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TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2012

VISUAL ART Queering the Art Museum Week on Slog, Part

I
posted by JEN GRAVES on TUE, MAY 8, 2012 at 2:34 PM

This portrait, titled *Wally Waterfall (I)*, is part of Portland artist [Lorenson Tillberg's](#) series *Transporraits*, featuring transgendered people posing in front of all landscapes the artist painted using the instructions of Bob Ross.

Seattle has a whooooooole lot of prominent gay/queer artists and art workers. A short list might include Wynne Greenwood, Jeffrey Mitchell, Rick Huhka, C. Davida Ingram, Robert Yoder, Roy McPakin, Adrian Chesser, Timothy White Eagle, Steven Miller, Susanna Blum, Rafael Soldi, Molly Landreth, Joey Volkamp, Gal Gibson, Greg Kucera*, James Harris, and Stephen Lyons.

Right now there are at least three local exhibitions overtly given to exploring sexual and gender identity: *Hide/Seek*, the large historical American exhibition visiting Tacoma Art Museum; *Under the Rainbow* at Greg Kucera; *Author and Subject: Contemporary Queer Photography* at the Photo Center Northwest.

And this weekend there's a symposium on the subject. It's called Queering the Art Museum, and it begins Friday at 5:30 with a reception and 6:30 keynote address ([details](#)), and continues Saturday at 10 am with a panel including, among others, Greenwood and *Hide/Seek* co-curator Jonathan Katz (and warning: some jerk who works for *The Stranger*), to be followed by a performance and events in Seattle and Tacoma ([details](#)).



GREG KUCERA GALLERY

Seattle native Charles LeDray's framed fragments of wrinkled white men's shirts on black backgrounds, painstakingly made by hand like all the artist's fabric sculptures, are a testimony to the absence in the language between his hands. My Father's Hands. This piece is at Greg Kucera's Gallery. Here is a closer by LeDray, a finger that has become nothing but a bone waiting for gay marriage to become legal.

When the afternoon sun hits the front window screenprinted with "Greg Kucera Gallery" at a certain angle, it casts a shadow that just spells "GAY," from the last letter in each word rising up vertically. And they try to see gay's not natural.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2012

VISUAL ART Queering the Art Museum Week on Slog, Part

2
posted by JEN GRAVES on WED, MAY 9, 2012 at 8:51 AM

Sophia Wallace was born in 1978 in Seattle. She went to high school at NOVA. Then she went to the University of Ghana, to Smith, and then to NYU. Last year she had a show of photographs and video at the Vienna Kunsthalle, and now a selection of those works appear back here in Seattle, at the Photo Center Northwest's show *Author and Subject*.

Her series is called *On Beauty*. She hired male models, but shot them in "feminized" style: their bodies partly concealed, partly exposed; their gazes lowered, indirect; their expressions innocent yet come-hither; wearing makeup applied to highlight feminine aspects and diminish masculine aspects of their features. She simply treated the male models the way female models are typically prepared and photographed, in advertising, in magazines, in much art.



This one is called *Untitled (Purity)*. By Sophia Wallace.

It's surprising and revealing how strongly the construction of femininity comes through, despite the fact that the models are plainly men. The clash of genders is apparent, even though the pictures are plain, understated, polished, entirely nonaggressive. The limitations of what we are each expected, or allowed, to do with our bodies are plain to see. Men just don't hold their hands, or their heads or shoulders, that way.



This one is called *Untitled (Cheaty)*. By Sophia Wallace.

There's also a video playing in the gallery, with headphones. On the screen each model appears in two views, frontal and profile, for a few seconds, silent, as the artist asks questions. The models' faces appear to be registering the questions and thinking about them, but they never answer. They remain modest, like classically agreeable females: seen, not heard.

The questions are about the experience of being photographed. "What was it like being posed the way I posed you? Did you ever feel that your body was not safe?" "How do you feel if someone says you're effeminate?" "What does it feel like as a male model to stand in for the idealized man?" "Do you like being looked at?" "What does it mean to be a man? Do you feel pressure to be strong all the time?" "What's the

experience like of having to make yourself appear available to both men and women?" The viewer formulates rolling answers.

For the exhibition in Vienna, the kunsthalle released a very good video interview with Wallace. I recommend [watching the whole thing](#). She explained that some of the models said they felt liberated being shot this way. But they all wiped off the makeup before going outside.

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