

# DIGITAL AGNES

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## Group Chat

*Patterns for All Bodies: Repatterning the Collection of Canadian Dress at Agnes*  
Recorded 5 January 2024

## SPEAKERS

Alicia Boutilier, Dare De LaFemme, Tyffanie Morgan, Rowena Whey

## KEYWORDS

Drag, Kingston artist, fashion history, Collection of Canadian Dress

## TRANSCRIPT

**Tyffanie:** Why hello there my little SweetPeas, my little love muffins from all around the big – the big blue world. This is your hostess, Miss Tyffanie Morgan, coming to you live from SweetPea Studios, the home of Limestone and the home to me, Miss Tyffanie Morgan, in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. As part of a special, Agnes Centre for the Arts. Agnes Etherington Art Centre. What is this – what is the name of it again? [Laughs]

**Dare:** *Patterns for All Bodies* [Laughs]

**Alicia:** Agnes Etherington Art Centre.

**Tyffanie:** Agnes Etherington Art Centre [Laughs]

**Dare:** The *Patterns for All Bodies*! [Laughs]

**Tyffanie:** Don't scream into the microphone. [Laughs] So, we're just – we're just getting together here, having little kiki in SweetPea Studios, AKA my living room at an ungodly, early hour of the morning.

**Dare:** That's my bad, I'm so sorry.

**Tyffanie:** Because everyone seems to have bought houses or needs to have some sort of house inspection or something. But we're gathered in the room here with Alicia [Laughs].

**Alicia:** Boutilier.

**Tyffanie:** Boutilier, yeah. [Laughs] Dare De LaFemme.

**Dare:** The one and only.

**Rowena:** They can't see your flourish on audio.

**Dare:** There was a dramatic flourish.

**Tyffanie:** Rowena Whey.

**Rowena:** Hi. It's me, Rowena Whey.

**Tyffanie:** And myself, Miss Tyffanie Morgan.

**Rowena:** Oh my God! Tyffanie Morgan!

**Tyffanie:** Oh my God, oh my God. [Laughs] But, I thought hey, let's have a little kiki, let's talk about the project. We're talking about the *Patterns for All Bodies* project, right now. Which is being – we're having this fabulous launch coming up on January 25th, where we're going to have a ball. We're going to have a ball.

**Rowena:** A ball.

**Tyffanie:** So, let's maybe do a little retrospective. What is – because you know, we're in a new year as well, 2024. What were some of the highlights of our starting the project in 2023?

**Rowena:** Well, I mean, actually, so Alicia first approached me in 2022.

**Tyffanie:** Oh!

**Rowena:** About the project, that's when that first email came to me. And I remember sitting there reading it and turning to my partner Brandon and being like, "Hey Brandon, what if I got hired by the Agnes before you did?"

[Laughter]

**Alicia:** And, he said?

**Rowena:** And he said, "No, no, that's not a thing." But, it turns out it is, turns out it is. I was so ecstatic when you sent me that email. I was sitting there reading it, and I was like, this is a chance for me to really be a part of Kingston's history, in a lasting way, and also to inform the future of like, historical costuming and also to really bring drag into another world. Because one of the big things that I like to do with my drag is to insert it into so many different art forms and into different aspects of society, because so many people don't understand what we do as drag artists. And they don't understand the actual art involved with drag. And costuming is a huge part of that. And so, getting to be a part of re-creating historical costumes in a drag manner, and also helping to make them more accessible to other audiences, was something that fascinated me and I'm so happy that it came – it's come to fruition. Like, we're three weeks away. I'm so excited.

**Tyffanie:** And for me, Rowena's like, "Hey, do you want to be part of a really big, fabulous project?" And I was like, "Sure, whatever."

[Laughter]

**Rowena:** And Dare is like, "I'm just going to send it to junk mail."

[Laughter]

**Dare:** I'm so glad you sent me that message being like, "Why haven't you responded to this? Where have you been? We've been sitting on this, waiting for you to read about it and you haven't said anything. Where are you?" I was very grateful for that because I definitely wanted to be part of this.

