MASQUERADE IN CLUBLAND: A SAFE SPACE FOR GLAMOUR

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Abstract

In this article, I examine social performances framed in photographs of the diverse, glamorous, and camp world of nightclubbers, particularly those at Suzy Mason's nightclubs in England. The cross gender dressing, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clubbers include a diversity of drag queens and others who play with gender boundaries and camp within the safe environment of the club. My investigation of *masquerade* and *glamour* in their self-presentations concerns notions of what constitutes the self and how the self is visually presented. My analysis contrasts the alluring persona presented in a club environment with the stigmas associated with the marginalized persona presented in everyday life. The club-goers' glamorous veneer often masks the suffering they endure in their day-to-day lives. Following Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender, I explored the idea that the presentation of the gendered self is essentially a social performance constructed to communicate a physical and sartorial message.

Key Words: Glamour, Marginal, Masquerade, Drag, Self, Substance

Introduction

Northcote (2006) argued that attending nightclubs serves as a means of adjustment for young adults undergoing a transitional phase from youth to independent identity (p. 13). He argued that clubbing activities are a process of balancing different modes of identity, both within the club and outside. For me, attending Suzy Mason's club nights in Leeds, a city in Northern England, was an intensely exciting event. It began with the co-ordination of my outfit, assembled to complement the dazzle of the night. The sense of theatre commenced outside the clubs with huge queues that constituted a cornucopia of alluring characters: drag queens, fairies, disco queens, burlesque artists, movie star look-alike's and fashionista's, all of whom were united in their passionate attempts to gain entry. This was controlled by a drag queen "Door Whore" (Tulloch, 1990), who carefully vetted the crowd, allowing only the most fabulously attired an entrance. Having survived these rigors, I was greeted by a technicolour wonderland, akin to Dorothy stepping out of her black and white farmhouse in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). This magic club land included trapeze artists, stilt walkers, breathtaking drag queens, sensational cocktail waitresses, dazzling cigarette sellers, gender blurred boys and girls, exotic dancers, and the glittering and intermittent appearances of Suzy the hostess. Combined with the spectacularly kitsch interior decoration, the whirlwind of sensations whetted my appetite for the re-invention, deception, and performance in the night that lay ahead.

Vague and *Speedqueen*: Suzy Mason's Nightclubs

Suzy Mason's club nights provided me with a primary opportunity to analyze the glamorous presentation of self in masquerade and opportunities to adjust and transform my own identity. Her two interconnected clubs called *Vague* and *Speedqueen* were active from 1992 to 2008. Suzy gave her customers the opportunity to present a vocabulary of glamour through a combination of experimental cross-dressing and gender blurred visual styles (S. Mason, personal communication, February 24, 2010). Identifying that there was little element of fantasy when she first went clubbing, Suzy began to have house parties

where everyone was required to dress up in order to attend (Smith, 2004). Melody Maker, who frequented Suzy Mason's first club *Vague* described it as the "dance equivalent of Warhol's *Factory*" (Tilton, 1994, p. 22).

The club very quickly captured the imagination of a clientele who hungered after the camp and glamour that Suzy promulgated as an antidote to a drab world. A *Daily Telegraph* journalist described *Vague* as a scene of Bacchanalian excess (Willis, 1993). Melody Maker reported that people revolutionized their lives in the club (Tilton, 1994). An example was Sam, a 20 year old male student journalist who had previously worn Armani, and who transformed himself by modeling only a "feather boa and black, see-through undies. 'I'm a complete slut' he explains" (p. 22), thus justifying his deeper need to express a previously repressed self through glamorous cross-dressing.

In describing herself as a *Social Entrepreneur,* Suzy explained how she became disillusioned with a social life that was limited and stereotyped (S. Mason, personal communication, February 24, 2010). She was concerned that there were few places for cross gender dressers, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people to express themselves and feel safe. Motivated by a sense of social responsibility, Suzy's clubs provided a safe space to explore multiple types of identities. She said:

> There are a lot of racist and sexist attitudes, even in clubs. I decided to set up a proper environment and a mixed space. Everyone was welcome as long as they didn't have a problem with the fact that other people were different from them, whether it was their colour, their age or their sexual orientation. (Moller, 1998, p. 27)

The drag queen *Door Whore* carefully vetted the crowd. She made sure to keep out anyone who might interfere with the clubs' promise of a safe space to experiment with glamour and cross dressing. Suzy created a fantasy environment that encouraged people to be glamorous, and the decor provided a fairytale ambiance (see Figure 1).

