

LAVENDER

Godzilla

VOICES OF THE GAY ASIAN PACIFIC ALLIANCE

Vol. 3 No. 6

VOGUE

OUT OF THE CLOSETS

Dino Duazo

I learned one of my first fashion lessons in the seventh grade. It was the last day of school and I wanted to show off a pair of white leather zippered ankle-length boots I had just gotten from a mail order catalog. To complement my new shoes, I wore my favorite navy blue nylon windbreaker, a pair of burgundy polyester pants with a melted burn hole in the back pocket from when I backed into a soldering iron in metal shop, and a yellow, reversible to blue, San Francisco Unified School District gym shirt, untucked to hide the burn hole in my pants. I thought it was "dressy, yet casual" but that was a personal fantasy that no one shared. What I got instead was a lot of strange looks from just about everybody. Needless to say, it was not a pretty sight.

continued on back page

PARTNERS AND PROPOSITIONS

m. j. talbot

By now you must have heard that after a ten year struggle, led mostly by the bisexual/lesbian/gay community (IES), the majority of San Francisco voters finally passed a domestic partners City Ordinance on November 6th.

GAPA, in an effort to show support for this symbolic reaffirmation of alternative committed relationships, hosted a Victorian Tea reception at the elegant, turn-of-the-Century Queen Anne Victorian, The Alamo Square Inn.

Although, as chair of this event, I was personally disappointed at the poor response rate of 5%; those who did support it were generous with their time or checkbooks (and in the case of Donald Masuda—both—mighty thanks, Donald, from all of us!)

I want to thank especially the following major donors: Wayne and Claus of The Alamo Square Inn for providing the space, Lee of Complete Business Services for covering the cost of printing our invitations, Dandy and Ben of Word of Mouth Patisserie for all the scones, Judith Franks, Tony King and Donald Masuda for their extra large checks.

And my sincere admiration goes to the following GAPA members for their talent and time:

George Choy	Jaime Geaga
Ron [REDACTED]	Franklin [REDACTED]
Kek [REDACTED]	Sherman [REDACTED]
Ming Yeung Lu	Francisco [REDACTED]
Ron [REDACTED]	Nam [REDACTED]
Sun [REDACTED]	Wayne [REDACTED]
Lawrence Wong	Edward [REDACTED]

and Van [REDACTED] with the GAPA Men's Chorus

And special Thanks to the following supporters:

Bob [REDACTED]	Terry [REDACTED]
Rich [REDACTED]	and Rick [REDACTED]

Rumor has it that GAPA's event was one of the major fundraisers for the Domestic Partners campaign. In all GAPA raised \$900 after expenses! I thank and applaud those of you who participated.

Lastly, a very fond and envious good luck to the four couples who helped cut our three-tier chocolate cake, celebrating their 8, 10, 25 and 30 years together.

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Our domestic partners from 8 to 30 years cutting the cake. (photo by Freddie Niem)

Fashion Statement: Confessions of a Closet Slouch

Ed ■

In the years I was growing up, my first lessons in fashion do's and don't's were impressed upon me unwittingly by well-intentioned aunts who carted over bags and boxes of hand-me-downs that their children had outgrown years earlier during the Beaver Cleaver era. In the typical assortment of tired-old-attire-that-should-have-retired were your basic puke-green trousers with mismatched ironed-on kneepatches and amorphous sweaters that might have gotten more use as door mats and cleaning rags. Demonstration of my —ahem!— immeasurable appreciation for the thoughtful generosity of relatives was to parade the finery in front of them when they visit, if not always out in public, in broad daylight.

With this extensive wardrobe from my extended family, there was never a real need to go shopping for clothes. While other kids were beginning to sport the latest in platform shoes and flared pants, I was more often than not dressed like an impersonator of my cousins when they were my age.

When I was in junior high school, I was at a loss knowing that soon I would have to develop my own sense of personal style. What followed were splurges to bargain-basements under the watchful eyes of my sisters. It was the first time I felt like a complete person being able to express my true colors and identity through what I wore. I had reached the pinnacle of self-realization: I was decked out in my personally-chosen permanent-press shirts and slacks.

By the time I was in college, I had to embark on a daunting mission to find a suit to wear at my oldest sister's wedding. I discovered that my suit size was in that no-man's-land between the largest of the boys' sizes and smallest of the men's sizes. After much trudging around from Sacramento to San Francisco, I finally pounced on a three-piece pinstripe suit that didn't make me look like a three-year-old playing dress-up in Daddy's clothes. Ironically, I found it in a big and tall men's clothing store. The salesman explained that the shop's name would have been a mouthful if it were qualified as a store for "big and tall, small and short, fat and skinny men." (Now it is called a store for the "exceptional" or "extraordinary" man — I like the sound of that!) Some months of obsessive search later, I lucked out again and dived right into a well-tailored gray suit right off the rack at Macy's. The only problem was that the jacket, pants and vest were all different sizes.

Some years later I ran into a friend who barely recognized me dressed up to the nines. I apologized profusely by pleading that this was only my occasional business drag. On second



photo: Ed ■

thought, I should have hacked out more gracefully and gotten some sympathy by telling him that: (1) I was off to a job interview, (2) I was on my way to see the dearly departed, or (3) I just ran out of regular clean clothes.