**Alicia:** One thing that I can add too is that, I had seen the three of you in a drag performance that Rowena was hosting. And I knew when I first approached Rowena, that I wanted all three of you to be part of this project. So, at Agnes, I oversee the dress collection, the historical dress collection. And I had already started working with Carolyn Dowdell, in making patterns, from select garments of the dress collection. But I knew that we needed to do something else than just make patterns and so this was my approach to you all, and I'm so delighted that you were all game to go on this very long, in the end, journey, in this process.

**Tyffanie:** Very gay and game.

[Laughter]

**Dare:** Accurate.

**Tyffanie:** Accurate.

**Rowena:** Accurate.

**Dare:** I think also, a little bit to your point and to your point earlier Rowena, I think it's such an interesting choice to include drag as part of this project. Because I feel like drag is having such a moment right now.

**Rowena:** A Renaissance you would say?

**Dare:** A Renaissance! We're making history through drag. It's never been popularized like this, so being able to take historical garments and then like, fast forward them through history, to breathe new life into them through drag, I think is just like a really beautiful way to combine old and new and make a lasting statement. Like, who knows if drag will be this popular forever, but I think it's really powerful to make this, like, historical stamp, with our drag, using history and, like, historical garments. I just love the way the two are married together. It was a great idea.

**Tyffanie:** Yeah.

**Alicia:** Yeah, and –

[Laughter]

**Tyffanie:** Yeah, I don't think that deep. [Laughs]

**Dare:** She's just a pretty face.

**Tyffanie:** I'm just a pretty face. No, it is very humbling when you think about it because, this is going to be part of the collection at the end of the day, right? And I'm really – I'm kind of humbled by that. I'm nervous about that too. And am I worth enough to be part of a collection?

**Rowena:** You are a Kingston history, Tyffanie. You are the reason for Kingston drag.

**Alicia:** Indeed.

**Rowena:** Like, without this project, you are already a piece of Kingston history.

**Tyffanie:** Thank you, thank you. I'm already petrified limestone at this point.

[Laughter]

**Dare:** Well, you've also been in an article this year. Like, aside from this project, you were in a magazine article and a –

**Tyffanie:** You mean [this one](#)?

**Dare:** Yes, Broadview!

**Alicia:** That no one can see.

**Tyffanie:** That no one can see.

**Dare:** It was a beautiful article about you.

**Tyffanie:** Broadview Magazine, making a scene – Oh, look at that! All three of us.

**Alicia:** All three of you.

**Dare:** It's almost like we work well together.

**Tyffanie:** Never spoken to these people before in my life.

**Alicia:** Well, it is interesting because drag has such a long history in Kingston and performativity in general. And that's at the root of the dress collection, at Agnes too. That it did get started in theatre

and just dress itself is a form of performance. So, it made so much sense to bring these two things together.

**Tyffanie:** Yeah. When you talked about the history of the garments because you know, these garments they come from many different decades and what not – eras. But they were all collected through the theatre, you know, sort of the thespians started collecting them. And they were used in theatre. And when you talk about that, especially when it comes to drag, I'm like, yeah, yeah. Of course, we all have some sort of connection to the theatre, right? Whether or not friends of ours, whether or not we've actually been theatre as well. Whether or not we've been in that Queens University massive storage there that smells like moth balls, of costumes. But you know, it's just nice to have those sort of connections. Yeah. Yeah, I'm really excited for it. But for 2023, I think the most, like, some of the highlights of the project, what am I talking about? It was everything. It was wearing the toiles when we got to – we had a little moment because we were allowed to in the toiles [Laughs]. Running around Agnes's house and stuff like that.

**Rowena:** That was really our first time, like, to actually experiencing the outfits that we would wear for this – for this ball. Because we – you can't wear historical outfits anymore. They're very fragile, they fall apart, they're – so we got to wear the toiles from the patterns that Carolyn helped design. And it was our first chance actually getting to feel what we were doing, and what we were going to be doing. And I know that anytime that we dress up, we try to – we put on a show whether we want to or not. And I hope that you see that in some of the videos that Jay puts together.

**Alicia:** And I'll just mention too that toiles are kind of like a pre-garment, garment. They are usually made out of a plain cotton cloth to give an indication of how the final dress might look and that's where a lot of adjustments are made. Not everybody might have, you know, the benefit of having a toile made before a final garment. But, it was really important and helpful in this project and hopefully helpful to you all in re-envisioning your own garment.

