

Out in Focus: Artist Insights

To accompany the release of the curated program "Out In Focus", I reached out to the five artists, and asked them to share insights into their videos, produced between fifteen and twenty years ago, to contextualize them within the times of their creation. They reflected on their choices of aesthetic and content, representation of LGBTQ identities and experiences, and the significance of these pieces within both their artistic practices and personal lives.

Talia Golland
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"*Tapette!!!* was one of my first videos. I play the angry drag queen and a friend shot the video, which I edited afterwards, playing it back on my tv while editing "live" with my VHS video camera. Getting the lights right was a fun challenge.

This work also coincided with my long, beautiful and angst-ridden coming out process. At that time, I was really interested in exploring gender issues, that's why the drag queen came out, all sad, frustrated and trashy, but also funny and rebellious."

Luc Desjardins, "*Tapette!!!*", 2002

"*Brothers* was shot in one day with no budget. The idea for the video came from the fact that Lorri Millan and I were often mistaken for one another, despite the fact that we don't really look alike at all. The video celebrates the fact that two figures, the brothers, do everything together and, sometimes, in unison.

In our experience, people mix us up because we are both big lesbians. We still call each other 'brother'."

Anne Golden, "*Brothers*", 1998

"*Pieces of Her Become You* is a film meant to make 'ordinary', the domestic day-to-day of a lesbian couple. The motif of the film is an alternating pattern of colour and black and white video. The colour sequences detail ordinary activities and interactions. The black and white sequences are highly stylized audio/visual poems that evoke the darker truths of internalized oppression. There is a shot that includes the NFB film poster for *Forbidden Love* (1) and the food preparation sequence is a deliberate reference to Martha Rosler's 1975 film *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (2) This was my first film produced with the support of Saw Video's JumpStart program and it premiered at the HERLAND Film and Video Festival in Calgary in 1997. I have an unreleased feature length documentary called *3 Days at the Women's Voices Festival* (3), showcasing performers such as Chris Williamson, Evalyn Parry and iconic blues' guitarist Ellen McIlwaine."

- (1) *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* is a 1992 Canadian documentary film about the lives of lesbian women and their experiences of lesbian pulp fiction. It was written and directed by Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman and featured author Ann Bannon. It premiered at the 1992 Toronto Festival of Festivals and was released in the United States on 4 August 1993. It was produced by Studio D, the women's studio of the National Film Board of Canada.
- (2) *Semiotics of the Kitchen* is a feminist parody video and performance piece released in 1975 by Martha Rosler. The video, which runs six minutes, is considered a critique of the commodified versions of traditional women's roles in modern society.
- (3) *3 Days at the Women's Voices Festival* is a feature length documentary shot on location in Plantagenet Ontario, during the last Women's Voices Festival, summer 2005. It had its Canadian Premiere at SAW Video the same year and remains unreleased. It is the only film that documents this piece of Canadian history: The last of the 'women-only' music festivals in Canada.

Marika Jemma, "*Pieces of Her Become You*", 1996

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“The songs are what give the video its narrative arc and are a reflection of what I was listening to at the time: Ute Lemper, Kurt Weill, Billy Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and from my teens, Donna Summer. *The Toilet Suite* was a video about the search for love. Twenty years later, love - searching for it, finding it, losing it – is what drives much of my work. In 2017, just as it was in 1999, the most radical and political thing we can do is love.”

Carl Stewart: “*The Toilet Suite*”, 1999

“I made this video at a time where I felt that women were under represented in film and video world. I wanted to make a video that used all women for the cast and the crew. I wanted to show that traditional gender roles do not have to play a part in the retelling of a fairytale. I was fascinated by technology especially green screen and AfterEffects, so I filmed ice sculptures to be the walls of the crystal palace and Gatineau Park in the middle of winter for the voyage scenes. I felt that technology did not need traditional gender roles to be effective so neither did we. Twenty years ago it was not as common to have same-sex couples kissing on screen. I also feel that my video is for all ages and allows younger people to know that gender does not have to play a role in creating or casting of a video.”

Kerry Campbell, “*Lesbian Fairytale*”, 2001