

Learn me
WHORE

FEMME//WHORE

Femme//Whore is a zine about and by sex worker femmes. Sex workers exchange their own erotic labour for money, shelter or other kinds of payments. The sex worker femmes who have work included in this zine do: lapdance/striping, webcamming, performance, escorting and various kinds of fetish /BDSM work. They come from various countries, but write about experiences working in three: the UK, USA and Germany. In Germany and the UK, various kinds of sex work are legalised and in the USA, most kinds of sex work are criminalised. Most sex worker rights activists globally work for decriminalisation, where all laws regarding sex work are removed, and sex work comes under general labour laws. Femme is most commonly (although not exclusively) understood to be a queer gender presentation, identity or orientation. It tends to include performative and subversive expressions of hyper-femininity, and isn't predicated on genitalia or prescribed gender at birth.

Femmes and sex workers can experience, amongst other oppressions, femmephobia and whorephobia, and an interest in examining this intersection was the thought which prompted the call for this zine.

Whore is a powerful slur that both femmes and sex workers hear about themselves and the use of this word as the title and within this zine is part of a wider attempt to regain its power for ourselves. We ask that if you aren't a sex worker, you don't use this word. The phrase 'sex worker' conveys our demand for labour rights and makes an alliance between kinds of sex workers who were previously divided across classist and criminalised lines.

This zine is supported by Sex Worker Open University, a UK worker's collective working towards sex worker rights, to end stigma and discrimination and to break isolation.

WHORES HANDS

fornicatrix

I lose track of the dicks I've touched within weeks of starting. I scour my hands with hot water several times between each one.

I feel guilty about touching my boyfriend with my mucky fingers and contaminating his body without his knowledge. I think of this often when I look down at my hands in the early days. They feel dirty.

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He's still wanking, 5 minutes over the endtime and I hear the maid do a warning knock. Looks like it's vinegar strokes but it's been forever and I don't know what to do. I panic. There are no gloves, so I slide a condom greasily over my finger and push inexpertly on his anus for a second or two. When my finger slips inside he immediately finishes on himself. I feel pleased.

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I tap the base of the bottle and sprinkle the powder along his back. After smearing it around I realise I didn't use enough – the sweaty stick of his back absorbs the talc instantly, and my hands jam into the soft clammy folds partway up his back. I try again, this time covering my palms with the stuff, and an extra sprinkle on the damp furry patch above his arse. I get to rubbing.

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"I like to be touched on the back of my scalp" he said.
"with your hands buried under my hair"
I can feel a raised mole, and rolls of skin on the back of his neck and his soft thinning white hair beneath my fingers. It feels a bit too intimate, but I do it anyway. He sighs with delight and pulls me in for an embrace. I let my mind go elsewhere and try not to focus on the texture of his hair beneath my fingertips.

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You like pain, he said? Does it excite you?
He had paid me £120 extra.
"Oh, yes Sir" I said.
He stood me in front, and commanded me to hold out my hand, fingers outstretched.
6 with a ruler, 6 with a strap. A proper schoolgirl punishment, he said afterwards, while I worked on his cock with my hot, stinging hand.

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'You're quite a handful' I said, my narrowed-eye smile belying my irritation. He was younger than my usual, and rambunctious, throwing me about the bed and room for ambitiously positioned fucks. I was losing patience and energy. 'get down here I'm gonna blow' he grunted, gesturing to the floor. But he shut his eyes so I caught the grey fluid in my cupped hands. I flick it into the basin after. Lather-rinse-lather-rinse-lather-rinse

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We go in together, she and I, after she rescues me from the endless cycle of washing towels and then making them dirty again.

We choose our colours and sit down for the hour. The technicians get to work gently clipping, buffing, filing, filling, elongating, shaping and painting while we tap-scroll-tap-scroll on our iphones with the other hands. We chat (in code for the sake of the shop staff) about work. They ask if we're best friends and why we're always in the shop together.

Smooth iced pink squares, or matte emerald green oval shapes, or a solid glitter nail in Mermaid's Tail, or sharp long red talons, or an understated French polish with white tip.

It feels like a restoration. like reinforcement. Like power. Tiny plates of armour being fixed to the tips of the fingers that do battle every day. It feels like a thankyou, from me, to me..

