

PLAYFULPROMISES

PLAYFUL  
PROMISES  
BLOG

TAGS

SEARCH



WWW.PLAYFULPROMISES.COM

# LINGERIE & IDENTITY: HOW LINGERIE ALLOWS US TO LIVE UNAPOLOGETICALLY IN OUR BODIES

January 26, 2018 / Erica



Violet Chachki modelling for our Bettie Page Lingerie line

Here at Playful Promises we have never been known to shirk away from a challenge, or from controversy. It has always been our aim and brand mission to be

as inclusive as possible, pushing and breaking the boundaries of what is considered "safe" and "acceptable" representation in fashion and in lingerie specifically. From working with more people of colour in our campaigns and collaborations (such as teaming up with Gabi Fresh for a collection), to being one of the first independent lingerie brands continuously expanding size ranges, Playful Promises has been unwavering in its dedication to inclusive, intersectional feminism, and being proactive in the fight against body snark.

Photographing Violet Chachki, the winner of RuPaul's Drag Race Season 7, was a natural progression of our ethos by including a non-binary model and performer as the face of our latest Bettie Page launch. With her stunning femme-fatale looks and sumptuous vintage styling, it could not possibly have been a better choice, and received an overwhelmingly positive response both from our fans and the press. The outpouring of support has felt validating, heart-felt and enormously gratifying. It also illustrates further, if any illustration was needed, how sorely diverse representation is lacking in the fashion industry.

With this in mind, we asked few non-binary/trans and gender-queer fans about their take on representation, and the role lingerie plays in it. We spoke to Vikki Le, a fashion and graphic designer based in New York; Australian MUA, artist and activist Ruby Allegra; London-based gallery producer and artist Parma Ham; and US-based full-time drag queen Louisiana Purchase - and asked them to share their views on our Violet Chachki-fronted campaign, the importance of inclusivity, and how their lingerie choices help to inform their gender identity.





Vikki Le wearing the Bettie Page Lingerie Emerald Overwire Set

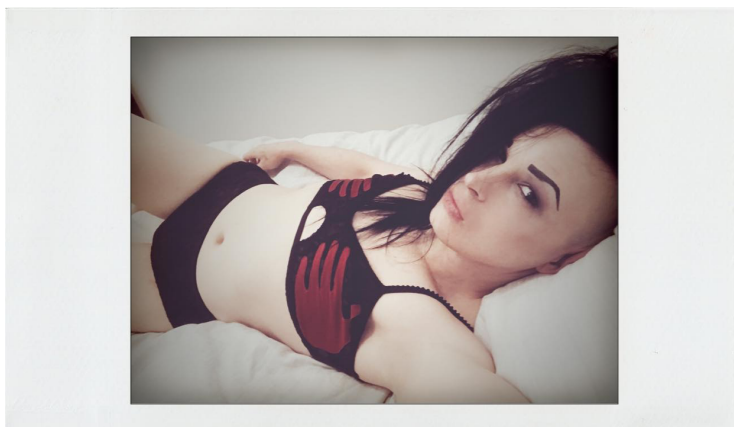
### **What does non-binary mean to you?**

Parma Ham quotes Oscar Wilde in response – “To define is to limit”, adding that “being non-binary is the experience of myself without rigid and enclosing definition”. Ruby elaborated by adding that “my genderfluidity is exactly that – fluid. Just as my identity shifts, so does my knowledge and understanding of what genderfluidity means to me.”

### **What considerations do you make when choosing lingerie? What do you look for?**

“Fancy lingerie is what we as people wear to fulfill other people’s fantasies”, muses Vikki, “I wear it to fulfill mine”. The theme of lingerie representing confidence and sexuality is a recurring one, with Louisiana adding that “Lingerie sets the mood for me. I feel most powerful and seductive in lingerie.”

Ruby also highlights the importance of comfort, both physically and mentally – “as a disabled person, lingerie has been a very important part of my work towards radical self acceptance, body positivity and the unlearning of ableist beauty standards”. Both Vikki and Ruby are also quick to highlight the importance of colour in how lingerie makes them feel and in setting the mood.



