

Notes on Gathering

Dirt.

dykes day

Hermetic State

Sadie Barnette

MUSE(O)FIRE

Cieara Adams

Dirt.

Designed and printed on the occasion of Sadie Barnette's Washington, D.C. installation of The New Eagle Creek Saloon at STABLE arts.

Publisher: Dirt

Editors: Ani Bradberry, Martina Dodd, Andy Johnson, Ikram Lakhdhar, Jordan Martin, Georgie Payne, & Valerie Wiseman

Contributors: Ceara Adams, Sadie Barnette, Ani Bradberry, Fabiola Ching, Ikram Lakhdhar, Mayah Lovell, MUSE(O)FIRE

Design: Andy Johnson

Copyeditors: Georgie Payne & Ani Bradberry

Acknowledgements

Sincere gratitude to our collaborators—Hermetic State, dykes day, Mayah Lovell, Ceara Adams, Krystal C. Mack, MUSE(O)FIRE, and Sadie Barnette. Thank you to STABLE for the opportunity to gather such a stunningly talented group of creative individuals. Sadie, Maleke Glee, Jessica Woodson, and Silky Sullivan pulled off an incredible exhibition and community space for the DMV, by the DMV.

© 2023 Dirt, Hermetic State, dykes day, MUSE(O)FIRE, Ceara Adams, & Sadie Barnette.

All images are courtesy of the artists unless otherwise noted. Certain images and materials have been printed under the Code of Fair Use.

>> www.dirtdmv.com
>> [youvegotdirt \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:youvegotdirt@gmail.com)

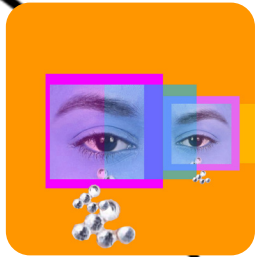
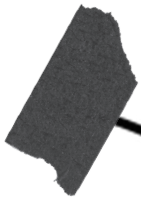
Dirt is an independent platform, collective, and resource for accessible critical arts discourse. Originally founded in the DC, Maryland, Virginia (DMV) area, *Dirt* focuses on direct engagement with artists, culture, and the forces that impact them. With that in mind, our approach is not limited by geography. We are interested in tracing the overlaps, exchanges, and conversations amongst our peer art communities.

In an increasingly jargon-ridden and inaccessible contemporary art field, *Dirt* is interested in alternative and critical approaches to addressing arts, politics, and culture. By way of our collective approach, *Dirt* creates a space in which our editors, contributors, readers, collaborators, and peers have the space to explore, discuss, interpret, question, critique, and share. *Dirt's* mission is to push and challenge the idea of what critical arts discourse looks like while discovering our own individual critical voices.

Table of Contents

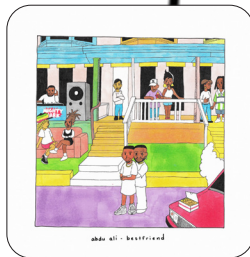
6	MUSE(O)FIRE Mixtape <i>Intro</i>
8	The Generosity of Queer Spaces: A Dialogue
32	Reimagining Utopia: A Menu for Liberation
36	MUSE(O)FIRE Mixtape <i>Outro</i>
38	Bios

MUSE (O)FIRE

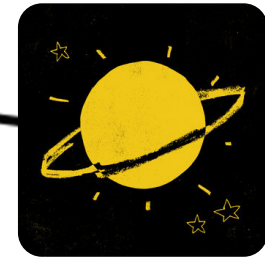


A+o
NAT
Wide Eyes

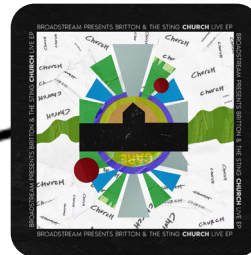
My Best Friend
Abdu Ali
My Best Friend



RARE ESSENCE_
TMA_83 BPM
Kelela, Rare Essence
TAKE ME A_PART,
THE REMIXES




Venus - Black Science
Orchestra Remix
Emma-Jean Thackray,
Black Science Orchestra
Venus



Blackstronauts
Britton & the Sting
Church Live EP

MIXTAPE

The Generosity of Queer Spaces: A Dialogue



*Dialogue
edited for
clarity.

In this conversation, Dirt editors Ani Bradberry and Ikram Lakhdhar, artist Sadie Barnette, publisher Fabiola Ching, and artist/poet Mayah Lovell explore the importance of mourning queer ancestors, the impact of a work such as *dykes day, a holigay*, and the act of defiance and generosity displayed at the Eagle Creek Saloon, the first Black-owned gay bar in San Francisco. They discuss the impact of the bar on the community, the need to create queer spaces, and the process of self-discovery and memory in their artistic endeavors. The conversation highlights the power of storytelling, the fluidity of art forms, and the significance of creating spaces that foster joy, inclusivity, affirmation, and connection.

Sadie Barnette To start off, The New Eagle Creek Saloon is a living, breathing monument, altar, bar, stage, platform, invitation that honors my father's bar, the Eagle Creek Saloon, which was the first Black-owned gay bar in San Francisco that ran from 1990-93. The presentation of Eagle Creek at STABLE is the fifth iteration. It's just really been exciting to see what different orbits and work and artists get pulled into this ever increasing crew of Eagle Creek VIPs. I'm excited for exactly this type of conversation and getting to know what other folks are working on in the name of our queer ancestors and queer futures.

