YouSpeak Radio Episode 4 –

Audio Transcript

Youspeak Introduction:

This is Youspeak Radio. With generous support from the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund. A project by ONE Archives Foundation on Tongva Land.

[MUSIC]

Elliot's Intro [00:03:03 - 00:03:18]

Elliot: Today I am interviewing queer trailblazer and artist Dorian Wood. In addition to learning Jordan's life story, we have a heartfelt conversation about being queer and non-binary in today's world. The main message of our conversation is clear: queer people are magic.

Dorian: Love is the commonality. Love is the drawing power

Dorian Wood [07:25:24 - 07:26:07]
Dorian: that makes us more powerful as communities, as individuals.

Dorian Wood [07:15:28 - 07:17:33]
Dorian: Love is something so powerful that it is, so purposefully regulated. Um, it's utilized against us by the powers that be.

Dorian Wood [07:17:52 - 07:18:06]
Dorian: It's put on a ballot

Dorian Wood [07:18:34 - 07:19:26]
Dorian: As we grow up, we are asked to express love differently, to not express it as fully.
Dorian Wood [07:32:14 - 07:32:56]
Dorian: Where is the justice in that? Where's the logic in that? It makes no sense unless

Dorian Wood [07:33:25 - 07:34:24]
Dorian: you recognize the power of love and you want to regulate it because you know how much it means to people.

Elliot's Intro [00:03:19 - 00:03:26]
Elliot: This was an amazing interview and I left feeling empowered. And I think that Dorian Wood is just a beautiful, inspiring human being. This was an amazing interview and I left feeling empowered.

Elliot's Listening Party Audio [00:44:02 - 00:44:11]
Elliot: It made me reflect on my place in the queer community, as well as shedding the light on the importance of remembering and honoring those who came before us and paved the way for us.

Music Transition

Elliot's Questions [00:00:05 - 00:00:08]
Elliot: My name is Elliot Starr Schneider.

Elliot's Intro [00:03:00 - 00:03:02]
Elliot: I am 15 years old, and I live in Austin, Texas.

Elliot's Questions [00:00:10 - 00:00:15]
Elliot: I identify as queer and non-binary, and I use they/them pronouns.

Elliot's Questions [00:00:29 - 00:00:31]
Elliot: I am here with Dorian Wood.

Dorian Wood [00:00:37 - 00:00:45]
Dorian: Elliot, it's so nice to meet you. Uh, I'm Dorian Wood. My pronouns are she/they, and I am a multidisciplinary artist based in LA.

Elliot's Questions [00:01:02 - 00:01:04]
Elliot: How would you describe yourself?

Elliot's Questions [00:01:06 - 00:01:07]
Elliot: You can interpret that any way you want, but

Dorian Wood [00:01:23 - 00:01:33]
Dorian: In this very moment, I would consider myself to be a vessel for change, objection, color and kindness.

Dorian Wood [00:01:42 - 00:02:02]
Dorian: I love the idea, though, that this is how I could see myself in this very moment and also be able to enjoy the freedom of being able to be something else in 10 minutes or tomorrow or next year. Um, so yeah, that's how I would see myself right now
Elliot's Questions [00:02:17 - 00:02:24]
Elliot: What was it like for you moving from Los Angeles to Costa Rica and then back to Los Angeles?

Dorian Wood [00:02:26 - 00:02:39]
Dorian: It was very jolting. Um, I remember as a kid when my parents presented my sisters and I with the idea of moving to Costa Rica.

Dorian Wood [00:02:42 - 00:02:52]
Dorian: We were just so petrified of moving somewhere that we had been on vacation to before, but it was, you know, just a whole different country.

Dorian Wood [00:02:55 - 00:02:56]
Dorian: quite a change,

Dorian Wood [00:03:02 - 00:03:13]
Dorian: adapting to life over there as already feeling like an outsider in general, um, and then going to, um, a school where everyone was from

Dorian Wood [00:03:14 - 00:03:16]
Dorian: the same neighborhoods, the same country.

Dorian Wood [00:03:16 - 00:03:20]
Dorian: I was heavily chastised and bullied

Dorian Wood [00:03:23 - 00:03:24]
Dorian: the entire time I was in high school.

Dorian Wood [00:03:27 - 00:03:33]
Dorian: I learned to adapt, um, as a means of just surviving the whole experience.

Dorian Wood [00:03:33 - 00:03:55]
Dorian: It was a school of the arts, so I felt that in my favor, I had the whole creative aspect of me that I could utilize to win people over, and I eventually did, and I made friends, but still it was all at the expense of who I was, um, not just my queerness but my identity.

Dorian Wood [00:04:01 - 00:04:01]
Dorian: It was tough.

Dorian Wood [00:04:01 - 00:04:08]
Dorian: Then moving back to L.A., um, was also

Dorian Wood [00:42:04 - 00:43:28]
Dorian: very impactful because I hadn't spoken English, um, conversationally for, for several years.

Dorian Wood [00:04:22 - 00:04:42]
Dorian: It was having to learn a lot of lingo and I wouldn't say relearned English, but
considering that I never took high school or college-level English, I had to really learn to, um, absorb a lot of ways of communicating.

**Dorian Wood [00:04:45 - 00:04:46]**
Dorian: American English is so

**Dorian Wood [00:04:49 - 00:04:53]**
Dorian: regional and, you know, very much influenced by

**Dorian Wood [00:04:57 - 00:05:09]**
Dorian: It was very intimidating at first, but I think I ultimately fell in, um, into my own groove.

