

#FF0000 by tom manzanarez

In July of 2017, Oregon's Transportation Commission moved forward with a decision that allowed Oregonians to select *M*, *F*, or *X* as their gender on licenses and identification cards, making the state the first to offer legal non-binary identification in the United States. For the first time, gender non-conforming US citizens gained the opportunity to break away from the male/female identification binary, insofar as legal documentation is concerned. Yet, inherent to the *X* identity is a complicated irony of its limitations: by moving outside of the dimorphic male/female model, *X* literally crosses out the possibility of gender.

Is this utopia or is this denial? Is this liberation or erasure?

tom manzanarez's work in **#FF0000** touches on the semiotics of identification and identifiers as a gender non-conforming person, exploring both its possibilities and limitations. Deeply intertwined with the work is what art historian and theorist David Getsy describes as *transgender capacity*: "the ability or the potential for making visible, bringing into experience, or knowing genders as mutable, successive, and multiple.... In other words, transgender capacity is the trait of those many things that support or demand accounts of gender's dynamism, plurality, and expansiveness."¹

By stripping them down to their most direct representations, manzanarez's work points at the absurd fallibility of current delineations of gender, sexuality, and queerness. "The dimorphic model of sex and the binary count of gender—not to mention the assertion of their static natures—are never adequate ways of knowing the sophisticated and divergent modes of existence that people enact," writes Getsy. "Such strictures always encode their own possibilities for collapse and deconstruction, and transgender capacity erupts at those moments when such reductive norms do not hold."

I often speak to queer artists of previous generations about finding subversion in explicit sexuality—warranted by the deadly silence around the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. Of course, this approach was not only important but incredibly necessary for those generations' liberations and struggles. But now we must think about how to evolve our language and semiotics to match the evolving and expanding experience of queerness and (trans)gender(ness). Current and upcoming generations face new struggles that require new subversive strategies. When does spit or ejaculation stop defining masculinity? When does faggot stop defining queerness? Can *X* truly subvert *M/F*?

Jason N. Le, curator
Graduate Curatorial Fellow, Fall 2022

¹ David Getsy, *Abstract Bodies: Sixties Sculpture in the Expanded Field of Gender* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 34-35.

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for the non-conforming, trans, the others, the neuro-divergent, the queers, the aliens, the freaks, the fags

#FF0000 presents an exhibition of recent photographs, installation, and performance work by tom manzanarez. Centering their experience as a gender non-conforming person, manzanarez examines the ways in which the gender binary system works to define, restrict, and ultimately minimize them and those within their communities.

#FF0000 is the hexadecimal color value made of 100% red in a RGB color space. Potent with associations, the presence of red within the exhibition space stretches connotations of rage, pride, violence, and danger. manzanarez's work reflects the quite literal trampling done unto them as well as the fight to rise from the futile athleticism of upholding gender roles centered around 'man' and 'woman'.

#FF0000 is on display at Gallery B10 at the Pacific Northwest College of Art November 3-18, 2022.

Exhibited Works, clockwise from entrance

self-portrait looking up

2022

digital print

42" x 56"

faggot

2022

series of archival digital prints

8" x 10"

man-up

2022

video installation

self-portrait looking down

2022

digital print

42" x 56"

THERE IS NO X IN TRANS

2022

durational live-performance

RED F(l)AG

2022

installation of american flag with red latex paint

tommanzanarez.com
entry code: REDF(l)AG