Daily

# Life

## UConn MFA student questions desire and the patriarchy in 'Bitch Eat Dog'

**by Sarah Barker**
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
SHE/HER/HERS
sarah.barker@uconn.edu

How do you pursue desire under patriarchy? University of Connecticut puppet arts MFA student Mel Carter explored this question in her show "Bitch Eat Dog," presented at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry for the last two weekends. Alongside performers Gail Bennet and Camille Charlier, Carter delivered a puppet show with sketches that dove into the gendered ethics of pursuit.

The show itself is hilarious while also shocking, raw and vulnerable. I think audiences will come out feeling that at least one part of the show is relatable to them.

The show was born out of Carter processing her trauma from being sexually assaulted multiple times, along with the realization that she'd never had an orgasm. She said, "I realized there was a lack of value for my own desire." And after talking with more women about this issue, she learned this wasn't just her experience.

The show features a gender-swapped version of "Moby Dick" that explores "girlboss feminism" (a type of feminism where women are cutthroat and pursue their goals no matter what, which has been criticized as women simply re-enacting the already-existing patriarchal structure), a "trad-wife" that sings about raw milk and keeping it "all natural," a questionable IUD insertion and much more. The show is hosted by a white man who means well and is trying his best, and two oysters who are making it their mission to terrorize him. It's a lot, and I mean that in the best possible way.

The different sketches in the show are connected by a through line of desire. Every single character wants something, and in their pursuit of it, they have to come to terms with the price of that desire.

Camille Charlier, cast member and performer of all the music for the show, said that the parts of the show that really resonated with her were the IUD sketch and the hotdog sketch, which blatantly references sexual assault, because both pieces show very personal, but universal experiences for women.



**A performance of the show "B*tch Eat Dog" by University of Connecticut puppet arts MFA student Mel Carter. The show is being presented at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry.**
PHOTOS COURTESY OF @BALLARDINSTITUTE ON INSTA

When asked what she learned about herself during this experience, Carter talked about how she'd never written a show before, so she learned that she can. She also directed and performed in the show, which was hard, and she wouldn't necessarily recommend it. Carter said the biggest thing, though, was the community and support she had around her while putting the show together.

This show is important and timely, and if you're the kind of person who questions the patriarchy, it'll be perfect for you. It allows for conversations regarding the different sides of feminism and how women specifically grapple with existing between the extremes, like being feminist girlbosses and tradwives.

"Bitch Eat Dog" has two more upcoming performances next weekend on April 10 and 11, so reserve your seat. This is one you don't want to miss.

## Lip-Sync Battle hits the Rainbow Center with spirit and enthusiasm

**by Jaylyn Davis**
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
SHE/HER/HERS
iue25001@uconn.edu

The University of Connecticut Rainbow Center hosted a lively lip-sync battle on Friday, April 3, in the Rainbow Center's main lounge.

Despite the word "battle" being in the event's name, there was no battle or contest in the event. Instead, students had the opportunity to lip-sync and dance to songs for fun. There was a total of four performances.

The lounge was very cozy and tranquil. Its sofas allowed audience members and performers to have a comfy place to sit. There were also speakers and disco balls that adorned the lounge with music and dance vibes.

Besides a cozy environment, food was available at the back of the lounge. Food that was served included chocolate, candy and a charcuterie consisting of pepperoni, cheese slices and crackers. Attendees and performers were also able to have Canada Dry and Coca-Cola as drinks.

The first performance was done by Matt Critzman, a fourth-semester communication major who went by the stage name When He'd Be Dropped. He danced and lip-synced to "Shut Up and Drive" by Rihanna.

Critzman was the most enthusiastic performer of the night. His moves were cohesive and incredible. He performed an array of jumps and twirls and even did a split towards the end of the song, wowing the audience. He also pulled out a paper fan, a lovely touch that amused the audience even more.

At the end of his performance, Critzman said he didn't prepare beforehand. Instead, he just made up the moves as he went. He also declared that this was his first time doing this type of performance.

"I've never lip-synced in front of a big audience before," Critzman said. "Not that this was a crazy big audience, but still. It was a lot of fun, though."

The next two performers were Lex Frank, a second-semester psychology student, and Aisha Barrie, a second-semester actuarial science student. The song they chose was "Finesse (feat. Cardi B)" by Bruno Mars.

Like Critzman, Frank and Barrie's performance was marvelous. Their dance moves were consistently in synchronization with each other, and the energy Frank and Barrie carried throughout their performance made the audience clap and sing along.

When the song ended, Frank shared that she also comes up with the moves as she performs.

"It just comes out of me," Frank said.

After Frank and Barrie was Deborah Williams, a fourth-semester political science student, and Poorna Choudhuri, a fourth-semester legal and business studies student. Together, they danced and lip-synced to Justin Bieber's "Beauty and a Beat" (feat. Nicki Minaj).

Williams and Choudhuri were outstanding. Beginning their dance facing back-to-back, they performed energetic dance moves that made the audience cheer for them. Some of their moves symbolized the lyrics, such as bowing.

After performing, Williams shared her thoughts on participating in the event.

"I had fun performing," Williams said. "I didn't think I was gonna perform before I got here, but I had fun dancing and lip-syncing with my friends and coworkers."

The last group to go was one consisting of earlier performers, Frank and Critzman, who gave a duo performance to Britney Spears' "Oops!...I Did It Again." Frank and Critzman's lip-syncing was superb. It almost looked as if they were singing the song itself. Their dance moves were remarkable as well. Some moves they did were circling around each other, kneeling and speaking rapidly in the part of the song that has no singing but dialogue.




ILLUSTRATION BY COSETTE ELLIS, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Kris Watson, a second-semester environmental science student, said all the performances were exceptional.

"Everyone was amazing, especially Matt," Watson said. "I was pleasantly surprised. I was like, 'Wow. People are really good at this.' And they were great."

At the same time, Williams was pleased with the number of people that showed up at the event.

"I didn't think anyone was going to show up because of the game," Williams said. "So, I was grateful that people actually came, signed up and participated."