Suzy altered her appearance to correspond to each theme of the night, and documented herself and the theme through a sequence of portrait photographs. These photos could be viewed as a marketing

Figure 1. A kitsch corner of Speedqueen with gold bed, zebra cushions, plastic flowers, and balloons. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 2002. Used with permission.

gimmick, but also corresponded to her desire to publically experiment with her own visual fantasies in a supportive environment. Her photographs adhere to Lurie's (1981) concepts about our clothes talking noisily "to everyone who sees us, telling us who we are, where we come from, what we like to do in bed" (p. 261). When one considers her pictures as complex signifiers, we see that although initially Figure 2 appears to be photograph of a lesbian dominatrix signifying *masculine* and *empowered*, there is also a sense of girlish naivety, as if the two protagonists have raided a dressing up box to play the palatably glamorous ideals of domination and submission.

Figure 2. Suzy Mason as a 'masculine and empowered' dominatrix. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 2002. Used with permission.

The peroxide blonde *Cigarette Girl*, (Figure 3), connotes *feminine and vulnerable* yet a deeper reading conjures up images of the archetypal Hollywood blonde sex symbol, exemplified by voluptuous images of Marilyn Monroe. Is Suzy therefore attempting to emulate a powerful sexuality within her coy stance?

The blue haired disco queen in Figure 4 says *fun and funky,* yet the cigarette and scornful stare hint at an enticing, erotic darkness, and menace. A deeper interpretation could suggest that Suzy is inviting us into a private world that combines both frivolity and an extension of the powerful sexuality hinted at in her evocation of the peroxide blonde.

Figure 3. Suzy Mason as a feminine and vulnerable' peroxide blonde cigarette girl. Photograph by Linda Molyneaux © 1992. Used with permission.
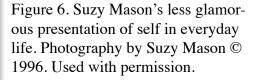
Figure 4. Suzy Mason as a 'fun and funky' blue haired disco queen. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 1994. Used with permission.

The washing basket and clothes peg look of Figure 5 suggests *eccentric and experimental*, yet this appropriation of appliances associated with domesticity could imply that Suzy is subverting this role, hinting at glamour and exoticism. The decoration of Suzy's body reinforces her physical stance. This vulnerable blonde is a stark contrast to the hard confident stance of the lesbian dominatrix. The looks also contrast with what I would consider Suzy's less glamorous presentation of self, in everyday life, in Figure 6. This image does not conform to the persona she has adopted for her club appearances. It suggests that Suzy appropriated the platform of her clubs in order to stage her glamorous visual fantasies in a supportive environment.

Figure 5. Suzy Mason's 'eccentric and experimental' washing basket and clothes peg look. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 1994. Used with permission.

Figure 6. Suzy Mason's less glamorous presentation of self in everyday life. Photography by Suzy Mason © 1996. Used with permission.

Figure 7 and Figure 8 demonstrate the before and after metamorphism of *Speedqueen* customers preparing for their night and challenging notions of sexuality and ethnicity. Both patrons in these photographs are male. One is Caucasian and the other Asian. In this transformation both gender and ethnicity become blurred. The adoption of Asian dress contrasts with the traditionally Western application of glamorous facial make-up. The wistful pose of the patron in Figure 7 is transformed into happiness in Figure 8, hinting at the individual's enjoyment in his metamorphism. Lurie (1981) described how "a costume not only appears at a specific place and time, it must be 'spoken' – that is worn—by a specific person" (p. 14). This implies that not only are specific clothes worn for specific occasions, they are given an individual identity by the person wearing them. In Figure 8 the combination of ethnicity in Indian dress and Western ideals of glamour here *speaks* through the individually interpreted gender blurred presentations of self.

Figure 8. The combination of ethnicity in Indian dress and Western ideals of glamour. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 2000. Used with permission.

