



IN REAL LIFE: PERFORMANCE

DYNASTY HANDBAG IN:

I, An Moron

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2016, 3:00PM

HAMMER MUSEUM

10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90024 | 310-443-7000 | hammer.ucla.edu

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Biographies

Jibz Cameron is a performance/video artist and actor living in Los Angeles. Her work as alter ego Dynasty Handbag has been presented at international dives both great and small. She has been heralded by the *New York Times* as “the funniest and most pitch-perfect performance seen in years,” and as “outrageously smart, grotesque and innovative” by the *New Yorker*. She has produced numerous video works and two albums of original music. In addition to her work as Dynasty Handbag, she has been seen acting in work by various avant-garde theater groups and in many comedic web series that remain unpopular. She also works as a professor and lecturer in performance and comedy-related subjects at California Institute of the Arts, among others. Jibz recently moved from New York to Los Angeles and is in development with Electric Dynamite on a television series about a performance artist who moves from New York to Los Angeles.

Taylor Plenn is a saxophonist and flautist based in Los Angeles. Apart from his own musical projects, Plenn has worked with a variety of artists and performers, such as Tim Heidecker, Dynasty Handbag, Alice Lilly, and many celebrities’ children, including flute with Harry Nilsson’s son Keifo in *The Point Live*. In high school he won various awards as a jazz soloist, including the Duke Ellington Award, which he thought at the time meant he was actually better than Duke Ellington. After being absent from the music scene for a couple of years as a result of this misunderstanding, Plenn is happy to again be playing regularly and maintains a healthy therapy schedule. He has received a lifetime ban from California Institute of the Arts, but feels that they will regret that one day soon.

This program is organized by Leslie Cozzi, curatorial associate.

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Dynasty Handbag: In Context

By Katherine Brewer Ball

Emerging out of a Los Angeles sunset, made all the more spectacular by the burning fires that feed off the hopes and dreams of millennials, Dynasty Handbag rides a Subaru like a G-string. Particulate matter in her eyes, this childless white lesbian with a camel toe at the dawn of the apocalypse has some things to say. These things are often jokes, but they are never just that. The alter ego of Jibz Cameron, Dynasty Handbag is a news junkie, a Nor Cal hippie, an ex-New Yorker, and a homosexual jester. She deals with the dangerous space of the psyche, a minefield of interior anguish and deep pleasure. With “flesh tone” stockings and ratted hair, Dynasty Handbag soft-shoes into a spotlight that amplifies what she calls her “F.A.G.S.” (fear, anger, guilt, and shame). The demonic love child of Gene Wilder and Gilda Radner, she is the 1970s hallucinogenic chocolate river tunnel Willy Wonka sails along, beyond the land of Oompa Loompas. Her interior dream world exposes the many selves that populate the often-dangerous neighborhood of her mind. In *Bags* (2008) and *The Quiet Storm* (2007), distorted omnipotent voices guide the actions of the onstage version of Dynasty Handbag. These prerecorded inner dialogues recall the jarring sonic works of the experimental theater maker Reza Abdoh. In contrast to Abdoh’s visceral and fractured multimedia productions made to reflect the normative violence of the 1990s, Dynasty Handbag’s works are comparatively quiet. Performing in *Remote Penetration* (2013) as a low-talking, daddy drone operator, she slows down each dopey explosion to an eerie, meditative speed. She seems to be pulling from both a history of cacophonous experimental theater and what we might call Brechtian music videos. As in Abdoh’s earlier queer media productions, the nuclear family is the site of incredible, bloody lunch-meat violence. Using a range of materials, from a tiny lady pirate hat to a big submarine sandwich, Dynasty Handbag’s magical landscapes are uncanny. Turning her failure feelings and slutty child’s play into a lesbian folk song or riotous, sexually frustrated country ballad, Dynasty Handbag calls out the invisible logics of megastructures like white supremacy and capitalism and their ability to keep us trapped in everyday self-hate and apathy. While this earth seems less and less habitable all the time—wildfires, bee die-offs, and police shootings of black people abound—there is comfort in renting property inside the old wig that is Dynasty Handbag’s mind, immersed in her psychedelic stream of consciousness and surrounded by F.A.G.S.