

The Twisted Brothers collection print is based on male "avatars" which My Lost Uncle explains are "a manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on earth." Or even less succinctly, "film star heroes of the past decades with the ruthless beauty consciousness of modern times. The looks are mass production, only the human metabolism remains the same." The deities depicted are "Cobra, Jack Ramsay from the film Runaway, Snake Plissken, Mad Max and John from the film Nine 1/2 Weeks." Sly Stallone, Tom Selleck, Kurt Russell, Mel Gibson and Mickey Rourke, all in their pumped pulchritudinous prime. That is some



serious camp testosterone.

And an extreme, and extremely welcome, example of gay desire subverting and claiming some very troublesome icons.



The collection, part one of two (the second due, pandemic willing, in April) speaks for itself with a t-shirt, shirt, hooded sweater, bomber jacket, bag and flip flops. Personally, I find the bag particularly covetable only because my astonishingly long-lasting faux-Andy Warhol printed TIMBUK2 bag is, after more than a decade, beginning to fray and TIMBUK2's newer designs are more staid than my now vintage piece. Though after seeing model Josh Cottam Umbrellaphone, street clown and composer of "futuristic music," as photographed by Swedish LGBTQ+ artist Ylva Åkerblom, it is impossible not to desire the bomber jacket as well.

The photos were shot, teases My Lost Uncle, in Bristol, UK (where the designers/artists are newly based) at the Barton Hill boxing club which was formerly the Dug Out youth club patronized by Banksy and "Massive Attack band members." That little nugget of information is either a clue, a mc-guffin, a conceptual allusion to the avatars, or a stylistic flourish. All as convoluted, butch/camp and mysterious as my favourite enigmatic sentence on the website:

"I'm Alive", told Andreas, designer's lost uncle just before disappearing on his cargo ship trip to New York City in 1979.

The Twisted Brothers Set No 1 is available at my-lostunclemissingsince1979.bigcartel.com





Model: [Omotayo](#)
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber

AMY WITAVAT

5 Summer Must-Haves for 2020; Toronto Men's Fashion From Head To Toe

1. Summer Shades: Versatile Style That Won't Break The Bank

The new Ray-Ban Wayfarer series is a range of shades suitable for every occasion, from lounging by the pool to formal summer weddings (and they go well with surgical masks too). Both the black or the tortoise framed versions are available for \$100-150 on Amazon.



2. Summer Tees From Uniqlo

Nothing fits as comfortably as a t-shirt from the Japanese casual wear brand Uniqlo. You can pick up basic, block colour tees, or opt for pieces from their seasonal, limited-edition collections. Partnering with everyone from Disney, to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, you're sure to find a tee for your tastes. Find your favourite summer 2020 shirt at Uniqlo.com. Prices start from \$15.



3. Klassic Khaki Shorts

Constantly cycling back into and then out of style, the khaki short is excellent for Toronto's heat and humidity. Unmistakably summery, khakis are both flattering and low maintenance. Shorts should hit above the knee, so you'd probably want a 9 or 10



inch inseam. A pair of khaki shorts, like these from Banana Republic go for \$55.

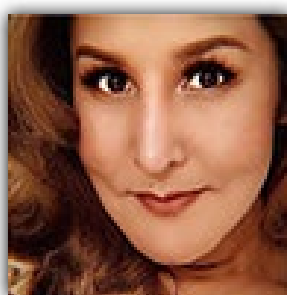
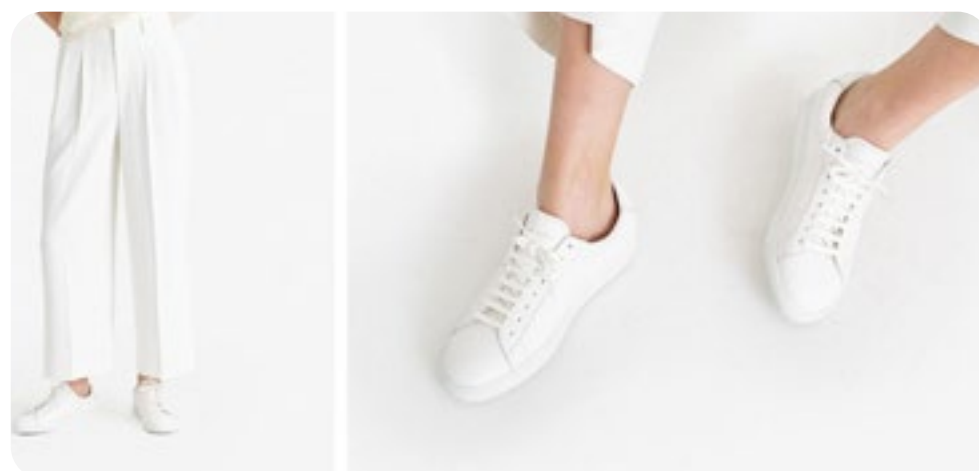
4. The Minimal Lightweight Summer Belt

Who in their right mind would want a heavy leather belt designed for jeans and prone to getting sweaty and sticky in the summertime? No one, that's who. This Four-in-One canvas belt goes for \$15 from L.L. Bean. Lightweight and durable, this should survive many an unbuckling if you plan to spend time at Hanlan's Point this summer.



5. Light-Weight, Breathable Summer Kicks.

Sneakers are where it's at in the summer! While a pair of black Chucks are good for three seasons, mix it up with a pair of natural colored sneakers that work with any outfit. The Oliver Cabell Low1 in white (pictured below) are \$168. Don't be tacky though; no socks or invis-socks only.



Amy Wittavat - is UK/Canadian stylist, make-up and special effects make-up artist.

[instagram.com/amitha_hmua/](https://www.instagram.com/amitha_hmua/)

Model: Matthew Eldracher
Styling: Amy Wittavat
Photo: Sean Leber



AMY WITTAVAT

/ FASHION STYLIST / PERSONAL SHOPPER - CONSULTANT / MAKE-UP ARTIST /

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DREW ROWSOME

The BelAmi boys have a Secret

"All gear is designed with fashionable gay men in mind," says AddictedUSA.com's Chris Lynch of their new 'Secret' swimwear line. "They are intended for guys who feel good about themselves, are comfortable with their bodies and are daring enough to be overtly racy."





And how better to showcase a line that is “daring,” “racy,” and aimed at gay men? Send photographer Tarek del Moreno and several stunning models from gay porn studio BelAmi to Torremolinos, Spain to frolic in the sand, sun and pools.

The models even, mostly, kept the swimsuits on.

And why not? Head designer Carmen Monforte explains that craftsmanship is paramount, “More time is put into the sewing of each garment so that they are built to last, even through the roughest play. They are tailored to fit every body type perfectly.” Especially the specific and sumptuous BelAmi body type.





Each item in the collection uses Addicted's "Dick-Up technology" which, judging from the photos, creates an impressive bulge for strutting the beach or pool deck. And enhances the "3D motifs" that are the patterns. Monforte says that the Secret Collection was inspired by a trip to Africa, "I was captivated by the tribal motifs and colors of the Sahara desert. I tried to capture the cultural richness of the tribes, their mystical beliefs, with bold primary colors and prints that would get guys noticed on the beach and in the pools."





Lynch wants everyone to know that despite the overt sexuality of the promotional campaign, quality matters. "This summer's swim collection is sporty and stylish and offers the quality, fit and comfort

Addicted has become famous for."

The Secret Collection is available, along with Addicted's many other collections from sportswear to fetish wear at addictedusa.com.









PAUL BELLINI

Popeye on top



So lately I've taken to eating chicken sandwiches. Sure, they are loaded with salt and fat and nothing about them is even remotely healthy, but chicken sandwiches have suddenly become the hot new alternative to burgers. By far the best of the lot comes from Popeye's, whose chicken burger is a thick fillet, coated in crispy somethingorother, nestled in a diamond-shaped bun and garnished with care. It really was fresh and flavourful.

I found it hard not to want to compare, so I went on a safari of chicken sandwich retailers. Wendy's offers not one but four variations — spicy, homestyle, barbecue and grilled. They tend to load up on the garnish, like bacon and Jalapeño and avocado and cheese, yet most of those add nothing to the flavour. They also sell nuggets and for those of you who believe that the bun is what makes you fat, they will wrap them in a tortilla.

Burger King offers two chicken sandwiches for six bucks, but buyer beware. Served on a rectangular bun, the fillet seems to be made up of little chicken bits pressed together. The crust was not crunchy at all, and most of the flavour came from the mayonnaise. I got one Original and one Spicy. The spicy one was the same thing but with horrible sweet barbecue sauce added. Over at KFC, the Big Crunch is a generous fillet with very crispy coating, but it tastes

exactly like every other piece of KFC chicken on earth, so salty that I had to drink two large glasses of water afterwards.

McDonald's has offered the McChicken for decades, and now they offer something new called the Seriously Chicken, whose name is as bad as it is delicious. Loaded with bacon, a food item that adds appeal to everything (you could eat an old shoe if it was wrapped in bacon), the Seriously is the best thing McDonald's has produced since their Wraps.

Finally, there is Chick-Fil-A. I had been cautioned by many gay activists to boycott Chick-Fil-A, because head office donates to various anti-gay causes, but I'm no activist. I am, however, a completist, so I had to try one for the sake of this article. What does hate taste like, I wondered? I ordered their most popular menu item, the standard chicken sandwich. The kid who served me was a total queen who either never heard all the controversy, or maybe just really needed a job. Regardless, the sandwich gave me indigestion. Every time I burped, I felt as though I was being punished for being a bad homosexual.

So the winner is Popeye's, not just because he has big arm muscles, but also because their chicken sandwich is high quality and hate-free.

WHAT IF YOU COULD REWRITE THE STORY?

A NETFLIX LIMITED SERIES

HOLLYWOOD

MAY 1 | NETFLIX

PAUL BELLINI

Hollywood: a fairytale that fails

Ryan Murphy's Netflix series *Hollywood* (what a bland title) is about a guy named Jack who comes to Hollywood in 1947 to become a movie star. His wife is pregnant and he has no money, so he takes a job at a gas station where the attendants double as male hookers for Hollywood's elite. This idea is based on Scotty Bowers' memoir *Full Service*, in which he ran a similar establishment. The employees of Bowers' gas station were all former WWII vets who most certainly engaged in some sort of gay sex while overseas. Statistically, a male prostitute's clients are overwhelmingly male because let's be honest, women don't usually have to pay for it. Except Jack is so straight that he's strictly for the ladies, so right away we're in TV show nonsense territory. The silliness continues when



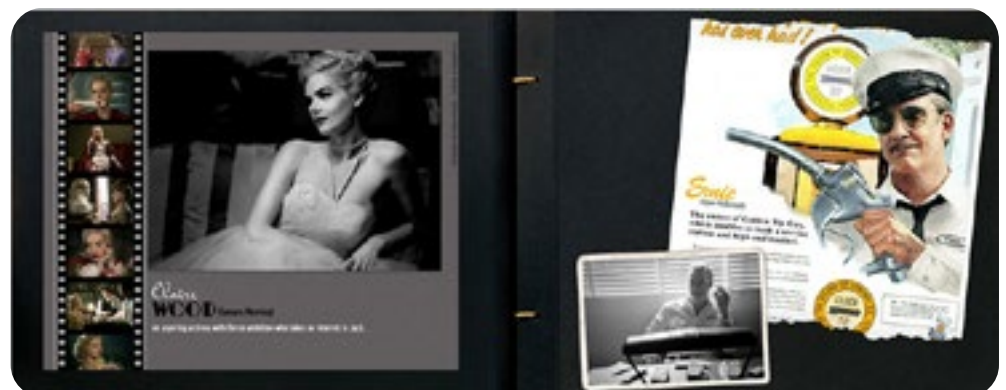
Jack, dressed as a cop, pretends to arrest a black gay guy who later reveals himself to be the gifted author of a screenplay about Peg Entwistle. Entwistle was a Welsh-born stage actress of the '20s who made one movie in 1932, *Thirteen Women*, then committed suicide by jumping off the Hollywood sign. Somehow, the movie gets made with a black woman in the lead, so they have to retitle it *Meg*. Everybody wins Oscars except the straight white guy. All this is so very contrived, but the worst thing about *Hollywood* might be the depiction of the young Rock Hudson. Earlier, he hooks up with the black screenwriter and they go to the Oscars holding hands, a bold act that seems to have no real consequence. In 1947.



\$25,000 over budget, the male whores get busy and pool their money to rescue the picture. While it is ludicrous that they could raise that amount of money in a short while, it is more ludicrous that a Hollywood studio would take the money and thus forfeit total ownership of the picture. But Hollywood is full of this sort of contrived writing. Why not just tell the real story of the men and women who pioneered civil rights by taking risks? Why reinvent a history that is so thoroughly documented? And why tell a story where every risk pays off? That doesn't even happen in fairytales. It's as offensive as making a movie about a bunch of Jews escaping from a concentration camp and then pushing Hitler into an oven, only if Ryan Murphy produced it, it would feature a diverse cast of Jews.



