

GENDER

#2

THE YOUTH POLITIC

FREE FOR
YOUTH U25
\$15 DONATION
FOR ADULTS

MAY 2026

**WRITTEN, DESIGNED, AND
PUBLISHED IN HALIFAX / KJIPUKTUK
IN MI'KMA'KI**

**BY THE STAFF AT THE YOUTH PROJECT
FOR 2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH SINCE 1993**

THANK YOU SO MUCH TO:

**THE YOUTH ACROSS ATLANTIC CANADA WHO
CONTRIBUTED THEIR BRILLIANT CREATIVITY. THANK YOU
FOR SHARING YOUR WORK: CAM T (4) , HANLEY S (5), RAY W
(6), PARKER C (9), ABBY Y (18), LU P (26), AND THE TALENTED
ANONYMOUS ARTIST ON PAGE 7.**

**KIWI DOE, WHO SUPPORTED AND FACILITATED THE
CREATION OF THIS RESOURCE DURING A PLACEMENT WITH
US IN 2025 <3**

**AND HANNAH GUINAN FROM THE KHYBER, WHO SUPPORTED
THE WRITING IN OUR FEATURE ON THE TURRET!**

YOUTHPROJECT.NS.CA

004 COMMUNITY

04 ARTIST FEATURES

10 I SEE GENDER PUZZLE

12 HANDS OFF OUR HRT

014 CULTURE

14 SAVE THE TURRET

16 NUNYA & HER BUSINESS

018 EDUCATION

24 MY GENDER RECIPE

26 ARTIST FEATURES




Gender can be confusing and complicated.

The gender binary is made to seem simple. You're placed into one of two categories (male/female), and whether you like it or not, you're expected to look and act accordingly.

But when we start to ask questions, it can get a little messy.

Why does it feel like our entire future is shaped for us by our body?



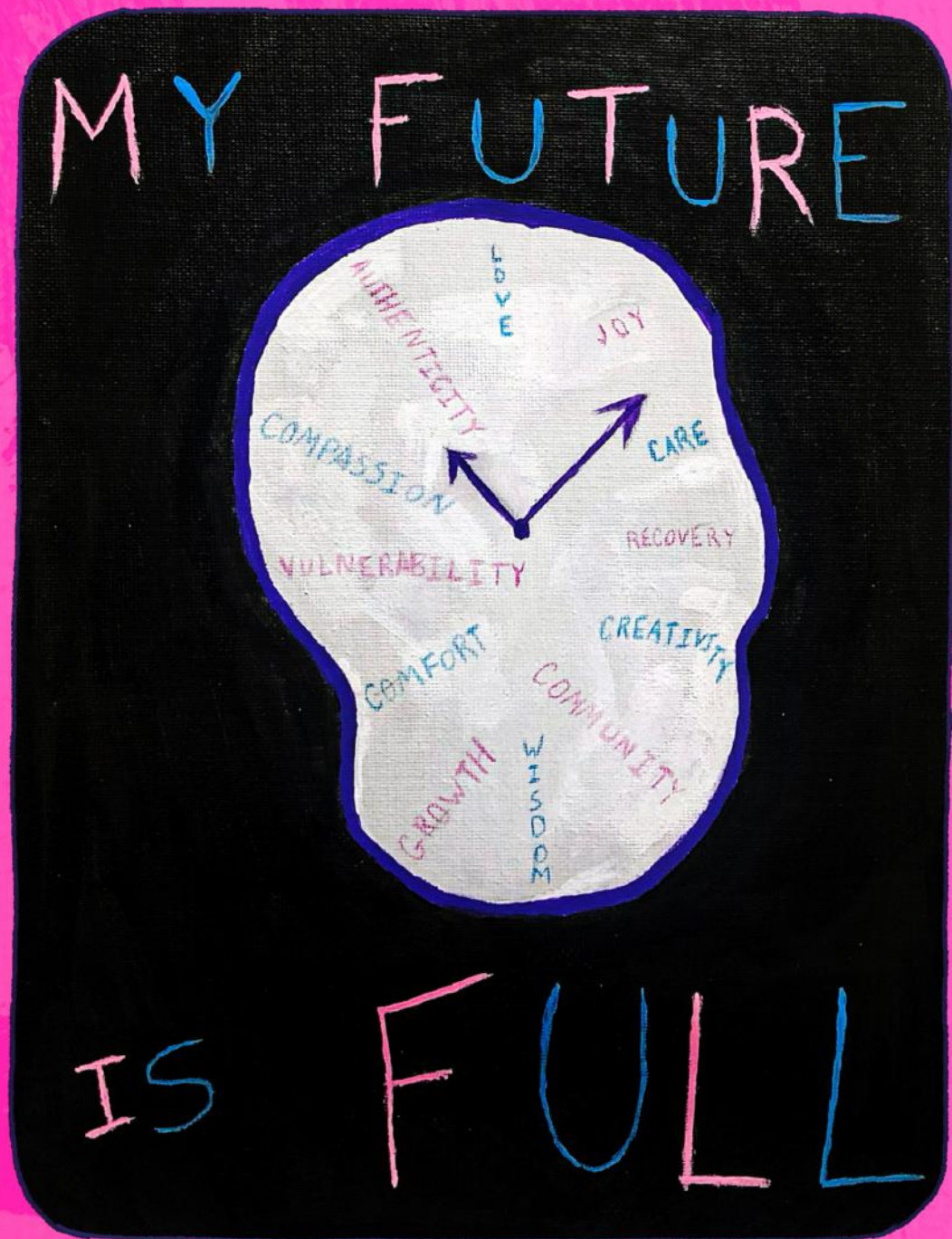
What does that have to do with how we dress? Why does that determine our friends and our hobbies?

What about bodies that don't neatly fit our ideas of "male" or "female", like our intersex community? What about everyone who feels most like themselves when they break all those rules? Why do we face so many consequences when we don't follow the binary?

How do I know what's right for my own gender?

ARTIST

FEATURES



CAM T, HALIFAX
AGE 18

MY FUTURE IS FULL (2025)
PAINTING ON CANVAS

HANLEY S (23), HALIFAX

THE BOOTS THAT MADE ME

Fresh grass and rubber,
Wet Thursdays filled with joyful play,
14, just exploring personal style
in an effervescent way,
radical self-love (an act of protest),
alto saxophone, bright and small,
very easy to hear,
musically self-possessed.

