

the end of Sissyboy. "[It's like] the queen is no longer on her throne. The queen is tapped out on the bathroom floor and is ready to go to rehab."

On top of personality conflicts, the infamous dragsters dealt with a lot of fallout from the party atmosphere they constructed around them—namely drug abuse. Although Thomas and Kyle stress that Sissyboy's reputation for debauchery was more talk than action, Jeffrey "Fannie Mae" Darling stands out as an extreme example of the negative power of substance abuse. He fell prey to a methamphetamine addiction earlier this year.

"It started off as a little taste, and slowly I was doing it every day and dating drug dealers and then shooting it up, and that's when it got really bad and really gross," Darling said via telephone from his hometown of Leo, Ind., where he was in recovery from June to September. "When you get so dehydrated you can't cry and you're so strung out people don't want to be around you, there's a lot of self-loathing, and the drug becomes a kind of comfort."

Darling stresses that his experience is an anomaly. "I definitely by far have had the worst drug history of all the girls," he says. "If you take me out of the equation, it's not a drug group at all."

Kyle says while many people in the group might have been recreational users of marijuana or cocaine, Darling's drug problem had a considerable effect on Sissyboy at large because he was such a key member of the troupe.

"It was sad, and it was hard to watch. I guess it's just the classic rise and fall of a rock band," Kyle says. "That's not the primary reason the group fell apart, but I would say it was one of the primary reasons."

Darling says he's given up meth for good and is looking forward to reuniting with the group for the final performance. He also had a "comeback" party Sept. 28, and in typical Sissyboy fashion, he worked out the demons of his drug addiction through performance.

"I'm not cured by any means. I'll always be an addict," he says.

Darling will also participate in Play Dead, a semi-improvisational performance art show created by "Saint" Caedmon McCarren of Sissyboy.

Darling isn't the only one who is launching his own creative projects on the heels of the final chapter of Sissyboy. Kyle and Winter are already breathing new life into Kaj-anne and Splendor with a new project called the Gender Fluids featuring Chad Tolson. With a few gigs already under their collective belt, the trio explored their masculine side during *Boys Will Be: Alone in Our Rooms* last month at Mark Woolley Gallery featuring a set created by installation artist Dallas Oliver.

"It's more like a performance art piece based on a common theme of self-discovery," Kyle says. "With the Gender Fluids, I'm going to reveal more who I am.... It's so hard for me to think of myself as a boy, but Chad and Kaj-anne are fairly boyish."

McGrath, who took on the bulk of the video editing for Sissyboy's multimedia presentations, has some exciting future plans. He's attending Portland Community College in preparation for a two-year program at Columbia College in Chicago, where he intends to get a bachelor's degree in film.

McGrath says his future fictional work will deviate from the campy, over-the-top stuff he shot with Sissyboy, although he learned some things along the way. "I'm kind of a perfectionist, so it's been eye-opening for me to see how much people appreciate something that's more off-the-cuff and more punk rock."

Sissyboy might be almost gone, but it is far from forgotten. Katie Turinski is making sure of that. She is an assistant video editor at Wieden+Kennedy who filmed about 40 hours of Sissyboy footage for her first independent documentary film. She hopes to show a clip at the finale to give Portlanders a taste of what's to come.

"I think for them it's a totally cathartic process and they're dealing with things that they've not known what to do with in their lives. That part of it is really intriguing to me," Turinski says. "The biggest thing I walk away with is almost envy because they are so self-aware and self-assured. We should all have a place to be as fearless as they are." 10



Kaj-anne



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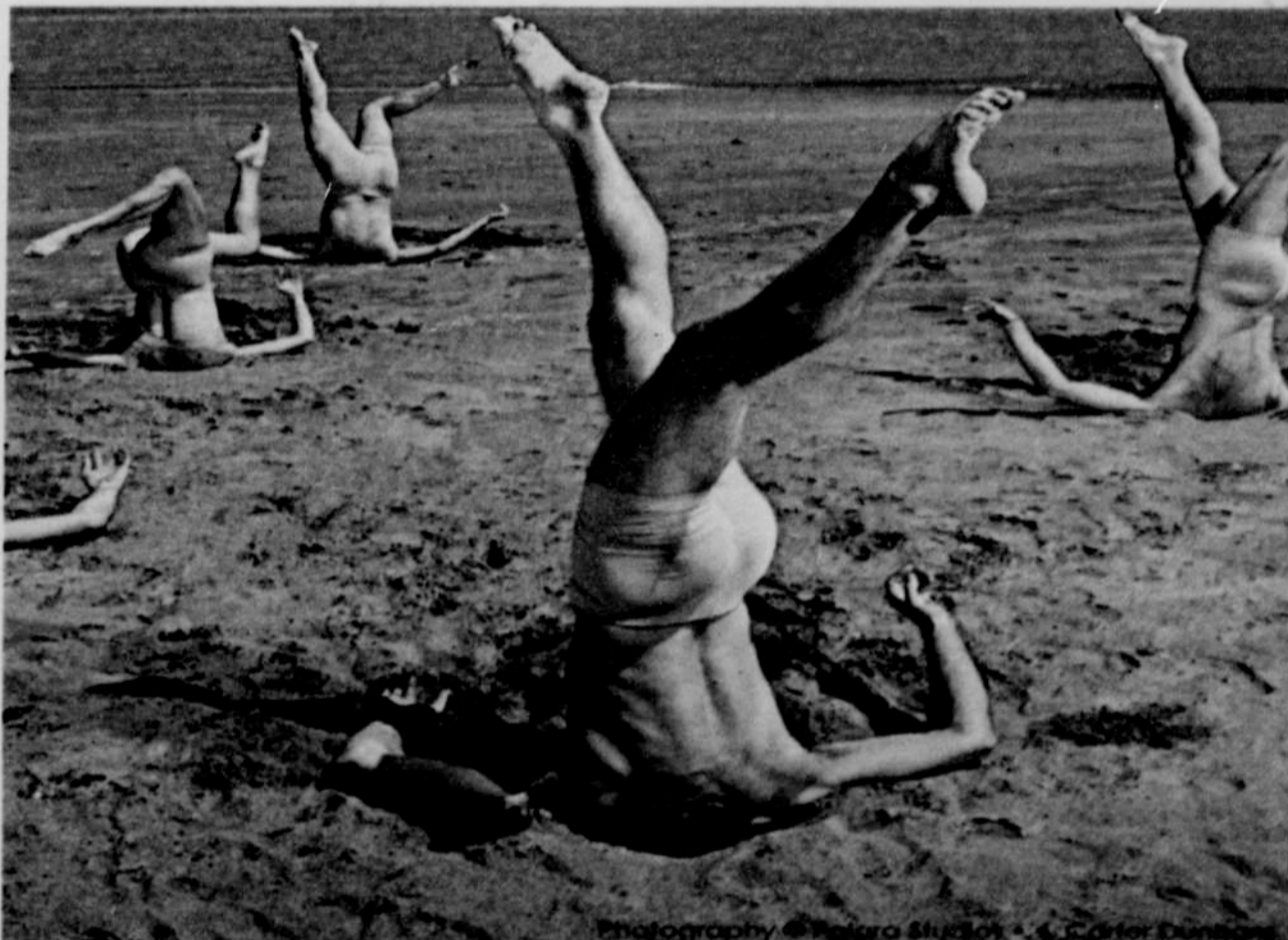
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