Fabiola Ching Hi. I am very honored to be talking with you guys today. My name is Fabiola. I run an experimental literary house called Hermetic State, at least that's how I refer to it. We recently published *dykes day, a holigay*, which is an anthology of prose, fiction, and poetry imagining a fictional lesbian surrealist holiday. It began from Mayah's manuscript and evolved to include several other contributors. I'm really excited to talk about tangibly creating worlds and doing devotional work in that sense.

Mayah Lovell Hi, everyone. I'm Mayah. It's really great to be talking to everyone today. Thanks to Dirt for hosting. I'm a multidisciplinary artist. I work in a multitude of mediums—performance, painting, and writing, often to explore the vulnerability of lesbianism. I'm a self-taught Caribbean-American artist, and my work is centered in Black lesbianism. I've been writing a lot for the past several years as an extension of the way I communicate about spirituality and lesbianism. I wrote *dykes day* through a workshop of imagining a holiday—the people who would be there, what you would do, what family members would come, and what food you would have.

A lot of my work honors queer ancestors and Caribbean spiritualists, so I'm really interested in the way you [Sadie] mentioned your father's saloon as an altar. I have done a lot of archival work with Hermetic State, for several years, and it's been a blessing to have a project that's so multimedia and experimental and be able to talk to different artists about ways to expand on that and how we meet and intersect. I also worked really closely with Fabiola on experimenting with ways that we can center Black dykehood.

Every time I read "On the Corner of Michigan and First - Spring 1985" (*dykes day, a holigay*, pg. 5) I'm blown away. When I envisioned *dykes day*, it was so much about, like I said, what friends are coming to this parade and who are we inviting, and what family members are coming to just be like, "Yay, dykes!" There's just so many things that can go along with that.

Fabiola wrote four vignettes for the book, and my favorite is "On the Corner of Michigan and First." What follows is a series of fictional vignettes that take place at McMillan Park in Washington, DC between the years 1985 through 2016. I really love how they brought in a totally different time frame and wrote about the ways that dykehood is in the past, the future, the present: expansive, showing different dimensions and different sounds, different layers in guttural bodily aspects of how we can imagine dykehood on Michigan Avenue in DC. The book has a lot of DC roots, and I just really love how intentional they are about the setting of our city.

Fabiola I always describe "dykes day [day of]" as the catalyst for this book to me. When Mayah sent it to me, I was like, oh—this is what we're doing. It really set the tone in terms of imagery and sensory and just everything:

dykes day [day of]
[excerpt]

By Mayah Lovell

peng girls
open to quench desire
seeing golden whirls dancing
their arrival clothed over ovule stalks
of chartreuse growing under stiletto worlds
blades of grass clumping at their heels
sputing nectar drips me

in dreams
of dost sounds echoing
moan gurgle rasp gawk
ripe morsels grasp velvet durag day-blips
do rags whimper your yesterday, girl?
doughkneading her needs with

fingers ullr
the protection of khephera
of them ladies hems skirting a dance
becoming god's favorite be cumming
lovers breathing in deities of it

READING! it's giving freyja lips rohan
SEETHING! it's reading for their neck
GIVING! its seething the bachelor's faggotry
ass shaking
cheek 2 cheek

Mayah sent me about three poems, which were all very vivid, very lush and very impactful. I was thinking, this could be one of those old radio shows from the 1930s that were very vivid and almost scary in how vivid they were. So I think that's what the project of *dykes day* was: to make something as dramatic poets, which Mayah and I definitely are. We thought, how can we make it so tangible and so tactile that you can feel it in your hand—our honest version.

Ani Bradberry I'm interested in this idea of thinking about it as this dramatic radio show before it even existed. Something that I feel is a common thread between your interests and Sadie's is where stories, memories, and art co-exist in multiple mediums. There is a moment in the Montez Press Radio session [released January 12, 2023], which is probably one of my favorite things that you two have shared with us, where Mayah was talking with Maya Martinez about making sculpture from writing, which really stuck with me. There's this thought that writing, whether it's a play or a poem, can be translated intuitively into a spatial piece or object. How do you incorporate writing or memories when making an installation? Or, how can a piece of writing have a future of many possible iterations in different mediums simultaneously?

Mayah Thanks for bringing that up, that conversation with Montez Press Radio was really fun, and we started digging in pretty deep at that point. I think I was referring to something that my teacher, Elaine Khan, has talked about: that writing is an object and it's not just about being able to have objects within the writing, but using objects and bringing them to living form. She's a poet, and I've written tons of poetry in her classes. She is the one who made me really be able to say, okay, this door is a living, breathing door—what kinds of things can get through that door and bring that about in poetry. That's the poetics of sculpture.

Gabrielle Octavia Rucker, who's an editor for *dykes day*, really helped shape a lot of perspectives for

"Messy in the Garden." The play is basically about these two giantesses that have a garden, and in the garden they have a strawberry patch and they find a little thief squirming and making noises, eating in their garden. They have exchanges until the thief is sucked into the mouth of one giantess lover and disintegrated. It's a lesbian body horror play. It's just three acts and it's a few pages. When we run it out, it's like a 30 minute play. In the book, it's the pink pages.

Gabrielle was like—well, everyone kept saying—how big are the strawberries if it's from a giant patch? Are the strawberries, like, the size of a human head? Then the little thief, how large is the little thief? We decided the little thief is regular human size. Then, we thought, is the strawberry the size of a car or the size of a tire? Using objects that we know as humans in this world and making it surrealist, trying to put into perspective for size and time and how we hear things, I think that's how I use sculpture in writing.

