

FAKE FRIENDS PRESENTS

# CIRCLE JERK

BY MICHAEL BRESLIN AND PATRICK FOLEY



***“I do the same thing you do, just for  
opposite sides”***

*— John Waters, speaking to Andrew Breitbart*

# About Us

*Circle Jerk* is a queer comedy about white gay supremacy, a homopessimist hybrid of yesterday's live theater and today's livestream (set in tomorrow's news cycle). It tells the story of gay, right-wing trolls and the algorithms they invent to spread their gay agenda and take over the Discourse...and then, the world. In an era when truth is dead and fact is fiction, *Circle Jerk* is a realistic comedy about a bleakly farcical reality.

We live in a world of deep fakes, fake news, viral memes, and mainstream drag. We're interconnected by our millions of daily digital (mis)information exchanges but still report feeling (self-)isolated. So where do we go for a little comfort, a little beauty, a little harmless illusion? To our bedrooms, to our screens, to watch our stories. But those stories, from the ones on *I Love Lucy* to the ones on the local news to the ones on Instagram Live, reach out and touch American people and American politics beyond the screen.

Historically, queer theater has played with identity, staging the joys of artificiality and the crises of attempted authenticity. It confronts our aversions and attractions, putting the Ridiculous and the humiliated on the pedestal where "straight plays" enshrined perfection, Realism, and truth. Queer theater flips scripts. But what can it offer us when it feels like the world has the lost the plot?

*Circle Jerk* springs from these culturally contagious screened and staged stories, and takes on their historical ability to make us laugh our way into tragedy.



Wen ur dad refuses to buy you more polo shirts



In *Circle Jerk*, politics (made in the bedroom) and pleasure (found on a screen) empowers a group of people who have been historically oppressed to become the oppressors. The title takes its name both from the homoerotic ritual in which men masturbate in a circle, getting off on watching each other get off, and the subreddit *"/r/circlejerk,"* a forum for group-shaming of groupthink, popular among young, white men in the US.

*This* circle jerk pits our collective gaze at our inherited supremacies and the white, dimpled underbelly of our cult of culture. Co-writers Michael and Patrick, who are nevertheless still willing to identify as white, gay, and men, with collaborators Catherine María Rodríguez and Ariel Sibert, attempt an (impossible?) exhibition, an experiment in exposing violence without reproducing harm.

The show combines quick changes and deep fakes, theatricality and the post-COVID livestream, to take on the laptop-orchestrated shitshow that is online life and its political discontents. The result is a new form made of old parts: An experimental film. A hijacked Instagram story. A queer, deranged live-audience sitcom featuring Gen-Z TikToks and Millennial memes.

The mark of a bunch of queer theater artists working together in the time of COVID, of uprising, of our lives.

—Fake Friends

(Michael Breslin, Patrick Foley, Catherine María Rodríguez, and Ariel Sibert)

[White supremacy] is our inheritance, institutionalized since the Civil War by a government that only recently, and tentatively, began to address domestic terrorism for what it is. White nationalism, legitimized by our president's support of 'very fine people,' has flourished in part because of his refusal to look it squarely in its face and acknowledge it as homegrown. Without a full accounting of the reality, there can be no remedy. To look away is a form of collaboration.

—Claudia Rankine

"This is America," *New York Magazine*, 23 December 2019



**Sarah Paulson** ✓  
@MsSarahPaulson

Catch the next showing of [#CIRCLEJERKLIVE](#) @faaakefriends are actual geniuses. These are the facts.



