

**Queen Activism as an Ally to Theatre in a Digital Age**  
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“Just imagine the world without Queens in it”

“It would be absolutely barbaric”

Tennessee Williams said that in the 1957 play “And Tell Sad Stories of the Deaths of Queens...”

Queer theatre has been queer theatre long before we started calling it queer theatre. The queer in the population have subversively been planting their message wherever the opportunity arose.

The tough part about Queer Theatre is a) nobody is listening to queer people, and that’s because of a more latent fear of femininity, and we know that nobody is listening to femininity. and b) nobody is listening to theatre, and that’s because of our evolution into the digital age where films, youtube, and tv shows deliver visual stories to us more immediately than the theatre.

I often hear that the theatre has been dying for the past 2000 years. No it hasn’t, it’s been dying since the 1930s when american movies dominated the storytelling industry and we aren’t appropriately responding to the fact that we’re immediately and imminently circling the drain.

When I tell people I’m in Queer Theatre they cock their heads and give me a half smile with a kind nod, they give me a bop on the shoulder and say “good for you!” Kind of like we do with children when they tell us that when they grow up they’re gonna build a giant flying island!

I’m an activist for Queerness because I know no other way to live. As a matter of fact, I live only partially awake if I don’t ask for the space my body is entitled to by the mere notion of me being alive. In the Middle East, I would live asleep to the potential of my life and I would be shackled to masks and burdened to a performance totally unfitting of who I truly am. A life that’s submissive, a life that’s guilty, shameful, fearful. A life that’s all too real for some right now. I’m an activist for Queerness because I am all too aware of the legacy of queer activists that cultivated the psychological and social landscape before me that have gifted me the liberties that I delight in now. I have no choice, I’m not even out to my family. And I’m not in alone that. The choice I have is to live a partial life or to live a fully realized life. Well my rioting atheistic soul says I’m going to live this life as purposely and intensely as I want. So I’m an activist for Queerness.

They’ve already began perking their ears up and making space for queerness in the form of marriage equality in the United States or the new trans\* protection legislation passed in May by the Trudeau government. They, because our queer disturbances, are making reformations to our schools, government policies, religions, and entertainment, so we’re doing something right in Queer activism. So what about theatre? Theatre that is dying in the Digital Age? We must be activists for theatre as well. And the same techniques and strategies applied to the diversifying of the sexual and gender landscape can assist us in our activism for theatre.

Theatre has demanded innovation and creativity from it’s very birth. It’s been a reflection on society since storytellers in Egypt were discussing Islamic morals through travelling puppet shows. In what ways does theatre exist in the digital world? How can something that demands

a physical space for its delivery exist when a very similar delivery is widely accepted through omniscient means?

It's our call as queer activists to be theatre activists. To demand the space that theatre occupies. But not in a conservative and traditionalist model. Our queerness already inspires and generates new stories and experiences that manifest in our sounds and our movements that could not otherwise have been achieved. What can we discover when we bring our queer bodies into the queer territory of Digital Theatre? How do we bring theatre, which has been a long time ally to the LGBT\* cause, with us?

We can already see how Digital Theatre is manifesting itself. I'm sure I could make the argument that Digital Theatre began with the introduction of the incandescent lightbulb in 1881. Digital Theatre takes shape in the multimedia additions to our existing theatre enterprises. We must, like our activism, become intersectional, bringing together theatre with digital mediums if we want it to have lasting relevance in the world of today and tomorrow.

One day I hope we say that Digital Theatre was digital theatre long before we started calling it digital theatre.

To echo, but adapt, Tennessee Willaim's words:  
"Just imagine a world without theatre in it."  
"It would be absolutely barbaric."