ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: SCREAM QUEEN: DRAG, DANCE, AND THE GROTESQUE BEAUTY OF QUEER IMAGINATION

Peter Pattengill, Master of Fine Arts in Dance, 2025

Thesis directed by: Professor Patrik Widrig, School of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies

Scream Queen is, if anything, an act of adoration for the medium of horror and the power of queer expression. This paper will detail the process and culminating product of my choreographed work, *Scream Queen,* presented in October 2024. I will discuss persona, drag, and the intimate relationship between horror and queerness. As a queer alternative movement artist, I hope to honor the subversive and revolutionary voices who have come before me. I will explore the belief and theory that queer people gravitate towards that which is grotesque, horrific, and villainous because it allows them to feel a sense of power within their otherness, actively witnessing aspects of their identity within figureheads that oppose the world which has demonized their existence.

SCREAM QUEEN: DRAG, DANCE, AND THE GROTESQUE BEAUTY OF QUEER IMAGINATION

By

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Dedications and Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to queer youth and future queer youth. This work is for the kids who never quite fit in, and whose interests skew against the grain. To every young boy who fastens a bath towel into an evening gown, and every little girl who would rather be a tarantula for Halloween than Cinderella. This work serves as a reminder that you are not alone in this experience, and that life may be harder for you than most, but you will emerge from these hardships more resilient, more fearless, and vindicated in your journey towards self-actualization. Whether you are a queen, a king, a creature, or something yet undiscovered, your uniqueness is your power. Queer existence is resistance.

To my loving family, Catherine, Derby, and Lily. I am so privileged to get to spend my life doing what I love. You have never discouraged me from expressing myself authentically, and for that, I am truly grateful. Thank you deeply to my artistic collaborators for turning my dreams (perhaps nightmares) into reality. Colin Franz, Sophia Tepermeister, Mariah Faulkner, Sean Preston, and Evan Thanicatt, your talent and willingness to dive into my world is admirable, and this project could not have achieved half of what it aimed to without your hard work and dedication. I would also like to offer special thanks to the family, friends, and mentors who have directly or indirectly supported this project as well as my personal well-being. I am honored to have you in my life. To name a few, thank you to Rush Johnston, Julia Asher, Angie (Hawk) Smith, Tori Niemiec, Leo Grierson, Zoe Walders, bree breeden, Jalen Rose, Henry Santer, Javi Padilla, danah bella, Kate Ladenheim, Kelly Hirina, Katherine Helen Fisher, as well as the TDPS Faculty, Staff, and Shops. And thank you to the mentors who will never know what they have taught me. To name just a few Elvira, John Waters, Leigh Bowery, H.R. Giger, Lypsinka, Dracmorda and Swanthula Boulet, David Kronenberg, and Dolly Parton.

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Artist Statement

Peter Pattengill's work transcends conventional boundaries, utilizing the captivating mediums of performance art and dance to boldly confront the more uncomfortable aspects of humanity, identity, and expression. Their creations serve as a compelling exploration of the profound intersection between beauty and terror, where the two coexist in a darkly engaging display of atypical embodiment. Within the intricate delineations of their artistic expressions, Pattengill delves into themes of disruption, horror, and filth, weaving them into narratives that challenge societal norms and embrace the unconventional. Central to Pattengill's portfolio is their distinctive ability to bring out the visceral and queer dimensions of their existence. Pattengill utilizes the tools of sabotage and subterfuge to subvert audience expectations and explore the complexities of queer identity and storytelling. In this creative space, Pattengill aims to subvert preconceived notions about conformity and control, encouraging viewers to question conceptions of reality.

One of the hallmarks of Pattengill's artistry is their innovative choreography. Through meticulously crafted performances, they beckon audiences into a world where the visceral horror and grotesque beauty of both humans and creatures are celebrated without reservation. This celebration takes place in the liminal space between what is known and what is mysterious, inviting viewers to reimagine their own subjectivity and reconsider the codified social norms that govern their lives. Pattengill's exploration of power dynamics and masochism offers a unique lens through which collective trauma and macabre fascinations can be examined. Their art transforms painful lived experiences into a profoundly tender and transformative experience, inviting individuals to reflect on their vulnerabilities and systems of oppression that shape their everyday lives.

As a self-described alternative artist, it is important to Pattengill that their work challenges and destabilizes normative expectations of concert dance in an effort to preserve and uplift radical

queer ideologies. Pattengill's work further pulls from themes of masochism, drag, and monstrosity. Peter Pattengill's work stands as a testament to the power of creativity to challenge, inspire, transform, and become. Through their fearless embrace of atypicality and discomfort, they invite us to journey to where beauty emerges even in the most unexpected places, and where transformation is within reach.

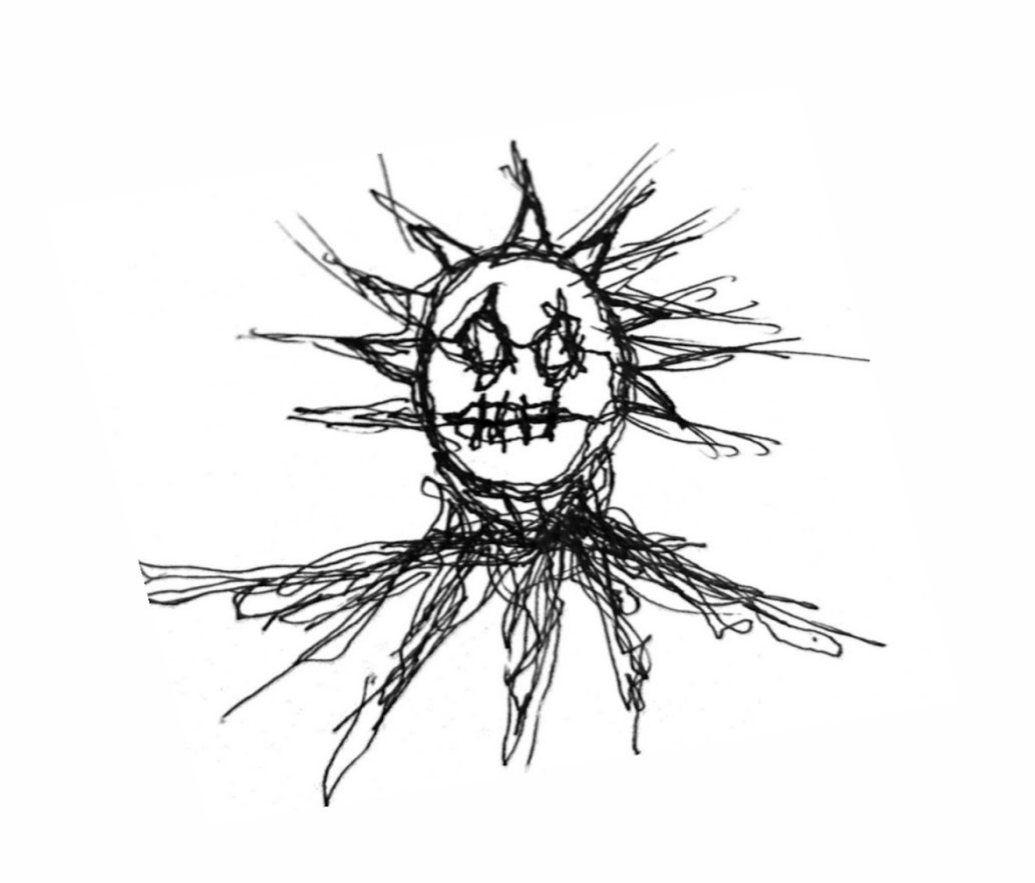


Photo 1 – Conceptual illustration of Shingles by Peter Pattengill

Chapter 1: Queerness, Horror, and Acts of Resilience

When faced with the daunting task of developing a thesis concert and its accompanying research, I knew that this was my opportunity to deepen my understanding and connection to themes and concepts that have shaped who I am as an artist and choreographer. From a young age, I have always felt a connection to horror, monsters, and generally anything that goes bump in the night. As I began my choreographic journey, this area of interest was often both a driving force and fundamental inspiration. The first solo I ever choreographed at the age of fourteen was to Camille Saint-Saëns, "Danse Macabre". Later in my career, I continued to develop a series of solo-choreographies that explored monstrosity, fear, and general elements of horror media. As I prepared myself to propose the project which would later be called *Scream Queen*, I saw the opportunity to not only push my choreographic limits in a niche that I was passionate about but also develop a deeper understanding of why the medium of horror speaks to me, and how my identity as a queer person directly influences this relationship. In this paper, I will discuss the process of developing and performing the work, *Scream Queen*, as well as conduct research in an attempt to further understand the connection between queer identities and horror.

5.10 What is Scream Queen?

"Scream Queen" is an iteration of the term "Screen Queen" in reference to the iconic feminine figures of the silver screen. "Scream Queen" more specifically refers to the presence of female protagonists in horror films. Actresses would be brandished the title of Scream Queen for either their consistent presence in horror films, or through a notable and iconic performance. It should be noted that while the development of these female characters has shifted alongside our cultural expectations, Scream Queens are more often than not associated with youth, beauty, a damsel-in-distress nature as well as their iconic screams of terror. Often considered the first to be

brandished the title of Scream Queen is actress Fay Wray for her performance in 1933's *King Kong*[1]. Other notable Scream Queens include Veronica Cartwright[2], Janet Leigh[3], Jamie Lee Curtis[4], and Neve Campbell[5].

The term Queen, beyond its monarchical associations, has been used to describe effeminate homosexual men since the 19th century[6]. Like many other terms intended for depreciation, Queen has seen an ever-shifting perspective of acceptance within the queer community. Even the term queer, which I choose to describe myself and my community, possessed a derogatory and dehumanizing connotation very recently in history. Many queer folks would not bat an eye at being called a queen and would perceive it as a compliment to the highest degree, but this has not always been the case. In the 2019 documentary, *Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street*[7]*,* Mark Patton reflects on his short-lived acting career following his controversial appearance in *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* (1985)[8]. This film, which is often referred to simply as "Nightmare 2", is noted for its wacky nature and heavy homosexual subtext. Patton took on the role of Jesse, a young male stand-in for the archetypal horror "final girl"[9]. Patton's effeminate performance of Jesse, along with several overtly queer references such as a leather bar, a raunchy shower scene, and homoerotic tension between male characters led to a reading of the film that subverted many of the norms of mainstream horror at the time. The release of this film also took place during the beginning of the

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[1] See Appendix C.
[2] Veronica Cartwright is known for her roles in *The Birds* (1963), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), *Alien* (1979), and many more.
[3] Janet Leigh is best known for her iconic role as Marion Crane in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960)
[4] Jamie Lee Curtis is known for her role as the primary protagonist of the *Halloween* franchise as well as her roles in *Prom Night* (1980), *Terror Train* (1980), and *The Fog* (1980). Curtis is also the daughter of Janet Leigh.
[5] Neve Campbell is best known as the primary protagonist of the *Scream* franchise.
[6] Originally spelt, "Quean". The use of the term fell out of popularity as the comparison was less than appreciated by Queen Victoria of England. Hudson, Kenneth. *A dictionary of the teenage revolution and its aftermath*, 1983, 151. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-05330-8.
[7] Jensen, Tyler and Roman Chimienti. *Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street. Tubi*, 2019. https://tubitv.com/movies/684776/scream-queen-my-nightmare-on-elm-street.
[8] See Appendix C
[9] The "final girl" is a horror archetype which is typically a female lead of a horror film who survives until the end of the film and is actively involved with the final confrontation of the killer. See Appendix A.

AIDS epidemic as well as the rise of Reagan conservatism. These events created an environment in which a film that may have seemed subversive and exciting years prior was lambasted for its inclusion of homosexual themes. Patton saw copious amounts of criticism and harassment, which effectively led to his being blacklisted from the film industry. The title of "Scream Queen" is transformed from a status of the highest regard in horror to a demeaning and degrading attack that not only was directed at Patton but served as a warning to both horror and Hollywood professionals that the industry is and will be actively antagonistic towards queerness. While this instance acts as a capsule for a particular time in Hollywood, most would be surprised to know that horror has been a medium for exploring queer identities for centuries.

1.2 Queer Gothic Horror and Queer Coded Villainy

I will begin my exploration of the relationship between queerness and horror with 19th-century gothic literature. While I am certain that this relationship has existed much longer, it is during this period that we see a boost of subversive queer storytelling on a mainstream scale. From Bram Stoker to Mary Shelley, queer literaries worked to subversively incorporate themes of queer identity within their novels. At this time, however, acts of homosexuality were highly contentious, so authors more often than not explored queer themes through their villain characters. Author and scholar of queer gothic culture Laura Westengard explores this concept arguing that, "the conservative aim of the Gothic performs 'insidious' trauma for queer readers and viewers who turn to the Gothic to see representations of queerness, but who must endure the underlying message that queerness is monstrous and must be destroyed for the sake of the norm."[10] Essentially, in order for

[10] Westengard, Laura. "Queer Gothic Literature and Culture." *Twentieth-Century Gothic*, June 17, 2022, 259–72. https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474490122.003.0017. Pg. 266

queer stories to exist in this era, they must be hidden within morally reprehensible characters who meet their inevitable comeuppance.

We see examples of subversive queer storytelling manifest within popular vampire novels. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, arguably the most influential novel of all time, has been subject to many queer interpretations. Many believe that Stoker, who was presumed to be a gay man himself, used Dracula as a mirror for the ways society demonized homosexuality. The vampire Dracula remains a figurehead for indulgence, temptation, and an active opposing force to normative society, which is largely shaped by the words of the church. In the novel, Dracula displays homoerotic tension towards the protagonist, Jonathan Harker, even expressing jealousy towards his wives who attempt to seduce him, proclaiming, "How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back I tell you all! This man belongs to me!"[11] While Dracula shows more overt sexual interest in women, subtextual evidence suggests his overt sexuality transcends gender. We see this pattern of indulgent omnisexuality repeated in vampiric figures to this day, most notably in the character of Lestat created by novelist Anne Rice.

We witness more overt examples of gothic homosexuality in Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 novel, *Carmilla*. The novel, which predates the release of *Dracula* by twenty-five years, explores the relationship between a young I woman, Laura, and a mysterious vampiric stranger named Carmilla. While *Dracula*'s explorations of homosexuality are more subtextual, *Carmilla*'s exploration of a sapphic relationship is far more at the forefront. Carmilla even proclaims to Laura, "'I have been in love with no one, and never shall,' she whispered, 'unless it should be with you.'"[12] With this arises the question, why must Stoker's explorations of queerness be so much more subtextual than Le Fanu's? Author and literary critic Taryn Tyler suggests that cultural presumptions of female sexuality

[11] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*, New York, New York, Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003, first published in 1897. Pg. 42
[12] Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan, *Carmilla.* Mumbai, General Press, 2022. Pg. 53

allow sapphic relationships to effectively hide in plain sight. The long-standing presumption of intimate female relationships is that "anything less than an explicit description of physical intimacy between two women is considered merely a 'friendship'."[13] Tyler argues that the nature of Laura and Carmilla's relationship would have been unquestionably romantic had they fit a male-female mold, and I can't help but agree with her. This showcases an example in which queer storytelling, even in an overt context, is allocated to a subtext by a normative culture that refuses to acknowledge its presence. It must be said that while Carmilla's queerness went largely over the heads of 19th century and even modern readers, Carmilla still meets a violent end, acting as yet another example in which the queer monster must be eliminated for the sake of maintaining normalcy.

Time passed, and in the early 20th century, a new artistic medium arose, film. We see one of the earliest examples of queer horror represented in the 1922 vampire film, *Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horror*[14]. This film, which was an unauthorized adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* was directed by a gay man, F.W. Murnau. Journalist, Chelsea Christine McConnell, believes Murnau used Nosferatu as "an allegory for modern values (women's liberation, Jewish and Eastern immigrants, and homosexuality) threatening the traditional ways so many at the time were clinging to."[15] Film acted as a new medium for many of the same subtextual and occasionally overt queer stories being explored through gothic literature.

