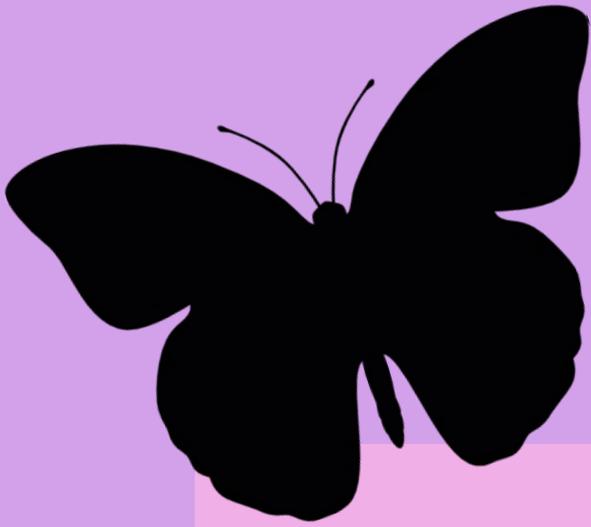


# GENDER BENDER

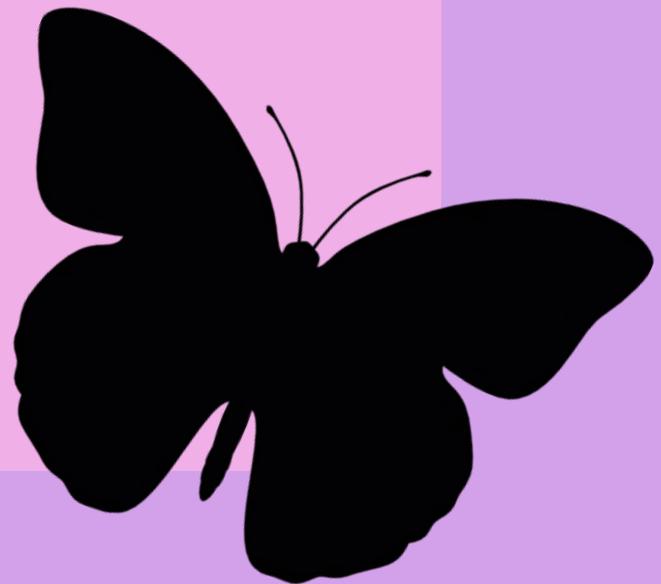


**Vol. 1**



*This is for anyone who has  
had to hide who they are.  
You don't have to hide  
anymore.*

*-Darwin*



# ***Sad Clown***

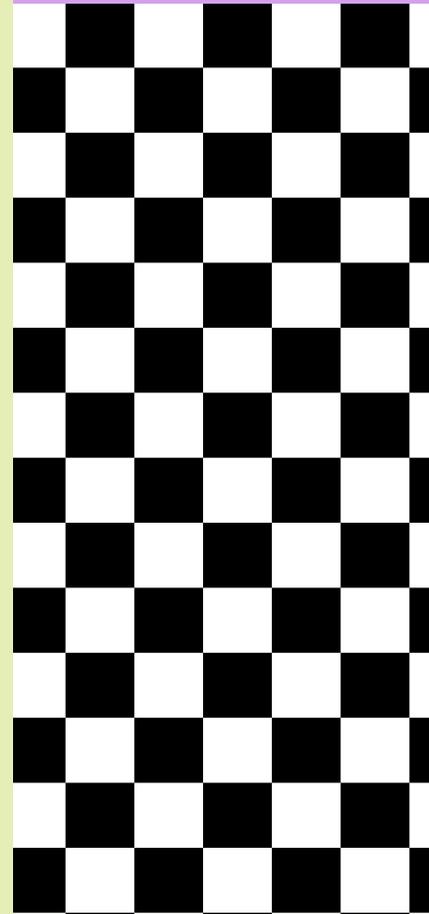
*I've been in the dark and I've cried in it  
But my best talent yet is my showmanship  
The voices they tell me go with it  
"Keep your face behind the mask-they didn't come for this"*

