

## Miss Barbie-Q to headline at Fresh Meat Festival

Kimberly Chun

Thursday, June 14, 2012

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS (0)

FONT | SIZE: - +



Courtesy of the artist

Miss Barbie-Q, who got her name while poking fun at an old-time drag queen, says she plans to collaborate with other artists.

[View Larger Image](#)

To paraphrase Walt Whitman, drag can be large, it can contain multitudes.

0

[Tweet](#)

That much Miss Barbie-Q - L.A. drag performer, singer, actor, writer, dancer, club promoter and radio reporter - has set out to prove, whether she's starring as the proud mother of a house in the independent film "Leave It on the Floor," materializing in Lady Gaga's "Telephone" video, writing about the L.A. art scene for publications like Odyssey Magazine, lending her gift of gab to a radio show on 90.7 KPFK in L.A. or appearing in performance art pieces like Kristina Wong's "Cat Lady."

9

[f share](#)

0

[g +1](#)

In fact since "Cat Lady," she says, "I'm on this whole kick of applying for grants and

collaborating with writers and seeing what else I can put out there. It was a whole different field to see what I was capable of. It wasn't just prancing around to a song. As Barbie-Q, I'm not as limited as I thought I was."

Miss Barbie-Q will be among the headliners at this weekend's Fresh Meat Festival of transgender and queer performances. The 11th annual event also features members of the dance troupe Vogue Evolution and Emily Vasquez, of "American Idol" and "The Glee Project."

Miss Barbie-Q's drag love story began 19 years ago in Orange County, among four beloved "sisters." "I don't believe in drag mothers, but I had four drag sisters," she recounts - the "chocolate diva" among Madonna, Bjork and girl group acolytes. An oldster walked into the club Barbie-Q was in with big clownlike circles of blush on her cheeks, so the mischievous Barbie-Q put tiny takeout containers of [barbecue](#) sauce up to her own cheeks, only to have them open and splash the sauce into her lap. "Everyone said, 'You should be Barbie-Q!' It's not pretentious or over-the-top like Lady Tiffany Carrington Diamond. It's more fun and approachable - that's how I see the character, and that's how I am too."

"I wouldn't say I'm a shaman, but I'm a shrink to a lot of people. I'll be in a huge club, and I'll be in the corner talking to some dude who just broke up with his boyfriend."

The performer nearly stopped bringing that larger-than-life healer quality to the clubs 11 years ago. "I stopped because the respect wasn't there," Miss Barbie-Q says. "After the last gig I did, the owner tried to pay me in drink tickets." The Cal State Fullerton graduate who studied TV and film put on a suit and tie, worked for AIG and then the International Documentary Association until the recession arrived and brought layoffs. Miss Barbie-Q was back.

"Now I'm seeing Barbie-Q and me as being fluid," she says. "I used to be very Republican about it: Take off your wig and you're a dude."

Going with the flow, she believes she'll work some original performance, a la tap dance, into her Fresh Meat turn: "I want to get together with a couple of tappers up there. One just hit me and said, 'Are we tapping or what?' Where else are you going to see black tap-dancing drag queens?"

The chance to collaborate with other kindred spirits is also compelling Miss Barbie-Q to make her way to the festival and surf a few friendly couches while in the city.

"Right now L.A. and California on a whole is on a buzz of creating art. Everyone is bouncing off each other. Drag queens getting with writers and artists. ... Everyone is stepping out of their zone," she says. "People are just so excited about doing something different - 'Let's take that idea, put your mozzarella on it, and it'll be delicious.'"

8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 7 p.m. Sunday. \$15-\$25. Brava Theater, 2781 24th St., S.F. [www.freshmeatproductions.org](http://www.freshmeatproductions.org).

Kimberly Chun is a freelance writer. E-mail: [96hours@sfgate.com](mailto:96hours@sfgate.com) Twitter: [@kimberlychun](https://twitter.com/kimberlychun)

This article appeared on page **HG - 16** of the San Francisco Chronicle