**Dorian Wood [00:05:13 - 00:05:16]**
Dorian: It just took a little while, but, um, ultimately to me, it was just about, um, you know, as a means of survival, you know, trying to find ways to adapt.

**Dorian Wood [00:05:20 - 00:05:24]**
Dorian: Something I've learned consistently is that along the way,

**Dorian Wood [00:05:28 - 00:05:32]**
Dorian: you'll meet people like you or not exactly like you, but at least people who, um, shared, you know, similar perspectives and have had similar trajectories as you.

**Dorian Wood [00:05:36 - 00:05:52]**
Dorian: People from the wrong end of the tracks, as I call them,

**Dorian Wood [00:05:56 - 00:06:01]**
Dorian: you know, taking back a term that has, has been used to marginalize people. I take that for myself and

**Dorian Wood [01:00:27 - 01:01:27]**
Dorian: proudly consider me and my fam to be from the wrong side of the tracks.

**Elliot's Questions [00:06:18 - 00:06:24]**
Elliot: It sounds like that, uh, that transition required a lot of adaptability from you and your family

**Elliot's Questions [00:06:28 - 00:06:33]**
Elliot: That kind of leads into the next question. When did you first know that you were queer?

**Elliot's Questions [00:06:37 - 00:06:41]**
Elliot: When did you first start questioning your gender identity?

**Dorian Wood [00:06:45 - 00:06:49]**
Dorian: Since as far as I can remember,

**Dorian Wood [00:06:53 - 00:06:57]**
Dorian: I didn't really know
Dorian Wood [00:06:49 - 00:06:50]
Dorian: any terminology other than gay.

Dorian Wood [00:06:54 - 00:06:57]
Dorian: Gay, to me, was presented as like, you know, men who like men.

Dorian Wood [00:07:01 - 00:07:03]
Dorian: I somehow imagined that I would,

Dorian Wood [00:07:06 - 00:07:20]
Dorian: in high school, magically transform into a peg-a-corn, and I seriously would have these wild fantasies about that that happening because I knew that I was magical.

Dorian Wood [00:07:24 - 00:07:30]
Dorian: The only association I had to, you know, that visualized magic was a peg-a-corn,

Dorian Wood [00:07:33 - 00:07:35]
Dorian: this fantastic horse

Dorian Wood [00:07:36 - 00:07:38]
Dorian: with a horn and wings, so I could fly.

Dorian Wood [00:07:39 - 00:07:43]
Dorian: It was like unicorn, uh, 2.0,

Dorian Wood [00:07:47 - 00:07:54]
Dorian: majestic with, like, you know, this beautiful wingspan and fly wherever I wanted to.

Dorian Wood [00:07:59 - 00:08:01]
Dorian: That I would say is like really

Dorian Wood [00:08:05 - 00:08:11]
Dorian: the closest label I ever gave myself in my mind was, uh, was peg-a-corn.

Music Transition

Dorian Wood [00:08:24 - 00:08:28]
Dorian: I knew that I was feminine. I was picked on constantly for being feminine

Dorian Wood [00:08:39 - 00:08:42]
Dorian: I just didn't see myself really as any specific gender other than just

Dorian Wood [00:08:44 - 00:08:46]
Dorian: I was given this name

Dorian Wood [00:08:47 - 00:08:52]
Dorian: from birth that, um, I really aligned with.

Dorian Wood [00:08:53 - 00:08:59]
Dorian: It's like a genderless name, Dorian, and and I just felt like that it
Dorian Wood [00:09:01 - 00:09:04]
Dorian: dictated my fate as far as just being magical.

Dorian Wood [00:09:05 - 00:09:14]
Dorian: "I have this magical name, therefore I am magic. Therefore, I, transcend any gender.

Dorian Wood [00:09:17 - 00:09:35]
Dorian: Wait 'til they see me when I magically transform into a peg-a-corn on the playground and fly away." I mean, these were always serious thoughts, ran through my mind over and over and over. Of course, it never happened in that way, and I found that I had to even

Dorian Wood [00:09:42 - 00:09:45]
Dorian: hide that identity

Dorian Wood [00:09:46 - 00:09:48]
Dorian: when I entered high school in Costa Rica because

Dorian Wood [00:09:51 - 00:09:53]
Dorian: the slightest hint of being magical would have

Dorian Wood [00:09:55 - 00:09:56]
Dorian: been very bad for me.

Dorian Wood [00:10:01 - 00:10:13]
Dorian: I had to really suppress, that for a while and just hope that at one point I would turn straight.

Dorian Wood [00:10:26 - 00:10:31]
Dorian: Maybe when I graduate high school, I will just magically, you know, integrate with everyone.

Music Transition

Dorian Wood [00:10:40 - 00:10:42]
Dorian: Right before I moved to L.A., I had a little bit of a nervous breakdown.

Dorian Wood [00:10:46 - 00:10:51]
Dorian: I didn't know what it was, and I thought it was really coming to terms with being queer.

Dorian Wood [00:10:53 - 00:10:55]
Dorian: Being gay just felt like this

Dorian Wood [00:10:56 - 00:10:56]
Dorian: placeholder.

