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Turnin' It! The Art and Culture of Drag Opens at Herron Oct 5



Image credit: Alix Smith,
Through Imitation 1, Digital C-print, 24h x
30w in (60.96h x 76.2w cm)
Courtesy of the artist.

Gender roles are social and behavioral norms that constitute our culture's influence on human identity. Or, as RuPaul Charles so succinctly puts it, "We're born naked, and the rest is drag."

Curated by Herron Alumnus Michael Barclay (B.A. in Art History, 2006), now a second-year graduate student in the IUPUI Museum Studies program, *Turnin' It! The Art and Culture of Drag* is an exhibition featuring contemporary photography, costumes and artifacts.

Turnin' It! challenges cultural gender stereotypes and the notion of identity while it explores the local drag queen scene of the last 30 years. The exhibition opens from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Oct. 5 with a reception in Herron School of Art and Design's Basile Gallery of Eskenazi Hall. The exhibition continues through Oct. 25.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Herron will offer a double feature screening of the documentaries *A Drag King Extravaganza* and *Paris is Burning* on Oct. 19 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Basile Auditorium of Eskenazi Hall. The film screenings are free and open to the public.

"I have always have been interested in the depiction of gender in art" said Barclay. "When looking for elements for the show from Indianapolis, I discovered a historically significant culture that is thriving today.

"Drag is the symbolic use of clothing to represent behaviors and characteristics associated with a gender and persona," Barclay continued. "When drag is worn by a person, it challenges gender as a performance of the qualities of the opposite sex one idolizes. Drag queens are men who use exaggerated costume, lip-syncing and dance to satirize commonly held gender roles and blur the distinctions between female and male."

Turnin' It! coincides with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month, which was first celebrated in the United States in 1994, and IUPUI's LGBT Heritage Month. The exhibition is partially funded by the IUPUI LGBT Faculty and Student Council, which formed in 2008.

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