



“Dress Code” follows Dani, an introverted poetry student, who experiments with her image. Inspired by her best friend’s riveting drag persona, Dani, who feels a bit uncomfortable in her own skin, must complete an intimidating final poetry assignment. The prompt is, “How do you identify?” This lyrical 9-minute drama investigates labels: the way they harm and empower us. The piece spotlights society’s shame around femininity and the patriarchal ideas that trickle deep into the queer community.

NBC film critic Manny Dela Rosa called the project “a smart and affecting look at gender identity and representation.”

“Dress Code” is featured on Girls in Film (GiF), NoBudge, Vimeo Staff Channel: LGBTQIA+ Voices, and NBC Palm Springs. It screened at numerous festivals internationally including NewFest, CINEMQ (Shanghai), and Rainbow Visions (Canada). The film received a 2021 Audience Award at Cinema Diverse: The Palm Springs LGBTQ Film Festival.

“Rich in color and sophisticated in tone, the film offers Dani’s fascination with drag performance as an invitation for the audience to think through the literal performance of gender.”

Keyanah Nurse, Honeysuckle Magazine

Featuring a stellar performance by Lauren Lane (C.C. Babcock, “The Nanny”), “Dress Code” was shot in Austin, TX with a 66% female crew. Queer collaborators were vital to the project. The glittery score was written and performed by synth-glam-pop Austin native Benjamin Violet (Pelvis Wrestley). Guided by the works of Joey Soloway, Dee Rees, and Desiree Akhavan, the piece aims to make you feel more comfortable in however you present.



“I often feel restricted by labels. When we try to define someone, it carries assumptions I may or may not agree with. But as a member of the queer community, I have a responsibility to recognize that labels are essential for survival.”

Melanie Notinger (she/they), Writer/Director/EP

“A nuanced piece about the limits of labels when it comes to identity.”
Ina Pira, Vimeo Staff Curator



For more information, please visit www.melanienotinger.com/dress-code
Facebook and Instagram @dresscodeshort