In the year 1934, however, we see a shift in queer storytelling with the enactment of the Hays Code. The Hays Code was a set of explicit guidelines highlighting acceptable and unacceptable content shown in motion pictures. The Code was enacted to create a system that limited content considered immoral, including but not limited to profanity, nudity, anti-Christian sentiment, mixed

[13] Tyler, Taryn. "Carmilla and Sapphic Erasure." Medium, October 18, 2024. https://medium.com/story-lamp-reviews/carmilla-and-sapphic-erasure-129ff2158655.
[14] See Appendix C
[15] McConnell, Kelsey Christine. "Quaking with Queer: A Brief History of Queer Horror Cinema." The Lineup, June 24, 2024. https://the-line-up.com/history-of-queer-horror.

race relationships, and of course, sexual perversion, i.e. homosexuality.[16] In a time of creative renaissance, filmmakers were expected to comply with regulations that skewed in favor of conservative, puritanical, and nationalist values. In an almost continued practice of the queer monsters of gothic literature, we see the increased popularity of the queer-coded villain.

Whether you are aware of them or not, I guarantee that you have witnessed a queer-coded villain before. The Hays Code, having effectively banned queerness from popular media, forced artists seeking to be creative with their implementation of queer stories. While it has many definitions, queer coding as I describe it, following scholars such as Koeun Kim[17], is the subtextual inference of a character's queer identity through the use of familiar traits and stereotypes. While their sexualities may never have been confirmed, many popular villains and otherwise dubious characters have long-held stereotypes associated with homosexuality. During the era of the Hays Code which spanned from 1934 – 1968, we see a number of queer-coded villains such as Norman Bates in *Psycho* (1960)*[18],* Mrs. Danvers in *Rebecca* (1940)[19], Philip and Brandon in *Rope* (1948)[20], and Bruno in *Strangers on a Train* (1950)[21]. Each character's perceived lack of morality and deviousness allows filmmakers to hide queer characters and bypass Hays Code standards by presenting these characters as evil. It must be said, however, that many of these characters are the most easily recognizable and entertaining characters of their respective films. Despite their devilish natures, I see myself in these characters and eagerly await their return in scenes where they are not present.

Just because the Hays Code was replaced by the MPAA[22] Film Rating System in 1968, does not mean that the pattern of queer-coded villains and monsters stopped. Particularly mainstream

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[16] Butters Jr., Gerard R. (2007). *Banned in Kansas: motion picture censorship, 1915–1966*. University of Missouri Press. ISBN 0-8262-1749-4
[17] Kim, Koeun. "Queer-Coded Villains (And Why You Should Care)," *Dialogues@RU*, 2017.
[18] See Appendix C
[19] See Appendix C
[20] See Appendix C
[21] See Appendix C
[22] The MPAA is the Motion Picture Association of America.

films still to this day tend to veer from overt queer characters and themes out of fear of upsetting or losing potential audience members. A company notorious for its queer-coded villains is Disney. From Scar to Captain Hook, Hades, Yzma, and Maleficent, to name a few, Disney has regularly showcased dastardly and campy villains that indulge in flamboyance, grandiosity, sass, and a distinct separation from their respective normative society. Ursula, who acts as the primary antagonist of 1980's *The Little Mermaid* was distinctively modeled after drag queen, Divine.[23] As a kid, I recall seeing these films and experiencing a connection to these villainous characters. I felt that they always had the best designs, the best songs, and were far more dynamic as characters than their heteronormative protagonist counterparts. I had no desire to be the prince, or even the princess for that matter. I wanted to be the powerful and sassy villain that commanded space, showcased independence, and was unapologetically themselves.

In the world of horror, we see this pattern continue. In Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987)[24], the cenobites are represented as androgynous personifications of pleasure and pain, blurring the lines of BDSM[25], sex, and torture with their victims regardless of sex and gender. In *The Lost Boys* (1987)[26], we see several vampires fitting the archetypical style of young queer people adorning leather, crop tops, eyeliner, and wild hair. In both examples, we see a protagonist tempted by an alluring and mysterious queer-coded villain who attempts to lure them into a sinful and exciting lifestyle. While I can continue to spout countless examples of queerness and its association with monstrosity, villainy, and horror, we can begin to look at how these patterns emerge, and how they impact a queer audience. In each of these examples, we see the queer-coded character standing in direct opposition

[23] Divine was an American drag queen and the self-proclaimed "Queen of Filth". Divine was best known for her roles in many films by John Waters. See Appendix B. Smyth, Tom. "The Little Known Drag Origin of the Little Mermaid's Ursula." Vogue, May 24, 2023. https://www.vogue.com/article/ursula-little-mermaid-drag.
[24] See Appendix C
[25] BDSM is short for bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadism and masochism. An umbrella term for an erotic and often taboo sexual subculture.
[26] See Appendix C.

to our protagonist. The queer character, as entertaining as they may be, is showcased as, at the very best, morally abject, and at the worst, unforgivably evil. In each instance we also see each of these queer characters meet their inevitable and often violent fate yet again showcasing the triumph of good over evil.

Scholar, Makenna Lambert claims, "Horror is one of the earliest genres to embrace queer identities if only to vilify or disparage them. Because queer people were demonized in society, queer stereotypes became the language of antagonists and monsters in horror films."[27] While I agree with some of Lambert's sentiments here, I feel as though I am still working out my feelings surrounding queerness as it is represented in horror. As a young queer person, I was seeing glimmers of myself in these characters that I was being simultaneously told were evil and often worthy of punishment or death. I recognize that these characters are flawed and showcase a very narrow perspective of queer identity, but at the same time, they are all that I have. I love, adore, and admire these characters because, for much of my life, they have been the only characters I could see any semblance of myself within. As much as I would like to say that queer people are organically drawn to elements of monstrosity and horror, we are simultaneously being actively pandered to with characters we consciously or subconsciously relate to. While I seek not to perpetuate the notion of perceived evil in association with queer people, I equally seek to reclaim that which was used against us and to find strength in my otherness and individuality.

1.3 Ideal Forms Practice

Within recent years, I have developed a small practice, or perhaps a game for myself. I call this my ideal forms practice, and the way that it works is simple. As I navigate myself through the world, whether it be walking down the street or scrolling through Instagram, I will come across

[27] Lambert, Makenna. "Queer representation in the horror genre: An analysis of queer stereotypes", 2023, https://encompass.eku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2008&context=honors_theses, Pg. 7.

various figures, symbols, and artifacts that resonate with me in a particular way. I then acknowledge whatever I am looking at and proclaim it to be an ideal form. As I am sure it is no surprise, I was an avid player of make-believe as a child. My friends and I would spend hours discussing our characters and fighting off hordes of imagined enemies. I believe that the ideal forms practice is an extension of this. The practice allows me to detach from the often-tumultuous relationships I have with my life and escape into a fantasy in which I can be my most true and ideal self; one that is not tethered to the laws of science nor the expectations of our modern society.

As I have passively continued this process over the years, I have collected many ideal forms, from drag artists, sculptures, graffiti, and abstract objects, which I'm sure brings about the question, "How can all of these forms be ideal?" And the answer to this question is that they aren't or at least aren't all the time. Each serves as a reflection of my personal desires, insecurities, and relationship to the world around me. I may gravitate towards a form that makes me feel strong on a day that I feel hopeless, or a feminine form on a day that I am having issues with being perceived as masculine. My point being that I am not actually searching for a definitive ideal form but actually listening to the wants and desires of my subconscious, utilizing the tools of persona, imagination, and posthumanism as a survival mechanism for navigating life. The following page provides a few examples of ideal forms that I have collected since beginning this practice.



Photo 2 – Drag Couenne attends *Drag Race Belgique* red carpet event



Photo 3 – "The Doctor" by Silas Orion



Photo 4 – Will and Garrett Huxley pose with dog, Edward



Photo 5 – Unnamed artist at KinAct Festival in Kinshasa, DRC.

Queer theorist, José Muñoz, discusses similar survival tactics in his book, *Disidentifications*. Muñoz theorizes that minority groups use disidentifications, which are strategies for both resisting and relating to mainstream culture, as a form of survival. Muñoz suggests, "To disidentify is to read one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject."[28]. Muñoz, who grew up as a Cuban American immigrant in South Florida, recalls watching Truman Capote on late-night talk show reruns. Despite not knowing particularly who Capote was nor having any significant cultural connections, Muñoz found himself

[28] Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications by José E. Muñoz*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. Pg. 12

transfixed and mesmerized by Capote and other "talk-show deviants". Although Muñoz was young and did not yet have the words to express his own queer identity, he was able to identify with and see himself within Capote's quick-witted bitchiness and extravagant demeanor. In many ways, I see myself having made similar disidentifications in my youth, gravitating towards and seeing myself within queer-coded characters and outcasts such as the X-Men long before I was aware of my queerness.

I argue that my ideal forms practice is a disidentificatory practice. It is a way for me to find connections and understand how I see myself within the world. While my ideal form is ever shifting, my physical body remains present, shifting and adapting as I do. Ideal forms, while imagined, allow me to experience a multitude of unique personas, attitudes, and embodiments that directly impact the work that I showcase onstage. Muñoz suggests that "Solo performance speaks to the reality of being queer at this particular moment"[29]. As an artist who primarily centers physical research on solo performance, I feel that this sentiment resonates with me heavily. Each solo I create, and each time I step onstage, I am working to develop the language to express how I see myself individually, and in the greater context of the world.

While my particular ideal forms may skew towards the grotesque, and horrific, an ideal form can be anything from a fantastical creature to a gaseous cloud, or a stone on the beach moving with the tides. I offer to you, the reader, to open yourself up to an imagined ideal form. If you could truly become anything you wanted to be, with no restraints tethering you to the laws of science or reality, what would you become, and how would you feel? Grant yourself the privilege of detaching from your physical body and look for how your spirit takes shape.

[29] Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications by José E. Muñoz*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. Pg. 1

Chapter 2: Monstrous, Glamorous, and Grotesque

2.1 The *Boulet Brothers' Dragula* as an Embodied and Aesthetic Framework

As drag has found itself more and more rooted within mainstream culture, with it a wide variety of movies, shows, and theatrical endeavors centering drag have been brought to the public eye. One venture, however, has stood out from the rest and brought with it a sense of belonging for me and my chosen family. *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula*[30] is a reality competition series that has just completed its sixth mainline season. The competition, hosted by drag artists Swanthula and Dracmorda Boulet, aims to crown "The Next Drag Super Monster". Unlike the more popular *RuPaul's Drag Race, Dragula* centers and celebrates alternative drag artists and largely focuses on horror and punk aesthetics. Where *Drag Race* contestants may be asked to wear a look that features an evening gown, or to write a girl-group verse, contestants on *Dragula* are more likely to be asked to present a look inspired by themes such as killer clowns, rock gods, or zombie sex workers. Notably, the contestants on *Dragula* showcase an impressive range of unique personas, interpretations, and perspectives on drag. While the program does showcase more traditional drag queens, they also highlight drag kings such as Landon Cider[31], agender drag artists such as Dahli[32], and drag monsters such as Orkgotik[33] and Yovska[34] who are unconcerned with any attachment of humanity within their drag. The show celebrates the strangeness and pushes away from traditional and conformative expressions of gender and artistic merit. While I may have been drawn in by the guts and gore, it is the14 relationship that the show has with oddity and individuality that allowed me and many of my closest queer friends to connect so deeply with its message of empowerment for the most bizarre, eccentric, and outlandish amongst us.

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[30] Whole. *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula*. Shudder AMC, October 31, 2016.
[31] See Appendix B.
[32] See Appendix B.
[33] See Appendix B.
[34] See Appendix B.

One aspect that has been made clear since the conception of the show, is the four main tenets of *Dragula*. These tenets are drag, horror, filth, and glamour. For a contestant to be named the "Next Drag Super Monster", they must be able to inhabit and showcase all of the tenets. These tenets act as a guide for the audience and contestants to understand that the pathway toward success within the context of the competition is one that requires balance and versatility. While this acts as a way for the competition to maintain a clear brand and system of guidelines, I believe that these tenets provide a framework for alternative queer art. While not all alternative queer artists may fit into the mold *Dragula,* I feel that this framework pushes artists towards the development of a nuanced and fully realized persona. Each tenet is layered and omnipresent, creating a multifaceted identity that feels as alive and tangible as the artist portraying it. Throughout the process of developing *Scream Queen*, I utilized the Boulet Brothers' framework to inform overarching and hyper-specific decision-making. While I did hold my tenets relatively close to those provided by the Boulets, I tweaked mine to more specifically cater to my research interests. The tenets that I chose to infuse within *Scream Queen* are "The Monstrous", "The Grotesque", and "The Glamorous". I provided myself and my designers with these tenets to encourage cohesion, honor queer artists who have inspired my work, and deliver a character and storyline that are multifaceted and fully realized.

2.2 The Monstrous

Monsters have been a part of human history and religion for thousands of years. From the Sphinx, the Kraken, and vampires, to the behemoth of biblical legend, monsters have long existed as beings to be feared. Whether they are religiously affiliated, created to scare children into eating their vegetables, or designed to entertain moviegoers, monsters reflect cultural fears, taboos, and abnormalities. According to the University of Cambridge, the history of the word monster can be

traced back to the Latin, *monstrare*, or "to demonstrate" and *monere* "to warn"[35]. Monsters were used as example makers, vicious beasts used to highlight the dangers of moral abjectivity of their particular culture. For example, Krampus, a pagan monster, was used to frighten misbehaving children around the winter solstice, and the gorgon Medusa was used as a warning against displeasing the gods. Monsters act as a living amalgamation of all that stands against a particular culture. It is also suggested that "By excising [monsters], through fantasies of execution or simply professional exclusion, we rid ourselves of the undesirable attributes they are perceived to carry."[36] In a way, by creating or proclaiming monstrosity, society attempts to rid itself or at least distance itself from its perceived moral downfalls.

While the title of monster certainly can be related to fantastical myths and legends, it can also be granted to humans deemed wicked and unworthy of societal acceptance. By making an example, or deeming an individual as a monster, we make them a "social scapegoat" effectively distancing the collective from unethical behavior. While many of these socially determined monsters have been violent, murderous, and bigoted individuals, monstrosity has also regularly been used as a weapon against marginalized groups.[37] The proclamation of monstrosity is one that carries with it a degree of privilege; a monster, more often than not, is defined by a normative collective. Queer individuals, as a relatively small population, stand out as easy targets for such demonization. Queer people are regularly made to feel monstrous by the heteronormative systems we regularly operate within. The deeming of queer people as monstrous allows the general public, or more specifically, the homophobic, to cleanse themselves and further isolate themselves from the perceived evil that is queerness.

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[35] "What Is a Monster?" University of Cambridge, September 7, 2015. https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/what-is-a-monster.

[36] "What Is a Monster?" University of Cambridge, September 7, 2015. https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/what-is-a-monster.

[37] While I will be specifically talking about monstrosity as it relates to queer identity, the title of monster has been used as a tool to demonize individuals based on race, religion, disabilities, and gender that I will not specifically address today.

Monstrosity more than anything acts as a tool for dehumanization. By proclaiming an individual as monstrous, I rid myself of the anxiety that they, like me, are human, and that I, like them, are susceptible to enacting the same evil. This effectively dehumanizes an individual and enforces a greater degree of separation between them and society. I see this pattern continuing particularly with trans and gender non-conforming individuals who are often perceived as ill or non-sensually referred to as "it". Westengard suggests that this practice is showcased in popular horror media stating, "The dehumanizing effect of monstrosity as a stand-in for gender non-conformity has a long history in the genre of horror cinema. In films such as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974)[38] and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991)[39] the killers use the salvaged flesh of their victims to construct their genders; both Leatherface and Buffalo Bill wear the scalps (and in the case of Leatherface the whole face) of their victims as a way of accessing femininity."[40] Both Leatherface and Buffalo Bill have been criticized for their representation of transness, acting as Indicators of the fear felt by mainstream audiences of transgender people. These films, while integral to the horror genre as well as personal favorites of mine, yet again fall into the queer-coded villain trope.[41] The difference in these portrayals is that while the previous queer-coded villains we discussed were campy, flamboyant, and deliciously evil, Leatherface and Buffalo Bill are portrayed as severely mentally ill sociopaths who use the flesh of their victims to explore their gender expression. Each showcases their respective character less as a villain and more as a monster that is too far gone to ever be saved.