*Cheer up, cheer up-never frown  
Nobody likes a sad clown  
You should make us want to laugh when you're around  
Nobody likes it when you crash and burn*

*Don't ever tear up  
Always smile  
Nobody likes a weeping clown  
You should make us want to dance when you're around  
Nobody wants to hear those crying sounds*

*Maybe to you, I'm just your fool  
But I've got feelings too  
There's only so much I can do before the act is through  
Mirror, mirror to the ground  
A thousand pieces of a depressed clown  
Nobody even giggles when they see themselves  
Because they wanted to forget they were in this town*

*And so they tear up  
Face falls down  
They've tried to hide their growing frowns  
A little bit of everybody needs some help  
Before this entire circus tent falls to the ground*





*"She lives, he dies, she dies, he lives;/yet they cohabit side by side/in a singular trembling body."*



*"Freed from society's chains, a dragon rose."*

# *Enough - Thays Figueiredo*

*I got to sit still and look pretty  
Cause all I got going for me are these big dreams  
And this is a man's world but I would be nothing without this  
beautiful face that I was blessed with*

*And I was always told as I grow old  
That the young women would taunt me  
That the young women would haunt me  
I guess they were right, I guess that's just life*

*I am a woman I move mountains  
Otherworldly modern mystery  
I yield power with my palms  
Soul in one hand, another in pockets  
Wait these jeans don't have pockets they're all make believe  
Just like the men make me out to seem*

*All my life I was told my value relies on a man's eye  
All my life I spent the time accumulating points, it was never  
enough  
But now I know I'm enough and I don't need a man to tell me so, I  
know I'm enough*



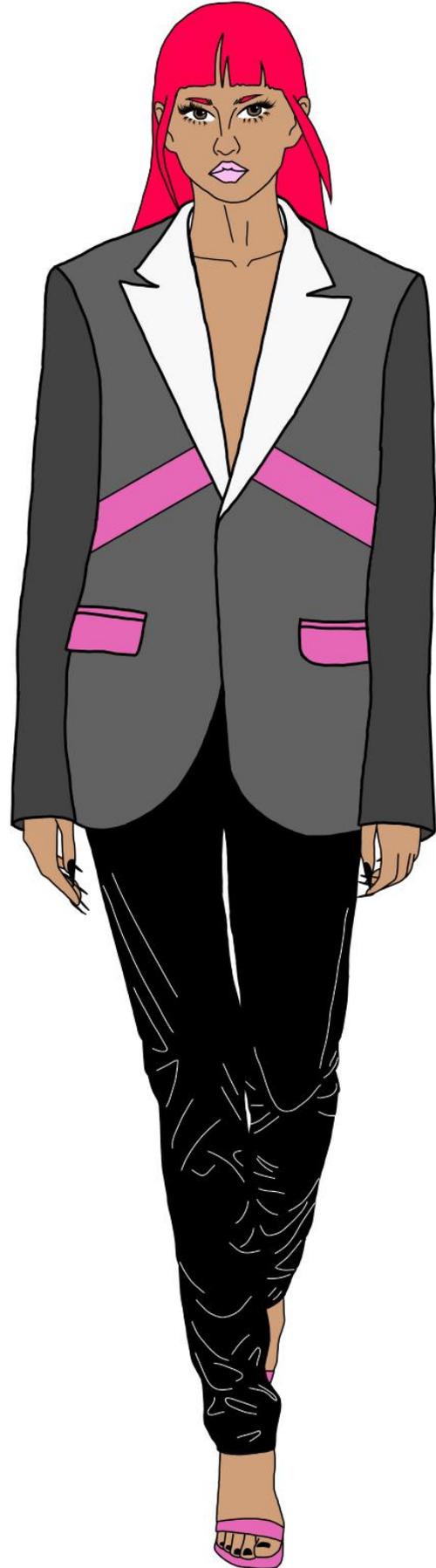
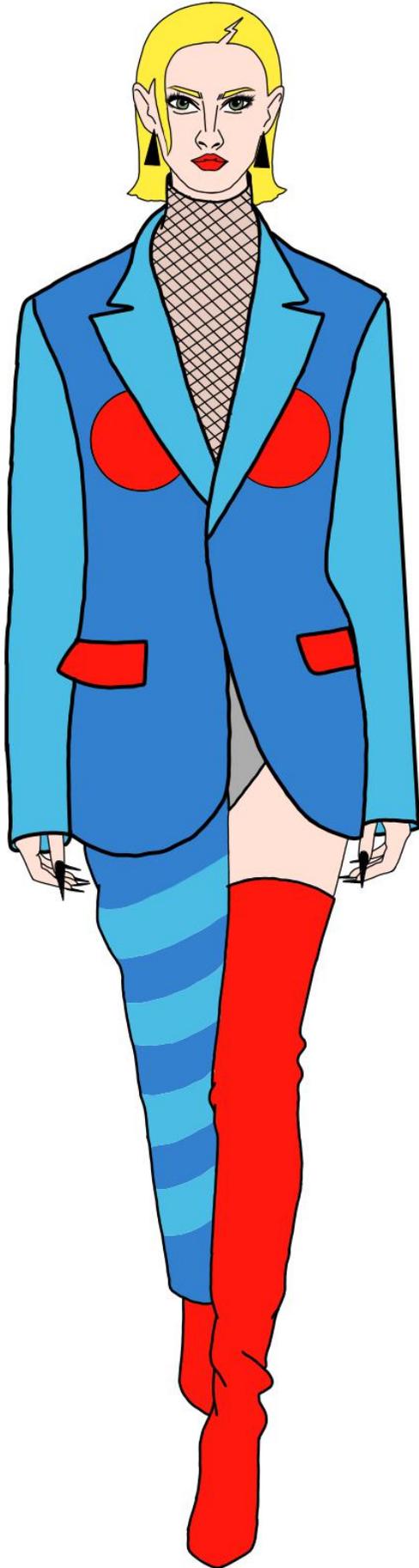
# THAYS FIGUEIREDO