Dorian Wood [00:10:58 - 00:11:00]
Dorian: And, you know, my mom could tell

Dorian Wood [00:11:00 - 00:11:10]
Dorian: that I was hiding something. My dad could tell. I ended up moving in with my dad, who lived in L.A. at that moment, and he was awful.
Dorian Wood [00:11:12 - 00:11:14]
Dorian: Ultimately, I just found

Dorian Wood [00:11:18 - 00:11:27]
Dorian: that no matter how much I tried to adapt to a specific type of subculture or, or community,

Dorian Wood [00:11:30 - 00:11:33]
Dorian: I always felt in my mind I would stick out like a sore thumb.

Dorian Wood [00:11:35 - 00:11:54]
Dorian: It wasn't until I became surrounded by people who were perhaps more invested in what they did creatively rather than how they identified that I was able to realize that

Dorian Wood [00:11:58 - 00:12:09]
Dorian: there's something very liberating in just owning your own self as as who you are, rather than taking it apart and, you know, putting it in categories.

Dorian Wood [00:12:11 - 00:12:12]
Dorian: I feel like my journey has been

Dorian Wood [00:12:13 - 00:12:40]
Dorian: from when I was born essentially, but it hasn't been until like the past, oh, like six, seven years that I've come into my own gender fluidity. And again, even that term is like a placeholder now, but, um, I'm finally excited to not have to adhere to this or that, like feel liberated.

Dorian Wood [00:12:41 - 00:12:48]
Dorian: So I've known from the very beginning and it's just been a hard, complicated,

Dorian Wood [00:12:50 - 00:12:51]
Dorian: but very nuanced,

Dorian Wood [00:12:51 - 00:12:52]
Dorian: road as well.

Elliot's Questions [00:13:00 - 00:13:02]
Elliot: I can relate a lot about

Elliot's Questions [00:13:03 - 00:13:12]
Elliot: knowing, um, for a long time, like, since the beginning, but then not having, like, a terminology or like, just the words to describe it.

Elliot's Questions [00:13:15 - 00:13:18]
Elliot: I completely understand that being non-binary and queer.

Dorian Wood [00:13:25 - 00:13:39]
Dorian: We are, right now, in the midst of this huge universal shift, and it's-I feel it's extremely frightening, but also extremely exciting.
Dorian Wood [00:13:43 - 00:13:44]
Dorian: We're breaking new ground,
Dorian Wood [00:13:46 - 00:13:50]
Dorian: and coming forth as truly liberated people.
Dorian Wood [00:13:53 - 00:13:54]
Dorian: We're finding our own joy.
Dorian Wood [00:13:55 - 00:14:02]
Dorian: We're finding our own selves. We are, you know, on this path that keeps unfolding and unfolding and unfolding.
Dorian Wood [02:20:48 - 02:23:09]
Dorian: We find peace in that where most of society finds fear and something to, um, try to box in, because that's what we've been conditioned to do for generations.
Dorian Wood [00:14:20 - 00:14:21]
Dorian: Here we are just changing everything.
Dorian Wood [00:14:25 - 00:14:26]
Dorian: I have to say;
Dorian Wood [00:14:28 - 00:14:37]
Dorian: I'm very excited for you because, like, this is a new era. Um, it's certainly a very different era from when I came into my own identity.
Dorian Wood [00:14:41 - 00:14:58]
Dorian: There is a world of, um, of possibility as far as being seen, being heard, creating spaces, sharing spaces, holding spaces.
Dorian Wood [00:15:00 - 00:15:02]
Dorian: Things that, you know,
Dorian Wood [00:15:04 - 00:15:05]
Dorian: in my youth like
Dorian Wood [00:15:06 - 00:15:07]
Dorian: 30, 40 years ago
Dorian Wood [00:15:08 - 00:15:19]
Dorian: were extremely radical, um, and the fact that they are more common now is very exciting.
Dorian Wood [00:15:22 - 00:15:23]
Dorian: And it's still hard,
Dorian Wood [00:15:27 - 00:15:32]
Dorian: still having to navigate a world that, like, you know, that misgenders us a lot.
Dorian Wood [00:15:34 - 00:15:37]
Dorian: And it's frustrating because, you know, it doesn't feel nice to be misgendered.
Dorian Wood [00:15:40 - 00:15:45]
Dorian: I don't like it, but I recognize the world that I live in.

Dorian Wood [00:15:50 - 00:15:52]
Dorian: A friend of mine told me, like years ago

Dorian Wood [00:15:52 - 00:16:15]
Dorian: something that really stayed with me, um; permanently is that like, "It's not easy being a trailblazer." And that is right there, the balance. It's not easy, but you're trailblazing, and there is something very, very profound and empowering about this.

Dorian Wood [00:16:17 - 00:16:18]
Dorian: So, yes,

Dorian Wood [00:16:22 - 00:16:28]
Dorian: happy to witness what's happening in the world and and excited for you on your journey as well.

Elliot's Questions [00:16:32 - 00:16:46]
Elliot: I loved when yo u're talking about how like we are kind of like liberating ourselves from these, like boxed in norms, like, especially with gender and sexuality and that everyone else is kind of afraid.

Elliot's Questions [00:16:46 - 00:16:47]
Elliot: They want to

Elliot's Questions [00:16:47 - 00:16:48]
Elliot: box us in, but we

Elliot's Questions [00:16:49 - 00:16:52]
Elliot: transcend that. I love that perspective. I'm feeling empowered.

Elliot's Questions [00:16:56 - 00:17:06]
Elliot: And yeah, it is kind of scary being openly queer and trans at this point, especially being a young person for me, just because it

Elliot's Questions [02:51:42 - 02:52:42]
Elliot: feels like there's a big movement to try to stop us from exploring our identities and

Elliot's Questions [02:52:45 - 02:53:51]
Elliot: just living as ourselves. And that movement is being done by the people who have the most power.