**Tyffanie:** Yeah, because if you're making your own – if you're going to be making your own dress out of these patterns, you don't need to do a toile, because we figured it out. Or I didn't figure it out, what am I talking about? I'm not the dress maker. [Laughs] But all those things are figured out for you. What were you going to say, Dare?

**Dare:** Oh, I was just going to say in talking about the toiles and you've kind of hit on this a little bit, one of the things I've also really enjoyed about this project is like, all of the different people who have come together to make this possible. Like, at the end of the day we're the ones who get to wear it. But, like, this has really been a team effort with everyone at the Agnes—we've got dress historians, we've got seam – I'm not going to know all of their job descriptions, but we've got like dressmakers and seamstresses and –

**Alicia:** Conservators.

**Dare:** Conservators, that's the word I was looking for, thank you. Yes. It's really been – and videographers, photographers. Like so many people with different skills have really come together,

and engaging with all of those different people has been really rewarding for me in doing this project.

**Tyffanie:** Yeah, we're really just the tip of the iceberg. [Laughs]

**Dare:** The very sparkly tip.

**Tyffanie:** Very sparkly tip. [Laughs] I think it's important that some people get to know a little bit about us though too, because the three of us, the three drag artists here. Because we're drag artists by the way. [Laughs]

**Rowena:** Did we not say that? Can you not tell that from our voices?

**Tyffanie:** I don't know, they may think that you're a big ol' construction worker. I don't know with that deep baritone voice right now.

**Rowena:** These past few months, I have been a big ol' construction workers.

**Dare:** She's a jack of all trades.

**Tyffanie:** But Dare De LaFemme, what do you really think about Rowena Whey?

[Laughter]

**Dare:** Oh, that was your serious question? I thought you were being shady!

**Tyffanie:** Just chat about us. Just chat about us a little bit.

**Dare:** Oh, you two have been such role models for me in coming up through drag. Rowena's going to cry. [Laughs] I've said one word. And I like, I think I've had so many great opportunities to work with you, and you two both have so many ideas and are always doing so much and it's something that I really admire for both of you. I remember when I first, A) realized that I could do drag and that drag kings were a thing. And then told you, I think you were like the third person I told I was interested in this, Rowena. Because you were friends with somebody that I was dating and I was like, "Hey, maybe I'll tell Rowena." And you were so supportive, right from the get go. And then I think you were both organizing the gig or maybe it was just you, but you booked me for my first gig which was in Pride, like, 4.5 years ago.

**Rowena:** It was that long ago?

**Dare:** Yeah, it's been a minute.

**Rowena:** It's time for some plastic surgery.

**Dare:** [Laughs] And yeah, just like – I feel like you've really been, both of you have been very like, active in the community, you've got like your podcast. Like doing all these shows, being on the Pride committee. So, you're both out here doing a lot for our community and increasing visibility and creating opportunities and that means a lot to me.

**Rowena:** Oh, thank you Dare.

**Tyffanie:** And Rowena, what do you really think about Dare?

**Dare:** She hates me, it's fine.

**Rowena:** No, I –

**Dare:** I'm the annoying little brother.

**Rowena:** So, Dare is my annoying little brother. No, when you first approached me and said you wanted to do drag, I mean, my first response out loud is always, "Yes! Do it!". I mean, at least try it. Because you never know unless you try. In my head I'm often like, "Do you know what you're getting yourself into?" But like, it's – once you realize that drag is for you, and once you realized drag was for you, like I saw you as a performer already. Like, you're on stage, your first performance and I could tell that you already did that. Like, you like showing off those artistic abilities. You like showing off.

**Dare:** I come from a dance background.

**Rowena:** You have a dance background. But I remember having so many conversations with you early on about like, well what is your drag style? What is your drag character? What do you want to be? And it – once you figured all that out, you really came into your own and you started building the community of drag performers. Because you were the first drag king that Kingston's had in 10, 15 years?

**Tyffanie:** Decades, yeah.

**Rowena:** Yeah. Like, in forever. So much so that you didn't know that there were drag kings.

**Dare:** [Laughs] That's true.

**Rowena:** Like, and I think that's something that you helped highlight and you've helped create this diverse drag community in Kingston, that's not just the queens. It's the kings and the things and all of the people who just want to portray their art. And I'm really grateful for you coming in and being eager to learn and to perform and to, you know, just be a part of things.

