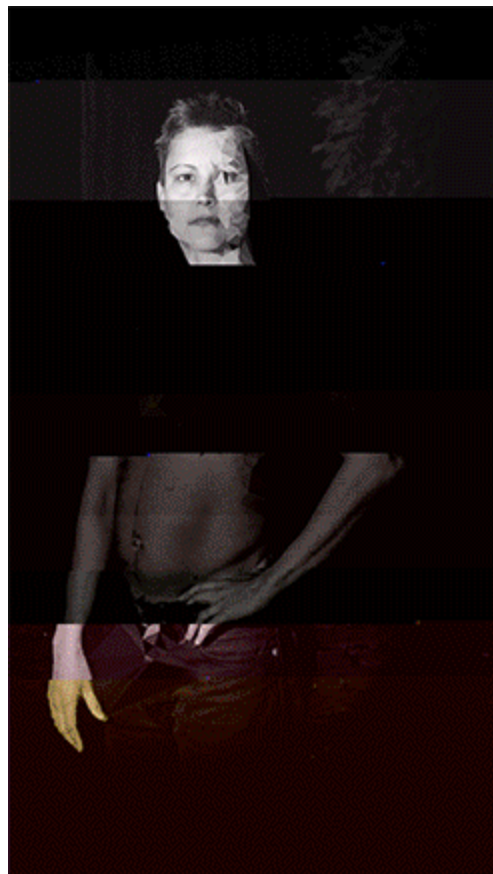
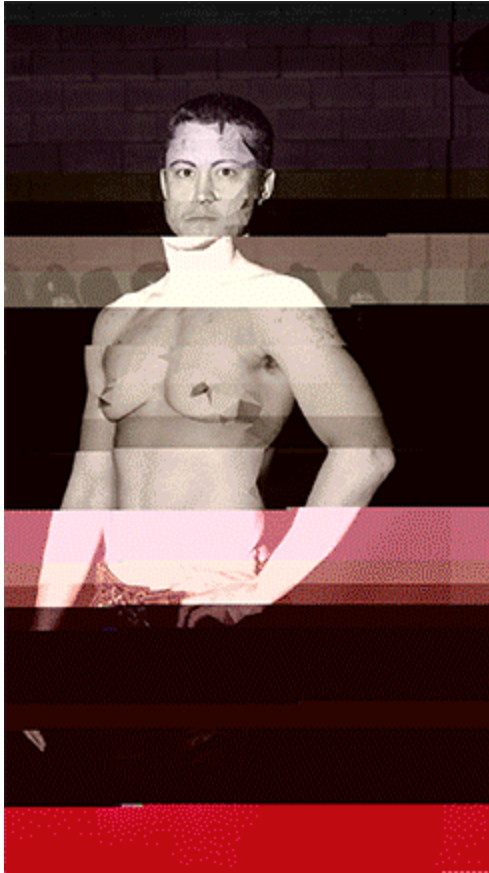


# Inverto

**Alison Bennett**



‘Inverto’ is Latin for transform/transfer/transpose, and curiously, ‘invert’ is an old term for homosexual that carries transgender implications.

Inverto is a series of photographs taken monthly over two years bearing witness to an individual undertaking the process of physically aligning gender identity with embodied presence. The images demonstrate the impact of hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery following pregnancy over a period of two years. The images have been compiled as a glitchy time-lapse animation, reflecting a glimpse into the disjunction of the inner and outer worlds of the subject’s transgender experience.

The project was driven by a desire to offer insight into an experience that very few get to observe. This was a unique opportunity – the subject’s medical team was not aware of another case in which a transman had chosen to delay transition in order to have a baby.

The project was designed as a visual conceptual strategy – our plan was to meet once a month to photograph the same pose under the same lighting and see what would emerge. We did not know what the end result would be when we started. Indeed, we were quite prepared to delete it if the subject/collaborator did not want to release the images.



*Scroll horizontally through the image above.*

I was familiar with Judith Butler's proposition of gender as enacted through performance. In the process of making *Inverno* I also came to a greater appreciation of the idea that gender can be conceived as technological practice, as something that can be embedded/reconstructed/reconstituted through engagement with technology. This is quite explicit in *Inverno* in the form of hormone therapy and surgery. This idea is also present in Donna Haraway's discussion of gender in "A Cyborg Manifesto," in which Haraway offers the metaphor of the cyborg, a creature co-created with technology in a post-gender world. Indeed, van Loon (1996) attempts a discussion of the interplay between Butler's and Haraway's propositions, characterised as the "struggle against perfect communication."

Curiously, one of the common questions often asked about *Inverno* is whether or not the transformation is achieved by manipulating images in Photoshop. That is one technological intervention that was not applied to this work. We employed photography as a documentary tool to track the gradual process of aligning gender presentation with identity. Indeed, documentary photography appears to hold a particular significance for transgender individuals as a means of affirming that the outside looks like the inside.

In order to protect his family's privacy, the subject of the photographs (and project collaborator) has chosen not to have his biographical details published with the project, but wanted to document and share the transition process in a public forum with the intention of diminishing the challenges facing others by contributing to the visibility of transgender bodies.

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## 2 THOUGHTS ON “INVERTO”

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