

Diffy Looks

TOM RUBNITZ / DYNASTY HANDBAG



9/25/2012

PROGRAM:

TOM RUBNITZ

The Mother Show, video, 4 mins., 1991

Made for TV, video, 15 mins., 1984

Drag Queen Marathon, video, 5 mins., 1986

Strawberry Shortcut, video, 1:30 mins., 1989

Pickle Surprise, video, 1:30 mins., 1989

DYNASTY HANDBAG

The Quiet Storm (with Hedia Maron), video, 10 mins., 2007

Eternal Quadrangle, video, 20 mins., 2012

WHITE COLUMNS



When I was a youth, say, about 8, I played a game in the woods with my friend Ocean where we pretended to be hookers. The game was called “Sassy Girls.” We did not know what hookers were exactly, but we did know certain things about them that made their lifestyle really attractive. One was that they wore high heels. Two was that they wore lipstick. Three was that they smoked. We made this little apartment which was supposed to be in New York City, which we knew was where all the hookers were. It was in between some burned out redwood trees in the back of Ocean’s house. We had a plastic tarp on the top for a ceiling. It was really a fort (by the way, I am looking for an apartment right now, in New York City, and would accept a similar situation if anyone knows of one). In order to join the Sassy Girls club, you had to steal a pack of cigarettes from your dad. Her dad was named Rick. Rick and my dad were beer and cocaine buddies. They smoked camel straights which was like inhaling hot needles. There was also a girlfriend of Rick who’s name I can’t recall. She smoked Belair cigarettes. Lighter and minty. Anyway, we managed to snatch away some Belairs from the girlfriend’s purse, or handbag as they were usually referred to at that time. “Mom can I look in your handbag for quarters?” was a common request from me. I remember that we lost interest in smoking pretty quickly but found that melting holes in the plastic roof of our apartment was much more gratifying. We would spend hours burning out dotted patterns in the ceiling, making hearts and writing our hooker names. I think mine was Tammy? Or Lisa? Looking through the holes to the sky that showed itself through the evergreen branches of the redwoods.



What does it mean to be a great performer? In a rather conventional sense, great performing is often associated with a sense of interiority, becoming your character, identifying with your role. In that sense, a great performer could become anyone else simply by looking deep within herself. Of course, there’s a long history of performance practices that reject this model. Yet whether it is a matter of embracing or rejecting what is, so to speak, on the inside, there is an overarching belief that great performers are uniquely adept at locating themselves and using that self to build a world around them.

It is no surprise then that today we are all expected to be great performers. Our lives are filled the endless capacity to shed one skin for another, to produce multiple cyber-personalities on a whim. We are hyperaware that our outsides are malleable and performative—and that our insides might be an endless resource for reinventing and rethinking ourselves (not to mention the world around us).

So perhaps it’s almost too obvious to say that Jibz Cameron, the mastermind behind *Dynasty Handbag*, is an incredible performer. Her timing, pacing and intuition are so perfect that I can only imagine they are a combination of talent and years of hard work. But what sets Jibz’s performance apart is not simply that she becomes *Dynasty Handbag*, but that she wears her like a costume, moving around inside of this vessel in a way that inverts more traditional performance models. For example, take a look at the “clips (good ones)” on her website, and you’ll find a video of *Dynasty* singing along to Beyoncé’s song “Party.” Her rendition is perpetually sidetracked by her own thoughts, but *Dynasty* persists, seemingly reaching the conclusion of the song when she literally wraps her left leg over her left arm while perfectly balancing on her right foot. And then, just as quickly as she wrapped herself up, she begins to unravel, hopping backwards, singing “hey” into the microphone in a series of associative iterations that evolves into her miming milking a cow. She just can’t seem to get outside herself long enough to finish. In fact, she can rarely escape herself, her performances literally filled with the variety of voices and personalities inside her own head. For *Dynasty*, her imagination and sense of self isn’t the root of (re)invention, it’s almost a prison. Her insides aren’t an endless resource; her insides are on the outside.

Trying to find her way in this inside-out world seems to be at the core of *Dynasty*’s performances. With sincerity, even in the silliness, her performances ferociously contend with the disparity between thinking and doing, between what we imagine we want and what we actually pursue. In an age where it is so easy, almost applauded, to abandon ourselves—she reminds us of the difficulty of remaining present, taking up space in the most basic ways. And while I can’t speak for *Dynasty*, I can say for myself that going along on her adventures makes me acutely aware of the difficulty of simply making sense of ourselves, when others get in our way, but even, and perhaps more tortuously, when we get in our own.