Ikram Lakhdhar I love that you construct different dimensions in your writing and have this incredible tactile way of building a world, a universe through writing. Have you thought about making this play into a performance or any aspects of the book into a live version?

Mayah Yes. We've done some run throughs for the play and created tracks for the narrator. They say "and then she walked this way and that way, and the giants bumped and thumped through the garden." We have plans to do some shows on the east coast for the play. It runs about 30 minutes and would have sort of an underground set with a few props. The way that the thief gets sucked into the mouth of the giantess is through the esophagus of one of the giantess lovers—using materials to build that esophagus structure, what it would even look like to build an esophagus, what materials we would use to do that on stage, how we engulf the thief in that esophagus, are all multimedia aspects to bring this work to life.

Ani That's a really great segue into your work, Sadie, where there's so much world-building. It's clear you want people to come in and experience their own story within the space. I think that is something really compelling about the New Eagle Creek Saloon, where it is a memory, or an altar, for a space that maybe no longer exists physically in the world, but it exists in so many ways through your experience, your family's experience, your community's experience, and you have this new iteration of it. I'd love to hear how you keep it alive and consider how *dykes day* has made a similarly "living" text that is super lush and could translate into other multimedia chapters in the future. I would love to hear about how you built this world and what you hope it'll mean for people who maybe had never heard of your father's bar and how it can differ in each city that it's in.

Sadie I think the reason there's so many outlets and available avenues for this project is just a response to me listening to what the project wanted, seeing what was happening, and realizing how many things could be folded into it. Really, my main reason for feeling a responsibility or a call to do this project was the fact that the name of my father's bar was potentially going to be lost to history. It wasn't one of those bits of San Francisco queer history that was in documentaries or often cited outside of the people who were there and experienced it. It wasn't something that grad students were studying or writing about. There's no Wikipedia page for it. So I just felt if I didn't tell this story, it would just be one of those things that was lost to history. While telling the story and calling out the specific names that I know, I'm also always thinking about if Eagle Creek was almost lost to history, what else has been lost to history? We know that there are gaps in our memories and in the archives, official and not official, so what can we do to hold space for those things that can't necessarily be recalled or named?

In answering that call, it just seemed very obvious that it had to be an actual bar. I couldn't make an exhibition of photographs on the wall or drawings about Eagle Creek. It had to be a bar, that just seemed obvious. It had to be a party. It had to be loud. It couldn't be super reverent and precious. It had to just be about it. It had to have a bass to it that was loud enough that the ancestors could feel that this party was for them and not just sitting around with distant observing. Sometimes you can create a distance when you're looking back at something, but I didn't want it to feel distant. I wanted it to feel like time had collapsed and you were actually at Eagle Creek in whatever plane that was possible on. As soon as we built this sculpture, we wanted to make it very welcoming. The U shape really teaches people how to behave at it—they just saddle up right to it.

It had to be a bar...it had to be a party. It had to be loud... it had to just be about it. It had to have a bass to it that was loud enough that the ancestors could feel that this party was for them... “

The first day that we opened it to the public at The Lab in San Francisco in 2019, I looked at it—the neon sign, the stools, the plexi, the brass—and I was like, it's a beautiful sculpture, but let's see what happens. By the end of that night, it was no longer a sculpture, it was a place, and it was a temple. It was a place where something happened. What

happened there very quickly became the artwork. Ever since then, I have been able to invite people to do dance performances, to do karaoke, to do film screenings. We've had live bands, we've had Warriors watch parties, because it's a bar and you can do that. All these different ways of thinking and making and being together become a part of it.

There's also the Eagle Creek zine that goes with it, which contains most of the archival things that I've been able to collect around the bar, which hasn't been many—a few photographs, a few newspaper clippings—and then that zine gets to move in its own way. The video documentation from certain performances has subsequently become its own medium. Things are constantly being folded into it and recycled, iterated to the point where maybe at some point this is a film project, but it's really just been an invitation.

I also think of the growing roster of people and collectives that have participated in the Eagle Creek Saloon now. At some point, I want to make something like a yearbook of sorts that would have everybody who's participated and contributed. That alone could be its own document, its own glossary of what people are working on. It's the outfits that people wear when they show up to the Eagle Creek, it's the conversations that the bartender facilitates, and it's the phone numbers that are exchanged. Everything that happens within it gets to be the work—it's fun and beautiful, and also stressful and annoying sometimes.

Ani It's a fully functioning bar—that alone is so much work. It's such a meaningful decision to just go for joy and happiness and a shared experience over maybe a more formal, technical, archival-detail method. I think that's something I can see simultaneously in *dykes day* and at The New Eagle Creek Saloon (and hopefully for the future of Dirt as well). There are moments where you have to decide how you honor a thing, a memory, a person, a story, and why not just prioritize feeling alive and feeling joy in each other's company? Archiving

through a museum approach of laying everything out to be absorbed, read, and understood as a linear narrative is the standard method I guess, but it seems people are starting to opt for the more joyful experience of a story in a way that's maybe more personal and communal and less objective.

There's this moment of an infinite pool of collaborators in both of your works, and in ours too with Dirt, where we rely and draw so much meaning from our collaborators. That definitely requires extra work, but the payback and the results are so inspiring. How have collaborators shaped your work and how do you keep things simultaneously adaptable but also rooted in your home? *dykes day* has contributors from everywhere, it's an amazing network of people. The New Eagle Creek Saloon has been everywhere—how do you define rootedness?

