

An Interview

WITH ARTIST ROBERT BLANCHON

Continued

example would be filmmaker John Water's "Serial Mom", there are no gay characters but isn't the joke really that it's a film by a gay guy about a straight family that has some major fucked up problems. It's through his life that he's lived this or observed this. Gay people are more observant than straight people. I'm not sure what that's about, except maybe our observational dedication to the artificiality of our world. Making films or making art is like making ceremony. We're in charge of the ceremony. The fag does the catering, the floral arrangements...

Anthony: Designs the clothes.

Blanchon: Right, and styles the hair, the makeup - we're in charge of the artifice. We're in charge of a fake thing. Like the idea of culture is our job. Keeping culture alive is up to the straight people. Our job is to aestheticize it - to make it beautiful, or ugly, make it a film, a video, porn - that's what we do. But in art's case, it's almost a fake artifice, if I can say those two words together, because it is such an unnecessary part of life. But it's the part of our life we need to keep on living. It's a part of our head that says we're not animals or run on instinct. We run on emotions and intellect, and as fags and dykes we are really

critical of that look.

Anthony: Well, as any artist does.

Blanchon: Yes, but for myself as a fag, it's entrenched in everything I do. Sexuality is so complicated, but on another level it's banal. It's simple or just there. You can take a look at the old school of psychology & see it's not controlling, it's just integral to everything I do. Let's say I make art, and it's not because I'm a S & M bottom, but certainly having experienced perhaps being that character will inform what I'm doing even if I'm making an architecture plan for IBM. My sexuality, or any part of my life will inform what I'm making.

Anthony: As will any part of your history - where you were born, who raised you...

Blanchon: Right. And that's why I'm saying it's degrading to call it "gay art" or "AIDS art".

I don't think there is such a thing as "AIDS art". There's AIDS, which people are dying from, and there's art, and the two can't be intertwined that easily. I mean, AIDS has been a part of my life for 15 years and keeping myself alive - and getting violently ill - there's no place for art there. It's not about art - it's about staying alive. Art is about vitality, but I don't want to get confused by it. I don't want to be confused as to what feeds what. And I think gay art, AIDS art, black art, women's art, to call it that is so