The tiny space that is alleged to be my closet now is crammed with all kinds of duds from the past and present, a few pieces here and there waiting for revival by the whims of current fashion. Having gone through enough costume changes in different settings and contexts in my lifetime already, I guess I don't have what it takes to be a clothes horse. Though it has been fun being my own guinea pig experimenting with different styles and looks, I am getting a bit leery of whatever the latest clothing fads happen to be, as they come and go so quickly and undoubtedly make me cringe whenever I see pictures of myself in them years later. With many oxford shirts and pleated pants in tow, I hope these will prove to be timeless as far as fashion and classic styles go. I have resisted the temptation to shred my jeans in strategic places in the recent craze of do-it-yourself rags. After all, I am not sure if I can find mismatched iron-on patches when peek-a-boo pants are out of vogue.



MY LIFE AS AN A.B.C. (authentic beauty contestant)



Chicken—



à la queen

Leila Tom Kwan,
Miss GAPA 1990

I never dreamt it possible for me to be a genuine queen and here I am now.

In all sincerity, I feel truly honored to be your reigning queen. I'm very grateful for this privilege and for the opportunity to meet so many loving fellow goy Asians. I sincerely hope my participation will contribute in strengthening our goy Asian identity.

And now for some GAPA-Gab... Here are some simple steps on how you too can become a beauty queen.

what's a girl to do . . .



- hair ✳ use your own - wigs are only good for concealing large ears
- face ✳ after applying make-up - never expose it to direct sunlight for more than 10 minutes or else your face will melt
- skin ✳ to eliminate enlarged pores - simply have your date remove his glasses
- nose hairs ✳ yank out the ones that hang down to your upper lip
- underarms ✳ if you're too busy to shave 'em - braid 'em
- boob(s) ✳ definitely have two
- fanny ✳ strut it - don't slut it
- legs ✳ keep 'em closed
- leg hairs ✳ never shave with upward strokes unless you plan to wear blood-red to match
- shoes ✳ wear 'em two sizes too small - people will think you had your feet bound

To complete your outfit, accessorize lightly. If you get too busy-looking, you'll resemble a bargain basement!

But remember, it's not how you look, it's simply up to you to allow the Susie Wong in all of us to shine from within - lots of luck...

Love, *Leila*

MISS GAPA HOPEFULS 1990

GINGER ALE

Hobbies: wrestling alligators, motorcycle drag racing

Favorite foods, movies, actors, etc: food — anything dead; movies — Easy Rider, Texas Chainsaw Massacre; actors — Brando, Marilyn Monroe, Jimmy Dean

Your dreams and ambitions: To follow the footsteps of Mother Theresa

What would you do if you won? To visit Jesse Helms and show him what he's been missing all his life.

Something personal I would like to share: I got a lot more than what you see up front.



DJO-DJO

(daughter of Dza-Dza)

Country: Tenderloin, SF.

Hobbies: sucking — lollipops, licking — ice cream.

Your dreams and ambitions: to become the 1st Queen Mayor of the Tenderloin.

What would you do if you won? To take my boyfriend to McDonald's. Audition for centerfold of the "Tenderloin Times."

Something personal I would like to share: Occupation — full-time sexology student majoring in male sex organs, College of the Tenderloin. Part-time penis enlarger, sponsored by Dr. Ralph.



CORA NATION

Hobbies: Cook a big dinner for my man. Artificial intelligence.

Favorite foods, movies, actors, etc: popsicles/I am a Man/Patrick Swayze

Your dreams and ambitions: To be the real Asian in "Miss Saigon"

What would you do if you won? Serve gay Asian communities and all humanities.

Something personal I would like to share: Want to find out phone numbers of all gorgeous guys. I love you all.



JUNE

Country: Japan

Hobbies: Cooking, shopping, and playing tennis.

Favorite foods, movies, actors, etc.: Italian food, Japanese and American food. I like to see horror films at home.

Your dreams and ambitions: To raise a family.



photos by Ed Lim



photo by Steven

A FAREWELL TO MY CROWN

Nitara Miss GAPA 1989

As I take my last walk down the runway, I'd like to thank again all the judges who voted for me last year. Those who have been so supportive of me in my reign as Miss GAPA 1989. My dear and closest friends: Andy Yen, Dino Duazo, Bill Miguel, Walter Fil and Freddie Niem. Thank you again for being there. As you see Miss GAPA 1989 before you, I feel I have fulfilled my duties as your Queen, and thank you for letting me be a part of your gay social lives. Remember children, GAPA is what you and I make it. I thank GAPA for giving gay Asians the freedom and outlets to express themselves, to celebrate life together the way we choose.

As for the new Miss GAPA 1990, I wish her all the best and I hope her reign will be as wonderful as mine was. My only regret is that I did not get a chance to get together with Mr. GAPA 1989 (ah Rey, I'm still waiting for you).

In closing, I now feel I have fulfilled my duties as Miss GAPA 1989 and I now pass my crown to your new Queen. Please remember one thing: remember me always and don't forget me. Remember also that I love you all. Goodbye!

GAPA on Vogue

Craig [REDACTED]

When I was asked to do this article, I wanted to interview GAPA members who seemed to have a strong sense of style. The three who had agreed to be interviewed, however, asked to remain anonymous, so you get to know them as Mr. C, his lover Mr. D, and Mr. P.

