

A.K. Burns & A.L. Steiner

ARTISTS

Double-entendres were inevitable while speaking with queer artists A.K. Burns (right) and A.L. Steiner (left) about their traveling video installation, *Community Action Center*, which could be described as erotic art or artsy erotica depending on how you experience it. "We called this a 'hole-filler,'" says Steiner, describing CAC, their response to the lack of desirable feminist porn amid the modern lesbian canon's immaculately lit, airbrushed, and impersonal offerings.

Their final product, a fantastical, transgressive porno cheekily clocking in at 69 minutes, was conceived three years ago with few specifics in mind, besides a commitment to acceptance and openness. In fact, Burns and Steiner, both prolific queer multimedia artists, intentionally gave their stars (many of whom were their friends) few directives aside from general scenarios. "We would present a very loose framework to the people we worked with," Burns explains. "Like, 'Let's go upstate and your character is some kind of perverse psychedelic witch or a radical fairy in the woods.'"

While extremely egalitarian in its filming, CAC is deliberately edited with nods to both popular art-house directors such as Kenneth Anger and outlandish mainstream porn tropes, including a randy cop, an unassuming pizza delivery boy, and a busty chick (credited as "Juggz" and played by Steiner) sudsing a car topless. Nostalgic for the long-forgotten public adult theaters of the 1970s and '80s, the duo is adamant that the film be viewed communally as "an antithesis to the private viewing experience that is prevalent with Internet and other modes of contemporary consumption of porn," says Burns, who later adds: "One of our big goals was to get fags to want to watch feminist lesbian porn because all the dykes are always watching gay porn, but it never goes the other way."

Within the past year, *Community Action Center* has largely exceeded its initial aspirations, having screened at numerous venues, including the Tate Modern and the Gaze Film Festival in Dublin. It will continue showing internationally—in New York City, San Francisco, Toronto, Paris, Copenhagen, Portugal, and Ecuador—over the next six months. When asked about whether the two will develop CAC into a series, Steiner responds, "We're hesitant to say yes to that. We're such bad capitalists, especially when we don't see it so much as a product, but more as an experiment."