Elliot's Questions [00:17:24 - 00:17:27]
Elliot: It's just really scary times, but also exciting.

Dorian Wood [00:17:33 - 00:17:35]
Dorian: That's all completely valid,

Dorian Wood [00:17:37 - 00:17:38]
Dorian: and I feel you.
Dorian Wood [00:17:39 - 00:17:40]
Dorian: It is a scary time.

Dorian Wood [00:17:42 - 00:17:44]
Dorian: It's okay to feel fear.

Dorian Wood [00:17:48 - 00:17:49]
Dorian: That fear is a path

Dorian Wood [02:58:37 - 02:58:59]
Dorian: to reaching the opposite of fear: empowerment.

Dorian Wood [00:17:54 - 00:18:12]
Dorian: When we acknowledged that we're afraid, like, you know, it's, I think it's people who don't want to, um, that have a tougher time. And they're the same people who don't want, um, for there to be such a thing as a safe space, who don't want there to be such a thing as individuality, because, um, these are the things that

Dorian Wood [00:18:13 - 00:18:14]
Dorian: you can control,

Dorian Wood [00:18:18 - 00:18:20]
Dorian: they are beyond, um, controlling,

Dorian Wood [00:18:22 - 00:18:32]
Dorian: so people in power want to stay in power. And the way you stay in power is if you have tools that you can use to manipulate people and keep them oppressed.

Dorian Wood [00:18:33 - 00:18:39]
Dorian: I was just in Austin a few months ago, actually. I've been to Austin twice already this year.

Dorian Wood [00:18:45 - 00:18:47]
Dorian: It's such a fascinating city to me.

Dorian Wood [00:18:48 - 00:18:50]
Dorian: As an outsider coming from LA,

Dorian Wood [03:08:42 - 03:08:48]
Dorian: on the one hand,

Dorian Wood [03:08:51 - 03:09:17]
Dorian: I feel Austin is extremely progressive

Dorian Wood [00:18:57 - 00:18:58]
Dorian: in comparison to the rest of Texas.

Dorian Wood [00:18:58 - 00:19:01]
Dorian: But on the other hand, it's still Texas.

Dorian Wood [00:19:08 - 00:19:13]
Dorian: I got to really, like, experience both and sometimes simultaneously.
Dorian Wood [00:19:16 - 00:19:18]
Dorian: It's a lot of energy.

Dorian Wood [00:19:20 - 00:19:37]
Dorian: I don't know if you've heard of Outsider Fest. Um, it's this wonderful festival. It's probably my favorite like arts and music festival in the world, and it takes place in February at The Vortex in Austin.

Dorian Wood [00:19:42 - 00:19:52]
Dorian: It's a wonderful community of creators who have, you know, the concept of, you know, respecting individuality.

Dorian Wood [00:19:56 - 00:20:02]
Dorian: it's so inspiring. It's such a wonderful environment to be in, and I've been going like every year for

Dorian Wood [00:20:03 - 00:20:50]
Dorian: Like three years. And I love this festival so much. And, um, and I felt incredibly safe every single time that I was there. Um, and like, beyond safe, I just, like, joyful, um, because it was this magical space that people were, you know, investing in like of themselves beyond any monetary value. Just your very presence was a richness, and you were to give and receive that, um, you know, in whatever way you you were comfortable to do that. Sometimes I would even just be like, you know what? I'm going to go run and hide, and that would be totally fine. You feel welcome and accepted for being however you want to be. Wonderful, wonderful environment.

Dorian Wood [00:20:54 - 00:21:07]
Dorian: I performed also at this festival called Fuze Box, um, and that was back in April, and this was my second time. I'm actually going back for Fuze Box next year. It's a wonderful environment as well, not as queer.

Dorian Wood [00:21:09 - 00:21:17]
Dorian: There were moments I felt very uncomfortable because, um, it also there was like an interweaving with

Dorian Wood [00:21:20 - 00:21:27]
Dorian: cis white bro culture that I feel this very is very prevalent in Austin.

Dorian Wood [00:21:28 - 00:21:31]
Dorian: When you talk about like the music scene,

Dorian Wood [00:21:34 - 00:21:35]
Dorian: not to really say that

Dorian Wood [00:21:36 - 00:21:36]
Dorian: all

Dorian Wood [00:21:37 - 00:21:38]
Dorian: cis white
Dorian Wood [00:21:39 - 00:21:45]
Dorian: hetero men are awful people, but, um, it is at the same time

Dorian Wood [00:21:48 - 00:21:56]
Dorian: a culture that they have never had to fight for, um, that they've always just been able to have.

Dorian Wood [03:39:31 - 03:40:29]
Dorian: That entitlement can be suffocating to be around, um, because

Dorian Wood [00:22:04 - 00:22:08]
Dorian: whether they intend to or not, you feel like you're a guest in someone's home.

Dorian Wood [00:22:11 - 00:22:14]
Dorian: If I'm invited to perform at a festival, like, I don't like feeling like that.

Dorian Wood [00:22:14 - 00:22:17]
Dorian: The people at Fuze Box who organize the festival are wonderful people,

Dorian Wood [00:22:19 - 00:22:19]
Dorian: but there is

Dorian Wood [00:22:32 - 00:22:41]
Dorian: straight white culture that, um, was served in contrast to what, you know, Outsider was back in February.