Hands that work hard, hands that do the work that people say is ugly.

But they're not dirty, or ugly. They're beautiful.



A FEW THINGS ABOUT BEING A FEMME SEX WORKER

tilly

Being femme and being a sex worker have more similarities than I ever noticed. They both give the impression that I am weak and fragile, a feather in a hurricane. That I am at the mercy of others. That I am a product of the patriarchy.

I hate living in a world where one of the worst things you can be is feminine. Where if you're a woman, one of the few ways you can be taken seriously is if you shed your femininity.

I strive to embrace the femme. Winged eyeliner applied painstakingly, sky-high heels that look like they're encrusted with stars, lacy underwear, coy glances. The bruises. Yes, femmes get bruises. Of course femmes get bruises. This femme gets bruises from sexy-crawling across stages, mostly.

Being a sex worker allows me to profit from my femininity. In the world of dimly lit strip clubs and brightly lit bedrooms, being passionate and attentive is a sign of strength, not one of weakness. Magazines urge you to use your femininity to "please your man." Sex work allows you to use your femininity to pay your bills and further your dreams.

Whether you shave or don't shave, wear makeup or don't, or are dominant or submissive, your experiences as a sex worker are valid and you deserve respect. Sometimes, I am accidentally femme. My hair, which was recently chin-length, has suddenly snaked its way down my back. There are waxing moons on my fingertips.

Sometimes, my femininity is intertwined with other things. I like rom-coms and knitting and affection. I also like power and money and one night stands. Such is the beauty of intersectionality.

I have a problem with things like "My favorite position is CEO." Because what if your favorite position is legs spread in front of a webcam? What then? What if your favorite outfit is a corset and not a pantsuit?

It's funny that sex workers are often perceived as weak and helpless, because to exist in a world that doesn't want you, you have to be quite strong.

"I WANT TO BE A WHORE WHEN I GROW UP"

