



'Incubus' Promo Shoot

## Fatness in Media

Hannah Perkins Battersby, born in 1836, traveled with Barnum & Bailey Circus as the "Mammoth Fat Lady." Fat women of the time period were often praised for their proportions as they indicated maternal success. On the other hand, many fat bodies, like Battersby, were considered freakish or unusual. Hannah Battersby's fatness exemplifies the ambiguous and changing meaning of the fat body in the nineteenth century.

Today's society is no different, as the media continues to criticize female bodies, while at the same time, setting unrealistic expectations for them. While men and GNC individuals also face backlash in our fat-phobic society, the male gaze predominantly fixates on the appearance of female bodies, emphasizing a preference for slimness. This theme is highlighted in our debut short 'Incubus', as Kacey fights against the implications of what it means to be a woman.

Both the previous and current centuries have their flaws, with decisions and beliefs often remaining unchallenged until someone speaks out. Change begins with recognizing existing issues and leveraging privileges to make a difference.

At Mount Productions, we aim to initiate programs and opportunities tailored for plus-size individuals. As a start-up, we need to continue laying foundations that include individuals of all backgrounds, shapes and sizes. Join us as we confront these ableist attitudes amongst our community and bring about a more inclusive mindset!

By: Krista Rose

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Dawn Heilung!

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GoFundMe Link and Story

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## MtP's Artist of the Month: Dawn Heilung!

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Dawn Heilung, (they/them), a performer, producer, and community organizer hailing from central Texas, is the founder and Artistic Director of *Gender Fucked Productions*; A trans, non-binary, and queer arts and event production non-profit based here in Chicago.

After taking a year off from school, and struggling to sustain life as an artist, Dawn returned to college and graduated with a double major in Public Health and a BFA in Acting from Texas State University. Dawn moved to Chicago seeking creative opportunities as a queer and gender non-conforming artist, Dawn was driven to create an expansive space *by* queer folk, *for* queer folk. "I just wanted to be in a place where that [queerness] was celebrated, loved, and embraced, and supported in more of a systemic way."

Dawn explains why they chose Chicago, "I really wanted to live in a place of abundance, and with artists who want to create as themselves and not have to hide themselves to exist in these systems." Dawn reflects on this and shares an unfortunate truth. "In America, I've recognized a certain amount of refugees fleeing states like Texas, where it's really hard to exist, receive medical care, employment, housing, and all these other kinds of things." Dawn's artistry is heavily focused on the plight of LGBTQ folks and how to create space for their stories to be told.

Dawn describes the push back they faced as a gender non-conforming person trying to build an artistic foundation in a community that often shunned, or flat out rejected them. "I was surrounded by a macro and micro-verse of really supportive people, but the general world was not supportive. The impetus of starting Gender Fucked was because of auditioning as a gender non-conforming person and not getting call backs, or even being let into the room."

Dawn's drag mother, Chitah Daniels Kennedy, encouraged them to use their drag as a way to fuck with their gender -- Hence, the name *GenderFucked Productions*. It was encouragement like this that allowed Dawn to fully embrace themselves, to pitch and produce projects that felt nearest and dearest to their heart, like the audience interactive dance show, *Queer Dance Freakout (QDF)*.



Dawn Heilung performing w/ QDF (2023)

QDF began in 2018, just outside of Austin, TX. What started as a political statement on anti-trans bathroom laws passed in various parts of the country, evolved into a way for the queer community to come together and tell their stories, both heartfelt and hilarious, through dance and movement.

"It was Queer Dance Freakout: A protest dance party outside the governor's house, where a bunch of naked queer and trans people just partied outside of the house until we got arrested or kicked out." After the pandemic hit in 2020, performances halted, allowing Dawn to move, first out West, then to Chicago.



Embraced by Chicago's intricate and vast LGBTQ+ community, Dawn continued to organize meet-ups and produce events of all kinds through *Gender Fucked*. "Gender Fucked became, sort of an umbrella to hold space for all the projects I like to do." Dawn says. As of this year, *Gender Fucked* is officially grant funded and has produced all over the Chicago area.

*"I love expanding genres and bringing performance art into different mediums, and questioning what any genre can mean."*

*-Dawn Heilung*

For Dawn, the business of starting new projects is just as important as the project itself. With *Gender Fucked* becoming more of a well-known force in the Chicago community, there is a level of pressure that comes with providing the funding for these events. "The process is ever evolving," Dawn shares, "We want to get trans led artistic projects funded and get mentorships to learn how to do the business parts, because those are what keep projects afloat for a longer period of time." Dawn does not shy away from the dirty and mundane work of owning a business. "I hate fundraising," they say, "but I've found it necessary, and have gotten a lot better at just asking people directly for money and being okay with them saying no."

It takes patience and a complex understanding of the community you're working with to be able to build something long-lasting. Dawn understands how these spaces can often spur dual relationships within tight knit queer communities. "There's the business and work side of creating a show or a dance, and then there's the friendships and relationships that come from that." The need for safe artistic communities is in high demand, with many trans and non-binary artists needing to perform as a specific gender in order to maintain work in their field. Often the space at *Gender Fucked* is the only space where trans and queer artists can show up as themselves without pushback.



Dawn pictured with QDF Company Lead A'Keisha Lee, and Mt.P Co-Founder Ellis Carmichael-Willins

You can catch Dawn showcasing their work at *Queer Dance Freakout*, with shows on April 5th at 8pm and April 7th at 3pm and 7pm, at Elastic Arts. To make this art accessible, *Gender Fucked* accepts sliding scale payments and encourages newcomers to see this one of a kind dance spectacle!

Dawn is also thrilled to introduce GFP's New Work series "It's Alive" by debuting an audience interactive play called "*The Chain\**" on April 13th. Dawn also appears in Mount Productions' debut short, '*Incubus*' coming this Summer. You can find more information on the *Gender Fucked* page - @gender\_fucked\_productions

Be sure to follow Dawn on Instagram - @dawnphenomenom - to stay up to date on all their events and projects, and trust us, you won't want to miss a single one.

# Support our Mission: Donate to our GoFundMe!



## MOUNT PRODUCTIONS

### Our 3 Main Goals



Creating a film requires a significant amount of time, effort, and passion. As a startup, we are funding our projects independently. While some may view this as a substantial risk, it's a risk we are willing to embrace to fulfill our mission.

Adapting the film industry to align with the changing world is crucial for us, and we are fully committed to it. We invite you to take a chance on us, to support us in our creative endeavors. There are countless untold stories waiting to be shared, and Mount Productions aims to empower artists to bring their visions to life by providing them with resources and fellow artists who share a similar vision.

The money raised from this GoFundMe will not only go towards our start-up costs, but will also aid in the telling of numerous LGBTQ stories that would otherwise go unheard.

LINK: <https://gofund.me/06647465>

VIDEO: [https://youtu.be/akyV64y8\\_BA](https://youtu.be/akyV64y8_BA)

## Artist of the Month: We want *YOU!*

Mount Productions highlights multi-disciplinary artists who are making waves in the creative scene here in Chicago.

As Artist of the Month, you'll be promoted on our social media and have a written interview in that month's newsletter.

All applications will be considered for future months, so no need to apply more than once. We look forward to meeting and learning more about you!



Contact us at [mountproductioninfo@gmail.com](mailto:mountproductioninfo@gmail.com)