It's a Femininomenon: Chappell Roan, Queer Visual Culture, and Participatory Feminist Rhetorics

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Abstract: This article examines pop artist Chappell Roan as a key figure in contemporary feminist visual culture whose drag-inflected, hyperfeminine aesthetic transforms spectacle into feminist rhetorical practice. Through multimodal performances that merge camp irony with drag embodiment, Roan constructs a participatory visual rhetoric grounded in pleasure, parody, and collective attunement. Her concerts, music videos, and fan collaborations mobilize what this essay calls the *femininomenon*—a queer-feminist method that turns femme excess into a world-making aesthetic and a pedagogy of joy. Drawing on feminist rhetorical theory, queer performance studies, and theories of kinesthetic interlistening, I analyze how Roan's visual and sonic practices blur the boundaries between performer and audience, sight and sensation, critique and celebration. In doing so, Roan's work complicates the visual turn in rhetoric by demonstrating how visual culture operates as an embodied, multisensory, and collaborative mode of feminist praxis that invites participation, feeling, and reimagination.

Keywords: Chappell Roan, feminist visual culture, participatory aesthetics, queer kinesthetic interlistening, drag performance, rhetorical feminism

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In an era where queer visibility in pop culture is both increasingly mainstream and politically contested, Grammy Award winner for Best New Artist (2025) Chappell Roan has emerged not merely as a performer but as a rhetorical force. Her work exemplifies how feminist rhetorics operate multimodally through bodies, images, and sound to create meaning within visual culture. Through camp aesthetics, hyperfemininity, and queer performance traditions, Roan's engagement with contemporary visual culture expands feminist rhetorical practice. This essay argues that her drag-inflected aesthetic enacts a participatory feminist praxis that redefines visual culture as embodied, multisensory, and collective. Her visual identity, rooted in drag, DIY spectacle, and an unapologetic embrace of excess, functions as both critique and celebration, challenging dominant ideals of beauty, gender, and performance. Roan's praxis invites reflection on privilege, lineage, and the ethics of participation within feminist visual culture.

Roan actively embeds drag culture into her work, from exaggerated, camp-infused performances to her decision to feature local drag queens as opening acts. Her aesthetic–marked by maximalist makeup, intentional "ugliness," and an embrace of imperfection–defies and deconstructs the constraints of conventional pop femininity. Across performances from the glittering apple entrance at Governors Ball to the prom-queen fantasy of her NPR Tiny Desk concert and the metallic Joan of Arc armor at the MTV Video Music Awards, Roan transforms spectacle into embodied rhetoric. Through theatrical exaggeration and sensory abundance, she constructs a visual language that amplifies feminist rhetorical theories of embodiment, affect, and performance (Moreland, 2019; Hawhee, 2004; Halberstam, 2011; Muñoz, 1999). Her rhetorical power lies in transforming visuality into a participatory encounter that teaches through pleasure, play, and collective attunement.

Situating Roan within the lineage of queer pop icons and feminist performers, including Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, and the broader drag tradition, this article analyzes her visual work across music videos, live performances, and fan engagement. Her persona is not only a spectacle but a call to action: an invitation to trans-

gress gender norms, embrace imperfection, and participate in aesthetic world-building. In a media environment often structured by surveillance, control, and curated authenticity, Roan's work reclaims performance as a site of feminist pedagogy, pleasure, and community building. The concept of "femininomenon," the title of the riotous opening track on her 2023 debut album *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess,* serves as both a keyword and a framework for this article. By fusing "feminine" and "phenomenon," Roan signals her maximalist embrace of femme excess as method, message, and world-making practice, encapsulating the feminist rhetorical force of her aesthetic and demonstrating how her cultural work transforms visual culture into an embodied, collaborative, and unapologetically inclusive feminist praxis.

Feminist Visual Culture, Embodiment, and Rhetorical Participation

Feminist rhetorical theory grounds this analysis of Roan's visual praxis, emphasizing that meaning is made through bodies, images, and sensory experience (Hawhee, 2015; Moreland, 2019). Within this framework, visual culture functions as a rhetorical domain where identities are constructed, contested, and reimagined. Feminist visual culture challenges logocentric hierarchies by asserting that gesture, adornment, and aesthetic labor carry epistemological and persuasive weight.[1] Building on these insights and on rhetorical theories of embodied and affective listening (Moore, 2018; Ratcliffe, 2005; Lipari, 2014; Faris, 2020; Halberstam, 2011; Muñoz, 1999), I examine how Roan's aesthetic rhetoric invites audiences into a collaborative, multisensory feminist praxis. Through drag-inflected spectacle and a porous boundary between performer and audience, she constructs a feminist visual sensorium, a participatory aesthetic space her fans actively inhabit. To trace the rhetorical implications of this feminist visual culture, the discussion begins with embodiment as a central concern in feminist rhetorical theory.