Bright green knows where I have been.
every step in my new life.
It dreams of it all coming together,
just like we planned.

THIS IS HOW I AM

I've always prided myself on being self-aware, including perception of my own gender, yet at the same time, the idea of gender and its expression never seems to be within my controlled grasp.

For many years now, I've identified as a trans man, using exclusively he/him pronouns and whatnot. I know inside that being a man is who I am, and any other interpretation of my identity brings only discomfort. Yet despite this fact, I still have a gnawing feeling (imposter syndrome, the common term) that I am not a "valid" trans man. And for that same self-awareness, I know why.

Despite all, I still like the feeling of presenting in feminine ways. Traditionally feminine clothing, style, accessories, or even behaviour; I want to be considered "cute" or "pretty" rather than "handsome". All of this appeals to me, which is precisely why I fear that my identity is false. What if I'm truly just a regular girl who wants to appear "special"?

I know if it were anyone else telling me this, I would simply tell them that it's who they are, and identity does not equal presentation.

But do I really know what I preach?

Sometimes, I see online images of cisgender feminine men, and I get a gush of envy. Had I been born that way, would I be able to let myself live like that too?

What difference does it make that I am not born that way?

Is it an external fear, that others will simply not understand and instead see me as a "normal" girl? Is it an internal fear, that I fear myself to be just a girl?

These questions plague me daily, none being answered, all of which feel like excuses for my own cowardice in expression.

But deep down, even if I fail to fully acknowledge it, I know what has been answered. I am a boy, and I like being a boy. I fear what my own self thinks, my own worries and imposter syndrome, but I strive day by day to chase that rare taste of euphoria for my unique gender expression.

In the end, I only wish to be understood for the way I am, to be able to live without having to explain myself to every person I meet. I envy those who let themselves freely be who they are; explanation is not your own obligation. And that's exactly it; gender is what we make of it, and what we make of it, is what we are.

Who knows whether in the future some unknown revelation will strike me, and my identity will reform; but for now, I know this is how I am.

Personal Writing
Ray W (16), Halifax

ARTIST
FEATURES

DISCONNECT



ANONYMOUS

I have always loved to express myself in ways that made no sense to other people. I love frivolous masculinity and harsh femininity, I love to make my shapes odd and my colours bombastic. No amount of programming or 'feedback' could push this out of me. Gender Queerness has been my inherent reality, and I have never cared to pretend that it is not true; even when I felt shame, it could never outweigh the forceful tide of joy I feel in androgyny. My green boots (from "The Boots that Made Me" pg. 5) came to me around the time I allowed myself to take full unapologetic joy in my gender again. They have always felt like a representation of this period of my life where I take no shame in being seen in my fat trans body, to such an extent that even though they are irreparable, I can't throw them out.

Hanley, 23

My own gender is something always tinged with doubt in my mind, yet a beautiful experience nonetheless. **Ray, 16**



TRUE SELF IN SHATTERED MIRROR (2023)
ACRYLIC & GLASS ON CANVAS
PARKER C (19), QUISPAMIS

True Self in Shattered Mirror was a part of a large project I created in my highschool. The goal of this painting was to take experiences of trans joy taken from interviews I did and put it into a tangible media. When I created this painting, I was fighting for the right to be Parker - not only in my family and school but across the district as the New Brunswick Government was trying to overturn policy 713.

This policy is the reason trans kids or kids playing with gender had privacy and protection from unaccepting guardians.

i see...

GENDER-AFFIRMING ITEM PUZZLE

■ Glasses in heart shapes, ■ a hair brush too, ■ and an androgel bottle that comes in blue. ■ Cream and a brush for shaving a face, ■ with a shiny safety razor hung in its place. ■ A vial of T with injection supplies, ■ and a bottle of temporary hair dye.



■ Two kinds of garments that help to compress, ■ a candle to light in a moment of stress, ■ a pendant of pearls, ■ earrings that drop, ■ the first mail in your name you got from your pop. ■ Nail polish in blue, ■ a handwritten card, ■ and a note on the mirror when things feel hard. ■ A zine about garment safety below ■ a journal you write in about how you grow. Lastly is ■ a container of sharps, exchange where you got it when it's time to restart.



HANDS OFF OUR HRT!

START

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE, LIKE HORMONE THERAPY. HOW DO I FIND A DOCTOR TO HELP ME LEARN ABOUT MY OPTIONS?

DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY DOCTOR?

YES!

AND I TRUST THEM ENOUGH TO ASK ABOUT IT

Family doctors/nurses have the power to work with you on a hormone care plan that fits your goals, but some will still say no. Common reasons given include lack of experience & patient age.

THEY SAID NO

NO!

OR I DON'T FEEL SAFE ASKING THEM ABOUT IT

NEXT STEP

book an appointment with them, and ask them about your options for gender-affirming care

Q: DOES THEIR PROCESS FEEL OUTDATED / LACKING INFORMED CONSENT?

some people might choose the pathway without a family doctor if their clinic's methods feel outdated (or if they say no), but some will continue with the outdated process if the waitlist for the other options are too long.

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR CAN HELP YOU START

NOVA SCOTIA

IWK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH LINE [FOR REFERRAL]

1-855-922-1122

NS

[HALIFAX AREA]

IWK TRANS HEALTH TEAM

902-464-4110

COMMON STEPS

review of health history
 hormone level tests & other bloodwork
 overview of care options & process
 review support network & readiness
 potential extra step: WPATH assess*
 identify risks related to treatment
 assessment of mental/physical health
 reviewing informed consent forms
 hormone admin tutorial (injection, etc)
 start of hormone therapy

WPATH step is a readiness assessment done by a therapist certified by World Pro Assoc. of Trans Health. Only required by some clinics.

WHAT'S INFORMED CONSENT?

"Informed consent" is a method used across healthcare practices that empowers patients to make decisions about their care, by offering thorough & accurate info about available care.

In gender care, it means that you determine your care needs and goals, and a diagnosis of gender dysphoria by the doctor's assessment is not required.

This doesn't mean that treatments like hormone therapy are delivered unsafely or without follow-up, it means those accessing care do not need to undergo unnecessary (and often unsafe) assessments - like proof of social transition and extensive psychotherapy - before starting their care process.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MY GUARDIAN?

