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**VALENTINE'S
DAY GIFT
GUIDE**
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SEXY'S BACK

**OUR SEX & LOVE ISSUE
ARE YOU ADDICTED
TO SEX?**

**CALPERNIA
ADDAMS IS
READY TO HAVE
SOME FUN**

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**PROJECT RUNWAY
HOTTIE RAMI KASHOU**



Andrea James (left) with Calpernia Addams

CALPERNIA ADDAMS' TRANSITION FROM SELF-described "activist-widow" to the effervescent goddess of Logo's *Transamerican Love Story* just may be as challenging as her metamorphosis from man to woman.

Seated in the harsh glare of a sunshine-saturated coffee hangout in East Hollywood, Calpernia—wearing a rather demure emerald-green top that accentuates her rusty-red colored mane of hair and peachy crème skin—looks fab.

Unlike the pack of her sister celebs of a certain age, Calpernia eats cheesecake and wants to be taken, not seriously, but comically. When her sidekick-in-art, Andrea James, arrives, Calpernia jokes that they met "in a maximum security prison." If Andrea and Calpernia share a hard-won sense of humor, the lightheartedness springs from a past riddled with heartache.

When she was a little boy (that's right), Calpernia remembers being told that she ran up and down the aisles of the Church of God of Prophecy, shouting, "I want to be Sister Batrille, I want to be Sister Batrille!" Her aspirations to take flight, ala Sally Field in *The Flying Nun*, were put on hold while she served in the navy as a combat medic who treated Marines.

"Being a medic allowed me to be a little softer, a bit more effeminate than I might have been otherwise," she says. In a transformation that can only be likened to the tired "caterpillar-into-butterfly" metaphor, the serviceman emerged from the cocoon of the military onto the runway of the Connection, a renowned gay bar in Tennessee, spreading her wings as a showgirl.

What happened next has been well-documented, including a 2003 Showtime movie, *Soldier's Girl*, in which Lee Pace (the star of *Pushing Daisies*) essayed the role of Calpernia. In what can only be described as a tragically doomed love affair, the film depicts the real life relationship between the showgirl and the serviceman who—in spite of "liking women," Calpernia asserts—was beaten to death when it was suggested by his peers that he was "a fag."

Overnight, Calpernia transitioned from feathers and beads to widow's weeds.

If there's a sense of delivery-by-rote as she recounts the scenario, it is the steeliness born from not wanting to appear melodramatic. That said, one cannot discount the trauma that is often unleashed on those heroic individuals who choose to embrace their physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological differences by not succumbing to →

girls just wanna have fun

Calpernia Addams and Andrea James discuss their new Logo series *Transamerican Love Story*

BY MICHAEL KEARNS

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the status quo.

"It's complicated," Andrea says, referring to the dynamics between men and male-to-female transgender women. The dating ritual, for instance, eventually leads to that dramatic moment of disclosure. "You never really know how they're going to respond," she says.

Transamerican Love Story, a revolutionary hour-long reality show premiering on Logo in February, will normalize this terrain by enlisting eight eligible bachelors who are open to dating a transwoman. Television has notoriously depicted the transgender population stereotypically; as sluts, drug addicts, wack jobs, or those daytime talk show regulars—the middle-aged married man with five kids who lives in Kansas and has an autumnal epiphany that he's been "trapped" for decades.

Instead of dwelling on the antiseptic medical aspects of a becoming a transsexual, *Transamerican Love Story* will look at the heart and soul matters that happen post-surgery. Calpernia says, "No one knows how hard it is for us to date!"

"I'm almost at the point where I want to just say, I'm a sex change," she says. "I'm sick of having to beg for approval. I'm tired of tiptoeing around the prejudices."

Does the gay community empathize with the plight of our brothers and sisters? "Even though they are our biggest friends and allies, I don't really think they really get it."

"Gay culture has to be forged," Andrea, a consulting producer on their television project, says. While acknowledging the "brave gay men and lesbians of the Sixties," she points to a "generational shift. The older generation tends to have more rigid ideas of man/woman, gay/straight. We threaten that. Younger people are more fluid—they see us as part of a spectrum."

Tired of "carrying the agenda," Calpernia looks at the *Transamerican Love Story* as an opportunity to strut her authentic self, after a decade of being imprisoned by society's malingering myopia. "I can be the real me," she trills. "Funny and sexy."

Yet while these girls just wanna have fun, one cannot deny the political ramifications of their wily artistic endeavors. "The fastest way to political change," Andrea says, "is through the media."

And, girlfriends, Calpernia is ready for her close-up.