Hudson, and countless other things about the era. In the end, *Hollywood* takes this remarkable material and infantilizes it. It's so disappointing when one considers what the same producer did with *The People Vs. O. J. Simpson*, *The Assassination of Gianni Versace*, and *Feud*, all of which went out of their way to fictionalize the facts correctly. Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it, but those who reinvent it are just liars.





Cody & Tito
photo: Sean Leber

PAUL BELLINI

The Fabulous Mrs Fairytale



What to make of *Fairytale*, a bizarre Italian movie about a 1950s perfect American housewife? It features a subtle performance by Italian actor Filippo Timi, who is best known for playing Benito Mussolini in the movie *Vincere*. The set, or perhaps its a location, is an astonishing house interior, with red carpets, floral prints, rounded archways, a spiral staircase, turquoise chairs, a full-size sculpture of a baboon, a silver tinsel Christmas tree, and an American flag hanging outside the window. Mrs Fairytale lives with a stuffed poodle named Lady, whom she adores. She spends her days receiving visitors, like her best friend Emerald, her dour old mother, and the Stewart triplets: her neighbour Ted, her sexy dance instructor Tim, and her plumber Glenn. Those last three roles are all played by the same totally hot actor, Luca Santagostino.

It was based on a stage play written by Timi and the film version was directed by his husband. Timi's performance is an excellent one, fairly nuanced and full of pathos, although like Patrick Swayze in *To Wong Foo*, no amount of make-up can hide the maleness of his face. There are some brilliant outfits and a pair of shoes that defy description. The film is fairly good looking, with the kind of eye-popping colour Almodovar is noted for, and the set is beautifully dressed with gorgeous kitsch.

Yes, it is pure camp, but not utterly frivolous. It's more like the foreign-language version of American camp. The narrative ultimately hinges on a murder plot, so it is willing to get dark. Even weirder, the protagonist seems to switch genders mid-plot because of a UFO. Its like *Polyester* directed by Ingmar

Bergman. It is in its own way totally unique. Released in Italy as *Favola*, I think if it were shot in English rather than Italian it would probably be a big hit in North America. Worth seeing even if you hate subtitles.

Fairytale is released by Breaking Glass Pictures on DVD and VOD.



DREW ROWSOME

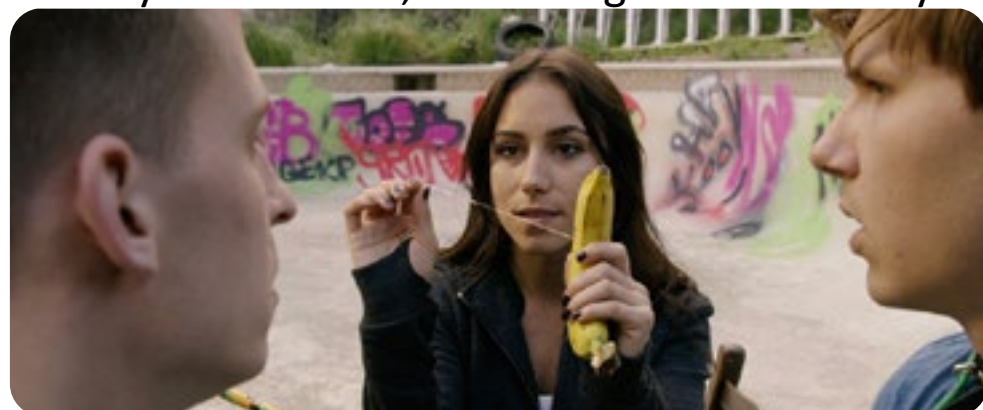
Groupers: homophobia is so totally gay



Groupers is a funny and nasty film with the tagline “Homophobia is so totally gay!” It is also impossible to summarize without giving away the twists and surprises that the film uses to build suspense and comedy. Suffice it to say that it begins with Meg (Nicole Dambro) kidnapping two young frat boys Brad (Peter Mayer-Klepchick) and Dylan (Cameron Duckett). She lures into the back of a van with the prospect of sexual favours but instead drugs them and ties them up, quite elaborately, in an empty graffitied swimming pool.

They are there to help her with her graduate thesis - she stops using the word “experiment” as it makes them uncomfortable - which aims to determine whether or not “homosexuality is a choice.” From there things get weird as the experiment spirals out of control.

The cat and mouse interplay between Meg and the boys is hilarious, disturbing and deliciously



explicit. And contains a lot of discussion about sexual preferences, homophobia and bullying. Writer/director Andrew Cowan also introduces the audience to a Tarantino-esque structure where flashbacks fill in the story and end with a reveal - a gag or plot point that has been carefully hidden by the way the shot that triggered the flashback was framed. It works satisfyingly every time, often to great comic effect. It also keeps all the proceedings off kilter so that every loopy character and plot twist becomes plausible.



It also, unfortunately, leads to repetitious dialogue that cries out for the pace of a '40s New York screwball noir instead of California mellow. Not that the dialogue isn't clever, funny and full of ideas, it just doesn't snap quite enough. Here too the Tarantino influence appears, Durant (Terrance Wentz) is a proponent of do it yourself gentrification and other erudite subjects. He is prone to monologue about all of them. He

is also muscle bound, hunky and his swaggering explanation of sexual preferences, specifically his own, is a highlight.

Durant's henchmen, a pair of drug-addled petty criminals with grandiose delusions, and Talkie (Brian Loakimedes) the mysterious mute man on a tricycle, are all sight gags, punchlines or plot escalators. Sometimes all three at once. More central is Orin the Hooded Homo (Jesse Pudles) who is a flamboyant gay boy with aspirations to be a super villain. It is complicated. But also integral as our loyalties and beliefs keep being supported, challenged and upended. As soon as we side with Orin, he goes off the rails and makes us cringe.

It is hard not to feel for the cute dumb blond Dylan, but he is also despicable and obviously under the sway of Brad, who is deplorable. They both have shortcomings or problems to explain, but not excuse, their bullying. And Meg who we initially cheer on in her queer revenge quest, is a bit of a sadistic bitch. Which of course just makes her more lovable. Her thesis is - SPOILER ALERT - not a success but we do learn, fairly definitively, that homosexuality is not a choice.

Groupers is now streaming on Amazon Prime and Tubi.





PAUL BELLINI

15 Years: the dilemma of a gorgeous pill



In my humble opinion, the men of the Middle East are the most handsome. It doesn't matter what country or religion, those meaty masculine hirsute faces are the best. So how could I resist *15 Years*, a gay Israeli movie filled with those faces?

you are that handsome you can afford to be a big asshole. Yoav says that he thinks gays having kids is gross and stupid. How can anyone be a responsible father and always be on Grindr at the same time? He believes that gay or straight, parenthood

picks up and fucks a soldier so hard he almost kills him. Later, he eats a whole bag of tranquilizers. Geez, what's eating Yoav? After a while, I got frustrated with his anguish, though if he was wearing less, I might have cared more. *15 Years* is the first movie from



The story concerns Yoav, a successful architect who lives in Tel Aviv and is in a relationship with Dan, a lawyer, for fifteen years. But when his best friend, a cool female artist named Alma, announces that she is pregnant, Yoav hates the idea so much he acts up and destroys a gay dinner party. Turns out he has demons in his past, of course. I guess when

fundamentally turns a party person into a wet blanket. He hates his own dad, left rotting in a seniors' home. Yoav is as ornery as he is pornilicious.

His relationships with both Dan and Alma fall apart, opening the door for some hot sex scenes with other actors. Dan meets a cute younger guy at a club, and Yoav

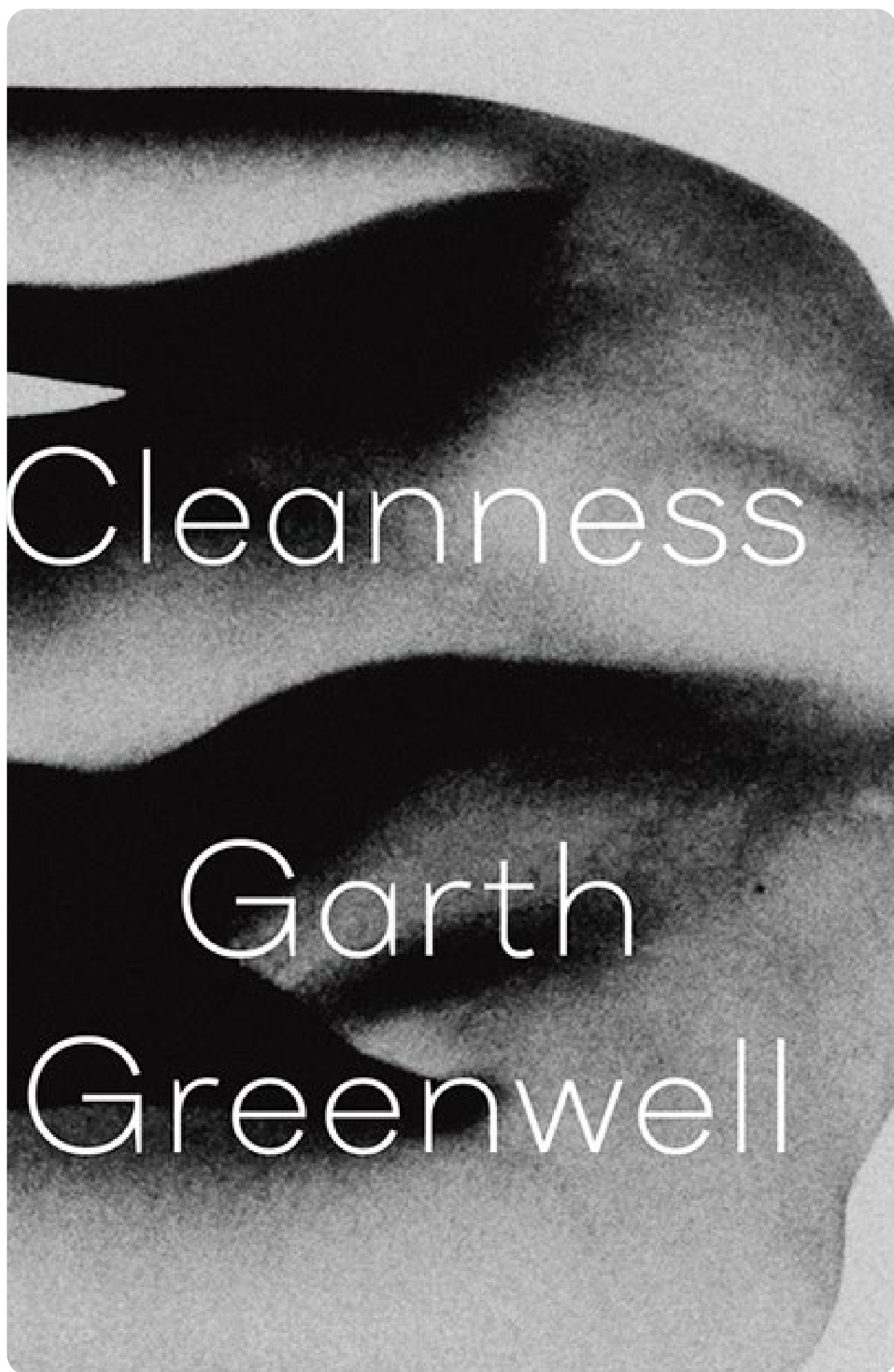
director and writer Yuval Hadadi. As a portrait of self-destruction, it is detailed and nuanced, though I never quite figured out why Yoav was such a pill. The movie looks great, and so does the cast. It won Best Narrative Feature at the Chicago Gay and Lesbian International Film Festival in 2019 and it is definitely worth watching.

DREW ROWSOME

Cleanness: an intoxicating blend of porn and art

As a great admirer of Garth Greenwell's novel *What Belongs to You*, I was very eager to read *Cleanness*. Even before he gave *The New York Times* the somewhat cheeky quote that stated that his aim was to write "something that was 100 percent pornographic and 100 percent high art." Greenwell doesn't achieve 100 percent of his ambition, simply because pornography is, to my mind, designed simply for arousal, whereas Greenwell uses explicit sex to probe deeply into the minds and emotional states of his characters. The final result is 100 percent erotica both in the sexually arousing sense and in the sheer seductive quality of the prose and ideas.

Cleanness is less a novel than a series of interconnected short stories that create an incomplete portrait. Narrative is not what is important. An English teacher who aspires to be a writer, is teaching in Sofia, Bulgaria. The first chapter chronicles his meeting with a student struggling to come out and dealing with heartbreak after rejection by his straight object of affection. The second is a vivid account of a BDSM encounter that goes wrong. The third documents the protest movement in Bulgaria and where it intersects with the gay rights struggle. The middle section is a series of stories delineating the narrator's love affair with a fellow expat, a tortured closeted



Azorian. *Cleanness* ends with the introductory chapters echoed in reverse.