Gender-affirming healthcare includes a thorough assessment of the patient's support network. Some clinics will respect a young person's decision to start hormones without guardian support once they reach the age of 16, with some requiring guardian involvement until age 18. Youth younger than 16 usually need guardian consent for HRT / puberty blockers.

I'M 18+, WHICH CLINICS CAN I ACCESS?

The options here with "youth" in the title are mostly for young people under 18. If you're 18-25 looking for care options, and you don't have a family doctor, your nearest sexual health centre can usually point you in the right direction.

NEWFOUNDLAND

FOR GETTING A FAMILY DOCTOR:
 NL FAMILY CARE TEAMS

PATIENTCONNECT.
 NLCHI.NL.CA

The only specialized gender-affirming care clinic in NL is the Gender Wellness Clinic in St. John's, but this clinic requires a referral from a family doctor or nurse. This means there are some significant barriers to care for 2STGNC young people in NL without primary care.

FOR LOCAL SUPPORT,
 TRY TRANS CARE NL

TSNL.UMBRELLA@GMAIL.COM

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

NEW BRUNSWICK

YOUTH INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY*

FR: 506-453-2132
 MR: 506-778-6111
 MO: 506-856-2922
 SJ: 506-658-3737
 CH: 506-466-7380
 SX: 506-432-2217
 PA: 506-273-4701
 WS: 506-325-4419

PRINCE EDWARD ISL

CONTACT A PATIENT NAVIGATOR 1-844-882-3141
 OR COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH
 SU: (902) 888-8180
 AL/OL: (902) 853-8670
 MO: (902) 838-0960
 SR: (902) 687-7110

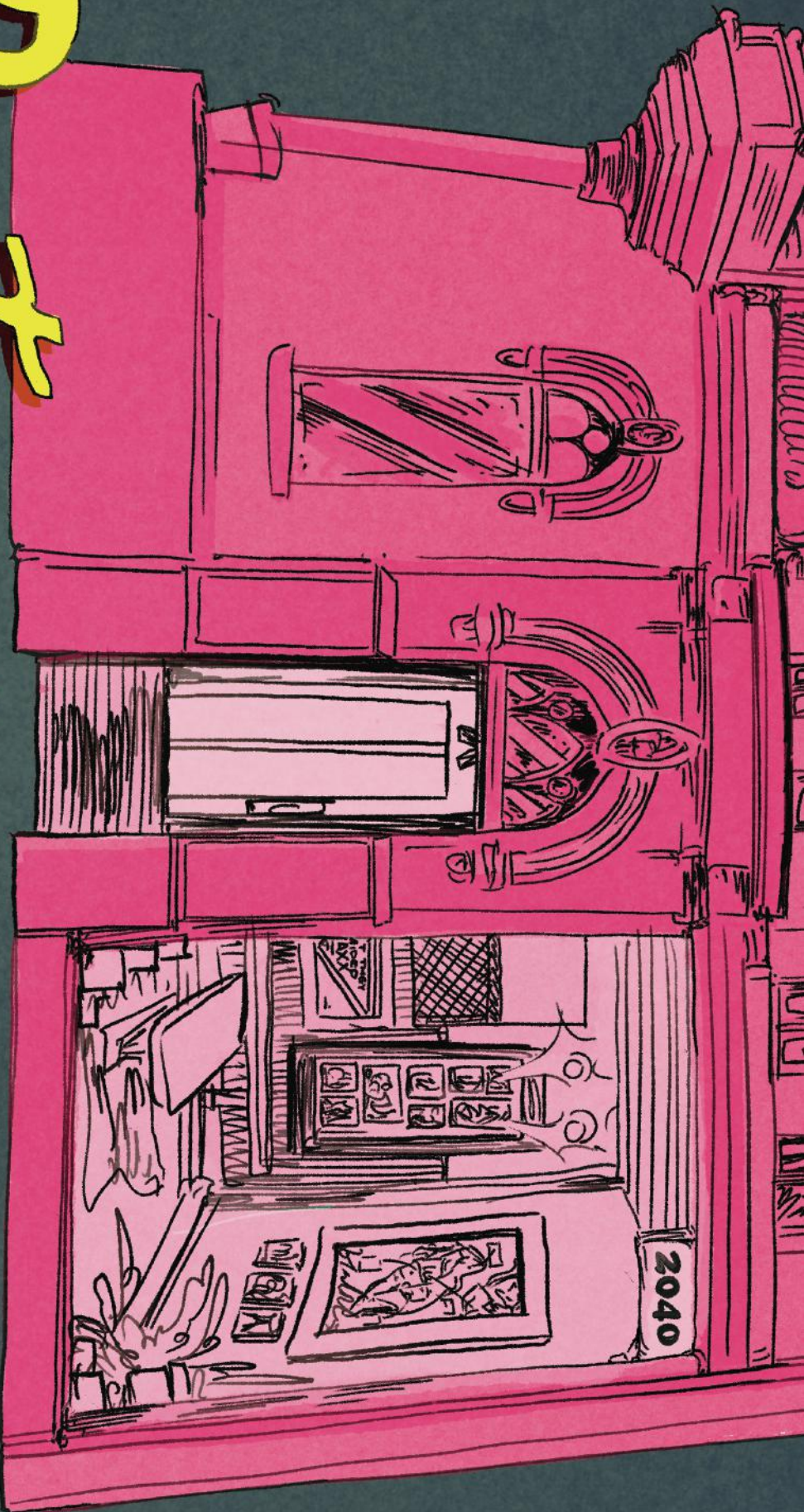


PEI [CHARLOTTETOWN AREA]

GENDER-AFFIRMING CLINIC

902-288-1850

YOU'RE ON THE PATH TO CARE



In years that follow, the space sees discos and drag shows, buffets, movie nights, queer community and the growth of a hub for building and activism.

Past, Present, and Future

After the last night of the Turret in 1982, GAE began to transform their new club at 1586 Granville St. into Rumours, but 1588 Barrington continued to be stewarded by small businesses, artists, & community groups.

From 1976 to 1982, 1588 Barrington (Halifax) was home to the Turret Club, a unique social space run “by and for the Gay and Lesbian community”.

Formed just a few years prior with a community helpline (GayLine), the local Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE)

hosted their first meetings at the Turret Club in 1976.

