

PANDROGENY: A LOVE STORY

by Marie Losier and Breyer P-Orridge

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The pandrogyne says, I just feel trapped in a body. The body is simply the suitcase that carries us around. Pandrogeny is all about the mind, consciousness.”

—Genesis P-Orridge

I am not interested in the way music bios typically portray their subject, with a chronological style and static interviews. This is the story of a fragile, struggling, yet extraordinarily resilient, controversial and hilarious rock icon who is considered one of the great innovators in several mediums. Still today, she shocks and surprises her audience, and transcends what is known and expected of her. Still today, she puts out two or three albums a year with incredible new sounds, designs all covers and posters and writes all the lyrics for her three bands, tours the world, writes poetry books, and furthers her pursuit of Pandrogeny.

Pandrogeny: A Love Story is a portrait of the extraordinary life of this musical and artistic genius, and her love partner/collaborator Lady Jaye. Over the past three years, Genesis and Lady Jaye have given me unprecedented access to film their professional and personal lives. Theirs is a story which no one would believe in a fiction film.

But while some might exploit the ‘freak’ angle of their story, I have witnessed their lives on the inside, and can bear witness to the incredible delicacy, fragility, and sweetness of their love. This film will reveal the Genesis beneath the dark, extreme shell — an experimental, hilarious, fearless artist who pushes all boundaries.

*“It took me until 1993 to find my other half (Lady Jaye)...
She’s so beautiful, so perfectly complicated that I just cry tears of blissful love”.*

After the recent tragic death of Lady Jaye at age 37, this story has taken on a new, painful resonance and immediacy. Genesis sees the film as necessary for her survival — a way to both mourn, and celebrate their union and unification — and to continue her love for Lady Jaye in a transcendental manner. It’s worth noting that Genesis has already been an inspiration to many, not only for her pioneering work in music, performance art, and writing, but also for having overcome so much pain, sickness,

and hardship in life. There’s nothing more difficult than losing the love of your life. Genesis has chosen this film to share her open wound with the world, in her quest to make sense of a life without the physical Lady Jaye.

So this film is going to move people, but it’s also going to scare people, make them laugh, and entrance them with sound. It’s going to be an electric collision of daily life, fiction, music and sex. It’ll be a wild journey into the art and music undergrounds, an epic love story, a treatise on the malleability of gender identity, and a cooking lesson.

The legendary Beat novelist William S. Burroughs, a collaborator and close friend of Genesis P-Orridge, wrote of him:

“(Genesis) is the only person I’ve ever met who I had hero-worshiped, who turned out exactly as I’d expected him to be, and everything I’d hoped him to be. Which was incredible. Inhumanly intelligent. I was interested in him primarily as a character, the way he lived, and he was a ‘more than real’ real life character. A phenomena. I was already into the idea that the most important work is the way you live and you should live life as a work and try to make each aspect of it as interesting as you can.”

In these words, Burroughs sums up what has always attracted me to know — and now to film — Genesis: she is her work and lives it every minute of her day. Sometimes, people who live their work are quite boring. But when you are considered both the ‘wrecker’ and the ‘savior’ of civilization, when you are a fearless artist-rock star-gender theorist, the inventor of industrial music, and half of one of the most bizarre and beautiful love stories of the century, the ‘phenomena’ label applies. This film is the human story behind the phenomenon.

Genesis P-Orridge is widely considered the inventor of Industrial Music, and a pioneer of Acid House and Techno. Her work in C.O.U.M., a performance art group with a focus on sex, taboos, and the paranormal, and her famous art show *Prostitution*, proved

too controversial for England. Deemed a wrecker of civilization by Parliament, Genesis was exiled in 1992 and has lived in New York ever since.

My story with Genesis P-Orridge begins three years ago with a typically miraculous New York City coincidence. I had just seen Genesis perform with her band Thee Majesty at the Knitting Factory, along with Alan Vega, who gave a memorably awful performance fondling his balls and grunting sex to an 80's beat. Genesis, on the other hand, was pure enlightenment to me. Chanting half-sung, half-spoken lyrics of deep poetic meaning in a primal - at times scary - voice, she somehow maintained an aura of delicacy and softness, as her giant breasts floated, half naked above the crowd. I was completely hypnotized by her, never having seen anything like her, and I knew then that I had to find a way to meet her and film her.

A week later, NYC took care of it. I was at a gallery opening in Soho, one of those sardine-can spaces where you can barely walk and breathe. I got pressed into a corner, and stepped on someone's toes. I turned to apologize and there she was, talking with Björk and smiling, her golden teeth glittering in my eyes. We spoke only briefly, but something special passed between us and she gave me her email and asked me about my films. So I guess you can say that fate - or clumsiness - stepped in and opened a very special door of friendship and filmmaking.

We emailed each other for a while, exchanging details of our lives. She'd invite me to her concerts, and one day I found myself in her house, sitting on a giant plastic green garden chair in the shape of a hand. There appeared Lady Jaye, his/her wife, strikingly beautiful with a strong posture and a directness that was so inviting and intimidating. I ended up staying for five hours with them, discussing our work, and it affirmed my resolve to make a film about them.

Since that day, I have been adopted by the family of 'mom and pop', as Genesis and Lady Jaye called themselves, and by the rest of the band, Psychic TV3. Of course, I had to pass through a trial period, where they tested my ability to melt with both their world and with the rough and tumble existence of band life, which is worlds away from their polite and genteel life at home. I swallowed my fears and discomfort, and over time the band not only accepted me, but became quite protective of me, making me their confidant, introducing me to their family, friends, and beloved dog Big Boy, encouraging me to film them during rehearsals and in private, to collaborate with them on side projects and to accompany them on their world tour to make the videos which they would incorporate into their shows.

