

Confessions of a Lesbo Drag Hag

by Sydney Pokorny



BEVERLY HILLS

Photo: Bill Bytsura

All my life I have never wanted to be anything but a girl, well, except for a few moments on a Friday night at Octagon when I pleaded with God to magically turn me into a boy. The problem is that by girl I mean a "real girl" who believes that it is meaningful to talk about hair, clothes, accessories, etc. It is not easy to be a lesbian and still find girlfriends who also believe Coco Chanel is a serious role model, do not think it is a capital offense to spend an hour in the shower and understand that you hate Jodie Foster for the simple reason that she wore such an awful dress to the Academy Awards.

I truly believe that if Patricia Field were really smart she would sponsor a seminar on "Overcoming Glamourphobic Attitudes in the Lesbian Community." It is a cruel act of God that the drag queen Taboo! can perform *The History of the Platform Shoe*, while many women I know are only interested in building a platform bed. I've read the arguments about glamour and fashion making women into victims and I'm intimately acquainted with the fashion-associated plagues: anorexia, bulimia, overly tight corsets, consumption and so on. If I were a good lesbian I would suppress my frivolity and give up worshipping Brigitte Bardot, but part of the fun of being a dyke is being a bad girl.

I have a confession to make: I am a dyke addicted to drag queens. I can remember when I first became aware of my problem. Actually, it wasn't that long ago. It all started last year, I saw *Polyester* for the first time and I was hooked. I sat there enchanted by, of all people, Divine. My jaw dropped at the sound of her raspy voice, she was so wonderfully seductive.

Then I wondered if I was the only lesbo on the block who felt this way about drag. I decided to do a little survey to see if other lesbians were similarly addicted. I asked four dykes and found that one was repulsed and

thought drag is misogynist, the other three were big fans. In fact, each one has a favorite and is kind of a groupie. What do some lesbians find so appealing? Why do we watch so intently?

It should be obvious that drag glamour strays from dominant cultural constructions. However, when *Newsday* runs an article on *Wigstock* and discusses the uses of wigs in this season's fashion lines, we miss the most obvious subversion—the queens are chicks, but they have dicks. Rather than replicating fashion and entertainment industry images, they mock all their sources. Drag queens are the ultimate scavengers. They rifle through the trash of pop culture and adopt specific roles to compose their acts. Femininity becomes a mask to be worn and we laugh (and marvel) at the masquerade of femininity once removed. Drag also trashes masculinity, making mincemeat of machismo.

Drag is one of those "postmodern" things; it simultaneously builds and destroys. A drag queen is the ultimate emcee. She is the Julie McCoy of our cruise into Fantasyland. The role that she creates leads us on a perverted magical mystery tour through the land of gender construction and desire. A good queen is larger than life and reduces everyone else to one of the little people. We all just sit, stare and coo, "I love you. You're sooo wonderful." While she is on stage lip syncing, we are asked to believe that she is actually a marvelous starlet. The spectacular pleasure of a six-foot woman singing a song we long forgot is fed by the secret belief that she is a real woman, yet our fantasy is destroyed by the knowledge that it is all pure artifice. And here is the final gender fuck: It is the artifice that is addictive. My attraction is based in the knowledge that I am watching a man playing at being a woman. However, the true object of my desire is the final product, the artificial hybrid, a girl who is also a boy.



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Photo: Bobby Miller