Madison Moore's theory of "fabulousness" helps illuminate the rhetorical stakes of Roan's visual performance. In *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric,* Moore (2018) has previously defined fabulousness as a tactic of queer world making, an embodied aesthetic revolt against normative systems. Less about money and conspicuous consumption, Moore's fabulousness "requires high levels of creativity, imagination, and originality" and is a form of protest, a revolt against the norms and systems that oppress and torture us all every day—white supremacy, misogyny, transmisogyny, patriarchy, toxic masculinity, gender policing and racism" (p. 8). Roan's performances enact this visual protest, embodying Moore's theory through drag, religious kitsch, early 2000s pop culture, and Midwestern camp, as seen in her 2024 Governors Ball appearance, where she emerged from a cracked red apple dressed as a drag-ified Statue of Liberty, painted green, wielding a torch, and smoking a giant joint (Fig. 1). She embraces camp as both medium and method, describing her stage identity as drag performance, collaborates with local drag artists when on tour, and designs her shows as participatory spectacles. These practices frame Roan's aesthetic not merely as representation, but as an invitation, a world to enter, an embodied, co-authored space of feminist and queer becoming.

1 Posthuman rhetorical theory reconceives agency as emerging from distributed, material, and affective relations rather than from a singular subject. Casey Boyle (2018) has described rhetorical force as arising from "serial encounters within ecologies" and bodies as "part of and apart from multiple arrays of practices" (p. 27). Sarah Hallenbeck (2012) similarly frames rhetorical action as relational and emergent (pp. 17–22). While reading Roan's aesthetic persona as a posthuman rhetorical assemblage co-constituted by fans, costumes, and performance practices offers a compelling direction, that analysis lies beyond the scope of this article.

Figure 1: 2024 Governors Ball, *Flood Magazine,* Photo Credit: Merissa Blitz, https://floodmagazine.com/165010/live-in-photos-governors-ball-2024-chappell-roan-alex-g/

Roan's Statute of Liberty performance makes visible what feminist rhetorical scholars have already urged us to recognize: that bodies are rhetorical agents, reshaping meaning through embodied performance. In their 2015 Key Concept Statement, "Embodiment: Embodying Feminist Rhetorics," Maureen Johnson, Daisy Levy, Katie Manthey, and Maria Novotny call on the field to "complicate the ways bodies are understood to work and perform as rhetorical agents" (p. 42) and to foreground embodiment not as ancillary to rhetoric but as central to how meaning, power, and identity circulate. This framework clarifies how Roan's visual strategies operate rhetorically.

Debra Hawhee's (2015) theory of the sensorium further elucidates this function by centering sensation and affect as central to rhetorical exchange. Roan's performances are less about being passively watched and more about feeling, sounding, and participating through the body. This fluid performativity invites audiences into a shared sensorium, a participatory aesthetic space in which rhetorical agency circulates through gesture, spectacle, and embodiment. In this space, meaning is made through adornment, sound, and style, and through collective attunement to an unruly, femme-coded rhetoric of joy. Yet, as Hawhee's own genealogical analysis of rhetorical history shows, appeals to bodily sensation have often lacked intersectional analysis. This model, like Aristotelian ethos more broadly, tends to overlook how race, gender, and class constrain bodily expression. In her reading of Serena Williams' "'Defiant' Black ēthe," Lorin Shellenberger (2020) calls for a more intersectional theory, an embodied ēthe, that accounts for how ethos and subjectivity are co-constructed through bodily difference and structures of social power. Roan provides one such example of embodied ēthe, not in opposition to racialized constraint, but through white femininity that is deliberately disjointed, excessive, and anti-decorous.