Fabiola Yeah, I mean, that's true. I would say, for me, being a writer is all about devotion and mirroring. I never really read books until I was ten. I just moved to a different country and I learned about people who had access to libraries and things like that. So one of my earliest memories that's not been darkened over by trauma is discovering *The Baby-Sitter's Club* books and Mary-Kate and Ashley books and really for the first time, that was my first true love story. This is how I care about something. So everything I do as a writer, as a publisher, or whatever, is based on that devotion. Collaboration has to come into play because *she* can get really insular. You can love your story so much and you can love your ideas so much—what is that song, she's like, "I got my mind"—I'm totally that way. I'm a Leo. But things can also get pretty insular and memory is so tricky. There's so many gaps and so many holes, and it's not a one-person job. It's not one person's job to reimagine or to world-build, and it can't possibly be.

dykes day was definitely an undertaking. I've done a lot of collaborative work since I was 17, for almost ten years. This was really immersive. We were in

the trenches. We were really working together for, like, I want to say, over a year of just going at it nonstop, because I've never made a book before. I've made small scale publications, but I've never made a book before. I've never worked with a team before, and there was a lot of learning and a lot of checking my own ego and my own ambitions. But I think it's necessary and I think that the only way it's going to smooth out like a pro is if you buff it right. So that's what collaboration is, and it's a really big part of what people call "the work," I feel.

DC has a really strong history of Black lesbianism in it, but it wasn't well known... by just writing a collective memory of what lesbians and dyke worlds did during that time, we built a sort of archive that needs to be here in 2023. “

I love the idea of someone reimagining a tactile bar, like the Eagle Creek Saloon, but also a bar that I think survives for a long time on its memories and the people that could regurgitate these memories and these mental images. To really take that and make it into something that people can interact with in multiple ways: you can party at the bar, you can also grieve at the bar, you can have a moment of solace at the bar. So that devotional work, it's not a solo thing, and it's not like a lot of

things happen when you do work like that. It's not something that you can plan. The only way that sort of magic happens is if you let other people experience it and touch it and change it in that way.

Mayah Yeah, I think that it's really interesting to think about the intersection between rootedness and memories. I believe one of my constant thoughts about art and writing, too, is that we make our memories. As a writer, I talk to poets a lot. You've got to lie to be a writer, and you've got to make shit up. People are like, how did you do this? How did you write it? Well, I just lied. I have to make memories.

When Sadie was talking about their father's bar, maybe not having a Wikipedia page or not letting that bar, the memory of it, go away...so many people move through it and live through it and exchange phone numbers in it, showing out with their outfits. By creating that live installation and allowing, like Fabiola said, that magic, the magic of just, like, being like, damn, well, I made it. Now people are going to visit it, and it's just going to move where it moves. I continuously think of the way the bar is like this traveling installation that's been here and there and here—and now it's in DC. That's pretty incredible for it to be this moving thing because it's going through so many lives, and people can continuously make memories there each time in the same way.

It makes me think of those vignettes from Fabiola, they are in the beginning of the book, too. It really touches me because we talked about the importance of how integral Black lesbianism is to queerhood in DC and had this conversation about where did the Black dykes of Logan Circle go? Today, Logan Circle is known for being one of the gay hubs of DC for mostly queer men and gay men.

DC has a really strong history of Black lesbianism in it, but it wasn't well known, and so by just writing a collective memory of what lesbians and dyke worlds did during that time, we built a sort

of archive that needs to be here in 2023. This is the book. See it, breathe it, live it. Think about music and dancing in the streets and stiletto heels clicking against the tile. How can our friends take this in and what do they want to receive? So I love the crossover between the bars being this celebratory state, but at the same time, I'm super heartfelt about the way that memory is. It can be sad to mourn this thing that is so important and mourn what it represents and its personal ties to family. We did have conversations about that when writing the book and even the process for the holiday workshop. In some cultures, especially not Western cultures, it can be a time for mourning. How can we mourn queer ancestors? So we have some dyke writers in the beginning of the book that really set the tone: some heartbreak stories, things that they thought were important to them and how they interpret their memories. In the same way, it's about joy and celebrating. There's still that background, too: taking something that is sad, like where did all the Black lesbians in Logan Circle go, but then you have two Black, dark-skinned lesbians of DC making that memory known.

I love Sadie's description of just coming and showing out and going to the bar. Live the bar, feel the bass at the bar. The ancestors need to hear it. It needs to be breathing and lived through as far as rootedness. It's interesting, I think what I'm describing is uprootedness and the freedom in that—the freedom in an artist making something.

I kept sending an early draft of three poems around to small contests. I was like, I think a Black lesbian that I already know and love should probably see this, and maybe Hermetic State wants to do something with this. And they were like, "yeah, I like it, but it needs to be more. I hear pots and pans and I hear music and dancing, and I think we should add a roster of people to it. Like, let's talk." Shit, I did not think we needed a roster of people on this thing. That wasn't my intention for it. But as soon as Fabiola said what they wanted to do with it for Hermetic State, as an artist, you give it to that

publisher and that editor and allow them to take reins as much as you can while maintaining your intentions. From there, it just unrooted and rooted in its own way.

We tried to keep the writers' roots in the DMV and to look at how mid-Atlantic dykes spread these interregional conversations around—how we see home and how we celebrate queerhood, specifically centering this idea that we're city dykes. We're not country dykes. Country dykes are cool, but that's just not where I'm from.

