

BRIGITTE MULHOLLAND



WITH WIT WE RISE EPISODE I The Fabulous Rebellion of the F.A.G.

It is a time of fabulous rebellion. Orange tyranny descends upon two worlds— Planet France and the Federated American Globe (F.A.G.).

The Cheezmalite Empire, born from corruption, misogyny, and disinformation, seeks to unmake queerkind.

But across the sands, The Daddy whispers prophecy. From the forests, The Mommy breathes life into resistance. And the Chevalier d'Eon, the first of the transformed, splits the Life Seed to forge new life.

From that spark emerges Barbara the Warrior Princess, blade of the queer divine.

On Planet France, President Brigitte Hyperion summons her armies, while Claude Cahun commands the Pink Pony ranks.

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As Joan of Arc ignites the flame once more,
the galaxy braces for battle— and the queer
gods rise to remind the universe:

Wit is Mightier Than War.

Thus begins the epic saga of Sean Fader's sprawling sci-fi narrative that transforms the gallery into the pictorial record of the Federated American Globe (F.A.G.). Proudly presented by Brigitte Mulholland, *With Wit We Rise: The Fabulous Rebellion of the F.A.G.* is the first solo show in Paris by the New York-based artist. Equal parts queer revolution, campy space opera, and mythic archive, Fader uses razor-sharp satire and fastidious historical research to tell the story of an idyllic, entirely queer planet that is invaded by the Cheezmalites - a plague of orange dust spores that, instead of killing the hosts that inhale them, convert them into believing fascist and puritanical ideologies. The revolution of the F.A.G. consists of a dazzling intergalactic resistance group that fights against the tyranny of its colonizers with humor, strategy, and shade.

Through large-scale photographs and sculptural relics, Fader's protagonists – Barbara the Warrior Princess; Claude Cahun, General of the Pink Pony Army; the resurrected Chevalier d'Éon; The Mommy Joan; The Daddy of the Dunes; The Daughter of Tides – wage a fabulous rebellion against the empire of Covfefe, a grotesque embodiment of cheeto-dusted toxic masculinity and authoritarian power. The resulting photographic tableaux fuse Enlightenment portraiture with sci-fi spectacle; drag pageantry with state propaganda. Every gesture is both a joke and an indictment – and a reminder that humor has always been a powerful queer weapon.

Shot mainly in France, many of the characters reference important historical figures, including Claude Cahun (the Surrealist artist and resistance leader during the Second World War, known for their explicit rejection of binary gender), Louis XIV, The Duke of Orléans, and the Chevalier d'Eon (the French spy to Russia during Louis XIV's reign who was the first person in history to have their gender legally changed). Fader's typical use of self-portraiture is found throughout the works; including the artist as the clone army - a mustachio-ed, leather-bound hybrid of Tom of Finland and Peter Marino - who battles a giant orange sandworm on the beaches of Normandy. The other photographic subjects include an amalgam of friends and queer allies across France and NY, including recognizable faces like Nicole Eisenman, Tamara Gonzales, Ryan Wilde, Kahlos Ephémère, and even the gallerist herself.

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With Wit We Rise extends Fader's long-standing exploration of how images perform history, queerness, desire, and violence. Across his career, he has transformed photography into a space of exchange, where performance, authorship, and intimacy converge. In this new chapter, Fader turns from the archive to the cosmos, imagining a future history in which queer survival is not tragedy but triumph: an uprising staged in both celebration and rage, where performance is both strategy and the fulfillment of a prophecy. Fader is acutely aware that art and queerhood are usually the first things attacked in fascism. This exhibition positions camp as a form of political clarity: laughter sharpened into resistance, sincerity refracted through spectacle. In Fader's universe, the revolution is choreographed, mascaraed, and magnificently deliberate. The future, it turns out, is triumphantly fabulous.

Sean Fader (he/him) is a queer artist and Associate Arts Professor of Photography & Imaging at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Working across photography, performance, and emerging technologies, Fader examines how power, visibility, and desire circulate through images in digital and physical space.

His ongoing project *Queer American Memorials* expands on *Insufficient Memory*—a series that revisits sites of anti-LGBTQ+ violence through photography and augmented reality, now in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Through these works, Fader transforms landscapes of trauma into spaces of queer resilience and collective remembrance.

Fader's work has been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Denny Dimin Gallery, and Brigitte Mulholland Gallery, and has been featured in *The British Journal of Photography*, *Hyperallergic*, and *BOMB Magazine*.