Dorian Wood [00:22:43 - 00:22:51]
Dorian: It took me a while to get to a point where I felt empowered and- and joyful, um, but I did, and I saw friends there and

Dorian Wood [00:22:51 - 00:22:52]
Dorian: we had a great time.

Dorian Wood [00:23:04 - 00:23:26]
Dorian: I wouldn't say it's a chore. It's a process to get to a point where we can enter a space and feel seen and comfortable and. I go through moments where I resent people who don't have to go through that. And then it goes back to the whole trailblazer aspect or like,

Dorian Wood [00:23:28 - 00:23:31]
Dorian: yes, it sucks that I have to like constantly

Dorian Wood [00:23:33 - 00:23:36]
Dorian: dip my toe in the water before going in.

Dorian Wood [00:23:38 - 00:25:06]
Dorian: However, I'm doing things. I'm living a life that is beyond my wildest dreams from when I was a kid, and I'm making it happen, and I'm experiencing people, sensations, um, inspirations that not only fill me in with something that, um, that informs my ever flowing identity, but also, um, helped secure my survival and helped secure the survival of my fam, the community around me, the people that I get to meet, um, that I get to love. Uh, and to feel almost
like, you know, to being like, not from this planet, even in that this is all somehow so radical, um, that it's all in direct defiance of a binary way of doing things, of identifying, of ticking boxes, of accepting, um, you know, just pre mandated faiths. To go against all of that and come out joyful, that to me is like in any situation, in the queer situation, in the most hetero situation, to be able to get to that point, I feel, is what truly makes this magical.

Elliot's Questions [00:25:09 - 00:25:11] Elliot: I completely hear everything you're saying.

Elliot's Questions [04:20:14 - 04:20:40] Elliot: Queer and trans joy is so powerful.

Elliot's Questions [00:25:11 - 00:25:13] Elliot: And yeah, it's weird living in Austin.

Elliot's Questions [00:25:15 - 00:25:26] Elliot: The queer community here is really strong. I've experienced it myself because we have the Capitol, and we I've been doing a lot of protesting there because of all the anti-trans legislation.

Elliot's Questions [00:25:27 - 00:25:28] Elliot: The support

Elliot's Questions [00:25:35 - 00:25:40] Elliot: fills me with hope to see that many queer people coming to support trans rights in Texas.

Elliot's Questions [00:25:43 - 00:25:54] Elliot: I think that the only place where I truly feel seen, like with my gender, is with the queer community, especially the trans community, because I feel like unless you really experienced it,

Elliot's Questions [00:25:55 - 00:25:58] Elliot: they will never truly see me for what I am,

Elliot's Questions [00:25:58 - 00:25:59] Elliot: and that's okay, as long as they're respectful.

Music Transition

Elliot's Questions [00:26:18 - 00:26:24] Elliot: How do your how does your queer and cultural identities intersect, if at all?

Dorian Wood [00:26:35 - 00:26:40] Dorian: They do and they don't. I think that's something really, uh, really fun.

The other night I told my friend Manny, I'm like, "Hey, are you going to the club tonight?"

Dorian Wood [00:27:54 - 00:27:56] Dorian: I rarely go to clubs, but like,

Dorian Wood [00:27:57 - 00:28:01] Dorian: I want to go to a club because I'm feeling like a snack, and I want to wear
Dorian Wood [00:28:04 - 00:28:11]
Dorian: this really cute pair of overalls I just got with no top underneath. And like, these really nice pair of earrings

Dorian Wood [00:28:13 - 00:28:21]
Dorian: and I just have, like, this visual, of like this amazing, sexy, beautiful creature entering the club,

Dorian Wood [00:28:23 - 00:28:25]
Dorian: and I just have, like,

Dorian Wood [00:28:30 - 00:28:45]
Dorian: I draw strength and empowerment from my sexuality, and then I want to be seen as, you know, as cute, as sexy, as beautiful, more than I usually do.

Dorian Wood [00:28:50 - 00:29:01]
Dorian: It comes across in my art sometimes, too, um, and not even as a form of transgression, but it's just as a form of liberation just to be able to say

Dorian Wood [00:29:04 - 00:29:05]
Dorian: I believe in

Dorian Wood [00:29:08 - 00:29:19]
Dorian: being someone who, you know, who transcends, um, gender, um, but also embraces sexuality. And to create a space in which both of them

Dorian Wood [00:29:20 - 00:29:30]
Dorian: are appreciated and are safely appreciated, and that is actually a big part of my work as well, um. But, you know, sometimes I am

Dorian Wood [00:29:33 - 00:29:44]
Dorian: just someone who likes to go to the supermarket and not have to really think much about like how I identify, um, what my sexuality is like.

Dorian Wood [00:29:44 - 00:29:51]
Dorian: I'm just a person, um, just, you know, buying peanut butter and cereal

Dorian Wood [04:58:58 - 04:59:46]
Dorian: then I get at the checkout stand and then somebody calls me "sir," and it's like, "Oh."

Dorian Wood [05:00:02 - 05:00:37]
Dorian: They're throwing a wrench into my day to day

Dorian Wood [00:30:05 - 00:30:12]
Dorian: up until this point, I didn't even think about how I identified I was just me. But then somebody had to

Dorian Wood [00:30:14 - 00:30:17]
Dorian: challenge that unknowingly
Dorian Wood [00:30:18 - 00:30:24]
Dorian: They are really going off of the world that they have been conditioned to accept from for generations and some from birth.

