Album: Timeline Photos

Shared with: Public

Tag This Photo

Open Photo Viewer

Make Profile Picture

Embed Post

Report Photo

Previous · Next

#### **Timeline Photos**

Back to Album · Lisa's Photos · Lisa's Timeline





Sister -- please re-post, add to your blog and like this statement if you stand

Statement from Michigan Womyn's Music Festival August 18, 2014

Many demands have been made of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival ("Michfest") via the Equality Michigan call for a boycott launched July 28, 2014. We have a few demands of our own.

#### 1. Get Your Facts Straight

As the 39th Festival closes and we turn our hearts and minds to our landmark 40th anniversary, we reiterate that Michfest recognizes trans womyn as womyn - and they are our sisters. We do not fear their presence among us, a false claim repeatedly made. What we resist – and what we will never stop fighting - is the continued erasure and disrespect for the specific experience of being born and living as female in a patriarchal, misogynist world.

Over 20 years ago, we asked Nancy Burkholder, a trans womon, to leave the Land. That was wrong, and for that, we are sorry. We, alongside the rest of the LGBTQ community, have learned and changed a great deal over our 39-year history. We speak to you now in 2014 after two decades of evolution; an evolution grown from our willingness to stay in hard conversations, just as we do every year around issues of race, ability, class and gender. Since that single incident, Festival organizers have never asked a trans womon to leave the Festival. We have a radical commitment to creating a space where for one week a year, no one's gender is questioned - it's one of the most unique and valued aspects of the Festival. The Michfest community has always been populated by womyn who bear the burden of urwanted gender scrutiny every day.

The truth is, trans womyn and trans men attend the Festival, blog about their experiences, and work on crew. Again, it is not the inclusion of trans womyn at Festival that we resist, it is the erasure of the specificity of female experience in the discussion of about the space itself that stifles progress in this conversation. As long as those who boycott and threaten Michfest do not acknowledge the reasons why the space was created in the first place, and has remained vital for four decades, the conversation remains deadlocked.

2. Acknowledge the Validity of Autonomous, Female-Defined Space Michfest is widely known as a predominantly lesbian community. This does not mean that heterosexual womyn, bisexual womyn, or those who do not share this identity are not present or welcome. But for a week, we collectively experience a lesbian-centered world; we experience what it feels like to be in a community defined by lesbian culture

There are trans womyn and trans men who attend and work at the Festival who participate in the Michfest community in this same spirit – as supporters of, rather than detractors from, our female-focused culture. The presence of trans womyn at Michfest has been misrepresented as a kind of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." But the real issue is about the focus of the event, a focus on the experience of those born female, who've lived their lives subjected to oppression based on the sole fact of their being female

In an August 4, 2014 article titled "What Is a Woman: The Dispute Between Radical Feminism and Transgenderism," The New Yorker magazine documents the extremism of the current push for language that erases the female experience. The board of the New York Abortion Access Fund, for example, "voted unanimously to stop using the word 'women' when talking about people who get pregnant. A Change org petition directed at NARAL and Planned Parenthood "specifically criticizes the hash tag #StandWithTexasWomen. . . and the phrase 'Trust Women."

We see this same pressure for erasure of a specifically female reality when "Pussy Manifesto," the female empowerment song written by the performers Bitch and Animal, now embraced as an unofficial Michfest anthem disparaged by some as transphobic – as was the event "A Night of A Thousand Vaginas" – solely for the use of the words vagina and pussy

If it is considered transphobic to talk about our pussies, our vaginas, or to even use the word female as specific to sex, our movement is dangerously close to using the same tactics as the far right, womyn hating, Michigan Republican leadership, who revoked the speaking privileges of two female legislators for saying the word vagina out loud on the Michigan State House floor. What has our movement come to when the mere articulation of your own experience in your own female body is denounced as an injury to another? It's time to examine the core issue here, which is our right to create an autonomous space focused on a female-defined experience

