

VISUAL ESSAY

# Am I doing this right?

Christopher Lacroix

*Am I doing this right?* (2017) is the result of a near six-hour performance in which I read a year's worth of journal entries phonetically backwards in a pitiful and misguided attempt to review myself and achieve self-actualization. As my voice grew coarse, I drank water and as I drank water I needed to pee. Dedicated as I was to this fruitless attempt at self-reflection, I stubbornly continued to read my journal, wetting my pants rather than take a break. With a shutter release in hand, I photographed myself each time I released urine, choosing to capture moments of paradox in which my body is in an abject and vulnerable state, yet stable and in control.

*Am I doing this right?* explores the relentless effort of queer existence, suggesting that queerness is not simply being born outside a normative subject position, but actively resists it. I begin with the recognition that my subjection to homophobic and heteronormative structures position me as "other", while insult qualifies me as a "faggot." This process of being othered confuses the limits and boundaries of my body in relation to itself, the world, and the people in it; it creates a crisis of self and bodily integrity that is abject. In being made a faggot through abject experiences, I liken my body to a vulnerable bundle of sticks made to be burned. How does one resist this vulnerability? In queering the faggot body—that is, to make it wet—one refuses its intended function to burn, relieving it from its vulnerable position. The work engages with the potential of abject self-deprecation as a means of self-preservation, employing gay traditions of camp and melodramatic pathos while genuinely considering concepts of otherness, failure, and anxious desires of belonging.

Presented here as a .gif, the work embodies the contradictory self-deprecating and self-protecting aspects of the performance. Known through its dissemination on the internet, the .gif form is often associated with ridiculous irreverence, a quality that *Am I doing this right?* strives for. The potential viral circulation of the format makes my faggot body susceptible to unknown and uncontrollable forces. The .gif's repetitions allow for my body to be suspended in a perpetual state that is both vulnerable and protected.

---

**Christopher Lacroix** is a second year MFA student at the University of British Columbia, and has a BFA from Ryerson University. His research and practice investigates queer and gay subject formation and the ways in which these subjectivities are performed. Lacroix is a recipient of the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Scholarship awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

