

Human Sculpture and the gyrl grip, of which she and Máire are the core members.

Máire says the gyrl grip offers a "performance outlet. It gives Lisa and I, as well as our staff, an opportunity to explore performance outside of administration, presenting, too much time on the computer."



Llewyn Máire (left) and Lisa Newman are 2 Gyrlz on a mission

In 2000, Two Girls Review became 2 Gyrlz, LLC, headed by Newman and Máire, who had met at several events and admired each other's work. "Our visions work well together," they agree while rolling their sleeves to reveal matching 2 Gyrlz tattoos.

Máire, who has dedicated the past 10 years to the facilitation of art on a multicultural community level, is featured in a vast expanse of projects—from organizing theater on the streets of New Orleans to underground puppet shows on the West Bank of Minneapolis.

Self-taught in the arts of sound, stage lighting and design engineering as well as a lifelong performer, musician and visual artist, Máire brings an abundance of dedication and diversity to 2 Gyrlz.

Describing herself as "a celtic-American-transsexual" (insisting on one "s" in the word "transsexual"—"that's right, there's a revolution going on!"), one of Máire's most interesting projects has to be her alter ego, the Rev. Rafik Legbara.

Described as "the transgender insurrectionist preacher" for the performative group Temple ov Identity, Máire/Rafik performances are interdisciplinary, merging spoken word with video projection and theater. The act "encourages a discipline which de/reconstructs identities," Máire explains.

In January 2001 a fire consumed the 2 Gyrlz office space, destroying equipment, archives, media and files. All material was lost, and a debt incurred that has yet to be paid off.

The setback was a difficult one, to say the least, but was not enough to break the spirit of the organization. "Somebody had just asked me what it would take for me to stop working with the group," Máire muses. "I told them that the only thing that would stop me would be if everything we had worked on was completely destroyed. I guess I was wrong, because that's what happened, and we're still at it."

The Enteractive Language Festival is a testimony to that dedication—a celebration of diverse forms of art that will establish the discourse necessary to keep those communities connected and encouraged to create art that is not bound to the hierarchy of gender, genre or media.

Not bad for one month. [M]

Contact 2 GYRLZ PERFORMATIVE ARTS at 503-318-6860 or [info@2gyrlz.org](mailto:info@2gyrlz.org). Visit their Internet home at [www.2gyrlz.org](http://www.2gyrlz.org).

JODI DARBY is a Portland graphic artist, writer and radio producer.

## Byrd's-eye view Queer artist creates metaphors for life

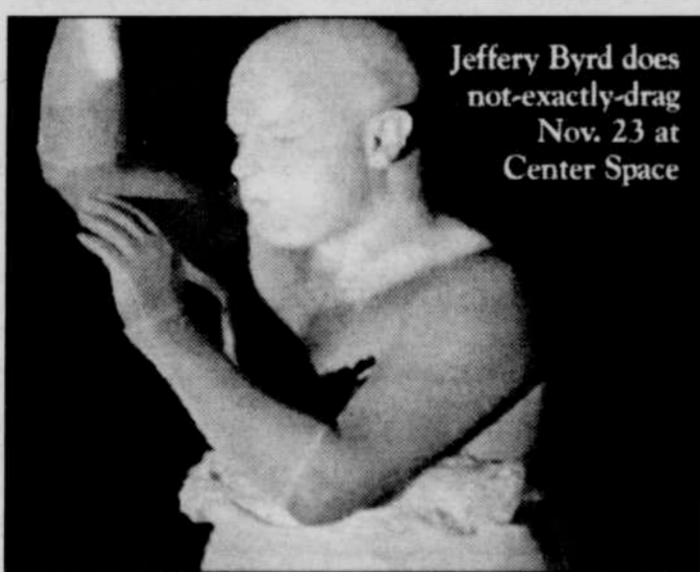
To most people's way of thinking, photography and performance art are very, very different.

Photographers get to hide behind the camera, performance artists are smack dab in front of it. Photographers don't perform for an audience, they are the audience. And photographers take pictures of performers, not the other way around.

Yet queer artist Jeffery Byrd leapt from photography to performance art completely naturally. "My photographs had always [been] very theatrical," he e-mails from University of Northern Iowa, where he teaches photography and performance. "I would stage events for the cameras—mostly male nudes made to look like old master paintings (drapery, dramatic lighting). Performance seemed like the next logical step."

Born and raised in Alabama, Byrd received a bachelor's degree in fine arts in his home state, then headed to Florida for a master's in the same thing before taking the teaching position in Iowa. This puts him around the country a bit, but never in Portland until now.

In town for 2 Gyrlz Performative Arts' Enteractive Language Festival, Byrd promises his Nov. 23 show at downtown's Center Space will be a multimedia production utilizing video projections, electronic music and live action.



Jeffery Byrd does not-exactly-drag Nov. 23 at Center Space

"It is somewhat like a chamber opera," he explains. "I wear a long gown—not exactly drag since I am bare-chested—and sing in a very high voice."

Although not giving up his camera, Byrd has enjoyed the change in art form from static to movement. "The image is live and connects with the viewer in a more direct manner," he states.

Byrd's main focus in his art, he says, "has a lot to do with combining the use of my voice with movement based on the Japanese Butoh style. My work explores the idea of creating metaphors for personal experience." [M]

—Lisa Bradshaw

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