

ARTS &

We're All Going Gaga: An Essay

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When we glimpse Lady Gaga, we see that in every way she is the epitome of a pop star: she has amazing hair, her costumes are drenched in rhinestones, and she sings the catchy songs that none of us can get out of our heads. Sure, she is glamorous and is referred to as the next Madonna, but is she just a well-packaged superstar whose lasting power will be that of overripe bananas, or will she be an enduring icon of the decade? I feel that Lady Gaga's influence is here to stay. She is not just a pretty face singing hit songs like "Bad Romance," "Telephone," or "Poker Face," but a legitimate artist who is making a variety of political statements through her clothing and actions, as well as satirizing our culture in her videos.

One of Gaga's most well-known costumes is one in which she is covered in Kermit-the-frog stuffed animals. She did not wear this outfit to be ostentatious or for pure shock value, but instead to make a statement regarding her feelings on wearing fur. She also gets very political in her most recent video, "Alejandro," which she described to Larry King as a "celebration of my love and appreciation for the gay community, my admiration of their bravery and their love for one another." Lady Gaga clearly has politi-

cal issues that she is passionate about, and she won't just censor herself in order to keep the world happy.

Her videos are not mindless displays of sexuality, although the content certainly is sexual—in fact, giving it a PG-13 rating might be a little too optimistic. In her videos she repeatedly includes themes like advertising, gross sarcasm, and gratuitous promiscuity, all as one large hyperbole of the cultural statements so common in mainstream media. In her video "Telephone," she showers her audience with advertisements for Polaroid, Diet Coke, Miracle Whip, Verizon, Chanel, and then she further imitates mainstream culture with her barely-covered breasts and constant provocative dancing in lingerie. Through her music videos, she simultaneously criticizes her American peers and embraces them.

In this era, Lady Gaga is the best representation of our culture. She is always trying to push the envelope and is not concerned about stepping on a few (or many) toes in the process. She is not a product of good marketing; she is a self-made woman. Her fashion choices may be erratic and her political positions extreme, but we must realize that she gives us intelligent reasons and sound justifications for doing the things that she does.



photo by John Write,

from <http://www.musictoob.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/lady-gaga-pic->

Ask Gigi

Dear Gigi,

For ten months, I pursued a relationship with a guy who barely acknowledged my existence. Under the influence of alcohol, and maybe some small aspect of remorse, he continually told me that he really would want to be in a serious relationship with me, if only... I eventually grew tired of his inconsistency and moved on. But now, he initiates conversation with me, and he tells me that he wants to make the relationship work. Should I give him a second chance?

Sincerely,
Fed Up with the Phony

Dear Fed Up with the Phony,

You said this guy continually fed you false lines "under the influence of alcohol." So what did he tell you when he wasn't drinking? In this case, perhaps what he didn't tell you sober should be the red flag. I find it suspicious that he has just now decided to express his romantic sentiments. He might tell you he misses you when what he really means to say is that he misses the lavish attention you paid him. Ultimately, you'll have to be the one to decide whether he has changed his game for good. But if you decide to let him back into your life, take it slow, establish clear rules for the relationship, and do what you say you'll do if he lets you down. Communication is nothing without action to back up your vows. If he disappoints you again, at least you will leave the relationship with your dignity intact and the sense of empowerment that a woman feels when her actions are congruent with her values.

Yours truly,
Gigi

What's Up In Raleigh

- Never Exhibited Works at the Visual Art Exchange until the 23rd
- To Kill A Mockingbird at the Burning Coal Theater Company until the 26th
- Pandemonium: The Lost and Found Orchestra at Broadway Series South starting the 28th
- Sparkcon on Fayetteville Street the 16 - 19

16th

Inflowential and HaLo at Tir Na Nog
The Small Ponds CD Release Party with Bright Young Things and The Tomahawks at the Pour House

17th

The Black Crowes at the Raleigh Amphitheater
Seven Samurai at the North Carolina Museum of Art

18th

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers with ZZ Top at Walnut Creek

19th

American Aquarium with the Drive-by Truckers and The Henry Clay People at the Lincoln Theater

The Kingdom of Kush: The World of Taharqa and the Nubian Pharaohs at the North Carolina Museum of Art

22nd

Bassnectar at Lincoln Theater

23rd

Veelee with Motor Skills and Cassis Orange at Tir Na Nog

24th

Drunken Angel at the North Carolina Museum of Art
Barefoot Wade at Shakedown Street

25th

Whatever Brains with the Light Pines and the Super Vacations at Kings