Sadie Even with the Eagle Creek, there's a lot of pain in the moment that the bar was created. It wasn't that my dad just said, "oh, you know, it would be a great business idea, I want to start a bar." It was really because of the racism that he and his friends were experiencing when they would go to the white gay bars in San Francisco. This was all throughout the late sixties, seventies, and eighties. The bar opened in 1990 because he and his friends would be met with such trash experiences. When they were going out, they would be asked for three forms of ID. Their dancing would be policed, their outfits would be policed. They would be ignored at the bar. Black bartenders and DJs were not getting hired at these bars. So really my dad opened this bar because they didn't have anywhere to be together. From the outset, it was an act of defiance. People were protesting these other bars. There was actually an anti-bias bar bill that had to be passed in the city of San Francisco because that's how prominent racial profiling was. From the beginning, it was a refusal of these other spaces and a creating of their own world out of necessity.

I see the ways that our communities overlap and watch out for each other, and so it never occurred to me that people wouldn't know that women were a part of Eagle Creek. I've had to spell that out a little bit for people just because, yeah, that's always a part of the way that folks roll together and a part of what made the space special. I could definitely even see *dykes day* at the Eagle Creek, some of the

visual graphics, some conversation—I could see this bar in that world. But it's just to say that women were always a part of the bar. DJs, bartenders, always a part of my dad's bar. I realized that I just took that for granted, but I also realized that a lot of people didn't know or understand that because it was predominantly a gay bar run by the boys, but because it was such a Black space, it was just very welcoming to everybody. There were always Latinx folks, there were always women. I think a lot of times women felt more comfortable in a Black space than at a white lesbian bar. So to me, that just always made sense.

Ani I love this idea of one landmark being all it takes to activate a memory, like the basilica mentioned in "On the Corner of Michigan and First - Spring 1985." That is all you need to set the stage, to tap back into that memory, even if you were a child. It means something for everybody because you can picture it in your head immediately. I'm curious about your material choices and if you include any hidden details in the saloon design, maybe through fabric or color? When you think about the Eagle Creek Saloon, are there things that maybe only you would notice and recognize?

Sadie One thing that Mayah said that I wanted to go back to was the idea of making your memories. One thing that people always ask me is if the bar looks like what the bar looked like. And I'm always like, not at all. For one thing, I didn't have a ton of documentation to tell me exactly what it looked like. Very quickly, I was able to abandon the idea of recreating it exactly. But then it was also a much more exciting opportunity for me to think about what I would remember of the bar. What memory would I create? What do my daydreams about the bar as a little kid or now look like? That's why it looks dream-like, almost toy-like. It's a bar about a bar. It's also very much in my aesthetic because I felt like the Eagle Creek would want everybody to turn up the volume in their own style and their own authorship. It would make sense that the bar

**We are really trying,
especially as queer people,
to reimagine and always put
in that generosity first.**



would be from me and of me as much as it's for my dad and for everybody who was a part of it. In some ways, it would be the most true and the most real if it was as unrealistic as possible. Also, I think it would feel more like how it felt, like when you remember something you always remember it well, not always depending on what it is, but a fond memory can become larger than life and everything can be like, oh yeah, it was glittering and it was this huge place. In reality, maybe it wasn't that, but that's what it felt like when you were feeling yourself at that bar.

In thinking of collaboration, I can just share one story that happened that just connected all the dots for me, which was that a DJ who I had known since my early days of going out to queer parties is this DJ called Black in the Bay Area. They've been spinning and doing parties and teaching other DJs for the past, like, 30 years. Only a few months ago, I heard from somebody that they had DJ-ed at my dad's bar, and I'm like, what? This is wild. So I called up Black and I was like, yeah, I heard you used to play records at my dad's bar. She couldn't believe it. She was like, "Wait, that's your dad? That's your *dad*?! That was the first person that let me play records at a party. The other DJ was out of town, so he let me come and play records." That was really her first "yes" is what she said. Like, the first person that said yes. So I'm thinking, like, literally because of the space that my dad had and the space that he shared and the yes that he gave to Black, fast

forward 20 years, I'm going out and I'm looking to find myself and my community and become myself, and I had a place to go because of the parties that Black was doing. So it's not abstract. It's literally the genealogy of my dad's space, if that hadn't been there then maybe I wouldn't have had spaces to go to later. So those are the things that just really connect it all home and also feel a bit faded and magical.

Mayah Yeah, that's such a cool piece of history. I love that.

Sadie It was special and then she was able to come back and DJ at the opening of The New Eagle Creek Saloon when it was at SFMoMA, she was also on the panel.

Fabiola We are really trying, especially as queer people, to reimagine and always put in that generosity first. So I can totally see that the one gay Black bar that's hospitable to everyone is where all the dykes are going to hang out. They're not going to hang out at the white left-wing bar because there just often tends to not be that sort of circulating generosity, which I think is what's happened with Logan Circle now. People sort of ignore that the bar scene has really taken off in a really intense way where it's centering money and status. These things are just not sustainable. It does not create any ecosystem that thrives.

Your story about your dad's bar and how it was hospitable to so many people reminds me of the Sapphire Sapphos who were the premier Black lesbian organization in DC. During the AIDS crisis they were very formidable in working with the gay community and gay men in DC and that's a very central part of their story and what they've done. It's good to always remember the little ways and big ways in which the circle keeps going.