DYNASTY HANDBAG – MICK JAGGER WITH A DAGGER

Jibz Cameron's alter ego Dynasty Handbag is *La Strada's* Giulietta Masina in a tube-top. Screen a any moment from her growing oeuvre and you'll see why—A hangdog expression morphs into lobotomized hypnosis. Fish eyes coldly blink and somehow create heat, backed by an electro-beat or cacophonous whistling strained through auto-tune. As a performer, her body is at once gawky and fluid, a silly putty that can stretch to exaggerated proportions or snap back into place like a science classroom skeleton. Dynasty is a crudely cut paper doll and Godzilla, AT THE SAME TIME. Profound, blunt, stupid and genius. She cogently rhapsodizes on existential themes but can't tie her own shoes. Her improvised and scripted dialogue collapses the border of banality and entertainment, and in doing so, transcends both.

"HEY, HEY SISTER!"

"WHAT??"

"OH, NOTHING...YOU JUST REALLY ARE PRETTY!!!"

"PRETTY?"

Absurdity and vulnerability are the two points between which Dynasty oscillates—a body builder made to walk a beauty pageant stage. She strives to entertain even as she reveals the violence and emotional pornography that entertainment culture demand. Try as she may, Dynasty fails to produce slicked-up candy coated positivism. Her gestures to mimic consumerist culture serve only to subvert it. To experience one of Handbag's videos or performances is to never quite look at leotards in the same way again. These wardrobe malfunctions are intentional. Anything she aspires to usually fails. A feminist Chaplin in a thong and stirrup pants.

"HEY, HEY BEAUTIFUL, CAN YOU COME OVER HERE A MINUTE?"

Like Alex Bag, Cameron uses an arsenal of performative tropes and cinematic genres as containers for her explosive identity. She mines music video, game show, and self help lecture formats. In appropriating these entertainments, she distorts them through her DIY production values and failure to "pass" as a commercially viable pop star. The result is a kind of unveiling, a portrait of desperation and commodification that all who seek fame are complicit in. When she crawls on hands and knees, moving her mouth like the demonic puppet from *Magic*, she is at once pointing at the artifice of pop star lip-synch and boiling it down to its crudest essence. No more airbrushes or seamless overdubs!

"WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

"NO, NO I DON'T WANT ANYTHING"

The difference here is that Dynasty is not part of a studio (or even a Warhol superstar) system. She is demanding these things of "herself." Her work is self generated, so the perversity can be interpreted as something more intimate, psychologically tougher. She really lets it all hang out.

"COME 'ERE! NO WAIT. CAN YOU DANCE TO ME?"

"DANCE?"

"YES DANCE"

That's not to say that this work has anything to do with navel-gazing (aside from Dynasty's belly button, which is often present in her performances). Cameron has built a loyal following through her unique mixture of grotesquerie, humor, and a kind of radical vulnerability. Dynasty Handbag will absolutely kick your ass, and then write about it in her journal, and then mine the material for a killer knock knock joke.

DRAG QUEEN MARATHON 1985

Early in 1985 there was an article in the *New York Times* about the East Village club performance scene that included a photo of the Pyramid Club, with the house performers hanging out at and dancing on the bar. The abundance of press around this neighborhood as a raw and energized cultural movement resulted in yuppies and Wall Street types showing up. Their presence struck the end of a rarified epoch of outsiders thriving within affordable turf. This process of gentrification had already shut down of the St. Marks Cinema and replaced it with a Gap store, the first stomp of a corporate footprint that would eventually claim most of Manhattan and usurp its remaining physical bohemia.

At first, the presence of the well-heeled visitors was welcomed, as there was more money floating around the club. It was the first time I was able to make a living off my creative work. I could avoid the dreaded restaurant jobs by performing at the Pyramid and dancing on its bar.

One day it was announced that Sister Dimension had hired 2 limos, so we embarked on an escorted junket around the map of Manhattan. Launched as a double flotilla of edgy queenhood, we showed up unannounced at the Metropolitan Opera, Godiva chocolates, Tiffany's, and the Plaza Hotel (where I did an impromptu Isadora Duncan dance on a tier of the fountain for a crowd of delighted tourists, till the police chased us away). We strolled down Fifth Avenue, explored the boutiques of Soho, and made our way back to the East Village. The presence of the limos gave us celebrity cred, though the crowds we encountered didn't know who we were or where we were from. We were there for the same reason—to enjoy the city on a beautiful day. We just happened to be dressed in our finery, as varied in look and attitude as the general public, just amped up while circumventing, warping, confusing, and re-inventing gender convention and constraint. As drag hadn't yet come out of the celluloid closet and caved into mainstream marketplace, we still wielded that power and frisson that the outsider and the other can sweetly inflict on unsuspecting mortals.