It is a clever structure that does not reveal itself until the book ends and one takes time to reflect. While immersed in Greenwell's sensual sentences

- long and alluring, fraught with allusions and hesitations - time stops and it is only the present events that matter. Somehow Greenwell achieves an urgency, as if the words are just pouring out, while also revelling in the intricate care that has been taken to place

each word, each phrase, each description, in a smooth, exact, and pleasing manner. Deceptively conversational, calmly passionate and a sheer joy to read.

The narrator is melodramatic, as gay men in lust and love are, and his desire to connect is outweighed by his constant struggle to figure out what other people are experiencing. It is all complicated by the necessity of being closeted in Bulgaria, which inevitably creates the tension that fuelled many great gay novels and that has been drained by the very obstacles to love removed by successful gay visibility and rights. A great love story has to have conflict and a love, a lust, that dare not speak its name was for decades a great device to create longing and thwarted passion.

Greenwell's over-arching question seems to be how much one is willing to give up for love. And/or for being

out. And/or for sexual gratification. The three are inextricably wound together in the narrator's original desire to be subservient, to be "nothing" but flesh to be used. The BDSM scene is brutal and beautiful. And brutally honest. As is its echo. And both debate how much of our desire is inspired by porn, the narrator asks himself that question explicitly several times, and how much is real. That throws the central love story into question as much of it is influenced by high art, specifically painting and opera. Greenwell stretches the metaphor even further with the power of the word - poetry and journalism - inspiring the coming out process.

The narrator, tragically, never gets to reconcile or completely fulfill his desires. He never quite comes out and he views his love story, with its hot vanilla sex, as more romantic and real than his penchant for rough sex. He sees it as a split between the mind and the body, the heart and the cock. It is a gay, a human, dilemma, and Greenwell splays it on the page in sybaritic and voluptuous prose that is irresistible. All while Greenwell proves emphatically that pornography and high art can co-exist within the same pages and the result is intoxicating.

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/45892271-cleanness>





DrewRowesome.blogspot.com

DREW ROWSOME

Topp: Promoter Gary Topp Brought Us The World, when cultural history is personal

It's been a long time since all comic books starred superheroes. Graphic novels tackle all subjects and it is not news that the best of them are literature. With *Topp: Promoter Gary Topp Brought Us the World*, artist David Collier ostensibly tackles a biography of promoter Gary Topp, told in a graphic novel format. What Collier ("with Gary Topp") achieves is a multi-layered portrait of Topp, Collier, and Toronto's cultural history.

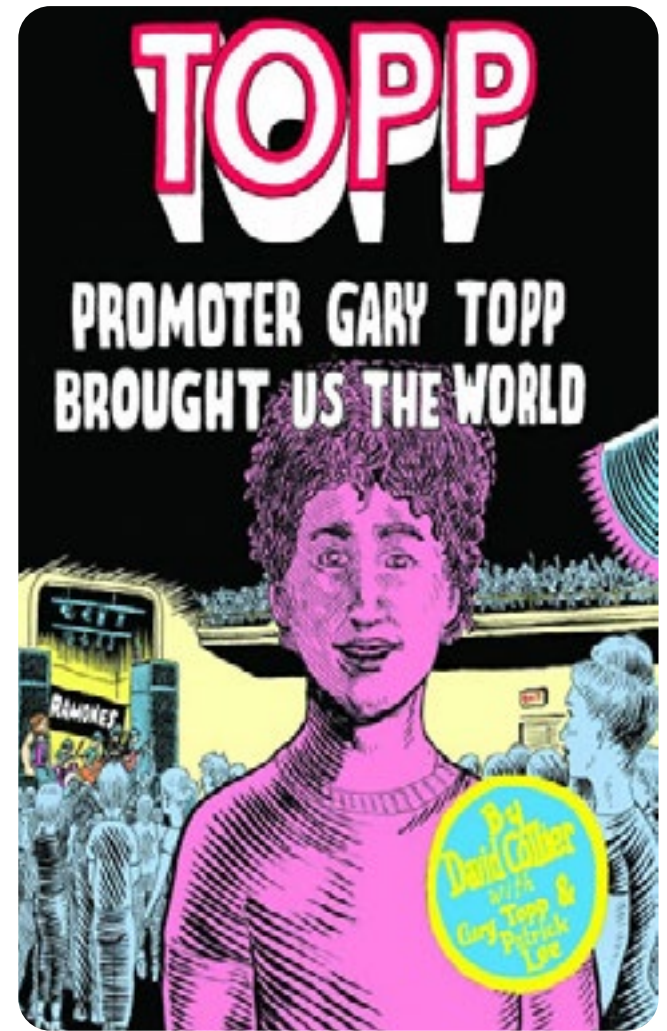
Anyone who has been part of, or who has sampled of, Toronto's cultural life, will recognize events and get a sweet rush of the nostalgia that suffuses *Topp*. My artistic education and delectation intersected with Gary Topp several times over the decades. From a belated immersion in film as an art form at the The Original 99¢ Roxy (first viewings of Pink Flamingos and Fellini's *Satyricon* particularly stick in my memory), to the hundreds of incredible acts I got to experience while bartending at The Diamond Club and The Phoenix. I also, like Collier, remember envying the meals Catherine Lalande created for the bands' riders. There was a life-changing set by Rough Trade on a drunken night at The Edge. And another drunken night at a Ramones concert where the bartender introduced me to another drunken Drew, though her last name was Barrymore.

As a journalist and blogger, I got to work with both The Garys and now Gary Topp Presents on a variety of events, the most recent being the release

of [Stiv: No Compromise No Regrets](#) and a whirlwind of an interview with [Michelle Shocked](#). In the same way that my intersections are tangled and haphazard, Collier arranges seemingly random one-page six-frame narratives, most with punchlines, that coalesce to not an incisive depiction of Topp's life, but rather a series of fragments that create a mosaic of memory and insight. Collier and Topp have worked together for decades and seem to have an amiable friendship which is also charmingly depicted.

Collier's evocation of life on the bottom rungs of the music biz - he was a busboy at The Edge and a frequent roadie and his tales of both are not only piercingly accurate but also hilarious - intersects with a few celebrity cameos. Topp and his cat's first encounter with Bryan Ferry is utterly deadpan and all the more comic for it. The loose narrative does form a biography as Collier - the narrator of each page might be Topp, might be Collier, might be someone else but, no, it is not confusing - diligently researches Topp's life story. Topp's family tree and time at camp gets as much coverage as the first Police Picnic. The fleeting nature of celebrity and fame is not the emphasis, even though Topp takes Johnny Ramone to a Blue Jays game with wry and perceptive results.

The creation of *Topp: Promoter Gary Topp Brought Us the World* is as much the subject



of the graphic novel as is Topp himself. Collier is digging into his past as well and that leads to ruminations on aging and the enduring power of the artistic impulse. And the, in this case, indomitably of the need to create. In 1964 a very young Topp writes a letter to CHUM-FM protesting their refusal to play the Rolling Stones until "they cleaned up their act." That momentous (if futile) act of civic outrage dovetails with Topp's consistent refusal to compromise on artistry or quality, and Collier's deceptively loose structure and artwork. Two artists, in wildly disparate fields, settle into an amiable collaboration that succeeds in being so much more than a biography.

As a meta-co-star Collier's art and story shines with considerable self-deprecation. I am not familiar with his graphic novels but instantly recognized his work from the posters and flybills he created

(Collier credits Topp for giving him his big break as well as ruining his knees in a ladder accident) and from frequent illustrations and graphic novellas in *The Globe and Mail*. Topp also includes priceless photos in a slightly satirical parody of more conventional celebrity or historical figure hagiographies. Collier and Topp aren't celebrities or stars but this biography, this cultural history, is way overdue and very welcome.

Perhaps all comic books do star superheroes.

<https://www.garytopp.com/the-book/> -Topp is published by Conundrum Press. conundrumpress.com



was a photography buff. He developed his own pictures.



Gary is a music promoter along with his business partner Gary Cormier. I worked with *The Garys* when they booked acts into a nightclub called *The Edge* and later, when they put on shows at larger venues.



And put it on The Roxy's old turntable.





Model: Matthew
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber

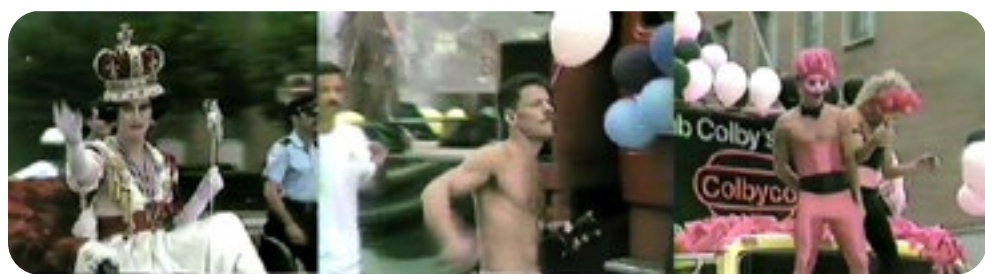
PAUL BELLINI

Prides of past: 1987



Okay, Sherman, let's get in the WABAC machine. As you know, this year's Pride events have been cancelled due to the Bubonic plague. So what better way to celebrate the event by looking back at Prides past?

Today, we step into 1987, long before special interest groups came along and ruined all the fun. According to the Pride website, which doesn't appear to have been updated since 2014, this was the year that sexual orientation was finally included in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The theme was Rightfully Proud, and about 15,000 people, mostly neighbourhood types, attended. Unfortunately, curmudgeon mayor Art Eggleton once again refused to issue a proclamation for the day. Nowadays, it's hard to believe how backwards things were way back then.



Now for the parade itself. Glorious! This was back in the day when local bars like Colby's and Soltero's and Chaps actually paid money to build floats. Groups marching included Gays and Lesbians Aging, The Out & Out Club, the Gay Asians of Toronto, Mensa (!), the Judy Garland Memorial Bowling League, Gay Fathers of Toronto, and Fruit Cocktail. There were so few people in attendance that the City didn't even close the intersection, so everyone had to scurry out of the way of cars. The parade, which assembled in front of the 519, made its way down to College, then north on Yonge Street.

Other highlights include a guy with an inflatable boa constrictor (replaced in later years by a guy with an actual boa around his neck); drag queens in big hoop skirts with motors underneath; contingents from other smaller cities like Kitchener and Sarnia; Miss Galaxy, whoever that is; some person in a terrible costume with a banner reading Captain Condom; Bitch Diva, sitting on a park bench twirling an Oriental umbrella; June Callwood, whose Casey House was newly opened; mad drag diva Gina, who was famous for singing big loud operatic notes for no reason at all; some guy dressed like Queen Elizabeth; and of course Michelle DuBarry elegantly perched atop the Trax float. Sexy clones with moustaches wore unzipped onesies or really tight basket-revealing shorts and classic 1980s muscle tops.

Best of all was the show, which took place on the world's tiniest stage (about six inches high) in the Beer Store parking lot. I remember that a band was playing when some totally drugged out queen felt he had the right to jump onstage and deliver some big stupid speech about how we are all proud to be gay. The flustered singer said, "Is this part of the show?" There was no security to get rid of the annoying twat, who eventually danced off in a drug haze.

Was it fun? You bet it was. Wish I could snap my fingers and go back to then. Instead, we're stuck here in shitty 2020, with no option but to look back on our better days. Join me next time for a look at yet another year in the life of Pride.

RAYMOND HELKIO

The Archives Trivia Night (Pride Edition)



“My most positive memory from the in-person trivia nights is the reaction of the crowd. I know that we’ve come up with a great question when we say the answer and I see that “Oh wow, I didn’t know that!” look on people’s faces. This has happened many times at each event.” - Rachel E Beatie, cohost

Every Monday night in June, The ArQuives hosts an online streaming trivia night that’ll challenge your queer history knowledge and give you plenty to laugh, celebrate and think about. Expect crazy costumes, camaraderie, community and a bit of elder knowledge transfer, as cohost Stewart Borden explains, “I love the idea of ‘the kids nowadays’ learning all this cool stuff about LGBT history and quirky facts. For example, did you know that bottoms are more likely to be left-handed than tops?”

Co-presented with the AIDS Committee of Toronto and Pride Toronto, the event is modelled after the previous two held at Glad Day Bookshop. The streaming model will be a first of its kind for the organizers but their goal is to continue providing aha moments for the entire audience, a tactic Rachel uses as a measure of their success, “I know that we’ve come up with a great question when

we say the answer and I see that “The questions that people get really excited about learning the answer makes it all so valuable to me. I feel like the whole point of the trivia is to teach people about both LGTQ2S+ history and The ArQuives and do it in a fun way. That reaction makes me feel like we’ve done our job.”