she/her

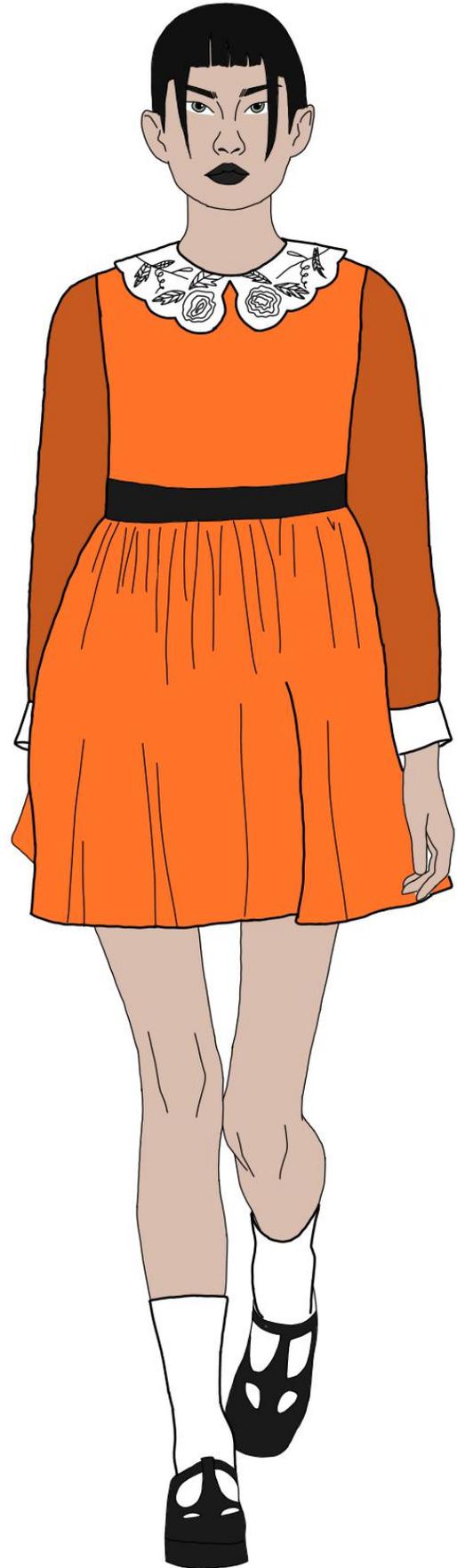
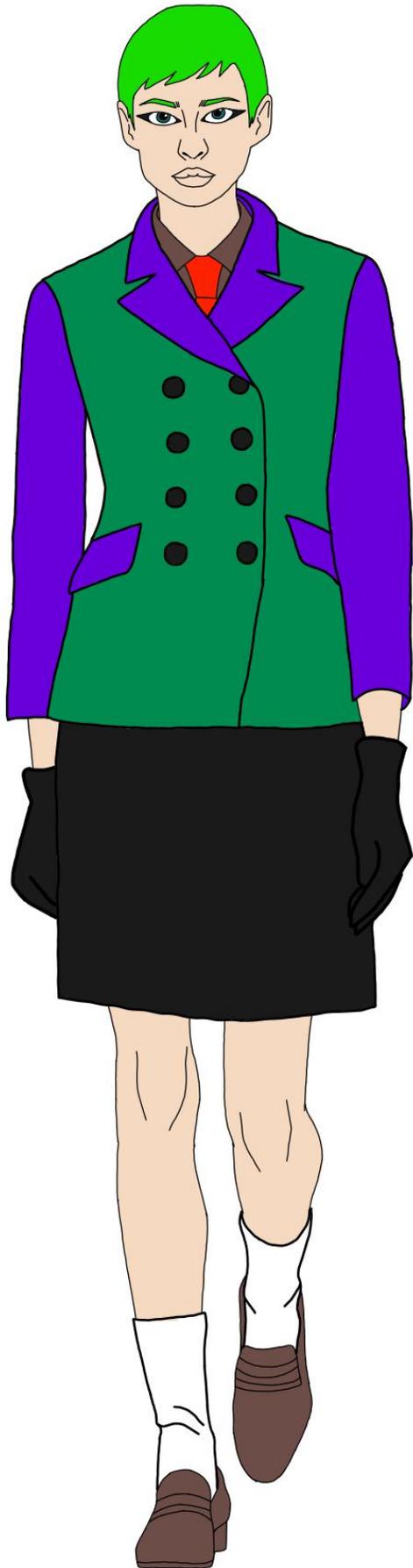
**singer-songwriter in the Boston area inspiring others with her bold takes on what it means to be a woman.**

"I wrote this song because I was feeling really insecure after being ghosted... When I wrote this song I was sitting back and thinking, damn all of my life these men have been letting me down, but you know what I'm freaking awesome and I don't need them."

# GENDER



# BENDER



## Dictionary

Search for a word



 **gen·der**  
/'jendər/

*noun*

1.

**whatever the fuck you want.**

# ***Breathe***

*Described as refreshing and light  
A beautiful sensation keeping you  
alive*

*But what about my pain?*

*The heavy breaths that travel  
through my nose and into my soul*

*The pain that drowned me while I  
lay dry, the pain that coursed  
through my veins*

