

"You may have thought you understood human nature before you read this book; after reading it you will be humbled by all you failed to grasp until now. America invented identity politics but here those identities have been multiplied and articulated as never before."—*Edmund White*

WHY ARE FAGGOTS SO AFRAID OF FAGGOTS?

Flaming Challenges to Masculinity, Objectification, and the Desire to Conform

Edited and with an introduction by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore

Gay culture has become the ultimate nightmare of consumerism, whether it's an endless quest for Absolut vodka, Diesel jeans, rainbow Hummers, pec implants, or Pottery Barn. As backrooms are shut down to make way for wedding vows, and gay sexual culture morphs into "straight-acting dudes hangin' out," what are the possibilities for a defiant faggotry that confronts the assimilationist norms of a corporate-cozy lifestyle?

In this collection of essays and experiences, edited and with an introduction by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, Jason Lydon and Mishael Burrows expose homophobic prison norms, Kristen Stoeckeler encounters gender policing in gay bars, Ali Abbas confronts gay mythologies of homophobic Arabs, and Tommi Avicoli Mecca shows us the scene for queens and their critics/admirers on the streets of 1970s Philadelphia.

Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots? challenges not just the violence of straight homophobia but the hypocrisy of mainstream gay norms that say the only way to stay safe is to act straight: get married, join the military, adopt kids! Whatever happened to sexual flamboyance and gender liberation, an end to marriage, the military, and the nuclear family? This anthology reinvents the anger, flamboyance, and subversion once thriving in gay subcultures in order to create something dangerous and lovely: an exploration of the perils of assimilation; a call for accountability; a vision for change.

Advance praise for *Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots?*:

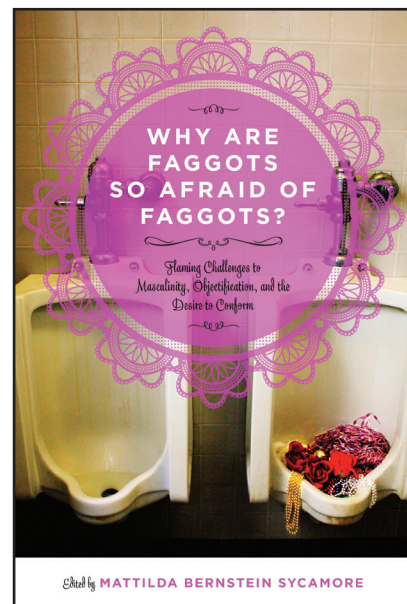
"*Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots?* is a collection of essays that not only examine the intricacies of the current socio-political climate within the realm of the gay/queer/trans world, but also show how important it is for us to interface and aggressively seek to inform the world view of the culture at large... Thanks, Mattilda, for the insights, intellectual rigor, and the glittering ammunition with which to destroy and rebuild."—*Mx Justin Vivian Bond, singer, songwriter, and author of Tango: My Childhood, Backwards and in High Heels*

"This book plumbs the most important question facing queers in the 21st century: how the hell did we go from forming a crucial part of the '60s "lib" rainbow, only to end up creating for ourselves a world of martial and marital law every bit as sterile, constricting, and amoral as the world we once fled like the plague?"—*Andy Bichlbaum of the Yes Men*

"Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore's coruscating eye and clear head is what queers need if we are to survive as anything other than a tamed branch of consumer society, based on assimilation, repression, and despair. These essays come like a plunge into a forest pool of revitalizing joy, honesty, and common sense. Read them. Now. No—not tomorrow. Now!"—*Samuel R. Delany, author of Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, called "startlingly bold and provocative" by Howard Zinn, and described as "a cross between Tinkerbell and a honky Malcolm X with a queer agenda" by the *Austin Chronicle*, is undoubtedly one of America's most outspoken queer critics. A writer, activist, artist, filmmaker, and social critic, Sycamore is the author of two novels, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly* (City Lights 2008) and *Pulling Taffy* (Suspect Thoughts 2003), and the editor of four nonfiction anthologies, most recently *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity* (Seal 2007) and *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* (Soft Skull 2008). Sycamore writes regularly for a wide variety of publications, including the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *AlterNet*, *Bitch*, *Bookslut*, *Gay and Lesbian Review*, *The Stranger*, and *Make/shift*, where she is a columnist and the reviews editor. Sycamore has lectured at universities across the country, including Yale, Harvard, Brown, NYU, and UCLA. In 2008, *Utne Reader* named Mattilda one of "50 Visionaries Changing Your World."

✧ **Mattilda and contributors will be touring throughout North America in February-May of 2012** ✧



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Ed. Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore

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