The Turret



NUNYA & HER BUSINESS

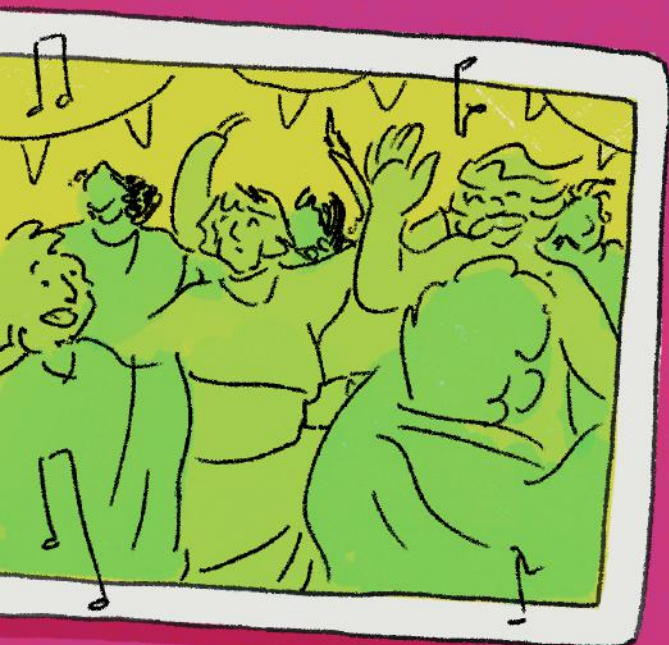


An inseparable duo made up of iconic African Nova Scotian drag artists Marchand (Jerry States) & Peenee (Travis Tynes).

As staple performers, their magnetism was undeniable. Frequenting the stage of local queer history hotspot, The Turret, Nunya and Her Business used their own singing voices to drag-up late-disco hits. Building community beyond The Turret's mostly white queer crowd, Peenee and Merchand would invite older folks from African Nova Scotian neighbourhoods like Preston and Uniacke Square, and the crowds began to grow around them.

In the early 90s, when the public was at risk of losing access to the building, a coalition of artists and activists called No Money Down, put forth a proposal to the city to turn the building into a public arts space. Halifax took ownership of the building, and the Khyber Centre for the Arts was formed by the artists, named to pay tribute to Amin Nasr's family-run cafe that was in the building throughout the 80s and into the 90s.

Into the early 2000s, despite the ongoing care, advocacy, and efforts of artists at the Khyber, the city was a neglectful landlord when it came to building maintenance. In late 2006, the Khyber Club closes on the main floor, and by 2014, Khyber and the Heritage Trust are evicted from the building due to hazardous materials.



This eviction was the catalyst for the current movement to save the building's future. Later that same year, when the city attempted to vote that the building be listed as surplus, they were met with collective resistance from ad-hoc Friends of the Khyber. The building's steadfast community organizing, yet again, kept the space from risk of being commercially sold and it remained under city ownership until 2018.

Throughout this time, a dedicated collective for preserving the home of the old Turret Club (Turret Arts Space), has branched off from the Khyber (now operating as a queer and trans artist-run centre at 1880 Hollis) to build a plan for the future of the building. In 2018, Turret Arts negotiates a \$1 sale of the building, and begin their ongoing restoration.

Today we're nearing almost 10 years since the sale. A decade of time, labour, dedication, asbestos clearance, and committed fundraising from local arts workers has been poured into this space with so much love. In early 2025, after years of collaborative planning with the city, Turret Arts applies for supportive funding to sustain the restoration of the space; and after denying the proposal in full in November, the city threatens to buy the building back at the \$1 price (disregarding the years of ongoing work).

Today in 2026, local arts workers and intergenerational supporters of the Turret are continuing to organize against the buy-back of the space. 1588 Barrington continues to be a cornerstone of local queer and trans history, the heart of local public arts, and a home that has witnessed the depth of our legacies.

The Turret Arts Space is currently gathering community support while waiting for results from another funding proposal - keep up with the project at turretartsspace.ca!

MY FEMININITY

Even in elementary school, I was already blunt, loud, and unapologetic. During recess, while the other girls huddled in the corner of the courtyard, gossiping and giggling, I played soccer with a group of boys, kicking, shoving and elbowing my way through fifth grade.

The girls laughed about topics that'd never cross my mind, topics that felt so distant and alienating. The terms they spoke about were foreign, their syllables forming incomprehensible words that linked together to make sentences that, to me, were nothing but a string of sound. Yet their enthusiasm, the spark in their eyes, the idea of belonging to a group, were inescapable.

I remember standing alone, watching them across the courtyard, separated by the concrete that seemed to span across miles.

Despite the contrasts, I never doubted that I was a girl. At least not initially. As a result, I held my head up high. I thought I was different, and I thought myself superior, I know now that this was just to satisfy my ego.

In middle school, it didn't feel different at first. But recurrently, I'd catch glances at other girls fixing their lipstick, eyeliner, or clothes in the mirror, readily applying the material like experienced painters, leaving smooth, seamless streaks of on their canvas.

A strange apprehension then fell upon me. Unlike them, my shoulders broadened, but my hips didn't. I adopted a boyish fashion sense, dressing in loose, flashy jackets and pants that, to me, reflected my personality more authentically.

My clothes hid what my body couldn't achieve. Even so, I watched as the other girls around me wore femininity like a jacket that fit perfectly, sliding into the sleeves with ease, while I stood in place. Alienated. Less than coequal. It was then that femininity became a checklist, and I fit into none of the boxes.

Slowly, I began to question if being a girl was something I could fail. I wondered if I was worthy, or fit the requirements to be called a girl. I thought I was too sharp, too crude, too masculine.

It was as if younger me made a permanent decision to embrace masculinity, and now, as I got older – regardless of how I felt – I was bound by that choice, caged and confined.

By high school, the burden grew heavier. I often asked things like, 'am I feminine enough? When they look past my abrasiveness, would they see a girl? Would they see who I am?'

I can't remember when, but one day, it was as if the world abruptly came into focus. I found that I didn't know who I was speaking to, so I questioned who could dictate whether I qualified as a girl or not. When I began to search for a clear answer, I found that no one answered to 'they.'

The realization and relief came slow – like the ebb and flow of a receding tide. But when it did, that epiphany revolutionized everything.

It was only then that I understood that the only person who could define my femininity was myself. Not strangers, not classmates, and certainly not the voice of self-hatred and judgement that had built up within me. Rushing to place myself on a pedestal in my youth, believing I was better, was nothing but a defensive attempt at preserving my own ego for not belonging to a majority.

