

# PERSONALS

## HOW TO PLACE AN AD

It's free!!! Just send us your ad with your name, complete address & phone number. All of these will be kept in our strictest confidence, babykins. And then all you have to do is wait by the mailbox for tons & tons of letters requesting your personal (& we're talking very personal) attention.

## TO ANSWER AN AD:

Place your letter in a sealed & unstamped envelope. Write in pencil and in the top right corner of the envelope, the drawer number of the ad you are responding to. Next put the envelope(s) plus \$5<sup>00</sup> for each contact (in cash or cheque/money order payable to genderpress) in another envelope & mail it to us at:

"gendertrash/personals"  
box 500-62,  
552 Church St,  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4Y 2E3

Please remember: no money no response. *gendertrash* can't live only on good intentions.

The editor & publishers of *gendertrash* assume no responsibility or liability for any meeting(s) resulting from these services.



### Bi-Curious

Post-op TS woman, single, french speaking, socially active, good natured, early forties, curvaceous. Recently found myself attracted to women. Would like to practise my english and explore my bisexuality with transsexual or genetic women. - *Quebec City # 170*

### Exploring Mind

Sincerely sadistic masochist (and a real sweetheart besides). Actually just an actively exploring and curious mind trapped in the body of a statuesque, ice-blue-eyed & make-up-fluent girl-type guy(?) with firm, ripe bosoms. I'm all of it and none of it - if you're similar or can in any way relate, let's talk, okay? - *Toronto # 210*

### Femme Seeks Butch

Desperately wants strong short-haired, no dress, no makeup, no purse, no high heels, good looking butch type, pre/non/post-op TS woman for great hugs, play fighting & outdoor fun. I'm a bright & cute 20ish TS femme - *Toronto # 150*

### French Man

Straight, but open-minded French genetic man, late 30's, attractive, business type, seeks good-looking & intelligent MTF TS for ongoing relationship. Discretion & respect a must. - *Toronto # 230*

### Gender Oriented Genetic

I am a gender-oriented genetic man who is drawn to TS's. Also am a bit of a cross-dresser. I would like to find a cute, smart TS who seeks a lover/friend/or relationship. I have many cultural interests from A to Z (abnormal psychology to art to avant garde novels). My favourite author is Jack Kerouac, father of the beat generation and son of French Canadians - pacifist, Zen seeker, jazz disciple, etc. - *Pennsylvania area # 100*

### Gender Outlaw

Gender outlaw into zines alternative music, cuts and 90210. Seeks funky TS/TG/TV/DQ who doesn't shop from Tapestry (and also can't afford to) for dancing, demos, researching TG history, hanging out & ? Way bilingual, way bisexual too. - *Montréal # 160*

### In Search of a FTM

Genetic woman, french, 25, red-head, mature & insightful, seeks sensitive, politically aware, intelligent, sexy FTM with a sense of humour, who likes children, for friendship and more... - *Montréal # 120*

### Party Girl

French crazy smoking, drinking, wild partying genetic girl wants to meet TS/TG girls with a brain for friendship, watching TV, eating junk & nights out. - *Toronto # 270*

### Sexy Femme TS

Beautiful model-type transsexual, 25, tall, slim, sexy, feminine figure, long curly brown hair, blue eyes. Seeks cute young (18+) guy for friendship plus ? - *Toronto # 190*

### TS Angel

Young but mature MTF Angel. Very beautiful, soft, sweet and sincere, but strong and assertive. Seeks unattached, intelligent, pro-feminist, non-smoker, vegetarian, attractive man for stable relationship, based on affection not garter belts... - *Toronto # 130*

### TS Lesbian Wanted

Non-transsexual lesbian, trans-curious, presently living in Montréal but planning to move to another planet soon. Would like to correspond with and/or meet a soft-core feminist transsexual lesbian. Must be open-minded, love kids and travelling. - *Montréal # 110*

### TS Man Wanted

Would like to meet a very masculine, confident, passable FTM for friendship and/or more. I'm a very feminine attractive 25 year old TS woman. Must be caring and open minded. - *Toronto # 150*

