

TransFigures

Poster Project

Tania Hammidi is an educator, performer, and queer fashion runway show curator who earned a Ph.D. from UC Riverside in Critical Dance Studies in 2010. Also known as "T," s/he identifies masculine-of-center, gender-non-conforming butch, boi, and feminist; s/he prefers both "male" or "female" and uses the women's bathroom – or gender-neutral bathrooms when available. T is most at ease doing drag kinging, performance art, and site-specific installation – within these artistic spheres s/he has been able to physically and aesthetically create live personas (be they kings, or stage characters) who are in most proper alignment with T's internal sense of a gendered, queer sexed, and mixed race self/selves. Currently, T is exploring 'butch voice' as a physiological question – what are the stakes of "sounding" masculine (while looking female), or sounding "female" (while looking masculine).

As an adjunct lecturer, Tania teaches gender/design/writing composition at the California College of the Arts, the San Francisco Art Institute, and the University of California, Davis. As a regular freelance contributor to Curve Magazine, Velvet Park: Dyke Culture in Bloom, Bitch, Make/Shift, and ITCH zine, Tania has had the opportunity to interview out leaders in the queer/LGBT art, music, performance, and film worlds such as: Ani Difranco, Christy Gephardt, Pratibha Parmar, Cheryl Dunye, Julie Tolentino, Juliana Snapper, Ron Athey, Leon Mostovoy, and, most recently, Campbell X.

Tania founded **QUEERTURE: Queer + Couture**, an organization for queer/LGBT fashion and costume designers, models, photographers, fashion journalists, writers, and archivists. T's goals are to foster safe spaces and create sustainable, thoughtful economic opportunities for alternatively masculine and gender-non-conforming individuals and communities within the realm of costume/fashion design, discussion, production and display.



Photo by Love Adlan

Tania "T" Hammidi

Lebanese-American, Masculine of Center Educator, Performer, Writer

Erotically/romantically, Tania has enjoyed a range of attractions and connections: with queer femmes, butch women, trans guys, drag queens, drag kings and gay men. T's comment: "It is what is between the ears that really matters to me."

There are moments when one finds oneself deeply lost. In the early 2000's, T lost both her parents at a time when most of her/his peers were busy starting their academic careers. Dealing with grief and mourning in combination with being the legal administrator for her family's affairs threw T's stability out the door! Legal documents enforced extreme normativity: daughter, sister, female, she, her, Ms. over and over. During this time there was an upsurge in transmale

visibility and a decline of "butch" as an abundant category of identity and masculine practice. This was not a pretty time. Or, to quote Donna Summer, a time when T's cake was definitely "left out in the rain."

It was the text **Freeing Ourselves – A Health Guide for Brown Bois & Masculine of Center Folks** (Brown Boi Project) that brought T's complex butch/masculine core back to life. Given to her by an ex-lover, the book was catalyst for new language and a deeper level of community connection – one where bodies, biology, aesthetics, voice, gender performance, ethnicity, class... all were threaded together under the umbrella of self/health care and community-generated queer masculine knowledge. "Masculine of Center" made sense to T – it pointed to the meat of one's body and to the center of one's spiritual core: ephemeral and as vital as a pulse. Masculine of center invigorated the solid feelings and intellectual sense of belonging, complexly, somewhere.