

## ARC Alumni Artist Spotlight: Pseuda



By Alyssa Miller

As queer performance art becomes more mainstream nationally and in San Francisco it is important to recognize and support those queer artists who are eccentric even within their own communities. Drag performance artist, Pseuda, embodies the essence of unconventionality. They incorporate dark imagery and themes that are not common within the queer performance art community, such as working with technological mediums, and incorporation of villain archetypes in their drag personas. Pseuda is constantly evolving so as to never be pigeonholed. In their own words, “I wouldn’t put a label on what I am, though a lot of people say I’m a shape shifter.” They’re working to keep the spirit of unconventionality and abnormalcy alive!

Nicholas Navarro also known as Pseuda is a multimedia performance artist who uses queer nightlife and drag performance aesthetics to create jarring and out of the box imagery. They first appeared on CounterPulse’s radar as a part of avant-drag performance art trio, Toxic Waste Face alongside fellow collaborators Jader and Urheinous.



As a CounterPulse Artist in Resident as part of the 2021 Combustible program, they produced *Are:Era* in collaboration with Kim Ip and Taurin Barrera, Gabriel Christian, and Erin Yen.

[Counterpulse's Combustible Residency](#) is a place for artists to be deeply inquisitive and experiment on the edge of what is known and to intersect art practices from dance and technology. *Are:Era* was a speculative science fiction allegory that examined the complexity of our shifting identities on the backdrop of a dystopian machinescape.

*Are:Era* represented and encapsulated Pseuda's own shift in identity and exploration with experimentalism because as Pseuda states, "It was the first time I executed a show with such complexity and scope." In reflecting on their past residency at CounterPulse, Pseuda went on to say that, "My experience with CounterPulse helped me to grow internally and gain more confidence to do larger scale performances and branch out of my comfort zone more," and they did just that. While audiences may have expected to see a characteristic drag performance in *Are:Era*, Pseuda instead surprised with a technologically-heavy installation work paired with a dance performance piece that questioned the implications of our ever growing techno-voyeurism.

While Pseuda is known for their typically dark and peculiar style when it comes to their drag performance art, lately they have been branching out more and experimenting with a more traditional approach of glam and glitz while still keeping the villain archetype that is prevalent in all their characters. This can be seen in their current project, a weekly dance party and drag show at LGBTQ nightclub, OASIS, called Princess, which they are the resident co-producer of alongside with Tito Soto.



Pseuda is a queen who just won't quit and they are busy as ever planning for the future! So far they have been working to expand Princess to other venues and cities including the first iteration of Princess NYC at 3 Dollar Bill back in July of 2022. They also want to continue to branch out and experiment even more with their own drag, and are planning another upcoming show within the next year that will have an end of the world theme. It will involve the reflection of earth's demise by the last living being on earth (with drag flair!).

CounterPulse is always excited to see our past performers grow and we can't wait to see what Pseuda has in store for us! If you're interested in keeping up to date with or exploring more of Pseuda's work you can attend their dance party, [Princess](#), every Saturday at 10 PM at OASIS, or you can follow their socials [@pseuda.name](#) and [@princess.4vr](#) on Instagram.