If embodied rhetoric opens space for alternative rhetorical praxes, then rhetorical listening deepens it by shifting from the speaker to shared, embodied practices. Rhetorical listening, as theorized by Krista Ratcliffe (2005), moves attention from persuasion to interpretive responsibility. Listening in this feminist frame is not passive, but relational, shaped by positionality, affect, and power. This framework reorients our understand-

ing of rhetorical activity away from speech-as-dominance and toward listening as an interpretive, ethical, and embodied mode of engagement.[2] In visual culture, rhetorical listening becomes a mode of experiencing otherwise, attending to how performances signify through the viewer's situated gaze. It insists on a visual ethics attuned to power, silence, and presence where viewers are not neutral observers but co-constructors of meaning. In Roan's case, the audience's embodied participation via dress, singing, and gesture echoes and amplifies this shared rhetorical labor.

If we take seriously the feminist imperative to theorize the body as more than a passive surface but as a site of knowledge and resistance, then Roan's aesthetic becomes legible as a rhetorical intervention. Her performances, which are at once loud and quiet, excessive and deliberate, invite multisensory forms of listening attuned to visual, affective, and corporeal cues. Her stylized persona, rooted in drag-inflected femininity and a deliberately disjointed trash-glam aesthetic, constructs a visual ethos that rejects traditional decorum in favor of audacity, excess, and queer inclusivity. These performances encourage us not simply to consume her spectacle but to feel its stakes and its invitation to co-perform gender fluidity, critique visual and social norms, and embody a feminist aesthetic of joyful defiance.

Spectacle and Subversion: Roan's Aesthetic as Feminist Critique

Chappell Roan's ascent to queer pop stardom is inseparable from her visual aesthetic, a maximalist, drag-inflected performance style that operates as both spectacle and critique.[3] Her costuming, makeup, and stage iconography deliberately rework and parody beauty norms, exposing the ideological underpinnings of heteronormative pop culture. Through drag, grotesque glamour, and camp, Roan constructs a visual grammar of queer feminist critique.[4] We can situate Roan's aesthetic within a lineage of feminist visual performance alongside Beyoncé and Lady Gaga, artists who also engage visual culture as a site of feminist and queer resistance. Beyoncé performs through historical reclamation, weaving African spirituality, Southern Black heritage, and antebellum tropes into narratives of Black womanhood and resilience in works such as *Lemonade* (2016) and *Homecoming* (2019). These spectacles center Black cultural forms on global stages.[5]

2 Steph Ceraso's (2014) work explores the sensory turn in rhetorical theory; in "(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning," she offers "the concept of multimodal listening to expand how we think about and practice listening as a situated, full-bodied act" (p. 103). See also, Sounding Composition: Multimodal Pedagogies for Embodied Listening (2018).

3 Roan's career started with a social media shout out from Troye Sivan and a 2018 contract with Atlantic Records. She moved from her small Missouri town to Los Angeles only to be dropped by the label two years later, prompting her return home. Revamping her collaboration with producer and co-writer Dan Nigro in 2021 led to her 2023 debut album, The Rise and Fall of a Midwestern Princess, and her meteoric rise to pop stardom. In early 2024, she opened for Olivia Rodrigo's GUTS tour, followed by music festival performances including Coachella, the Governor's Ball in New York City, and Lollapalooza, a "performance [that] broke an attendance record for the largest day crowd ever seen in the event's 30-plus-year history — without a headline billing." See Daw (2024) and Montiel (2024).

4 While often used interchangeably, camp and drag mark distinct yet overlapping rhetorical registers in Roan's work. Camp, as an ironic sensibility that celebrates excess and artifice, shapes the tonal and visual wit of her performances, while drag operates as embodied practice, an enactment of gender's artifice through transformation and participation (Butler, 1990; Muñoz & Cabral, 1999; Moore, 2018). Their synthesis turns exaggeration into feminist method, transforming spectacle into critique and irony into collective pleasure.

5 Her 2019 Coachella performance, captured in *Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé* (2019), extends this ethos with a spectacular tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, featuring step teams, a live marching band, and Black Greek iconography. Beyoncé underscores the political power of centering Black cultural forms on a global stage. Positioned as a Black woman reclaiming her lineage, Beyoncé performs history to rewrite it, rendering her work widely understood as counter-he-

Lady Gaga, by contrast, exemplifies what José Esteban Muñoz (1999) theorizes as "disidentification," a queer strategy that repurposes dominant cultural codes. Gaga's early work drew on Catholic iconography, drag, and club-kid aesthetics to expose identity as theatrical and constructed. Albums like *Born This Way* (2011) stage gender and fame as hypermediated spectacle.