**rachel syme** ✓  
@rachsyme

I feel like this is the first made-for-the-web theater piece I've seen that felt truly made for the web; it has all the gummy brain worms I want from a Very Online Production and I mean this in the best way; 10/10 would purchase again A++++++ [#circlejerklive](#)



**hari nef** ✓  
@harinef

1/2

streamed [#circlejerklive](#) last night and it hit me where it hurts. @faaakefriends is out on the edge of the cliff divining Phase Two of how we Do identity and language. it felt like an honest Representation of the back of my eyelids when i'm trying and failing to sleep :)



**roxane gay** ✓  
@rgay

If you're looking for great live theater I encourage you to check out Circle Jerk. It is a wild ride and here you can get tix for this weekend:

# VULTURE

THEATER REVIEW | OCT. 21, 2020

## *Circle Jerk's* Theatrical Erudition Includes a Dose of *The O.C.*

By Helen Shaw [@helen\\_e\\_shaw](#)



*Circle Jerk*: Homemade-looking yet elaborately staged. Photo: JJ Darling

In this weird theater season — the “asterisk” season, when every achievement comes with a giant virus-shaped caveat — it’s hard to categorize our responses to art. Is this gratitude I’m experiencing, or appreciation? Is this emotion due to my own isolation or the thing itself? But at least technical admiration is unambiguous. You know what you’re feeling when someone sinks a basket from a whole court away.

And on that level, Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley’s berserker comedy *Circle Jerk* is a coup. Filmed and broadcast live with multiple sets, a trillion costume changes, and an aesthetic of relentless stimulation, it’s the first digital production I’ve seen that’s a true, non-sterile hybrid of theater and film. *Circle Jerk* was born for the online environment, suckled on the dankest basement memes, an overstimulated baby of the present moment. For once, here’s a digital-theatrical performance that wouldn’t be better in person.

Part of its ease with hybridity comes from camp — *Circle Jerk* is queer as hell, exuberantly louche, a little dribbly. Breslin and Foley each play a number of characters on the show’s mysterious Gayman Island, including a repulsive internet creature, the Troll, with a dirty muslin doll’s body and vertical blue hair. (It speaks in rhyming couplets and drools.) Wigs are wiggly and sometimes applied sideways; costume changes are chaotic scrambles that are sometimes “caught” (*oops! ooh!*) on camera. Despite the production’s sophistication, the slap-it-together vibe is deliberately puerile and Zillennial: Charles Ludlam’s Ridiculous Theatre behind a TikTok filter, an Alfred Jarry play if Père Ubu started flogging a mindfulness app.

After the Troll welcomes us to Gayman Island, Foley appears as Jurgen, a Milo Yiannopoulos-esque right-winger, who has been canceled for his repellent political activities. “First they came for the white women, and I said nothing — because I agreed,” he muses, regretfully. Enraged, he plans his white gay supremacist revenge with the help of his pet software genius Lord Baby Bussy (Breslin), crafting an AI bot out of an Amazon Alexa and a stolen social-media profile. The resulting cyber-succubus (Cat Rodríguez) whispers her poison into the internet, and Jurgen and Bussy’s project starts to bear fruit: The world begins to be gradually purged of everyone but white gay men. Various visitors (also Foley and Breslin and Rodríguez) offer token resistance, but are soon seduced, usually through flattery or an appeal to their own self-interest.

The show is shot in Theater Mitu's flexible MITU580 space in Brooklyn, where a dozen cameras can follow the actors as they dash around the space. The co-director, Rory Pelsue, has the actors whizz between an immaculate living room set, decorated in blue velvet, and Jurgen's tech-lair, which looks a little like backstage. At various points, the production switches to internet images, toggling between scenes and clips from their online inspirations. (The script calls this a Meme Ballet.) I've seen that sort of multimedia material projected in conventional theater productions, but web content in meatspace is usually a fish in a phone booth — it dies and it doesn't reach anyone. In contrast, *Circle Jerk* occupies both "our" screen and "their" stage, comfortably manipulating both media. The Meme Ballet's viral videos are at home on our laptops; the theatrical conventions make the ragged seams seem glamorous. The production does what neither form can do alone: I bet artists will be using it as a model, even after the pandemic.