"Express Yourself"

All three seemed to agree that aside from its basic function, clothing and fashion also serve as an experiential and visual form of communication.

Mr. C: It's a form of visual communication, visual expression. Even people who don't care or pay any attention to what they wear—that in itself communicates something like 'Hey, I don't care how I look to you or how you perceive me on this superficial level.' If you can read, you can learn a lot about me just by the way I dress.

Certainly when Mr. D and I went home for the first time, my mother read Mr. D instantly; 'Why does he have to wear earrings? Does he have to advertise it like that? Isn't it unsafe; does that put you in any danger? Why does he have to do that?' I just told her, 'Mom, Chill out.'

Clothing and fashion can also be used to make an explicit statement. Used this way, it becomes a medium for visual expression.

Mr. D: At the time, I had three earrings and I had my hair dyed platinum white. I wore black lipstick and I painted my nails black. Why? To be different. That was my specific response to beauty. I had come into a certain acceptance as result of the way I looked—I was thin, young, and kind-of cute—and I really rejected the sort of attention I received because of that. I did the typical (or atypical) things that people do to make themselves look ugly. It was a way of defining for myself a space or a location on a continuum of beauty or acceptance; a way of intentionally excluding myself from society.

Mr. C: So in a way, the way you were dressing was a very clear, very deliberate communication to those around you.

Mr. D: Right, that I'm not part of you, that I'm not part of the system, that I'm not part of what is valued in this society.

At other times, clothing and fashion can be reflective of how a person interacts with his or her environment.

Mr. P: I can tell you what I like. I like what I see; what I like to see is what I like to wear. What do I like to see? You need to know what works with you. For instance, I know what doesn't look good on me and what does look good on me. I flip through magazines and find certain colors that I like, certain materials that I like. I incorporate things in my environment; things I see on the street, on the people around me.

Mr. C: And if what I see and like doesn't fit me—my class, my ethnicity, my body, my age, my sex, my orientation, my personal taste—sometimes I go to the essence of what I see to make it fit me.

Mr. D: So by uncovering and internalizing its essence, whatever comes out of your brain becomes your personal expression of that concept. That way, the fashion vernacular can be expanded to include anyone.

Thrift-store Economics

Thrift store shopping seems to be one way these poor fashion queens can satisfy their appetite for well-designed clothes.

Mr. P: I have trouble spending money on clothes. First, economically, I can't afford it. Second, it's hard for me to imagine spending \$10,000 for a suit. What do I do? I compromise; I do what I can with what I have. For one, I shop at thrift stores. Buying stuff in thrift stores can be really

fun—though with all the fleas and lice, you're really putting your personal hygiene at risk. It's challenging too; almost like you're hunting. Once you find it, there's that sense of gratification. There's that feeling that, 'Yeah, you're the only one that owns it.'

Mr. C: There's also the thrill of finding value. Thrift store shopping allows people who have no money to find something nice—albeit nice things from yesteryear. Face it, the stuff that you or I can afford—if it's not used, it's a K-mart blue-light special. It's all part of having no money; it's part of that reality.

Strangely, families values such as pragmatism and parsimony seem to support their thrift store shopping behavior.

Mr. C: For me it was learned. Definitely part of family values. My sister brought it home from college. I got into it. Now my brother and even my parents shop at thrift stores. We even buy our Christmas presents there. I feel it's reflective of how people these days are starting to look more for value. My parents always stressed to me, 'Why spend \$50 on that sweater when this \$20 one here will keep you just as warm and will last just as long.' My response that 'the \$50 one was prettier' didn't seem to matter.

Mr. P: Or like, 'Why spend \$200 on one pair of shoes when you could get 10 pairs of the \$20 ones?'

Mr. C: Value. What happened in my family was an inversion of tastes: the cheaper it is, the better value it must be, the more attractive it becomes, the prettier it seems. I feel it's a healthy response to harsh economic conditions.

Dressing with (Your) Class

Aside from personal expressions, people use fashion to identify themselves with a group, a community. And—sometimes out of choice, sometimes not—fashion has become a marker for social class.

Mr. P: Thrift store shopping is a reality. It reveals that there is social and economic inequality and that as a result people have to resort to used clothing.

Mr. C: During the 50's, everyone wanted to be of a higher class. No one bought used clothing because it identified

you with the lower class. These days, I am forced to recognize—because of my income, my neighborhood, my living conditions, my social status, my family lineage—that I am not middle class. I don't identify with suburban values, suburban styles, or with supporting the fashion industry. I do identify with my environment, the urban neighborhood, the street outside my front door. I feel more comfortable there; it's where my father comes from, it's where I live. Consequently, that's the way I dress.

Colonialism, Drag, and Authority Identification

Sometimes, people dress not to identify with their own community but rather to identify with another. Traditional drag, for instance, is one way of identifying with the opposite gender. Drag is more than just cross-dressing, however, and people have used drag to cross class (to slum or to crash), sexual orientation (straight or "butch" drag), and ethnicity (white or "Kansas" drag). Sometimes people do drag for practical reasons, but sometimes not.