Mayah Yeah, Sapphire Sapphos—that was one of the groups that centered *dykes day*. It began with three pages [of poetry] and Fabiola and I were talking: what are we bringing to this? What's happened

with DC? We just went through and we were like—Sapphire Sapphos—that needs to be like a center. Like how they went and flyer'd around, like, come to this party. The lesbians are doing this. Gay, queer, come to this. We open *dykes day* with this invitation. Like, the first page is this square puzzle poem that's like: come dance, faggots, bachelors. It's just like 36 six by six poems. We wanted to bring in the archival ways of traditional lesbianism—lesbians on the streets who went door to door protesting, getting people to protest on the streets. That way of inviting people and maintaining traditional archival ways of getting people out that's not just online, but really immersive—this real story of people doing things.

I really appreciate Sadie sharing that story with us about how women will come to the bar, Black women, it makes a lot of sense. Black people are like, yeah, come on. I totally heard some uncle just being like, "yeah, come on in, come on in." That's exactly how we are.

Ani Something that was on my mind in the Worms Magazine interview [published April 26, 2023] was when Fabiola was describing the early days of *dykes day*. Like, maybe you had just been sent Mayah's first poem that was the birth of the book, but you were describing this feeling before you started the project as a point in time when it felt "hard to sound like yourself." I think I see a common thread of self-discovery, and maybe not just on an individual level, but on a communal scale. How do you leave this project now that it's published, Fabiola and Mayah, or now that this bar installation is complete for you, Sadie? How have you found yourself now? How do you think of your past self before this ends? Did you think that it was a project of self-discovery, intentional or not? What are you left with these days, reflecting on it?

Fabiola I always think about what I don't know. Okay, so one of my favorite writers is this woman named Sarah Nicole Prickett. She did an interview, I think it was Eileen Myles or some other old white lesbian,

but she said writing a book or, really, finishing any major project, is like giving birth, and then you have to eat the placenta. That is honestly so true. But I really like what Mayah said about not feeling pressured to be rooted in the work. I'm down to pump and dump. I'm down to say listen, we did it. This was really fun. Let's check back in five years.

I think what is always thrilling to me is, well, for a long time, I was very frustrated about not sounding like myself, which is a thing that I still struggle with. It was very frustrating, but it also has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with time. It has everything to do with just you living your life every day. So that's very freeing for me, knowing that, all right, well, listen, that doesn't sound right, but maybe one day it will. As long as I can always return to myself and be like, is this something that if someone else made you would like a lot? Would you be moved by it? If I can answer yes to that, then I feel good about really anything that I do. I don't think anything's ever going to be perfect and I don't think anything's ever going to 100% sound like what I wanted it to at inception, but that's not really my goal. I'm always interested in how other people interact with it, what people see that you missed, or that you didn't know you were doing in the work. That's fun for me.

Sadie Yeah. I think for me, it's definitely been a journey and a teacher to do this project. I've learned a lot, which to me is just inherently uncomfortable. I don't like learning things. I like just already knowing stuff and being good at it. It sounds like a gentle stretch to say I learned a lot, but I mean it in a terrifyingly violent way, which is that I learned a lot about myself and had to step outside of the studio and step a little more in front of the camera, so to speak. A large part of the reason why I gravitated towards making visual art in the way that I had was because of the solitude and the quiet thinking time that I was able to have in the studio.

With creating this Eagle Creek project, it just blew that up for myself and all of a sudden I'm like, okay,

I'm hosting a bar, I'm producing concerts—why and how? But to me, it was just about listening to the work and rising to the occasion and stepping up and facing the parts of you that want to do that next thing and the parts of you that don't and trying to gather them all together.

I'm still learning and letting Eagle Creek evolve and figuring out what it needs. What are the parameters for it as it continues to travel to other institutions? Like, literally thinking about how many days of activation it needs versus days where you can look at it, in stillness. How many people from previous iterations need to be brought back in order for it to have continuity with the community that's growing? How many new programs should there be or programs specific to the city that it's in? All of these are things that I'm figuring out through trial and error or logistical constraints. There's always things to me that I'm wishing I could do over again after I've learned the lesson, which would just make life really long and impossible. I understand that that's not the point, but it's a tension between wanting it to be the highest level of execution that the artwork can be and also knowing that it's going to be a little bit messier than that. My involvement in it is going to be a little messier than that. It couldn't be as alive as it is without being a little messy.

Mayah Yeah, I relate to that a lot. As a visual artist myself, I've always thought that I can make the work, but I think part of my process has always been that I can make the work and have it and just continue working forever. But once it's put out there, once it's published, it's printed, it's exhibited, or someone buys the work and they have it, it's theirs and it's not mine anymore. So that's something that I have close to me. But then I feel, I don't know, something about *dykes day* the way Fabiola describes it as a birth. Then what did you say? Like eating the placenta. That feels more close too, because of how it started off as this small egg and then has expanded into so much. It's received by so many people. I still have friends—just this weekend, Pride

weekend—they're like, "what are you up to? What's going on?" It's like...*dykes day*. We're having a book. Like our book tour is next week. They're like, "where do I buy the book?" People are still asking where to get it. I've been working on this for two years, so it's everywhere. The point is that even though it's out and people know of these things, it's still a long road before it's realized and received in full. I love that question, Ani, because I think of the question of when, where, and how do you want this to be understood? In five years or ten years?

...you are paying homage to your ancestors, but you're also inserting yourself and recreating their memories with your own memories... you yourself are creating your own ancestors...

