

## Arts Review

By Heather Barfield Cole



### Single Wet Female

The Off Center, Feb. 25

Running Time: 1 hr 30 min

Have you seen the film *Single White Female*? If not, rent the 1992 suspense thriller. The plot: An executive businesswoman just out of a failed relationship seeks a reasonably well-adjusted roommate to supplement rent, only to realize that her choice of a home companion is a psychotic with ill intentions. Did you notice the homoerotic undertones, the sultry after-shower scenes, the choreographed catfights, and the irrational fear of being single? Observe the film through a queer eye, and you will locate the inspiration for Carmelita Tropicana and Marga Gomez's *Single Wet Female*, the second installment of the Rude Mechs' *Throws Like a Girl* series.

Twisting Hollywood plotlines, Tropicana and Gomez performed a Latina lesbian Hitchcock-edged show using camp as a theatrical device coated in mockery and invested in meaning. Personalities looped into numerous subtexts as Tropicana (historically known for her intentionally overfeminized, fruit-laden Cubana acts) played self-described "ber-butch"

Camy, and Gomez played the "hyper-femme," power-suited Margaret. Showing off pink nails and branded fashion sense, Gomez's wide-eyed blankness and constant surprise lampooned those women we are apt to see roaming expensive boutiques looking for that nonexistent item to make them whole. Gomez's desperate plea for a roommate exposed her selfish longing for superficial comforts and unmitigated dependency. Camy, in an orange jumpsuit and slick-backed hair, followed the frail Margaret with tongue virtually panting out of her mouth. Desiring Margaret's approval, Camy resolved everyday conflicts in a sadistic fashion conveniently ignored by the impeccably dumb Margaret. When the pizza carried excess spice, burning Margaret's virgin tongue, Camy handled the delivery boy with a circular slicing knife. When Margaret admitted her trainer was a "hottie," we soon heard screeching violins and noticed Camy's upturned eyebrows, suggesting another jealous murder was on the way.

Margaret, in pure vanilla manner, protested her Hispanic neighbors' loud merengue music, their bright clothing, expressive gesturing, and the wafting putrid smell of plantains. During stage breaks, another story unfolded on a projection screen, that of two babies, played by Gomez and Tropicana in bonnets and sucking on pacifiers. Baby Margaret marveled at two Barbie dolls, a blonde and brunette. The darker-haired one got her head ripped off by a nurse before the stunned baby's face. A glorified white culture trained the babies to reject themselves as Latinas and succumb to heteronormative prescriptive behavior. Conform to the norm (whatever that is), or else severe punishment shall be inflicted upon you. Thus, when the dainty lady Margaret takes advantage of the seductively soothing advances by Camy in the bathtub, she denies herself memory of the experience. Nothing happened; nothing that she could permit herself to remember.

Camy's secret camera surveillance of Margaret's life peaked when she, and we, watched Margaret engage in coitus with her ex-fiancé Murray, played by drag king Murray Hill. Camy uselessly screamed and begged Margaret to stop the sexual encounter, not submit to male penetration. Camy tricked Murray into a libidinous fit as a ploy to murder him with a high-heeled shoe punched square in the eye. Stereotypes kill, or at the very least, get mightily uncomfortable when one does not adhere to the standards set by mystical hegemonies.

More than comedic farce, Gomez and Tropicana mounted a delectable feast of perversions, inversions, and subversions for the ravenously underrepresented.