

Bruce LaBruce's photo-diary: the stories behind the scenes

Opening tonight, the queer-punk auteur's first UK solo show surveys his thirty year career. Here, Bruce LaBruce offers a peek into his long-kept, top-shelf picture diaries



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Photography: Bruce LaBruce
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In the 13 minute film *Boy/Girl* - released 30 years ago this past spring - a voyeur focuses his binoculars on a male dominatrix as he sexually humiliates a slave, played by the Vancouver auteur Bruce LaBruce. Like the majority of his work to come, LaBruce's debut movie explored the fringes of kink and the sexual unknown - the fetishes you never thought possible.

LaBruce mined heavy leather and Neo-Nazi titillations in *No Skin Off My Ass* (topping Kurt Cobain's favourite films list when it came out in 1993), amputee fetishisms in *Hustler White*, extra-terrestrial jerk circles in *LA Zombie* and propaganda porn in *Otto; or, Up with Dead People*. Earlier this year, he introduced a cell of revolutionary feminist terrorists in *The Misandrists*.

LaBruce made a lot of friends as he percolated America's underground cinema scene in the 90s and 2000s. Rubbing shoulders with the likes of Harmony Korine, regular drinking partner Ryan McGinley and punk cartoonist Mike Diana - who was jailed in 1996 for depictions of bestiality and rape in his work - LaBruce documented much of the debauchery that ignited around him in a photo-diary.

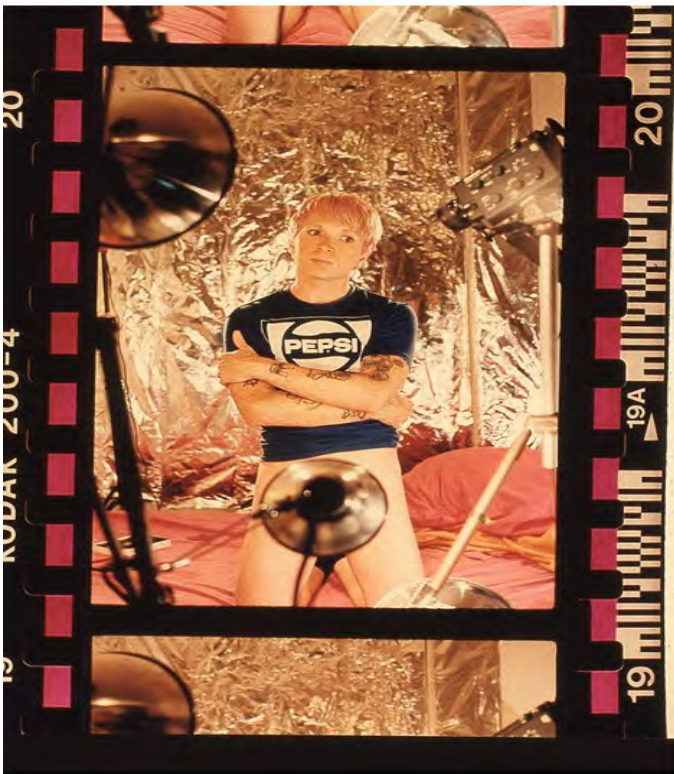
Here, ahead of the launch of his retrospective gallery show *The Haus of Bruce LaBruce* tonight, the rebel filmmaker tells the stories behind the shots.



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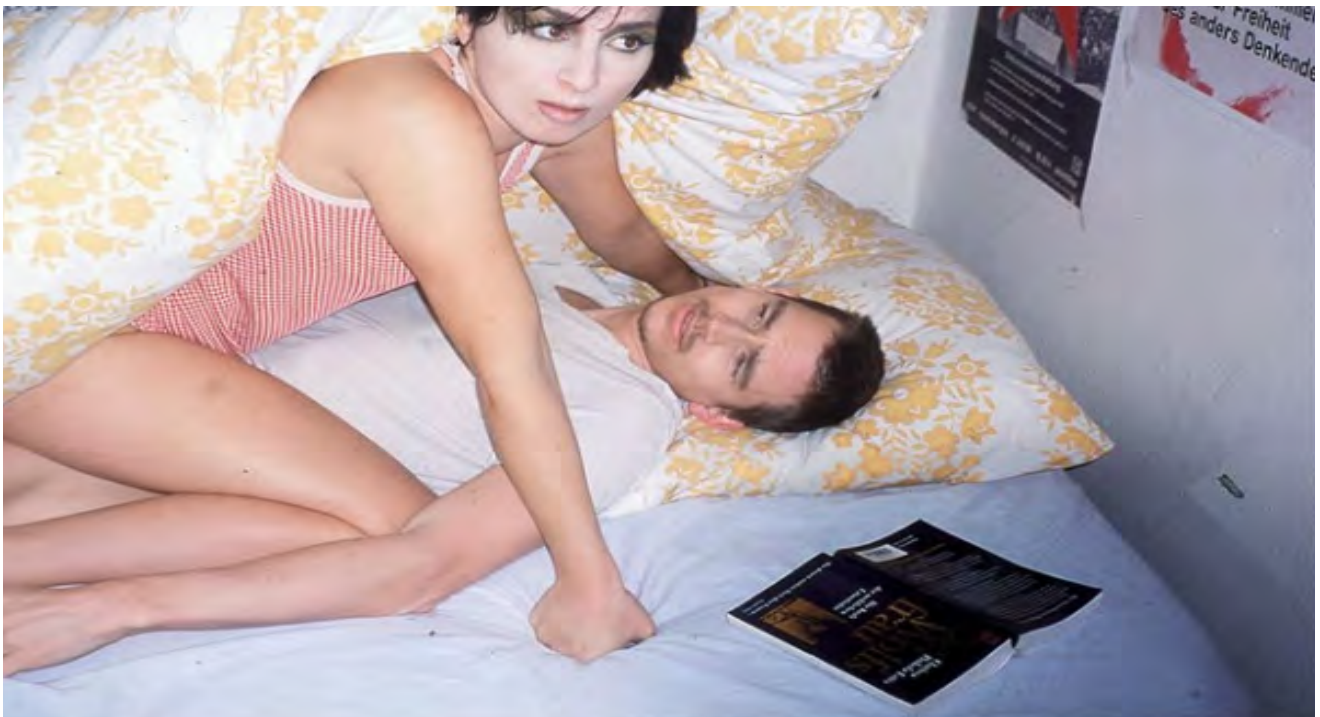
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- 2 | Photography Bruce LaBruce
- 3 | Courtesy Bruce LaBruce
- 4 | Bruce LaBruce- Photo Diary