This group of artists and performers had found a home at Pyramid Club, and our family outing was a chance to share our madness and genius with the outside world. We didn't expect to blend in, but we upped the ante of what is possible, what should be acceptable, in public; our presence became an event. We did it for the love, and the lovely fried chicken picnic in Central Park. 9/21/12





You starred in quite a few of Tom Rubnitz's videos. Do you remember when you two first met?

I don't! Those were the messy, drunken days of my twenties and a lot is lost and/or blacked out. But I do remember Tom always being one of the Pyramid Club people—one of the inner circle, if you will. Everyone loved Tom and he was as fun and zany as he was talented. Not many of us had much of a vision so he was "one of us" who had the skill and budget to create these great shorts. And we trusted him enough to put on our best drag—as laughable as that is—and turn it out for him.

Rubnitz has been called "the historian of the Pyramid Club." Are there things viewers today should know (but probably don't) about the Pyramid scene you both came out of?

I honestly don't know what people know since no one—except your great series!—expresses it much these days. But I feel the same way that most people who experienced that club do—that we were very lucky to experience this fantastic scene at its zenith. Looking back over years of clubbing, that era really stands out as having such a creative and varied bunch of freaks. I wouldn't exactly call Tom the historian except for a very specific part of the club which was both zany and drag-oriented. That's what floated Tom's boat but there were many other aspects of the scene from Black Lips (where Antony and Antony and The Johnsons got their start) to the other darker, gory/goth/punk parts of the scene. Those didn't interest Tom at all. He liked trippy and loony.

What was it like on the set of a Tom Rubnitz video? Did he collaborate with his performers on the scripts or encourage improvisation?

I think we all knew what Tom wanted and we wanted the same thing. So I think we pretty much nailed it with a minimum of takes. It wasn't like we were memorizing long scripts or anything. Tom loved to smoke pot as we all did, so I'm sure that was present on set. It definitely wasn't tense at all—more like a family affair. We were grateful to Tom since he saw our potential and had pinpointed us in this grimy bar to be a part of something bigger. So we did what he wanted.

Rubnitz's videos have their own inimitable, unforgettable look. But he also worked with a lot of queens and clubkids who knew how to turn it out. How much of the costumes, outfits, and set design was his handiwork?

I honestly don't know! I seem to recall bringing a couple of outfits for *Pickle Surprise* and *Strawberry Shortcut* just to get them okayed. I also remember being angry at RuPaul because I thought she was kind of over it all and didn't create a retro look that was in synch with the rest of us. But that came from me, not Tom. And I love that Tom used the gorgeous real girl! Maria Ayala, who is certainly one of my style icons. The styling of the Ann Magnuson video is amazing!

What's with all the cooking tutorials?

I think the idea was to spoof something very homespun and all-American with these colorful characters and a pinch of LSD to really sock it to ya!

Rubnitz made the first documentary about Wigstock, which you emceed and co-created. How was working with him on *Wigstock: The Movie*?

I wasn't involved very much but I certainly liked the outcome. I don't enjoy watching myself—especially footage of me shot while I was on auto-pilot. My attitude was always "I'm glad you all like it but don't make me watch it." Tom included some footage of the B-52's which was shot upstate to flesh out the Wigstock/Woodstock connection. The B-52's never appeared at Wigstock but Cindy Wilson did sing as a soloist a year or two later. Tom was always super-excited by the festival and many insiders consider his film to be superior to the 1995 documentary *Wigstock*. He was also a very supportive friend and helped out a lot. This was sorely needed since I was young and not terribly organized or sober. Frieda was Tom's friend and he arranged for her to appear at Wigstock—the festival never recovered and she became a regular form several years. One of the greatest acts ever!

Rubnitz's influence has been traced to contemporary artists like Ryan Trecartin, TV seems to have caught up to what he was doing decades ago, and his videos are now YouTube staples. Did you see yourselves as doing something ahead of its time or shaping the culture?

I didn't! But I was thrilled to see a crazy video of some kooky young girls re-encating the video for their own YouTube video. The genius Jackie Beat also remade *Pickle Surprise* (playing me) and did a fantastic job.