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The Pandrogeny project is Genesis and Lady Jaye's attempt to deconstruct their individual identities in order to create a third being, 'The Breyer P-Orridge'. The film will capture the total mental, physical, and emotional demands of this life/art project, and in tandem, shed light upon society's evolving obsessions with physical and moral transformations, via cloning, plastic surgery, and religion.

The film will also retrace the path which led Genesis and Lady Jaye to the Pandrogeny project. As both were sick at birth, their relationship to the body has always been a complex one. Already major influences on both the European Fluxus movement and the New York transgressive art underground, Genesis and Lady Jaye also became gender variant activists, attaching major importance to the value of physical and mental alterations.

In an attempt to dismantle their fictional selves, Genesis and Lady Jaye decided to create a third being, another third entity which they call Breyer P-Orridge. The central concern of Breyer P-Orridge is the deconstruction of the fictional SELF. Genesis and Lady Jaye considered the body as a deceptive assembly, a culturally-imposed narrative, which is very much linked to one's appearance. They believed that this behavioral construct limits novelty and inspiration. It was their mission to erase the terminal loop of binary systems such as her/or him, good/bad, male/female, which they believe are the root cause of conflict and aggression in society.

Using various modern medical techniques, they committed their bodies to surgical redevelopment in order to look as much like each other as possible. In 2003, for example, they received identical breast implants on Valentine's Day. Their mutating outward appearance is based on gestural aesthetics which uses the superficial key signifiers (lips, breasts, eyebrows, cheeks) in which gender and identity are usually perceived. The film will explore Breyer P-Orridge's belief that the transformation of one's appearance is a critical concept directly linked to the survival and evolution of the human species. 'Pandrogeny' is not about defining differences but about creating similarities. It is about resolution and unification.

The film will document Breyer P-Orridge's physical transformation, and will navigate through the different mediums they've used to illustrate their living project, including music, painting, writing, performance, collage, photography, and the cult of T.O.P.Y. Now, after Lady Jaye's death, Genesis remains committed to her quest for the Pandrogynne, in honor of her lost love.

METHODOLOGY

Pandrogeny: A Love Story is a film that will celebrate the life, work and legendary love of Genesis P-Orridge and Lady Jaye. Since they represent so many things to so many people – rock icons, philosophers, gender activists, sex gods, the devil incarnate – the possibilities for this film are infinite. Genesis' life in particular could inspire a million films. However, my desire to make this film is born from an intimate knowledge of their lives, and rhythms, and idiosyncrasies. Having had the opportunity to live with the subjects 24/7 on tour, I have seen them as forces of nature and as a gentle, loving couple – and everything in between. So this film will not be a traditional, chronological portrait of them, but rather a ballad of their artistic and personal lives, which is a rare unified entity. For me, Genesis and Lady Jaye represent the purest melding of life and art imaginable. I want this film to be like a tableau which matches their brushstroke.

What this means is 'spontaneous combustion' on screen, where ideas, clues, music, myths, and recreations spiral through the narrative like wildfire, combining to illuminate the many dimensions of Genesis and Lady Jaye. I have already shot a critical mass of footage of them at home, on tour, in their studios, and on the streets. I've also begun combing through hundreds of hours of private archives – found footage, news clips, unseen home movies, some of which dates back several decades, and all carrying the powerful imprint of authenticity and the pure essence of Genesis.

I see the film as an agile, mobile, playful, ripped, raw, cut-up, hand-spliced patchwork of iconic images capturing the constant activity, flow and theatricality of their lives. The cameraman I work with sometimes for some scenes is Benjamin Kasulke, who is a perfect match for this style of filmmaking. He recently shot Guy Maddin's *Brand Upon the Brain*, with

its surreal, perfectly crafted black and white photography and intuitive sense of movement. Kasulke's mastery of magical Melies-esque superimpositions will be used here in a whimsical illustration of the Pandrogeny process.

The film will develop Genesis's musical life, her pioneering work in Industrial music, acid house, and techno, and her three current bands, of which Lady Jaye was in two (PTV3 and Thee Majesty). The film will show the band in ways their international legion of fans never get a chance to see, capturing both the insanity of the rock world, and the very intimate, loving, and secular group behind the scenes.

Music is the primary way they've made their living so that they can support their Pandrogeny project. I see music as the engine of the film, and the Pandrogeny quest as the heart of it. The film will provide a context for the origins of Pandrogeny, what it means physically and spiritually for Genesis and Lady Jaye, and why they believe Pandrogeny is directly linked to the survival and evolution of the human species. Needless to say, this will be a visually mesmerizing subject.

Since the act of cutting up and reassembling is a major facet of their art, the film will also have animations and recreations based on events and dreams from Genesis's life, such as her first encounter with Lady Jaye, which is quite peculiar and cinematic. These will be shot in a studio.

Finally, I will collect the incredible stories from their close friends, musicians, writers, and artists, who have been collaborating with and influenced by Genesis and Lady Jaye for many years. Among the many who have agreed to be interviewed: Orlan, Tony Oursler, Peaches, Asia Dargento, and Genesis' two daughters, Caresse and Genesse.

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French filmmaker and curator **Marie Losier** (1972) lives and works in New York and has shown her films and videos at museums, galleries, biennials and festivals worldwide. As a programmer she works at the French Institute / Alliance Francaise in New York City and programs experimental films at Participant Gallery, NYC and Ocularis in Brooklyn and brings programs in Europe and in the States.

She just completed a short documentary on musician and filmmaker Tony Conrad and has started her first feature film, a portrait about the musical genius Genesis P-Orridge, and her band Psychic TV with the title **PANDROGENY: A LOVE STORY**.