

Tobaron Waxman is a performance artist, specializing in digital media and voice. His work contextualizes gender, embodiment, and the physical experience of time as systems of inscription. His work also includes elements of traditional Jewish texts and philosophy, as well as politics and desire. At Hong Sexxcahnge Salon he will present "GenderFluXXXors UnCoded: an FTM Supornova" which takes the form of a performance/lecture. Below is an excerpt of an interview he conducted with Curator/Organizer Katrien Jacobs.



stills from 'light saber'
Tobaron Waxman 2003 for ssspread.com

Q: What do you mean by the term "genderfluxors"? Do you think these fluxors can arouse a straight audience?

A: GenderFluXXXors was originally born out of a series of conversations between Lisa Ganser, Artistic Director of the Flaming Film Festival Minneapolis in 2004, and myself. She invited me to do a presentation on something to do with Female-To-Males and pornography, due to the growing list of indy titles in this genre, and as foreplay to the screening of Morty Diamond's groundbreaking feature *Trannyfags*.

The works by contemporary Female-To-Male/Gender Queer artists included a variety of ethnicities, body sizes, and cultural expressions, the unifying element being their sexplicit transmasculine content. I was also able to facilitate the sale of some artists' tapes to the local woman-owned sex shoppe, as well as coordinate shoots with various people who wanted to make their own queer porn/erotica. A 'hat' was passed around in order to anonymously raise money for a TS family in financial and health crisis. I intend to make the same community oriented gestures with any opportunity to present this lecture.

Ultimately the goal of this presentation is to empower and encourage Transgender/ Transexual/Genderqueer cultural production, with a critical eye, on a grassroots level, as well as to encourage pride and self-love. It was created with an FTM audience in mind, but it is very interesting to expand the audience to people of differently bodied experiences, and see what conversations emerge.

I am not sure if any of these images will stimulate a straight audience and if so in what way they would. I do not know how to anticipate the needs of a straight audience, apart from established norms and popular tropes as evidenced in advertising, etc. Some of the clips are hetero, perhaps they could be arousing to straight people. In most of the hetero scenes, there is a strap on involved. I do not know if the average straight viewer would be distracted from arousal by that.



However, if the female body is usually the point of focus in straight porn perhaps the absence of typical genetic male genitals won't make a difference. That said, the female in hetero couplings in straight porn usually does not have much subjectivity. In much of the hetero couplings with FTMs and women that I have found on film and video, the woman in the scene has an identity beyond the trope. The average straight viewer may also be distracted by the use of irony which is not a typical filmic strategy in traditional straight porn.

The clips I have compiled are not hard for me to find, because I have been finding them over the past 15 years. My gaze is attuned to them. The more recent works excerpted here are made by me, and by people I know. There is a great deal of privilege in the act of archiving. Questions are raised as to who gets historicized, whose works get collected, whom is deemed worthy of remembering and for what reason.

Q: In your own work there develops a genderqueer identity within the Jewish religion. That must be a tough responsibility?

A: I make work which takes our gender binary and reframes it in a manner which is both literate to traditional Jewish sources and astute in terms of a transgender informed reality. I do not support a gender binary, and yet I participate in the gender dyad of the life and languages of traditional Judaism. An example would be the performance for photo "amidah" or performance installation "self portrait as pshat". My new conceptual works in progress are about a genderqueer approach to religious architecture as a way to indicate options in thinking about middle east peace conflict in terms both corporeal and metaphysical. I suggest that architecture which separates and controls movement in the name of the sacred ought to do so in a way that an individual has to accept into their own reality, rather than attempt to impose some kind of immutable structure which has no relationship to the environment around it. Judaism makes distinctions between day and night, for example, but we do so at dusk, thereby also acknowledging the space between, i.e. variance in nature. It is necessary to our cosmology to make distinctions, however this need not be done in a way that establishes conflict and opposites. It can be done in a way that honours distinctions. Why not mark a semi permeable membrane that acknowledges differences rather than build a wall? The result might be an entire absence of the notion of 'sides'.

Traditional Jewish metatexts could be read to indicate that the omnipresence of G-d precludes the border as an obsolete, human foible worth transcending, because the same sacred entity is equally as present both on, around, and permeating the border. This interrogation indicates the locus of 'border' as a conceptual one based only in fear, control, and the human need to establish an order. My experience would indicate that the same rationale is the source of anxiety regarding gender, land, and anything else people feel the need to separate and control.