For updates, please visit their facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/events/888083461710083/>

The ArQuives Trivia Night (Pride Edition) - Monday Nights @ 8 PM

June 1

Queerly Canadian: Canada’s LGBTQ+ past and present

June 8

From Oscar Wilde to Tegan and Sara: LGBTQ+ pop culture

June 15

Hogtown Homos: Toronto’s LGBTQ+ scene

June 22

From Stonewall to Gigi Gorgeous: Know your Pride

DREW ROWSOME

GEANDERSON MELLO

is MGT's proud Pride cover boy



Geanderson Mello
 mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
 photo: Sean Leber

“Brazil is a very religious country and we get a lot of hate from conservative people,” says dancer and *MGT* cover model Geanderson Mello. “When I moved to Toronto in 2013 it was right before Pride. I saw so many gay flags at the airport and in the streets, which showed me how progressive this country is. It gave me hope for Brazil.”

Mello takes a deep breath and explains, “I came out when I was 16-years-old. It wasn’t easy, it was very rocky because someone posted a photo of me online and then the photo got to my parents. My parents are very Catholic and they didn’t

accept me. My dad kicked me and my brother who is also gay out of my home and we had to move to a big city. My brother was 14 so we left home together. My mom was suffering because she was afraid we would get hurt more than being upset about us being gay. My dad is just recently reaching out and saying how sorry he feels for doing that to us, but it feels weird.”

But that was not the reason that Mello wound up in Toronto. “I moved to Toronto because of love,” he says. “I met my partner in 2012 when he was vacationing in Brazil. He returned several times to



Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber



Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber

visit me in Rio de Janeiro. We then decided that for the relationship to have any chance, I'd need to relocate in Toronto. So I took a huge leap of faith, and uprooted my established life in Brazil, to be with him. And now we've been together for seven and half years, and married for almost four."

Mello studied at Toronto Dance Theatre before joining Kaeja d'Dance while picked up modelling gigs on the side. Occasionally the two art forms intersect, with Mello naming Darryl Hoskins and [Sean Leber](#) as his two favourite photographers to work with so far. "The reason I like to work with the two of them is because they are from the same background as I am. Sean used to be a dancer and Darryl graduated from Toronto Dance Theatre as I did. I feel that knowing that they have been there, I just trust more."

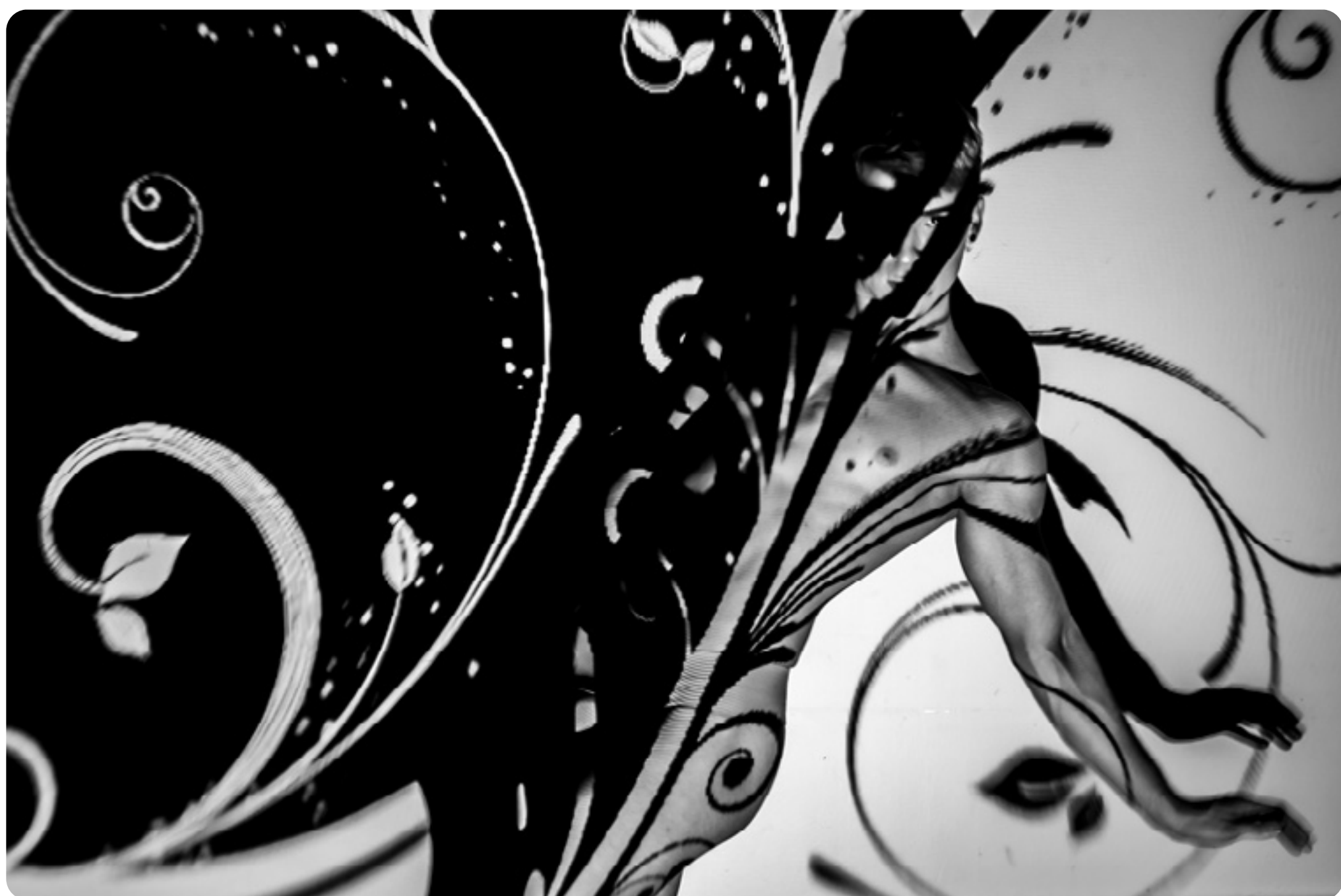
Leber, who is also the publisher of *MGT* and MyGayToronto.com, enthuses about working with Mello saying that while the model seemed shy at first, he was very quickly comfortable with "being outside and being half naked." Mello laughs, "It was just very natural, very organic. Being watched by the people outside, it felt like an audience which gave me a bit of excitement."

Though Mello also enjoyed working in the studio because it "felt intimate and special. I enjoyed being treated like a star. Sean and stylist and make-up artist [Amy Wittavat](#) were very

professional. I enjoyed changing outfits and make-up. It's something I really love. It was different, I'm used to producing my own photo shoots, doing my own thing. My own make-up." Leber raves about Mello's ability, enhanced by his dance background, to deliver multiple personas and a variety of looks.

Mello likes to explore personas. "Of all the photographs, the one I adore is the lollipop one. The one with the pink lollipop where I am sucking it. Mostly because, as I was saying before, Brazil is a very masculine society. You have to be masculine, you have to act that way. There's a lot of pressure as a boy to behave like a boy, boys don't cry. I was told that my whole life and I tried to hold myself in a way to please others, my father, my family. I couldn't wear pink or red or anything. To be able to express a feminine side of me, just elevates the man I am today."

But Mello isn't finished enthusing. "I love the Frida one and the projections, they are my second favourite part of the photo shoot. I felt like I was just a painting and that Sean was the artist doing work on my body and that was amazing." As Leber has already noted, Mello is quite comfortable with nudity both in dancing and modelling and it has got him into trouble. "Social media doesn't think my nude work with photographers is art. They're not educated enough to know the difference. So I don't put myself in that position."





Geanderson Mello
Shirt: Mikey Sin Designs
photo: Sean Leber



Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber



Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber



This leads to a love/hate relationship with social media. “It helps me to advertise upcoming performances and to make myself be seen and not forgotten in the community. It’s important to keep posting things and show what you have to offer. My dance form is basically theatre so we don’t have footage of that. People don’t actually know who I am as a dancer unless they go to the theatre, so on social media it’s a little taste of what I do.”

There are sometimes less beneficial results. “I’ve gotten a lot of hate from people criticizing the photos I post. It’s not something that my family wouldn’t like, I’ve sent them all my photos and they appreciate my art and my vision. People ask why do I post them, do I want attention? Am I going through something? And they ask, how is that art? They ask if I’m doing porn now because of some photos I posted. But, no.”

Mello knows exactly what the difference between art and pornography is. “I think they are very different and it depends on the intent of the photographer and of the model. And, honestly, the audience. There’s a lot of beauty in the human body and I think if it’s done tastefully or to provoke the audience somehow, it’s art. It’s political expression.”

Like many others, the current pandemic has interrupted Mello’s career trajectory. “I do what I can on a daily basis but it’s very frustrating. Everything in my life has been postponed or cancelled. I have good days when I feel motivated and post online trying to give people a little bit of hope. But I have bad days where I’m depressed and don’t feel like working out, it’s hard.”

And *Pride*, which was such an inspiration is also postponed if not cancelled, but Mello is optimistic. “Hopefully we’re going to be able to gather in smaller groups like 10 people or so. If not, I’m going to a cottage with my best buddies and that will be fun too. Relieve a little bit of the stress.” And when the pandemic ends, Mello, with a little help, will be ready. “My husband is my biggest supporter. He always says to go for photo shoots and auditions. He’s my number one fan.”

That optimism shines when Mello is asked for advice for others coming out, dealing with the pandemic and/or the loss of *Pride*. He doesn’t hesitate, “I would say, you’re not alone. Two, be yourself. And three, be proud because you were born perfect.”

Geanderson Mello is on Instagram [@gee_mello](https://www.instagram.com/gee_mello)





Geanderson Mello
photo: Sean Leber



Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber



Geanderson Mello
photo: Sean Leber



Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber





Geanderson Mello
photo: Sean Leber



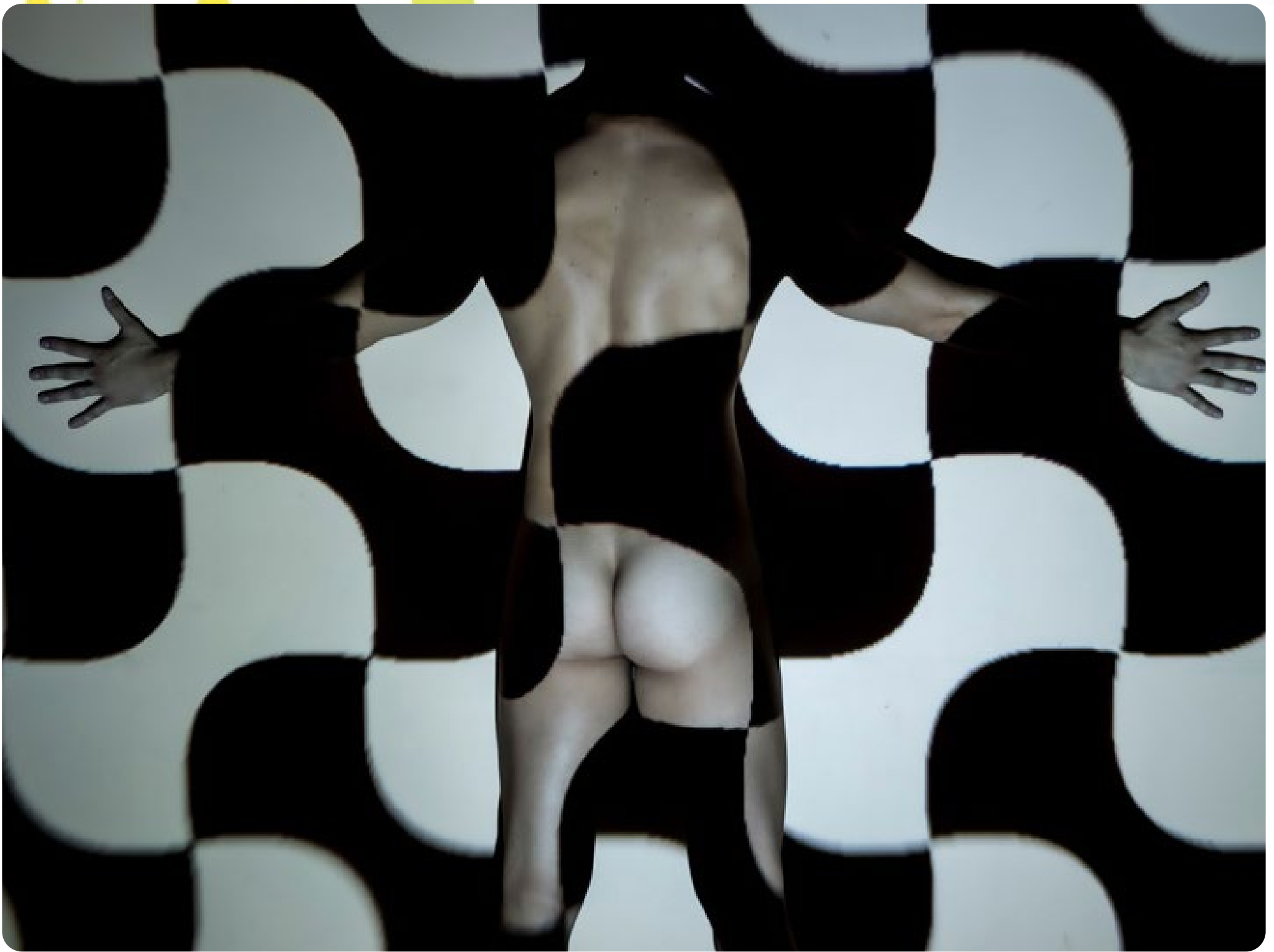
Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber



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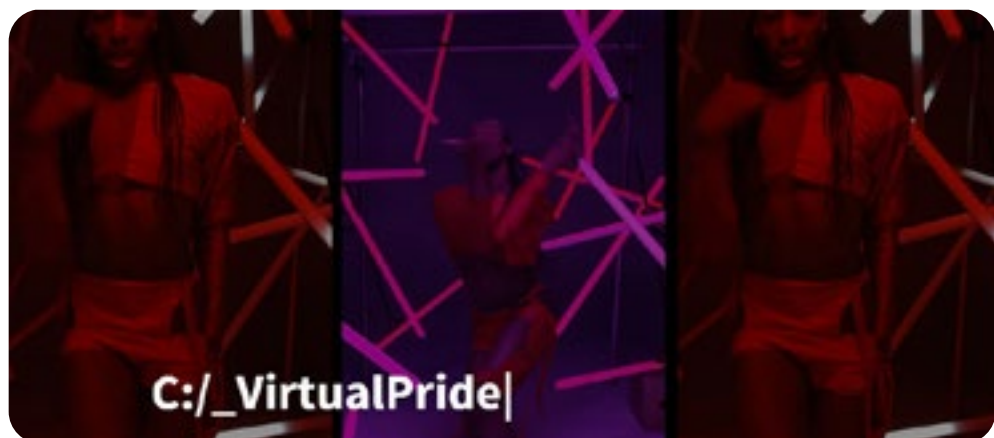
Geanderson Mello
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber

DREW ROWSOME

Surviving the Pandemic III: festivals in your home!



The covid-19 pandemic has dealt a serious blow to the LGBTQ and arts communities. The first "[Surviving the Pandemic](#)" looked at how individual artists and groups were struggling to adapt and to create amidst the loss of their usual venues. The second "[Surviving the Pandemic](#)" featured even more. Since then there have been many great projects that deserve to be added to those lists but hopefully readers are scanning social media and finding even more than I have. Great art and entertainment is thriving on the web.



But now we are three months in and summer is here. All the events that make summer in this city so vibrant have been cancelled in their usual formats. But a lot of them are figuring out how to connect via the internet. The summer's biggest event, Pride Toronto, is launching Virtual Pride. While a lot of events have been announced covering the entire Pride Month - drag extravaganzas, virtual versions of all three parades, versions of Steers & Queers and Blockorama, *Fay & Fluffy's Drag Story Time*, *Yes Yes Y'all*, *Sex Talk: Calls in Quarantine*, and even *The Morning After: Strapped Brunch Takeover* - the details are still vague about how to actually tune in. Visit pridetoronto.com and though we can't celebrate collectively, we can all still be proud.

Buddies' Queer Pride always fills Pride Month with joy and daring. It too has moved online for 2020



and with their Queer, Far, Wherever You Are series ongoing on Instagram and continual blogposts dealing directly and insightfully with queer life in a pandemic, they have a head start. Buddies is also sponsoring fixed location performances and installations that are spread all across the city (with the admonishment to avoid travelling and to visit the one near your lockdown location or view online). From a *Twilight Fairy Garden* with heavenly vocals by Helene Ducharme, to a "site-specific, physically-distant drag performance spectacular for one" with Jord Camp, to a Michael Caldwell ([House Guests](#)) dance piece titled "Cruising" at Cherry Beach (if only it were safe for it be interactive), to a Pride Rocks rock garden in Scarborough, to a nightly party at Trixie and Beever's notorious backyard, there is a lot to explore.



On Wednesday, June 24 Buddies teams up with the CBC for *Queer Pride Inside: a Buddies in Bad Times Cabaret* hosted by Elvira Kurt and starring a motherfuckerlode of queer talent including Gay Jesus, Pearle Harbour ([Retreat](#), [Chautauqua](#), [Pearle Harbour's Sunday School](#)), Ivan Coyote, Tawiah M'Carthy

([Obaaberima](#), [Black Boys](#)), Les Femmes Fatales and many more. The Queer Youth and performances by the Emerging Creators Unit will also be performing their annual Pride cabarets. And for everyone missing the casual cruisy festivities at Tallulah's on Pride Sunday, there was a Zoom event Patricia's Pride Tea Dance hosted by the grande dame herself, Patricia Wilson ([Musings From the Bunker & Slouching Towards Womanhood](#)) but it has now been cancelled. All the details on how to join in Buddies Pride are at buddiesinbadtimes.com.



The other big gay festival, Inside Out has optimistically postponed the festival of LGBTQ films until October. In the meantime, to celebrate their 30th year, there is a Retrospective Shorts Program culled from the festival's three decades that can be streamed at insideout.ca. There is no way to recreate the excitement and cruisiness of the actual festival, but at least a taste will keep cinephiles sated until, hopefully, October. The shorts are collected into the groupings of "Best of the Best of the Fest," "Local Heroes," and "30 Years of CanQueer." All three contain dozens of shorts that tantalize and can't help but build anticipation for the future main event.



The Luminato Festival which has brought Toronto audiences so many extraordinary events - [RIOT](#), [Burning Doors](#), and the life-changing [Forget Me Not](#) - over the years is now streaming on the festival's social media platforms and Zoom from Thursday, June 11 to Saturday, June 13. There are many workshops and conversations, which



always were a part of Luminato's programming, but also "an edible performance" by Measha Brueggergosman ([Caroline, or Change](#)) that will be delicious. Taking on extra urgency in light of current events is *Black Summer Nights* with Unit 2, Black Lives Matter Toronto and Tea Base. As well as a host of DJs there are performances by Dainty Smith and [Stephen Jackman-Torkoff](#) ([Trout Stanley](#), [Towards Youth](#), [Botticelli in the Fire & Sunday in Sodom](#), [Black Boys](#)) that will transcend any technological limitations of presentation.



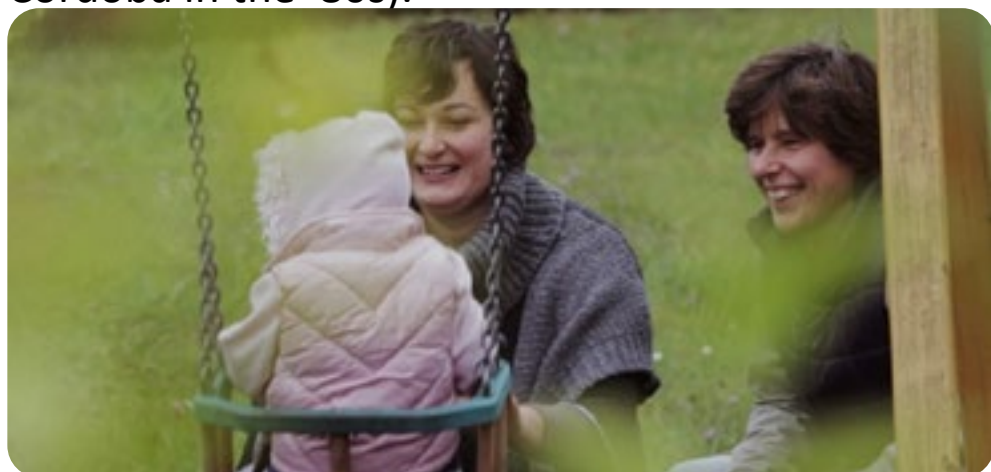
Zuppa Theatre Co present *Vista20*, a walking tour app that they claim can be experienced anywhere - even "in circles around an apartment" - without ignoring physical distancing. The irrepressible [Tomson Highway](#) ([The \(Post\) Mistress](#)) introduces a performance of his and John Millard's hit from last year's festival [The Cave](#). A cabaret production that was already intensely intimate, it should translate well to a small screen with its magical musicality intact. Luminato climaxes with an invitation to "come and party like its the end of the world" at *Revelation* with Les Femmes Fatales and DJ [Nik Red](#). Full listings and log-on details



at luminatofestival.com.

The Hot Docs Festival will miss having a big screen, but it does have a big selection of

over 140 films and shorts that are available online. Some are once-offs but many are will be streaming on demand until Wednesday, June 24. There is, as always, queer content with *Her Mothers* (Hungarian lesbians adopt), *Transhood* (four years in the lives of four trans youth in Kansas City), *Meat the Future* (queer filmmaker Liz Marshall explores producing meat without slaughtering animals), *If It Were Love* (a theatre tour of a play based on raves becomes a surreal film/theatre hybrid), and *Playback* (drag queens in conservative Cordoba in the '80s).



As always there are also many documentaries with queer appeal: *Bare* (the creation of *Burning Souls*, a dance piece performed au naturel), *Kachalka* (a gym built out of “cast-off Soviet-era machinery and the eccentrics who work out there), and the self-explanatory *Leap of Faith: William Friedkin on The Exorcist*. Browsing the catalogue online at hotdocs.ca will help you find many other films to fill those hours when Netflix just doesn't have what you want.

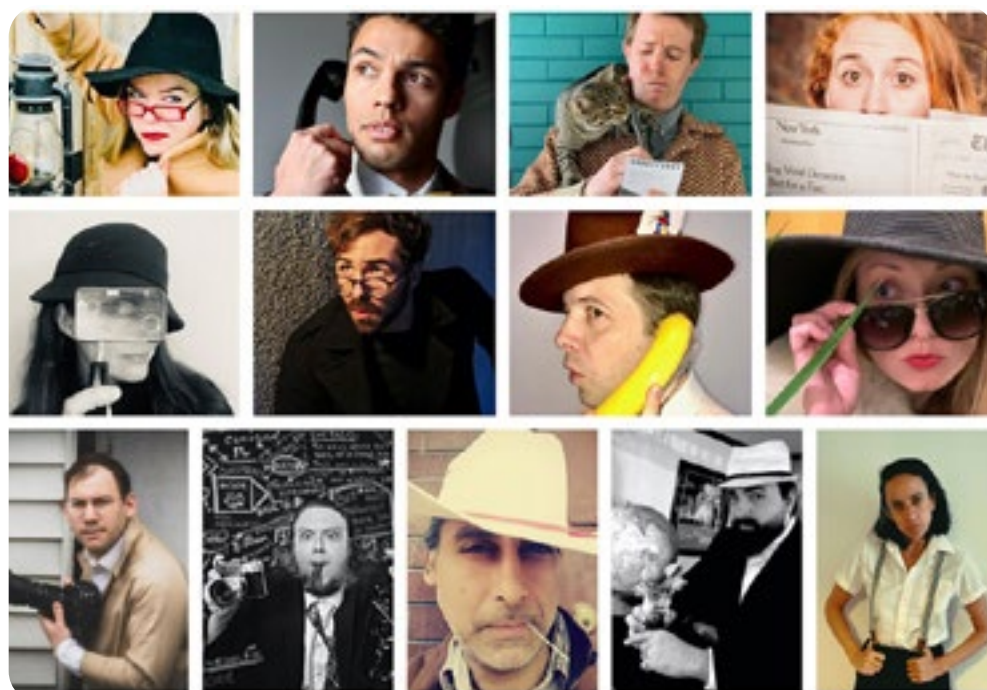


Though the full details aren't announced yet, the Toronto Fringe festival is also going to adapt with *The Fringe Collective, a Digital Experience*. The 50 performances that were scheduled for summer 2020 will “share a creative offering” in a slot during four acts taking place from Wednesday, July 1 to Sunday, July 12. All the performances will be pre-recorded and will stream on a private page at fringetoronto.com. There isn't a full program available yet, but never underestimate the “let's put on a show” spirit of the Fringe.

Who wouldn't pick up if they got a call from



Nick Blais, Colin Doyle (*The Flick*), Francis Melling (*Hand to God*), Anand Rajaram (*Buffoon, Mustard, Stupefaction*), or Sebastien Heins (*Bang Bang, Brotherhood: The Hip Hopera*)? SummerWorks will tragically not be able to offer their slate of intriguing experiments and adventures, but they are teaming up with Outside the March (*The Flick, The Tape Escape, Mr Burns, a Post-Electric Play*) to present *The Ministry of Mundane Mysteries*. The first mystery is just what the production is, the press release explains it as a “customized improvised narrative experience unfolding over a week's worth of short daily phone calls, as our intrepid private investigators delve into your very own micro mystery using the



investigative power of good conversation.” However it works, ‘the game's afoot!’ with assistance available from “The Misplaced Keepsakes Division,” “The Striking Coincidences Think Tank,” “The Missed Connections Unit,” and “The Paranormal Activity Task Force,” all staffed with some of Toronto's best theatrical talent and the mad geniuses that form Outside the March. Bookings with The Ministry and more information at summerworks.ca and outsidethemarch.ca.