It's become apparent that I am different. I may never belong to a group like that, never fit into the same type of 'femininity' as them, and never discuss the same topics. Yet, nowadays, that's easier to accept. They are just as feminine as I am.

I am a girl. I like being a girl. It's hard to explain the surge of euphoria that nowadays often swells in my chest, but it's there. Even though it's abstract and indescribable, it's real, and it's personal.

I know who I am. My femininity isn't expressed through clothing, makeup, or bodily features. It is illustrated through me and my own identity, and it's not something that I owe an explanation for.

My femininity is mine, and it exists because I do.

PERSONAL WRITING
ABBY Y (16), HALIFAX

INGREDIENTS OF GENDER



LANGUAGE



INGREDIENTS OF GENDER

STYLE



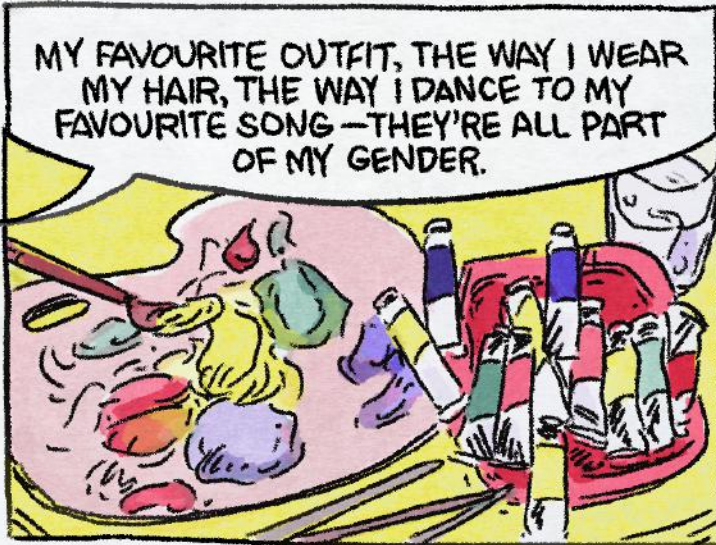
THE SHAPE OF OUR BODIES, THE WAY THEY MOVE...

HOW WE DECORATE THEM, HOW WE USE OUR VOICES--

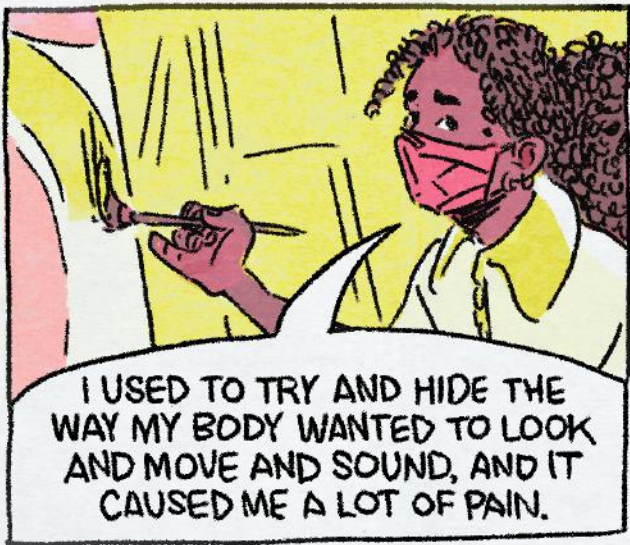


THEY COME WITH A LOT OF MEANING TOO.

WHEN WE LEARN HOW OTHER PEOPLE WANT US TO EMBODY OUR GENDER, IT CAN BE A LOT OF EXPECTATIONS!



MY FAVOURITE OUTFIT, THE WAY I WEAR MY HAIR, THE WAY I DANCE TO MY FAVOURITE SONG—THEY'RE ALL PART OF MY GENDER.



I USED TO TRY AND HIDE THE WAY MY BODY WANTED TO LOOK AND MOVE AND SOUND, AND IT CAUSED ME A LOT OF PAIN.



BUT, I SORT OF HAD A FEELING ABOUT WHY I WAS HURTING, AND IT JUST DIDN'T FEEL SAFE TO SHARE THAT PART OF MYSELF, YET EITHER.



I STARTED PAINTING TO EXPRESS MYSELF OUTSIDE OF MY BODY, AND NOW IT'S PART OF MY GENDER, TOO.

WE LEARN A LOT OF EXPECTATIONS ABOUT GENDER FROM THE COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES WE'RE A PART OF.

THE FAMILY WHO RAISED ME,

THE SCHOOL CLUBS I'M A PART OF..

THE NEIGHBOURS WHO COME TO THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN WE GO TO,

GENDER SHAPES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL ROLES,

INGREDIENTS OF GENDER

SOCIAL ROLES

BUT ALL THESE PARTS OF OUR SOCIAL LIVES ALSO SHAPE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER!

LAST YEAR I WAS IN THE SCHOOL MUSICAL AND THERE WEREN'T "ENOUGH BOYS"...

