



Sissyboy celebrates its first anniversary with the trial of the century

by Aaron Scott Photos by Xilia Faye

Clockwise from left, Pollyanne Marie, Fannie Mae Darling, Donatella Sol, Splendor Gabor, Zebra, Bulimianne Rhapsody and Gregory stand accused of being *Offensive and Wrong* July 20 at Wonder Ballroom.

Like lipsticked Pied Pipers of debauchery, Sissyboy has been seducing Portland's queers with its monthly punk-rock drag performances for one year now.

During the past 12 months, the group garnered a reputation as the trashiest, most foul-mouthed, offensive and hilarious queer event in town. And not everyone has been pleased. To address its onslaught on the American values we hold dear, Sissyboy will bring its most revolting offenses to court in its upcoming anniversary show, *Sissyboy Is Offensive and Wrong*.

If this is to be the real trial of the century, as the so-called "gay and lesbian media" we must address: What exactly is Sissyboy? And of what offenses is it being accused?

For most boys, to be called a "sissy" is a hallmark of a scarred youth.

"We were all sissies when we were little," says Lee Kyle Turner, 32, although it is harder now to imagine, given the 6-foot-4, muscular, tattooed, Texan frame behind his character Splendor Gabor. "'Sissy' was the worst word you could call a boy in the South."

Jeffrey Kreischer, 25, who grew up in Indiana and now plays Fannie Mae Darling, agrees: "I was called sissy, faggot, fat. Made fun of for everything I did in life."

But by adding "boy" to this queer-bashing epithet, Sissyboy has redefined what it means to be a sissy, rescuing itself (and us) from the schoolyard bullies.

Sissyboy is more than a monthly drag performance. Sissyboy is a collective of individuals

who are radicalizing drag and gender in Portland to fashion a mindset where being a "sissy" is not a point of pain, but an ass-kickin' label of redemption.

sis-sy-boy [SIS-ee boi] *n.* a glamorous, shit-talking, genderfucking drag queen, often observed in packs; also: anything you want to be, darling

"I want to turn around the label 'sissy' to one of empowerment," says Turner, evoking the collective's mission to challenge both themselves and their audience to express and embody their identities as fiercely as possible.

Kreischer concurs: "Sissyboy is a way I can express myself as I've always dreamed of

expressing. Fannie can walk on heels, and she can build a barn."

Sissyboys don't stuff, they don't tuck, and they make no pretense to pass as women. Cocks, both parodied and real, make regular appearances on stage. In fact, their trashy, ambiguous drag is often anything but feminine, which stretches drag's transgression of gender even further. Whereas traditional female impersonation arguably jumps from one gender box to the other, Sissyboy's messy drag completely obliterates gender's biological hold on the body by illustrating that boys can be girly, squirrely and tough.

"The ultimate drag insult is dewigging," explains Brendan Morrill, 28, aka Precious. "But Sissyboy can't be dewigged, can't be unveiled. We flaunt the paradox of drag by presenting the