

Aiyyana Maracle 'Gender Möbius'

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Event series: Halfbred

Artists: Aiyyana Maracle

Transcript and Captions by: Kira Saragih, 2025

Video found here: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8954621/video/248233371>

[00:00:00]

(grunt brushstrokes audio plays)

[00:00:09]

[**Glenn Alteen:**] For her to do her own credits at the end. D, as a transgender and First Nations person, is working really out of two traditions, and this is basically a piece that deals with her own journey through this. And this piece is gonna be a lot of movement, so they're probably gonna have to be moving you around at certain points. So be ready to... okay.

(Audience laughs and claps)

[00:00:48]

(slide projector clicks)

(high-pitched wailing)

(flute-like vibrato whistles)

(raven cawing)

(low airy hums)

(shrilling vibrato)

(moaning)

(noises repeating and blending to form a soundscape)

[00:04:30]

[Aiiyana Maracle (traditional drumming and singing)]

(low air blowing)

(shrilling vibrato)

(rhythmic rattling)

(airy whistling)

(scattering rattle)

(noises repeating and blending to form a soundscape)

[AM (playing a rattle)]

(low air blowing)

(bird-like whistles)

[AM (moaning)]

(bird call-like whistles)

(paper crinkling sounds)

(low air blowing)

[00:08:47]

[AM:] Columbus?

(Spanish-style guitar strumming and picking starts)

(falsetto singing and wailing)

[00:10:04]

(guitar and singing continues accompanied with rhythmic clapping)

[00:10:24]

(guitar, singing and clapping stops)

[00:10:41]

[Performer 1:] Fucking queers. (cackles) Indians who in it? We should've stomped that filth out when we had the chance. They're pigs and savages, animals, ... heathens!

[P1:] Hell we've always had queers. When we first came here, shit, women running around, showing tits and all. Hoooo-weeee, mom we was in heaven. (audience laughs) It was way more fun and a hell of a lot more easy than trying to wrastle them sheep down at home. (audience laughs)

(drumming starts)

[P1:] It was our God-given duty to civilize these animals. Domesticate 'em. Bring some morality to 'em. And don't get me wrong, that most of them was running around half naked it was just fine, just fine. Made it easy to take what they seem to be offering. We was just reapin' our divine destiny. Our man-o-fist destiny. Most of all, what was immoral, unnatural, they didn't even have the sense God gave, to know that there is only man and woman, man and woman, man and woman, man and woman.

[Performer 2 off stage:] Might is right, God is good, might is right, God is good (repeats chant)

[P1:] Anyway, sometimes we drive on the lawn.

(breathing and grunting noises)

(audience laughs)

(thuds)

(creaking of wooden plinths being stepped on)

(drumming continues)

[00:15:03]

[P1:] Damn, queer! They tried to tell us shit like they was special, right? Or they had healing, seeing powers, spiritual bullshit. Oh crap! They tried to tell us that God was a she/he and they was like them. Oh no sir, no sir we can't have that. We fought, we tried real hard and we thought we got them all but obviously we missed one.

(audience laughs in awe)

(drumming continues)

[00:16:51]

[AM:] Natural light, natural, light sun

(rustling and shuffling as performer moves across the room)

[AM:] What is it, in life, in the cycles of life that we have? I look into my past, hear my grandmother's whisper to me. Down through history, rooted in the culture of all of them. (shaker rattles) For us, to be who we were, to view the world was to have choice, choice was sacred in all. Notions of who we were was a choice. Personal. How we related, or part of, belong to the world. We see, we learn, we look for where we fit in. Do we? As much as choosing a name says who we are, who we are as a person, much as we view the world in its wholeness, also we view all people. In more than a polarity of male or female, beyond simply mixing those two concepts, we are allowed to be. Our knowledge of the birds allowed us to transform ourselves to become who we are. (shaker rattles) In this, the choice belongs to us, to take and do it, to become.