The unfortunate truth, however, is that queer people don't need to have murdered and skinned multiple people to be made to feel like a monster. The existence of queer people acts oppositional to the norm, and they are regularly ousted for expressing their wants and needs.

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[38] See Appendix C
[39] See Appendix C.
[40] Westengard, Laura. "Queer Gothic Literature and Culture." *Twentieth-Century Gothic*, June 17, 2022, 259–72. https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474490122.003.0017. Pg. 261
[41] In the film *Silence of the Lambs,* Buffalo Bill is portrayed as openly queer, however, I use the term queer coded to better highlight filmmaking patterns and attach his similar qualities to Leatherface.

Something as simple as a young boy wearing a dress he chose to wear is perceived as an affront to the very nature of things, acting as a signifier of individuality that must be stamped out for the greater good of society. The stigma of being different carries with it an immense weight. Queer youth are four times more likely to take their own life than others their same age not because they are queer, but because they are made to feel unworthy of love, joy, and prosperity by the world around them.[42] To be queer is to be viewed, to some extent, as monstrous. I choose, however, to take this title, rear my gnarled teeth, and show them that I am not going anywhere.

2.3 The Grotesque

Take a brief moment to consider the images that come to mind when you think of the term, "grotesque". For me, I see Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*[43], David Kronenberg's, *The Thing* (1982)[44], and most recently, Monstro Elizasue from Coralie Fargeat's acclaimed film, *The Substance* (2024)[45]. Whatever images come to mind for you, I am willing to bet that they unnerve you in some way. The grotesque, though illusive in its definition and manifestations, manages to produce a visceral, uncomfortable, and often disturbing sensation that is hard to look away from.

The term grotesque has origins that date back to the Roman Empire. The Domus Aurea Is a palace built in Rome by the Emperor Nero. This palace was an architectural marvel of the time, however, much of the palace was filled with earth and built over following Nero's death. It wasn't until the 15th century that the palace was rediscovered. Inside were gardens, caves, and grottos filled with unique and unusual artwork. These murals depicted human, animal, and plant hybrids. The

[42] "Facts about Suicide among LGBTQ+ Young People." The Trevor Project, February 5, 2025. https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/.
[43] Bosch, Hieronymus. "The Garden of Earthly Delights." *Museo Del Prado*, April 28, 2015. https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-garden-of-earthly-delights-triptych/02388242-6d6a-4e9e-a992-e1311eab3609.
[44] See Appendix C.
[45] Fargeat, Coralie. *The Substance.* Mubi, Cannes, France, May, 2024.

works were then defined as *Grottesche,* or in English, "of the cave".[46] While early uses of the term were used to describe artwork reminiscent of that found in Nero's grotto, grotesque is now used as a descriptor for that which is absurd, fantastical, ugly, distorted, and unusual. Commonly we see this in the whacky and scary proportions of Halloween masks, and the amalgamated jumbles of fingers produced by generative AI trying to figure out what a human hand looks like.

In my opinion, an essential element of the grotesque is the mystery that it holds. An image or creature that is truly grotesque should leave me, the witnesser, with some degree of confusion and intrigue. I want to sit with the image for quite some time, left trying to figure out what it is that I am exactly looking at. While I am disturbed, I am equally curious. It is in my opinion this innately mysterious nature that separates artwork that is grotesque from work that is simply filthy, gruesome, and shocking. The grotesque also carries with it a certain level of complexity and delicate intricacy. I will return briefly to the film, *The Substance,* as I believe the character of Monstro Elizasue to be a perfect example of grotesque character design. To put a long story short, Elizasue, is the monstrous outcome of the main character Elizabeth's efforts to maintain eternal youth and beauty, ultimately dooming herself to becoming a horrifying amalgamation of body parts, clinging to whatever beauty is left behind. Admittedly, Monstro Elizasue's appearance is quite disturbing, her face seemingly both melted and tumorous, a set of teeth affixed on her collar bone, what appears to be a spine replacing her sternum, and the screaming face of Margaret Qualley on her back to name only a few of her physical deformities. While the sight of Elizasue is quite stomach-churning, I can't quite look away. Her design, despite its horror, elicits sympathy from me as the viewer. The tact with which the filmmakers have designed this look allows me to attach to her more human qualities and empathize with the pain she must be experiencing. It is the grotesque that tethers this character to its humanity,

[46] Smith-Laing, Tim. "Horrible Art Histories - the Grotesque in Art." Apollo Magazine, April 6, 2015. https://www.apollo-magazine.com/horrible-art-histories-grotesque/.

separating her from a creature that is so abstract and inhuman that we as the audience are incapable of feeling compassion for her. In one sequence, we see Elizasue in a desperate attempt to be seen as beautiful, straightening one of three strands of hair she has left and jamming an earring into the mound of flesh where her ear used to be. While I am certain that the filmmakers could have made Elizasue into a completely unrecognizable horror, they made an active effort to incorporate recognizable features into her design that showcased her unwavering desire for feminine beauty and adoration.

The presence of grotesque embodiments is showcased throughout *Scream Queen*. The first element that I will highlight is the costuming. Costume pieces showcased throughout the work often toe the line between organic and inorganic, the fleshy nature leading to wonder whether the pieces are clothes worn or are physical distortions. Costume silhouettes such as the puffed sleeves further shape and abstract the body from a recognizable form. Additional grotesqueries show up in the cocoon sequence, as well as many of the strange and broken-seeming movement explorations. While the capacity for grotesque imagery is limited in live performance under a restricted budget, my goal was to leave the audience with a slight sense of constant unknowing and discomfort. Through slight caricatures and distortions of sound, movement, and imagery, I sought to create a world and character that could not quite fit categorizations of human, inhuman, natural, supernatural, real, or imagined. It is this element of the grotesque that I sought to infuse throughout the work, with just a dash of filth along the way.

2.4 The Glamorous

On a surface level, I am sure that glamour of all things feels the most out of place within this project. If the goal is to explore horror, monstrosity, and the grotesque, how will glamour uplift the work instead of muddying its intentions? When most hear the word glamour, they may think of lavish jewels, evening gowns, and an effortless beauty, but never blood and gore. In many cases the

privilege of the title of glamorous is reserved only for the affluent, and often only for those who possess feminine beauty. I for one, however, believe that glamour as a status, as an aesthetic, and as an expression of power, finds Itself represented by subcultures far beyond the heteronormative one percent.

Glamour, as a concept, has a long-standing relationship with queer expression. While the history of the term "drag" is somewhat contested, it was William Dorsey Swann who first adorned the title "Queen of Drag".[47] Swann, who was previously a victim of American Chattel Slavery, threw underground drag balls in Washington DC where queer folks could cross dress in extravagant attire. Although Swann has long passed, his legacy lives on with drag artists regularly adopting the title of King or Queen and acting as figureheads for the community. This monarchical title brings with it flamboyant and ornate costumes to match. Drag artists often mimic the fashions of times present and past, but often with a certain degree of exaggeration, absurdism, and camp. As more artists began to participate in drag, proportions were enhanced with each generation producing bigger hair, bigger hip pads, and bigger jewels. Because many drag artists could not afford extravagant custom garments and pieces, they became their own designers, seamstresses, wig stylists, and makeup artists. This for me acts as a shining example of the tenacity of the queer spirit to take next to nothing and create something truly remarkable.

For those of you who are still wrestling with my decision to implement elements of glamour within the performance, I would like to highlight a few notable examples of the crossover between horror and glamour. An example that comes to mind first is the character, Elvira. Elvira, who is an original

[47] Phillip Zonkel, Q Voice News. "William Dorsey Swann the 1st Drag Queen, LGBTQ Rights Pioneer." Q Voice News, January 26, 2024. https://qvoicenews.com/2020/03/05/william-dorsey-swann-the-1st-drag-queen-lgbtq-rights-pioneer/.

character portrayed by actress Cassandra Peterson, acted as a sexy, seductive, and vampy television host who frequented late-night broadcasts with her quick wit, dirty jokes, and love of B movie horror.[48] Her quintessential look featured an exaggerated hair bump and a signature black dress that featured a high slit, a plunging neckline, and a dagger-shaped belt. Glamour showcased in a different variety can be seen in both Guillermo Del Toro's *Crimson Peak* (2015)[49] as well as most recently, Robert Eggers', *Nosferatu* (2024)[50]. Both films feature elements of gothic fashion that allow their characters to remain quite glamorous while still maintaining a horrific atmosphere. While admittedly the scope of glamorous horror is limited outside of the context of drag, I view glamour as an act of transcendence. When I don a glamorous atypical costume, it is to say I may be perceived as a monster, but that is far from how I perceive myself.

Glamour is about beauty and extravagance, yes, but I feel that it holds so much more weight to it. Glamour is for me more than anything a reclamation of my pride and self-worth. Operating in this world as a visibly and openly queer person allocates me in the eyes of many as a member of society whose mere existence is an immorality that opposes societal prosperity. I have been harassed and yelled at many times on the street, and more often than not this happens when I am wearing my most flamboyant attire, and when I am feeling my best. I interpret this as a sign of defense, and an acknowledgment that my comfort in expressing myself is an active threat to the assailant's well-being. So often queer folks are met with the phrase, "I don't have a problem with gay people, I just don't want them to be all in my face about it". While this phrase may be a homophobic cliché at this point, it highlights the fears of many and the belief that queer people should neither be seen nor heard and should showcase gratitude for the minimal amount of tolerance they are afforded. To be

[48] B movies are low budget motion pictures created to accompany or act as sequels to more popular mainstream productions. The often zany and messy nature of these films has led to many of them becoming cult classic films.
[49] See Appendix C.
[50] See Appendix C.

glamorous is to be proud, to be boisterous, to be unafraid to take up space and make an impact. To be glamorous as a queer person is an act of resistance in and of itself, putting out into the open that I am unafraid.

Chapter 3: Drag, Queer Expression, and the Power of Persona

3.1 Drag as a Personally and Culturally Relevant Art form

Drag. I remember some of my earliest experiences with drag. I knew of drag for the majority of my life, but it always felt like something secret. Drag was framed as something seedy and mysterious. Despite being openly gay at a relatively young age, I found myself in more traditional and conservative circles simply by my involvement with ballet. In the summer of 2015, I was introduced to a show called *RuPaul's Drag Race*[51] by my roommate at the Ballet West Summer Intensive in Salt Lake City, Utah. The show at the time had just completed its 7th season and after my first episode, I was hooked. Drag transformed, in my perspective, from this grungy and strange thing to something magical and spellbinding. I marveled at these statuesque goddesses wearing the most extravagant clothing I had ever seen. They exuded confidence, danced, sang, sewed garments, told jokes, and stood up for themselves. It was my first experience witnessing a queer-centered environment. Those who would be traditionally ousted by society were celebrated, worshipped, and perceived as aspirational. I remember coming home from this intensive and looking for any kind of bootleg version of the show I could to watch every episode. It was an immediate obsession.

As I slipped further into my fixation on what would have already been defined as an alternative art form, I found myself continuing to veer towards the side of weird. As each season passed, I found myself rooting not for the most traditionally beautiful or glamorous queens, but the clowns, the Club Kids[52], and the odd ones out in a group of people who were already the odd ones out. Drag is most often associated with the act of "female illusion" or the attempt to impersonate

[51] Whole. *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Los Angeles, California: World of Wonder, February 2, 2009.
[52] Club Kids refers to an artistic and fashion movement originated by young club-goers in New York during the late 80's and early 90's. I will speak more on Club Kids later in the paper.

and "pass"[53] as a woman. While the average person may perceive drag as such, it is and always has been so much more. Drag, in summation, is the art and performance of gender. Drag in its infinite multitudes touches on the ever-expanding edges of gender and exists along, with, and beyond that spectrum. When you think of a drag artist, you may think of a drag queen such as RuPaul[54], Sasha Colby[55], or Envy Peru[56] whose drag takes form with an aesthetic of hyper-femininity, beauty, untouchability, and what can be referred to as a "glamazon"[57] aesthetic. On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are Drag Kings who play on tropes of hypermasculinity, strength, swagger, and what I will call "dude energy" such as Landon Cider[58], King Molasses[59], and Tenderoni[60]. Beyond the spectrum of masculinity and femininity, there are common aesthetics and tropes that artists can fall under such as camp aesthetics, celebrity impersonation, grunge, club kid, burlesque, pantomime, and so much more. My point in this is that there is no one way to do drag. Drag acts as an umbrella term that encapsulates an art form whose defining features are entirely determined by the artists themselves, as at the end of the day, drag is an art form that centers personal expression and fantasy over all else.

As I write this now in 2024, *RuPaul's Drag Race* has concluded its 16th season of the flagship series, as well as introduced several international spinoffs and all-star seasons resulting in a total of 73 seasons, 5 of which are currently airing. I mention this because the art of drag has had a global explosion with its presence in pop culture. Drag artists are seen more regularly in films, on talk

[53] Passing is a term used in the LGBT+ community to refer to someone who is perceived as the way that they identify, particularly in relation to gender and the perception of being cisgender. While this terminology is important to note, it is also necessary to note that it is outdated and inappropriate to utilize in present day scenarios.
[54] See Appendix B.
[55] See Appendix B.
[56] See Appendix B.
[57] Glamazon is a portmanteau combining the terms glamorous and amazon in reference to the ancient Amazonian warrior women of Greek myth.
[58] See Appendix B.
[59] See Appendix B.
[60] See Appendix B.

shows, and in music videos, colloquial drag lingo has found itself in the mainstream vernacular, and drag queen and singer, Chappell Roan[61], headlined for the largest crowd in the history of the Lollapalooza Music Festival.[62] While I can presume that the youth of today have greater access to the art of drag as well as queer art in general, I feel that my introduction to the form was just on the cusp of its exponential growth. With same-sex marriage being legalized in the same month as my introduction to drag, queer art and expression were making some push toward the mainstream view, but still very overshadowed, unrepresented, and somewhat taboo. In its own way, my viewing of this series still felt somewhat rebellious.[63]

This all being said, although drag is as widespread and mainstream as it has ever been, it has begun to feel more and more rebellious in the last few years. With every push, there is a pull and as a response to the globalization of queer perspectives, there has been a strengthening and loudening of anti-LGBT voices. There is a rise in false allegations of drag artists grooming children, proposed anti-drag and anti-trans legislature[64], as well as an explosion of false rhetoric spread by public figures such as Elon Musk and trans-exclusionary radical feminist[65], J.K. Rowling. Drag has been and always will be a subversive and political act that challenges mainstream traditions of gender. The act of putting on drag is one that is actively rebellious, and it is important to note that this is still true no

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[61] See Appendix B.

[62] Monteil, Abby. "Chappell Roan Reportedly Drew Lollapalooza's Largest Crowd Ever." Them., August 6, 2024. https://www.them.us/story/chappell-roan-lollapalooza-largest-festival-crowd-ever#:~:text=Music-,Chappell%20Roan%20Reportedly%20Drew%20Lollapalooza's%20Largest%20Crowd%20Ever,a%20festival%20s

[63] In the United States, same-sex marriage was legalized on June 26th, 2015, in the Supreme Court case Obergefell v. Hodges.
"Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015)." Justia Law. Accessed March 2, 2025. https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/576/644/.

[64] A record number of 53 anti-trans bills were introduced in the United States in 2023.
"United States Bills: Anti-Trans Legislation." United States Bills | Anti-trans legislation. Accessed February 28, 2025. https://translegislation.com/bills/2023/US.

[65] A trans-exclusionary radical feminist, or TERF, is a member of the Gender-Critical Feminist movement. TERF's center many of their beliefs around white feminism while perceiving identities under the trans umbrella as an active threat towards women.

matter the political climate of the time. As is the cyclicality of human nature, drag, like many other subversive cultures, will slip in and out of the favorable eyes of the public.

