

WOMEN WHO WEAR PLAID – Artist Statement

Artist: Georgia Kirkos

While the female population was reconstructing gender norms, I was happily sneaking into my parents' bedroom and putting on my dad's plaid suit, tie and dress shirt. Parading around the living room wearing this oversized outfit and sending my mother into hysterical laughter was one of my proudest moments. I was 4.

As a teenager, I bought my brother a plaid shirt which I promptly stole and wore myself. That same shirt quickly became my go-to piece of clothing when I wanted to feel attractive yet still be myself - comfortable, sensible and very, very gay.

Plaid was once associated with rebellion, a revolt against societal norms. Lesbians adopted plaid not only as a signal to other lesbians but also as a celebration of their unique and distinct place in society.

Women Who Wear Plaid is a collection of images representing a group of women who understand and relate the connection of plaid to their queer selves.

What began as a tribute, transformed into an individual exploration of meaning for each participant. I started by photographing women within my social circle. I would ask them to bring along something plaid that resonated with them. Other women began to hear about my desire to examine and reclaim the plaid emblem in my life as a lesbian and an artist. The request for participants soon became a wait list of eager volunteers. What was revealed with each session was that plaid was a uniting force in the lives of all those who were photographed. It was a comfort that ran deep. Plaid continues to be not only an emblem but a reassurance, a solace, a symbol of solidarity.

As a documentary photographer, I value the authenticity of capturing real life moments as they happen. In the process of photographing these women, their ideas about how they wanted to be photographed and what they felt represented their relationship with plaid became part of the agenda.

As plaid has been co-opted by mainstream trends and has veered away from the emblematic symbol of lesbians, I wanted to rediscover its meaning for myself. Its impact played out so distinctly in my own life that I wanted to pay homage to its strength not as a fashion statement, but as a life affirming choice. I wanted to capture the unity that this symbolic fabric has created both in my small circle and in the world community of the LGBTQ2.

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