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People

Rapper Mykki Blanco Recites Zoe Leonard's 'I Want a Dyke for President'

And it's just in time for election season.

Rain Embuscado, October 5, 2016



Zoe Leonard. Courtesy Laura Cavanaugh/Getty Images.

It was only a matter of time before Zoe Leonard's *I Want a Dyke for President* resurfaced in light of our current election season. On Tuesday, American rapper Mykki Blanco became one of the first to revisit the piece.

Just in time for last night's vice presidential debate, Blanco posted a two-minute video of himself reciting the statement against a dramatic red backdrop. In a text provided below the video, Blanco described the relevance of Leonard's piece: "In 2016, as we watch Hillary Clinton and, unbelievably, Donald Trump battle it out for control of America, as xenophobic politicians helped the United Kingdom leave the EU, as Russian bombs drop on Syria, the poem—that aggressively questions the violent banality of our elected politicians—remains as relevant and striking as ever."

I want a dyke for president. I want a person with aids for president and I want a fag for vice president and I want someone with no health insurance and I want someone who grew up in a place where the earth is so saturated with toxic waste that they didn't have a choice about getting leukemia. I want a president that had an abortion at sixteen and I want a candidate who isn't the lesser of two evils and I want a president who lost their last lover to aids, who still sees that in their eyes every time they lay down to rest, who held their lover in their arms and knew they were dying. I want a president with no airconditioning, a president who has stood on line at the clinic, at the dmv, at the welfare office and has been unemployed and layed off and sexually harrassed and gaybashed and deported. I want someone who has spent the night in the toms and had a cross burned on their lawn and survived rape. I want someone who has been in love and been hurt, who respects sex, who has made mistakes and learned from them. I want a Black woman for president. I want someone with bad teeth ~~and an attitude~~, someone who has eaten ~~that nasty~~ hospital food, someone who crossdresses and has done drugs and been in therapy. I want someone who has committed civil disobedience. And I want to know why this isn't possible. I want to know why we started learning somewhere down the line that a president is always a clown: always a john and never a hooker. Always a boss and never a worker, always a liar, always a thief and never caught.



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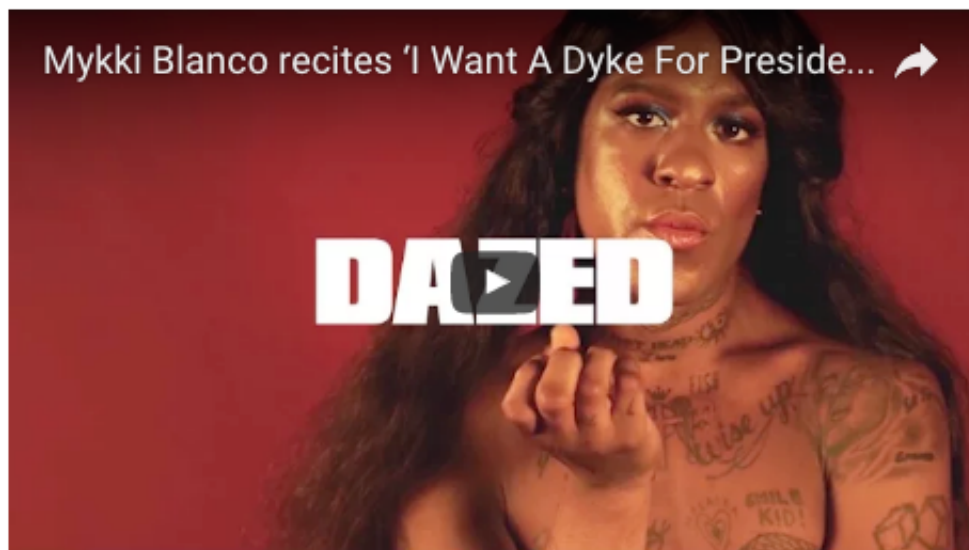
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Leonard's typewritten manifesto, which was originally released in 1992, crystallized the country's anxieties during a time when student protests swept the nation and online activism was starting to gain traction. Notably, that year saw the acquittal of four police officers in the videotaped beating of taxi driver Rodney King, which resulted in the Los Angeles riots, a six-day period of civil unrest that claimed 55 lives. It was also the year Bill Clinton took the White House from George H. W. Bush.



Blanco, whose video homage is posted above, isn't the only artist who has been inspired by the declaration over the years. As Hilary Robinson writes about Leonard (and other political artists) in *Feminism Art History: An Anthology 1968–2014*: "We see the political artist in present-day society as a model maker as well as an image maker." According to Hauser & Wirth, the gallery that represents Leonard, the artist recently contributed the piece to *Queer*, a collection of documents on contemporary art.

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