AND OTHER RUMINATIONS FROM THE CONVENT

Luka Salome

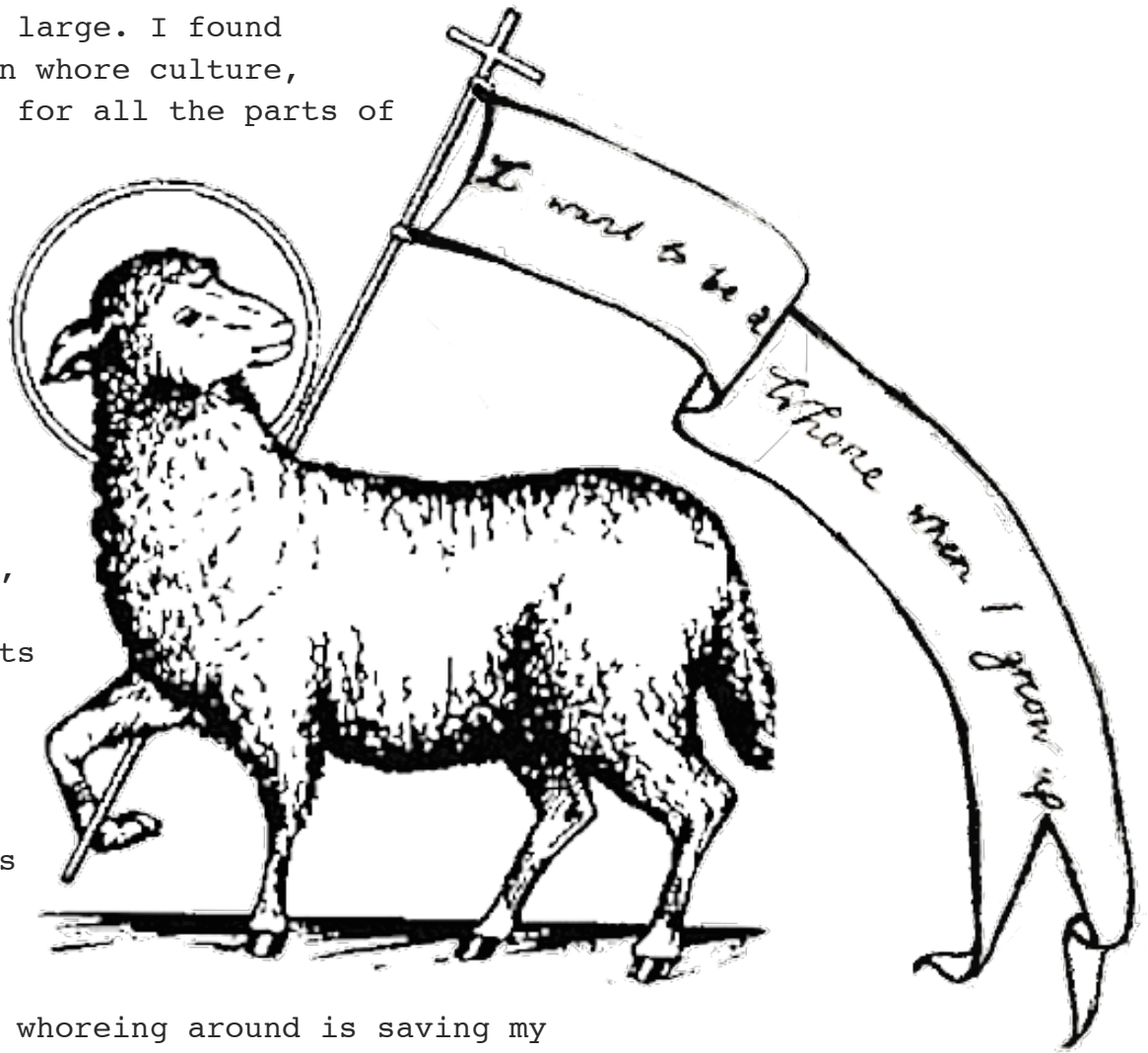
I grew up in a convent, the old school type, a community where women had two roles, to serve men or serve god. Sexuality was forbidden and as we were mostly told to stay away from boys and to cover ourselves, well the obvious conclusion was that I had something they wanted and it was powerful enough we could never talk about it. It's an archaic notion that's been around forever. I just happened to grow up with it in the last 30 years, here in the US. Being a rebel, I became curious about this thing that was forbidden me. I also realized quite young that this "sexuality" was maybe the only tool that seemed to give me any sense of power in this bizarre world in which I lived where women had none. I'm talking the kind of situation where admonishing your wife was preached from the pulpit. Within this environment I learned both what I was being taught (mad caretaking skills of the utmost extreme) and my own survival skills (which broke every rule, the non-sexuality clause being one of them). For the environment I was in, I was deemed a prostitute and lesbian, how they made the logical conclusion that both these were true, I don't know. I was banned from spaces by age 12. Needless to say I got out of this community eventually. I explored the world, myself, my gender, and my sex. I still used my seductress and feisty "liberated female" tactics to varying degrees. By my early 20's decided I didn't need them anymore. I didn't want to define my sense of freedom and power in the world based on my ability to control men around me by means of their desire or approval of me. I renounced the version of femininity I had developed and explored the more gender queer part of myself that didn't identify with all this femme business and that definitely didn't identify with the tactics I was engrained with in my upbringing. I renounced them in a big way, and in so doing renounced myself in the same big way. It came into sex work slowly. I started in friendsquo's porn projects and funny little gigs like a guy who wanted to buy panties, bras and stockings after you stripped for him. Eventually I had my first full escort gig. I loved it. It was fun and exhilarating and the easiest thing I'd ever done for money. That's not to say it's easy work, it was just easier for me than any other job I'd worked or working for any boss. It felt less compromising than other jobs

and like the most natural thing. After a year of escorting I felt a bit of that renounced femme in me coming back to life.

I was working with high paying clients, who for the most part, were paying to adore me. I had an innate sense of performing "carework" and "femininity" from childhood that these wealthy business men were comfortable with, I had also done a lot of work to find my authentic self and heal from the violence of those confining roles so wasn't at risk of getting lost in that version of service. But what I didn't anticipate was the amount that this work with the support and alliance of whore culture would heal me and my inner femme. It's been a journey and will continue to be, to understand the navigation of a slutty whore femme who likes to be a little more androgynous in the world at large. I found solidarity in whore culture, found refuge for all the parts of

me I had learned to deny. I hadn't been able to own femme sexuality, explicit slutty fabulousness, or overtly sexual aspects of my person till I found the haven of beautiful slutty whores like myself.