3.1.2 A Note on Referentiality and Drag

I would argue that all art is inherently referential, but in my opinion, drag actively encourages this referentiality and embraces it. Drag performance is more often than not a mirroring and exaggeration of popular culture. At any given drag performance, it is rare to see performances that do not reflect aspects of celebrity, pop music, internet meme culture, or any other subculture or symbol of iconography. You may see San Franciscan Drag Queen, Loma Prietta, performing a drag performance as Mr. Krabs from SpongeBob[66] in the same evening that you see Jazell Barbie Royale's playful and glamorous rendition of Cece Peniston's "He Loves Me 2"[67] and Stefon Royce's near flawless impersonation of Rick James.[68] This is to say that while drag artists are vastly diverse in their skill sets and artistic voice, there is more often than not a direct call to, reference, or parody of culture, whether it be mainstream or not. I mention this as I feel it is important to be open about my inspirations and references. From the costumes to the set, the lighting, musical, and performance choices, which are stuffed to the brim with references to art, drag, and pop culture, have allowed me to find my inner voice. I find too often that the contemporary dance field shies away from referentiality. Particularly as one gains notoriety from the field, there is a shift away from direct and tangible reference that begins to veer into a hubris of divine inspiration. This, in ways, insinuates the belief that art can come from nothing, that artistic talent can be fostered in a vacuum, and perpetuates the deification of artistic figures who fail to recognize or acknowledge their artistic inspirations.

[66] See clip and artist description in Appendix B.
[67] See clip and artist description in Appendix B.
[68] See clip and artist description in Appendix B.

3.2 Developing a Drag Persona

Personas, whether they be in drag, an online identity, or imagined reality, act as an escape and a signifier of our truest desires, expressions, and senses of self. A persona allows me to do and say things that I would never be able to in my everyday life. A persona is free from modern conceptions of politeness, taboo, or embarrassment serving as a metaphorical mask and shield. Although I do feel pride in myself and my accomplishments, I also come with insecurities, anxieties, and imperfections that shape the ways I function in society and have real-world consequences. Like a child playing dress up, inhabiting a persona grants me the opportunity to reshape myself, and strip away any unwanted anxieties. While I may be too nervous to sing in front of an audience, my persona may not be, and while the adoption of a persona is temporary, much like that child playing dress-up, it grants me the power to push the limits of my capabilities.

The premiere of the work *Scream Queen* also acts as the premiere of my dragsona. A dragsona, or drag persona, is an extension of my expression as much as a character to be embodied just as I would any other character in any other performance. I have decided to call this dragsona, Shingles. I feel that this drag persona falls less clearly on the gender spectrum, but feeds heavily into alternative, creature, and club kid aesthetics. Shingles refers to a painful rash caused by the varicella-zoster virus.[69] As a name, I found this to be tantalizing as it elicits discomfort, pain, and viscera, while simultaneously bringing forth a jovial and almost clown-like nature. I wanted this persona to revel in pain and discomfort. Much like the Cenobites of Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*[70], Shingles operates in a way that pain and pleasure are equal and interchangeable, which may be perceived by an audience as sadomasochistic. As I continue to balance the line between hero and villain, monster and misunderstood soul I find myself reeling on the intentions of this creature who we can now call

[69] Varicella-zoster virus (VZV) is the virus that causes chickenpox. This virus can lay dormant in the body for many years before reactivating and causing shingles.
[70] Barker, Clive. *Hellraiser,* New World Pictures, September 1987.

Shingles. We see a number of times that Shingles does what they can to make the audience actively uncomfortable, but the question lies for me in the "why?".[71] Is Shingles doing this because they are actively antagonistic towards the audience, because they perceive discomfort as pleasurable and entertaining, or because they are so isolated in their own experience that they wish to share it with the audience in hopes of being understood?

3.3 Costume Design, and the Importance of Clothes as a Form of Self-Expression and Storytelling

"Dress as if your life depends on it, or don't bother" – Leigh Bowery

From the beginning of the production process, I knew that costume was going to be one of the most integral design elements. For me, clothes are deeply entangled with my relationships with gender and self-expression. From an early age, I remember trying on my mother's heels which were about 10 sizes too large, or draping blankets into what I can assume were red carpet-worthy gowns. It was then in my late teens that feminine blouses, kimonos, and skirts were some of the first experiments with non-traditional gender expression.

While the intention and characterization of a drag persona can be exciting and rich, the aesthetic and look behind the character are equally as important. I can craft a deep and rich backstory that only I will ever know, and while that may show up in my embodiment, the average audience member will never know this story, and at the end of the day, their first impression of my drag will be the way that I look. I have to ask myself, "What story can I immediately convey without moving a muscle?"

In my collaboration with costume designer, Colin Franz, we had many conversations about how to create a costume that showcases the aspects of monstrosity, horror, grotesquerie, and filth

[71] Throughout this paper, I will primarily use they and them pronouns in reference to Shingles, however, I do view their pronouns as interchangeable, so there will be times in which they are referred to as she, he, it, or "The Creature"

that I was so keen on portraying within each of my design elements. Particularly for the first look, which I affectionately refer to as either the skin suit or gimp mask, we began to look at horror iconography. We looked to brooding slashers and intimidating killers such as Leatherface[72], Jason Vorhees[73], and fellow JHU alum, Hannibal Lecter[74]. It was soon after this that we landed on a character that resembled a butcher. We wanted something that immediately told the audience that they should be afraid of this character by pulling in many slasher tropes such as overalls or aprons, masks, and a wide masculine presence. Another aspect that was important to me was a distinct silhouette. Many slashers such as Jason Vorhees or Michael Meyers[75], are not revealed directly to the viewer for large portions of their film, so I wanted a costume that could be recognizable and effectively intimidating in low light or silhouette. This all seems simple enough at the time, but something is missing: where is the queerness? While we could certainly do a deep dive into the queerness already on display by characters such as Leatherface and Lecter, that isn't necessarily going to read for an audience. How do we take the archetype of a brooding, intimidating, and ruthless killer, and place it into the world of drag while still maintaining all of these darker qualities?

I went immediately into looking at a subculture that I have been in awe of for many years, the Club Kids. The Club Kid movement was a queer artistic subculture surrounding the New York club scene of the 1980s and '90s. Trailing the tail end of club culture developed in locations like Studio 54, and Andy Warhol's Factory, Club Kids built on and twisted expectations of grandiosity, fashion, and sex. Club Kids were known for their bizarre and exaggerated fashions, often sporting

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[72] Leatherface is the primary antagonist of the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* franchise. First appearing in 1974, known for his cannibalistic tendencies, chainsaw, and mask of human flesh.
[73] Jason Vorhees is the primary antagonist of the *Friday the 13th* franchise. Jason first appeared in 1980's *Friday the 13th,* but did not appear as the machete wielding character we know until 1981's *Friday the 13th Pt. 2.*
[74] Hannibal Lecter is an intellectual cannibal and sadistic psychologist character created by the novelist Thomas Harris in 1981. Lecter was made famous by Anthony Hopkins' Academy Award winning portrayal in the 1991 film adaptation of *The Silence of the Lambs.*
[75] Michael Meyers is the primary antagonist of the *Halloween* film franchise. Meyers is a silent killer, sometimes referred to as "The Shape".

unique garments that they developed themselves. These expressions often surpassed normative expectations of gender and would have been perceived as absurd by the average citizen of the 80's. This subculture which centered joy, queer expression, and sexuality while existing almost entirely in New York City clubs birthed many prominent names in drag and entertainment such as James St. James[76], Lady Bunny[77], RuPaul[78], and Amanda Lepore[79]. As perfect as this aesthetic seemed to incorporate into the design, it was actually a precursor to the Club Kid movement that acted as the greatest source of inspiration.

Leigh Bowery was a performance artist, fashion designer, and club promoter. Bowery was noted for operating parties at the prominent London club, Taboo in the 1980's. These parties, which often had a theme and dress code enforced by Bowery, were a haven for experimental fashion and expression. These parties are often considered the primary cultivating location for the "New Romantics" subculture, as well as a prominent celebrity hotspot for names such as John Galliano, Boy George, and George Michael. Bowery himself was a staple of Taboo. As the creator and promoter, Bowery set the standard for experimental and fabulous self-constructed garments. Bowery is noted for boisterous and gender-bending silhouettes, distorted shapes, exaggerated makeup, masks, and bold use of color.

Bowery's wacky and genderless style was exactly what my character needed, and in many ways, I simply asked "How can we turn Leigh Bowery into a horror icon?" Evidence of this can be seen in the use of the spiked gimp mask, which mirrors many of Bowery's spikey headpieces as well as his tendency to cover his face. Bowery's influence is also seen in the grandiosity of the shoulders which play both on the traditionally feminine Victorian sleeve, as well as act as absurd and

[76] See Appendix B.
[77] See Appendix B.
[78] See Appendix B.
[79] See Appendix B.

cartoonishly masculine bicep muscles. The conversations between myself and costume designer, Franz, more often than not centered around finding and maintaining a balance of scary, bold, and deeply queer. In his rendering of the costume, Franz was able to play with draggy silhouettes while still maintaining an air of brooding strength and intimidation using these absurd androgynous fashions.

This gimp mask look feels so integral to the work and its establishment of so many of my themes. I am so proud of the work that Franz did on this design. I feel as though it so excellently embodies the elements of monstrosity, the grotesque, and the glamorous. Monstrosity is seen in the horrifying nature of the mask. I feel that it is important to speak to the presence of sex in the work. While not overtly sexual, elements such as the gimp mask, stretch vinyl, and chains certainly illicit dark sexuality and themes of BDSM. The intention behind this centers the heterosexual gaze upon the queer body. When a queer individual faces demonization from an outside group, they are most often placed firmly astray from conservative sexual values. Queer people are perceived as morally abject and hedonistic monsters whose mere presence will infect and tarnish a pure soul. It seems only fitting that a queer monster would be one immediately associated with debauchery and brutal sexuality.[80] It must also be noted that while aesthetically intimidating, gimp masks are most commonly worn by submissive BDSM practitioners to further restrain, dehumanize, and humiliate them. This fittingly pushes the narrative that while this creature, Shingles, is presumed to be quite monstrous, they are immediately placed in a position of being dehumanized by the audience. Faced with presumptions that they are morally abject. All that is recognized is sex and violence, which for many queer people, is what they face from the eyes of loved ones, grocery store clerks, pastors, and

[80] Please note that this is not my personal belief surrounding BDSM and fetishists but is one that is often assumed of them.

politicians, who choose to see a reprehensible beast long before they see the complexities of the human beneath.



Photo 6-8 – Costume sketches by Colin Franz. Left to right, costumes progress in order they appear in *Scream Queen*

Chapter 4: Atmospheric Intent and Collaborative World Building

Admittedly, prior to the development of this project, environment was an aspect of design and choreography that I rarely considered. While this can largely be attributed to a lack of access to resources and funding, my character explorations rarely, if ever, examine the worlds that these creatures inhabit. This project granted me both the privilege and challenge to work with designers who helped develop a world and environment that not only supported but greatly enhanced the depth of my performance. In horror particularly, the environment can be a determining factor in success. If my goal is to immerse my audience in the performance as well as generate some degree of fear response, I need them to maintain some suspension of disbelief. Elements such as lights, sound, scenery, and projection are put into use as a method of detaching from the reality of the audience experience of sitting in a proscenium theater.

4.1 Scenic Collaboration

In my time as a choreographer, I had never had the opportunity to work with a scenic designer or set to any extent. In a way, this made the prospect of having a scenic designer the most exciting as well as the most daunting. I had major anxieties with how I was going to engage choreographically with the set as well as a fear of how little time I had to work with scenery and props before performing. Much of this anxiety, however, washed away with the professionalism and straightforward attitude of my scenic designer, Sophia Tepermeister. I knew going in that I wanted to create a space that feels like the lair or home front for my character. I knew that I wanted this to be an environment that feels viscerally uncomfortable and disturbing to the average person but feels like a safe space for our protagonist. It was fairly quickly that Tepermeister and I landed on the idea of a meat locker. I liked that this space immediately makes me feel a sense of unease, it is frigid, unwelcoming, and likely smells of lingering death. Equally, this space is reminiscent of a typical slasher villain layer while still feeling distinct. I can infer where this character is storing his victims,

what weapons of violence are available here, and how isolating a space like this could be. Within Tepermeister's design, however, we also see elements of cabaret in her circular portal affixed with PVC freezer curtains. While Tepermeister's design feels more closely related to the monstrous and grotesque elements of the framework, I feel that the grit she was able to accomplish established an immediate sense of discomfort and tension within the space.

A highlight of Tepermeister's design for me is the form and function of the body bags. Because *Scream Queen* is a solo performance, it is important to remember that audience focus will almost entirely be directed towards me, the performer. It was important to me to maintain a level of focus from my audience as much as possible. Any moment that I leave the stage to grab a prop or change my clothes is a moment where suspension can be broken, so we intended to limit these distractions as much as possible. The five body bags suspended on the stage act not only as elements to fill and inform the space, but also as secret compartments hidden within plain sight. Inside the body bags, openings faced away from the audience that were used to store props and costumes to be revealed as the work progresses. This operated in a way that was highly functional for the performer and provided a certain level of surprise which feeds into my love of subversive performance tactics. The body bag that stood out the most, however, did not carry props or costumes, it carried me. The bag, which we will call the cocoon, was an idea that I had quite early on. I wasn't sure how it would be accomplished, but I had an idea of an emergence or birth from a pulsating vessel. Although I could feel a sense of uncertainty when I brought this idea to the design meeting, Tepermeister was dedicated to seeing this idea through. What we ended with was an altered aerial yoga hammock made to look like a sack bursting from a bloody body bag. I will talk more about this section of movement later; however, I truly believe that the cocoon was the perfect mode for establishing the tone and tension of the work, and I cannot thank Sophia enough for her professionalism and dedication to fulfilling my wild fantasies.



Photo 9 – Pattengill stands in deep squat, center stage. Surrounding them are five body bags hung from the ceiling. Photo by Sophia Tepermeister

4.2 Lighting Collaboration

When it came to lighting, I was given the honor of working with Mariah Faulkner. Admittedly, my collaboration with Mariah was probably the most hands-off of the designers. We stuck to the decision that the tone of the space would gradually transition from the feel of a horror film to a drag cabaret. We envisioned that the show would start quite cold and unwelcoming in its lighting before slowly and incrementally becoming warmer and more dramatic. For the introductory segments, I suggested a look similar to the bathroom scene in *Saw* (2004)[81] for its isolated, gritty, and cold atmosphere. For the latter half of the performance, I remember specifically citing Jessica Rabbit's performance in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988)[82] as an influence for what I would imagine the cabaret to look and feel like. Beyond these two suggestions, Faulkner was largely left to her own devices. What I found particularly successful in Faulkner's work was her keen eye for framing and

[81] See Appendix C.
[82] See Appendix C.

her use of color. Faulkner worked with my jarring transitions to make them feel more intentionally abrupt, understanding where and when to pull focus. I feel this most specifically in her slow and methodic opening that gradually introduces the audience to the environment as light expands externally away from the cocoon. I particularly love Faulkner's willingness to build work that is intentionally ugly. I remember distinctly her choice to wash the space with a hue of yellow reminiscent of old urine just after the telephone section. This particular yellow elicits distinct and uncomfortable sensations in me as a viewer that subconsciously keep me in a heightened state even in a moment of choreography that is less particularly grotesque.

After a few weeks of design meetings had occurred, Faulkner ran up to me with a glimmer in her eye. She had the idea to include in the performance an anatomical heart which also functioned as a source of light. I loved this idea, but I wasn't sure at first how it would fit into the piece. After some collective brainstorming, we decided that the heart would expel light from within the cocoon, an activating source indicating life. This light source is the first thing that the audience sees when the curtains open, pulsating in near darkness along with the music. The heart, which was 3D printed at UMD, was hollowed out and fitted with remotely operated lights which were controlled from the booth. This allowed Faulkner to tailor pulsations from the heart to whatever sound is present, even keeping beat in some instances. The heart for me feels essential to the activation of the space and the work as a whole; a catalyst for birth, and rebirth, and a reminder of the drive and 37dedication that true change requires from us.