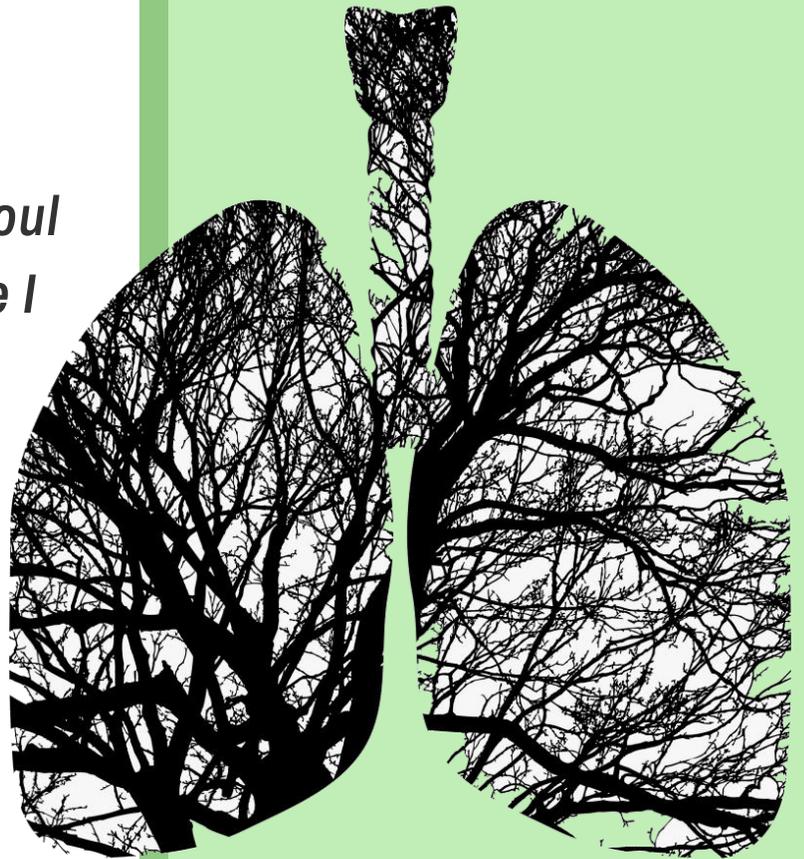
*The release of that pain,  
forgiveness*

*It's not your fault*

*It's not your fault*

*Here I stand, strong and stable*

*Finally able to breathe*



## MINOR DISAPPOINTMENT

they/them

is a non-binary drag artist in the Vancouver area inspiring other teen artists with their looks



What does your work aim to say?

My work aims to diminish gender stereotypes placed on trans-masculine people.

How does your work comment on current social or political issues?

My work comments on the gender inequality and misogyny within the drag community, and how it is harmful to the community. By creating my work I am showing that drag originated from trans people, and we have just as much room in the drag world as cis-gendered people

What are your biggest inspirations?

My biggest inspirations are local performers that I consider my chosen family. Everyday I am reminded of the amazing history and legacy that I am taking part in.

What audience do you hope to reach with your art?

I hope to reach anyone who feels like they don't have a place in the drag community, or have been discriminated against because they are trans-masculine. Drag should be for everyone. Not just cis, gay men.

How has drag helped you break out of these conceptions that society holds of gender?

Drag has helped me break out of the conceptions society has of gender by allowing me to be free with my expression and not feel trapped by expectations. When I'm in drag I feel empowered.

## AMADI WILLIAMS

she/her

multidisciplinary artist from Brooklyn. Through her art she explores giving a voice to the silenced and bringing attention to social justice issues. Her work always has a message behind it, helping to stir the audience to advocate for the issues she dicusses.



What does your work aim to say?

My main goal when creating my work is to send a message. I've always liked art that is driven by a cause and I find that my best ideas come from current events.

How does your work comment on current social or political issues?

My work usually is a commentary on social or political issues that effect me or my peers, I believe that there are a lot of issues that go unheard and that's why I created my platform Meaningful Voices.

What are your biggest inspirations?

My biggest inspirations are my family members who are constantly teaching me about issues in the world that matter most to them as well as black creatives such as Kehinde Wiley. Both of these sources of inspiration drive me to represent people that look like me in a more positive light.

What audience do you hope to reach with your art?

I hope that my art reaches other young creatives and shows them how they can make an impact and that all skin tones are beautiful. I want my art to inspire hope and a pathway for future generations to feed off of. I want my art to influence people to change the unjust system that we are currently living in.

Describe what it's like to be a woman in art?

For me being a black woman making art means that I have the power to portray women of color in a positive way. I think that the art that I currently see in museums doesn't express women of color in a positive light. I think that as a woman in art I should show that all women are beautiful!





# KAYLA CAMPBELL

she/her

Kayla is a young fierce artist in the Boston area inspiring others with her campy looks.

"Throughout time, men and women are put into these molds of what they're supposed to look and act like. With this illustration, I wanted to use the vibrant colors to highlight that women and men do not have to fit these molds. Whether it's something as subtle as an adam's apple or as noticeable as body hair, any gender can have these traits and it should be normalized that not all women or men are going to be cookie cutter clones. We all come in different shapes and forms."