That's the Surprise: Tom Rubnitz's Sexy, Wiggy, Desserty World

At one point in Tom Rubnitz's collaboration with Ann Magnuson, *Made for TV* (1984), a feminist channel-switching genre parody featuring Magnuson in iconic female roles of daytime television (housewife, femme fatale, televangelist, pop star), she appears in an "editorial" as a stuffy schoolmarm disparaging "television's jumble of jumping colored dots—fragments of information that cannot constitute a Culture." *Made for TV* certainly demonstrates a schizophrenic television viewing experience, but Rubnitz's body of video work takes up this challenge: How to make a culture out of these fragments? How to forge a queer camp aesthetic out of the detritus of mass media culture? How, as collaborator and fellow "child of television" RuPaul once put it, "to speak the language of television. Fluently" (but also with a pronounced "gay accent")? In this, Rubnitz is the true heir to Jack Smith's "moldy" art (*Flaming Creatures* and *Normal Love* [both 1963]). For Rubnitz and Smith, camp is more than "mocking exposure of the elements and assumptions of a dominant culture" (although *Made for TV* does a brilliant job at this). Rather, camp is motivated by a reparative, collecting/collective form of love, and by the realistic fear that "the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nurture" (to use Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's distinction between "paranoid" and "reparative" forms of reading).

During Reagan's conservative 1980s and the decimating AIDS crisis that claimed Rubnitz himself (in 1992, at the age of 36), New York's queer underground of visual artists, drag queens, and club performers found unique resources in recycled and resuscitated 1960s psychedelic Pop and countercultural aesthetics. This camp revival is visible in Rubnitz's collaborations with the legendary Lady Bunny and Pyramid Club hostess Hapi Phace in *Wigstock: The Movie* (1987, almost a decade before the feature-length documentary of the same name), *Drag Queen Marathon* (1986; featuring drag queens competing for photo ops in famous New York art world settings), and in his famous convenience-cooking show parodies *Pickle Surprise* and *Strawberry Shortcut* (both 1989). Like Smith, Rubnitz explained that he wanted to "make things beautiful, funny and positive—escapes that you could just get into and laugh through" (*Video Data Bank*). Indeed, *The Mother Show* (1991), featuring "living doll" Frieda in ridiculous pastoral settings, is hilarious in its treatment of a daughter's questions to her mother ("do you ever have that not-so-fresh feeling?" "what's a boner?"). But this laughter is not only subversive or escapist; it represents a shared camp sense of humor that was equally crucial to the New York underground of the 1960s and 1980s in terms of survival and collective memory. Proof of this can be seen in Rubnitz's *Summer of Love PSA* (1990) with a veritable who's who of queer icons—Quentin Crisp, Allen Ginsburg, Mink Stole, and The B-52's—assembled in the style of The Beatles's *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, but with a central drum that reads "ART AGAINST AIDS."

This attempt to forge a bridge between the underground aesthetics of the '60s and '80s is not merely "postmodern nostalgia." Another two decades on, Barry Morse created a brilliant video homage to Rubnitz's *Pickle Surprise* called *Ookie Cookie* (2009), starring Jackie Beat as Lady Bunny, Willam Belli as Lahoma Van Zandt, Shaz Bennett as RuPaul, and Barry Morse as Pickle. The paradox is that RuPaul and Lady Bunny are still famous and working as hard as ever (giving future legends like Willam Belli new opportunities through "RuPaul's Drag Race"). But what *Ookie Cookie* reveals is that Rubnitz's camp video aesthetic has now become a resource for the YouTube generation.

Who's Who in Tom Rubnitz's Videos

A

Maria Ayala is a jewelry designer. (*Pickle Surprise*)



B

Billy Beyond has worked as a DJ for clubs including Beige NY, Beige Hollywood and appears frequently in clubs around the world. Billy was a model for campaigns by LA Eyeworks and Levis and is best known for his appearances in Todd Oldham fashion shows in NY through the nineties. He maintains a near daily blog at www.billybeyond.com. His current photography work may be seen at his website www.billyerb.com. His work has been published in various magazines and books including Amy Sedaris' *I Like You*. (*Strawberry Shortcut*)



Eric Bogosian provides the male voice-overs in *Made for TV*. He has written and performed at least six solo shows, plays including *subUrbia* and *Talk Radio* (both turned into films), appeared on Broadway and was a featured character on *Law and Order: CI*.