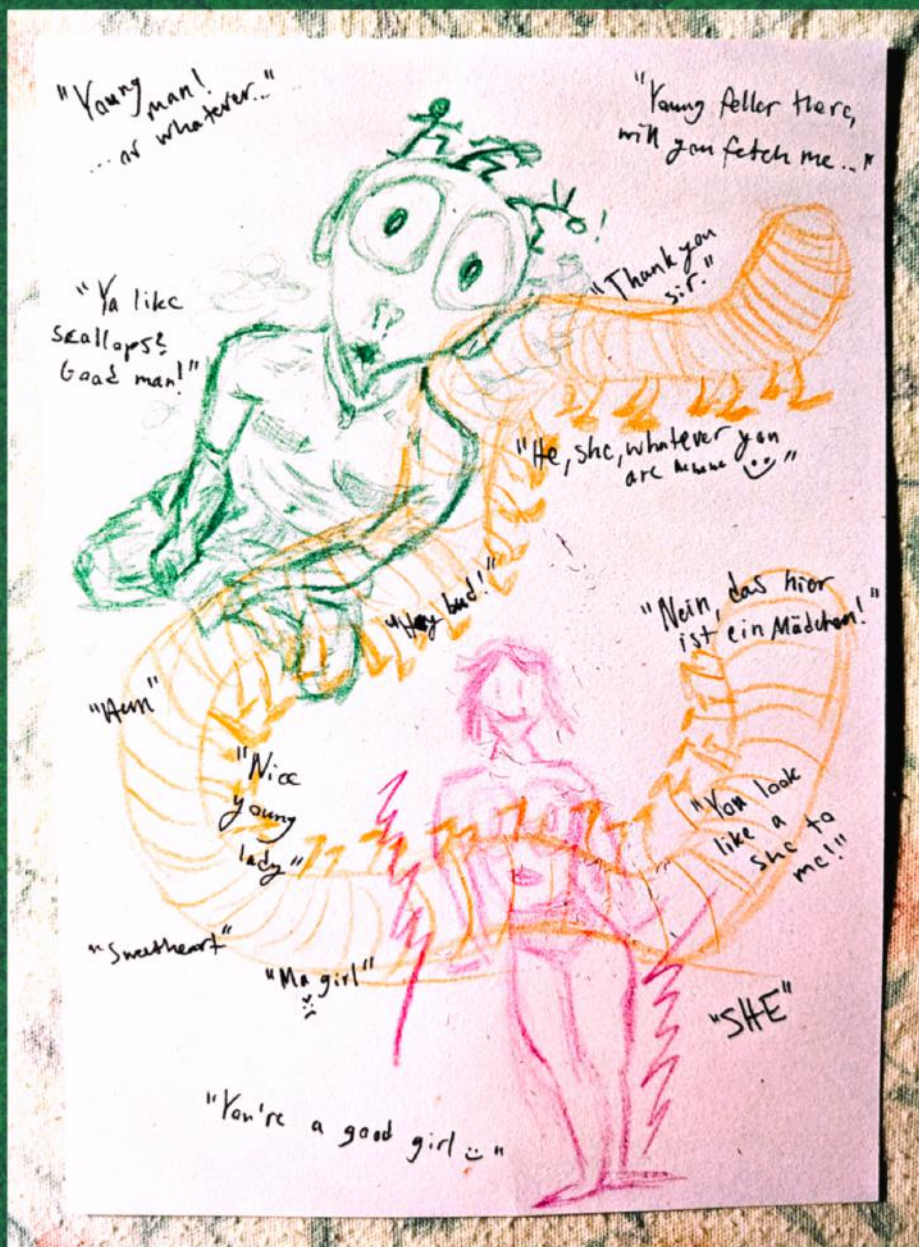
IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND HOW I SEE MY OWN GENDER. IT FELT SO FREEING.

SOMETHING ABOUT BEING SEEN AS A "BOY" CHARACTER,

Quotes are mostly from interactions at my workplace (in food service).

Sometimes I love having a body, but other times I just feel like a creature and wish others would stop having certain ideas about who I am.

It's also important to revel in moments of gender euphoria - like "he, she, whatever you are" said cheerfully by an old woman who was content with my ambiguity.



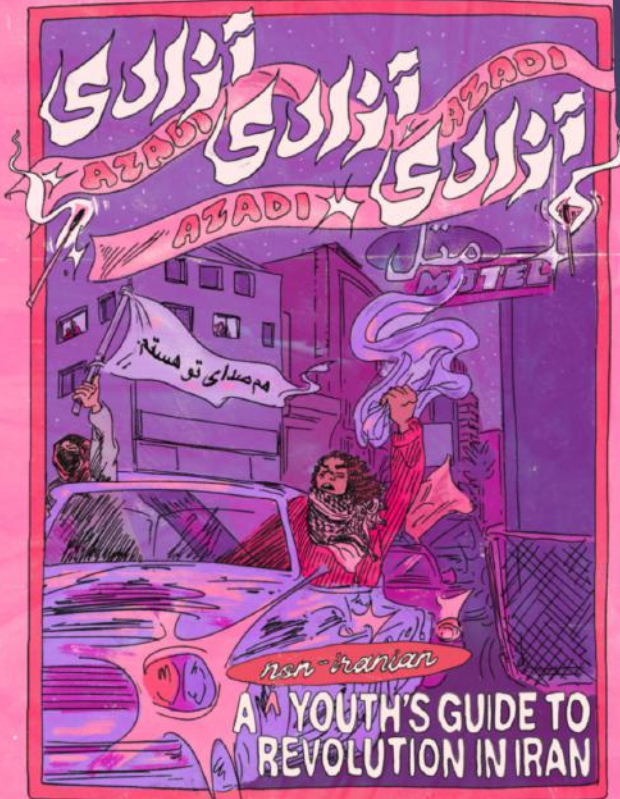
WHATEVER YOU ARE (2026)

ABI U (18), LUNENBURG
COLOURED PENCIL ON PAPER

READ MORE

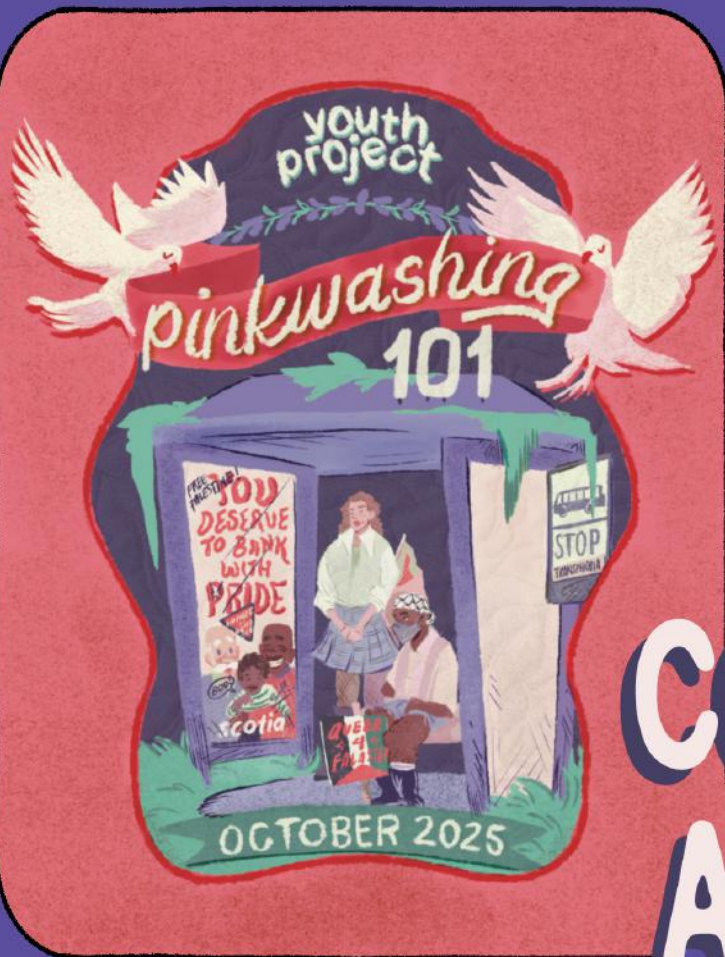
1 youth's guide to revolution in iran **may 2026**