“

I think *dykes day* is the thing. It's like, remember this book that these two Black lesbians shared around DC and had so many publications and collaborations with and this is the book, and wow, they did that—it's a legend in a way. That's how I think of the bar. Sadie's bar is this iconic Black bar in Northern California, an amazing installation, and you're now talking about writing a documentary or a film. I think of the way that in five to ten years it will be something else.

I do have those really strong feelings, those sentiments like, wow, I should have done this or that with the book, or there was this issue there

that I wish could have been redone or something. You can't go back, so we allow it to just flourish on and meet and intersect where it can with other pieces of art. Just communicating our stories is so important, it taught me about myself as far as just letting go and allowing the art to take its course without me, or not without me. If you create the intention as the artist, then however it's received from the community and lived through can be a part of that conversation. But it's really just about letting that take place. Yeah, it's fun too. It's fun and hard. I'm glad to meet so many people along the way.

Ikram We started talking about how in each of your works you are paying homage to your ancestors, but you're also inserting yourself and recreating their memories with your own memories. So by the end of the conversation we're talking about how you yourself are creating your own ancestors, so later on for the next generation you're going to leave this world as a seminal ancestor yourself. So I think this continuous thread, the continuous line of preexisting to existing just really expands everything and is so profound and meaningful because here you're thinking about a past time in the present and in the future.

Sadie, I do want to ask you a question about the ways in which you were in conversation with your dad about the multiple iterations of the saloon and of the bar in different cities. What has been the core essence throughout and were there any elements that were surprising and whole for your father and for you?

Sadie Yeah, I mean, he's always a part of the conversation and thinking about what are the things that he wants people to know about. The bar, as well as a number of the other former members of the bar, have been able to come to different events. That always feels really special to have a very intergenerational queer space because a lot of times queer spaces are not the most intergenerational. Sometimes it's built around

self-discovery and you're doing that with peers that are your own age and obviously that is really important. But to have this family reunion vibe where it's my uncles, my dad's friends that are like my uncles, and also with all my friends, by the end of the evening, it's just this intergenerational party, I think that's been really special. Yeah, I mean, I feel very lucky that my dad is a living part of this work. He gets to be on the panels and gets interviewed and gets to have his own perspective on it. We sometimes disagree. We are of different generations and have different ways of seeing things.

I think that also is an important part of making it not too reverent. We're real people, and I think it's also been just nice to really see my father be, to have so many young people wanting to know more about this history and my dad's involvement

with the Panthers or his time working with Angela Davis. I don't think when he was doing any of these things he thought that people 30 years later were going to be so hungry and curious to know what those experiences were like. He's always like, "why do they want to interview me?" He had an amazing life, but it wasn't like, oh, this is iconic, this is a movie. It's your life and you're just doing what you think is the right thing to do. He's a really humble guy, so it's cool to be able to put a little bit of spotlight on him and just let him know that people are interested in the work that he dedicated his life to. That's really special. Thanks for asking.

Ikram Thank you all very much for your time. It's been such a pleasure to hear the fuller stories and inspiration behind *dykes day* and Eagle Creek. I look forward to more.

Reimagining Utopia:

Creating the menu for *dykes day* and Sadie Barnette's New Eagle Creek Saloon has been an incredible journey, not just in terms of culinary exploration, but as a catalyst for reimagining a dream world. This process has led to the creation of a queer-topia, a realm that embraces and celebrates my identity as a Black queer non-binary individual, as well as the rich tapestry of my multifaceted ancestors and our collective liberation. In this safe space I find solace, playfulness, and a profound opportunity to honor those who came before me, pursuing pleasure and joy as acts of resistance. Join me on this journey as we delve into a narrative that pushes the boundaries of reclamation and moves us forward.

A Menu for Liberation

Cieara Adams

The Power of Identity

Identity is a powerful force that shapes who we are and how we navigate the world. As a Black queer non-binary person, my existence is a testament to the resilience and strength of those who fought for our freedom, defying societal norms and challenging oppressive structures. Through this menu, I have been able to weave together the flavors and ingredients that reflect my lived experiences, honoring the struggles and triumphs of my ancestors while forging a path towards self-discovery and self-acceptance. Each dish becomes a metaphorical stepping stone in our collective journey towards liberation.

A Safe Place to Land

Within the realm of this dream world, I have found a safe place to land—a sanctuary where I can fully embrace my authentic self. The act of creating this menu has provided me with a sense of belonging, as if I have finally discovered a home where my identity is celebrated and cherished. It serves as a reminder that no matter how turbulent the outside world may be, we have the power to create our own havens, where our true selves can thrive without fear or judgment.

**Pursuing
Pleasure
and Joy** In the process of crafting this menu, I have come to understand the transformative power of pleasure and joy. By embracing the culinary arts as a form of self-expression, I have discovered new dimensions of happiness and fulfillment. The act of savoring delectable flavors and indulging in culinary delights has become an act of rebellion—an assertion that our joy is valid and worthy of celebration. Through this zine, we invite you to join us in reclaiming pleasure as an essential component of our liberation.

**Pushing
Reclamation
Forward** Our narrative is one of reclamation—reclaiming the stories of our ancestors, reclaiming our identities, and reclaiming our rightful place in society. This zine serves as a vessel for sharing our collective experiences and visions of a more inclusive and equitable world. It is a call to action, urging us all to challenge the status quo, dismantle oppressive systems, and push the boundaries of what is considered acceptable. Together, we can create a future that not only embraces our diverse identities but also celebrates them as powerful sources of strength and resilience.