Photo 10 – Pattengill stands holding up glowing anatomical heart. Photo by Sophia Tepermeister

4.3 Media Design and Projection

Media and projection design was another field that I felt very little familiarity with prior to this project. Technology has never been my strength as an artist, so I felt very lucky to have Sean Preston on my team. Upfront, I knew that I did not want to oversaturate the stage with projections. I felt that the best use of media would be to add texture to the space. While Tepermeister's design was great, I felt myself yearning for more unease within the space. Preston and I talked about adding many abstract viscera to the background. From maggots to eyeballs and blood, we wanted the space to feel alive and to tug at some common human fears. The projections also loosely follow the themes and tones of the show as it progresses. The opening showcases a pulsating embryonic background, and as I begin to grow in the size of my dancing, several swinging body bags are projected as if to indicate a widening of the space or a piling up of bodies. Preston was the collaborator that leaned most heavily into themes of isolation, otherness, and the experience of queer bodies under societal pressures, which although they are relatively abstracted in the context of

the piece, offered *Scream Queen* an additional layer of depth I had not anticipated when I was first given a media designer.



Photo 11 – Pattengill hangs from suspended body bag. Preston showcases embryonic texture through projection. Photo by Sophia Tepermeister.

Preston easily got me out of one of my biggest jams as a choreographer. At the beginning of the piece's development, I had the intention of never leaving the stage. It was not long before we were heading into the theater, however, that I realized this idea was not going to work. I was consistently too exhausted right after a big movement section, and I was unable to put on my stylish tan pumps without falling over. I needed a moment to breathe, take a swig of water, and put on my shoes without being seen. I tried to do this as a moment of silence, but internally I felt rushed, and externally, audience members couldn't tell whether the piece was over. Thankfully Preston was able to come up with a solution. This moment in the context of the piece is a signifier of growth within the character and an active metamorphosis. Preston developed a quick-paced montage of images which in addition to sound and flashing lights felt almost like a mad scientist bringing to life a new creation. This moment also allowed Preston and I to utilize many of the textures, images, and

themes that we had previously scrapped in the process. This last-minute decision completely altered the viewing experience by eliminating the stark drop in momentum the previous transition caused.

4.4 Sound Design

My journey through sound unknowingly began a year prior to *Scream Queen's* debut. I was at the time taking a sound design course with Samuel Crawford. While I had previously used editing software to mix and distort music, it was in this course that I began to compose and create music from scratch. It was the skills learned in this class that helped me build many of the tracks showcased in *Scream Queen,* the opening track having originally started as a Western film score, I created as a final project.

While I did develop many of the musical scores myself, it was the help of Evan Thanicatt that truly helped me fall in love with the sound of this work. The wide variety of tones and moods for the piece left us wanting more from the score which at times could feel a little flat or two-dimensional when presented back-to-back. As stated previously, building atmosphere was integral to my design vision. Thanicatt took this prompt and ran, regularly shifting which speakers were being utilized to fit the dynamic shifts of the work. For example, in the "And Then He Kissed Me" section, the speakers are almost entirely frontal, presenting more like a typical proscenium show, however, in the conjuring section, the audience experiences sound emanating from speakers positioned behind and around them. This element showcases how the work shifts from fantastical and humorous to quite gritty and visceral. Thanicatt also utilized the potential of subwoofers to shake the space, mirroring both club environments as well as amplifying the reverberations of the final sung moment.

A particular moment in the work that I feel best showcased the sound design happened in the telephone section. Throughout the section, several fake phones ring and are answered. Because I was running around so frantically answering fake phones, Thanicatt had the idea that he would

program each phone ring to come from a different speaker in the theater, adding to the chaotic nature of the scene. Then, just as the audience begins to feel comfortable, the ringing stops, and directly behind them, they hear the chilling whisper "Wouldst thou like to live deliciously?" This soundbite is quite spine-tingling on its own, however, this impact is enhanced because this is the first time in the piece that the audience experiences sound coming from directly behind them. This was a fairly consistent scare for at least a few audience members every performance and highlights the impact that sound and atmosphere have in audience engagement.

Chapter 5: *Scream Queen*, a Dance in Many Parts



Photo 12 – Pattengill stands, facing camera, holding anatomical heart prop. Photo by Taneen Momeni

5.1 Structure of *Scream Queen*

Scream Queen is structured in what I would consider nine distinct sections. Each section, while maintaining a loose narrative and structural throughline, also stands on its own as an individual act and embodied exploration. These sections are rooted in embodiments of masculine and feminine energies, drag and horror tropes, and personal catharsis while continuing to balance the framework of The Monstrous, The Grotesque, and The Glamorous. The structure of this work was developed with the distinct intention to make the experience of watching it mirror the experience of watching a drag cabaret. Much like a drag show, each section or number as we will call it is unique. At a traditional drag show, every number carries with it a distinct energy, embodiment, and persona as a constantly rotating cast of artists showcase their talents. The audience likely experiences rapid tonal shifts between each drag artist as numbers zip between dancy pop tracks, dramatic spoken word, and campy absurdist performances. The difference in my show is that I have tasked myself with

embodying and performing each number. The intentionally startling transitions act as clear indicators to the audience that a new ideation, intention, and energy is being adopted. My goal in this decision was to capture the feeling that I experience at a drag show: the anticipation of not knowing what happens next, the liveliness of an amalgamation of queer expressions, and the odd sense of joy of having my expectations subverted.

5.2 The Cocoon

The cocoon is our first introduction not only to our central character but also to the world that that character inhabits for the duration of the piece. I knew that the images that I was sharing would be quite visceral, which gave me as the choreographer two options: either throw my audience into the deep end or slowly acquaint them with the space. I chose to veer more into the latter. The space starts quite dark, a slow pulsing begins to activate as a mysterious body bag or cocoon dangles while unknown organism writhes within its blood-splattered membrane. An unknown source of light shines from within, just barely highlighting the silhouette of the creature within.

The physicality of this particular section was one that I didn't have long to explore prior to the performance. Because of the suspended and weight-bearing nature of the cocoon, I was unable to get inside it until the beginning of tech rehearsals. The physicality of this moment was meant to evoke both an awakening and a sense of discomfort. Not unlike the chrysalis of a butterfly or the molting of an insect, the creature must slowly wiggle itself from its confined space.

The cocoon acts as a safe space. Within this space, the creature Is safe from the harmful judgments or fearful looks of the audience. They are unencumbered by the weight of reality, but in the same sense, they are restricted. Restricted in the sense that they are both physically withheld and cradled, but also in that they will never be able to live a full and authentic life within the confines of their safety net. I feel that this reflects heavily on the experience of many queer people. Many will go

large portions of their lives, or the entirety of their lives attempting to assimilate and conform to heteronormative standards of being. While they may be able to successfully avoid the judgment of those around them, they will never be able to live their life and express themselves authentically while feeding into assimilation tactics. The cocoon acts as the metaphorical closet, which, upon leaving, offers a form of birth, rebirth, or metamorphosis.

After some time, the writhing grows from the cocoon, eventually seeing the creature's spiked head pop out. The creature then descends from the cocoon in a somewhat acrobatic fashion, never quite addressing the audience. Having emerged from the cocoon, the creature fixates on the glowing heart. In this instance, the heart is the activator of the space and the primary focus of the movement. The movement of this section is slow, methodical, curious, slinky, and contorted. Many wrist movements are being drawn from Pandanggo[83] techniques learned from a mentor, danah bella. The creature finds itself in uncomfortable positions, always fixated on the light. As the pulsating rhythm shifts to a cacophony of laughter and then a mysterious whisper, the creature is drawn, if not dragged by the heart for it to finally be hung by a hook just above eye level.

This section of the work, despite being one of the less physically demanding or complex choreographies, is one that I felt integral to the work. Beyond the shock factor of the character emerging from the set, this section functions to familiarize the audience with the set, tone, and character of the work. It was important for me that the creature isn't immediately placed in an antagonistic light. While the sight of the creature, particularly in the context of a bloody meat freezer, may be unnerving, he spends the first few minutes of the work in a mindset of curiosity, not violence.

[83] Pandanggo sa Ilaw is a Filipino folk dance also known as the "Dance of Lights". The dance sees performers balancing lit candles on their heads and in their hands.



Photo 13 – Pattengill crosses stage holding glowing anatomical heart. Photo by Taneen Momeni

5.3 Muscle Dance

The Muscle Dance, as I have come to call it, is the least authentic movement section for the creature. This dance occurs at what I would consider to be the moment Shingles recognizes that an active audience is watching him. With their back turned, the audience witnesses an activation. The soft and inquisitive nature that is witnessed in the previous section is now gone as a wider and more domineering posture is adopted. The creature marches towards the upstage before quickly turning its head in the work's first direct acknowledgment of the audience. Shingles then unzips the mouth of their hooded mask, and waves to the audience with direct and fierce eye contact. The creature then crawls forward, similar to an insect or lizard, directly toward the audience, matching the beat of the intense and building music.



Photo 14 – Pattengill crawls towards audience. Photo by Colin Franz

This section signifies a particular shift in how the creature wishes to be seen. The movement of this section is derived from elements of predatory behavior as well as hyper-masculine intimidation tactics. Similar to a predator, particularly one that is acting defensively, Shingles widens their stance in an effort to appear larger and more threatening. They also maintain direct eye contact with the audience, almost as if they are stalking their prey. To appear hyper-masculine, the creature strikes many poses similar to those of bodybuilders, utilizing their puffed sleeves as exaggerated bicep muscles. At this moment, the creature represses its feminine and softer qualities, essentially adopting the violent and monstrous expectations placed on it. While intimidating, this is a defensive tactic that shields the creature from painful judgments. Shingles eliminates the possibility of being truly vulnerable by controlling external perceptions and becoming the villainous monster that he is expected to be. Adding to this is the power dynamic of fear. I would imagine that the thoughts

behind these tactics center around the feeling that "if they fear me, they cannot hurt me". In this sense, the bark is truly bigger than the bite.



Photo 15 – Pattengill poses in a bodybuilder like manner. Photo by Taneen Momeni

We see, however, that this tactic is unsustainable. The creature is living inauthentically, and as the section progresses, the audience witnesses the physical toll that this has on him. Slowly these hyper-masculine postures begin to bubble inside, making the creature feel quite ill. The creature stumbles around attempting to maintain their position of power over the audience but is overwhelmed. They begin to shake rapidly as they remove their mask, revealing the first glimpse of humanity for this character. In a last-ditch effort, they begin to force I into postures previously seen, inevitably ending with a large and interrupting dry heave.

My understanding of this section comes from years of personal repression. In my teenage years as a ballet student, despite being openly gay at the time, I was constantly berated with expectations of fulfilling heteronormative expectations of manhood. I was told constantly that I could never believably be the prince or in love with a woman. I was told that if I wanted to have a career in ballet, I would essentially need to "butch it up", removing any of the flourishes and

whimsicality that made me feel the most alive while dancing. Now trust me, I understand the humor in asking a male ballet dancer to be less effeminate, however, I feel that a majority of non-ballet dancers would be surprised at how deeply tethered ballet as an art form is to traditional perceptions of gender and conservatism. For some time, I fed into the desires of my mentors, doing everything I could not to stand out as the Houston Ballet's resident sissy boy. Much like Shingles, however, this was unsustainable. I was miserable. I had essentially squandered and stamped out not only what made me love to dance, but what made me unique, all for the sake of assimilating with the culture around me.



Photo 16, 17 – Pattengill strikes bodybuilder like poses. Photos by Colin Franz.

I see this not only in myself but also in the world around me. Repression is only ever a temporary fix to the solution, which leads to an inevitable conclusion of self-loathing. So often the most repressed are the most outspoken. We see this as anti-LGBT legislators and elected officials

are caught cruising[84] in men's restrooms.[85] Just this last year the Republican National Convention was reported to be such a hotspot on the gay hookup app, Grindr, that it reportedly overworked and shut down the company's Milwaukee servers.[86] I say this not to shame or "out" these individuals, but to acknowledge the presence of this defensive tactic in our everyday lives. The repressed mindset often leans towards the belief that "If I am actively anti-gay, I will never be perceived as one myself. These people, much like our character of Shingles, want you to perceive them as big, scary, unflinching, and for that matter, heterosexual, so that you cannot see them as the vulnerable and scared individuals that they are. While this tactic may work temporarily, they will never experience an authentic life and will ultimately find themselves trapped in the unfulfilled persona that they themselves have manufactured.

5.4 The Retching

A violent gag acts as the first of many stark interruptions in the piece. The music that has been pounding is met with a wall of silence. The creature is left, stunned and vulnerable, with the power dynamic yet again shifting in favor of the observer. Shingles develops a more thrown movement aesthetic, tossing, releasing, utilizing repetition and momentum to take up space on stage. Ever present, however, is the continued need to vomit. The creature, despite un-adopting the hyper-masculine and toxic embodiment, still feels its presence eating away at his being. In order for there to be true healing, there must be a purge.

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[84] Cruising is a term, particularly for gay men, that means searching in public locations in an effort to have likely anonymous sex with other men. This arose as a practice for queer people in times where queerness was more taboo or potentially illegal, but is still practiced today by both out and closeted queer people.
[85] I will not divulge the personal identities of these individuals, but you are welcome to look them up. There are more than you'd expect.
[86] Boswell, Josh. "Exclusive Republican National Convention Dubbed 'The Grindr Superbowl' after Gay Dating App Crashed Due to Spike in Users in Milwaukee." Daily Mail Online, July 18, 2024. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13649291/republican-national-convention-grindr-dating-app-crash-milwaukee.html.

As many queer people experience, myself included, repression, self-doubt, and self-loathing are lingering emotions, which lay dormant in the psyche and take a great deal of time and care to uproot. This manifests in the phenomenon of internalized homophobia. I feel in this section that the creature experiences physical manifestations of his own repression which slowly poisons and sickens him from the inside out. The creature will not heal until it has released these self-loathing thoughts.



Photo 18 – Pattengill, mid retch. Photo by Colin Franz

As the movement section moves forward, we see the creature begin to retch more and more. What was at one point a singular dry heave becomes a flurry of tossed limbs and constant upheaval. This culminates in a moment of stillness. In a deep plié, Shingles takes a moment to breathe. Slowly these breaths build before she dons an evil glare. It appears almost as if the monstrous personality is coming back. Shingles pries open their jaw, sticking their tongue out in an extreme and horrifying manner before finally… oh wait, someone is calling, I better pick up the phone.

This movement section began its conception long before any ideation of this concert. I have always had a volatile gag reflex. From a young age, I have consistently had issues with gagging and

potentially vomiting from textures, smells, anger, excitement, anxiety, and illnesses, once even famously vomiting from an ear infection. I found, however, in my first year at UMD, that I was able to trigger this gag reflex at will. As an artist who loves elements of shock, filth, and subversion, the harnessing of this ability is a tool that I felt could enhance my choreographic arsenal. Through this, I have developed a particular retching technique that allows me to gag on command without needing to be ill. I will walk you through this technique now.

5.4.2 The Pattengill Retching Technique:

Step 1: Make sure that your stomach is relatively empty. I do not recommend starving yourself, however, I would not attempt this technique less than an hour after eating or drinking. Remember that we want to trigger the gag reflex without expelling our stomachs.

Step 2: Take a small gulp of air, almost like you would if you were attempting to burp on command. I try not to swallow too much air, as this can cause pain in the stomach or unwanted bumping as opposed to gagging. I also try to hold the air in my esophagus, just above the sternum rather than allowing it to sink into my stomach.

Step 3: After swallowing a small pocket of air, you are going to want to think deeply about the presence of your tongue. You want to think of it almost as a foreign object in your mouth, feeling every muscle as it slides across your teeth and your soft palette. You may find this thought process quite uncomfortable and even disgusting, but that is okay. The more you train your mind into believing that your tongue is unnatural and tap into the sensations we experience every day but ignore, the easier it will be for your body to reject it, resulting in a gag.

Step 4: At this point, you have swallowed some air and become painfully aware of the presence of your tongue. Now, you are going to attempt to swallow your tongue from back to front. What I mean by this is that you should think about pushing your tongue, at its base and not its tip, in the direction of your throat. Attempting to swallow the tip of your tongue can be a choking hazard, so

avoid this at all costs. I prefer to keep the tip of my tongue curled into the floor of my mouth. This is a strange sensation, but with some practice, it should be accomplishable. Once you begin to swallow your tongue, your gag reflex should activate in an effort to expel the oxygen and tongue from your throat.