2 two-spirit community members respond "i wish someone would have told me" **june 2022**

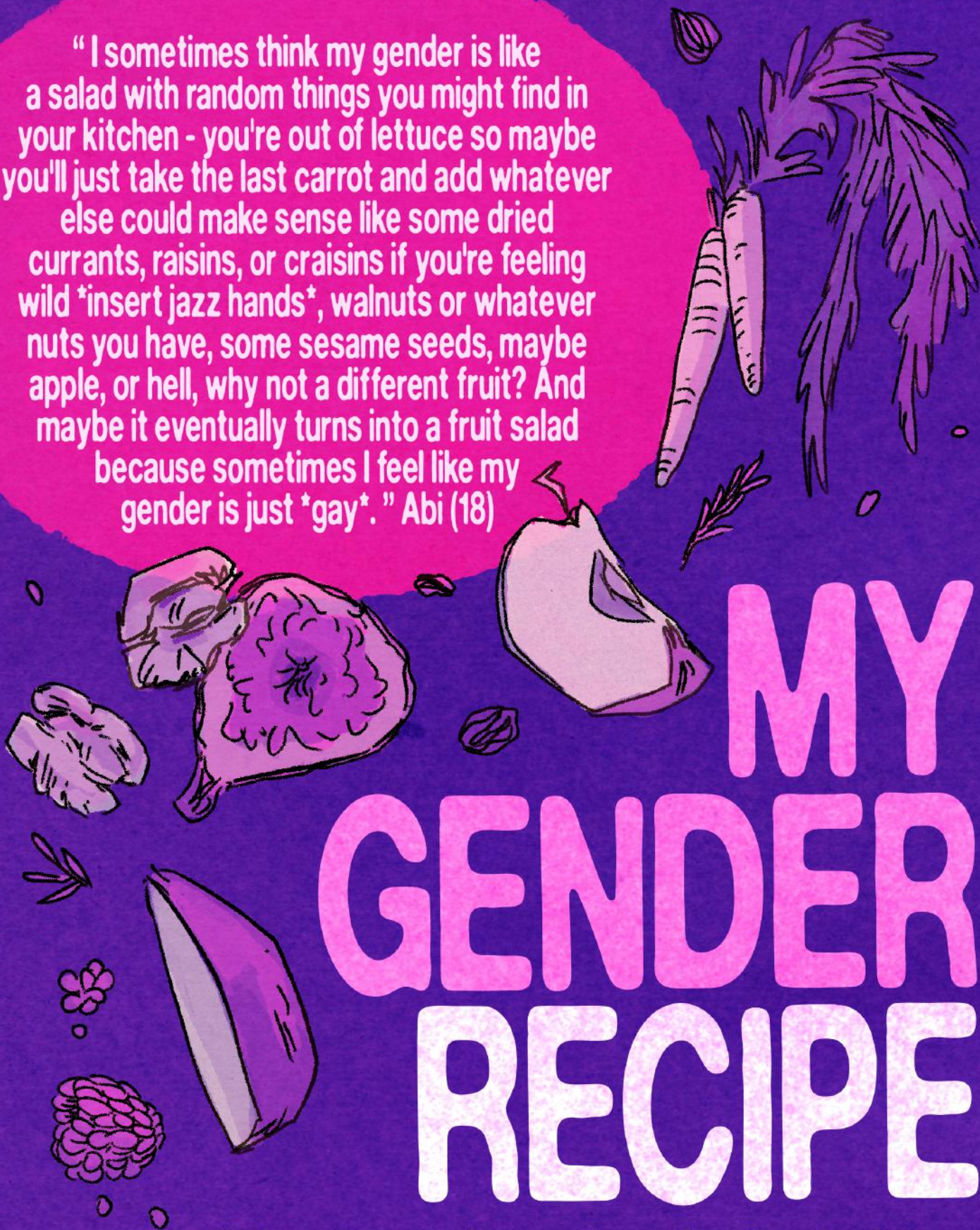


3 pinkwashing 101: performative allyship, homonationalism, and palestine **oct 2025**

COLONIALISM AND GENDER



"I sometimes think my gender is like a salad with random things you might find in your kitchen - you're out of lettuce so maybe you'll just take the last carrot and add whatever else could make sense like some dried currants, raisins, or craisins if you're feeling wild *insert jazz hands*, walnuts or whatever nuts you have, some sesame seeds, maybe apple, or hell, why not a different fruit? And maybe it eventually turns into a fruit salad because sometimes I feel like my gender is just *gay*." Abi (18)



MY GENDER RECIPE

We're going to make a meal together. One that is tasty and nourishing, and makes us feel well-fed.

We've been given a meal already that we're expected to eat everyday. Not just once, but every time we interact with ourselves or someone else. If you like your meal, that's great news for you. All your interactions have the joy of delicious food! You seek out these interactions, they make you feel full and nourished. We can call this feeling of joy from meeting your needs: "euphoria".

But what if your food tastes bad on your tongue and makes you feel unappetized? What if it does not meet your dietary needs and makes your body feel painful? If you've never enjoyed your food, how can you imagine that you ever will? If this meal is part of all of our interactions with the people around us, we're going to avoid them; and we're going to be hungry. This can make us feel really unwell, and the bad feelings that come with a lack of our needs being met can be called "dysphoria".

DREAM UP INGREDIENTS FOR GENDER EUPHORIA

ideas

- your dream outfit
- a sketch of a pretty bug
- a personal keepsake
- an accessory you love
- a book you relate to

We aren't always given the ingredients or tools in the kitchen to make the meal we really want. A lot are limited to the varying ingredients we have in front of us, or what someone else has given us, ready-to-eat. But this is a space to dream up exactly what you want.