Obsession with models, though, may be why the 100-minute show slows down. This is despite what *seems* like a speeding-up: In Act III, everyone takes their clothes off and freaks out in front of ring lights, while acting out a scene from the aughts reality show *The Hills*. Some of this is down to the show's unrelenting tendency to test (or perhaps flatter) its audience: Breslin and Foley write dense, witty stuff, full of allusions, all flung with violence — pearls hurled at pigs. Do you get this joke about Broadway message boards? Do you hear the echoes of Molière and *The Wizard of Oz* and Leo Bersani? The show sneers whether you catch the reference or not. (And woe betide you if you're not invested in *The O.C.*)

Like its oft-referenced French neoclassical and drag satire forebears, the play is best when we're meeting the characters. Exposition is the show's sharpest writing, quippy and wicked. "I am a prophet in the iconic tradition of all fabulous Greek gays," says Jurgen. "Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Maria Callas, Nia Vardalos." Or Bussy sums himself up thus: "If the internet's the Wild West and everyone's a cowboy, I'm the hussy in the back of the saloon who knows all their secrets and dreams — the nasty shit people only type into search bars when they think no one's looking." *Zing*. There's a quotable line every 20 seconds; it's a shame people don't get rich as epigrammatists any more. But while Jurgen mocks the idea of "plot," *Circle Jerk* does actually suffer from its lack. Causes don't prompt effects, so characters will occasionally just ... shoot each other. If you're caught up in the mood of pop-culture Insta-scrolling, then this randomness will feel exhilarating and hilarious. (*Die, Bussy, Die!*) If you're not on the show's particular poppers, though, the plot-is-for-suckers incoherence can make the show seem longer than it is.

You know how it feels when you lose all your open web tabs and suddenly can't remember a single article you were reading? It's a bit like that: too much attention, and too little. What will stay with you from *Circle Jerk*, though, apart from Foley's terrifying Troll (which drips saliva on itself while grinning flirtatiously), is that there's a way to make a digital theater show, live, that has movement and surprise and polish. *Circle Jerk* proves that the transgressions of the avant-garde are still possible even in our unshockable virtual world: You can do it by showing the sweat of performance and taking us behind-the-scenes; you can do it by creating a *bouffon* clown so alarming and grotesque that no horror movie could match it. By the end of the show, after the story has ended (somewhat arbitrarily), the trio of performers fall back on old pre-virtual stuff, doing Bob Fosse choreography, dancing to the "Hot Honey Rag" from *Chicago*. Within the context of the show, it seems a bit like "please look at these jazz hands instead of the fact that we haven't got an ending." But Foley and Breslin and Rodríguez are also damn good at it. They wriggle and shrug and tip their bowler hats. In Fosse's hands, vaudeville got sexier *after* it died. In these new hands, maybe the same goes for theater.

# VULTURE

# The New York Times

## Review: A Satire of Social Media That Aims at Too Many Targets

Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley's virtual play includes a YouTuber, an influencer and a meme machine. Sometimes total chaos ensues.



Catherine María Rodríguez, who plays an A.I. influencer in this jam-packed satire. via Fake Friends

The new play “Circle Jerk” is a lot.

It starts up with a rhyming prologue by a Shakespearean fool-troll and builds up to an incredibly dense, incredibly disjointed third act, packed with a barrage of fast-and-furious pop references. Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley's show is a crazed, ambitious satire of how the media and woke cultures feed on themselves and into flamboyant incoherence — an M.O. it ends up reflecting.

The story revolves around Jurgen (Foley), a YouTube provocateur reminiscent of Milo Yiannopoulos, and his BFF and enabler Lord Baby Bussy (Breslin) as they hatch a “gay colonial eugenicist plot” to take over Manhattan, then the world. To do so, they create an artificially intelligent influencer named Eva Maria (Catherine María Rodríguez) by combining a virtual assistant called Alexia with a meme machine.

It's hard to understand how exactly this master plan is meant to work out, but “Circle Jerk” — beware when Googling the show — does not concern itself with practicalities.

Into this mix we must add Jurgen's new date, Patrick (Foley), an aspiring actor, and Patrick's friend Michael (Breslin), who is quick to clarify his position on the artistic map: “I don't work in theater, I curate performance,” he says. “The relationship to reality is totally different.”

Most of the play's fun comes from trying to identify the many, many song snippets, throwaway quotes and lightning-fast visual jokes. Some are from the pop-culture canon: Dolly Parton's “9 to 5,” Britney Spears, an injunction for Alexia to “emancipate Mimi.” The television show “The Hills” feeds lip-synced dialogue.