Scholars who have analyzed the culture and significance of nightclubs (Grazian, 2008; Jackson, 2004; Kummer, 1997; Malbon, 1999; Northcote, 2006; Owen, 2003; Moller, 1998; Redhead, 1998; Smith, 2008; Thornton, 1995) focus on the social and cultural impact of clubbing, including dress and appearance in order to assess its social relevance. Jackson (2004) believed that "clubbing is an important and complex social experience that merits further investigation" (p. 1). He examines how people transform themselves visually into fantasy selves. The safety of the club becomes their stage for the night in which "dressing up plays a significant role" (p. 47). The profile of Suzy Mason in 'Regina' (Moller, 1998) provides a valuable commentary about her club philosophy. Journalistic reports concerning the impact and significance of Suzy's clubs, (Moller, 1998; Smith, 2004; Tilton, 1994; Willis, 1993) highlight appearance and camp glamour. The emphasis is superficial reportage that sensationalizes a very focused experimentation with gender and outrageous aesthetics.

Self Presentation: Masquerade and Glamour

Self presentation includes the adornment of the human body, and I am particularly interested in the presentations within safe and supportive environments that encourage individuals to express visually who they desire to be. I was a regular attendee at Suzy's club nights, and can reflect on the sartorial presentation of her customers in these manufactured

Figure 7. The wistful figure undergoing a glamorous transformation. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 2000. Used with permission.

environments. Suzy ran her two nightclubs that celebrated glamour for all, from 1992 to 2008. This was a difficult venture in the gritty English city of Leeds. Suzy, however, regarded her market as a community who ached for a glamorous arena in which to celebrate by visually expressing themselves. In popular culture, the nightclub has been considered an alluring and escapist setting in which people can temporarily convey who they aspire to be. As Suzy explained:

> With the club there is reality within fantasy and vice versa. There is a lot of glamour which surrounds the club scene, but glamour without any substance underneath is a bit sickening. Everything may glitter and look fantastic, but it leaves you feeling empty. Glamour is not enough in itself and you have to make sure you get the balance. (Moller, 1998, p. 29)

Masquerade

Masquerade and *glamour* provide a visual vocabulary that invites the desires of the private self and the rights of the individual to expose them. They relate to fashion, style, and gender (Barthes, 1967; Barthes, 2006; Butler, 1990; Davies, 2001; Entwistle, 2000; Goffman, 1959; Griffiths, 1995; Lurie, 1981; Tseelon, 1995, 2001; Vincent, S. 2009). Davies (2001) argues that the majority of people in Western society are prevented from visually expressing themselves and considers that most people "only act out a restricted version of themselves" (p. 38). He uses the analogy of the stage and performance to compare what makes a good or bad actor when presenting an image of self in everyday life and believes that the majority of people are content to remain within the confinements of "age, sex, family position, social status, occupation, ethnic origin and social class" (p. 38). This is because people fear stigma, social ostracism, or the social embarrassment of operating beyond a "narrow band of human behavior" (p. 38).

Many homosexuals and transvestites are excellent performers and sometimes this performance extends to pretending to be heterosexual. The nightclub for them is the sublime theatre in which to stage an idealized performance of self. Tseelon (2001) analyzed masquerade in relation to the construction of visual characteristics that conceal or reveal identity and considered the diversity of narrative voices that distinguish between the self and artifice, as well as the role disguise plays in representing marginal identities. For example, Leeks, Maas, and Lenning (2001) showed how the disguise of the male body as female in Neil Jordan's film, 'The Crying Game' (1992), challenges conventional Western assumptions about the gendered human body.

Goffman (1959) analyzed the props people use as expressions of identity, including houses, interiors, fashion, clothing, and employment to present an image to the world. He recorded the consequences to the individual when the presentation of self failed, particularly when situated in an unsupportive surrounding. Goffman's argument coincides with the potential conflict endured by the everyday personas of glamorous nightclub protagonists who are often very interested in fashion. Tseelon (1995) examined the construction of the visual female image in Western society and described the common perception "that fashion is a feminine affair, and that appearance is superficial – an antithesis to substance" (p. 3). The presentation of self in Suzy's clubs comes from a feminine perspective, for example, make-up, wigs, and heels, which are the accoutrements of feminine dress and cross dressing. The duplicity of this armour is in its concealment of the everyday presence.

