

Beyond Aesthetics: A Femme Manifesto

We are Femme—not (just) feminine—Femme.
We are femininity's rebellious sibling.
Fiercely un-compromising and unapologetically all encompassing.

Femmes are the abnormal occupation of normalcy.
We are feminine, but not necessarily female.
We are men and women.
We were assigned the wrong sex at birth.
We reject systems of sex classification altogether.
My 'sex' does not define my gender.
My gender is not a reflection of my (a)sexuality,
Sexual availability and desire.
We like it rough, we like it soft. We rock on bottom and on top.
We call compulsory sexualities into question—
Our bodies. Our sexualities. Our choices.

Whether we wear them or not,
Femmes understand that short skirts and high heels are not an invitation.
Stiletto, noun | sti * let * to | \ste- 'le- (,) to\ : a short dagger with a tapered blade used to abolish one's opponent.
Wielding femme weapons and bright red lipstick to colour outside the lines of heteronormativity,
Femmes destroy rape culture that assumes masculine right over the feminine.

We are proud of our unruly bodies,
And take pride in our uncontained Femme expressions.
We will not strive to fit in with ableist, racist, or sexist beauty ideals.
We challenge them:
Our queer bodies, black and brown bodies, fat and disabled bodies disrupt your notions of what it means to be
“properly feminine.”

Femmes traverse a diverse landscape of feminine multiplicities.
While we do not occupy a communal terrain, we unanimously rewrite and reclaim what it means to be feminine
in our own way, with our own voice.
Femmes are astronomers of the feminine galaxy, ever expanding the universe of femininities and what it means to
be feminine.

Femmes cannot and will not fit into patriarchal molds of femininity.
We bust out of your normative confines
To rip open your assumption that femininity is the exclusive property of straight, cisgender, able-bodied,
heterosexual, nice, white ladies.

We turn your assumptions on their head.
Femmes do not equate femininity with fragility,
Nor femininity with passivity and powerlessness.
We are not mindless recipients of patriarchal beauty standards
And we are *not* just an aesthetic.
We derive power from what the world has deemed inferior.
And in a world that privileges masculinity
We *are* the resistance.

Femmes are not invisible because we hide.
We are invisible because we are ignored.
Erased.
Femmes are a reminder of the possibilities that exist beyond systems of oppression.
We will not compromise our appearance or flamboyancy to be the type of queer you find acceptable,
And we will not make ourselves more palatable for a queer, homonormative, or male gaze.
No, we're not invisible. You're just not looking.

Femmes take up space.
If we're at the gym, we're training for the resistance.
If we lift heavy, we're not afraid of bulk or of taking up too much space.
Femmes don't train to trim into your mould; we train to burst out of it.
We will stop eating when we're full,
Not when society thinks we've had enough!
We will not suppress our appetites, our bodies, desires, or our voices.
Nor will we be shamed.
We locate sites of resistance in what has been culturally shamed: our fat, queer, crip, racialized, poor, feminine
bodies.
We overflow with possibility and we refuse to be contained.

Femmes will not be pitted against one another.
Femmes will not tear each other down, but will help each other grow.
We are not in competition. We are not jealous.
We come together in solidarity
To resist and to reclaim.

We are the failures of patriarchal femininity
Refusing your standards
And carving out a space for empowered and diverse expressions of femininity.

Femmes are Nasty Women. Femmes are valiant "Sissies."
Binary Breakers.
Decolonizers.
A threat to the cis-tem.
Femme is a radical invocation of femininity.
And in a masculinist white cis heteropatriarchy,
Femmes *are* the resistance.

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Keywords: femme; feminine; gender; queer; resistance