

FROM HERE ON

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Uncategorized



FROM HERE ON is the title of the exhibition and of the exclusive interview with Francesca Galliani, artist who since the '90s has shown through her works the strength and beauty of transgender men and women living at the frontiers of the traditional categories by which we define society and social roles. Stories of courage, celebrating diversity and the right to truly be your real self.

When did you start wanting to get into the arts?

I moved to the U.S. when I was 19. I decided to enroll in art school in Washington D.C. I also took a basic photography class where I learned how to really use a camera. I fell in love with photography almost immediately, and I spent a lot of time in the dark room with my photographs. My instructor was very supportive and really encouraged me to pursue my newfound passion. I discovered how much life photography gave me, and in many ways enriched me. I went to the Corcoran School of Art and received my BFA there.

Your relationship with Italy and NYC

My roots are Italian, but I am a proud New Yorker. I owe so much to NYC. It has helped me tremendously to come to terms with who I am, to embrace and celebrate me. It is a city that pulsates with freedom, openness, tolerance, acceptance and celebrates differences. NYC thrives on difference, cultures, religions, sexuality and gender.

Tell me about your creative process

The first thing I need to do is to get quiet within and listen to what comes up and without questioning, execute it. My technical artifice supports the expressive urgency. In the darkroom I invented personal techniques, taken from ancient processes and modified to my liking: hand-rendered sepia toning, punches of selenium and bleaching. Material interventions on the image surface that renders it unique.

You are an active ally and member of the LGBTQ community, how do you approach the present political climate and how do you advocate with your work?

As an artist I have a responsibility to defend freedom of expression, basic human rights, and civil and political liberty that is still suppressed in our modern society, that has taken a dramatic backward turn since the last election. Historically it is a reality that art helps change the world, and my intention and passion is to contribute to that change through my art.

Your definition or non definition of gender and the message you want to advocate with your work

"You are more than just neither, honey. There's other ways to be than either-or. It's not so simple. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many people who don't fit." (Leslie Feinberg, Stone Butch Blues 1993)

As a means of self-discovery I have been photographing transgender people since the 90's, showing the dignity, power and beauty of being human in any outward appearance you choose and that includes being transgender. I photograph transgender men and women who live on the margins of traditional categories by which we define society and roles within it. Sometimes these portraits hint at the more tragic aspects of life experience: "stop misery," "trash," "fight back," smash gay oppression." The tension in these works arises from the combination of gendered faces and bodies that seem unambiguous, with emotional expressions that vary from seductive, tender, and introspective to despondent, confrontational, and triumphant.

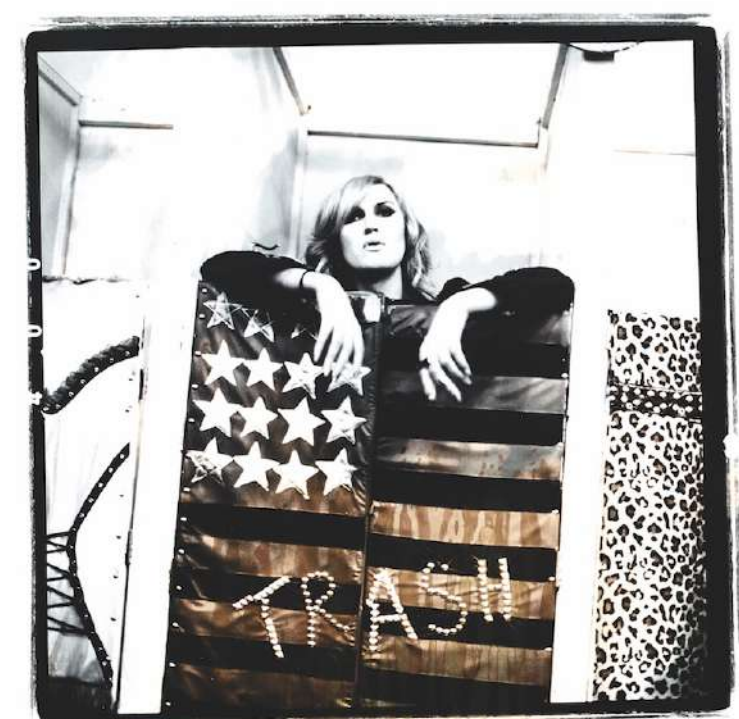
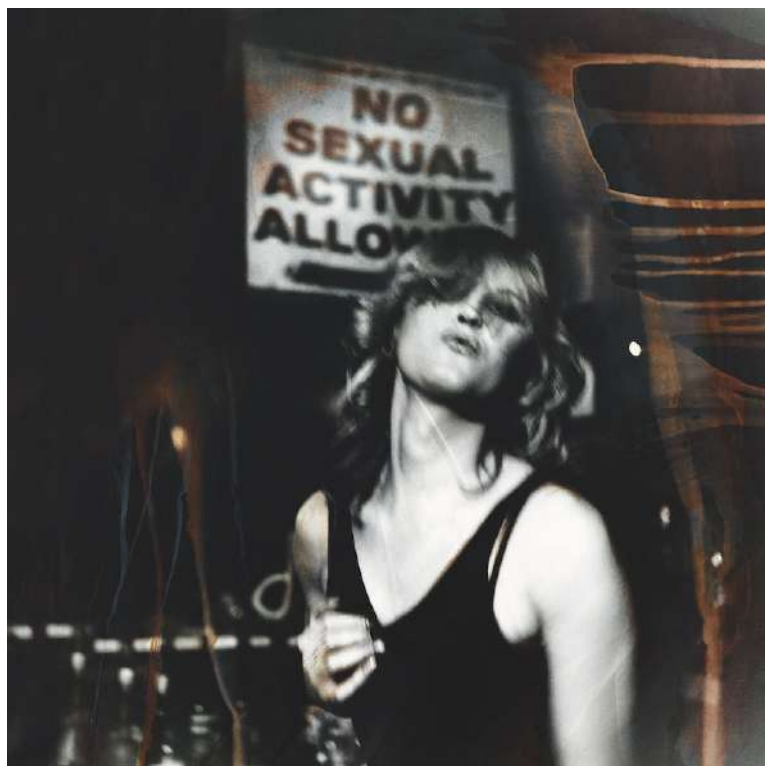
How was *Made In Me 8* born?