#### Acknow dge That Michfest Creates Spaces That Do Not Exist Elsewhere

This year, thousands of womyn and girls from 3 weeks to 92 years old attended our 39th Festival. This included over 75 deaf womyn who came to rejuvenate and be in community. Nearly 200 womyn with disabilities came into the woods to thrive. At one of the workshops held this year, young womyn stated that until they came to Festival, they had never seen an gender-non-conforming female in person; they did not know that those womyn existed. We built this space to let these womyn be seen and celebrated. We built this space around the fierce solidarity of female experience that has always been and continues to be deconstructed into invisibility; where that unique experience is relegated to a place of dishonor Whenever females honor ourselves, wherever we take up space, and sit collectively in the source of our collective power, we are burned and stoned, both literally and metaphorically

## 4. Turn Your Energy Towards the Real Enemies of Female and LGBTQ

While the abuse and disenfranchisement of womyn and girls escalates around the world and LGBTQ people experience life-threatening harms, LGBTQ organizations have turned inwards on a curious target – a weeklong music festival that does not ban or exclude anyone, that simply seeks to devote its focus to an experience that is denigrated in the larger world: the experience of being born and living as female.

Equality Michigan and the organizations endorsing its petition including HRC, the Task Force, NCLR and the National Black Justice Coalition, are targeting Michfest with McCarthy-era blacklist tactics. Specifically, they have called for attendees and artists to boycott the event, and – astonishingly – have threatened the livelihood of artists and vendors by branding those who participate in the Festival as "having committed anti-transgende

These organizations are targeting artists who perform at Michfest while remaining completely silent when queer-identified artists play at venues that generate profits for racist, transphobic, and homophobic corporate entities and individuals, whose interests are dangerous to the global LGBTQ

movement and all basic human rights.

We call on the constituents, donors, and dues-paying members of the LGBTQ institutions targeting Michfest to hold them accountable for this misuse and misdirection of organizational resources, and to withdraw their time and dollars from these organizations until the targeting of Michfest ends. Sisters - we urge you to redirect your money to organizations that speak to your lives and speak for you.

 Join the Conversation, Not the Digital Sound Bite War Our community is strong enough to hold disagreement and to engage deeply with each other, face-to-face, through difficulty. The Michfest community welcomes conversation; we do not stifle it. We have and will continue to remain in community with those trans woman for whom Michfest has been home; trans womyn like those organizing the New Narratives Conference who do not require females to disappear ourselve unique experiences to prove our political and social solidarity.

Michfest has always existed outside the gender binary. We built this city out of a radical diversity of age, culture, race, class and gender. We continue the revolutionary work of digging out from under the boot of patriarchy; a system of oppression so omnipresent, it is invisible in the analysis used by the very organizations who are supposed to be fighting alongside and for

us. We are fierce allies to and members of the trans and broader LGBTQ movement – but our alliance cannot and will not be premised on our continued erasure We turn to our LGBTQ community and say: we hear your truths; we ask you to acknowledge that you hear ours. Listen to the voices of the tens of thousands of women who call Michfest home. Join the conversation in person in your home communities, not exclusively through social media platforms or online petitions. We invite our sisters to participate in this conversation in person on the Land. Make room in your heart to hold

difference of opinion and disagreement - this is the challenging path to honoring true diversity. We turn to our LGBTQ community and ask you to unite with us in the belief that we can work together as a movement and stand together in solidarity. We ask you to work with us, not against us. -

at photo by Bunty Burgin.

Sponsored %

Sponsored

#### Free Jewel Games

New Game! Play Bejeweled &



hundreds of other games for FREE with the Gaming Wonderland toolbar

## **Grow New Healthy Hair**



Breakthrough natural formula promotes new, healthy hair growth. Works for all hair types!

1,627 people like this

#### **Barb Walters: The Truth!**



Read The Article That Got Barbara Fired From The View, Before She Makes Us Take It Do

### FOR YOUR GROWING FAMILY



Bundle U-verse TV+Internet+Phone for one low price! Only \$79/mo for 2 yrs w/ a 1-yr term.

#### MEGAMILLIONS



Buy a ticket for your chance to win \$160 million! Drawings every Tuesday and Friday.

### Class of '77 Photos



# The Shade Store ®



42,257 people like this