Dorian Wood [05:04:19 - 05:05:18]
Dorian: and some people are fighting it, and some people aren't. Others are just fighting in their own way, I guess.

Dorian Wood [00:30:38 - 00:30:39]
Dorian: But I try

Dorian Wood [00:30:40 - 00:30:41]
Dorian: to find joy in

Dorian Wood [05:07:04 - 05:07:14]
Dorian: either situation.

Elliot's Questions [00:30:45 - 00:30:45]
Elliot: I hear that.

Elliot's Questions [00:30:47 - 00:30:48]
Elliot: Being misgendered,

Elliot's Questions [00:30:48 - 00:30:49]
Elliot: it really, like, has to

Elliot's Questions [00:30:49 - 00:30:50]
Elliot: snap you back into reality, like.

Elliot's Questions [00:30:50 - 00:30:54]
Elliot: Like, "Oh, right, not everyone, like, understands who I am."

Elliot's Questions [00:30:56 - 00:31:01]
Elliot: I think they should just stop saying ma'am and sir, like, we are so past that. We don't need that, like.

Elliot's Questions [00:31:01 - 00:31:04]
Elliot: We understand you're trying to be polite, but, like, we really don't need it.

Dorian Wood [05:10:51 - 05:11:10]
Dorian: We really don't. We really don't.

Dorian Wood [00:31:08 - 00:31:10]
Dorian: I did a performance in

Dorian Wood [00:31:23 - 00:31:44]
Dorian: this small town in Catalonia, and a big part of the performance was, um, engaging people in chanting about, um, you know, respecting individuality and, um, and liberating, you know, the self from any societal expectations and just
Dorian Wood [00:31:45 - 00:31:51]
Dorian: creating a very empowering, um, space, collaborating with the audience and creating the space.

Dorian Wood [00:31:54 - 00:32:11]
Dorian: I was just feeling myself and I went backstage, and this male-presenting person comes up, and he was acting very much like a dude. And he's like, "Man, that was so great."

Dorian Wood [00:32:18 - 00:32:33]
Dorian: And I'm like, "Stop calling me 'man.'" And he's like, "Well, you know, you were just so great." I'm like, "It bothers me. I don't care if it doesn't bother you."

Dorian Wood [00:32:37 - 00:32:38]
Dorian: I'm like, "Holy shit balls!"

Dorian Wood [00:32:50 - 00:32:55]
Dorian: And he was so taken aback, like, almost like: how dare I deconstruct his compliment?

Dorian Wood [00:32:56 - 00:32:58]
Dorian: I would counter that so many times where

Dorian Wood [00:32:59 - 00:33:03]
Dorian: someone's trying to pay a compliment, and they're just misgendering you and misidentifying you left and right.

Dorian Wood [00:33:04 - 00:33:07]
Dorian: You know, you point something out and they get hypersensitive.

Dorian Wood [00:33:08 - 00:33:14]
Dorian: like, "How dare you?" Um, and then other people don't. Other people are just kind of like, acknowledge it. You know, a little apology or like, "Oh, sorry."

Elliot's Questions [00:34:06 - 00:34:07]
Elliot: Some people get,

Elliot's Questions [00:34:08 - 00:34:09]
Elliot: if they misgender me, and I'll like

Elliot's Questions [00:34:10 - 00:34:11]
Elliot: correct them, they'll just get

Elliot's Questions [00:34:17 - 00:34:23]
Elliot: really apologetic to the point where it's really uncomfortable. So I think my favorite thing is when people are like, "Oh, sorry," and then move on.
Elliot's Questions [00:34:25 - 00:34:26]
Elliot: Like, that is great for me.

Dorian Wood [00:33:22 - 00:33:35]
Dorian: To me, yeah, it's like this whole thing of having to accept the world for what it is and to consider ourselves lucky, to be able to call ourselves what we want.

Dorian Wood [00:33:37 - 00:33:45]
Dorian: It's actually symptomatic of something really horrible that we've had to accept for generations.

Dorian Wood [00:33:48 - 00:34:05]
Dorian: We're bubbling up and saying no more. It's not being rude. It's actually underlining for people the rudeness that we've all had to survive for so long. And I guess some people can't take that.

Dorian Wood [00:34:35 - 00:34:38]
Dorian: I think the common thing is that they make it about themselves.

Dorian Wood [00:34:43 - 00:34:44]
Dorian: They make it about their own pain.

Dorian Wood [00:34:46 - 00:35:01]
Dorian: I have to talk you down off a ledge because you feel so terrible and you're down on your knees whipping yourself, or all like, you know, huffy and puffy about it because I somehow came for your entire family by asking you to be, to respect my pronouns.

Dorian Wood [05:50:27 - 05:50:51]
Dorian: You're making it about your own pain.

Music Transition

Elliot's Questions [00:35:16 - 00:35:20]
Elliot: How does your queer identity connect with your musical career?

Dorian Wood [00:35:32 - 00:35:35]
Dorian: It's a decision that I've made to do that.

Dorian Wood [00:35:40 - 00:35:59]
Dorian: I feel now and I've felt for a very long time the urgency of having to put my queerness more out in the open, um, out of a fear that if I don't, then it's allowing for the ongoing marginalization of queerness and the othering of queerness.