And then there are the bits fresh from our current online world, as when an exchange between Jurgen and Patrick is brilliantly set to Jufu's TikTok hit “Who R U.”

So, yes, this new play is a lot, and the virtuosity of its frenetic pace is impressive. But sometimes a lot is not quite enough: When you choose to focus on surface, the wounds you inflict may not cut deep.

This last zinger could sum up the entire show, both in its themes and setup — the most elaborate I have yet seen in the virtual-theater era.

Since the live production, directed by Breslin, Foley and Rory Pelsue, involves physical staging ([at the Brooklyn space Mitu580](#)) that goes way beyond Zoom boxes, the three cast members, each handling three roles, must execute quick costume changes, with a few prerecorded segments easing some transitions and adding extra mirrors in a hall already full of them. The show is performed live until Oct. 23 and will be available on demand Oct. 24-Nov. 7.

# 'Circle Jerk's Gleeful Chaos Breaks New Ground for Streaming Theatre: REVIEW

OCTOBER 20, 2020 BY NAVEEN KUMAR — 0



One benefit to living in extreme times is the invention of new forms and ways of thinking. You might have easily guessed, for example, what clicking on [circlejerk.live](https://circlejerk.live) would've led to in any other year since the dawn of dial-up. But *Circle Jerk*, a livestream from the theatre and media collective Fake Friends now playing through November 7, is a blissfully chaotic queer fantasia on digital themes that stakes out its very own form, one meme at a time.

Call it Theatre of the Very Online.

Alternatives to in-person theatre, from high-gloss streams of past productions to Zoom-native performances, tend to combine some element of 'live-ness' with our everyday screens to present a hybrid substitute. If we can't be in the same space, they offer a memory of when we could be, or a virtual interface to indicate and bridge the distance.

But Fake Friends recognizes that there is one obvious space many of us share, with its own language, aesthetics, and operating system. The internet not only shapes our culture, but how we conceive of our identities, what we desire, who has influence, and why. It's not just where we live now, it's who we are. In *Circle Jerk*, that means reaction GIFs, TikTok split screens, and Britney Spears' Instagram Stories serve as shorthand signifiers. Language is meme-ified and the Discourse steeped in hot tea.

The piece is a combination of (mostly) livestream performance from a studio in Gowanus, Brooklyn, and 'deep fakes,' or previously recorded clips. Co-writers Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley each play multiple roles, as does Catherine María Rodríguez, who also collaborated on the script (Ariel Sibert serves as dramaturg). It is a self-conscious reflection of its allegiance to being Very Online that *Circle Jerk* is more a feat of form and discrete content than linear plot or conventional coherence.

But, here goes: A pair of white supremacist gays are plotting world domination from their well-appointed secret lair on "Gayman Island" (how else to spend the off season?). They create an ambiguously raced AI fembot (very *Pygmalion* of them) to convince straight people to cancel themselves, relocate non-white gays to the Southern Hemisphere ("We'll call it, umm... Liberation"), and "build a world where White Gays run free and reign supreme." Unexpected visitors (same actors, different lewks) cause mild commotion, and technical difficulty (imagined, not real) presents the greatest obstacle.

It takes a certain boldness to interrogate the toxicity of one's own identifying categories, as Breslin and Foley do here with the privileges and hypocrisies tied up with being cis, gay, white men. They relish in absurdities, satirize basic-bitch stereotypes, and gobble up the scenery with supervillain camp. With the help of Ms. Rodríguez, *Circle Jerk* also pokes fun at the extremities of woke liberal rhetoric that frame self-conception as a revolutionary high art. ("I am a radical. I am a movement! I am my roots! I am [Nican Tlaca](#)," one of her characters says.) Another character's trans subplot may risk coming off glib, but a brief moment of sincerity breaks through with a bit of truth: "You can claim whatever you need," another tells them, with regard to pronouns.