## ARTIST BIO

*Darwin Saravia is a queer latinx artist who uses their identity in their art to inspire others. They use unconventional materials to convey a message of acceptance and love. They explore difficult topics like gender and discrimination by creating art that highlights the beauty of marginalized groups of people. Their work aims to inspire queer people who are struggling with self expression. They want to use their art to give queer people the strength to live and continue living authentically. They are a graduate of The Oxbow School and currently attend Boston Arts Academy.*

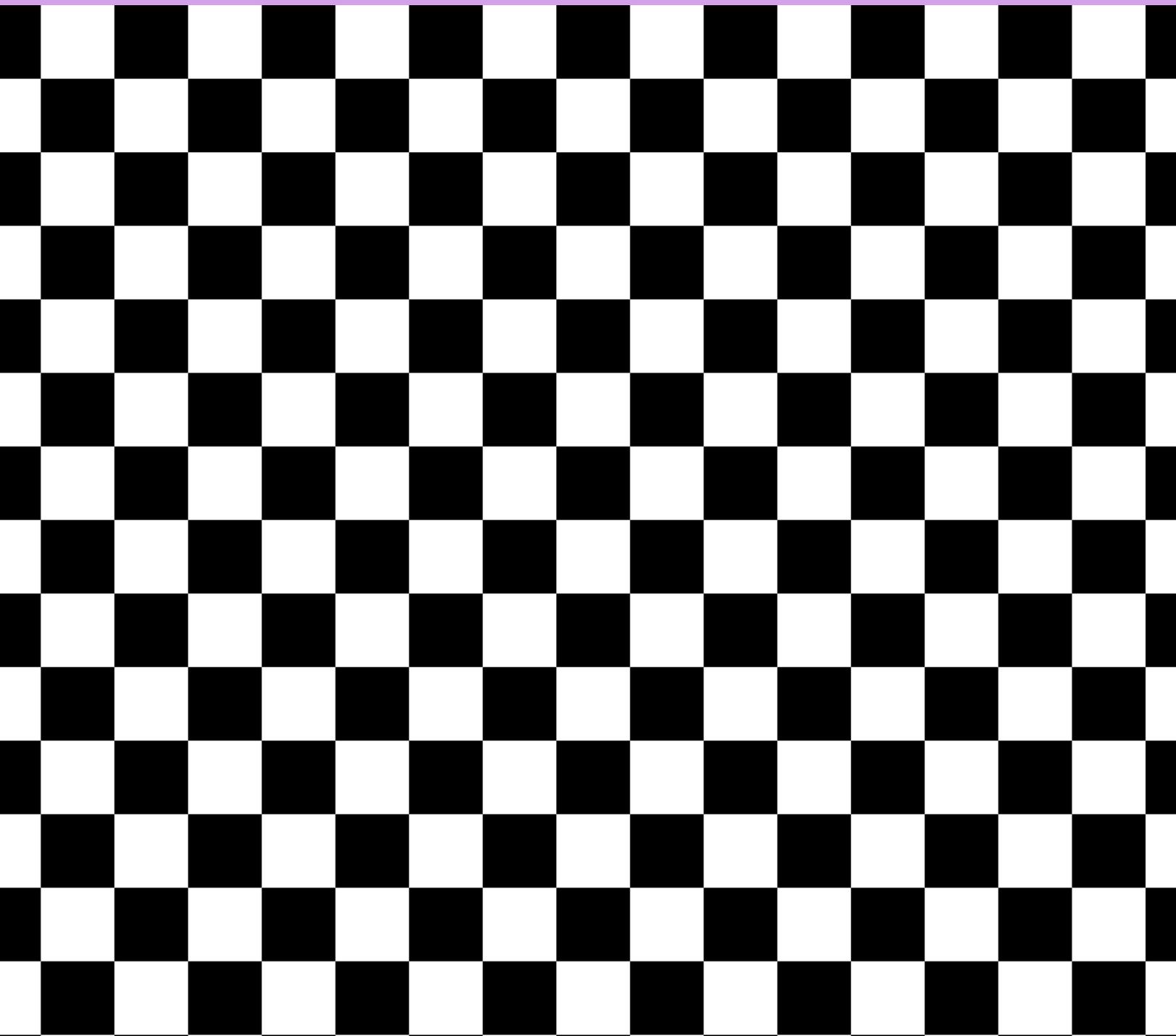


# ARTIST STATEMENT

*Gender has always been something that has affected my life in many ways. The pressure I felt to fit in followed me throughout my childhood. It was hard being different in a world that wanted you to be like everyone else. I was determined to break out of the chains that society had placed on me and that's exactly what I did. I grew into the beautiful queer person I am today, and I'm proud of the skin I'm in. I remember being so fascinated with queer people when I was younger. To see someone who I related to living freely truly inspired me.*

*In this zine, I'm honoring the queer community, the community that told me I was fierce. The community that accepted me for who I was. The community that accepted me for who I was. The community that taught me everything I know. I want this zine to pay homage to all of those who have felt like they've had to hide who they are. This zine features my art which includes a black and white photo set, fashion illustrations, and poems. I want my art to speak beyond the language of gender and defy everything that society has ever told us about gender. I want the flip of the first page to send you into an experience you'll never forget.*

*My zine also includes works from other artists like Thays Figueiredo and Kayla Campbell. As well as interviews from the stunning Amadi Williams and drag artist Minor Disappointment. My art has always been about collaboration and the beauty that can be created when minorities come together and this is evidence of that.*



# Gender Bender

Darwin S.



Have you ever felt like an outsider? Glitter filled dreams and bright pink wishes. I knew I wasn't going to be a "normal" boy. We're raised in this society that creates these barriers. From non-inclusive language to harmful gender roles. [These barriers limit people and force them into being one or the other.](#) Freedom to be who you want to be is the first step to a better world. What are you supposed to do as someone who feels stuck in the middle? This society tears those that are different down. They tear them down until the differences disappear. They create carbon copies of what they've defined as "normal".