The summer won't be a total loss with the internet bringing all the festivals and Pride directly to your home. It won't be the same but it will still be a summer of festivals. Festivals in your home.



Model: Cody
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber

PAUL BELLINI

Prides of past: 1992



Pride was pretty exciting in 1992. The Supreme Court of Canada had just ruled that under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act, gays and lesbians could not be excluded from entering the Canadian Forces. The federal government does not appeal the ruling. Party, motherfuckers!

“Breaking the Silence” was Pride’s theme that year, and the Grand Marshals were children of gay and lesbian parents, who clearly hadn’t suffered enough. Attendance was estimated to be 120,000 people.

once again, Bitch Diva worked her umbrella while looking pretty and demure atop some vehicle.

The only sombre note was the die-in. Back in 1992, people still died of AIDS, and every issue of *Xtra* featured dozens of pictures of guys we all recognized from the bars, now dead way too soon. As always, gay activists appealed to an indifferent federal government for help. One way to get attention was with a die-in. In the middle of the parade, some guy blew a whistle and hundreds of people lay down on the pavement (imagine, lying down on Yonge Street!) and someone else would



The previous year saw Glad Day Bookshop under siege, busted by the cops for selling a dirty filthy lesbian porno mag called *Bad Attitude*. The bust resulted in a huge march months earlier and the anger carried over to Pride. Buddies in Bad Times upped the ante with a sexually suggestive in-your-face float featuring S&M and jail bars and sex toys and tits and ass. Newly opened men’s strip club Remington’s put a hunk on the roof of a car. Wearing only a lime-green G-string, you could see his dick from two blocks away. Gina the operatic drag diva once again trilled what some believe might be opera from atop her float. The cutest were the AIDS Committee of Toronto who hired some guys to twirl flags while wearing Sgt Pepper jackets, and boy, were they having a blast. And



come by and draw a chalk outline around them. The idea was, every chalk outline symbolized some young gay man who needlessly died of this disease. The effect was very powerful, until some goof decided to draw hair and facial features on the chalk outlines. Well, it was powerful while it lasted.



DREW ROWSOME

Surviving the Pandemic IV: all hail the queens!

As Pride Month lurches and limps towards whatever celebrations we can manage in this ever fluctuating state of semi-isolation we find ourselves in, once again it is drag queens to the rescue!



Queens are nothing if not adaptable, even if a small screen can barely contain the glamour, hair and energy. But with the stages and runways, a drag queen's natural habitat, off limits for the time being, the larger than life stars of our community are a gift to our phones, tablets and laptops.



"[Surviving the Pandemic](#)" brought us BIG GIRL, The B-Girlz's *QuaranQueened* and Ruby La Rue in *Digging Up Dorothy*. "[Surviving the Pandemic II](#)" starred Varla Jean Merman and Jackie Beat. The festivals featured in "[Surviving the Pandemic III](#)" boasted drag on film and in virtual events of all kinds. And since the beginning of the pandemic, drag queens have been entertaining on a variety of social media platforms with [Miss Conception](#) adapting



her spectacular revues for online, and Sofonda Cox rocking suburbia and going viral with her curbside drag shows and *Sofonda's Go Go Review*.



Ivory Towers burns up [twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv) with fierce guest stars in the upcoming Gaymer Girls (Tuesday, June 16) and Power Hours (Monday, June 22). Even the venerable CBC is getting into the act with *Queens* (streaming on CBC Gem at [cbc.ca](https://www.cbc.ca) starting Friday, June 19) a mystery/comedy involving lots of shade and the disappearance of a pageant crown. On Friday, June 26, CBC Gem is also the home of an online version of the We're Funny That Way festival with host Maggie Cassella hosting the queer comic brilliance of Martha Chaves, [Gavin Crawford](#), Lea DeLaria, Andrea Martin, Deb McGrath, Colin Mochrie, Katie Rigg, Carolyn Taylor, Shawnee, Karen Williams and more.

Friendly Stranger, the cannabis retail store in the heart of the Village (501 Church St), has organized and is presenting a *Digital Drag Show* on Tuesday, June 16 which aims to rival the best of the Pride stages or a much-missed at the moment



night at Woody's, Crews & Tangos or [Buddies](#). The spectacle is hosted by the Queen of the North [Brooke Lynn Hytes](#) who, after being first runner up in season 11 of *RuPaul's Drag Race* and is a judge on the upcoming *Canada's Drag Race*, needs no introduction, and Brock McGillis, the first professional hockey player to come out.



The list of performers is impressive: Boa, Lucy Flawless, Baby Bel Bel, Eric Brockobic, Miss Fiercalicious, Devine Darlin, Juice Boxx, Jada Hudson, Courtney Conquers, Gia Metric, Sapphire and, of course, Sofonda Cox. The funds raised are for the Glad Day Lit's Emergency Survival Fund that supports Village artists, performers and tip-wage earners. Access to the event live is through a [GoFundMe](#) page and viewings (and the chance to further donate) will be available for a month after at [friendlystranger.com](#). Viewers will also be treated to special offers and prize packages from Village mainstays Craig's Cookies, Crews and Tangos, Woody's, The Well and, of course, our friends at Friendly Stranger.

Less local but just as dramatic is *Werg the World's Pride Castle* on Saturday, June 27. Jaida Essence

Hall and Yvie Oddly are joined by Heidi N Closet, Raja, Naomi Smalls, Kim Chi and Plastique for a virtual Pride event hosted by Candis Cayne. After entering the Pride Castle, "viewers will be whisked into the regal rooms of the residing queens and treated to a grand performance by each. The tour concludes with a live ball featuring all of the queens together for one over-the-top majestic spectacular in the castle's vast courtyard." Ticket sales, donations and all tips will be forwarded to the National Black Justice Coalition, an organization dedicated to empowering the black LGBT+ community. Tickets are available at [vossevents.com](#).

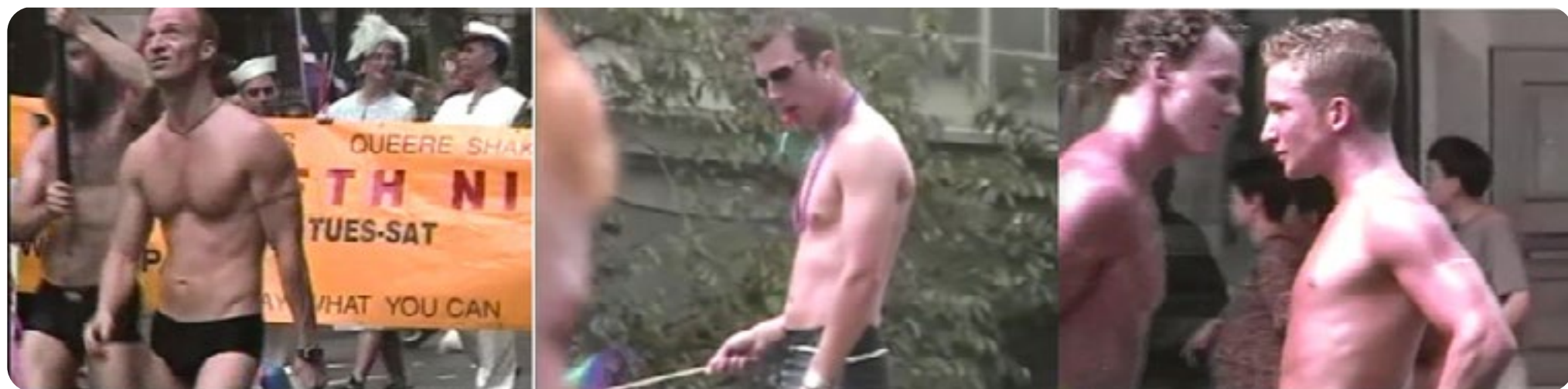


After reading this far you should already be feeling more proud. And hopefully indulging in those insistent urges to glam it up a little bit even if you're stuck at home. This only scratches, with lethal press-ons, the surface of what drag queens are created to ensure the survival of Pride. And pride. Check your favourite queen's Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and even Tik Tok, and guaranteed there will be an upcoming event or a performance or even a performance snippet that will lift your spirits over the rainbow.



PAUL BELLINI

Prides of past: 2002



In 2002, Pride was peaking. The attendance figures were growing every year, and the world was starting to notice. Floats were massive, so they assembled along Bloor east of Yonge Street, then made their way south along Yonge. Media had a huge presence, and the excitement was palpable.



The theme was "Uncensored!" and thank God, because it was impossible not to notice the Totally Naked Toronto contingent, marching proudly with cocks flapping in the wind. Unfortunately, most of them were guys you don't want to see naked. To compensate, MAC cosmetics, then flourishing, had a massive float adorned with many anatomically-perfect glitter-painted hunks, along with a second



group circling the flatbed on roller blades.

The Grand Marshals were JP Hornick and Rachel Aitchison of the Toronto Women's Bathhouse Committee, which is odd, as no women's bathhouse ever existed in Toronto or anywhere else on earth. True, a lesbian sex party held at Club Toronto, which was called Pussy Palace, was ruined by stupid cops two years earlier. I guess that explains it. Glad Day Bookshop was the Honoured Group. The Pride Committee's website

declares, "Come on out, and help us make her/history." Isn't that just her/hysterical?



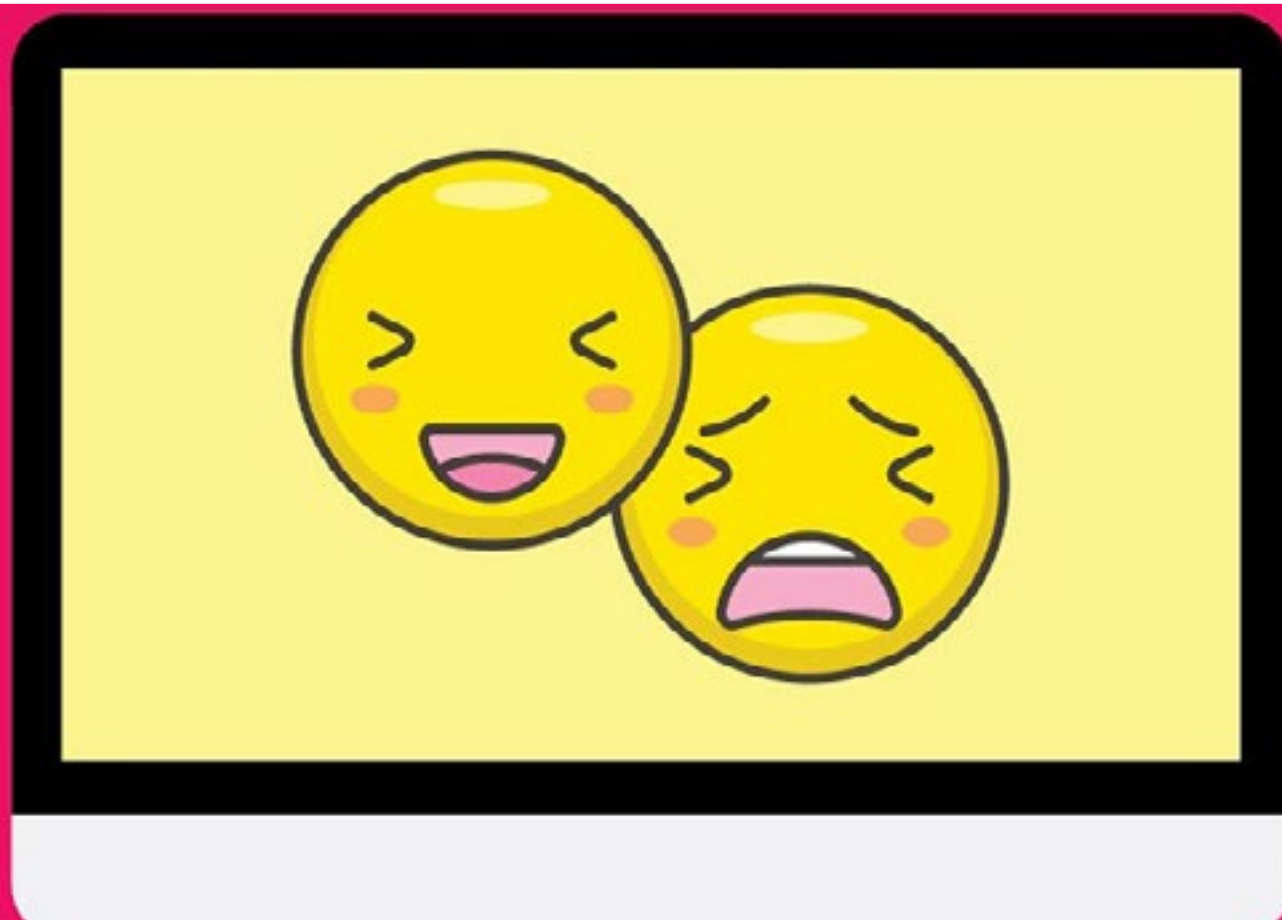
I particularly liked The Fraternity's group, dressed in white cotton shirts and ties, knee-high dress socks and shoes and briefcases. Everything but pants. So cute. My friend, who had a sock fetish, was out of his mind with pleasure. PFLAG marched, so dignified, and many young lesbians showed their tits. In terms of public nudity, 2002 was a banner year.