Mr. C: Gay men do drag—straight women's and straight men's drag—that identifies them with their oppressors, not their community. In *Paris is Burning* acting or looking "real" was sometimes a matter of survival—to avoid getting beat up, to pass unnoticed in an ugly situation. But much more often there is no practical reason. Despite this, many gay men still model their appearance after their oppressors—the college frat boy, the WWII aviator, the crewcut marine, the cowboy—all very straight, very male images. Look at what looks are popular among today's young urban gays—the skinhead, the punk, the counter-culture hippie. For gay Asian men, I wonder if the impulse to harmonize with one's psychological and social environment—to do straight white drag—is yet greater.

Mr. P: This colonial mentality need not be outwardly realized. For instance, just wanting to get an Armani watch, stuff that I can't really afford. It's almost like a fantasy. I wouldn't mind a nice Comme des Garçons suit. On the other hand, it's like, 'Let's get back to reality.'

Mr. C: Emulating your oppressor. Wanting to be your oppressor. Wanting to have the same things.

Mr. P: Authority identification.

Mr. C: Either that or authority subversion. Taking what is usually an oppressive image and making it one's own, making it gay. Both really—part parody, part identification.

Exploiting the Oppressed

If it's strange when marginalized people identify with their oppressor, then it's also stranger when these same oppressors glamorize the people they oppress.

Mr. C: I think that thrift store shopping is also becoming more accepted. I think it's influencing fashion now.

Mr. P: You know what I heard? That Versace goes to American Rag. He uses things he finds there. Fashion that is derived from thrift store clothing—where the fashion industry is saying, 'We have to look to the streets, to the urban environment, to the thrift stores to get our ideas'—that's just another form of exploitation because the people on the streets are not getting the money.

Mr. C: Right. It's just like "slumming." Immersing oneself in this glorious ethnic culture, or this glorious urban culture, or this glorious homosexual culture. It's pure consumption.

Mr. P: Or to think that just because they are in this type of environment, that they're just as hip. Like what happened at The BOX; having to establish the fact that this is still a queer dance club, that its not going to become a straight club.

Mr. C: Because it's the most marginalized groups in society in which the most interesting things are happening. And because the mainstream is so unchallenged, they must go to a marginalized group such as lesbians and gays, black Americans, or the urban underclass to actually get a truly fresh idea.

Mr. P: In terms of fashion you have ethnic clothing. Here's Giorgio Armani doing ethnic clothing; he's the one making the money. It's upsetting, these designers have access to almost anything. Any cultural artifact is theirs to exploit—the bags of the Peruvian Indians, the urns of the Philippines. It's weird because here's the empowered totally glamorizing the oppressed. It's almost like they're translating the experiences of the marginalized so that the mainstream can experience

them vicariously.

Mr. C: It's the reduction of a culture into elements which the upper class can consume. In some ways, it's meant to ease the conscience of the upper class; easing the guilt is part of what slumming is all about. 'Oh look, I can relate to these people. I must be progressive.'

Mr. P: That and the upper class is too bored; they're not oppressed enough.

Mr. C: Glamorizing the oppressed yet consciously ignoring the downside, the injustice of the oppression.

The empowered exploit the creativity of the oppressed. The oppressed, however, identify with the empowered and ironically, identify with the images copied directly from their consciousness.

Mr. C: Do you feel exploited? Do you feel that you or some collective consciousness of which you are a member is being exploited by someone else?

Mr. P: Yeah, I'm exploited. A certain person is using elements of my life to make money. In turn, when I see those ripped-off items in magazines—nicely photographed on beautiful models—I'd say, 'Oh my gosh, that's nice. I wish I had that.' When in reality, it came from me and now is being sold to me. I'm constantly being sucked into this kind of mentality.

Mr. C: One thing I do to avoid that trap is to use my friends instead of the fashion industry to give me ideas.

Mr. P: Exactly, use what you have available. So does this mean we're also getting exploited by you?

Mr. C: No. You're not getting exploited by me because I'm not getting any money.

Mr. P: That's true . . . Not money, but dotes maybe? (laugh)

At this point, let me ask you: How does fashion or physical imagery fit into GAPA's social, cultural, and political agendas? During the parade, the jeans, shirts, bandanas, and leis made GAPA look friendly, accessible, non-stereotypically Asian and Pacific Islander, as well as organized (not to mention butch). Does GAPA want to cultivate a physical image (I can think of at least a half dozen other lesbian, gay, or bisexual groups which already have)? What are your ideas? Write them down and send them in.



VOGUE



FASHION



When the Newsletter Committee first decided to do an issue on Fashion-Style-Voguing, my first thoughts were *Will we only see the young and handsome? or will the still dazzling over-40 GAPA men be included?*

From the start I insisted (with much support from the rest of the Lavender Godzilla staff) on making sure that this point did not get lost in the production line process.

Now I'm delighted to share space and thoughts on Fashion & Style with some of my contemporaries!

Fashion — Clothes that are trendy and not suitable for most

Style — A manner that is evolved to reflect a personality or interest(s)

m. j. talbot

postscript: so, judging from my photograph, is it style or fashion that is being projected, or is it something entirely a fantasy?

