

**Interviewed by Andrew Milk for Future Nature zine
2011**

Firstly, tell me where the name hdd [Homosexual death Drive] came from?

It alludes to a branch of punk-influenced queer theory that is concerned with the pleasures and necessity of anti-social behaviour. I understand it as having something to do with living now and not worrying about an imagined future when everything will be perfect, being lawless, badass and free. It's an anti-assimilationist stance, critical of mainstream LGBT values and projects; if I could blow up or burn down a rainbow then I would.

Seeing you play was a really fun experience and it felt very involving and different to everyone else on the bill that night (the 'proper' bands). Has labelling yourselves an 'imposter band' allowed for a more creatively open approach to songwriting and performing live?

Thanks! I've never really been in a proper band, one where everyone has clearly defined roles, can play their instruments, cares about rehearsing and craft, has songs that follow a particular formula, is young, beautiful and cool, plays gig circuits and festivals, seeks fame, and ever expects to be paid. I've been in a few bands but we've never performed more than once, and we generally only have a couple of songs, and even they sound weird and fucked up. So it's hard to tell if Kay (Hyatt, my girlfriend and co-conspirator in HDD) and I are presenting an alternative way of doing and performing music, or this is just the only way we know how to do it. We both have minimal musical talent, the recorder I learned at school 35 years ago is the only instrument I can play with any dexterity or skill. So we just muddle through with whatever we can find that works well enough and sounds just about plausible. My boyfriend Simon Murphy has long been involved in making strange music, so that encourages me too. I think not relying on a traditional band format means that we are free from having to worry about a lot of things, like being in tune! And I have zero interest in writing or performing songs that have generic subject matter although, typically, having just said that, I'm now wondering what a Homosexual Death Drive love song might sound like. I saw a band recently, a couple of very serious young blokes who played very earnest songs about politics and fighting, looking cool and right-on was clearly important to them. One of them didn't play an instrument, he just played a load of knobs on a table, which were plugged into his computer. I know this makes me sound like a complete foguey but I think this would be my ideal, just playing knobs that somehow make music, and leaping around and singing. I'm working towards that. I love Ximon's moves with Teeth too, in fact I just love him, he plays a computer, I should ask him how it goes because they sound astonishing.

Could you explain the basic notion/concept/theory (cant think of the right word) behind fat activism?

There are lots of ways of thinking about and doing fat activism, and disagreements within the movement about the best or right way to do it. I think of fat activism as a

political project, it's about altering the way that fatness is understood and understanding fat within a framework of power relations. It includes cultural elements and there are communities of people doing this kind of work in lots of different ways, often overlapping with other communities. I think of fat activism as something that generates fat culture, shows the richness of fat people's lives, validates us as worthy human beings, and counters prevalent negative cultural messages about "the obese," who are typically understood as stupid, passive, ugly, a medical and social problem that needs to be fixed by caring experts. Some people have specific ideas about what is and what isn't fat activism, eg protesting, changing laws, and there's a lot of activism that goes on around media representation and clothing, and health. I tend to think of it as 'doing stuff' where people use the networks and resources available to them creatively. My fat activism is currently based on writing and publishing, giving talks and presentations, making films, chatting with people, visiting archives and unearthing historical fat feminist activist documentation, having my picture taken, scholarship, blogging, organising events, flirting etc etc. I'll have a go at anything and, really, I do fat activism because it feels good and makes me happy.

How does the band feed into your roles as activists?

I don't know about Kay but for me it's another format for self-expression. The audience you get playing a gig is different to one at an academic conference, a lot more sexy and fun. I'm not too bothered about 'getting a message across,' or 'being a positive role model,' which is what fat activism is often concerned with, and which I find very stifling. People can take or leave what they like.

Who or what are 'the chubbies'?

Ah, you're thinking about The Chubsters! I started this as a fat queer girl gang in 2003, though you don't have to be fat, queer, a girl, or even particularly tough to join in. There are about 100 jumped-in members now, all of whom have a badge and a membership card. It's partly made-up and partly real, about the power of imagining things when they can't be real, and also very Death Drive in its love of anti-social badassery. Sometimes I do workshops, I've got one in a few weeks where I'll be teaching fat people how to spit and how to shoot potato guns. Sometimes I host filmshows. Sometimes people make things with a Chubster theme, I have some embroidery that someone gave me, someone else made some Chubster stonemasonry, Simon made an electronic game called The Chubuzzer. It's random and silly and serious.

If you could perform for any public figure in history, who would that be ...and why?

They are not dead yet but I would like to use my music and stage presence to torture a captive panel of Rosemary Conley, who popularised the Hip and Thigh Diet; Jean Nidetch, founder of Weight Watchers; Jackie Cox, Bar Hewlett and Rebecca Hunter, directors of LigherLife; Tam Fry, chief zealot of the National Obesity Forum; and the entire membership of the Association for the Study of Obesity.

What was the last book you read?

A trashy exposé of the British fashion industry dressed up as fiction, and Confessions of The Guerrilla Girls. I skipped through an anthology of short fiction by young Welsh writers, most were forgettable but there was a good story about a rug. Next up: something about neoliberalism, some poetry, and more Frantz Fanon. Writers I love: Brendan Behan, Michelle Tea and Eileen Myles.

Tell me what the future holds for HDD?

I want to make a record and maybe do some more shows, but only ones that will be fun. I guess I should do some kind of website. Also, I don't mind! I really loved the show that we played for you, a highlight of my year. Everything else is gravy, as they say.

What can I do to be more like Homosexual Death Drive?

Tuck me up in bed and read me a story.

What do you think Lindsay Lohan would make of all this?

I think she'd like the idea but would be utterly horrified by the reality. I can imagine her smile turning into a frown, which is a shame because she'd look so good sitting on my face.

Thanks! I love you!