

To learn more about gender as a performance, I definitely recommend "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" by Judith Butler, among her other works. It's free online.

It was the basis for this idea and a great read for understanding gender within a social context.

@BLVRRYKAT



## GENDER IS PERFORMED.

Gender is often defined as the ways in which we express ourselves, usually in relation to the sex we were assigned at birth. The "rules" that go along with this form of self expression are not concrete fact- they are influenced by the society that raises us and reinforced by the performance we are pressured to enact.

From a young age, most children are taught that deviating from the assumed norm, or "playing with" gender expression, is wrong. They minimize their own self expression by performing "gendered" acts in order to fit into the social box that they were prescribed. The older we get, the smaller these boxes become, to the point where acts completely removed from any (already rocky) biological basis get called into question as well. We thus lose our "true selves" in an effort to conform.

In other words, furscons play with both the gender binary, and the binary between "human" and "nonhuman" as well. I say "nonhuman" to encompass not only the animalistic aspect of furry, but other physical attributes- size, material, color, number of limbs, etc.

## FURRY IS AN EXTENSION OF DRAG.

A furscon creates an idealized version of one's self through similar means, by adding additional "roles" (prey, mammal, canine) and "costumes" (ears, tails, claws) outside of the gendered ones we are used to. In creating new roles, the gendered ones break down. We can thus exaggerate and mock an animal's gendered body, as well as its other bodily features in new and nonconforming ways.

Drag personas often become an idealized version of one's inner mind, breaking human bodily constraints to achieve this form, and always with the safety net of claiming that it's all an act. But because we repeat these "gendered" acts so often, we sometimes forget the possibilities outside of a gendered framework.

While drag does a good job of questioning these performances, it struggles in breaking them down completely.

## DRAG PLAYS WITH GENDER.

Drag, under this definition, is an "unpacking" of these boxes, an outlet to try on different roles that one may not be able to perform due to societal pressure. Drag does this through three main, overlapping vessels: exaggeration, mockery, and self expression. One might exaggerate their makeup as a mockery of women's beauty standards (or, perhaps, men's desire to self-express their appearance).