Conclusion As I reflect on the journey of creating this menu, I am filled with gratitude and hope. Gratitude for the opportunity to honor my ancestors and celebrate my identity, and hope for a future where our dreams of liberation become a reality. This zine is a testament to the power of imagination, resilience, and the unwavering spirit of those who dare to dream of a better world. Let us continue to push forward, forging new paths of reclamation and paving the way for generations to come.

24 Hours
Boston Chery,
BEMATA
Channel 8 (Part I)



Spacefruit
Sa-ra Creative Partners,
Debi Nova
*Nuclear Evolution:
The Age of Love*

Golden Boys
Res
How I Do



Love Song #1
Meshell Ndegeocello
Comfort Woman

only think about you
Ray Winder
*only think about you
(Radio Edit)*



DJ set performed on
June 23, 2023 at the
New Eagle Creek Saloon
(Washington, DC).



Scan to enjoy the mix.

Bios



dykes day, a holigay is a multi-sensory anthology of prose, poetry and fiction, exploring a fictional surrealist holiday for lesbians. *dykes day, a holigay* is created by interdisciplinary artist and writer Mayah Lovell and published and edited by Hermetic State, an experimental literary house based in D.C.

Although lesbian community is historical to D.C., the city has very few lesbian spaces. In an emergent world in major change, safety and economic support from dyke curators provides transformative solutions in an environment wherein artistic lesbian preservation is crucial. As Washington D.C. continues to shift through capitalism and rapid gentrification, this project doesn't just serve as a method of self-preservation and memory work, but also as a stable and safe economic and creative endeavor.

Through immersive multisensory performances and displays, a broader community of interregional dykes everywhere can engage in playful and accessible ways to learn the history and celebrations arranged for and by dykes.

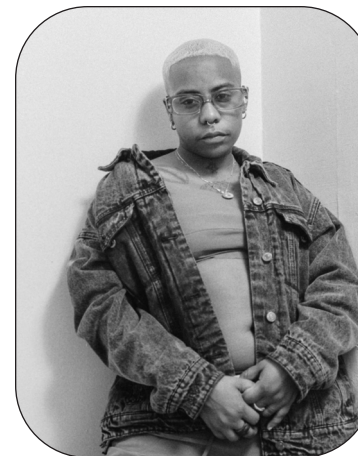
www.hermeticstate.com
www.dykesday.today

MUSE(O)FIRE is a US-based interdisciplinary artist with a love for booty shaking beats and music that gets your body moving. Blending genres of the African diaspora from Baltimore club to Baile Funke seamlessly. Their infectious smile and energy will lift your spirits and command you to the dance floor. Muse has played venues like NoBar, Mood Ring, HOIO, MOCADA, Basquiat's Bottle, Starr Bar, 3 Dollar Bill, Starr Bar and Cafe Erzulie.

www.moniquemusedodd.com
soundcloud.com/museonfire



Photo credit: Landon Spears



Ciara Adams is based in Baltimore and their art practices are a testament to their unwavering dedication to utilizing food, history, farming, and spirituality as mediums to express, preserve, and share the richness of the black experience. Through their roles as a food artist, storyteller, and archivist, their aim is to craft profound culinary and thought-provoking experiences that ignite dialogue about race and identity, forge connections, pay homage to ancestral roots, and foster cultural understanding. They are driven by an unyielding passion to employ their creativity as a beacon, illuminating the diverse narratives, challenges, and invaluable contributions of the black queer community.



Sadie Barnette's multimedia practice illuminates her own family history as it mirrors a collective history of repression and resistance in the United States. The last born of the last born, and hence the youngest of her generation, Barnette holds a long and deep fascination with the personal and political value of kin. Barnette's adept materialization of the archive rises above a static reverence for the past; by inserting herself into the retelling, she offers a history that is alive. Her drawings, photographs, and installations collapse time and expand possibilities. Political and social structures are a jumping off point for the work, but they are not the final destination. Her use of abstraction, glitter, and the fantastical summons another dimension of human experience and imagination. Recent projects include the reclamation of a 500-page FBI surveillance file amassed on her father during his time with the Black Panther Party and her interactive reimagining of his bar — San Francisco's first Black-owned gay bar.

Barnette holds a BFA from CalArts and an MFA from University of California, San Diego. She has enjoyed solo exhibitions at The Kitchen, New York; Pomona College, Los Angeles and Pitzer College Art Galleries, Los Angeles; ICA Los Angeles, The Lab, San Francisco; the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco; MCA San Diego; and the Manetti Shrem Museum, UC Davis. Barnette's work has been included in recent exhibitions at Oakland Museum of California; FotoFocus Biennial, Cincinnati, OH; and the California Biennial at Orange County Museum of Art. Her work is in the permanent collections of LACMA, CA; Brooklyn Museum; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Guggenheim Museum, NY; San José Museum of Art, CA; Oakland Museum of California; the Berkeley Art Museum, CA; Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; and the Walker Art Center, MN. She's the recipient of numerous grants and residencies including the Studio Museum in Harlem, Artadia, Art Matters, Eureka Fellowship, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Headlands Center for the Arts, and the Camargo Foundation in France, and was the inaugural Artist Fellow at UC Berkeley's Black Studies Collaboratory. Recent commissions include Bay Area Walls at SFMOMA and a permanent, site-specific installation at the Los Angeles International Airport is forthcoming in 2024. Barnette lives and works in Oakland, CA.

sadiebarnette.com