Glamour

Glamour has been the subject of a number of works that attempted to define its meaning and place it in a sociological and chronological context (Dyhouse, 2010; Gould, 2005; Gundle, 2008; Gundle & Castelli, 2006; Rosa, Patton, Postrel, & Steele, 2004; Wilson, 2007). It was presented by Gundle (2008) as a "bewitching aspect of contemporary culture" (p. 1), a somewhat artificial phenomenon and a mask of alluring enchantment that can be applied to the physical presentation of an individual. "A dream version of the self can be forged, built to deceive, delight and bewitch" (Gundle, 2008, p. 4). In the nightclub glamour makes people feel more beautiful and attractive with a heightened sense of sexual orientation. However, glamour can be overly intoxicating in its transcendence of everyday reality. Wilson (2007) presented glamour as

tragic.

The emotions associated with glamour include desire, fear, loss, and an acknowledgement of death. Glamour is tragic; many of the most glamorous figures achieved glamour through suffering. Glamour is the result of work and effort – artfully concealed of course. (Wilson, 2007, p. 100)

The suffering endured in the everyday lives of Suzy Mason's marginalized clientele, who through great effort presented glamorous personas within the nightclub, contains elements of tragedy. This suggests that glamour can be threatening and mysterious; attainable only to those hungry enough to embrace it. To the majority of others, who Davies (2001) believed present "a restricted version of themselves" (p. 38), glamour is an aspiration.

Suzy and her devotees experimented with a type of glamour that is incredibly camp, a way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon in terms of stylized artifice (Sontag, 1966). Camp has been the subject of a variety of investigations (Booth, 1983; Cleto, 1999; Core, 1984; Sontag, 1966; Meyer 1994) and has been defined as an excessive and theatrical way of life, predominantly practiced by homosexuals who exaggerate their behavior and appearance, due to a sense of social displacement and by heterosexuals who perceive life through a homosexual context. Camp people often want to be accepted but find they are unacceptable to a majority of people. The adoption of a camp persona is a defiant self advertisement of a private self and a disguise for emotional and physical insecurities. The jazz singer George Melly said, "Here they come, swishing and screaming, weeping noisily, laughing hysterically, living in luxury, dying in penury from many countries and most ages the diverse, perverse legion of the camp" (Core, 1984, p. 5). This seems to encapsulate the characteristics of the varied, glamorous inhabitants of Suzy's clubs.

The Nightclub - A Safe Space For Glamour

Nightclubs offer an environment for people to transform and reinvent themselves in a visual way that is unacceptable in other social situations. Davies (2001) argued that the majority of "people have neither the skill nor the motivation to adopt a drastic disguise" (p. 38). Although self presentation is of central importance, it is often done within a very narrow range, "if forced to go beyond this range" (p. 38), people become embarrassed or incompetent. The night club could, therefore, be viewed as a safe arena for those who are marginalized in society due to gender or sexuality to express their visual selves through a glamorous mask. However, whilst presenting a safe haven for some, others can be intimidated or threatened by the sense of liberation the nightclub both celebrates and encourages.

In a themed club space, patrons may present their fantasy selves without embarrassment. However, the oftentimes uninhibited club goer suffers in the attempt to reconcile a club persona with the demands and conventions of everyday life. As Davies (2001) implied, they are frustrated performers. "Those who habitually wear 'masks' to hide a stigma or resolve an uncertain identity are more likely to have the makings of a good performer" (p. 38). Jackson (2004) agreed and described how people invent alternative selves, seizing the opportunity to break down sartorial conventions within the club arena. "Drag queens are one example of this phenomenon as they perform constantly, adopting personas they add theatricality to the club event" (p. 51).

In many societies males dressing in female clothes are persecuted, due to their opposition to conventional gender perceptions. Lurie (1981) suggested that most men would not wear a skirt, just as they would not use phrases such as "simply marvelous" (p. 6), which in Western culture would be considered exclusively feminine because they want to avoid negative cultural responses. At the same time, Jackson (2004) suggests that drag queens are people who "perform constantly, adopting names and personas" (p. 51). These diverse, but constantly performing patrons are often the backbone to the club experiences.

Glamour and Masquerade - Pantomime

Photographs of three different types of drag queen from *Speedqueen* are examined in relation to pantomime, deception, and acceptabil-

ity. The *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* in Figure 9 from the Speedqueen's first birthday party, is an example of the fairytale fantasy Suzy sought to promulgate. It emits a profusion of visual symbolism. The three drag queens in gingham pinafores, inspired by Dorothy Gale[1] from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) are pure pantomime. They perform amid the chaos of a children's tea party festooned with brightly coloured paper plates, ice cream, and birthday cake. The abundance of wigs, make-up, and cleavage constitute some of the foundations of fashion and glamour, yet the effect is neither.