**Dare:** It's definitely a journey from where I started. [Laughs] I thought I had to be so macho and masculine at the beginning.

**Rowena:** No, no, no, no, no, no. I mean, look at Tyffanie, you think she's feminine?

[Laughter]

**Tyffanie:** Wait, what? Wait, what?

**Rowena:** Um, anyway, Tyffanie Morgan, I mean.

**Tyffanie:** I'm the host.

**Dare:** With the most!

**Tyffanie:** With the most.

**Rowena:** I mean, I said it earlier, but there wouldn't be a drag scene in Kingston without you.

**Dare:** Amen.

**Tyffanie:** Oh, well thank you. You're welcome. Or - ha, ha, ha, ha.

[Laughter]

**Dare:** Depends who you ask.

**Alicia:** Say why. Say why, Rowena and Dare.

**Rowena:** So, Tyffanie has been holding the drag scene afloat for the last 24 years.

**Tyffanie:** [coughs] Oh shit, it – oh! [Laughs] Oh, goodness, it is 24 coming March.

**Rowena:** Coming March.

**Tyffanie:** Coming March.

**Rowena:** Tyffanie has been performing here in Kingston for 24 years. And for at least 10 if not 14 of those years, she was literally holding the scene afloat, because all the other drag performers left.

**Dare:** They went to the big city.

**Rowena:** They went to the big city, they weren't committing. And Kingston's queer scene, Kingston's drag scene, was really diminished. We lost our gay bar, multiple times. We did not have any drag performers. But Tyffanie being the person, the pillar of the drag community here, and continuing to perform in her month shows and continuing to encourage other performers who wanted to come up. Literally dragging people out of the audience to perform at her shows. I mean, she has been – she's been keeping the scene alive and without her, I wouldn't have had shows to come back to



when I came time Kingston. And I wouldn't have one of my best friends, both in and out of drag. And it's been such a magical journey getting to know you, but also getting to help build the community even further together and then to do this project together, which is like literally being a stamp in Kingston's history.

**Tyffanie:** It's hard for Rowena not to think fondly of me because the first time I booked her first show, I broke her foot. [Laughs] No, she broke her own foot. I have no insurance.

**Rowena:** Neither did I, so I suffered through that broken foot.

**Tyffanie:** But yeah, yeah. What can I say? Yeah, it's all true. Buy my merchandise. And go the Tyffanie.com. T-y-f-f-a-n-i-e.com.

**Rowena:** I'm going to get you like a t-shirt that just has like, a Roman column on it and it just says, "The Pillar" and it has your face on it.

**Tyffanie:** Awww.

**Rowena:** Yeah. No one will understand but.

**Tyffanie:** [Laughs] But I'm still relevant and youthful and vibrant.

**Dare:** It can be an "and both."

**Tyffanie:** An "and both." [Laughs]

**Alicia:** We have columns we can incorporate for the 25th of January.

**Tyffanie:** Oh, we do! We do!

**Dare:** Oh my god, just a wrap of Tyffanie's face.

**Tyffanie:** Wait, what? [Laughs] You'll just print my face all around the column. Yeah, there we go. I know exactly which columns you're talking about—they were in the bottom closet there at the Agnes. Not that I'm checking out the closet space.

**Dare:** I was going to say. [Laughs]

**Rowena:** So, I don't want to steal your hosting duties, but I just wanted to ask, so what do people have in store for your performance at the pageant? At the ball?

**Dare:** The pageant. [Laughs]

**Rowena:** At the show. Well, it's a pageant ball, it's a pageant ball.

**Tyffanie:** I'm going to be living my like full-on fantasy, kind of Rococo sort of thing, you know. I'm going to be challenging Rococo, but it's going to come out as stiff Victorian, which is exactly what it is. [Laughs] I've always said to you before that whenever I'm like, learning a dance move or something, I feel like I'm moving around all over the place and then I look at the video afterwards and I'm like, "My gosh, you're stiff as a bone." But I felt like I was moving all over the place. I felt like I was like, "Oh, look at this. I'm a ballerina."