### TS Woman Wanted

40 years old TS woman would like another intelligent, mature, political, vegetarian, non-smoker, non-drinking, quiet TS woman, 30-40, for friendship. Operative status unimportant. No makeup sessions nor lingerie parade, please. - *Toronto # 160*

— gendertrash #3 —

Some kind of we  
Curated by Dallas Fellini  
September 12, 2024–December 15, 2024  
Art Gallery of Guelph

# A (pre)history of t4t

Before the internet was available for public use, trans people sought each other out through groups devoted to trans activism and trans social bonds. In the 60s, 70s, and 80s—prior to a moment where global connectivity was an expected and immediate reality—we looked to trans support groups, social groups, and activism organizations for connection. These groups began to form a social fabric of trans togetherness in north america. Important to this moment was the development of self-published newsletters, zines, and other publications devoted to connecting trans community members. From this era emerged a print history of trans people sharing life-saving knowledge with each other, forming community across geographies, and disseminating trans cultural production within trans-run networks of distribution.

Self-published print media like *Metamorphosis Newsletter/Metamorphosis Magazine* (1982–1988), published in Toronto by Rupert Raj, combined the dissemination of practical information and trans artistic expression to support and connect trans communities. On the pages of *Metamorphosis*, informational resources for transsexual men seeking access to surgery and hormones were brought together with poetry and personal essays submitted by the publication's readership. Eager

calls from readers for penpals and correspondence with other trans people featured prominently in the personals section of the publication, a testament to the urgent need for community connectivity in this era.<sup>1</sup> *Metamorphosis* was able to fill this gap, forming a connective tissue that brought together previously isolated community members, allowing them to organize and usher in a new era of trans rights organizing. Amidst bleakly dehumanizing mainstream representations of transness and devastatingly minimal knowledge of trans needs within cis institutions, Raj disseminated information, resources, and peer support to other trans people.

The trans-run zine *gendertrash from hell* was another significant canadian publication within this history, created and distributed from 1993 to 1995 by collaborators and partners Mirha-Soleil Ross and the late Xanthra Phillipa MacKay. MacKay and Ross's zine sought to give "a voice to gender queers, who've been discouraged from speaking out & communicating with each other."<sup>2</sup> The publication was manifold in content, featuring poetry and artwork, personal ads submitted by readers, practical resources, and articles about trans activism, sex work decriminalization, prisoners' rights, trans health advocacy, racism, and transphobia. *gendertrash* embodies

a legacy of trans activism and community-making that prioritizes platforming a shared culture for and by transsexual and transgender people. *gendertrash* acted as a galvanizing force that allowed trans people across Canada and beyond to escape isolation and form community, while also distributing information that dispelled transphobic myths, contributing to trans activism and organizing. In this sense, *gendertrash* performed a t4t ethos, connecting trans people with each other during a period where isolation and loneliness were often defining characteristics of trans experiences.

T4t, meaning “trans for trans,” is shorthand that emerged in the early 2000s, used in Craigslist personals by transgender and transsexual people seeking relationships with other trans people. These personals became a new iteration of the newsletter and zine circuits that originally connected trans communities and galvanized trans rights movements in Canada in previous decades. The personals published in *Metamorphosis* and

*gendertrash*—through which trans people would seek each other out for correspondence, companionship, and hookups—undergo a digital transformation, benefiting from the immediacy of the Internet and Craigslist’s use of geotagging. Though the term emerged out of this context oriented towards sexual and romantic relationships between trans people, t4t has come to encapsulate practices of solidarity, mutual aid, and cultural production within trans communities.<sup>3</sup> In contemplating t4t as a political orientation, a line can be drawn extending back to the DIY newsletters and zines of earlier decades, which invested in creating platforms for trans people to share art and strategies for survival, and in mobilizing trans people to organize for their collective rights. T4t encapsulates these actions, and importantly connects them with trans love and trans sexuality, positioning these experiences as similarly invested in manifesting new conditions for oneself.