Tip: When I was first teaching myself to do this, I found it helpful to tickle or stroke my throat in an upward motion with my hands. I find this helps activate your throat as well as pull focus towards the intended area.

Stage 5: Congratulations! You have now wretched successfully and can move on to completing your performance or getting out of work early.

5.5 Telephone Section

A telephone of unknown origin rings. The creature, seemingly embarrassed that the phone would interrupt his performance, shifts to the most personable and pedestrian demeanor we see throughout the duration of the work. Upon answering the imaginary phone in a pantomimed manner, a familiar voice echoes through the space asking, "What's your favorite scary movie?" The clip derives from Wes Craven's 1991 horror classic *Scream* (1996)[87]. The opening scene of the film sees a young and I Drew Barrymore making popcorn and settling to watch a horror movie. Barrymore answers a ringing phone only to find a mysterious voice on the other end. This voice, which begins flirty and curious, soon reveals itself to be the voice of the sadistic masked murderer Ghostface toying with his prey.

Scream, at the time of its release, was a standout of the genre. While on the surface *Scream* appears to be a slasher film typical of the 80's and early 90's, falling into many standard archetypes and plotlines of the time, *Scream* actually exists as a commentary of the slasher genre as a whole. The

[87] Craven, Wes. *Scream,* Miramax, December 1996. See Appendix C.

film sees the titular killer as a horror-obsessed nerd who begins enacting his own fantasies of being a horror icon as well as victims of said killer who use their knowledge of slasher tropes as a means of survival. *Scream* in many ways is a horror movie about horror movies, and the opening sequence is just as much a part of it. While many contribute the trope of the slasher victim speaking with the killer on the phone directly to the *Scream* franchise, we actually see this being rooted in horror for decades prior. The trope, which has been dubbed, "The call is coming from inside the house" can be tracked to urban legends of the 1960s in stories such as "The Babysitter"[88] and is seen in classic horror films such as *Black Christmas* (1974)[89] and *When a Stranger Calls* (1979)[90]. This is one of many examples of how the film, *Scream,* showcases its reverence of the horror genre by actively feeding into long-standing tropes of the genre while still providing a fresh and unique perspective.

An additional element of Influence for me in this section Is what I would call a drag mega mix. The mega mix, as we have come to call it, allows a drag performer to inhabit a variety of emotions and embodiments while perhaps weaving together a throughline, theme, or story to their number. While some mega mixes showcase witty transitions and comedic bits, others utilize stark and instantaneous shifts in an effort to surprise and excite an audience. An example that showcases both techniques is Sasha Colby's 2012 Miss Continental[91] Talent Performance.[92] In the span of five minutes, Colby takes the audience through a series of six unique tracks and a number of original recordings. While her transition between "Royal T" by the Crookers and "Drama" by Club 69 is nearly seamless, showcasing impressive audio mixing techniques, other transitions, such as her shift into Azaelia Banks' "212" utilizes the drag trope that I will call "Whip-Crack.mp3". While I am

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[88] Stockton, Chrissy. "The Creepy History of the 'call Is Coming from inside the House' Trope." Thought Catalog, August 27, 2021. https://thoughtcatalog.com/christine-stockton/2021/07/the-call-is-coming-from-inside-the-house-horror-trope-is-based-on-a-sady-true-story/.
[89] See Appendix C.
[90] See Appendix C.
[91] Miss Continental is a drag pageant, not unlike a more mainstream beauty pageant, which is held annually since 1980. Winners of this pageant are often considered to be among the most elite of the field.
[92] See Appendix B for performance clip and artist information.

unable to find resources that back the presence of this trope in the field of drag, it is one that I experience and see regularly in the field. The practice sees a performer interrupted almost instantaneously by a loud and quick sound effect, most often the sound of a whip crack, but also seen with sounds like glass shattering, explosions, record scratches, or any other jarring sound. This sound effect then prompts a direct shift in both the music and the performance. In this performance, I use the sound of a telephone ringing in an effort to capture the same effect. It is these instantaneous and sometimes jarring transitional moments that capture the energy of drag as a unique art form, and what shaped many of my musical and tonal shifts throughout this section as well as the work as a whole.

No performance showcases this energy and shapes this section of the work more than Lypsinka's legendary telephone mix[93]. Drag artist, Lypsinka is known for popularizing the use of spoken word lip-syncs in her campy and wild old Hollywood reenactments. In particular, I feel that her performance of her telephone mix on "The Joan Rivers Show" is one of the most influential to my artistic being. The performance sees Lypsinka walking out as any other guest would on a talk show. As she sits down for her interview with Joan, she is interrupted by a mysterious phone call. Seemingly embarrassed, she walks to the other end of the stage and picks up an imaginary phone to great comedic effect. She is then bombarded by several phone calls from all directions, answering each with a lip-sync to lines from iconic Hollywood actresses such as Elizabeth Taylor, Joan Crawford, and Faye Dunaway. Now, if you are familiar with the telephone section of my choreography, you are likely noticing some repeating patterns. While I utilize tracks from horror icons, I am effectively utilizing Lypsinka's performance as a template or score for my own choreography. I am not shy to this inspiration, even using some of the same soundbites as Lypsinka, as I am in awe of this artist, and I seek to pay homage to her contribution to queer art in this

[93] See Appendix B for performance clip and artist information.

moment. What I love so much about this performance is her dedication to subversion, her use of wit and understanding of popular culture, her effortless shift in tone and posture, as well as her subtle but fully activated performance. Just as she subverted the expectations of a talk show interview, I sought to subvert the expectations of my audience. Just as the performance begins to reach its peak intensity, I wanted to bring an unexpected but welcome respite of joy, humor, and levity, while still continuing to develop my character.



Photo 19 – Pattengill holds an imaginary phone with an angered expression. Photo by Taneen Momeni

This section effectively acts as my personal adaptation of both the "The call is coming from inside the house" trope and drag mega mixes while also showcasing my love and knowledge of the genre as a whole. The section sees the creature running around the stage answering imaginary phone call after imaginary phone call, adopting a variety of postures and demeanors as they lip-sync several classic horror soundbites. The soundbites vary from genre-defining moments of triumph to spine-chilling threats, and occasional bouts of comedic nonsense. The creature's demeanor rapidly shifts between tender, sassy, fearful, and irreverent, taking the audience on an emotional journey using 18 distinct soundbites from 16 different pieces of media.

The telephone section contains soundbites from the following pieces of media in the order that they are listed:[94]

- Lypsinka's Telephone Mix (1993)
- *Scream* (1996)
- *Night of the Living Dead* (1968)
- *Pet Sematary* (1989)
- Lypsinka's Telephone Mix (1993)
- *It* (1990)
- *The Fly* (1986)
- *Bridesmaids* (2011)
- *When a Stanger Calls* (1979)
- *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984)
- *Hereditary* (2018)
- *The Witch* (2015)
- *Friday the 13th* (1980)
- *Alien* (1979)
- *Scream* (1996)
- "Telephone" by Lady Gaga (2009)
- *Pearl* (2022)
- *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)

Understandably, I can see how this may bring forward some questions surrounding originality, referentiality, and intellectual property. Some may see Lypsinka's performance, and call into question my decision to pull so heavily from it. I understand why my implementation of this moment has been pulled into question, but I believe this to be a continued practice regarding the referential nature of drag. As I mentioned previously, drag, like all art, is inherently referential. More than anything, drag is a constant regurgitation, satire, and reinterpretation of popular culture. While many artists choose to believe that their work comes from some form of divine inspiration, the culture of drag is one that says, "I love this piece of art, how can I make it mine, and make it better". For me, while I could have been more abstract in my interpretation of Lypsinka's famous act, I felt that changing it any further would have been disrespectful to her legacy as a queer icon and trendsetter. Thanks to Lypsinka, drag artists have been lip-syncing to spoken word tracks, and using

[94] See Appendix C for information on each of the listed films.

fake phone calls to interrupt their performances for decades. This is not an attempt to steal Lypsinka's act, but as a love letter and an opportunity to showcase a queer elder whose impact was fundamental in developing an artform I love, and whose name is more often than not forgotten in the current drag climate. More than anything, I wanted to keep the legacy of an artist I cherish, alive.

5.6 The Conjuring

While certainly less abrasive, another distinct tonal shift occurs following the words of *Sunset Boulevard*'s Norma Desmond. At this moment, Shingles directly addresses and acknowledges the audience with the line "... and all those wonderful people out there in the dark." A tension begins to build in the creature's demeanor. Each of their muscles tightens as they gain a slight twitch and almost fold in on themselves. Are they being suffocated, manipulated by an external force, experiencing bodily changes, or simply feeling the immense weight of being truly witnessed for the first time? Just as their body reaches a level of peak discomfort, a skipping track of the 1938 classic, "Jeepers Creepers" by Paul Whiteman's Swing Wing and The Modernaires begins to play. A forced and pained smile washes across the creature's face, as they wave to the crowd of squirming witnesses. The music ceases its skipping, and yet again, Shingles instantaneously sheds all tension and adopts an almost vaudevillian performance style.

This scene for me, particularly in its latter half, acts as a catalyst and indicator of greater change for Shingles. We see as he begins to come into his own power, adopting movement that feels more reminiscent of my own personal sense of flow and aesthetic, a further mirroring of the journey that this character and I share amongst ourselves. This shift is happening in a moment where the creature holds a deep and somewhat precarious lunge in a forced arch. This is a moment of intense focus for me as the performer as I attempt to push my physical limits and expand this already difficult balance. It is in this moment of the work in which the audience washes away from my mind,

where even a brief moment of hardship and focus allows me to be entirely present with my mind and my body. I believe this to be the moment in which Shingles makes an active decision to live freely, to experience joy, and to let go of the oppressive gaze of normative society.

I call this moment The Conjuring because it is the moment in which a queer person begins to curate a life for I that is fruitful and authentic whether it be through personal expression, adopting a chosen family, or any other change in life that allows one to be as they truly are. I said previously that this movement section feels the truest to my personal expression. It is articulate, ornamental, grotesque, and beautiful, a style which I have affectionately coined as dancing like a haunted tree. While it may be one of the less flashy movement vocabularies of the work, it tethers me to the purpose of the piece as a whole and reminds me of the unmatched euphoria of learning how I wanted to dance as opposed to how others wanted me to dance. It is this epiphanic moment that I sought to capture, and whether this was legible to an audience or not, it functioned as the anchor of the work for me as a performer and maker.

5.7 The Incantation

The Incantation is the largest movement section of the work. It easily takes up the greatest amount of space and energy, with the intended goal of reaching a level of deep exhaustion. The movement vocabulary of this scene is derived from one exploration, choreography as a form of spell casting. This idea first sparked my interest from its use in the Dario Argento film *Suspiria* (1977)[95] and its 2018 remake by Luca Guadagnino[96]. Both films fill the niche genre of "dance horror" films, following a dance company run by a coven of witches. The witches use their dancers to enact "choreographies" which are actually rituals and spells used to grant them more power or to enact harm upon their enemies. Guadagnino's remake, in particular, had a formative impact on me as a

[95] See Appendix C.
[96] Guadagnino, Luca. Jalet, Damien. Suspiria. Amazon Prime Video, January 1st, 2019. https://www.amazon.com/Suspiria-Jessica-Harper/dp/B08CS5HFKN.

dancer and dance maker with its featured choreographies by Belgian choreographer Damien Jalet. The visceral and intense choreographies, which were developed from Jalet's previous work *les médusées*,[97] were some of the first dance works that I had seen used in the context of horror. The choreographies were unconcerned with being traditionally beautiful and accessed a level of grit that at the time I had experienced very little of.

One scene in particular sees the protagonist of the film, played by Dakota Johnson, performing a solo unaware that she is actually casting a powerful spell which leads to the death of fellow dancer, Olga. We as the audience see that Johnson's movements directly connect to the physical torture enacted on Olga despite their presence in entirely separate rooms. With each slice of Johnson's arm, Olga is thrown or slammed down, with each circle of the wrist Olga's bones are contorted and folded in until she can only be described as a human knot. This absolutely gruesome scene not only showcases the potential that contemporary dance has in modern horror, but also acts as the clearest example of correlation and causation in Jalet's attempts to cast spells. While I don't have access to the magic of film, nor another performer to showcase said acts of spellcasting on, I developed the movement for this scene with the intention that every movement is a carefully crafted ritual in an effort to create metamorphic change.

[97] Jalet, Damien. les médusées, Louvre Museum, Paris, France, February, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeSdm1aCsGw&rco=1.



Photo 20 – Pattengill stands one arm, and one leg raised. Photo by Taneen Momeni

The movement of this section oscillates from articulate and sustained, to thrown and syncopated. There are moments of exertion initiated by sharp audible exhalations. As the scene progresses, movement gradually becomes larger and more intense as the creature becomes more and more exhaustive. This to me speaks to the sacrifice of change. For someone to make meaningful change in their life, they will often have to make sacrifices. In the context of the piece, the audience witnesses as the spell holds a physical toll on Shingles, draining her energy, but in the context of reality, we see queer people detaching from their loved ones, unlearning societal and religious oppression or even sacrificing their ability to live homogeneously with society in an effort to live authentically. While it may be seen as cliché, it is more often than not that one must survive hardship to achieve fulfillment.

5.8 And Then He Kissed Me

"And Then He Kissed Me" is a song that has stuck with me since my childhood, and has always informed my sense of love, romance, and the fantasies we hold for ourselves. My obsession with this song began when I was probably around 12 years old, and I watched the film *Adventures in*

Babysitting (1987)[98]. The opening scene of the film sees Chris, played by Elisabeth Shue in her bedroom. She lip-syncs and frantically dances around the room listening to "And Then He Kissed Me" by the Crystals while she gets ready for a date with a boy she is madly in love with. While the remainder of the plot of the film has no bearing on this paper or any of my work for that matter, this particular scene has always stuck with me. There is such a joy in Shue's performance. This is a joy that I know all too well, dancing and lip-syncing in my own room while fantasizing about a life that could be. This fantasy, along with an escape from reality, and the whimsical performances that we may put on when no one is watching are exactly what I sought to capture in this section.

Moments after I drag my exhausted body off stage, I emerge from the black curtain in a pair of pumps. With the Crystals acting as my muses, I float and lip-sync across the stage in a bright and playful manner that acts in contrast to the heavy and exhaustive state of the previous section. As the song progresses, I gradually begin to remove costume items from the body bags on set and in almost a reverse burlesque number, slowly beginning to adopt each article of clothing into what will be my final aesthetic transformation. First, a rhinestoned ribcage, followed by a long skirt, pearls, and finally, opera-length red velvet gloves. The movement is cheeky, relaxed, and not unlike the movement used for what drag artists would call a "tipping number". As the song reaches its final chorus, I address the audience head-on, assuming poses reminiscent of girl groups of the 60's such as The Supremes.

The lip-sync number is the artistic and embodied representation of my ideal forms practice. This moment allows Shingles to become something that they wish to be or see themselves in a way that they wish to be seen. In this way, my persona adopts a persona of its own. He wishes to be seen, not as a monster, not as a freak or a fool, but as a queen. There is a yearning for extravagance,

[98] See Appendix C.

abundance, notoriety, love, and celebrity. In many ways, I feel that their only perception of love is adoration from a crowd of screaming fans.

This section, to me, acts as a major shift for our protagonist. Not only are we seeing a physical transformation with the addition of the extravagant costume, but also a dramatic contrast in tone. Prior to this moment, Shingles is in their heaviest and most exhaustive state, yet they return as though none of the prior narrative has occurred. In this sense, the section acts as a reintroduction, or perhaps a do-over for the character. Still to this day, I wonder about this transition. I ask myself whether the conjuring and spellcasting of previous sections have allowed Shingles to metamorphose into her final form, or if the reality that the audience experiences from this point of the piece to the end is a construct of his imagination? I wonder if the magical and glamorous world we end up in is just as imagined as the fantasy Shue brings to her lovestruck teenage character. This is not intended to be a raincloud on the outcome of the work, but as a reminder that for many queer people, fantasy is as close as one can get to experiencing their truest and most expressive self.

