

10 Must-See Gender Documentaries

Transamerica got filmgoers talking about the New Trans Cinema of recent years. But beyond must-see features (*Boys Don't Cry*, *Soldier's Girl*) are some trans docs that are worthy of note.

Enough Man: Luke Woodward's fearless and compelling trans porn documentary explores body image, relationships and sex from the perspective of nine transmen and their partners. (lukewoodward.net)

Audrey's Beard: Almost anything from Native, trans filmmaker Alec Butler is worthy of note, but *Audrey's Beard* succinctly captures the transition from butch dyke to transman in two minutes. (E-mail madlobster@rogers.com for more information.)

Detached: Gentry McShane's four-minute film features a young genderqueer named Adrian who discusses his/her experience with the intersections between sex work and gender identity.

Boy I Am: Sam Feder and Julie Hollar's compelling new doc features FTMs in various stages of transition as well as lesbians who question

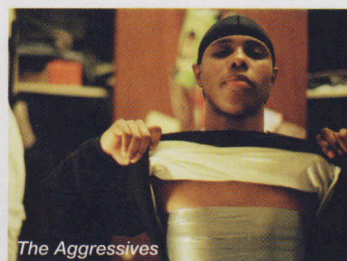


whether transitioning from female to male is congruent with feminist principles. (boyiam.com)

TransGeneration: This eight-part series about four transitioning college kids is now on DVD. (sundancechannel.com/transgeneration)

The Aggressives: Although the people in this documentary are not technically trans, this illuminating film about New York lesbians living as "aggressives" says much about gender in America. (image-entertainment.com)

100% Woman: This adrenaline-fueled doc follows MTF bike champ Michelle Dumaresq as she becomes the first transgender athlete on a national team. (100percentwoman.com)



Transparent: Jules Rosskam's riveting film features female-to-male transsexuals who struggle with the challenge of raising their children while transitioning. (transparentthemovie.com)

Sir: Just a Normal Guy: Melanie La Rosa follows Jay Snider over the course of 15 months during his transition from female to male. Interviews with Snider's ex-husband and lesbian partner are remarkably moving. (octopusfilmvideo.com)

A Boy Named Sue: This fascinating doc chronicles the transformation of Theo from a woman to a man over the course of six years, including the effect of his transition on his lesbian lover and their friends. Easily one of the best films on the FTM experience. (wmm.com) — Diane Anderson-Minshall

Most Frequently Asked Trans Questions

Do any insurance companies cover sex reassignment surgeries?

Unless you have a nontrans reason to pursue surgeries such as a mastectomy or hysterectomy, you'll need an insurance policy that specifically covers sex reassignment procedures. Until recently, it was basically unheard of for private insurers to cover SRS. Then in 2001, the city of San Francisco passed its groundbreaking transgender health benefits package for its employees, and within a few years all of its insurance carriers were on board. That means more insurance companies now offer employers plans that include SRS coverage for eligible employees. But not all insurance companies that offer SRS plans will offer them to every employer. Similarly, an employer may decide against an SRS-inclusive plan if one is available. And even plans that cover SRS may require patients to use in-house or recently trained doctors rather than surgeons already widely known and respected in the community.

Are FTMs buying into our culture's hatred of the female body? If a lesbian transitions to male and then dates only guys, it's hard not to feel he's rejecting femaleness.

understood anything about bodies, differences between them or social hierarchy based on them. I was barely able to talk and [was] declaring that I was a boy," says Lynn Breedlove, former lead singer of the dyke punk band Tribe 8 and author of the novel *Godspeed*. Breedlove — who identifies as a feminist and dyke as well as a man — chose not to medically transition, but did attempt to get rid of female curves by "doing a lot of drugs. As I grew older, I didn't like my curves and neither did mass media. Was I just trying to make my insides match my outsides? And if so, where did that inside image come from? A little nature and a little nurture." Far from rejecting femaleness, Breedlove actually "hesitated to go by 'he,' because of what so many hes have done to so many shes."

David is a women's college graduate, feminist and former dyke who is now a gay man. He describes his female role models as strong and his upbringing as supportive of his gender expressions. As a dyke, he says, "I met, dated and fell in love with several interesting, smart and dynamic women," but never learned how to be one, "because I wasn't one." Transitioning, he says, "was never about rejecting womanhood — it was about learning about myself." As for dating men now, "I think I'm just basically oriented to be homo-

same sex as I am," says David. "It's definitely about who I do want in my bed, not about some theoretical act of repudiation."

My partner is transitioning from female to male. Can we marry legally?

Changing gender on legal documents is a process that, depending on where one was born and now lives, can range from needing a doctor's note to securing a court order. Some states only require a driver's license for a marriage license, while others request a birth certificate or other documents. Legally changed gender markers on these documents, therefore, are necessary when you're outside of Massachusetts and need to be an opposite-sex couple to get married. But LGBT advocates caution that it's not just the license itself that makes a legal marriage, but rather, the license's ability to withstand later challenge. "Thousands of trans people across the country are in marriages," says Chris Daley, director of the Transgender Law Center. "In a couple of states, the validity of those marriages has been legally challenged, and we've gotten mixed rulings." In Kansas, for instance, the State Supreme Court ruled against recognizing marriages where both partners were born as the same sex. Other states like