# Into the now

These histories mark the point from which this exhibition takes its departure. *Some kind of we* features works that approach t4t sensibilities, emphasizing networks of trans relationality, self-representation, cross-generational inheritance, desire, and love. The works brought together in this exhibition offer candid depictions of t4t love and organizing, reflecting an ongoing, intergenerational tradition of trans-centered artistic production in Canada over the course of three decades. The title of this exhibition, borrowed from an Ari Banias' poem from his 2016 book *Anybody*, speaks to the tenuous nature of naming and operating in collectivity, prompting questions around how trans togetherness and community are constituted, how terms like *us* and *them* are defined, and who they are defined for.<sup>4</sup> While t4t might offer a form of belonging, collectivity, or even community through conjuring a space separate from cis-centric worldviews, when engaged as an "uncritical utopian horizon" t4t holds the potential to enable harm by constructing a tenuous and uneven trans "we."<sup>5</sup> While this "we" is imperfect, it offers up space to contemplate a trans history of speaking to and supporting each other, and an opportunity to think deeply about which aspects of these practices might continue to serve us.

*Some kind of we* looks at how t4t sensibilities and practices have been carried into the present, considering what it would mean to centre trans audiences amidst extractive engagements with transness in the arts, and how we might benefit from removing ourselves from cis-centric ways of understanding transness.<sup>6</sup> This exhibition offers an experiment in t4t exhibition modelling, combining multiple dissemination strategies to prioritize experiences of trans audiences. A "distributed exhibition" runs parallel to the physical exhibition on view at the Art Gallery of Guelph, emphasizing the connective role of distributed media such as video and self-published zines and newsletters within trans histories of pre- and early-internet activism and community-building in Canada.

In the gallery, visitors encounter *Gendertroublemakers* (1993), a video work by Mirha-Soleil Ross and Xanthra Phillipa MacKay, originally disseminated through *gendertrash from hell*. Readers of the zine in Canada and beyond could fill out an order form to get their hands on more issues of *gendertrash*, and had the option to mail-order videotapes produced by Ross and MacKay as well. *Gendertroublemakers* was one of these videos, and features the two artists candidly discussing their past experiences with gay and

straight cis men, and their unabashed attraction to other transsexual women. The t4t care imbued into *Gendertroublemakers* is located not only in Ross and MacKay's expression of devotion to each other, but also in their advocacy for trans communities. Home video camera footage of the two artists kissing and lying in bed together is interspersed with intimate, video-diary shots in which they each speak about their experiences, demanding that non-transsexuals stop trying to define their sexualities for them. They assert: "We have our own culture, language, stories, and thus it is time for us and only us to document ourselves." The video forwards a call for cultural production by and for trans people, emerging from a history of developing connective networks between a dispersed trans population in Canada.

Produced just over two decades after *Gendertroublemakers*, *polished* (2016), by B.G-Osborne in collaboration with Benjamin Da Silva, plays across two monitors mounted on particle board. In their two-channel video, B.G-Osborne and Da Silva explore t4t relationality in a similarly candid and intimate tone. The artists are shown sitting in a bath together and shaving their faces, their conversation jumping from t4t dynamics, to mental health and substance use, to their own experiences in each

of their transitions. Sentiments and interpersonal dynamics from *Gendertroublemakers* are echoed into this video: a trans past fuses into a trans present. *polished* puts focus on trans intimacy, sexuality, and personal narratives, while discussions of mental health and addiction allow for a non-utopic and nuanced perspective of t4t to become visible, emphasizing the sometimes arduous nature of navigating relationality while trans.

In a third video work, *this caress fathoms* (2024), collaborators and partners Daze Jefferies and B.G-Osborne put forward an ambient poetic correspondence. Manifesting trans intergenerational longing, the video creates a transient space, accompanied by a sung and spoken poem in which the two artist's voices fuse into one another. Similarities in Jefferies' and B.G-Osborne's voices forge an aural togetherness, drawing on trans vocal malleability. An ethereal soundscape combines with childhood home video footage featuring bodies of water, overlapped by a hypnotic revolving interpretation of a sand dollar. A continuation of their collaborative work that positions water as a connector to trans foremothers, this video produces a rural topography of trans experience and intergenerational longing, connecting the two artists'

respective upbringings in Kawartha Lakes, Ontario and Bay of Exploits, Newfoundland through their proximities to bodies of water.