Director Rory Pelsue, along with a design and effects team of 10, remix and blend media in a way that synthesizes the moment, the means of transmission, and the current quality of our attention. Bits bounce from one to the next with the sticky slipperiness of an endless scroll (the play runs 105 minutes with two brief intermissions). From sitcom-style scenes on a unit set to iPhone confessions and self-talk, a hyper self-awareness saturates the experience, including occasional Brecht-like glimpses behind the curtain.

It's almost startling to see crew members in face coverings during these in-between moments, a rare reminder of the conditions that compelled the form. The show otherwise manages to deliver an escape from our current dystopia into one that exists on a not-so-distant plane and inches closer every day. *Circle Jerk* isn't a substitute for in-person theatre, or a case for humbly making the best of limitations. It's a gauntlet and a dare to imagine the future.

**TOWLEROAD**



# What 'Circle Jerk' Reveals About Gay Men, White Supremacy, and 'The Hills'

| IDENTITY POLITICS |

Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley have moved from funny, deep analyses of the *Real Housewives* to, in "Circle Jerk," a multi-layered examination of gay culture and white supremacy.



**Tim Teeman**  
Senior Editor And Writer

Updated Oct. 21, 2020 6:31AM ET / Published Oct. 21, 2020 4:53AM ET



It's a jolting rollercoaster, watching Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley's *Circle Jerk*. You're giggling at a camp aside or momentary outbreak of disco, then suddenly pummeled with a piercing cultural critique of gay white male identity.

In 2018, in the Next Door space at New York Theatre Workshop, with bare-bones staging, Breslin and Foley somehow evoked the big-drama, big-emotion madness of Bravo's *Real Housewives*, alongside some unexpected profundity sprouting from the franchise's sudsy entrails. In *Circle Jerk* (streaming to Nov. 7), they again locate serious depths in some deliciously absurdist shallows while examining online culture, liberal gays, and white supremacy in a kind of fantastical realm—"Gaymen Island," which could be *Fire Island*, but also a Shakespearean space like Illyria in *Twelfth Night*.

There, a lunatic far-right gay overlord wants, with the help of a sidekick, to create the perfect online avatar to win liberal white gays over to their right-wing dark side. So, there's a dash of Frankenstein too. And there are two characters called Michael and Patrick, wittily and testily asking each other what it means to be white gay men. The action mostly takes place in a purgatorial-feeling room that doesn't look at all fantastical.

Breslin and Foley, who founded the theater and media collective *Fake Friends*, call *Circle Jerk* "a queer comedy about the tragedy of being gay," and by that they mean an unsparing interrogation of themselves and others. The criticism isn't just of "white gay men" as a block, but an examination of how queer culture has evolved for good, and bad.

Just as they dressed up dizzily in *This American Wife*, as themselves and others, so they do here: Breslin and Foley and Cat Rodriguez (who plays Eva Maria, the avatar they create), play nine characters between them. The play is performed as live. You see hints of backstage and quick changes—but really it's baffling how they do it.

"We started our research for this show with a lot of articles about gay men on the 'alt right,' 'alt lite,' 'far right,' whatever you want to call it," Breslin told *The Daily Beast*. "Then, our thinking about the show expanded and we began to think about ourselves more deeply and our friends and experiences in the gay community, specifically in 'white gay' spaces."

“While the characters aren’t autobiographical, the debates between Michael and Patrick are really personal,” said Breslin. “What good does it do to separate ourselves from the racism and misogyny of ‘white gay’ culture—because we want some sort of claim on wokeness? These issues are obviously structural and we are embedded in them: How do we profit off them? Identifying as a liberal on social media clearly doesn’t just make all of that go away.”

“On the other hand, throwing your hands in the air and saying ‘Fuck it, it doesn’t matter’ also is not helpful *at all*,” said Foley. “What does using your privilege for the greater good actually look like? Messy. Patrick’s character says ‘You’re gonna fuck up.’ Which is also another way of saying: ‘You already have.’ None of us are pure or clean and we need to incorporate the reality of our own complexities.”

