

Same Sex Wedding Photo Essay Interview with Participants

1. What has been the greatest challenge?

Tricia: The greatest challenge in creating this ceremony was balancing the demands of the traditional wedding framework with the demands of our feminist frameworks. I feel as though both frameworks demanded something very different of us, and the balance was hard to strike. We needed the ceremony and decor to "look like a wedding" so that our families could easily recognize it as such, and we needed a ceremony and decor that reflected our anti-oppression politics. The wedding industry is full of patriarchy and oppressive understandings of love -- no one is going to "have" me or "hold" me unless I say it's okay, for instance. We couldn't have a wedding that perpetuated terrible ways of being in the world. But! It also had to look like a wedding, because celebrating our love in ways that our families value was one of the reasons we wanted to get married. Needless to say it was difficult to strike that balance! Karolyn took care of the aesthetics-- the bubbles interspersed with the anti-oppression literature-- and I took care of the words we shared at the ceremony-- quotes from feminist authors, where bible verses might have otherwise been.

Karolyn: The guest list was the hardest part for me! We didn't want a big wedding. We really wanted to keep it small because we thought it would be more intimate that way, but it was so hard to figure out where to cut off the guest list. I was surprised at one point when someone asked me if we kept the wedding small because we're gay. I guess they thought we would be embarrassed and want to keep it quiet? It was very unexpected, because we wanted to do anything but keep it quiet. We love each other, and our wedding was the best party we've ever been to. We gave away pomegranates as wedding favours. It was too fun!

2. What has been the biggest opportunity?

Tricia: I really feel like we had the opportunity to queer the way that our love got recognized. It was an opportunity to be within the belly of the wedding industrial complex (a true beast), and to give it some indigestion. When Karla read from Judith Butler, all dressed up in her legal robes, it offered this amazing powerhouse feminist a measure of credibility with my grandparents that she otherwise might not have gotten. When my sister read from Brene Brown, telling us all that "Love is not something we give or get; it is something that we nurture and grow" we had an opportunity to use a familiar ritual to showcase a very different way of being and loving in the world. My parents cried. Karolyn's parents cried. It was a kickass, gorgeous ceremony that slipped feminism in as if it had always belonged there. It felt rebellious and amazing.

Karolyn: The biggest opportunity was that we got to demonstrate our love and share it with our families in a way that they respect. Our families both love weddings, and it felt so great to have everyone gathering around to celebrate us in our weird little ceremony.

3. What is the most important message that you want to give to Canadians who see the photo essay?

Tricia: I would say the important take away for me is that weddings can (and should) be acts of rebellion, and that pairing love with rebellion feels amazing. I guess I always imagined rebellion to be fuelled by anger, but this one was fuelled by love and a desire to recognize human connection in all of its complexity.

Karolyn: I think our wedding showcased expanding definitions of love, and I think that it's important to share our story. We are feminists, and we just think about love very differently than a lot of people who are getting married in the mainstream. Our wedding would not have been selected for an episode of "Say Yes to the Dress." When I was searching for wedding ideas, I did not find much information about non-traditional weddings. I think a lot of feminists dismiss weddings. I get the impression that many feminists think weddings are too mainstream or too patriarchal. Audre Lorde did say that the masters' tools will never dismantle the masters' house, after all! However, I really have to believe that the ritual of having our family and friends recognize and celebrate our love was something special.