

Art

edited by
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TRANS-RABBI EXPRESS

Oreet Ashery, aka Marcus Fisher, is an artist who likes to dress up as a transgender Jewish Orthodox man and meet the general public. Crossing cultural borders and scrambling cultural codes has been something she's always done, before even assuming the guise of Marcus (Mar-Cus being 'Mr Cunt' in Hebrew). She explains that "having been brought up in Jerusalem, it's all about territory, so even since I was a child I was dressing up in skimpy dresses and going to the Orthodox neighbourhoods and having stuff thrown at me." Beginning her project as a kind of street performance and also as interventions in clubs, she is now aiming her sights more firmly at the art crowd. Running a new format, which she describes as "a chance for an intimate moment with Marcus Fisher," she and a member of the public get to spend five minutes alone on a bed before then taking a picture, which she then sends to the participant. Having done this format in both London and Berlin, she is exporting Marcus to New York and Ljubliana for more "one to ones". So instead of hiding in the studio pontificating about sexuality, religion and the like, Ashery is willing to get face to face with the public and act as a mirror to their reactions to these murky subjects. As she says, "it's not like I'm on my own being an artist playing with weirdness... some of the people who come are far kinkier than anything Marcus can ever be." Although working more in the art world now, Marcus Fisher still remains elusive. Instead the project is filtering through as a kind of Chinese whispers, or as Ashery says, "more like an urban myth. Like someone said 'I saw your character on a skateboard in Brixton', or running with a deckchair, something like that. Any Orthodox Jew doing something you wouldn't expect becomes Marcus Fisher. That's the point of it, because really he's a clown." She also admits that "he is a bit sleazy", which explains the bed format. **FS** *Overdressed* works by Oreet Ashery and Victoria Hall is at Lounge, 52 Ferndale Rd, London, May 27th - June 16th. Info: 020 8211 0958