5.9 Pose Beat

The section, which I have decided to call the pose beat section, was admittedly the section that was completed last. I knew that I wanted to end the work in a more grounded place, so I knew that I was looking to build a section that brought energy to the crowd. Beyond this, I wanted to create a section that emphasized the tenet of glamour. At this point in the work, I had completed my aesthetic transformation to one of extravagance and it was important that I allow myself to revel in said extravagance as this physical transformation does not denote the end of my journey, nor the journey of the work itself.

In an effort to exemplify fierceness, extravagance, and glamour, I looked to ballroom for Inspiration. I speak to this, not only as an academic but as an embodied practitioner as well. In 2019, I had the opportunity to briefly learn the inner workings of vogue-femme from the Legendary Icon,

Marquis Revlon.[99] From him, I learned the fundamental vogue movements, the inner workings of ballroom culture, as well as competed in a ball myself, being graciously offered the nickname of "White Rabbit". While I was offered to join a Haus, and further my relationship with the ballroom community, my time with them was cut short by my education and the 2020 global pandemic.

My ballroom experience, while limited, has shaped my personal relationship with gesture, flow, and improvisational performance practices. As a former ballet dancer, having at that point in time very little relationship with modern and postmodern dance, I had never experienced the use of improvisational scores in performance. Ballroom, as it is typically structured, acts as an improvisation. Ball categories act as improvisational scores where particular criteria must be met, but the method with which those criteria are met is up to the interpretation of the performer. Performers regularly riff off of audience feedback, read their fellow competitors, and allow their persona or fantasy to take the wheel of the performance. I feel as though this completely altered my perception of performance, choreography, and relationship with the audience. I no longer view my choreographic scores as entirely set at any time. While there are certainly phrases and sections of choreography that feel more set than others, there is always room left for real-time adjustments according to physical, emotional, and artistic intuitions. This mindset allowed me to witness my choreography, not as a set of movements that must be executed perfectly each time, but as a score that balanced hard-set rules with play, allowing each performance to be unique and alive.

The movement vocabulary of this section Is shaped and inspired by vogue hand performance as well as waaking. These styles rely on fast and fluid hand movements: fluttering, waving, rolling the wrists, and framing the face through symmetric and asymmetric poses. Complex and ornamental hand movements have become somewhat of a staple of my choreographic work,

[99] Marquis Clanton is currently referred to as International Icon Marquis Revlon as of the time of writing this. See Appendix B.

however, the framework of Waaking and vogue techniques helped me unlock a tone of fierceness, poise, and confidence that my more creature-like movements regularly do not inhabit. These queer art forms yet again offer a space in which the other is made to feel powerful. One in which the most outlandish, and outspoken are treated, not as freaks, but as royalty.

5.10 A Swan Song

The final act of *Scream Queen* sees our titular character enact a final swan song. In a moment of quiet, sitting far downstage, Shingles is met with a surprise. A mysterious red glove, which is the only appearance of another body on stage throughout the entirety of the piece, hands off a standing microphone. Shingles breathes heavily into the microphone, speaking an unknown language through what can be described as a forced whisper. They begin to stumble their way towards centerstage with the microphone. As they reach the center, a calm and confident energy washes over them. Leaning into the microphone in a posture not dissimilar to that of Billie Holiday or other jazz singers of the 40's, Shingles delivers a deep and bellowing echo throughout the space, a cavernous and spine-tingling vocal chant reverberates throughout the room. The voice being used falls somewhere between a moan, a screech, and a song. Soon, in another forced and hollow cry, the words to Marilyn Monroe's "I Want to Be Loved by You" can be vaguely made out. As Shingles reaches their final held note, a rain of blood-red sequins falls from the sky and the lights fade. A reverberation still haunts the space. The performance is over.

The vocal technique used throughout this section Is one that I have been practicing for many years. A vocal fry is a sound that occurs in the lowest vocal register and is caused by the relaxing of the vocal cords. This creaky vocal register is most often associated with the stereotypical Californian accent of the Kardashians and associated with disinterest. Beyond the stereotype of a relaxed and easy-going resident of America's West Coast, vocal fry has also been used frequently

within the horror genre. Whether it is the croaky moan of the spirits in *Ju-On: The Grudge (2002)*[100], or Danny Torrance's iconic "Red Rum" line in *The Shining (1980)*[101], vocal fry, used at its most extreme, has regularly been used to indicate otherworldliness, evil, and corruption of innocence. First introduced to vocal fry techniques by composer Maxim Brekhman in 2018, the use of otherworldly vocals intrigued me for their potential to abstract form, convey a degree of inhumanness, and profoundly impact a viewing experience. While I had used vocal fry techniques in previous choreographic projects, this was the first instance in which I used vocal fry as a form of singing.



Photo 21 – Assistant Stage Manager, Chiso Obichere tosses microphone to Pattengill. Photo by Colin Franz

The inspiration behind this moment of the performance is largely inspired by Akemi Takeya's *Schrei X8*[102]. The work, which I witnessed during my time at the Impulstanz festival in 2023, is easily one of the most profound and impactful works I have experienced as an audience member. The performance sees Takeya, who was at the time in her early 60's, enacting a ritual in which she

[100] See Appendix B.
[101] See Appendix B.
[102] Takeya, Akemi. "Schrei X8." Vienna, Austria, July 23, 2022.

contacts artists who have influenced and inspired her over the years. In many ways, I feel as though I am enacting similar rituals throughout this work. While Takeya directly names and showcases her influences within the performance, I too am activating embodiments of artists who have significantly influenced my artistic voice, Takeya included. My "ideal forms" practice is enacted beyond abstract embodiments. This practice materializes in the depth of my sustained lunge, the sass of my lip-sync, and the articulation of my scapula; each a micro embodiment in which I inhabit gestures, postures, and patterns through a fantasy of becoming. From mentors to friends, artists, drawings, and conceptual bodies, this work acts as a celebration and amalgamation of the forces material and immaterial that have granted me the privilege of learning who I truly am.

Takeya closes her performance with a song. As a ballgown made from silicone tubing lowers onto her from above, Takeya serenades the audience with Operatic vocals. At the same instance, a Rube Goldberg-esque mechanism squeezes lemons whose juices then flow through the transparent gown like an IV drip. While she may not be a classical vocalist, the audience, myself included, is brought to tears. There is a sense of both vulnerability and accomplishment. Takeya bares her soul and I, having witnessed her journey, feel pride, adoration, and empathy for all that has come before. I structured this work largely with this feeling in mind. Having never previously structured a solo performance at this length and scale, and not necessarily certain where to start, my loose memory of Takeya's performance that night became a blueprint for structure and tone. It only felt fitting that the concluding moment of *Scream Queen* mirrors the conclusion of *Schrei X8*. While the purpose of each of their swan songs holds a different story and weight, I feel that each is a profoundly impactful and essential moment for their respective work. Within each of these moments, the protagonist directly addresses the audience in a plea to be seen, heard, and understood in an act that balances desperation, rigorous effort, and cathartic release. As a performer, this moment was always the most spiritually rewarding. I felt an immense sense of pride and accomplishment knowing the effort and

physical exertion it took to reach this place. I stand there, in my blood-soaked drag regalia, bellowing my most unnerving vocal monstrosities, and I look out to a crowd of faces both cherished and unknown. I can't properly sing a lick, but none of that matters; I have never felt so beautiful.



Photo 22 – Pattengill stands center stage in full regalia. Photo by Taneen Momeni.

A Moment to Reflect

It has now been a little over four months since I last performed *Scream Queen*. I sit here now on a sun-soaked couch, a small dog sleeps on my lap, and the wind whistles through my back patio. As I approach the end of my degree, I ask myself, "What is next?" I sit, grateful for the lifelong friendships I have built, and acknowledging the privilege that I have had to experience a community that has accepted and supported me so unconditionally. In the back of my mind, I recognize an all too familiar feeling. Much like attending a new school for the first time, I hold with me an anxiety that I won't find connection, fit in, or be loved. I see the rest of my life ahead of me, and admittedly it feels a little like I am standing on the edge of a diving board. I was once told by a mentor of mine that I dance to make sense of a world that can't quite make sense of me. As much as *Scream Queen* is about the glitz, the gore, and the drama, it has always been a tool for me to gain a better understanding of who I am in this world and how I operate within it. I recognize that I, like many queer people, yearn to truly be seen and understood. I may not know what life has in store for me past the month of May, but I stand confident after the work that I have put in over the last three years that I can make and find connection in the most unusual places. My safe space may be drag queens, and serial killers, but the project is about so much more than that. *Scream Queen* is a reminder that no matter how outcasted and misunderstood you are made to feel, that your uniqueness and your otherness is your power. We as queer people are made to feel like monsters because our willingness to reject conformity threatens heteronormative standards of being. I was recently at a drag show and a queen brought forth some words of inspiration that I will now share with you. I ask now for all the ghouls, the gays, and anyone who doesn't fit the mold of normalcy, live loudly, authentically, and truthfully. You may never know who you inspire, but I guarantee you remember the first time you saw a visibly queer person on the street, and your life was changed forever.

- Peter Pattengill (Shingles)

Appendix A
Terminology and Culturally Specific Vernacular

BDSM: Short for bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadism and masochism. An umbrella term for an erotic and often taboo sexual subculture.

B Movie: Low budget motion pictures created to accompany or act as sequels to more popular mainstream productions. The often zany and messy nature of these films has led to many of them becoming cult classic films.

Club Kid: An artistic and fashion movement originated by young queer club-goers in New York during the late 80's and early 90's. Club Kids regularly showcased outrageous fashion and makeup, threw wild parties, and generally acted in opposition to societal norms. Notable members include Michael Alig, James St. James, and Amanda Lepore.

Cruising: A term, particularly for gay men, that means searching in public locations in an effort to have anonymous sex with other men. This arose as a practice for queer people in times where queerness was more taboo or potentially illegal but is still practiced today by both out and closeted queer people.

Final Girl: The "final girl" is a horror archetype which is typically a female lead of a horror film who survives until the end of the film and is actively involved with the final confrontation of the killer.

Glamazon: A portmanteau combining the terms glamorous and amazon in reference to the ancient Amazonian warrior women of Greek myth.

Passing: a term used in the LGBT+ community to refer to someone who is perceived as the way that they identify, particularly in relation to gender and the perception of being cisgender. While this terminology is important to note, it is also necessary to note that it is outdated and inappropriate to utilize in present day scenarios.

Reading: A queer vernacular observation, similar to the more heteronormative, roast. Reading is a way of calling out or insulting another person in a particularly quick witted, sassy, and humorous way. This is akin to throwing shade or being shady.

Scream Queen: A play on the term, "screen queen", a scream queen is a title attributed to actresses who are particularly known for their roles in horror films. Scream queens are typically young, attractive, and known for their screams.

TERF: A trans-exclusionary radical feminist, or TERF, is a member of the Gender-Critical Feminist movement. TERF's center many of their beliefs around white feminism while perceiving identities under the trans umbrella as an active threat towards women

Tipping Number: A colloquial drag term to reference a performance in which the artist collects a large amount of cash tips. These numbers differentiate themselves from other drag performances that may not give the artist a chance to collect tips because they are too physically involved. Tipping numbers are typically slower and offer respite from other high energy numbers.

Appendix B
Referenced Drag Artists and Queer Icons

***I have offered this appendix in an effort to share and spread the work of fellow queer artists who have influenced and inspired this work. I have provided Instagram profiles as well as video clips in hopes that I can spread their influence even further.**

***Pronouns are offered for artists who have publicly provided preferred pronouns. Keep in mind that some artists may have different preferred pronouns in and out of drag.**

Amanda Lepore (She/Her): Transgender model, singer, and performance artist. Known for her signature pinup aesthetic and love of plastic surgery, Lepore is a former Club Kid and staple of metropolitan nightlife.

Instagram: @amandalepore https://www.instagram.com/amandalepore/

The Boulet Brothers: American alternative drag duo and nightlife promoters. Swanthula and Dracmorda Boulet are best known for their horror themed drag events and for hosting *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula.*

Instagram: @bouletbrothers https://www.instagram.com/bouletbrothers/?hl=en
Dragula Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1yIZIsYzyI

Chappell Roan (She/Her): American popstar and Grammy Award winning artist. Roan has quickly gained notoriety as an openly Lesbian drag queen emerging into mainstream pop music.

Instagram: @chappellroan https://www.instagram.com/chappellroan/
Lollapalooza Performance clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t-QsFIc-pg

Dahli (They/He): Non-binary drag artist, and musician. Dahli is known for their clown inspired androgynous aesthetic and for winning the fourth season of *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula.*

Instagram: @thedahli https://www.instagram.com/thedahli/

Divine: Self-proclaimed "Queen of Filth" and stage persona of Harris Glenn Milstead. Divine was best known for her friendship with queer filmmaker and fellow Baltimore native John Waters, starring in many of his films including *Hairspray* (1988) and *Pink Flamingos* (1972). Divine passed away in 1988 at the age of forty-two.

Archival Instagram: @divineofficial https://www.instagram.com/divineofficial/
Divine in *Pink Flamingos* (1972): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTOWIMJkKpc

Drag Couenne: Belgian alternative drag artist. Couenne is known for their androgynous and experimental aesthetic as well as being the first winner of *Drag Race Belgique*.

Instagram: @dragcouenne https://www.instagram.com/dragcouenne/?hl=en

Elvira (She/Her): Stage name of actress, comedian, and dancer, Cassandra Peterson. Elvira is a television host and character known for her campy and innuendo filled commentary on late-night horror films. Peterson has in recent years opened up about being a queer woman.

Instagram: @therealelvira https://www.instagram.com/therealelvira/

Envy Peru (She/Her): Peruvian born and Holland based drag queen. Peru is known for her makeup skills, winning the first season of Drag Race Holland, and acting as head judge of *Make Up Your Mind.*

Instagram: @missenvyperu https://www.instagram.com/missenvyperu/
Hosting clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qiapei8FTQ4

James St. James (He/Him): Author, television personality, and founding Club Kid. James Clark, A.K.A. James St. James, is best known for writing "Disco Bloodbath", a memoir that chronicled his life in the rise of Club Kid culture as well as the gruesome murder of Angel Melendez by Michael Alig. "Disco Bloodbath" was rereleased as "Party Monster" and made into a feature film of the same name, starring Macaulay Culkin in 2003.

Instagram: @jamesstjames1 https://www.instagram.com/jamesstjames1/?hl=en
Interview clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikhoqfeiNXU

Jazell Barbie Royale (She/Her): Florida based drag queen, singer, and transgender activist. Royale is best known for winning the Miss Continental pageant in 2016, winning the Miss International Queen pageant in 2019, and competing on the drag queen singing competition, *Queen of the Universe.*

Instagram: @jazellbarbieroyale https://www.instagram.com/jazellbarbieroyale/
He Loves Me 2 Performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1Y791Pq68A&t=313s

José Esteban Muñoz (He/Him): Cuban American queer theorist and scholar. Muñoz is remembered greatly for his contributions to queer scholarly work including his books, *Disidentifications* (1999), *Cruising Utopia* (2009), and the posthumously released *The Sense of Brown* (2020). Muñoz passed away in 2013 at the age of forty-six.

Queer utopianism discussion: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHLxmCe4GpI

King Molasses (They/Them): Washington DC based drag king and performance artist. Molasses uses drag as an act of resistance, and an opportunity to showcase Black-American and Nigerian masculine aesthetics and embodiments. Molasses has been awarded DC's best drag king three years in a row.

Instagram: @kingmolasses https://www.instagram.com/kingmolasses/

Lady Bunny (She/Her): American drag queen, comedian, DJ, and nightlife personality. A drag icon, Bunny is known for her signature style, crass humor, and longtime friendship/working relationship with RuPaul. Bunny is also the founder of the annual Wigstock Drag Festival.