IMAGE

Dean's Fashion Quiz

1. Your ____ style. A. create
2. Your eye should stimulate your _____. B. personal
3. Don't let ____ dictate what you wear, however use them only as advisors. C. accentuate
4. Accessories can ____ your outfits. D. imagination
5. Accessories can also ____ a whole new look! E. creative
6. ____ is what you make it. F. wear
7. Remember most of all... you are what you ____? G. cool



OBJECT of *DESIRE*

Paul [REDACTED]

There's hair. That mammalian stuff that needs to be shampooed and cut once in a while, and then there's *hair*. Otherworldly, teased, curled, coaxed into a cotton-candy confection, it's got to be, in a word, big. Eyelashes? Long. None of that Maybelline shit, we're talking fake ones out to here. Thank you. Makeup? Plenty. It has nothing to do with nature. Fashion she can't be bothered with. She is a creation. Uncensored, unpretentious, unreal. Ladies and gentlemen... *Desirée*.

Above the kitchen sink in David's apartment are wigs and headdresses placed on styrofoam heads or tea kettles, a neat row of scalps. This is David's profession. He's done hair for Charles Pierce, performers at Finocchio's, Sharon McNight, Sylvester. By his dressing table is a wig of Japanese architectural design for Cio-Cio-San, another character David does occasionally, perhaps as a tribute to Tamasaburo Bondo, the consummate Kabuki *onnagata* he admires. Two thick photo albums cover his (*Desirée*'s) twenty years in show business. Here a *soignée* Marie Antoinette. As a sleek white cat for a musical premier. Balls, fêtes, benefits. *Desirée* has been a mistress of many ceremonies. Often the photos are accompanied by trashy comments cut from porno magazines. Closing a book, David tells me, 'Well, what do you expect from *Desirée*?'



photos by Freddie Niem

DAVID SABADO

**How did you develop
the persona of Desirée?**

I created Desirée from a friend of mine who I used to admire a long time ago in 1969-1970. That was the first time I ever got the idea of performing or being in a show of any type. They had asked me if I wanted to be in the show because the original show was coming to the United States for a tour and they needed people to fill their spots, so I created Desirée with help from other people.

Do you see her as part of yourself or separate?

I think it is. I think people who do characters drag or anything it has to be a part of yourself. An alter ego, probably.

What part of your personality comes through?

The things that 'David' normally wouldn't do or say, 'Desirée' does for him. A lot of people won't believe it, but I am shy. Desirée takes that and reverses everything. I think Desirée is more expressive in that every aspect of David's life, maybe political or whatever, Desirée is more the aggressor and can express that.

Who were your early idols? Who did you emulate?

I liked Bette Davis. I like strong characters. I like people that are not only aggressive, but compassionate at the same time. Bette Davis is my favorite actress... and Charles Pierce.

After touring, in 1975, you decided to stay here?

Yeah, to live here. With no intention of performing. I wanted to give it up.

What brought you back into it?

I think the AIDS situation did. My friends were dying and I wanted to do something. To put back into the community. I didn't like the thought of a group of people or the community supporting me if I were sick and I in turn not putting back into something. I also thought it would be too late for me to put back into something if I got sick. I had this character and I wanted to utilize her in the best way, but at the same time not have the pressures and rigors that I used to have as a professional performer.

How has the style of drag changed over the years?

I think that people forget what drag is, period. People don't realize that our so-called drag, or what used to be called female impersonation, is exactly what it is, female impersonation. It's not just dressing up and trying to be a woman and having fun. That's a different part of it. Drag itself is strictly an art and people forget that. People like to use terms as female illusionist that's full of crap. Drag is female impersonation. People like to make categories to make themselves unique. You are unique only by how well you do it. By your talent.

What do you think of gender fuck or radicalized street artists like Jerome?

Jerome's fun. It's really a part of him. That is what he really is, inside. And maybe being a male, he can't express himself so well, so when he dresses up in that character, that is really a part of him. That's a different form again. For me, I'm more on the theatrical and stage part of it. My whole presentation is that. Some of these kids criticize me, oh you use too much makeup or the costumes are a bit too wild. That's it, that's theatrics, that's theater. Jerome or anyone who goes into the gender fuck drag, that's their interpretation, but some of it is more personal for them. Some of them feel that this is what they are.

It seems that people who do gender fuck are more white intellectuals, and blacks and Asians are more into high style.

Yeah. I think that goes with culture and breeding. Asians, it is imbedded through our culture. Our culture has tried so hard to attain a certain level of pride in what they believe in and how they do it. I tend to look at the Caucasian or white race as trying to be more the radical. They always radical because I don't think they have that long line of culture. Look at the Chinese culture. Thousands and thousands of years it went beyond, even before the Egyptians. It goes way back and I do believe it is culture. America doesn't have that breeding. We are truly a country that's a mixture of everything. And we were the world's problems that got rid of us. Here we are. But now these people have to look back and reflect and learn from other cultures. I don't think that Caucasian culture does that too much. They're willing to take, and whatever they take, they don't truly understand. We tend to cherish what we have and don't take things for granted that much.

What is the function of the court system in San Francisco?

That whole court trip is the fun side for people to relive the pressure of what they're doing. They decided to create these emperors and empresses, but also to let it be known that they were leaders of the gay community. Because at the time that was the gay community. We didn't have the organizations as we do now.

How far back does it go?