Of the almost universally celebrated re-customizing of the #ProudBoys hashtag by gay men, Breslin said, “If those white gays who re-appropriated that hashtag had marched with Black Lives Matter, had a history of grassroots organizing, had a stated commitment to anti-racist education and investigating their own white privilege...it might be, like, a little bit funny. We don’t want to be totally humorless, you know? But, the Proud Boys represent a despicable virus in American society and there are more sophisticated ways of resisting them than posting a picture of yourself on Fire Island.”

Foley said they had done a research trip to Fire Island last summer “that ended in a really disturbing moment of a bunch of white gay men chanting at Cat to ‘Go home.’ So that experience was really formative for us.” Most broadly, he and Breslin “were obsessed with contemporary debates about representation, empathy, and identity and how these debates relate to the onslaught of social media we consume daily, even by the minute.”

Netflix’s *The Social Dilemma*, illustrating the impact of the online world on all our lives, may have caused a recent stir, but Breslin said he and Foley “were really diving into these questions about Big Tech and fake news and deep fakes and the vitality and contagion of propaganda over a year ago at the start of this project.” Their research included “a fascinating back-and-forth with a deep fake programmer out of Tel Aviv.”



**DAILY BEAST**

I was a fan of [A Dolls' House, Part 3](#), by the artists formerly known as Michael+Patrick. They have rebranded their company as Fake Friends, and with this, have upped the creative ante with a dizzying, queer whirligig of a live-streaming show called *Circle Jerk*.

Wigs fly on and off, quick changes abound, there are TikTok dances, a literal troll, and some A+ theater jokes. There's even a Sondheim lyrical cum quip. Truly something for everyone.

But beyond the layers and layers of white gay culture that the show is sending up (there are references to musical theater fans, Drag Race, and pop music divas), is an insidious backdrop of tech-overload, alt-right influencing, misinformation, and big data control.

The point to this theatrical mayhem, textual boundary-pushing, and narrative edge is to interrogate white supremacy within the gay community in this internet age.

Somehow the show, written and directed by Michael Breslin and Patrick Foley (with co-direction by Rory Pelsue), manages to eat its technicolor wackadoodle cake while having a solid grounding in social critique too—the rare satirical success.

*Circle Jerk* is focused on Jurgen Yionoullis (Patrick Foley), an alt-right troll/self-help guru. He gets “cancelled” on account of the world discovering his secret creation—an AI meme machine that generates alt-right propaganda.

Holed up on Gayman Island, Jurgen and his programmer pal Lord Baby Bussy (Michael Breslin) need to stage a comeback. They plan to turn the world into a white gay utopia of their creation. They steal an “ethnically ambiguous” dead woman's identity and create a new internet persona Eva Maria (Cat Rodríguez). Using the pool of data we've all freely shared in the swamp of social media, Eva Maria targets internet users based on their biases and vulnerabilities to turn them all to Jurgen and LBB's way of thinking.

*exeunt*  
NEW YORK CITY

## Review: Circle Jerk

ONLINE · THROUGH 7TH NOVEMBER 2020

*Going full maximalism, this live streaming show is skewering satire of white supremacy in gay circles.*

NICOLE SERRATORE



Meanwhile, above this subterranean Nazi den, greeted by “gay incel” housekeeper Honney (also Breslin), dim and needy actor Patrick (also Foley) comes to the island to see his new boyfriend Jurgen. At the same time, Patrick’s bff Michael (also Breslin) confronts Patrick over his decision to fuck a white supremacist.

I’m often frustrated by stage depictions of “the internet.” Even when it is staged in a literal fashion of screens of images and texts, it feels like your grandma’s idea of the internet (*Dear Even Hansen*, I’m looking right at you). It just screams “information superhighway” with a dial-up modem shriek, when that’s not really our contemporary relationship to it at all.

*Circle Jerk* smartly avoid this trap and using the style, language, and constructs of our social media/online lives to recreate the sensation of the addictive-destructive relationship we have with technology. The seamless look and technical smoothness of the production were also impressive.