2 "Here's my bestie at the time, Ryan McGinley, going cuckoo for kicks at some trendy club in NYC circa 1999. I used to stay with him while I was in New York in his apartment on Seventh Street in the East Village. Much partying ensued, which often entailed throwing up."

3 "Two Moons on the set of my movie *Super 8 1/2*. That's me cheekily mooning the camera on the left, and one of my co-stars, Mikey², doing the same on the right. *Super 8 1/2* was shot over a gruelling two year period in 1993/94 while I was waiting tables at a crummy hipster Mexican restaurant called La Hacienda in Toronto to finance it. Trivia: it was the first and only film in which I got fucked up the ass!"

1 "This is a production still from my movie *The Raspberry Reich*. The film was a no-budget extravaganza shot in Berlin about the female leader of a group of would-be terrorists who forces her straight male followers to have gay sex with each other, in order to prove their revolutionary commitment. I shot the abduction scene featuring four porn models at the Olympic stadium using very realistic-looking prop guns. I wonder if I'd be able to get away with that today?"



5 "Susanne Sachsse as Gudrun and Daniel Baetscher as Holger on the set of *The Raspberry Reich* (2004). One of our locations was an apartment in a prominent east Berlin complex on Karl Marx Allee, where I shot a sex scene in the elevator and had porn actors in ski masks with guns running in and out of the building. The residents were not impressed, and had us summarily ejected from the premises."



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"Harmony Korine on the set of *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999). I met Harmony at the world premier of *Kids* at Sundance in 1995 where I was showing my film *Super 8 1/2*, which included blow-jobs and ass-fucking scenes. Those were the days. We became friends, and I visited a couple of his sets for index magazine, including his lost masterpiece *Julien Donkey-Boy*. He was shooting at his grandmother's house in Queens. Anthony Dod Mantle, who would later win an Oscar for *Slumdog Millionaire*, was the D.P."

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"The Pepsi generation! That's me with pink hair on the set of *Super 8 1/2* in Toronto, circa 1993. In this cautionary biopic, I played a washed-up porn star desperate for a comeback, only to be ruthlessly exploited by an underground lesbian filmmaker chicken-scratching for her own immortality."



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"My friend and occasional muse, Justus, posing with 'whore power' graffiti in my hometown of Toronto, circa 2003. Toronto has always had a strongly political sex-trade worker community, although I have to say that since its premier hustler bar, Sneakers, closed down in 2007, things have never really quite been the same for me in Bore-onto."



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"Kembra Pfahler and the girls of The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, circa 2000. While visiting LA for a 24-hour performance event called Platinum Oasis, I shot Kembra doing her infamous Wall of Vagina performance in the courtyard of the Highland Gardens Hotel, where Janis Joplin died. Kembra was running around wearing only blue bodypaint, but she insisted to the alarmed management that she wasn't naked. I guess it all depends on your point of view."

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"That's legendary artist Mike Diana, styled as Peter Berlin, posing for *Honcho Magazine* circa 1998. I met Mike when he was dating my friend Kembra Pfahler, and he was happy to pose avec hard-on for me. Between 1998 and 2003 I worked frequently for *Honcho*, *Playguy*, and *Inches* magazines, which were jerk-off mags for gay men. The editor at the time, Doug McClemon, hired a lot of artists to shoot spreads, including Collier Schorr, Terry Richardson, Slava Mogutin, and Richard Kern."

10 "Model Axel Kohler was only 16 or so when I shot this spread for the Dutch fashion magazine *BLEND*, circa 2005. It was his own doberman he was posing with, but I forget her name. Axel is now a fashion designer in Toronto."



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11 "On the set of *Hustler White* (1996). I captured the crucial scene in which Tony Ward slips on a bar of soap and hits his head on the side of a jacuzzi, knocking him unconscious. That's my oft-time Director of Photography, James Carman, whom I've worked with on six feature films, shooting with his trusty Bolex, and you can barely see my collaborator Rick Castro in the lower corner also snapping pics. The film was shot on 16mm for 50K."



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