There was one thing that really impressed me. Three guys went to a dollar store and bought hundreds of plastic flowers of all different colours, then they glue-gunned those flowers on some cheap Value Village suits. They also created huge magnificent flower crowns. The total effect was stunning, and to this day, those three flower suits hold the record for Best Costume Ever. Sometimes, gay men are just the most ingenious of people.



DREW ROWSOME

Surviving the Pandemic V: adapting at the FRINGE!



“It is definitely a terrifying time for theatre, but creativity doesn’t stop when the stage shuts down,” says playwright Steven Elliott Jackson (*The Seat Next to the King*, *Threesome*, *Real Life Superhero*). “I knew with this year’s Toronto Fringe that I would have to adapt or explore new avenues of telling stories.” Jackson was already preparing his play *The President’s Daughter* and a family show for the 2020 Toronto Fringe Festival when the pandemic hit and all the Fringe venues were closed indefinitely. The Fringe Festival became The Fringe Collective and the artists who had spots in the festival were offered the opportunity to join together online to create a different experience but with the Fringe energy and exuberance.



Jackson has two offerings with *The Cage* and *Sarah/Frank*. “*The Cage* is a short play set in 1929 when Billy, a man who has faced rejection and trauma, is visited by his sister Vera with the information that he will have to move out of his apartment due to the Depression,” says Jackson. “I really wanted to write something like my favourite gay films, the ones from the mid ‘50s



to late ‘60s like *The Children’s Hour*, *Advise And Consent*, and *The Detective*. These filmmakers had to tell gay stories, mostly viewed negatively and without the ability to use the words. I could see the empathy for these characters as they had to choose ways to protect themselves from the filmmakers.”

Adapting to an online presentation was a process. “You can’t really take in the energy of an audience with a video or audio performance,” says Jackson. “What you can do is sort of be your own audience as best you can. During both shows, we talked a lot after the recording was done. We did multiple recordings of *The Cage*. You can’t replace an audience, but you can do your best to create a pleasurable atmosphere. You just have to go in with a different set of eyes and ears. One thing that might seem like a limitation but was a strength was a time limit. It’s very hard to watch a tiny screen for longer than 30 minutes.”

Thirty minutes still requires a lot of work and compromise. “We had the limitations of not being in the same room. There are some movements that have to coincide with each other. Thankfully it was a piece that didn’t require sexual intimacy. As a writer and director, I had to thoroughly edit the script not only for length, but also for the limitations of different rooms. You really have to think about what’s needed. Stage directions and some dialogue were gone because we couldn’t make it work in the format.”

The collaborative spirit of theatre helped. “Billy is performed by Brandon Knox, who is such an amazing actor who really dug into every word, and Vera is performed by Kate McArthur, who worked tirelessly to capture Vera and she truly shines in the role. The three of us worked and discussed possibilities to make the script work. We did about five recordings after two weeks of rehearsals until we found the one we all felt the best.”



Sarah/Frank is a “prerecorded audio experience. It tells the story of Sarah Edmondson, a person from New Brunswick who changed their gender, fought in the American Civil War and won the first pension for a woman. I had learned that upwards of a thousand women had fought in the Civil War. When I did a reading of another play I wrote a few years ago, this character received 75 percent of the questions from the audience. They have been on my mind ever since. There was unanimous feeling that this was the story to tell. I knew I had to get to work to write that play.”



Jackson wrote *Sarah/Frank* specifically as an audio play. “We did talk about a video, but with our incredible sound designer David Kingsmill, we knew that we could create something very special without visuals. His work on the piece was time consuming but it’s absolutely stunning.

Rebecca Perry plays Sarah and Frank and it’s a mastery of voice and sound that she creates these distinct personalities. The work is directed by Ryan G Hinds [[Lilies](#), [MacArthur Park Suite: A Disco Ballet](#)] and it was such a blessing that he could come on board to helm this piece. Ryan offers not only perspective on the piece as a performer, but he is tireless in advocating for telling stories that fall outside what we think is the mainstream experience.”

With both shows pre-recorded, Jackson will be able to enjoy the festival without the frenzy of supervising his own productions. “I can’t wait to see *King Lear . . . A (Self-Isolating) Puppet Epic!* by Tom McGee. His work is so funny, I’ll never forget *Hamlet* a few years ago,” he says. “I also can’t wait to see the second show from Donovan Jackson, *Medium Hot Coffee Black: Just Like My Soul*, he’s such a talented dancer, actor and writer. And *Together Alone* by Armon Gh, who always brings intensity to any show he does. Both are queer artists who will be seen for years to come.”

But of course the Fringe is usually also a time to network and socialize with other artists. To this end the Fringe Collective will attempt to bring the notorious Fringe Patio online, including an Isolation Disco. “I’ve been so busy with writing lately that I’m looking for downtime,” laughs Jackson. “Of course, who doesn’t love to dance? I look forward to connecting with the other artists as much as I would at the Fringe Tent. I think that bond of most artists being isolated and needing to connect has been happening. We have been expanding how we communicate through play readings, development meetings, workshops and open discussions and just our own personal relationships. There is a real struggle among theatre artists without any real stage. As a writer, I’m even learning to take that craft and adapt it into other areas like TV and film, but I also know my first love is theatre.”

And though Jackson is too modest to plug his own work without prompting, he finally notes that his hit play that got its start at the Fringe, [The Seat Next To The King](#) “was published by Scirocco Drama in 2018 and can be purchased at Book City, Page & Panel, and Glad Day Bookshop. Support small book sellers!”

The Fringe Collective runs from Wed, July 1 to Sun, July 12 online at fringetoronto.com

Pride Throw Back 2014

Photos by Cheryl Lifford & Matt Clopot



My Gay Toronto.com
Photo by Cheryl Lifford



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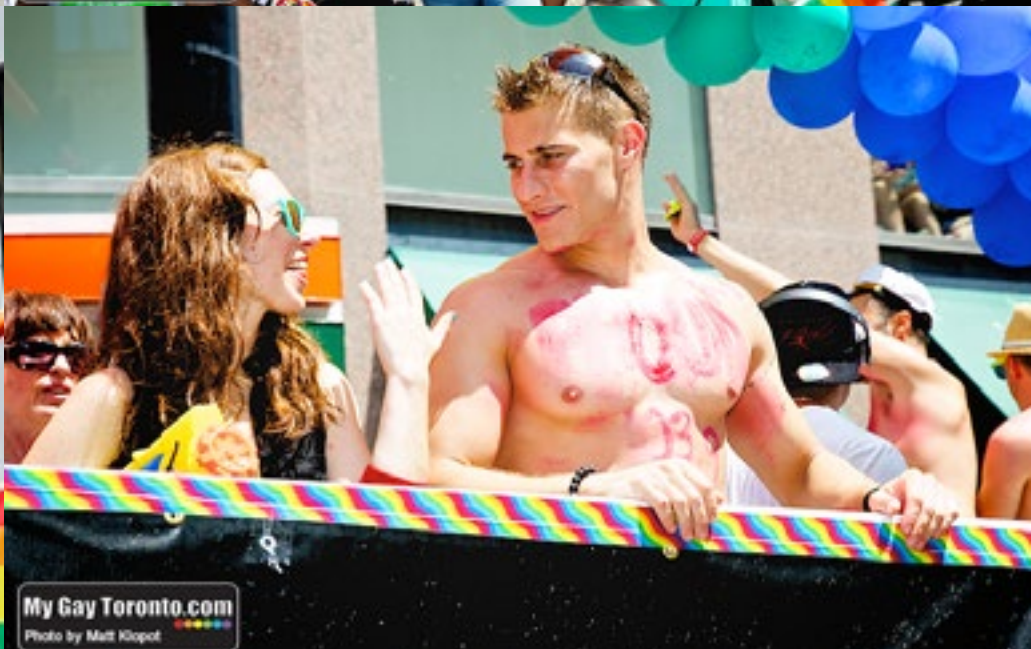
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buddies Pride 2020 Event listings

QUEER, FAR, WHENEVER YOU ARE

Queer, Far, Wherever You Are

June 1-15

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday at 5PM ET

Instagram Live (@buddiesTO)

Kicking off a month full of events is a special Pride edition of *Queer, Far, Wherever You Are*, an ongoing series of livestreams bringing queer content to the comfort of your homes. Tune in to our Instagram channel at 5PM ET every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday for music, drag, crafts, and more!

June 1 - Partner

June 3 - Gabriel Dharmoo (Bijuriya)

June 4 - Carole Pope

June 8 - Cris Derksen

June 10 - Anais West and Sara Vickruck

June 11 - LAL

June 15 - Pree Rehal

buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/queer-far-wherever-you-are/

CBC ARTS PRESENTS QUEER PRIDE INSIDE: A BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES CABARET

CBC Arts Presents Queer Pride Inside: A Buddies in Bad Times Cabaret

Saturday, June 20, 9PM ET

Available on the free [CBC Gem](#) streaming service

CBC Arts teams up with the world's largest and longest-running queer theatre to bring you a one-night cabaret extravaganza. This virtual taste of what audiences have come to expect from Buddies' annual Queer Pride Festival will now be available to viewers across the country. Hosted live by award-winning comic **Elvira Kurt**, expect an evening of boundary-pushing, wild expression, with some of Canada's top queer performers in drag, burlesque, storytelling, and music. The lineup includes the **Gay Jesus, Gwen Benaway, Ivan Coyote, Stewart Legere, Les Femmes Fatales**, and more.

buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/queer-pride-inside/

QUEER PLACE, QUEER SPACE: A QUEER YOUTH CABARET

Queer Place, Queer Space: A Queer Youth Cabaret

co-presented with Soulpepper Theatre

Thursday, June 25, 7PM ET

Streamed online at soulpepper.ca/online

This cabaret, a partnership between **Soulpepper** and **Buddies**, explores how young artists define queer

spaces, whether through body, mind, physical space or community around them. These definitions of place have shifted over the last few months. While we are isolated, our identities are being constantly redefined by our new daily spaces: our homes, our walking trails, and Zoom performances with friends and strangers.

Soulpepper and Buddies are looking for young people of all artistic backgrounds to explore what queer space, place, and community is to them right now. We are currently video accepting submissions from queer artists and performers aged 14-30. Submissions close Sunday, June 7.

[/buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/queer-place-queer-space/](https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/queer-place-queer-space/)

PATRICIA'S PRIDE TEA DANCE

Patricia's Pride Tea Dance

Sunday, June 28, 3-6PM ET

Hosted on Zoom

The Madonna of Alexander Street herself, Patricia Wilson, hosts a Zoom party like no other. Every year on Pride Sunday, Buddies opens its doors to those wanting some respite from the sun. This year, in lieu of meeting in person, we're creating a casual virtual space for folks to drop-in, catch up with the Buddies crowd, and take in a bit of a show. Patricia will be joined by some familiar faces, light tunes by **DJ Corser**, and special guest performers to be announced.

buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/tea-dance/

EMERGING CREATORS UNIT

Good Grief: Queer and Trans Reflections on the Edge of Survival

Emerging Creators Unit Presentations

in partnership with **b current performing arts**

Tuesday, June 30, 8PM ET

Digitally simulcast by Buddies

Since January, the 2020 **Emerging Creators Unit** cohort has been developing new works for the stage. Always a highly-anticipated event of the Buddies season, this year the innovative spirit of the Unit will be on full display, as they showcase the digital adaptations of their projects. Cap off your Queer Pride with a night of important, emerging queer voices: **Gabe Maharjan + Merlin Simard**, with support from Emerging Creators Unit director **Catherine Hernandez** and assistant directors **Celia Green, daniel jelani ellis, Rochelle Richardson**.

buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/ecu-2020



Model: Pawel
mua & styling: Amy Wittavat
photo: Sean Leber

ANALOGUE PROJECTS CELEBRATING PRIDE IN PLACE

Analogue Projects Celebrating Pride in Place

June 15 - 28

Across the GTA

During this time of isolation and physical distancing, we ask: how can we still find ways to take up public space, be visible, out, loud and proud, political? How can we bring the spirit of queer pride to our neighbourhoods, public, private and shared spaces right across our city? Over forty artists respond, with fifteen hyper-local projects animating gardens, parking lots, and mailboxes across the city.

Mail-out Projects

Three of our Analogue Pride projects will be sent out by mail. If you would like to receive one of these, please fill out the respective forms below. We have a limited number of copies available, which will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. Please only sign up for one of the three mail-out projects.