**Rowena:** We need to get you some hip stretches, hip stretches. [Laughs]

**Tyffanie:** So, I'm going to be channeling Rococo going all over the place, but it's going to be nice and Victorian, you know, "aww, aww" sort of thing. But yeah, I actually, well I won't give out too much because it's going to be a nice little surprise, but I'm looking forward to it with all the accoutrement and oh, wearing that dress is good too. It's really, really good too, because believe it or not, there's a lot of fabric, but it was actually light and airy underneath. Which is great. I just need like, you know, a little bar fridge and air conditioning underneath.

**Rowena:** They actually sewed like fans underneath the dress.

**Tyffanie:** No, they didn't! They didn't sew fans. [Laughs]

**Rowena:** Accessorizing.

**Tyffanie:** Accessorizing, accessorizing.

**Dare:** Have your Marilyn Monroe moment with the fans. [Laughs] That's all I could picture.

**Tyffanie:** There's so much fabric, it'll probably just take up the entire room if there was a fan underneath. [Laughs]

**Dare:** Oh, everyone suddenly looked at me.

**Tyffanie:** We're suddenly looking at Dare.

**Dare:** All at once. I also don't want to give away too much and it's definitely still like, in the works, noodling around in my brain. But I definitely want to bring a lot of drama into it. I think we touched on this a little bit in our recordings. But I want to invite people to stare at me and like drink in the luxury of the garment. And almost, not scare them, is the wrong word. But like, I want them to be like feel like I'm a person of a power in front and feel like I'm a spectacle, but also a little bit intimidating.

**Rowena:** That's kind of funny because I'm bringing a similar concept.

**Dare:** She's coming for my gig.

**Rowena:** I'm coming for your gig. Not in that I'm inviting people to stare, although people are welcome to stare, always. It's okay if you like looking at me because the feeling is mutual. So, my concept is that of a queen. I'm going to be a queen. I am a queen. But it's going to incorporate my favourite flowers, the roses, and the duality of the beauty and the pain of roses. So, it's going to be bringing in some old stuff and bring in some modern stuff, and I'm hoping that people like it.

**Dare:** I didn't know roses were your favourite.

**Rowena:** It's going to be really dramatic.

**Alicia:** Will people see your tattoo?

**Rowena:** No, there will be many layers of tights, unfortunately, over my tattoo. But I just, for the listeners, I did get a tattoo to commemorate this project and to commemorate my favourite flower, which is a rose. But it's actually my favourite flower because when it dies, it's still beautiful.

**Tyffanie:** And to wrap things up. Alicia, what are you looking forward to?

**Dare:** Yeah!

**Tyffanie:** Yeah, what's your thought, what are you looking forward to?

**Alicia:** I'm looking forward to a good party.

**Rowena:** Oh, yes.

**Alicia:** And performance. For the historical costume ball drag show fashion pageant spectacular.

**Dare:** Extravaganza!

**Alicia:** No, I'm super excited and I want to thank you all for bringing the dress collection forward, bringing it out into the community and enlivening it in ways it could never have imagined, but is itself so appreciative of what you bring to it. And yeah, so, I think it's going to be a good party and a good show and I'm super excited and to throw the question back to you all too, a question back to you all, would you do this again?

**Dare:** Yes.

**Rowena:** I mean yes. Can I just like go through the fashion? Like the costumes and just be like, "That one."

**Dare:** That one that looks kind of leopard-printy, but it's actually flowers.

**Alicia:** I know which one you mean. Yes.

**Dare:** Yes.

**Rowena:** That was the first one. That was the first outfit that I looked at and I was like, I want this in like, all the colours.

**Dare:** I've got so many ideas for that one already.

**Tyffanie:** And for me, God willing if I'm still alive, [Laughs] Oh, that one.

**Dare:** I'm seeing like an open chest bind with like buttons glued on.

**Tyffanie:** The juices are already flowing. The juices are already flowing. [Laughs] Alright, well we're going to say adieu, adieu, adieu, adieu. Until the next project. Any final words anyone?

**Rowena:** Come! I mean, I don't know when this audio is being featured, so, come. If you're already here, thank you for coming.

**Alicia:** Dress up.

**Tyffanie:** Dress up, enjoy yourselves. Yes! Alright, SweetPeas, we'll see you later. Bye-bye!

**Dare:** Bye.