Using split screens, movie clips, gifs, lip synching, ASMR, IG stories, meme images, and the all-powerful ghost in the machine Eva Maria, the show re-creates the frenetic way we use the internet—quickly flitting from images and ideas and capturing our fractured attention with bright colors, vivid images, and clickable appeal. In one moment, an Eva Maria avatar may be provocatively dipping her pointy acrylic nail into a McNugget sauce packet arguing “The only way forward is homosexuality” and the next her face is superimposed on images of Nancy Pelosi, Suzanne Somers, and Mike Pence (did I dream that?). Her expressive, big eyes calling out to us like a Margaret Keane painting. Is she everywhere or is she now just on our mind all of the time? Have I fallen for her?

*Circle Jerk* keeps the pace, imagery, and sound design compulsively engaging and watchable. It’s out-of-control, loud, unstable, mesmerizing, lurid, and fun.

We also see the way the internet can infiltrate minds—politically, socially, personally. With these men, they are swallowed up in the destructive, impossible beauty standards so prevalent in the gay community. Now you can Facetune your cheekbones, change your skin color, give yourself hair if you have lost yours—all things the characters in the show do in search of some idealized version of themselves. “God, I like need, a permanent filter,” Bussy complains.

The show astutely focuses on faces throughout—whether it’s a selfie, a self-tape, or a confessional. The aggregate is an overload of self, without any self left at all. These characters are performing versions of themselves and over time have lost track of who they truly are. They are remixes of pop culture, memes, and cultural appropriation, with hardly an original thought.

With excellent wigs and costumes and sharp acting choices, there were times I forgot it was only three actors playing all nine roles. The performers gallop through an array of characters all unique and precise. Horrifyingly recognizable. The satire works because they nailed the specificity.


My only hiccup was getting confused by the character Kokomo (also Rodríguez), an activist who ends up trying to decolonize her mind and recolonize the island, and blurs issues of gender identity and indigenous identity. I was not totally sure what their intention with her was.

For all the visual stimulation, this is also a dense referential text. I had to just let it wash over me and could only start to parse the multitude of ideas afterwards. Truly a delight in this moment of theater getting stripped down to bare essentials, this show is full maximalism.

*exeunt*  
NEW YORK CITY

# NEW YORK

## The Approval Matrix

HIGHBROW	
<p>● Protests of Nigeria's notoriously violent police unit met with ... <b>more police violence.</b></p> 	<p>● All the <b>naked Medusa</b> statue is missing is a pink pussy hat.</p> 
<p>● Dianne Feinstein's <b>master class</b> in how not to put up a fight.</p> 	<p>● Why would you admit to the Post that you <b>plan on fleeing</b> the city for Election Day?</p> 
<p>● <b>Zoom Dick Incident.</b></p> 	<p>● Ghislaine Maxwell says she was just giving <b>"career advice."</b></p> 
<p>● Hey, you hear the one about the president pausing a secret intelligence briefing to order a <b>milkshake?</b></p> 	<p>● Westminister Dog Show <b>moving out</b> of NYC for 2021. Okay, now this pandemic thing has gone too far.</p> 
<p>● Still waiting for <b>LACMA.</b></p> 	<p>● Trump <b>whining</b> about Lesley Stahl being unfair to him is sure to resonate with undecided voters.</p> 
<p>● Mike Love plays Trump fund-raiser, once again <b>sullying</b> the Beach Boys' good name.</p> 	<p>● <b>WICKED</b> continues <b>defying</b> existence.</p> 
<p>● The virus does not care about your <b>pandemic fatigue.</b></p> 	<p>● Don't you dare shame Cardi B for that, uh, <b>accidental nude.</b></p> 
<p>● The celebrity <b>Chrisea</b> must end.</p> 	<p>● Michael B. Jordan's <b>bulging pecs</b> said "Vote Early."</p> 
<p>● Rebecca on Netflix more like <b>Rebecca...ugh.</b></p> 	<p>● <b>Circle Jerk's brand of digital camp</b> will make you feel absolutely ancient.</p> 
<p>● <b>The Vow 2: Here We Vow Again?</b> Return of the Vow?</p> 	<p>● Turns out humans probably have previously unknown <b>salivary glands</b>—right under our noses this whole time.</p> 
<p>● Bill Cosby's creepy-ass <b>mug-shot</b> grin.</p> 	<p>● Carole Baskin comes out as <b>bi.</b> Could have just as easily been <i>Tiger Queen</i>, as it were.</p> 
<p>● "Just watching my algorithms getting crushed," whines <b>under-the-covers</b> Donald Trump Jr. in strangely riveting Instagram video.</p> 	<p>● James Austin Johnson's addictive Trump <b>impression.</b></p> 
<p>● So far seemingly so good on New York City's <b>in-person schooling</b> experiment. Did de Blasio actually do something right?</p> 	<p>● <b>What the Constitution Means to Me</b>, <b>timely</b> as ever and now streaming.</p> 
<p>● If you need an endorphin boost, <b>this must be the place.</b></p> 	<p>● Missing <b>Jacob Lawrence painting</b> found in Upper West Side apartment heads across town to the Met.</p> 
<p>● More from the civic-pride files: NYC eclipses 2010's <b>Census self-response rate.</b></p> 	<p>● Congrats to the lone Tony nominee for <b>Best Actor in a Musical</b> thanks to 2020's very limited offerings.</p> 
<p>● The livestock cameos in Isabella Rossellini's <b>Sex &amp; Consequences</b> streamed live from her <b>farm.</b></p> 	<p>● Greenlight Bookstore's less-than-subtle <b>anti-Amazon</b> display.</p> 
<p>● Target Margin's <b>Magic in Plain Sight</b> <b>delights</b> on the sidewalk.</p> 	<p>● <b>The Dead Are Arising</b> <b>peels</b> back another layer of the Malcolm X mythos.</p> 

