

My Experience at Frank Moore's Erotic Friction

By Lula Chapman

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I was walking down Valencia St. with my beloved collaborator, Sadie Lune, when she handed me a flyer for Frank Moore's show at the Center for Sex and Culture. The flyer had the words "Erotic Friction" and drawings of people coming in and out of people's orifices.

"You should go to this," she said.

"Who's Frank Moore?" I said.

"You don't know who Frank Moore is?" she said incredulously. "He is a performance artist with a reputation for being a sex cult leader. I thought those were your areas of expertise."

"Huh. Never heard of him," and we walked on arms linked.

The next day on the cosmic hologram that is Facebook, Frank requested my virtual friendship. I accepted. I wrote on his wall that I wanted to meet him.

He read one of my notes entitled, "performance art, the love of my life, you cheap freak" and commented: "looks like we have similar tastes, playful natures, and are bad to the bone!" He sent me some of his writings called the Shaman's Cave. I read how the doctors told his parents to put him in a home and basically forget about him. He was born without the use of his arms, legs or the ability to speak. His parents saw intelligence in his eyes and decided to take him home. He writes about having the perfect body for performance art. First of all, people are always staring at him and he's always liked it. Secondly, he said because he has never had any expectations placed on him to be successful, make money, polished, or accomplished. He has been free to do whatever the hell he wants to do.

I went to his house in Berkeley with my pocha homie, Jimmy Lusero. The house is purple, decorated with peace signs and splatter paint on the sidewalk. We walked through the white picket fence and were sure we were in the right place.

We were a little nervous. I didn't know what to do when I first saw Frank. Should I hug him? Linda was there, she translated for him by looking into his eyes and saying "A. B. C. D ... L. M. N. O. P." She could tell if the letter was right or not by his grunt. Then, she'd run through the alphabet until she got the next letter. She can tell pretty quickly what he wants to say. He wanted her to show us around the house. She showed us Mikey's art work. He was the artist that drew the people coming in and out of the other people's orifices on the flyer. It smelled good in the house. Like curry. They all live together.

We went back to Frank's studio and he was set up with this computer program that could anticipate what he was typing and say it out loud. He has a poker that attaches to his head that he uses to type. It's pretty cool.

The first thing he types is, "I like your title." He was referring to the last show Sadie and I did called, "Prove You're Not a Robot: Interactive Experiments in Fear-Art-Love." I thought he was going to say, "I like your tits." The poker typer technique isn't so fast, so you are always guessing what he was going to say. I was relieved that he hadn't.

We talked about performance art. He asked why I do the thing that I do. I asked him how he does the thing that he does. He gets his audience naked within a short amount of time and interacting with each other. I was intrigued. He said that nudity took hours off of the process. And that



Lula Chapman is undressed by Erika

process was one where people could cut through the bullshit and connect with one another. He talks about performance art as a battle field to break people out of the boxes and labels that keep us stuck and isolated. I agreed.

He asked if I would be a plant in the show. I said yes ... but, what does that entail? Come open, eager and willing.

Jimmy and I left feeling exhausted and inspired.

Before the show I got my period. I emailed Frank about it and said I probably would not be up for taking off my underwear. He said he could work around it.

Fast forward, we are at the show. There are tapestries hanging on the walls of people coming in and out of people's orifices. There were pillows covering the floor for people to lie on. There was Frank Moore sitting in his wheelchair with a board that had the alphabet written on it and a few dozen commonly used words. He had his

head band on with a laser pointer attached to it. He used that to spell out what Linda Mac vocalized.

There were about twenty people in the audience. We sat down facing Frank on the pillows. It felt cozy. Frank asked us to scoot in closer to him. He began by asking people individually what had brought them to the performance. Facebook. A flyer. A friend.

He wanted to know what had attracted them to coming.

"I am a pervert," one woman laughed nervously.

"Well, I am going to test you on that," Frank joked back.

One guy said he just got back from hanging out with shamans in Peru, so he figured this was apropos.

"What is a shaman?" Frank asked.

"He is neither good nor bad because he is a channel for both God and the Devil!"

"I am a free agent," Frank said.

He asked me what brought me here tonight. I told him about my flyer and Facebook experience. He asked me if I was a plant.