Oh, it goes back to grandma's time in the fifties. The Empress Juan Jose (Sarría) was the first one to have the foresight to see we needed a group like this. We needed to be heard. Jose was willing to put his job, and life probably, on the line for that, because at the time it was quite different. It was worse to be openly gay, to say you're queer or faggot. People didn't talk about those things. The imperials and royals, more or less, became the leaders of the community. The emperor and empress are the host and hostess of San Francisco. They represent us. I think also along that line, they themselves have even lost their meaning of what their title means. The organizations need to reflect and look at themselves because along the way they have lost their true meaning and purpose of what they are doing.

It seems very white, like the debutante ball system in the South.

It used to be. You always knew when the title holder or empress was black. There was some kind of prejudice before. It has changed. I think the courts have learned that there are other groups that are forming, are changing with the times, and they have no choice but to change with them.

What about the gay Miss Universe pageants? They seem to be strongly Filipino organized.

Yeah, most of them are Filipino. I think the only reason why it's Filipinos is because Filipinos have this thing, they love pageants. They really do. They're a ham for it. Being involved with the pageants, like the Mr. Gay Asian/Pacific and the Miss Gay Asian/Pacific, I have also seen involved in that, the Chinese. One year we had one from Thailand. It's basically the Southeast Asians now. And I think Filipinos just have the flair for that. They love pageantry. It's part of their Moslem culture. Moslems are very famous for that. The Filipinos are big show-offs.

PORTRAIT OF A WINNER

Khai [REDACTED]

Before the Gay Games, I was afraid that I wasn't good enough. But what the heck, what did I have to lose? (Face? Nah. My virginity? Maybe...) Ten days later, I came back home from Vancouver with two shining medals for badminton, one bronze, one gold. I wouldn't have gotten any medals without a lot of support from our own cheerleaders, Dean, George, Ron and Randy, who looked so cute and sexy in their mini-skirts and colorful pom-poms. These medals are for you too, guys! In fact, they are for all of us proud GAPA members.

With pride and excitement, I would like to organize a volleyball and a badminton team for the 1994 Games in New York. Some friends and I get together to play volleyball and badminton every Sunday at USF KORET Gym. The gym has an olympic-size pool, a weight room, etc. You can wear your favorite skirt to play badminton. So don't be shy. Get out there. Show off your butts while chasing the birds. If anyone is interested in joining us, contact Khai at (415) [REDACTED] (M-W/7-9pm) or leave a message at (408) [REDACTED]



photo by Freddie Niem

OBJECT of DESIRE

from page 11

In Filipino culture, there's a history of effeminate men dressing up as women and taking women's roles. Do you think that has a part to do with it?

I think that's the difference between white culture and Asian culture. There is a place for them in our culture. And there's also a purpose for them. We don't look at them as degrading as a white culture does. Asian culture, we realize it does exist. Instead of kicking them out, the Asian culture has been able to utilize their lives. Some of it may be religious, like the Hawaiian culture. They were actually highly looked upon. They were usually the chosen dancers for the kings and queens. The family that had a son that was gay was rewarded for it because it was a special honor to dance for the king.

For minorities, there are bars like the Black Rose, the Blue and Gold and the 222 Club (it's not here anymore) in the Tenderloin and Esta Noche in the Mission. Do customers stay in one bar or do they mix around?

The Tenderloin nightclubs, and again, they're part of our gay culture, but unfortunately, like the Black Rose, the queens that patronize it don't like to consider themselves 'queens' or 'gay.' Unfortunately they're a part of our gay brothers that truly do have a hard time accepting themselves

as gay. They look at themselves more as women. They even have a hard time accepting drag queens what we call drag queens. To them they are not drag queens, they are women. That is very difficult. The gay community has had a difficult time with bringing them into our culture right now because of lack of understanding between both parties. The people who patronize that bar are part of the community that are very closeted cases in that sense, because most of (the men in bars) tend to be tricks for them or straight men that have homosexual tendencies and cannot accept their homosexual tendencies. They will go to these bars and fulfill their fantasies through them. Yeah, I think they do move around in that they will only hit a certain area or type of bar that you find these type of gay men. I don't think they have the exposure to the gay community as well.

There's hustling going on in these bars?

Oh yeah, definitely. I think the gay community also looks at them as a lower class of people that we'd not want to acknowledge as being a part of ourselves. Shame, because they are. These people have a hard time making a living. These are the people the community tends to kick out. Try to ignore because of their lifestyle. I have always said that the gay community, to this day, will never achieve its goal of getting what it wants because of their own prejudices. They can never attain what they want I don't care if you're ACT UP or Queer

Nation, or what, that's full of shit because they'll never achieve it. Because they themselves are prejudiced among their own kind and they cannot work together. They will never attain it, not in this century. It will be a problem until the day they only work as one. They can make all the noise they want to and fight. Sure we'll be heard, but we'll never get it because they themselves are prejudiced among their own and also with the straight community. We as gay people, I like to think, have a gift. And the gift is our sensitivity to what's around us. We are the ones that tend to refine everything in art, everything in culture. We are the ones that have the special gift to know when to and how to and when not to. But I think we tend to go overboard and take that all for granted and to be too critical. It's fine to be critical, but we have to be able to give each other a chance.

Have you been harassed dressed up as Desirée on the streets?

No. And if they do, I harass them. And most people can't handle that. First of all, they're more intimidated by my costume more than anything else. It's how one projects oneself. I hear about other people that are in costume who get harassed, even physically hurt by other people. Sometimes it can also be the person in costume. If you present yourself with class, in a positive sense, people won't bother you, no matter what you are. And they'll enjoy it with you.