Instagram: @official_lady_bunny https://www.instagram.com/official_lady_bunny/

Landon Cider (He/Him): American drag king and tattoo artist. Cider is considered to be amongst the best working drag kings, and was the winner of *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula,* Season 3.

Instagram: @landoncider https://www.instagram.com/landoncider/

Leigh Bowery (He/Him): Australian born and UK based designer, club promoter, and performance artist. Bowery was most known for his outlandish makeup and costuming as well as his influence on queer subcultural fashion. Bowery passed away in 1994 at the age of thirty-three.

Archival Instagram: @leighbowery https://www.instagram.com/leighbowery/?hl=en
Tate Modern exhibition preview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L60jmJ6fMBA

Loma Prietta: San Francisco based drag queen. Prieta is known for her comedic and campy character-based performances.

Instagram: @thelomaprietta https://www.instagram.com/thelomaprietta/?hl=en
Mr. Krabs performance: https://www.instagram.com/p/C9ftHKgy0or/?hl=en

Lypsinka: Drag persona of American drag queen, and comedian John Epperson. Lypsinka is known for her groundbreaking lip-syncing skills as well as her intricately crafted performance mixes. It is safe to say that modern drag lip sync culture is heavily influenced by Lypsinka's work and career.

Instagram: @lypsinka https://www.instagram.com/lypsinka/?hl=en
Joan Rivers Performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAEwvMS1rxI

Marquis Revlon (He/Him): Marquis Clanton, also known as the International Icon Marquis Revlon, is a dancer, choreographer, and vogue-femme practitioner. The Baltimore based artist is known for appearing on the television series *Pose*.

Instagram: @marquisclanton https://www.instagram.com/marquisclanton/?hl=en
Performance clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AomCc_WWonQ

Orkgotik: Argentinean drag creature and performance artist. Orkgotik is known for their signature prosthetic makeup technique as well as their horrifying and androgynous aesthetic. Orkgotik creates drag that specifically showcases body-horror and post-human themes. Orkgotik was a finalist of the fifth season of *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula*.

Instagram: @orkgotik https://www.instagram.com/orkgotik/?hl=en

RuPaul (Any Pronouns): American drag queen, model, musician, and host of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. RuPaul gained fame in the 1990's through her modeling, acting, and the release of her hit debut single "Supermodel (You Better Work)". RuPaul is inarguably the most influential drag artist in modern pop culture.

Instagram: @rupaulofficial https://www.instagram.com/rupaulofficial/?hl=en
Supermodel Music Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nTl4Rmf6AI

Sasha Colby (She/Her): Hawaiian born and Los Angeles based drag queen and transgender activist. Colby is best known for winning the Miss Continental pageant in 2012 as well as winning the fifteenth season of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Colby's most notable quote is "I am your favorite drag queen's favorite drag queen". Colby is the drag mother of Kerri Colby and Chappell Roan.

Instagram: @sashacolby https://www.instagram.com/sashacolby/
Miss Continental Performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANVZdk9oDBE

Stefon Royce (He/Him): DMV based drag king. Royce is known for his celebrity impersonation performances as well as regularly hosting and organizing events centering drag kings.

Instagram: @stefonroyce https://www.instagram.com/stefonroyce/
Rick James Illusion: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx4qW7jgxtw/

Tenderoni (He/Him): Chicago based drag king. Known for his 80's hip-hop inspired aesthetic, Tenderoni was the first king to win the Drag Queen of the Year Competition Award Contest Competition.

Instagram: @tenderoni88 https://www.instagram.com/tenderoni88/

William Dorsey Swann: First self-proclaimed "Queen of Drag". Swann who was formerly enslaved, was known for throwing underground drag parties for queer people in Washington DC. Swann passed away in 1925 at the age of sixty-seven.

Yovska (He/They): Mexican Canadian, drag and performance artist. Yovska is known for subversive looks that maintain horror and creature aesthetics while resembling children's plush toys. Yovska was a competitor on *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula* season three as well as *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula Titans* season one.

Instagram: @yovska https://www.instagram.com/yovska/

Appendix C
Referenced Films

***Plot summaries provided by the Internet Movie Database (IMDb)**

Adventures in Babysitting, released 1987, directed by Chris Columbus: A babysitter must battle her way through the big city after being stranded there with the kids she's looking after.

Alien, released 1979, directed by Ridley Scott: After investigating a mysterious transmission of unknown origin, the crew of the commercial spacecraft encounters a deadly lifeform.

Black Christmas, released 1974, directed by Bob Clark: During their Christmas break, a group of sorority girls are stalked by a stranger.

*Bridesmaids, r*eleased 2011, directed by Paul Feig: Competition between the maid of honor and a bridesmaid over who is the bride's best friend, threatens to upend the life of an out-of-work pastry chef.

Crimson Peak, released 2015, directed by Guillermo Del Toro: In the aftermath of a family tragedy, an aspiring author is torn between love for her childhood friend and the temptation of a mysterious outsider. Trying to escape the ghosts of her past, she is swept away to a house that breathes, bleeds, and remembers.

The Fly, released 1986, directed by David Cronenberg: A brilliant but eccentric scientist begins to transform into a giant man/fly hybrid after one of his experiments goes horribly wrong.

Friday the 13th, released 1980, directed by Sean S. Cunningham: A group of teenage camp counselors attempt to re-open an abandoned summer camp with a tragic past, but they are stalked by a mysterious, relentless killer.

Halloween, released 1978, directed by John Carpenter: Fifteen years after murdering his sister on Halloween night 1963, Michael Myers escapes from a mental hospital and returns to the small town of Haddonfield, Illinois to kill again.

Hellraiser, released 1987, directed by Clive Barker: A woman discovers the newly resurrected, partially formed, body of her brother-in-law and lover. She starts killing for him to revitalize his body and escape the demonic beings that are pursuing him after he escaped their underworld.

Hereditary, released 2018, directed by Ari Aster: A grieving family is haunted by tragic and disturbing occurrences.

It, released 1990, directed by Tommy Lee Wallace: In 1960, seven pre-teen outcasts fight an evil demon who poses as a child-killing clown. Thirty years later, they reunite to stop the demon once and for all when it returns to their hometown.

Ju-On: The Grudge, released 2002, directed by Takashi Shimizu: A mysterious and vengeful spirit marks and pursues anybody who dares enter the house in which it resides.

King Kong, released 1930, directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack: A film crew goes to a tropical island for a location shoot, where they capture a colossal ape who takes a shine to their blonde starlet, and bring him back to New York City.

The Little Mermaid, released 1989, directed by Ron Clements and John Musker: A mermaid princess makes a Faustian bargain in an attempt to become human and win a prince's love.

The Lost Boys, released 1987, directed by Joel Schumaker: When a recently divorced mother and her two teenage boys move to a coastal town to stay with her father, it doesn't take long for the brothers to realize the area is a haven for something much more sinister than party-going surfers.

Night of the Living Dead, released 1968, directed by George A. Romero: A ragtag group of Pennsylvanians barricade themselves in an old farmhouse to remain safe from a horde of flesh-eating ghouls that are ravaging the Northeast of the United States.

A Nightmare on Elm Street, released 1984, directed by Wes Craven: Teenager Nancy Thompson must uncover the dark truth concealed by her parents after she and her friends become targets of the spirit of a serial killer with a bladed glove in their dreams, in which if they die, it kills them in real life.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge, released 1985, directed by Jack Sholder: A teenage boy is haunted in his dreams by deceased child murderer Freddy Krueger, who is out to possess him in order to continue his reign of terror in the real world.

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror, released 1922, directed by F.W. Murnau: Vampire Count Orlok expresses interest in a new residence and real estate agent Hutter's wife.

Nosferatu, released 2024, directed by Robert Eggers: A gothic tale of obsession between a haunted young woman and the terrifying vampire infatuated with her, causing untold horror in its wake.

Pearl, released 2022, directed by Ti West: In 1918, a young woman on the brink of madness pursues stardom in a desperate attempt to escape the drudgery, isolation, and lovelessness of life on her parents' farm.

Pet Sematary, released 1989, directed by Mary Lambert: After tragedy strikes, a grieving father discovers an ancient burial ground behind his home with the power to raise the dead.

Psycho, released 1960, directed by Alfred Hitchcock: A secretary on the run for embezzlement takes refuge at a secluded California motel owned by a repressed man and his overbearing mother.

Rebecca, released 1940, directed by Alfred Hitchcock: A self-conscious woman juggles adjusting to her new role as an aristocrat's wife and avoiding being intimidated by his first wife's spectral presence.

Rope, released 1948, directed by Alfred Hitchcock: Two men try to convince themselves they've committed the perfect murder by hosting a dinner party after strangling a former classmate to death.

Saw, released 2004, directed by James Wan: Two men awaken to find themselves on the opposite sides of a dead body, each with specific instructions to kill the other or face consequences. These two are the latest victims of the Jigsaw Killer.

Scream, released 1996, directed by Wes Craven: A year after the murder of her mother, a teenage girl is terrorized by a masked killer who targets her and her friends by using scary movies as part of a deadly game.

Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street, released 2019, directed by Tyler Jensen and Roman Chimienti: A retrospective look at A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge (1985) and the life of its lead actor, Mark Patton.

The Shining, released 1980, directed by Stanley Kubrick: A family heads to an isolated hotel for the winter, where a sinister presence influences the father into violence. At the same time, his psychic son sees horrifying forebodings from both the past and the future.

Suspiria, released 1977, directed by Dario Argento: An American newcomer to a prestigious German ballet academy comes to realize that the school is a front for something sinister amid a series of ghastly murders.

Suspiria, released 2018, directed by Luca Guadagniño: A darkness swirls at the center of a world-renowned dance company, one that will engulf the artistic director, an ambitious young dancer, and a grieving psychotherapist. Some will succumb to the nightmare. Others will finally wake up.

The Silence of the Lambs, released 1991, directed by Jonathan Demme: A young F.B.I. cadet must receive the help of an incarcerated and manipulative cannibal killer to help catch another serial killer, a madman who skins his victims.

Strangers on a Train, released 1951, directed by Alfred Hitchcock: A psychopath tries to forcibly persuade a tennis star to agree to his theory that two strangers can get away with murder by submitting to his plan to kill each other's most-hated person.

The Substance, released 2024, directed by Coralie Fargeat: A fading celebrity takes a black-market drug: a cell replicating substance that temporarily creates a younger, better version of herself.

Sunset Boulevard, released 1950, directed by Billy Wilder: A screenwriter develops a dangerous relationship with a faded film star determined to make a triumphant return.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, released 1974, directed by Tobe Hooper: Five friends head out to rural Texas to visit the grave of a grandfather. On the way they stumble across what appears to be a deserted house, only to discover something sinister within. Something armed with a chainsaw.

The Thing, released 1982, directed by John Carpenter: A research team in Antarctica is hunted by a shape-shifting alien that assumes the appearance of its victims.

The Witch, released 2015, directed by Robert Eggers (Original title: *The VVitch: A New England Folktale*): An isolated Puritan family in 1630s New England comes unraveled by the forces of witchcraft and possession.

When A Stranger Calls, released 1979, directed by Fred Walton: A psychopathic killer terrorizes a babysitter, then returns seven years later to menace her again.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit, released 1988, directed by Robert Zemeckis: When a cartoon rabbit is accused of murder, he enlists the help of a burnt-out private investigator to prove his innocence.

Appendix D
Photos and Drawings

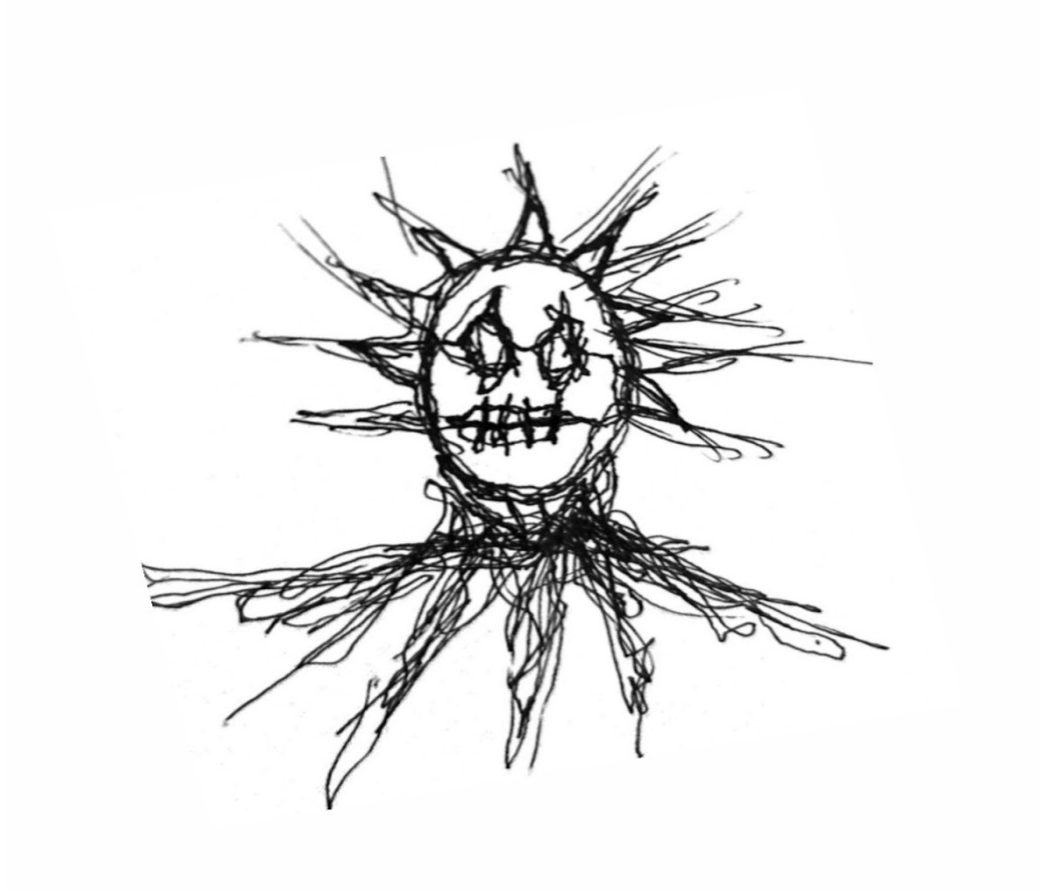


Photo 1 – Conceptual illustration of Shingles by Peter Pattengill



Photo 2 – Drag Couenne attends *Drag Race Belgique* red carpet event



Photo 3 - "The Doctor" by Silas Orion



Photo 4 – Will and Garrett Huxley pose with dog, Edward



Photo 5 – Unnamed artist at KinAct Festival in Kinshasa, DRC.



Photo 6-8 – Costume sketches by Colin Franz. Left to right, costumes progress in order they appear in *Scream Queen*



Photo 9 – Pattengill stands in deep squat, center stage. Surrounding them are five body bags hung from the ceiling. Photo by Sophia Tepermeister



Photo 10 – Pattengill stands holding up glowing anatomical heart. Photo by Sophia Tepermeister



Photo 11 – Pattengill hangs from suspended body bag. Preston showcases embryonic texture through projection. Photo by Sophia Tepermeister.



Photo 12 – Pattengill stands, facing camera, holding anatomical heart prop. Photo by Taneen Momeni



Photo 13 – Pattengill crosses stage holding glowing anatomical heart. Photo by Taneen Momeni



Photo 14 – Pattengill crawls towards audience. Photo by Colin Franz



Photo 15 – Pattengill poses in a bodybuilder like manner. Photo by Taneen Momeni





Photo 16, 17 – Pattengill strikes bodybuilder like poses. Photos by Colin Franz.



Photo 18 – Pattengill, mid retch. Photo by Colin Franz



Photo 19 – Pattengill holds an imaginary phone with an angered expression. Photo by Taneen Momeni



Photo 20 – Pattengill stands one arm, and one leg raised. Photo by Taneen Momeni



Photo 21 – Assistant Stage Manager, Chiso Obichere tosses microphone to Pattengill. Photo by Colin Franz



Photo 22 – Pattengill stands center stage in full regalia. Photo by Taneen Momeni.

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