[AM:] When I was little, I was raised with my sisters, my aunts, my grandmothers. I was not a boy. When I looked into the world, what I saw, what came filtering through, came filtering through the eyes of a woman. A gift from my grandmother. I grew to appreciate the body that I had, as male and strong as it may have been, inside, what I saw, what I felt, was woman. (shaker rattles) I looked around, I listened, looking for that mirror where I could see myself, to understand who I was. In school, before I went to school, I was this cute little person that people would tug my cheek and tussle my hair and say "my what a cute little thing you are", suddenly school came and I became this ugly little Indian boy. I was not ugly, I knew that. But was I a boy? Not in my life had I felt like that, that's why I looked around, what is it to be a boy, to be a man. No mirrors, no knowledge, nowhere to look and see myself.

[00:22:37]

(singing and drumming in the background)

[AM:] "You're crazy", "don't talk like that", "don't think like that you don't need to know things like that". I hid. I had children, behaved as a man, but never belonged. As a young Native man, I fought. Through all the 70s, we started to raise our voices and question and demand who we were. The public greeted me with fear, because of my race. Because they saw I'm an Indian

man, and it scared the hell out of them. I followed that for many years, to see where it will take me. All the time trusting, in what I felt, in the words that my grandmother would whisper to my ears, in my sleep. As my kids grow older, and I had more freedom, suddenly they were gone, grown, gave me grandchildren. I questioned, for many years again, looked around. Where am I? Where is my mirror? Where do I finally see myself? Still nothing. Enough years of being told “you’re crazy”, “we dont want to hear that shit”, “thats not how the fucking world is”, “who the fuck do you think you are?”.

(singing and drumming continues)

(an instrument swinging a note back and forth)

[AM:] Eventually it beats you down. Silences you. Finally when I approached 40 and looked and saw the coming of the millennium. Felt that the world was changing. Not a mirror yet, but the possibility of it being there. At 40, I couldn’t take it no more. I said, where is my mother in law? Has she died of cancer? The nurses laugh. All the woman skills I had acquired, had been given in the course of my life. The whispering of my grandmother to me, teach me how to be a healer. Where are the medicines? How are they used? But in today’s world, it takes more than that medicine. It takes an understanding of this world. We are more than sick, we are sick in spirit, how do we heal that? And who heals the healer? With the passing of my grandmother, sorry, my mother in law. As she left the world, her gift for my time spent caring for her as she died, the rage, the confusion, everything that was welled up inside of me, she took.

[00:27:44]

[AM:] All my life I, having been called crazy, I resisted. Accepting that notion, I knew I was not crazy. I absolutely saw the world differently. But, because I saw the world differently that was my gift, that was my conviction, that was what I was, who I am.

(rattling shaker)

[00:28:16]

(shaker plays rhythmically, singing continues)

[AM:] To be crazy is to lose your mind. At some point I lost my mind and unloaded all that shit, all that pain, all that stuff I had no idea what to do with. Leaving me not envy, but much more

filled with myself, and who I was, who I am, my position, what to do, where to go, who am I. I finally had to give up, trying to pretend that I was any kind of a man. And with that acceptance, allowed me to be, not just woman, not just man, something much beyond. We had, in our path, I felt it was in my bones all my life, every bit of my memory, every whisper from my grandmother, told me so, that it was true. And it wasn't until I could trust in them, and give myself fully to them that they allowed me that final piece of knowledge, that final bit of courage, to be, simply to be. I have not claimed a label, would not allow people to stick me in a box all my life, I cannot label myself now. I am not man. The woman I am is a different kind. And I must trust that it's there. Where do I go from here?

[00:31:01]

(audience nervously laugh and cheer)

(audience crosstalk)

[00:31:30]

[AM:] We must trust, I must trust

(audience laughs)

[00:31:38]

[audience member:] Rope's on the right

(audience chatter)

[00:31:48]

[AM:] We trust

(audience laughs)

[AM:] Where I'm off to, I don't know. In my life, there is a void ahead of me. (audience laughs)

My grandmother here with me, my children are with me.

(audience cheers quietly)

[00:32:45]

[AM:] I am back, me, free.

(Audience claps and cheers)

[**AM:**] (thanks collaborators, individual names drowned out by audience cheering)

(audience crosstalk)