NOT FOR YOUR ORIENTALIST GAZE

Queer and Womxn Muslims: A Zine on Community, Art, and Organizing.
What this zine is...

This zine is inspired by a collection of interviews with Queer and Womxn Muslim artists, activists, and writers. It utilizes art and storytelling to center their narratives on gender-based marginalization. It includes strategies for organizing and responses to dominant Islamophobic, anti-Black, and homophobic notions about Muslim communities in the United States.

What this zine is not...

For your orientalist gaze! Which means check yourself...(thank you, Dr. Edward Said). If you have questions while scrolling through these pages then google responsibly. This is the page where you throw out your assumptions about Islam, gender, and queerness before proceeding.

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Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.

- José Esteban Muñoz, Cruising Utopia
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Queer and Femme Writers
"The words for being LGBTQI in other cultures are not the same as the United States and cannot be reduced to the simple acronym. There are romantic same-sex relationships and non-binary genders distinctly embedded within our cultures that have names with cultural and historical significance, especially before colonization. Don’t white-wash queerness as a western concept.” - anonymous queer desi femme

"Pahlavans in Love" by Hushidar Mortezaie
Support Queer Muslims, Know Your Sh!t

Orientalism is...
a concept first proposed by Dr. Edward Said in 1978. It pertains to the way that people in Western cultures imagine and interpret the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and East Asia.

Homonationalism is...
a concept first proposed by Dr. Jasbir Puar in 2007. Puar argued that Western LGBT movements are often bound up with upholding the racist sovereignty of the nation state.
strategies of organizing for queer Muslim liberation

**Self-care**
"Under a macro/micro levels we are under attack for being Muslim, children of immigrants, immigrants ourselves, and queer. You need to take care of yourself before you can go out and stay fighting.” - Ahmad-Bilal Askaryar

**Engage many communities**
"Engage with mainstream Muslim and LGBTQI communities to try and educate both. Have a constant loop where we can meet LGBTQ Muslims and share our space.” - Urooj Arshad

**Center the most impacted individuals**
"We need to honor the experiences of those who are directly impacted by policy and marginalization. Not academic experts or policymakers.” - Ahmad-Bilal Askaryar

**Create spaces**
"...where folks can be together in community... Chances are if you are queer and Muslim the daily life you navigate is not affirming you. Chances are mainstream queer spaces and mainstream Muslim spaces are harmful to your identity. ” - Urooj Arshad

**Analysis**
Read Muslim writers and recognize the many layers of oppressions that impact Muslims in the United States- including surveillance, anti-Black racism, immigration status, classism, and more.
Queer Muslim Spaces in the USA

Islamic Healing Space of A2 & Ypsi in East Michigan
https://www.facebook.com/IslamicHealingSpace/

Third Coast Queer Muslims of Chicago & the Upper Midwest & Masjid-al Rabia
facebook.com/thirdcoastqueermuslims
masjidalarabia.org

Masjid an-Nur al-Isslaah (Light of Reform Mosque)
in Washington D.C.
daayiee@gmail.com

Queer Muslims of Boston
https://qmob.wordpress.com/ & facebook.com/QMOBoston
queer muslimsofboston@gmail.com

Haven The Inclusive Muslim Union of Philadelphia
https://www.facebook.com/havenimup/
havenimup@gmail.com

Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity
http://www.muslimalliance.org/

NOOR: LGBTQIA Muslims of Seattle
https://www.facebook.com/seattleqtm/
seattle.qtm@gmail.com

QueerCrescent in Oakland, CA
https://www.queercrescent.org/

LGBT Muslim Annual Retreat
http://www.lgbtmuslimretreat.com/
RAINBOW WASHING IS VIOLENCE

Representation is important, but what are things we can do to include Queer folks from many backgrounds and cultures?

Center their stories

Receive their religious and spiritual practices without judgment

If they prefer, recognize them by the gender/sexuality they are native to within their cultures rather than LGBTQ+

Recognize not all ’coming out’ stories are the same

Philadelphia’s Office of LGBT Affairs released the POC Pride Flag in 2017 with the addition of Black and Brown stripes to be inclusive of people of color.
Tips for allies of Queer Muslims

MY EXPERIENCE > YOUR ANALYSIS

Although the Gender in Islam class you took in undergrad or the study abroad experience you had in Morocco was formative, that means nothing to a person’s individual experience. Telling us about that one friend who is Muslim and queer out of nowhere in conversation isn’t helpful and doesn’t gain trust. Don’t assume anything about how our families feel about our queerness. Pity is never fashionable.

Be robust in your intersectional work

Don’t just check a box by picking a random queer or Muslim organization to collaborate with you on your project or represent us at your event or conference. In acknowledging these identities, recognize there is also anti-Blackness, misogyny, immigration issues, and many other oppressions that impact all Muslims in the United States.

Center LGBTQIA Muslims and learn from them

Ask Queer Muslims the tools they need for liberation before making assumptions. Build relationships by genuinely getting to know individuals.

Strategies compiled through conversations with Ahmad-Bilal Askaryar, Sadiyah Bashir, and Urooj Arshad.
“FASHION IS A TOOL OF REVOLUTION.”

-HUSHIDAR MORTEZAIE

Instagram: @hushi5
Website: silkroadsuper.com

“Chic Chic Chic” by Hushidar Mortezaie

Hushidar Mortezaie was born in Tehran and immigrated to the Bay Area in 1975. Mortezaie is a fashion designer, visual artist, and activist who combines these varied mediums into installation like tableaus that create a singular political pop art world of satire and artifice, reflecting the dystopia and information overload of the 21st century through elaborate detail and layering of concepts, ages, and artistic mediums. Mortezaie’s work prompted the rise of Middle Eastern style and Islamic motifs in fashion and conceptual art through his pioneer celebration of his Iranian heritage. It is an honor to have his work in this zine, please check out his website and Instagram above to follow his work.
“My queer Muslim family showed me there is no place where I will really be "whole." Of course, I love them, but my deepest feeling of wholeness comes from my relationship with Allah because that is the only Being that will ever know me in my fullness. ”

- anonymous
QUEER MUSLIM VISIBILITY

"Rudiments of Love" by Hushidar Mortazaie

Angels Have No Gender, So Why Should You?
Queer and Femme Muslim Writers You Should Read

Wazina Zondon, Afghan poet from Queens & Terna Hamida, Black Muslim Poet
Co-Creators of their show “Coming Out Muslim”

Kaveh Akbar
Iranian-American Poet and Professor at Purdue University

Kazim Ali
Pakistani Poet and Professor at Oberlin College

Yunique A. Saafir
Co-Creator of “Muslim Cool” that engages with how young Black Muslims negotiate identity

Fatimah Asghar
Queer Pakistani Poet and writer of Emmy nominated “Brown Girls”

Sadiyah Bashir
Black Femme Writer Author of “Seven”