THE IRON BUTTERFLIES

were conceived spiritually in May of 1990 and actualized in July of the same year. Eight weeks of intense rehearsal followed with our Grand Debut at the August Moon Benefit for GCHP. Though known by our stage names April, May and June, we were born Richard Shiu, Gary [REDACTED] and Rafael [REDACTED]. So dubbed by member Richard [REDACTED] in a quest for 'sensible Chinese girls names.' (of course we could have been Lily, Rose and Pearl!)

The name IRON BUTTERFLIES comes from the former First Lady of the Philippines, thank you very much! We too are living the legend! (Three snaps in a circle!)



photos by Ed [REDACTED]



IRON BUTTERFLIES recommend aspiring divas:

Think *young*.

Be open-minded.

Exercise at least *four* times a week.

Watch what goes into your face.

Start early a regimen of skin care and *stick* to it if it takes glue, girl!

And *most* important, when you're made-up, never, *ever* bite food, or anything else.....

INSERT Darlings INSERT!!!!



Congratulations to all the GAPA "sisters"! For more Halloween beauties turn the page...



the GAPA Halloween Gallery

Photos by Dino Duazo



"Conversation with Ayer" No.1 to No.9 is what sculptor Kek Tee Lim named his nine pieces of acrylic. *Ayer* is a Malay word, meaning water or liquid.

Last year I went to see Tee's carved acrylic sculpture show at the Triangle Gallery. I was amazed at the four Conversation with Ayer pieces — the other five had already been sold. Stylistically, they lay on the line between abstraction and self-expression. Most of them were crystal clear cuboid in form. I fell in love with Tee's sculptures. They were simple, quiet, direct, honest, and peaceful. My mind travelled to another space as I contemplated them.

In one, the LIQUID was swelling up from the center of the cuboid, like the top half of a bubble rising from melted center

space. In one, the BUBBLE was continuing to melt toward the edge of one side of the cuboid. In one, the melting LIQUID was dripping from the edge, stopping just before touching the ground. It looked like a photographer has used his fast-speed shutter to capture the work. And in the final one, the LIQUID was dripping down all over the ground and stopped right there...



KEK TEE LIM

Freddie Niem

It was not easy to create these deceptively simple forms. The sculptor's hands had spent many hours carving, sanding, polishing—it took forever to finish a single piece.

Tee came from Tokai, Kedah, Malaysia, where he was born to a Chinese family. After studying in Singapore at Nanyang

University Art School, he worked as a corporate designer of ceramic products. He travelled to France, Germany, England and New York before settling in San Francisco in 1976. He continued his studies at San Francisco State University. He has been turning out facile ceramic figurines at a commercial workshop. He forms his sculpture by working in clay, then makes a mold to have each piece cast in bronze. Bronze and acrylic sculptures have been his very successful work.

The shapes of his bronze sculptures are very simple and pure. They are like those of the egg or the squash. The rounded forms often suggest a sense of movement that brings the heavy bronze to life.

Tee once said to me, "If I can create things that totally express myself, then maybe they will last a long time after me. I want to make sculpture. I wish to see my world as beautiful and to try to reshape it in that image. When I sculpt, I feel that something of worth is taking shape, that something is trying to be born and be beautiful."

"If five years from now, if fifty years from now, other people still find beauty in my sculptures, then I have perpetuated myself."

photos by Freddie Niem

GAPA PROFILES

HASAN

Dino Duazo

The cooking style of Singapore-born Hasan used to be either Asian or Continental, but now it's a blend combining the best of East and West to produce an entirely new style. As he says, living in America "you have to come up with something different all the time" to appeal to diverse and discriminating palates. Many of us can identify with his delicate cultural balancing act, but few can claim the same amount of success.

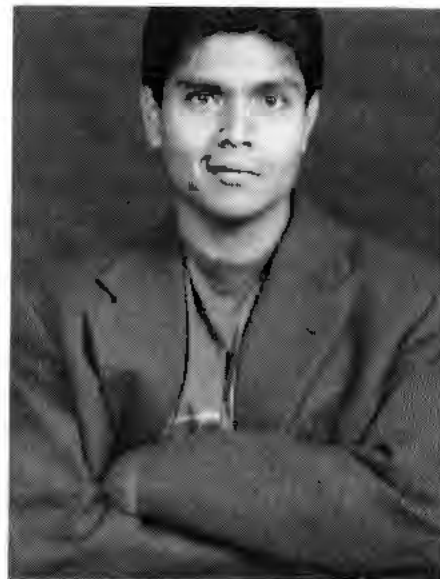
Much has changed since he operated his first restaurant here using the dining room and kitchen of a Victorian home. In exchange for rent, Hasan cooked and served two meals a month to his landlord. That operation only had one seating per night with eight diners, but even then, the celebration of food was important. "It was more like a private party than a restaurant. Very low key, very exclusive. People had to make reservations far in advance."

After that gratifying venture, Hasan started a new business with fellow Singaporean Roy preparing health food sandwiches. And of course, greater success has followed. Thanks to Roy's administrative talents and Hasan's culinary skills, they now have two restaurants, both garnering well-deserved acclaim—Temasek recently observed its first anniversary and Sen-

tosa, located next to the venerable Zuni Cafe, is doing well after just a few months.