The Lady Bunny maintains an active career as an international DJ and drag performer. One of the founders of Wigstock, Bunny produced and emceed the popular Labor Day outdoor drag festival for 20 years. She has appeared in TV shows including "Sex and the City" and films including *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*. Bunny's show, Hot Mess, plays at XL each Wednesday. www.ladybunny.net (*Drag Queen Marathon, Strawberry Shortcut, Pickle Surprise*)



C

Lady Crumbum, along with Africa Nicks and Faye Runway, is a drag persona of George Rock who was an early Pyramid performer and ran the Stephen Sprouse fashion house at its zenith. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)



D

Danilo styled wigs and hair for many of Rubnitz's videos, created John Sex's signature hair do and Lady Gaga's Diet Coke can hair rollers look for "Telephone." He was Chief Coiffure for a decade at Thierry Mugler and has worked as a stylist for an expansive list of celebrity clients and fashion houses from Gwen Stefani and Pink to John Galliano and Oscar de la Renta.

Matt Danowski edited many of Rubnitz's videos.

David Dalrymple designed outfits for everyone on the 1980s downtown scene from RuPaul and Joey Arias to Dee-Lite. In 1993, he became head designer for Patricia Field's House of Field and has designed for "Sex and the City" and "Ugly Betty" and a long list of celebrity clients including Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez and the Dixie Chicks. (*Pickle Surprise*)



Loretta B. DeMille is one of Brian Butterick's drag personas along with Hattie Hathaway. Founder of post-punk band 3 Teens Kill 4, he is also a Wigstock founder and key player at



the Pyramid and Jackie 60. In 2006, he appeared in the Broadway revival of *The Three Penny Opera* (*Drag Queen Marathon*)

Sister Dimension, known for an intergalactic drag style and out of this world performances, is one of the Pyramid Club founders as well as spinning as its regular DJ and at Susanne Bartsch parties. Sister Dimension also played drum machine and Moog for the band Shazork. (*Pickle Surprise, Strawberry Shortcut, Drag Queen Marathon*)



F
Mr. Fashion (d. 2008) designed costumes as well as acting in several Ethyl Eichelberger plays. A staple of the club scene crowd from Limelight to Roxy, he curated a lecture series at King Tut's Wah Wah Hut featuring bold face nightlife names. Mr. Fashion can also be seen in films by Jacob Burckhardt and was Frankie Lymon's nephew. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)

Frieda, the "International Superstar," is the brainchild of Barbara Lipp and Tom Koken. Frieda was a popular performer at many NY venues including the Pyramid, Area, Mudd Club, and La Mama, and was a regular at many Wigstocks. Frieda appeared on "The David Letterman Show" and performed "Plastic Rap" from her 12-inch single, recorded on Varla Records. (*The Mother Show*)



G
Lynn Grabowski is a photographer. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)

H
Aunt Hagatha is a drag persona of Clark Render, lead singer of the band Hagatha, and later one half of the drag cabaret duo the Dueling Bankheads. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)

K
Tom Koken is an artist and co-creator of Frieda. www.tomkoken.com (*The Mother Show*)

L
Barbara Lipp is a co-creator of Frieda (*The Mother Show*)

M
Ann Magnuson managed the vibrant Club 57 and performed regularly from The Mudd Club to Danceteria. Her wildly eclectic career includes bands Vulcan Death Grip and Bongwater, films from *Desperately Seeking Susan* to *The Hunger*, and TV shows including "Anything But Love." Her monthly column, "L.A. Woman," ran in *Paper* magazine for eight years. www.annmagnuson.com (*Made for TV*)



O
Dagmar Onassis is John Kelly's female alter ego. A performance and visual artist, Kelly's performances have played the BAM Next Wave Festival and London's Tate Modern. He is the recipient of two Bessie and two Obie Awards. Fellowships include a Guggenheim, the Radcliffe Institute, and the Rome Prize in visual art at the American Academy in Rome. He recently starred in *The Clerk's Tale*, a film by James Franco. Kelly sings at Joe's Pub Oct. 14, 28, and Nov. 4 as Dargelos, Dagmar's brother. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)



Melody Oyster was a drag queen visiting NYC from Montreal on May 12, 1985 when *Drag Queen Marathon* was shot and became part of its occupying drag queen flash mob.

P
Hapi Phace hosted the popular drag night Whispers at the Pyramid Club. He is an Off-Broadway performer, Melville scholar, and can be seen in films by Charles Atlas. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)



R
Tom Rubnitz (1956-1992) made over a dozen quirky, colorful and inventive video shorts between 1983 and his death. The videos feature a raft of his friends on the East Village scene and screened during his lifetime at venues including La Mama and the Holly Solomon Gallery. He studied at the Kansas City Art Institute before moving to NYC in the late 1970s.