Dorian Wood [00:36:33 - 00:36:46]
Dorian: Something I do aim to do with everything that I put out there, um, is truth, is a truth of myself is a truth of my my perspective of

Dorian Wood [00:36:50 - 00:36:57]
Dorian: how I perceive the world, how I respond to the world and, you know, there is a queerness in that.
Dorian Wood [00:37:01 - 00:37:03]
Dorian: I'll come up with a melody, for example.

Dorian Wood [00:37:04 - 00:37:09]
Dorian: It's not like, "Oh, this is a queer melody," but it's like, "Oh, this is very queer."

Dorian Wood [00:37:12 - 00:37:18]
Dorian: That to me is like the undefinable part of creating.

Dorian Wood [00:37:20 - 00:37:22]
Dorian: I don't feel like that needs to be overly labeled, um, and I'm comfortable with having

Dorian Wood [00:37:28 - 00:37:58]
Dorian: inspiration come from wherever it is that it comes from. um, queer subject matter is a decision, um, that is, um, is more motivated by dismantling systems that, that marginalized people. um, I created this, um, this t-shirt. I think it's maybe a couple of years ago already.

Dorian Wood [00:38:01 - 00:38:18]
Dorian: It's what I call the "Myth of the Straight Man" t-shirt. And it says, um, "The straight man is a myth. I do not believe in the myth of the straight man. um, I will no longer be governed, governed," or "I will no longer be..." Oh God, I totally forgot!

Dorian Wood [00:38:23 - 00:38:24]
Dorian: It made sense to me.

Dorian Wood [00:38:31 - 00:38:41]
Dorian: It's really like, I will no longer be defined or governed by a myth is how the t-shirt ends, um, really underlining that straightness is also a construct.

Dorian Wood [00:38:45 - 00:38:48]
Dorian: You know, straightness is the opposite of queerness

Dorian Wood [00:39:12 - 00:39:23]
Dorian: in that it is all about boxing people into a very strict and, um, unsustainable format.

Dorian Wood [00:39:31 - 00:39:48]
Dorian: You see people trying to adhere to the rules of straightness, and they're breaking at the seams in one way or another. And the way they they break at the seams really informs their queerness. I'm someone who believes that everyone is on a queer spectrum. Everyone.

Dorian Wood [00:40:04 - 00:40:04]
Dorian: Queerness

Dorian Wood [00:40:09 - 00:40:11]
Dorian: includes sexuality, but it is not dependent on it.

Dorian Wood [00:46:49 - 00:46:52]
Dorian: Attraction is this, you know, this wild cosmic thing
Dorian Wood [00:40:12 - 00:40:25]
Dorian: The idea of a safe space, for example, that is a queer creation. And straight people use safe space all the time now. So like, if you're using a safe space, congratulations, you're queer.

Dorian Wood [00:40:28 - 00:40:29]
Dorian: There's other people,

Dorian Wood [00:40:32 - 00:40:34]
Dorian: straight allies who are afraid of appropriating.

Dorian Wood [00:40:35 - 00:40:47]
Dorian: It's not appropriation if you actually incorporate yourself into the narrative of queerness. If you accept it, and there's nothing wrong. I mean, what is so horrible about being queer?

Dorian Wood [00:40:50 - 00:40:52]
Dorian: Queerness as a label is something that

Dorian Wood [00:40:54 - 00:40:56]
Dorian: will one day, like not be valid anymore.

Dorian Wood [00:40:56 - 00:41:05]
Dorian: There'll be something else that is more defining of like the othering, um, but what, in fact, is the liberation of the self.

Dorian Wood [00:41:07 - 00:41:17]
Dorian: And, you know, this idea that we have to compare ourselves to this standard of oppression, of self oppression.

Dorian Wood [00:41:21 - 00:41:24]
Dorian: Nobody questions str ss," you know, "factor into your creativity?" type of thing.

Dorian Wood [00:41:48 - 00:41:57]
Dorian: Straight people never get asked these things because it's like they feel like they've never had to, but I'm like, no, straight people justify your straightness for us.

Dorian Wood [00:41:59 - 00:42:06]
Dorian: If it's something that is just so unbreakable and so impermeable, then show us why.

Dorian Wood [00:42:07 - 00:42:28]
Dorian: Why is it that it's beyond questioning? And yet every aspect of us, *coughs* you know, is out there for studying and debating and voting? Um, what makes straightness so great? I'd like to know because I have not seen a single thing about straightness that I would want for myself.

Elliot's Questions [00:42:32 - 00:42:35]
Elliot: I think I kind of have like a hot take on it, like.

Elliot's Questions [00:42:41 - 00:42:49]
Elliot: Love is so, *like*, powerful, and gender is a construct, and so love
Elliot's Questions [00:42:52 - 00:42:53]
Elliot: transcends gender.

Elliot's Questions [00:42:55 - 00:42:59]
Elliot: Personally, I'm attracted to people not based on the gender, just based on the person.

Elliot's Questions [00:43:03 - 00:43:11]
Elliot: If we didn't have, like all these labels put on ourselves, that it would be better because we can all just love who we want to love.

Elliot's Questions [07:12:00 - 07:13:11]
Elliot: There are so many people in this world, and there's so many different identities that it's impossible to say. "I only love this one type of person in this one type of way."

Dorian Wood [00:43:23 - 00:43:24]
Dorian: I hear you.

Dorian Wood [00:43:29 - 00:43:45]
Dorian: I am in complete agreement. I think love is something so powerful that it is, um, so purposefully regulated. Um, it's utilized against us by the powers that be.

