

Trans+ History Week: Thoughts & Reflections



by Azza Essakhi

From as young as a toddler, other people saw me as a boy. My father's African genes gave me afro hair which I figured was the reason people in this country didn't know how to interpret my gender; due to the masculinisation of African features under Eurocentric beauty standards.

In terms of my interests growing up, we're talking contact sports, video games, action man, superheroes - I even attended a fancy dress party as Bob the Builder when all the other girls were princesses and fairies. Of course this meant that adults regularly told me that I liked 'boys' stuff and I'm not a boy so I should wear dresses more often, despite never in my life feeling comfortable in a dress.

I was always made aware by others that my gender was ambiguous and that it was a problem - even when I forced myself to be more 'girly' at age 15 by wearing makeup. I avoid using female only public toilets because women often look at me as if I shouldn't be in there. There was a time I was even confronted by an older woman who told me I'm in the wrong toilet and I should leave. The way in which people treat me when they make it their mission to impose their gender stereotypes onto me feels belittling. It feels like they view me as less than human because they can't work me out. In their minds - gender always has to be binary. A girl in trousers with short hair and a bounce in her walk cannot be a girl?

This is my experience as a cis-gendered woman. My personal experience has given me an insight into what transgender people experience every single day. I definitely only experience less than 1% of what a trans person goes through but it is more than I can handle. I stand shoulder to shoulder with the trans community underpinned by my own experiences of transphobia. Solidarity forever.

Not to mention that trans rights are human rights and it is actions of trans people throughout history that have defined the LGBTQIA+ movement in its entirety.