Do-It-Yourself Pride Festival

creators **Lee Cameron + Wesley Reibeling**

This 13-day DIY Pride Festival zine offers reflections on Toronto's queer history and community, along with instructional event scores inviting you to activate and disrupt your own space and routines. A queer tribute to Yoko Ono's 1967 Do-It-Yourself Dance Festival. (Also available for pick-up and in digital form)

The Pride Crying Club

creators & criers **Monica Garrido + Elizabeth Staples**

Pride is an emotional time for us queers. Sign up for the chance to receive a curated crying kit, catered to your own crying adventure. Choose from one of four tear-jerking options: heartbreak, frustration, happiness, or sadness.

Pride Grams

creator **Jenna Harris**

Inspired by valentine-o-grams and halloween-o-grams of our school days, have a cute, colourful, hand-stenciled postcard sent to a loved one to celebrate Pride season.

Travelling

The Glambulance

creators **The Rothko Institute, Olivia Coombe, Axiom Circus + Lumatronic**

June 26, 2020; 7PM-11PM

A queer, traveling tribute to frontline health workers, the Glambulance is a mobile Pride stage that brings the party to you. Complete with rainbow cannon, music, and circus performances, it's a feast for the senses to be experienced from your windows, porches, and balconies.

Fixed locations

aPrideaPart

creator and performer **Jord Camp**, director **Elizabeth**

Staples

Location: Dufferin Ave and Brandon Ave

Date: June 17-19, 23-25, 6PM + 7:30PM

Presented in association with SummerWorks

Jord Camp invites you to an outdoor, site-specific, physically-distant drag performance spectacular for one. Listen to the soundtrack through your headphones and celebrate pride with tons of dancing, loads of reveals, and some self-reflection. This may be a pride apart, but we can still be a part of pride.

Cruising

director + choreographer **Michael Caldwell**

performers **Michael Caldwell + Benjamin Landsberg**

Location: Cherry Beach + Port Lands

Date: June 21-24, 9PM

What begins as a knowing glance develops into an intricate physical conversation between two men in public space, in this contemporary dance/live art event. The performers directly engage with the audience via text message, as they witness the action from their own vehicles.

Deaf Cabaret

curator **Sage Lovell**

featured performers **Gaitrie Persaud + Jay Go**

Location: Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, and various locations

Date: June 25, starting at 5PM

Ready to see magic come alive through sign language? Deaf Spectrum presents a series of pop-up performances by Deaf artists, animating sites across the downtown core, with a central activation outside Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.

Food Care/Soil Share

Created by **Unit 2, Bricks and Glitter**, and **Food Not Bombs**, featuring **Miss Nookie Galore, Franny Galore**, and **Mikiki**

Location: Allan Gardens (Carlton St & Homewood Ave)

Date: June 21, 1-3PM

Unit 2's food care team ties mutual aid into spectacle this Pride, showing the world how we can get dirty, play, perform, and help one another in new, tangible ways. Find them at Allan Gardens accepting soil donations in exchange for care items, seed bombs and (with your consent) some dirty humour.

Pocket Gay to Night

creators **Trixie & Beaver (with Adrien Whan)**

Location: Boulton Ave & Jones Ave

Date: June 22-27, daily at 8PM

Pride nightlife vibes make their way to Trixie and Beaver's east end home. In the front, a balcony covered in Pride accoutrements echoes the ones seen throughout the village, while the back turns into a party scene at dusk, as lights, music, shadows, and fog spill into the street.



THE TWILIGHT FAIRY GARDEN

WATCH A GARDEN TRANSFORM INTO A
MAGICAL SYMPHONY OF COLOUR, SOUND
AND CRITTERS OF THE QUEEREST KIND!

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2020

9PM ON YOUTUBE LIVE:

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/3SBFVI7FSDE](https://youtu.be/3SBFVI7FSDE)

buddies
IN BAD TIMES THEATRE

Pop-Up Pride Historycreator **Simon Black**

Location: Kippendavie Ave

Date: June 15-June 28

From the first gay picnic on Hanlan's in 1971 to Black Lives Matter's action at Pride 2016, lively pop-up-book style dioramas bring to life several different scenes and events from our queer community histories. The displays will change over the course of the festival.

Pride Rockscreator + curator **Aisha Fairclough**

Location: McCowan District Park

Date: June 18-28

Responding to a lack of safe spaces for queer folks in Scarborough, Aisha Fairclough animates a park's walking trail with hand-painted rocks featuring affirmations of love, belonging, and resilience.

Queerantimeby the **Canadian-Caribbean Arts Network**creator **Rhoma Spencer**, in collaboration withperformers **Jillia Cato + Nickeshia Garrick**soundscape design **Brandon Valdivia**director **Rhoma Spencer**

Location: Shuter St & Sackville St

Date: June 27, 8PM + 9PM

Two lesbians meet for the first time after months of online dating, only to be confronted by COVID. *Queerantime* is a pas de deux on pavement: a physical theatre installation exploring queer love in the time of lockdown.

Queer Crip History Projectby **Cyborg Circus Project**curators **Shay Erlich + Jenna Roy**

Location: Artscape Weston Common

Date: June 20-28

As the spectre of fear of who the queer disabled community will lose to this pandemic looms large, this photo and caption installation grapples with both grief and joy, celebrating notable queer disabled political and artistic figures in North American history.

Queer Domesticitieslead artist **Sara Melvin**

Location: Geary Ave & Salem Ave N.

Date: June 23-28

Lending cameras, film, and a set of guidelines to a group of Toronto queer community artists and organizers, lead artist Sara Melvin curates an outdoor photographic installation highlighting how our queer lives, power, and community manifest in our domestic spaces.

The Twilight Fairy Gardendirector, animator **Raymond Helkio**composer **Stewart Borden**offering **Keith Cole**musical saw **Charlie C. Petch**vocals **Hélène Ducharme**writer **David Bateman**

Location: Pape Ave & Bain Ave (+ livestreamed)

Date: June 27, 9PM

Fairies will fly, fireflies will mate and disco ball unicorns will perform a musical saw aria culminating in a majestic rainbow. Watch a backyard garden transform, in real-time, into a magical symphony of colour, sound, and critters of the queerest kind.

A note regarding health and safety: While we want our communities to join in this celebration of Queer Pride, public safety has been a primary consideration in our programming. Many offerings have a digital, travelling, or mail-out component. If you choose to engage with outdoor programs, we ask that you stick to projects in and around your neighbourhood, avoid crowding in any situation, and always respect physical distancing guidelines. We encourage you to wear a mask in public spaces to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Pay attention to the most up-to-date public health directives, use your judgement, and please be safe.

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/show/analogue-pride/>

PRIDE PEN PALS**Pride Pen Pals**

Ongoing sign-up

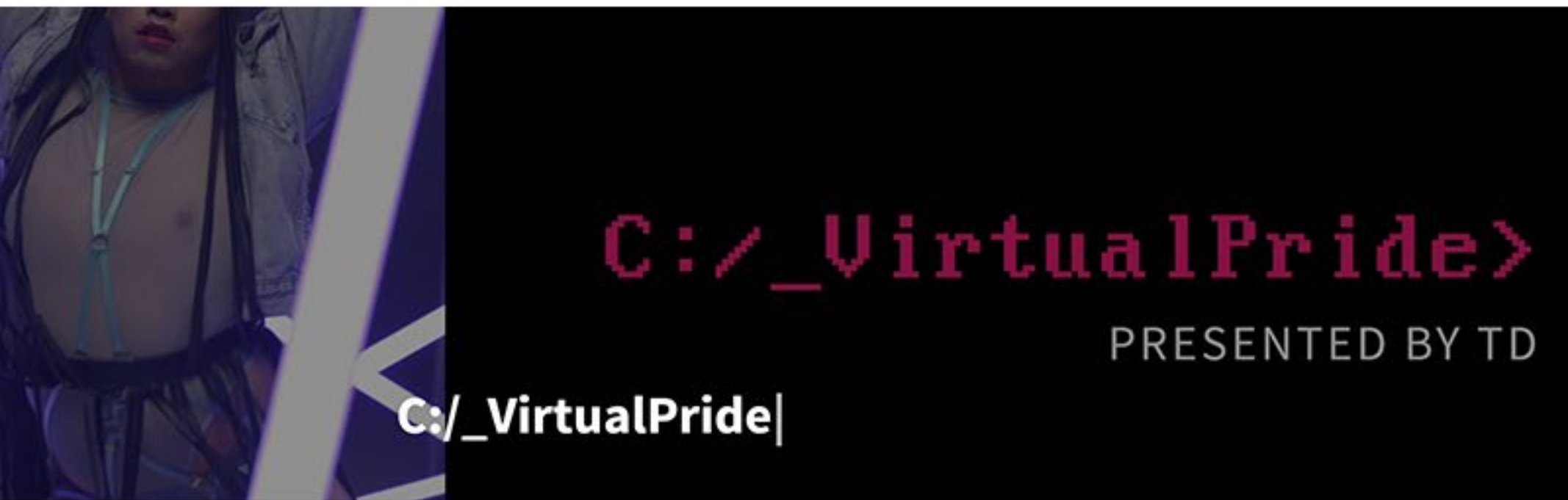
This pen pal matching program is for queers — artists, audience members, club goers, retirees, arts workers, community leaders, old or young — who would welcome the chance to write a letter (or maybe a few), and get to know someone through an exchange through the mail. A chance to share some thoughts or memories about what Pride means to you, now, or before; a chance to exchange some queer life stories and experiences, to write about what things are like for you right now.

Open to queers across Canada:

<https://buddiesinbadtimes.com/pride-pen-pals/>



Pride Toronto 2020 Virtual Pride



C:/_VirtualPride>

PRESENTED BY TD

C:/_VirtualPride|

/_SpecialEvent>

We're going digital! We have put together a month of innovative online programming throughout June that showcases the best of what's happening in our city. Virtual Pride is a celebration of our local queer and trans trailblazers. We are featuring a lineup of DJs, performers, drag artists, singers, and dancers; shining a concentrated spotlight on women in music and BIPOC artists. Toronto is overflowing with queer and trans talent and we are very excited to have been working so closely with our community.

[_ViewMore>](#)

/_WeeklyEvents>

Pride Toronto will be hosting weekly virtual segments on various online platforms. This programming is less about a party and more about community engagement and light at-home entertainment. Information on how to access this programming will be provided on our website.

[_ViewMore>](#)

/_StayHomeSaturdays>

We're going digital! We have put together a month of innovative online programming throughout June that showcases the best of what's happening in our city. Virtual Pride is a celebration of our local queer and trans trailblazers. We are featuring a lineup of DJs, performers, drag artists, singers, and dancers; shining a concentrated spotlight on women in music and BIPOC artists. Toronto is overflowing with queer and trans talent and we are very excited to have been working so closely with our community.

[_ViewMore>](#)

/_FestivalWeekend>

Pride Toronto will be hosting weekly virtual segments on various online platforms. This programming is less about a party and more about community engagement and light at-home entertainment. Information on how to access this programming will be provided on our website.

[_ViewMore>](#)

/_StayHomeSaturdays>

This programming serves as a true representation of what events you would have seen throughout Pride month and on the physical festival footprint. Tune in for an hour or binge-watch all day!

[_ViewMore>](#)

/_FestivalWeekend>

A line up of virtual programming set to stream off our main channels and embedded onto our website. The Virtual Pride Festival Weekend programming serves as a representation of what would have taken place on the physical footprint Pride Festival Weekend.

[_ViewMore>](#)

/_VirtualMarket>

A curated list of local LGBTQ+ makers, creators, and vendors that you have come to expect and are excited to see throughout our annual StreetFair. Scroll through to support our local community members. Many of them are offering exclusive specials discount codes available on our portal.



[_ViewMore>](#)

/_Donate>

Pride Toronto is a not-for-profit organization. It is in part to your donations that we are able to do what we do. Thank you!



NOW
THIS

FOOTAGE: TYLER MERRITT

Before you call the cops,

0:02 / 3:06



Pride Parade - Toronto 2019

7,351 views • 24 Jun 2019

We Know Gay



Drew Rowsome - MGT Editor, a writer, reviewer, musician and the lead singer of Crackpuppy.
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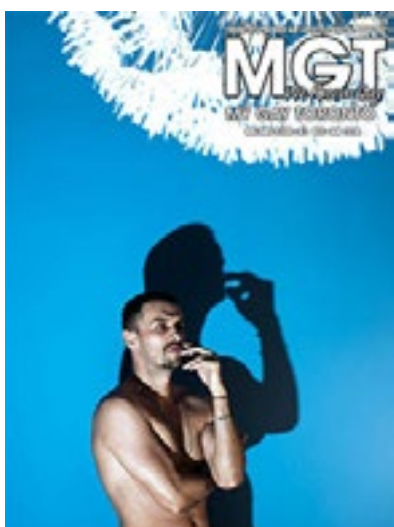
Raymond Helkio - is an author, director and award-winning filmmaker. He cofounded TheReadingSalon.ca



Paul Bellini was a writer for The Kids in the Hall and a producer for This Hour Has 22 Minutes, and columnist at Fab Magazine...



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