Parma Ham wearing the Bettie Page Lingerie Hand Print set

### **How do you go about styling your look and how do you work lingerie into it?**

“Lingerie is either the spotlight or a necessary layer that I never skip!” – Louisiana muses enthusiastically, adding that “lingerie is definitely a staple in my wardrobe”. Parma Ham adds – “The way lingerie frames the body is so important. Well chosen lingerie can transform my boyish body into something highly feminine”.

### **How important is it to have queer, trans and non-binary visibility in lingerie?**

Ruby raises an important question – “If non-binary people, for example only see images of cisgender or binary-gendered people celebrating their bodies through wearing and enjoying lingerie, what message does that send about non-binary or

genderqueer bodies?"; adding that "we live in a very heteronormative and cisnormative society, which often does not respect or acknowledge queer, trans and non-binary identities as being real, valid or worthy." Vikki adds another important point, pointing out that "we are more than just victims or sexual fantasies". Louisiana adds that the importance of representation is a useful tool in breaking down stereotypes and current societal boundaries. Parma Ham elaborates, commenting on the current state of global affairs, adding that "Right now everyone under the trans and queer umbrella needs as much visibility and as many positive narratives as possible. Seeing queer people in lingerie is a gentle reminder that we too are human, we too are beautiful and desirable".



Louisiana Purchase wearing the Bettie Page Lingerie Leopard Overwire set, photo by Ruby Knight

**What would you like to see more of from lingerie/clothing companies? How can they be**

### more inclusive?

Vikki states categorically that what they see to be a current trend is “more than just an image, it’s a movement and if you’re a good ally then make sure to give us the platforms to share our stories and visibility.” This point could not have been echoed strongly enough among the rest of our respondents, with Parma Ham emphasizing the importance of using genderqueer and non-binary models not simply as tokens. “Reducing the use of gender-specific language, and perhaps incorporating more gender neutral vocabulary” is a simple yet far-reaching change that any brand can implement, Ruby suggests. “I would love to see more bodies, ALL bodies in lingerie”, adds Louisiana, “It’s important that they can feel fabulous too.”

### How is lingerie important to your identity?

“Lingerie sets the mood for me. I feel most powerful and seductive in lingerie”, muses Louisiana; the theme of lingerie representing confidence and sexuality is a recurring one, with Vikki adding that “it’s a whole act of seduction and power”. Furthermore, there is no denying the transformative power of lingerie, with Parma Ham noting that “I value the power of transformation, and the freedom to not commit to either masculinity or femininity, this is where I feel most comfortable.” Vikki goes as far as describing the act of wearing lingerie as an “act of rebellion”, since wearing lingerie was not something they were always able to do throughout their life. Lingerie, it appears unanimously, represents both strength and freedom.

### How do you foresee the Violet Chachki fronted Bettie Page campaign being received by others?

Ruby sees it as a “really great, refreshing step towards visibility and representation for sexually and



gender diverse people", with Parma Ham adding that it's another kick to the rigidity of the binary – "I think everyone can benefit from society being less strict on what you can and cannot wear." Louisiana reiterates its importance in breaking boundaries for LGBTQIA folks.



Ruby Allegra

It is evident that the power of representation for socially marginalized groups cannot be overstated, nor can the change come too soon, with Ruby concluding that "sexuality is a huge part of many people's identities, so denying groups of people the access and means to explore that can be very harmful. A lack of representation can lead to isolation and serious issues relating to self-esteem, body image and mental health".

Here at Playful Promises we are hopeful that our contribution to the fight towards greater representation is just one step among countless in the right direction.



0 Comments / 6 Likes

*tags* / body positivity, gender, feminism, inclusivity, diversity

Comments

Community

1 Login ▾

Recommend 1

Tweet

Share

Sort by Newest ▾

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name

Newer / Older



Powered by Squarespace. Background image by  
Kuba Bozanowski.