The real emphasis is uninhibited fun and enjoyment. Tseelon (1995) suggests that unconventional clothing is often considered a symptom of abnormality. This hints at the stigma the drag queens would endure in society, but also reflects the incongruous placement of a children's tea party in the adult and sophisticated setting of a night club.

Figure 9.
The Mad Hatters Tea Party. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 2000. Used with permission.

1. 'Dorothy Gale was the lead character played by Judy Garland in the film 'The Wizard of OZ' (1939). She wore a blue gingham pinafore dress throughout the film. Garland's role as Dorothy Gale is particularly noted for contributing to her status as a gay icon' (Shipman, 1992).

The majority of looks created by Suzy's customers have a glamorous veneer and press descriptions focus on the "Flamboyant mix of anarchy angels, devious devils and club kids who gather for a night of sheer unadulterated madness" (Carrick, 2000, p. 96). You were invited to:

> Visualize false eyelashes, painstakingly applied make-up, big hair, impossibly high heels, tanned limbs, encased in sexy, silver micro mini skirts and heaving, ample bosoms straining against skimpy designer tops and that's just some of the boys. (Smith, 2004, p. 43)

Davies (2001) argues that socially displaced people are often drawn to the theatrical and flamboyant, the stigmatized, and those of uncertain identity because it offers tolerance from a hostile and rigid world. The theater is also "the home of disguises" (Davis, 2001, p. 4). Suzy's clubs provided a theatrical production that emphasized the clash between the joyous safe space that celebrated sartorial expression and the world outside that considered many of the customers to be socially dislocated.

Analysis of Suzy's clientele, in outfits beyond the confines of cross dressing maintain elements of glamour and masquerade. They reassemble more obvious fashion references that are contradictory; emphasizing or concealing the gender. In the *Vague R Us* postcard (Figure 13) that was used to promote the club, patrons were asked to customize their image in an idealized way. Some of these images depict stereotypical ideals of feminine fashion, which have been adopted, then subverted. For instance the pudding bowl blonde haircut and blue eye shadow in the first image evokes images of the female *Purdey* cut in the 1970s, this is subverted as it is worn by a man with a beard. Similarly the funky, afro-haired female in Figure 7 evokes further images of 1970s fashion yet is subverted by the masculine image of shirt and tie.

Suzy's clubs were arenas for self presentation that celebrated diversified genders and sexualities, and a glamorous ideal. Displaced and stigmatized people such as the experimental dressers in *Vague* and *Speed-queen* were drawn to the theatricality of clubbing, as a fantasy-inspired stage from which to perform. Davies (2001) argued that the

Figure 13. The *Vague R Us* postcard, in which each person was asked to customize their image in an idealized way. Photograph by Suzy Mason © 1994. Used with permission.

presentation of self is "typically done within a narrow and often stereo-typical range that comprises what the person thinks he or she is" (p. 38). In its theatricality the nightclub stage presents a liberated opportunity to explode the stereotype through individual masks of glamour. A glamor-ous allure enhances the feeling of being beautiful and heightens sexual attraction and orientation and needs a specialist environment in which to flourish and encourage individuality.

All were welcome at Suzy's. The girl in a classic Gucci dress, described by Jackson (2004), was welcome in *Speedqueen*, which is a tribute to the success of Suzy's concept of a safe space to celebrate glamour. The girl was however, probably a boy paying homage to Suzy's promotion of glamorous cross dressing and gender blurred visual styles.

Conclusions: A Degree of Substance

In his analysis of clubbing, Jackson (2004) declared: "Clothes make people fuckable, approachable, desirable, lickable, glamorous, aloof, funky, playful, fun, slinky, seductive, passionate, invisible, bizarre and beautiful" (p. 54). Night clubs encourage a diversity of choice in the way people choose to dress, though glamour is encouraged. Glamour is however, not as simple as it may seem on the surface. It often comes from a conceptual and personal space that is disguised, shrouded, con-fused, celebrated, masked, flawed, threatening, frightening and tragic, as many club goers achieve glamour through some level of endurance and suffering (Wilson, 2007). Glamour can also be disorientating because "looking different confuses people and they are unsure how to deal with it" (Jackson, 2004, p. 52). Confusing people by confronting them with a sartorial language that makes them uncertain, also presents challenges, altering ways of seeing and understanding the self (Lurie, 1981).

