

<https://dissonanttimes.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Femme-Dagger.mp3>

Ahead of Femme Dagger's upcoming release of their album Glitter in the Cut, I talked with Annah Anti-Palindrome. Using a looping system, kitchen utensils, gas-masks, raw eggs, found objects, and Annah's own body (mostly throat), she performs with Temple Kirk on bass, Verdant Heart's Al on keyboards, and a new addition to the band, Emerald City Roadkill's Megan on stand-up bass.

*Femme Dagger's album release show is **Wednesday, 10/29/25**, at Sam Bond's Garage, at 8pm. The show is a fundraiser for H.I.R.N, a neighborhood mutual aid network operating in Hebron/Al Khalil and throughout the Southern part of the West Bank. The show will also feature performers Penny Royale and Zeo Boekiinder. CountryTrash, MelodyPunk, QueerCore, Riot Girl music; every member of this band wakes up in the morning with dreams of an anti-capitalist future and the words FREE PALESTINE clenched tightly between their teeth.*

"My priority is to make art in service of revolution; this band is not at all interested in being marketable or neutral." – Annah

Dime: Can you talk about what inspired the name of the band, Femme Dagger, and this album, Glitter in the Cut? □□□□□□

Annah: In terms of how this moniker came to be, I'd have to reference the work of Leah Lakshmi-Piepzna-Samarasinha, Ren Hawk, and Amber Hollibaugh— writers & culture-makers whose work has helped me in so many ways to articulate my relationship to growing up dirt poor, femme-of-center, and

queer. The term “femme” in a radical queer context gestures toward a gender expression rooted in owning femininity as power on one’s own terms (regardless of gender identity), rather than as some biologically predetermined expectation to be performed by AFAB people for the male gaze. The term redefines femininity outside of cis-het frameworks. Adding dagger is a double-edged reference meant to bring a slight tinge of attraction/repulsion to the table, but is also in reference to the dated slur, “bulldagger,” which emerged in the 1920s & 30s. It was a term used to describe strong, masculine, assertive lesbians – women who often dressed and acted in ways coded as “male” at the time. Early blues musicians like Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Gladys Bentley referenced bulldaggers in their lyrics, shamelessly celebrating the queer desires thriving in underground scenes at the time. So...Femme Dagger is kind of...a playful queering of a reclaimed queer slur I guess?

Annah: As for Glitter in the Cut: There’s this quote from one of my favorite writers, Ann Cvetkovich, who reminds us that “music helps return the listener to the sensory embodiment that trauma destroys.” As a musician, working on Glitter in the Cut is definitely the project where I’ve felt this to be most true for myself. The title intends to continue a reference to the hard-femme poetic of “attraction/repulsion,” so it both figuratively and literally means what it says.

I grew up in a rural, working class gold-rush town in the Sierra Nevada foothills. As we know, street names forever record people, places and events in a region’s history. Big Cut Road, where I grew up, is named for the large cut in a hill made by miners using the hydraulic mining process. It’s still quite visible, and served as a landmark in the early part of the 20th century. As we also know, communities of origin can hold deep wounds for lots of us! In 2018 I moved back to my hometown to assume the director position of a run-away and homeless youth shelter that I’d stayed at when I was

a kid. Those years of doing direct-care and trauma stewardship in the very location of my own trauma history, felt like pouring glitter into a fucking cut.

Dime: In a world and industry insistent on marketable neutrality, that attempts to separate art from its political context, what does it feel like to be making music that is speaking explicitly to our social and political moment?

Annah: We have to! As Adrienne Maree Brown says, “Our radical imagination is a tool for decolonization, for reclaiming our right to shape our lived reality.” She also reminds us that art is never neutral, it either upholds or disrupts the status quo, advancing or regressing justice. My priority is to make art in service of revolution; this band is not at all interested in being marketable or neutral. In navigating the commodification of creative labor under late-stage capitalism, we’re hoping to use this project as a way to redistribute resources because let’s be honest: GONNA DO IT ANYWAY, EVEN IF IT DOESN’T PAY. Not being interested in profiting off of the products of your creative labor, isn’t something everybody understands.

□□□□□□

“Glitter in the Cut” has been referred to by some as Sonic Witchcraft. Each song comes as an invocation, casting blessings, curses, pleas, demands, and sharp, guttural need for a liberated world. It’s raw and intentional in its expression of deep, insistent love. The track “Medusa” is an anthem to queer life and death. “Queens of Winnemucca” is a ruckus saga of power and reclamation. “Holiest Sin” forces a confrontation with your tenderest desire as it scratches its way out of the hidden corner of your heart where you buried it. “Shabbat Hijack” combines prayer, grief, and oral history in a litany spoken as spell for Palestinian liberation. Taking

in this album will require at least a fraction of the courage and vulnerability it took to produce it.