

# FIL YOUR BOOTS

ARMED WITH KILLER HOOKS AND QUEER LOOKS, BRITISH-CHINESE INDIE POP PROVOCATEUR **LE FIL** BREAKS DOWN STEREOTYPES AHEAD OF HIS 24/7 LIVE SHOW

WORDS: ADAM DUXBURY

**Your new show is about how we package ourselves for consumption. Do you think this is something gay men are particularly aware of?**

Being raised in a heterosexual patriarchal society means that we gay men are inherently aware of how we are perceived and how to fit in, either to avoid homophobia as a child, or, in contrast, to seem desirable when an adult. Gay men are bombarded with imagery and advertising that encourages us to shape ourselves into a specific category such as bears, cubs, otters, twinks or jocks. It's as if we shop for men, especially on dating apps where there's just a little square window for you to sell your goods. Even being Asian is just a category, where people can write "no Asians" or "I like Oriental boys" as if an entire race is some sort of sexual object.

Thankfully, things are shifting now and there's increasingly more diversity in how gender and sexuality is represented and packaged, but we still have a long way to go to deconstruct these archetypes that have shaped our society. We're now moving beyond the "white, muscley, masculine jock" as the most prevalent gay ideal. I try to challenge those stereotypes every day in my life and in my work. With the way I look, even little things such as talking in my strong Yorkshire accent or walking proudly into men's toilets become little acts of subversion.

{ Q & A }

And having long hair or make-up doesn't mean I'm in drag or emulating a woman. Make-up doesn't have a gender, it's just a pot of paint!

**What can people expect from 24/7?**

A fully loaded kaleidoscopic pop adventure! It's the first time that I'll perform all the music from my first two EPs *Pop Sculpture* and *Nightlife* in full. It's epic pop music, with production by Frankmusik, who have made music for Ellie Goulding and RuPaul.

The show is an introduction to my world and explores how gender and identity has been shaped and its impact on my relationships.

24/7 Live is part-pop, part-performance-art, part-dance and is choreographed by Ted Rogers, who's worked as a dancer with Sink The Pink, Florence and the Machine and Holly Blakey.

**Your show is called 24/7, are you Le Fil 24/7 or is this a character you become while performing?**

First, Fil is my real name, the actual me. Le Fil means the thread in French, which I interpreted as this continuing thread that connects the different disciplines within my work. Second, it's like the masculine appropriation of "la fille," which means the girl, so it captures the essence of androgyny too. Adding "Le" in front of my real name transforms me into a piece of work, a bit like a human sculpture.

**"My friends love that I was ranked higher than Duncan James in *Attitude's* Top 100 Bachelors"**

**Who are your biggest influences right now?**

Grayson Perry's book *The Descent of Man* was a major reference point. It affirms every idea I have about constructions of gender that I address in my show. Beyoncé's *Lemonade* — a fantastic pop sculpture — is also influential in terms of how music can be linked within a narrative to tell a story.

**You made our Top 100 Bachelor's List. What did you think when that was announced?**

As a new artist with not many people knowing my work yet, it was great to be recognised and to represent a different type of "man." Plus, I was in great company and my friends love the fact that I was ranked higher than Blue's Duncan James! I've read *Attitude* since I was a teenager, and it's always held an important position in reflecting how our LGBT+ culture has grown and developed, so it makes me genuinely happy to be in it, representing a British-Chinese man — albeit still a bachelor... **a**

**Le Fil: 24/7 Live is on 14 September at Hackney Showroom. [hackneyshowroom.com](http://hackneyshowroom.com)**