Dorian Wood [00:43:47 - 00:43:48]
Dorian: It's put on a ballot

Dorian Wood [00:43:51 - 00:44:05]
Dorian: As we grow up, we are asked to express love differently, to not express it as fully, to be conscious about how we receive love. It is because it is something so incredibly powerful.

Dorian Wood [00:44:07 - 00:44:15]
Dorian: Going back to the, you know, queer magic, you know, we have continuously created situations

Dorian Wood [00:44:20 - 00:44:28]
Dorian: in which love is the commonality. Love is the drawing power. Love is the reason why for these spaces over and over again.

Dorian Wood [00:44:32 - 00:44:38]
Dorian: That makes us more powerful as communities, as individuals, when we're able to say, "Yes,

Dorian Wood [00:44:39 - 00:44:41]
Dorian: I love people for who they are."

Dorian Wood [00:44:55 - 00:45:06]
Dorian: We can find certain parts of people that are attractive but like to feel love for someone. Like, how do you explain that? And that's magical, and why should that have to be boxed into something
Dorian Wood [00:45:09 - 00:45:19]
Dorian: that is expected of us in order to secure our own survival? Like, where is the justice in
that? Where's the logic in that? It makes no sense unless you're someone in power, unless
Dorian Wood [00:45:20 - 00:45:26]
Dorian: you recognize the power of love and you want to regulate it because you know how
much it means to people.
Dorian Wood [00:45:28 - 00:45:29]
Dorian: I'm totally with you.
Elliot's Questions [00:47:06 - 00:47:09]
Elliot: I love that we share the same perspective on that.
Elliot's Questions [00:47:10 - 00:47:12]
Elliot: I love love. I think that love is everything.
Dorian Wood [00:45:32 - 00:45:37]
Dorian: Love, transcends every identity, any identity, the need for identity, the need for gender.
Dorian Wood [00:45:38 - 00:45:39]
Dorian: Love is
Dorian Wood [00:45:41 - 00:45:42]
Dorian: everything.
Dorian Wood [00:45:44 - 00:45:51]
Dorian: It's the guiding force behind every, every transgressive movement against oppression.
Dorian Wood [00:45:52 - 00:45:53]
Dorian: When we saw
Dorian Wood [00:45:56 - 00:45:58]
Dorian: these huge crowds
Dorian Wood [00:45:59 - 00:46:10]
Dorian: a few years ago during pandemic, taking to the streets, you know, protesting, you know,
racism and, and misogyny, um, in such mass numbers.
Dorian Wood [07:41:55 - 07:42:12]
Dorian: That's love manifested.

Music Transition
Elliot's Questions [00:47:15 - 00:47:16]
Elliot: I have one last question.
Elliot's Questions [00:47:19 - 00:47:26]
Elliot: Do you have a message for younger, queer audiences listening who are dealing with the
new-wave of anti-LGBTQ+ hate?
**Dorian Wood** [07:54:47 - 07:57:56]
Speaker 1: Remember you were magic. Remember, you are. You are magic. And. This is a world that wants to silence magic. It's as simple as that. And it's. It's not fair.

**Dorian Wood** [07:58:42 - 08:03:42]
Speaker 1: It's okay to feel angry. It's okay to feel sad and scared and frustrated. But as you embrace the idea that we are meant to try to transcend the binary. We can also feel joy. We can also feel empowerment. We can take a break from fighting the good fight to heal our wounds, to heal ourselves, to find peace within our own spaces, and then throw ourselves back into the fight.

**Dorian Wood** [08:04:41 - 08:12:09]
Speaker 1: Find your joy in everything that. That you put your heart to. It could be joining a fight. It could be like just writing something, drawing something, speaking out about something, or just taking time for yourself. Sitting quietly in one place. You are capable of a world of change, and that is a wonderful thing, but it's also something that takes up a lot of energy. So be mindful and kind to yourself. Just be so good to yourself. Be, be a really great self parent

**Dorian Wood** [08:13:11 - 08:17:16]
Speaker 1: in a way that only you know how to do for yourself. And in every gesture of self parenting, in every moment where you offer yourself a glass of water because you didn't think you needed to be like, No, you need to drink water. In a moment, you tell yourself you need to breathe. Also, tell yourself, remind yourself constantly. Write it on the wall. You are magic.

**Elliot's Questions** [00:49:48 - 00:49:49]
Elliot: You are Magic.

**Elliot's Questions** [00:16:50 - 00:16:52]
Elliot: I love that perspective. I'm feeling empowered.

**Elliot's Questions** [00:50:04 - 00:50:06]
Elliot: It's so nice meeting you and talking with you.

**Elliot's Questions** [00:50:13 - 00:50:16]
Elliot: Your, like, energy is infectious.

**Elliot's Questions** [00:50:17 - 00:50:19]
Elliot: I feel very much queer joy happening right now.

**Dorian Wood** [00:49:59 - 00:50:00]
Dorian: Thank you so much, Elliot.

**Dorian Wood** [00:50:28 - 00:50:29]
Dorian: And likewise. You are amazing.

**Elliot's Listening Party Audio** [00:44:41 - 00:44:43]
Elliot: And now I'm going to go to warm up the chicken nuggets.
Youspeak Outro (32:10):

This is Youspeak Radio. We are Caleigh Campbell, Diego Gonzalez, Madeline Lee, Grae Mordhorst, Elliot Starr-Schneider, Marbella Zoliz-Maldonado with generous support from the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, a project by ONE Archives Foundation on Tongva Land.