Building on these traditions, Roan shifts the rhetorical mode from reclamation or ironic deconstruction to participatory co-creation. As Kelly Moreland (2019) theorizes, bodies function as rhetorical spaces, shaped by history, culture, and affect, and capable of generating meaning through their visual and material form (p. 405). Roan's body becomes such a space: not a fixed symbol of femininity, but a rhetorical site where femininity is contested, styled, and reimagined. She performs under a stage name, Chappell Roan, which she explicitly frames as a drag persona: "I really have taken that on as an identity, and it's been very freeing to be like 'Oh Chappell Roan is my drag project'" (Gibson, 2025). This alter ego allows her to disidentify from traditional expectations of pop stardom and femininity. Embodying Chappell Roan is "really liberating for me" because "the drag queen that I play … is very confident and comfortable singing…." (Tonic, 2024). Roan deploys drag not as imitation but as intervention, a strategic mode of visual exaggeration that refuses tidy containment of femininity and invites audiences into its joyful undoing.

Roan's commitment to drag culture is not only rhetorical but relational. In a pop landscape where drag is often mined for spectacle, her visual rhetoric emerges from embeddedness rather than appropriation. As drag's mainstream visibility has grown, so have questions about whether pop artists engage it meaningfully or simply exploit it for image-making. Roan resists the hollow co-optation that marks much mainstream drag appropriation. As British drag queen Bones notes, "Roan feels different …. I know American queens who know [Roan] as the girl who used to come to the club and support the queens. Like Lady Gaga, you know exactly who she is–there's a certain authenticity from the get go" (Snapes, 2024). This testimony positions Roan not as an outsider borrowing drag for aesthetic effect, but as someone whose visual practice is grounded in a lived ethic of participation.

That embeddedness informs her aesthetic debts to "trash drag," a tradition that embraces ugliness as both a political resource and stylistic excess.[6] At NPR's Tiny Desk, Roan squeezed her maximalist aesthetic into the intimate, fluorescent-lit office space, staging herself as a "grotesque" prom queen. (Fig. 2). Her face was painted a ghostly white that glared under the overhead lights, streaks of black mascara running visibly down her cheeks. A thick smear of lipstick bled across her teeth as she smiled into the microphone. A tiara on her beehive wig glittered not with jewels but with crushed cigarette butts, their orange filters catching the light. The clash between regal form and abject material literalizes what Jack Halberstam (2011) identifies as *queer failure*: the refusal of polish, glamour, or success as normative ideals. Ordinarily a symbol of feminine perfection, the prom queen crown is deliberately dirtied here, transformed into an emblem of refusal. Rather than reclaiming trash into empowerment, Roan revels in femininity's supposed "failures," unsettling the

gemonic rather than appropriative.

6 Trash drag emerged from underground queer communities that challenged the flawless femininity in mainstream drag. Heavily influenced by the grotesque and camp aesthetics of 1970s trash cinema, especially John Waters and the legendary drag diva Divine, this style took root globally. Roan paid homage to Divine's roles in Water's film Pink Flamingos. See Nesvig (2024).

very criteria of success and femininity that the tiara is supposed to signify.

Figure 2: NPR Tiny Desk Concert, Photo Credit: Elizabeth Gillis/NPR: https://www.npr.org/2024/03/21/1238815351/tiny-desk-concert-chappell-roan

On a massive stage at the MTV Music Awards, Roan appeared not as a sanitized pop product, but as an unruly feminist icon: part Joan of Arc, part Julie d'Aubigny, part DIY drag royalty (Fig. 3). Wearing shimmering body armor, red hair teased into medieval sculpture, and an overflowing gown made of cigarette boxes and rosary beads, she embodied what might best be described as a queer medieval fever dream. The gown of abject materials offers another example of queer failure, refusing couture polish in favor of assemblage and trash. By exaggerating sainthood into drag excess, Roan destabilizes both femininity and holiness, staging their supposed purity as always already constructed.

Jonathan Graffam-O'Meara (2024) has noted that Roan exemplifies drag precisely because she "leans into hyperfemininity, at times toying with beauty ideals and elements of 'ugliness' and trash," creating a visual contradiction that celebrates femininity while holding "a middle finger up at those same societal ideals and expectations. Her grotesque styling, lipstick on her teeth, smeared mascara, cigarette-butt tiaras, literalizes this "middle finger," enacting what might be called a feminist politics of distortion: a subversion not through rejection of femininity but through its exaggeration into satire and refusal. Her Statue of Liberty look at Governors Ball, with her painted green and smoking a giant joint, and her rhinestone cheerleader outfit spelling "HOT TO GO!" make Graffam-O'Meara's (2024) point visible: pep rally femininity, grotesque glamor, and trash camp collide in exaggerated contradiction. Roan's DIY self-styling becomes a form of feminist critique made legible through the visual grammars of drag, camp, and queer performative excess. By reworking archetypes historically associated with objectification, from Joan of Arc to the Midwest beauty queen to Lady Liberty, Roan's body becomes the canvas on which visual culture is remade. She exaggerates, distorts, and reclaims them as sites of unruly pleasure. "I love looking pretty and scary, or pretty and tacky," she told Jimmy Fallon, citing drag, horror films, and burlesque as key influences (2024).