For now however, slutting and whoreing around is saving my heart and soul and helps me free myself to a fuller and more fabulous life. I know myself better, I desire more profoundly, I feel more deeply, I love stronger and have generosity I never knew I would, through this powerful force of nature that is my cunt.



YOUR EYES IN THE MIRROR

Sir Cuss

As a gender queer femme there are always explanations to be made, 'What do I mean by gender queer?', 'Am I sure?', 'But you look like a girl.' The added bonus is that if I try to explain who I am, I also have the opportunity to offend others whose gender already has an adequate language of description. As a sex worker people very rarely ask you to explain, they ask questions which are more curiosity or prurient interest, mostly they have already decided who you are. It comes down to similar things: stereotypes, assumptions, ignoring the voice of the person living the experience. Sexism and conditioned ways of behaving towards those who appear female is another running theme.

Monday's boundary pushing client keeps asking for services I don't offer, smiling cheekily and saying 'I'm not really demanding', a hundred small transgressions that accumulate over the course of our two hour appointment and leave me exhausted. That client reminds me of so many butches I have met in bars over the years, cocky macho studs who think I'm just a pretty girl, something for them to try out their sexual bravado on. The sleazily friendly butch stud who grabs my arse, the group of women playing pool who wolf whistle and call out names, because I'm wearing high heels and make up. All of those who assume I want to take their cock, or even better that as cock identified femme I am a challenge to their masculinity. I'm something to project a sexual fantasy onto, my self invisible, or if I am visible I may be regarded as worthy of a kind of aggression other than sexual harassment.

Wednesdays client loves to be fucked hard with my strap on and to worship my cock. Helping them to cross dress, slipping a satin petticoat over their head, tightening corset strings, as I apply their make up I ask 'Do you ever dress by yourself? or is this something you just like to do in session?' they reply 'I used to, then I stopped'. I tell them how I have spent many hours alone in my room putting on clothes, wigs, make up, just to watch another person emerge from beneath my skin. My client replies

'Yes, we all have many different people living within us.'

I place an elaborate Venetian carnival mask over the top half of their face and the transformation is complete, a fabulous glittering creature sits before me, clad in tight black satin and bound with leather straps to a chair. I caress the soft fabrics, feeling the smooth lines created by the corset, making eye contact with the other gendered creature behind that mask I lean in close and am tempted to kiss those carmine lips. In those glittering eyes I recognise myself, my own love affair with the trappings of femininity and my ambivalent relationship with those roles.

One of the most difficult experiences for me is to be read at face value: I may look like a cis gendered woman, but that's not how I feel. My gender expression affects how I experience my body, being expected to perform a gender or sexuality that doesn't fit how I see myself feels off kilter. When I perform a role for money, that's not so bad - I'm earning a living - and I can stop doing it as soon as I show my client out the door. When my identity in every day life is overshadowed by what others project onto me, then it feels damaging.

I am not a passive person, I resist, I speak out, I fight to be who I am, but there are times when others projections hurt, when the eyes that look back from the mirror are not my own. Having the depth of who I am rendered invisible either as a gender queer femme or as a sex worker produces dangerous inequalities that actively enforce the status quo.

HANDBAGS AT DUSK

Pussy Von Cash

I was a whore before I was a queer, and I was a queer before I became a femme. I'd love to know how these things came about for the other few sparkly beings that inhabit this glorious inner part of the venn diagram circles of these three identities: queer, femme, sex worker, but that was the way round it was for me.

Queer femme is what I call my gender. I was more or less a lesbian before I started escorting, although now I call myself bisexual: I like two kinds of people: queer femmes, and everyone else (ZING!!) On thinking about this recently, I think it is might have been partly just a lack of exposure to dude types that meant I took nearly 25 years to find out that I actually really like dick, yeah. I had an absent father and spent much of my education at all girls school. My relationships with women were fulfilling enough, and the one time I did try a relationship with a guy, I encountered such horrific biphobia from my chosen family, my lesbian& gay family (this is before the word queer got reclaimed, such that it has been), that I gave it up pretty quickly.