I remember sitting alone on the school bus when I was younger, constantly hearing people whisper things about me. All of my time went to drawing these made-up things, mermaids, fairies, angels. The only way for me to escape my reality was by drawing a new one. I didn't want to exist in this reality that only knew how to make me feel ostracized. I wanted to escape into one that celebrated my expression and uniqueness. Days passed and I tried hard to fit in. [I stopped living for myself and began conforming to the rules that were in place by this cruel society.](#) I got older and so did the kids on the yellow school bus, but things only got worse. It was so hard having to sit there as those kids tormented me. Although I was broken down I still had glitter-filled dreams and bright pink wishes. I knew that things would get better and that one day there would be people who accepted me.

In middle school, things changed. The shell that I once used to protect me was now being used to express myself. At a certain point, you just stop caring. I knew I would get hate for expressing myself, but I couldn't keep living in the shadows. I needed to reveal the thrilling person that lived inside of me. I started wearing bright blue eyeshadow and dark lipstick. It was truly an awakening, I finally felt alive. For the first time in so many years, I was happy. Of course, I still received the taunting and torment, but I wasn't hiding who I was anymore. I wasn't afraid of the monsters anymore. I felt strong, resilient enough to remain joyful no matter what people thought or said about me.

In high school I became the person I had always dreamed of being. The fear was gone, I was secure with myself and that's the only thing that mattered to me. The confidence I exuded was recognized by those around me and admired. I finally understood the beauty of love and acceptance. Having so many people praise you for living authentically feels amazing. [It validates everything you've ever been told was wrong.](#) I remember sitting in class and catching this boy constantly staring at me. Months went by and this boy became one of my best friends. I remember sitting on his bed and having him tell me how much he struggled with his identity and that he was inspired by my bold persona and how carefree I lived my life. Moments like these are what I feel is my purpose. Something had gone off in me. I finally understood the bigger picture. This wasn't just about me anymore, it was about the countless young queer people that I could inspire to express themselves in whatever way made them feel comfortable. I know what it's like to feel alone, an outcast. To feel like no one is hearing your cries, to feel helpless. If I can prevent even just one queer person from feeling like that, then it would all be worth it.