Fashion decorates and adorns the body in a visual vocabulary comparable to the way a writer uses words—mixing, matching, oppos-ing, and challenging. For inspiration, fashion designers need to consider those who will oppose sartorial norms, and experiment with different looks through lived experiences, such as those described by the clientele of Suzy's clubs. The nightclub is an experimentation station in which patrons

patrons may take risks, test, and exploit new and ultimately glamorous dreams. The New York drag queen Jodie Marsh confirmed this in her statement:

> I love a trip to the disco. There's no better arena in which to dress up and have a good time. I believe the dance floor can offer some thing of a sanctuary for the misfits of society – those with far too much fabulousness to just dress up as one gender, or simply too much creativity to avoid experimenting with shape, form, height, size and overall appearance. (Smith, 2008, p. 133)

Through being involved in *Vague* and *Speedqueen*, I learnt a great deal about the desire people have to dress up and be glamorous. As a small child I was enthralled by the idea of glamour, and I was inspired to study fashion. I had always ached for an arena that would celebrate glamorous masquerade in an uninhibited way and recognized that as a fashion designer, I could surround myself with creative and visually stimulating people who disregard traditional gender boundaries. Their attitudes fed my creative spirit and inspired my work. I also believe that creative people need a platform from which to display themselves; to preen, pose, and be adored, not just to people like themselves but to a wider appreciative audience. Suzy Mason's clubs created a community which I embraced. Making a glamorous entrance into the club gave me as much creative satisfaction as designing a fabulous outfit. It also brought together a disparate set of people who were welcome because they appreciated the fact that other people were different from them. It allowed people who would not normally socialize to integrate and learn about each other; for instance a glamorous drag queen could have a conversation with a heterosexual builder, or a single female painted entirely in gold could dance with another female dressed in a tuxedo.

Suzy made a personal decision to end her clubs. She felt that as she was growing older it impacted on her credibility to tap into changing youth cultures that would attract a younger market. However when the clubs ended they left a void. Other club promoters within the city of Leeds attempted to duplicate Suzy's formula but lacked the heart, integrity, and sense of purpose that allowed her to create such glamorous,

diverse, and safe events.

People have multiple choices in the way they choose to dress and Butler's (1990) theory about gendered social performance and the individuals' decisions support this idea. The nightclub can provide the substance and diversity in which to safely exploit these choices. As the self proclaimed social and sartorial outsider, Quentin Crisp said:

> I am not a drop out I was never in. I have not spent my life hacking my way through the constraints of a bourgeois existence. I was always free – appallingly free. (Crisp, 1981, p. 7)

His reflection is the result of spending his adult life dressed as an effeminate homosexual, complete with dyed hair and make-up and feeling the pressures of society in the United Kingdom in the early 20th century when homosexuality was illegal. Crisp was shunned by much of society due to his effeminate (though glamorous) appearance. Unfortunately, even today people like Suzy Mason and her devotees still face social ostracism because of their individualism.

The price paid in the "appalling freedom" that Crisp (1981) described, was loneliness and rejection (p. 7). In Suzy's case, when asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, she replied, "Suzy Mason" (Moller, 1998, p. 24). This determination to set herself apart led to the phenomenal triumph of her club nights, giving her the safe and supportive arena in which to experiment with glamour. Glamour, as Suzy indicated in Regina (Moller, 1998), is not enough to retain a balanced life. Suzy's clientele often had to balance their different identities. For instance Tiara/Eddie had to stabilize two opposing, glamorous club selves with his identity in everyday life. As a social entrepreneur Suzy offered no everyday solution to this yet provided an important social outlet (Mason, 2004). She also recognized that beyond the few hours of the club night there needed to be a level of equilibrium behind the mask of fantasy. I ultimately learnt, along with Suzy, and the other habitués of her clubs that within this precious space of time, the spellbinding diversity in glamour and masquerade could be celebrated and distilled.

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