What if instead of food we were talking about gender? What "ingredients" make up the way you want to embody your gender?

Decorate this page with the ingredients that connect you to a feeling of "gender euphoria".

VOCABULARY

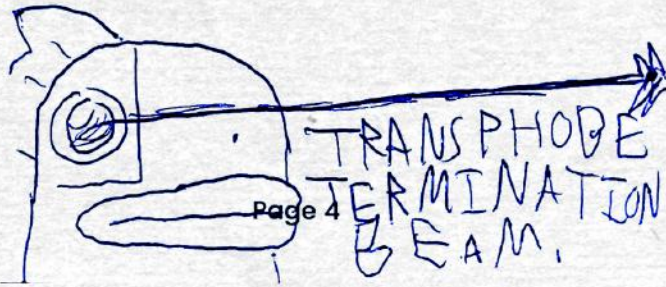
euphoria and dysphoria are two words that can sometimes create a binary of their own. You may have heard them used to talk about transness and gender non-conformity, because the gender dysphoria model has been a big part of the history of medical care/treatment for 2STGNC communities. Medical systems can sometimes view transness as a lack of something that causes us to feel unwell (dysphoria), but transness is huge and plentiful, and can also be understood by the feeling of fullness and joy that comes with it (euphoria). This doesn't mean you need to feel one way or the other all the time, but it can help us understand the way it makes us feel to be understood in certain ways.

TRANSPHOBE TERMINATORS #1 (2026) BY LU P.(19), LUNENBURG

Transphobe Terminators

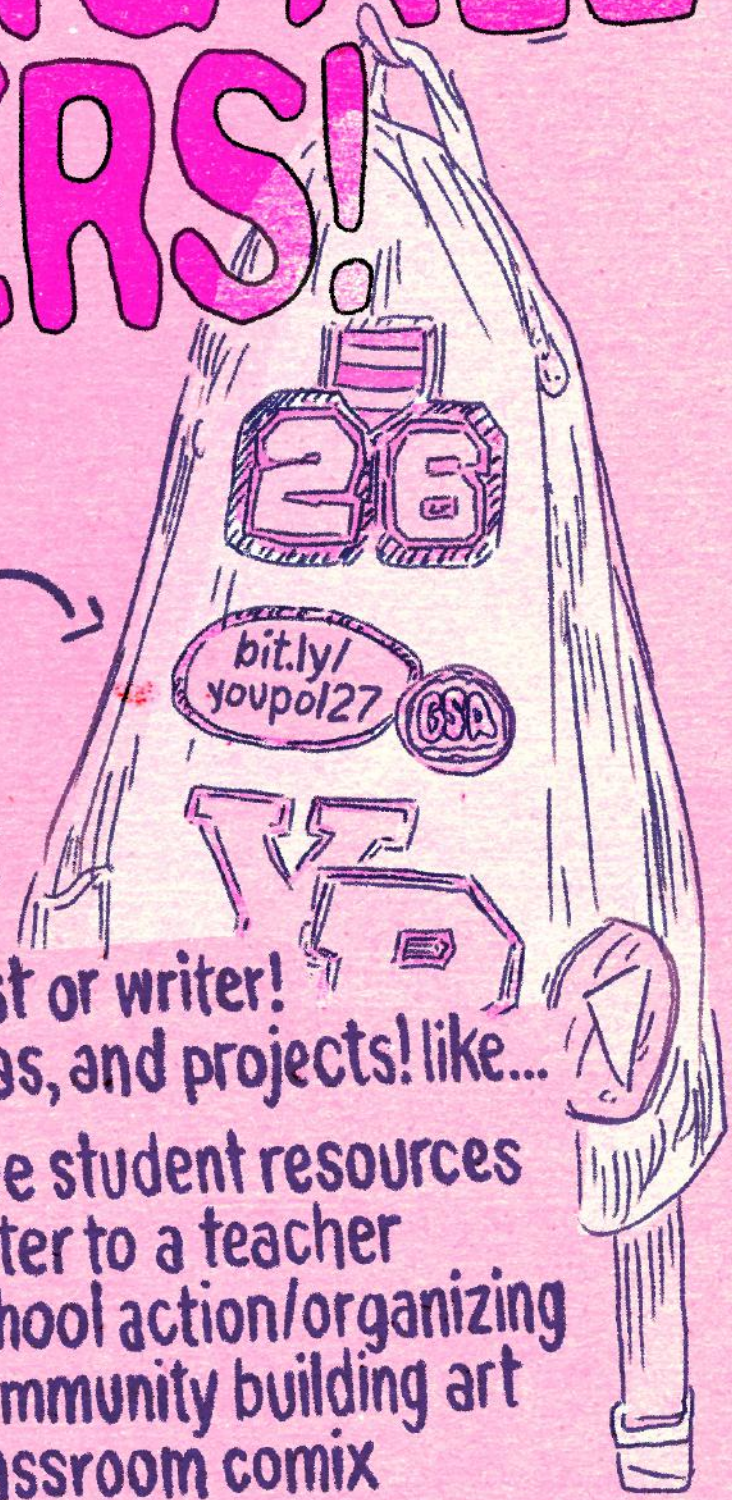


TRANSPHOBE TERMINATORS #1 (2026) BY LU P. (19), LUNENBURG



CALLING ALL READERS!

SUBMISSIONS
OPEN FOR 004
THE BACK TO
SCHOOL ISSUE



you don't have to be an artist or writer!
send us your questions, ideas, and projects! like...

- *gsa mural paintings
- *campus event posters
- *interview with a peer
- *gay reading lists
- *trans school questions
- *free student resources
- *letter to a teacher
- *school action/organizing
- *community building art
- *classroom comix

THE YOUTH POLITIC OPEN TILL
AUG 1 '26

youth
project

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

gender creative kids u12 drop-in
talk back local politics group
lucky 13 substance support space
transformers trans & gnc hang
game night board, video, & more
craft night crafts for 2slgbtqia+ youth
art jam tantallon & s. shore drop-in
& transfemme social club every month

@NSYOUTHPROJECT
YOUTHPROJECT.NS.CA

IN ISSUE 02 YOUTH
ARTIST FEATURES
+ COMICS ABOUT
GENDER + LOCAL
GAY HISTORY +
GENDER-AFFIRMING
CARE IN YOUR
AREA + A PUZZLE