RuPaul came on the NYC nightlife scene in the early 1980s at the Pyramid and later worked parties like Larry Tee's Love Machine and Susanne Bartsch's Copacabana. In 1992, RuPaul's single "Supermodel" was released and became an international dance hit. A few years later RuPaul became the first face of M.A.C. cosmetics and published his autobiography *Lettin' It All Hang Out*. RuPaul is honored with a wax figure in Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum and hosts the popular reality TV show "RuPaul's Drag Race." www.rupaul.com (*Drag Queen Marathon*)



S
John Sex (1956-1990) was a singer whose act was a hybrid of Vegas lounge schmaltz and boylesque. Known for his gravity defying blonde waterfall hairdo, he studied painting but soon became a regular performer from Club 57 to the Pyramid Club and The Palladium. Sex stars in at least four Rubnitz videos including music videos for "Hustle with My Muscle" and "Bump and Grind It."



T
Tabboo! studied art in Boston and moved to NYC in the early 1980s becoming a regular performer at the Pyramid and Wigstock. Tabboo! has created many flyers, stage backdrops and murals around NYC and is known for a spiraling font style. His paintings have shown from the ICA in Boston to the New Museum as well as galleries and museums in Spain, Italy, London, Hollywood and Berlin. Tabboo!'s plays have been staged at the Participant Gallery and Gene Frankel Theatre. (*Drag Queen Marathon*)



V
Lahoma Van Zandt moved to New York with a wave of folks from Atlanta including Larry Tee, RuPaul and Lady Bunny. With a kooky, bubbly drag persona, Lahoma was a Limelight club kid in the 1990s and today works in magazine publishing. Lahoma can also be seen on film in Mike Ruiz's *Starrbooty* and the documentary *Party Monster*. (*Strawberry Shortcut*)

W
Ande Whyland has been photo documenting the downtown scene since the early days of Club 57. Whyland's lively images have been published in numerous books and magazines including *Artforum* and exhibited at The New Museum. (*Strawberry Shortcut*)



Who's Who compiled by Joe E. Jeffreys with research assistance from Brian Butterick, Billy Erb, Filloyd, Dany Johnson, John Kelly, Tom Koken, Agosto Machado, Byron Suber, Stephen Tashjian, and Ande Whyland.

Joe E. Jeffreys is a videographer and drag historian. He produces *Drag Show Video Verite* (www.dsvv.tv) and is on the board of Dirty Looks.

DIRTY LOOKS is a roaming series held on the last Wednesday of the month. Curated by Bradford Nordeen, Dirty Looks is a screening series designed to trace contemporary queer aesthetics through historical works, presenting quintessential GLBT film and video alongside up-and-coming artists and filmmakers. A salon of influences, Dirty Looks is an open platform for inquiry, discussion and debate.

“Deliver us from Daddy! Dirty Looks sets its sights on artist film and video that pierces dominant narratives, wanders with deviant eyes or captures the counter in salacious glares.”

A quintessential New York underground film/video artist, the late **TOM RUBNITZ** took a bite out of the Big Apple and spat it out in a wild kaleidoscope of unequivocal camp and hallucinogenic color. RuPaul, the B-52's, Quentin Crisp, the Lady Bunny, Ann Magnuson, and John Sex are but a few of the stars that shine oh-so-brightly in his glittering oeuvre. A genre artist par excellence, Rubnitz treated the sexy-druggy-wiggy-luscious-desserty qualities of the 80s downtown club scene with the loving care only a true hedonist could show. Rubnitz died from an AIDS-related illness in 1992.

JIBZ CAMERON is a performance/video artist and actor who lives and works in New York. In 2002 she began to develop *Dynasty Handbag*, a one-woman show combining music, audio, video and live performance. She has since toured extensively in the US and Europe and her performance and video work as her alter ego, *Dynasty Handbag*, has been seen at institutions and festivals such as The New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Kitchen, Outfest Los Angeles, SXSW, and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. *Dynasty Handbag* shows have been heralded as “the funniest and most pitch perfect performance seen in years” by the New York Times and “crackpot genius” by the Village Voice. She has received awards from Dance Theater Workshop (2008), Franklin Furnace (2008), *Mondo Cane!* (2010), and *Kindle Project* (2011, 2012). She is an adjunct professor of Performance and Theater studies at Tisch School of the Arts, NYU and is currently an associate performer with the Wooster Group.

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