<p>● New York <b>bans plastic bags.</b> No, for real this time.</p> 	<p>● <b>Circle Jerk's brand of digital camp</b> will make you feel absolutely ancient.</p> 
<p>● Carole Baskin comes out as <b>bi.</b> Could have just as easily been <i>Tiger Queen</i>, as it were.</p> 	<p>● Turns out humans probably have previously unknown <b>salivary glands</b>—right under our noses this whole time.</p> 

fake friends Retweeted



**Taylor Lorenz** ✓  
@TaylorLorenz

Circle Jerk is one of the most brilliant, creative shows I've ever seen. It is the perfect show for these times, it is everything. You can get tickets for this weekend here [eventbrite.com/e/circle-jerk-...](https://eventbrite.com/e/circle-jerk-...) @faaakefriends #circlejerklive



**molly bernard** ✓  
@bollymernard

GAY INGENUES OF THE WORLD UNITE! @faaakefriends @jeremyoharris

7:50 PM · Nov 1, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone



**juliana canfield**  
@julianacanfield

CIRCLE JERK LIVE by @faaakefriends is skinny as a needle, manic, messy, precise, virtuosic, sexxy, dangerous, hilarious, genius, genre-defying, electrifying, disgusting and gorgeous ummmm etc etc??????? Get ur tix bbs you will never forget it and never regret it 💕💕



**Ira Madison III** ✓  
@ira

THIS IS THEATUH @faaakefriends @jeremyoharris #CircleJerkLive



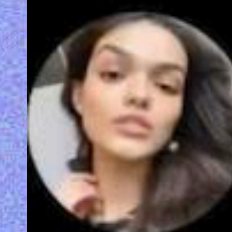
**fat jon boyega**  
@larryowenslive

no lie i was at a social distance park hang and half of the group was raving about #circlejerklive and the other half left to get home in time to watch...idk yall it just felt so good, it's the little things, i'm so excited @faaakefriends @jeremyoharris watch with me tn!



**Andy Mientus** ✓  
@andymientus

I can't recommend this enough. Definitely my favorite digital theater offering so far in this hellscape. If you need a laugh after the last couple days, and especially if you are a Very Online White Gay or someone who knows one, treat yourself to a stream.



**rachel zegler** ✓ @rachelzegler · 1d  
Replying to @rachelzegler

i keep bouncing back and forth between complete understanding and hysterical laughter because i don't get ANYTHING THAT'S HAPPENING and it's the most glorious experience of my life @faaakefriends #circlejerkLIVE