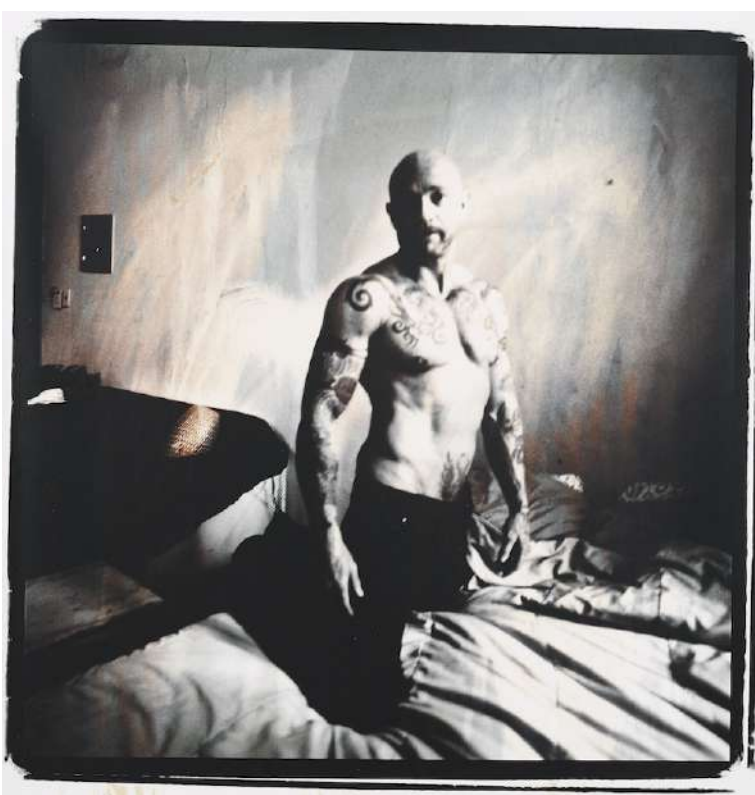
Made In Me 8 came to fruition on its own. It has been an exciting process that started on Gay Pride 2015, a few days before the Supreme Court issued a ruling legalizing gay marriage in all 50 states. I decided to paint some t-shirts for my friends that read: "love wins" (President Obama coined that quote right after gay marriage was legalized). It was there in the crowd, making our way down 5th Avenue that. I found a new platform. I saw the opportunity to make my art public, wearable, usable and affordable for a wider audience. The screen-printed shirts have my original art work literally printed on them. I chose artworks that express my point of view. They start a conversation, which is very hard to do with so many different strong points of view, especially in this divided climate. The hand-painted shirts have strong messages of hope and

lives within me in a remote, but not forgotten place.

Photos by Francesca Galliani

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