Change is possible. [I can confidently say that art has made me believe that. Art is challenging gender bias and outdated gender roles to create a new, more inclusive world.](#) Art is giving people who feel silenced a way to be heard. Art gave me the voice I never thought I would have. Art brings awareness to the injustices that still remain in this society, it can shed light on issues that are brushed off or ignored. I've written countless poems and drawn hundreds of pictures that capture the essence of expression. They are a way for me to speak in a different language, one that's easier to understand people like me. Visual art is crucial to making change.

Gender roles and stereotypes rely so heavily on things we see so to create art that changes the meaning of these things could be very powerful.

Power to the youth! Views are changing, and minds are opening up to new ideas and concepts. Everything isn't so black and white anymore. [Young queer artists will lead the revolution against gender and breaking the codes of normality that has lived on for too long.](#) Not only must we change the social climate in regards to queer people, but the political climate as well. We need to stand up for queer people in these scary times. Policies are

Now I'm sixteen years old and doing better than ever. I know how hard it is to be different in this world. I make sure to stand up for those who aren't as confident with their identity. I accept ALL of my queer identity and won't let other people take that away from me. I walk into school with my head held high, strutting down every hallway and being myself. I'm no longer afraid of anything, I feel unstoppable. In the future, I hope to advocate for queer youth and help people who felt like I did, lost and alone. I don't know where life will take me next, but I know I'll still have my glitter filled dreams and bright pink wishes.

## Annotated Bibliography

**Gabrielle Burton, “Gender fluidity.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TED, 26 Oct. 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOkyc91eY90>**

In this Ted Talk, Gabrielle Burton talks about her observations of gender and how the gender binaries divide us as people and make people, especially young kids feel insecure. Gabrielle explains why these things shouldn't matter and that expression shouldn't be limited.

Gabrielle takes her own experience as a mother to fuel her passion to debunk these conceptions. It's clear that Gabrielle wants to make a change and have kids grow up being free to express themselves in whatever way they want. The expression is something that kids need to grow up, suppression can cause so many struggles later in life. Let your kids be who they want to be, and make sure they're proud to be who they are.

*“The problem with it is that it's based on a binary model. You are one thing or you are another. You are a boy or you are a girl. You are masculine or you are feminine. You are heterosexual or you are homosexual. The truth is these things are a lot more complicated... All of us have elements that cross traditional gender role differentiation. The truth is gender isn't male or female. It's sort of like we're all cake mixes and we're not made from a box... I'm hoping that by not assuming every animal I see in the world is a he, or by being mindful to offer my children an entire color palette of all the wide colors that are available and not just pink or blue... That maybe by doing these tiny things, that I will offer a world for myself and my children that have a richer sense of possibility.”*

Gabrielle's thoughts on gender are very progressive and they're something we need for the future of our world. My concept of gender is that it should be no longer. Gabrielle understands that gender exists, but that it doesn't have to dictate every little thing in your life.

Leguizamon, Mercedes, and Brandon Griggs. "More US Teens Are Rejecting 'Boy' or 'Girl' Gender Identities, a Study Finds." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 3 Oct. 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/06/health/teens-gender-nonconforming-study-trnd/index.html>.

In this article, the authors describe studies and data that they have observed and collected that show an increase of queer teens.

The authors tell us that the population of queer teens is increasing rapidly. This means that the world is becoming more aware of different types of people and these teens don't feel the need to hide who they are anymore.

*"More teenagers are identifying themselves with nontraditional gender labels such as transgender or gender-fluid, according to a new study. The research, published Monday in the journal Pediatrics, found that almost 3% of Minnesota teens did not identify with traditional gender labels such as "boy" or "girl." That number is higher than the researchers expected. A UCLA study from a year ago estimated that 0.7% of teens identified as transgender... Growing awareness and visibility surrounding transgender issues in recent years may make teenagers more comfortable with steering away from traditional gender labels, experts say."*

The authors speak on different data that shows that more people are becoming aware of queer people. There are a lot more young people being educated and it's allowing them to learn more about themselves. My project aims to help queer people feel comfortable with who they are, so this article really ties in with that.