Hasan is one of 12 children, the youngest of six sons. "My mom had a restaurant in Singapore," he said. "I always really loved cooking. I started with dishwashing and climbed my way up." He first studied cooking in Lausanne, Switzerland, but has also worked in kitchens of Madrid, Barcelona and New York. Hasan has studied in Norway, Germany, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Denmark as well.

He uses herbs generously in his cooking—all types of herbs. "I use any herbs that I think will blend, regardless of whether it's French, Thai, Vietnamese, etc. The main idea is to make



it really unique and different." Those who sample his cuisine will find such ingredients as wine, cream, oregano, juniper berries, truffles, lemon grass, saffron, fish sauce, oyster sauce, dried shrimp and cardamom. He also likes to blend meats—rabbit and duck, bacon and fish, pork and fish, veal and pork sausage, Cornish hen and veal sausage.

However, because of his Asian background, "Sometimes people want me to cook sweet-and-sour fish or fried chow mein. So boring!" he says with a smile. For those interested in experiencing Hasan's unique break from convention, there's hardly a better way than by visiting Temasek (1555 Clement at 17th

Avenue) or Sentosa (1666 Market Street, at Gough). You'll find just how unbor-ing his style is.



[FASHION] NOTES FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Rafael

Hey *Bakla*! Don't you know that life is to short to be subtle?

This issue of Lavender Godzilla focuses on what we wear to get that "look" and, more importantly, personal style as we live our lives in this pseudo-realistic world.

For many, personal style is a political statement from where they take on issues that affect their community. That can mean wearing what's currently "in style" or going for the ACT-UP! look (one that I sometimes prefer - black leather jacket, bandanna, rolled up jeans, counter-culture haircuts and boots). Others prefer to present a style that leans more towards "downtown drag"

(blue pinstripe suit, power tie and brief case with tastefully matching patent leathers, of course!).

Whether it's collegiate drag or Queer Nation accessories, I usually work towards still staying the same. Being vocal (if not obnoxious) of the issues in the Pacific Islander Asian gay community everywhere I go. This especially holds true when I attend those parties for the rich and famous or politically correct. As many have said in the past, the issues do not disappear when they are not mentioned, and the "closet door" which still holds some of our brothers and sisters in various "bondage scenes" is also teaming with the nasties of racism, classism, sexism and

prejudices. We must all wear the appropriate "drag" for the right event to push for the common issues that affect us all.

And yes, dare to be different! Dare to challenge the stereotypes as to what a man or woman should or should not wear, for what we wear is sometimes a form of bondage in our community. Style is not ornamentation; it is a way one lives from the inside out!

I will leave you with the following:

Motivation: Someday my prince will come!

Wish: Everything in my closet should have an expiration date!

**OUT OF THE CLOSETS**

from page 1

The choices I pull out of the closet reflect as much about me now as they did then. Is it about fashion? Nah, of course not. Looks alone ain't where it's at; we're talking about style here. After all, fashion is so easily constructed, but personal style hits closer to home. It's all about projecting an image and an attitude to make a personal statement. Some may make a more conscious effort than others, but what you offer on the outside says just as much about you as anything else. What comes out of the closet can literally form your identity.

Of course, it isn't all that simple. We're caught in a continual process of constructing ourselves, from the outside as well as from within. As an example, ten years ago, clones had "the look." I envied their open expression of sexuality, but the moustache, jeans and plaid shirt weren't me. On the other hand, the only Asians I noticed were the fabulous creatures hanging around the bars. Wispy and loud and highly fashionable, they seemed to be the only

alternative for me to emulate. As an impressionable teen (!?) still trying to find myself, I was stuck with two unsatisfying models of expression. Perhaps a clichéd observation at this point, but such images have had a lasting impression on me.

Nowadays, Queer Nationals are supplanting the clones. And whereas clones codified conformity, the new queer uniform is more fluid and subject to individual interpretation. There's much more freedom, or so it seems. Yet as a new segment gains authority, there's inevitably a shift to embrace the prevailing standard. But since most of us GAP'ettes don't follow the new queer code, in dress and in action, will we be taken less seriously among the "hip"?

And as I look around now, another icon seems to be emerging among Asian men. I notice more and more guys coming forth with gym-toned bodies. It's a thrilling sight, but sometimes a little scary. Such images are idealized by the mainstream -- and we're equally susceptible -- but what about those of us who don't fit that look? Others already do it; it would be a mistake for us to also limit ourselves into thinking what

is best for Asian men to look like. Ideally, there should be room for all of us.

In response to the expectations and limitations that are often placed on us, we at the newsletter continually strive to present the diversity of expression among gay Asian and Pacific men. Our "diversity" should be obvious, but given the limited representations available to us, it doesn't hurt to be reminded that although we share a common cultural background, we are still unique in our own way. As you go through this issue, look at all the different faces, notice the small accomplishments adding up to heroic victories, and appreciate all the varied expressions of self. Through words and pictures, this issue illustrates our specific individualism more than ever.

After all, that's what personal style is all about, an individualism that sets us apart. From high drag to high camp, from the pages of GQ to the racks of JCPenney, we come forth in all our glory. Artists and athletes, activists and entertainers -- share in what we have to offer. It's more than striking a pose, it's about claiming our identity.