Roan's participatory aesthetic also manifests in fan styling and co-costuming practices. Roan announces tour themes like Midwest Princess, Kink Is My Karma, and Pink Pony Club, encouraging fans to "Go full out" (Fig. 3). Audiences arrive in DIY costumes, perform choreographed movements, and share their cre-

ations online, participating in the rhetorical and cultural feminominon (Trebay, 2025). Rather than partnering with couture designers like Madonna did with Jean Paul Gaultier, Roan works with her stylist and creative director, Genesis Webb, to create signature looks that blend historical, modern, and avant-garde looks sourced from upcycled fashion, vintage items, and theatrical prosthetics. This conscious rejection of high fashion aligns her visual rhetoric with feminist material rhetorics of reuse, resistance, and unruliness. By rejecting exclusivity and embracing reuse, Roan builds an aesthetic world that is legible, remixable, and participatory, an invitation fans take seriously.

Participatory Aesthetics and Queer Kinesthetic Listening

This section extends Michael J. Faris's (2020) concept of queer kinesthetic interlistening beyond the classroom, showing how Roan's visual aesthetic and fan practices constitute a communal, affective form of feminist rhetorical invention. While these visual disruptions are powerful in their own right, Roan's feminist praxis extends beyond spectacle. She actively invites her audience to co-create it. Drawing on Moreland's (2019) theory of "body as space," we can understand Roan's visual persona as a rhetorical environment that reflects and remakes cultural imaginaries through performance. Moreland argues that bodies function as rhetorical spaces shaped by cultural, historical, and material forces, not just symbolic representations (pp. 405–7). Roan's grotesque drag body, then, is not a costume layered on top of an identity but a visual space through which gendered meaning is contested, embodied, and reimagined. Her body becomes a shifting surface of rhetorical inscription and resistance. We can understand Roan's body not as a static symbol but as mobile and contingent, constructed in and through aesthetic choices, audience reaction, and performance context.

Roan's invitation for fans to embody her aesthetic—through themed dress codes and choreographed crowd dances like "Hot to Go!"—transforms the audience from spectators to co-authors of the performance. This affective circulation is central to Roan's events, where queer joy, drag stylings, and emotional openness are felt collectively in movement, not just seen. In this way, Roan's visual rhetoric prepares the ground for a more radical mode of feminist performance, one in which spectacle is collectively co-authored.

At a Chappell Roan concert, the line between performer and audience dissolves into glitter, makeup, sweat, chant, and shared experience. Fans arrive in elaborate DIY costumes, clown wigs, thrifted corsets, pink cowboy hats, already embodying the themes for her concerts that Roan announces on social media: Lesbian prom, Pink Pony Club, and Hot To Go! (Fig. 4). The collective energy cycles back and forth between Roan and her audience as fans dance in sync to pretaught choreography, scream-chant lyrics of queer defiance, and hold their costumed bodies in radiant connection with Roan's own. In these moments, listening becomes an invitation to Faris's (2020) "queer kinesthetic interlistening," a rhetorical act where meaning emerges through affective, embodied, and participatory entanglement of performer and audience. Faris expands Krista Ratcliffe's (2005) notion of rhetorical listening, which tends to privilege "the discursive and epistemic at the expense of the embodied and material" (Faris, 2020, p. 2). Roan's performance offers precisely this material surplus: a fan dancing in neon heels to the "Hot To Go!" beat is not interpreting an argument; they are inhabiting it. For Faris, queer kinesthetic interlistening extends rhetorical theory to account for how listening hap-

pens through bodies in motion, and how "listening is polymodal … includ[ing] all of our senses, not just our hearing" (p. 8). Drawing from Lisbeth Lipari's (2014) work, Faris reorients listening from an epistemological to an ontological act, something that "touches" us, "vibrates through our bodies," and is shaped by rhythm, movement, and proximity (pp. 30–1).