Here in the gallery, these videos stagnate, their artistic power inhibited by barriers to reaching the trans communities who may be implicated in and impacted by these works. These videos, exhibited in a gallery setting, contrast the original dissemination of *Gendertroublemakers*, where at-home viewing and mail-order VHS allowed access to trans cultural production regardless of location and enabled a system of trans-national-trans-relationality to emerge. What does it mean to exhibit works like these, some of which put forward intimate and often intra-community discussions into a gallery—a space where trans people are not typically well-represented within visitor demographics? How does the gallery as a structure hinder a project like this, which draws from legacies of cultural production oriented towards connecting remote communities?

In navigating questions of accessibility and reach, we can look back to t4t methods of network-building and information dissemination to aid in resolving the disparity between who this exhibition is oriented towards and the reality of audience demographics at the AGG and other canadian galleries. In addition to being screened in the gallery, QR codes for digital viewing of the featured video works are enclosed

in envelopes and sent out from the AGG to a list of trans registrants, allowing a second, amorphous space for trans people to engage with these works. Through this mail art action, *Gendertroublemakers* is returned to the mail-order distribution that it was originally born into.

Accompanying the dispatched videos are a series of print multiples constituting a project by Cleopatria Peterson—works that offer a material intimacy to recipients similar to that of a zine. In the gallery, the prints act as exhibition takeaways: objects that a viewer can sit with, hold, and take home if they desire. These takeaways repeat themselves onto the doorsteps and into the mailboxes of distributed exhibition recipients, building on trans mail-based practices like early trans zines and newsletters that were sometimes the only way that trans people could connect with each other. Peterson's illustrated mock newspaper *The Transgender Times* (2024) features a personals section evoking the origins of t4t, as well as an interview between the artist and their trans friends that speaks to the t4t relationality at the centre of this project. Peterson's prints are accompanied by a print supplement to Daze Jefferies' and B.G-Osborne's video work, as well as reproduced pages from *gendertrash*. One featured print by Peterson, *Trans Prayer* (2024), presents a poem that offers protection for a trans person who carries it with them.

They instruct their reader: “weave and sculpt a place to hold this body used to hard work.” Accompanying Peterson’s poem is a reprint of “Self Blessing Ritual,” authored by Isis and published in the second issue of *gendertrash*, gesturing towards an intuitive trans lineage and cross-generational inheritance that materializes throughout this exhibition.

Through its distributed component, *Some kind of we* performs an experiment in t4t exhibition-making, the distributable quality of print and video allowing for a continued tradition of by-trans-for-trans models of cultural production and dissemination. While *Some kind of we* engages t4t topically, the distributed portion of this exhibition adopts a t4t methodology to prioritize trans audiences, locally and beyond, reproducing

trans histories of organizing into the present. These methodologies have served trans communities for decades, but perhaps there is a particular relevance of t4t today—t4t networks of communication can escape ever-present expectations of representations of transness oriented towards cis audiences. To these ends, *Some kind of we* holds the capacity to trouble expectations of how transness manifests in the gallery and who representations of transness are oriented towards. While far from uncomplicated ideas of togetherness and utopia, a vision of t4t and a tangled and sometimes difficult type of “we” emerges from both within and beyond the walls of the Art Gallery of Guelph.

—Dallas Fellini

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## Endnotes

- 1 Rupert Raj, *Metamorphosis* 1 no. 4 (1982): 6.
- 2 Mirha-Soleil Ross and Xanthe Phillipa MacKay, *gendertrash from hell #1* (Toronto: Genderpress, 1993), 2.
- 3 Cameron Awkward-Rich and Hil Malatino, “Meanwhile, t4t,” *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (2022): 2.
- 4 Ari Banias, *Anybody* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 3–4.
- 5 Cameron Awkward-Rich and Hil Malatino, “Meanwhile, t4t,” *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (2022): 3.
- 6 Hil Malatino, “Future Fatigue: Trans Intimacies and Trans Presents (or How to Survive the Interregnum),” *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (2019): 654.

Cover image: “Personals” from *gendertrash from hell #3* (1994), page 41.  
Courtesy of Mirha-Soleil Ross and The ArQuives.



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