"A plant?" I said not sure if I should blow my cover.

"I work with honesty."

"I have been planted."

So it was all up in the open.

There was another woman in the audience who had been planted. He asked her if she would be willing to eroplay with him. He didn't explain it at the time, but I had read that eroplay was a word he had made up to describe affectionate play that does not lead to sex. She said sure.

He asked people what they did ... for fun. One woman in the audience was a photographer. Frank asked her if she would be willing to pose all of us in a nude photo.

"Sure, but I don't have a camera."

"That's ok, we have photographers here." For what? I don't know.

Within twenty minutes everyone got naked and that was that. Frank said if anyone was "on the rag" they didn't have to take off their clothes. I think that was something special said just for me. I kept my tights on.

The photographer lady was a little unsure. "I don't usually pose people."

I said, "Just pretend like you are bossy."

She arranged us around Frank and took our picture. There we were. A big pile of naked strangers suddenly saying cheese. It was bonding.

Two well dressed ladies walked in during the photo shoot and it was too late for them. They never took off their clothes. Before they arrived, Frank talked about how it is harder to watch than participate. This is something he has learned after years of leading these rituals. He was right. Those ladies were palpably uncomfortable.

He asked me if I would be willing to make an erotic creation with him. Sure. I sat facing him and waited for an impulse to move me. Linda told me I could climb all over him, but avoid his left bum knee. I touched his feet. Could I take his shoes off? No, he needed them for adjustments. Hmm. I curled up underneath his legs and reached out for a hand that jumped in and out of my hand. He calls his arms Mike and Ike and they have two minds of their own. I lay like that for a few moments. It was relaxing. Frank said it was truly comfortable.

Then, the notion of gestures was addressed. Linda put us into groups of two or three and read to us gestures to enact. I was put with the photographer and Emily, a woman who Frank asked to dress me into a sheer blouse right off the bat. So the three of us were instructed to joyfully hug each other, explore each other's faces, rub our breasts together, rub our butts together, interlace our limbs with one another and rock back and forth, cock our heads slightly, healingly touch each other's genitals. The photographer was a little chatty to begin with like, "how do we do that?" and "what did she say?" Emily had obviously been there before and her presence added a certain weight and calm to the experience. We were all just exploring like unchaperoned children showing each other our bits. It was erotic, but the fact that we took sex out of it made it safe. I don't know how I would have felt had I been paired with two dudes.

At one point, I was paired with Frank and I sat on his lap. The gesture was to rock together. I didn't know how to rock with him. I felt a little awkward because I didn't want to fully straddle him and go to rocking town. I just sat facing out sort of dazedly. Frank has a very unique smell that I am not used to and he drools a little bit. So, I was a little uncomfortable. It was interesting for me to look at that uncom-



fort. Was I uncomfortable being close like that with an older man and afraid that I was being used? What is it to be used? Where did I get that "using" idea? One of my mom's favorite sayings is that men think with their dicks. Or was it the drooling? I don't know. I was contemplating this on his lap and at the same time feeling at ease and filled with wonder.

At the end of the "show", Frank talked to us about our experiences and his practice. I was sort of spacing out when he addressed me. He reminded me how I asked him how he got people naked at his shows. Did I have an answer now?

"Yeah. It's easier than I thought." And then I told him about my most current experience. I had been lying on the pillows mostly naked. I was getting cold. I sort of inched up to a guy I was sitting next to, hoping that he would sense my coldness and hold me. No luck. I didn't want to put my clothes back on so I looked my neigh-

bor in the eyes and said, "I am cold." He smiled and put his naked arms around me. I was so happy. I was sitting in that spaced out happiness when Frank asked about my experience. I had never been to a performance where I ended up snuggled next to a naked dude and feeling so grateful for our ability to warm each other. I felt like the performance was a success. The photographer lady had snuggled up to the warming guy's other side.

The next day, I was explaining the experience to a friend and he asked if I really wanted to fuck after that. It was a valid question; some performances leave you wanting to fuck. But the answer is no. I left feeling open and spacey, warm and fuzzy. I left feeling like a squishy human with hair, pores, and teeth. I left with an awareness of my desire for warmth, exploration and connection.