Figure 3: Instagram post: "TOUR THEMES PART 2." Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CwqchjlSY-n/?img_index=1

This kinesthetic mode of engagement transforms Roan's concerts from spectacles into sites of rhetorical invention. Following Jennifer LeMesurier (2014), such bodily movement becomes rhetorical invention, where "somatic metaphors" emerge through proprioceptive experience and create openings for rhetorical action (p. 157). More than a choreographed routine, Roan's "Hot To Go!" becomes a multisensory act of rhetorical identification and co-creation. Fans learn it in advance on TikTok or Roan gives the crowd a dance lesson before singing the song, blurring the line between audience and performer. Here, rhetorical agency is distributed across a network of moving bodies. As Faris (2020) notes in his discussion of voguing, embodied practices can become "a site of memory and invention," particularly in queer communities whose histories are often erased or fragmented (p. 9). The audience's gestures echo Roan's even as they transform and remix them with their own bodies, generating meaning through reciprocal performance. Rhetorical meaning is no longer a message transmitted from artist to listener; it is co-performed, felt in rhythm and breath.

The participatory dimension of Roan's concerts is what Lipari (2014) describes as an "ethics of attunement," listening less for information and more "to the harmonic interconnectivity of all beings and objects" (p. 3). In this relational mode, to listen is to be with, to enter a dance of resonance and improvisation. Lipari's concept of interlistening is polyphonic, embodied, and intersubjective: "What if our entire body is one great listening organ?" she asks; "What if we are, in some sense, all ears?" (p. 30). At a Roan show, whole bodies listen through touch (glittered and sweaty skin, stomping boots), through sight (costumes mirroring Roan's), and through movement (group choreography). More than aesthetic echoes, these are rhetorical acts. Roan's

concert spaces transform commercial music venues into a feminist rhetorical commons where bodies—queer, trans, femme, cis, and unruly—become mediums of rhetorical participation.

Roan's aesthetic themes are open invitations, not identification with a fixed brand. Lipari (2014) calls this kind of relationality "akroatic listening," a non-hierarchical ethics that privileges resonance over control, synchronicity over persuasion (pp. 213–14). Fans take Roan's aesthetic cues like a campy Joan of Arc, a pink prom queen, or a drag-tinged Statue of Liberty, and remake them in their own image and collectively author its meaning in community. This co-authorship extends from visual mimicry to bodily rhythm. When the crowd collectively performs this "Hot To Go!", they are *attuning.* Faris argues that kinesthetic interlistening is habituated, emerging from "the sedimentation of repeated actions," creating rhetorical meaning through rhythmic, embodied memory (p. 10). Similarly, for Lipari , listening is shaped by a "listening habitus," a set of sensory and cultural dispositions learned over time. Roan's fan rituals, learned in bedrooms and performed in public, are precisely this: ritualized bodily rhetorics that teach queer attunement, belonging, and joy. While kinesthetic interlistening is often theorized within sonic rhetorics, Roan's performances reveal how listening and seeing are mutually constitutive within feminist visual culture, collapsing the boundary between audience and spectacle, transforming vision into a tactile and rhythmic mode of relation. Thus, Roan extends feminist visual methodology beyond observation toward attunement and a way of seeing that is felt, co-created, and sensorially reciprocal.

Roan's feminist visual rhetoric emerges from an ethos of collective attunement rather than individual display. Her performances materialize a feminist and queer sensorium, an embodied field of relation where audience participation becomes a form of knowing. By inviting audiences to feel, move, and co-create, Roan transforms spectatorship into pedagogy and visuality into relation. Roan's practice of queer kinesthetic interlistening clarifies how listening and seeing intertwine within feminist visual culture: her audiences listen with their eyes and perceive through the shared pulse of movement and sound. In this sense, interlistening becomes a visual method, expanding feminist visual analysis beyond observation toward attunement and multisensory reciprocity. Roan's work complicates the primacy of sight in visual rhetoric by insisting that seeing is never singular; it is always entangled with touch, sound, movement, and affect. Roan's methods thus expand visual rhetoric's scope from the optical to the sensorial, urging scholars to consider how visual practices might also be heard, felt, and inhabited. Through drag, hyperfemininity, and participatory joy, she models a feminist aesthetic that renders the visual porous so that it includes an opening for collective presence rather than a frame of separation. In this way, Roan's "femininomenon" challenges visual rhetoric to account not only for what is seen but for what is sensed, shared, and co-created.

Biography

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