



Romeo Roxman Gatt is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores gender, identity, sexuality, consumption and love. He has been working for some time with themes of humanisation and interaction with consumer objects, where the inanimate becomes iconic and fetishised. He is also interested in the documentation and archiving of trans and queer experiences, and in 2021 he launched a new project called Rosa Kwir. This project focuses on alternative concepts of masculinity, and gathers stories of trans men and non-binary and masculine-presenting people in Malta. He is the co-founder of the first space for queer contemporary art projects and exhibitions in Malta. Roxman holds an MA in Visual Communication from the Royal College of Art, and was an artist-associate with Open School East, an unaccredited alternative art school focusing on inclusion and collaboration ●

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Qarn *Romeo Roxman Gatt*

Qarn is a memoir of transition, a protest essay, a poetic manifesto, a utopian strategy, a love letter. Romeo Roxman Gatt returns to Malta for a short visit, but bad news prevents him from returning to London. Instead, he embarks on a much more demanding journey, one he had always known he'd have to take one day. *Qarn* is the story of his homecoming—his coming home to his language, to his family, and to himself.

press “Gatt creates a total metaphorical inventory around his transition and trans people. The metaphors fall roughly into three categories, religious ones, those of various transformative animals, and those from the world of masculinity. He calls trans people Transformers, short cowboys, and likens himself to an injured soldier, a muscular Jerry (from Tom and Jerry), a devilish or iron angel, with muscular wings, butterflies, mermaids, a camouflaged octopus, a lizard that looks like a snake... He creates truly beautiful images, such as when he compares the ceiling of his room to a mirror that presses down on him in contrast to the sky that elevates him, or when he imagines jumping back into the womb that opens up like a black hole in his room where he loses his body and the worries that come with it, or when he compares the club to a church in the way that they are both a means of liberation.” — *Illum*

summary In his memoir *Qarn*, Romeo Roxman Gatt returns to Malta for a short visit but bad news prevents him from leaving. Although he doesn't go back to London, he starts a much more demanding journey, one that he has known for a long time that he has to make. ● During his journey to “correct the error that the doctors and midwives had made” when he and his twin sister were born, he looks not only at the ideas that we carry with us about masculinity, but also at his family, and the culture that he was born into. Initially, it was an illness in the family that kept him from returning to London. This is our first glimpse into Romeo's world, his life with his parents and his sister.” ● Not returning to the UK proves fortuitous when the pandemic closes down the skies. Malta is a less hostile environment for him to begin his transition. As he begins a course of Testosterone and starts preparing for surgery, Romeo obsesses over the minutiae of Mediterranean manhood and the pageantry of gender in Catholic culture. He searches for, and occasionally finds, tenderness in even the most masculine of spaces. ● “I don't want to add to the narrative that when someone like me starts injecting hormones he becomes more aggressive, confident, sure of himself, etc. Luckily for me, I was not socialised as a man. I didn't always see this as good fortune, but I was still young and my mind was not that mature, so I didn't go too deeply into things... I've promised myself that when I take hormones I will be a trans man; I see it as another asset for the future of manhood, if not for all of humanity.”

Aphroconfuso is a literary journal and publishing house with open interests, especially to feminist experiences, marginal and queer realities ● contact: l-edituri@aphroconfuso.mt