My best lesbian friend at school (who ran off with a butch ex of mine seconds after we had broken up- so much for sisterhood) was a femme, but I found the whole thing alienating. Partly since femme had no nuance for me at that point, and I felt that it was expected that if I were a femme, I would date butches. Only, I liked androgynous types, bears, other femmes, basically anyone with sharp style and a great haircut. I liked, and continue like those with a predilection towards eyeliner abuse above all other characteristics or personality traits.

It all makes a great deal more sense now I call my gender femme, and not my orientation.

Trans women taught me the practice of self documentation as a political act: taking selfies and sometimes posting them in public makes me face the reality of what I look like as my identity develops, and when people appreciate my body, my look and the visual representation of my identity in this way, it helps me develop my self assurance.

Getting constant compliments from clients when they misread my proficiency at using my femme skills as passing for straight is

also a great way for me have my self-esteem mirrored back at me, although I would prefer to feel beautiful without needing confirmation of that from other people, least of all people who pay me to be beautiful and who are therefore invested in the fantasy of me desirable even if I weren't.

I am lucky to have fierce femmes around me in my community. I learnt from other femmes that it was ok to conceptualise my gender as a fundamentally queer one. My femme sisters (I have a couple of close ones in particular) enrich and re-energise me when I feel the exhaustion of femmephobia in queer space, as well as an almost constant sense of invisibility, both in the queer and straight worlds. My international network of femmes spreads around the world, and when I read the work of American femmes, see the performance of Japanese sex workers and listen to the words of Swedish femmes, I know that the family is in my heart wherever I go.



I pretty much always think of femme and whore as both fundamentally subversive identities. Anti sex work feminists consider sex workers the ultimate traitors: shoring up capitalist patriarchy by servicing their ultimate need to occupy even our very bodies. Charging men for what they expect for free is however, a radically feminist act. Subjecting poor, unsuspecting men to my panoply of femme skills and demanding payment for it is nothing short of 21st century witchcraft, and I couldn't be more proud of that heritage.

FEMME WHORE

Emy Fem

Femme

Fem_me

Femme me. That's me.

My gender, my desire.

My connection to my body.

A body and a gender which was not assumed as femme at birth.

My erotic trip to my actual body and gender.

Teached me to realize myself and the persons I am sexual attracted to.

My power, my femininity

Femmeininity.

Me.

The power I need to survive, stay alive and dream.

The power to act. Beeing active. Beeing an activist.

A femmeinist activist.

The power to work.

My work.

Sexwork.

I am a prostitute!

Prostitution is the work which fits to my life. To the way I live.

Queer sexwork, sexpositive performances, feminist porn, escort, modelling, massage, strip, bdsm, tantrix.

Mainstream for the money.

Queer for my desire.

My sexwork has different directions.

Yes, I do have sex with Cismen. Only for money. Not privately.

My play with their desire, their joy.

A desire to a body, a sexuality they often don't understand.

Easy to forget my customer.

On my way home, alone with my dream in the night about this hot transboy.

My clients.
My desire.
Seems impossible to connect.
In fact, super easy.
I am used to presenting myself.
If it's needed in a hot way.
For me femme is a sexual gender.
Creates the important skills I also use for sexwork.

Butch/ femme.
An erotic game with hot bodys.
A wonderful connection.
And Respect.
Why not earn money with that skill? An easy step.
Earning money with the point I am cool with my body and learning how to
present it to the people I am hot on.
Also possible with my clients.
Mostly straight normative rich cismen.
Easy to understand.
Simple codes.
Simple sexuality.
A sexuality which is not mine, I am not into.
Hard to feel but easy to understand.
Easy to get in contact with. To play with.
To bring him to the point he wanna go to.
With a sensitivity and power he maybe don't know in his normative world.
A useful situation when you have creative erotic respectful femme-
skills.
Or try to have/ learn them.
Respect and time
Femme/ Fem/ Fem_me
Like me

Emy Fem:

This text is written from my perspective. The Perspective of a white, nonacademic sexworking femme with a transgendered body. I work mostly in the country of my birth. A country where Sexwork is half legalized and not decriminalised but it's legal to do Sexwork. A country where it's possible to have an official name and genderchange. My official gender is female and my official name is choosen. And I am a mother. These are all points which I find important to point out, because they show some of my privileges and my stigmas.

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