

## Running ‘Amok’ | The MCLA Beacon

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Monday night Jennifer Miller, a bearded woman, spoke and performed in Sullivan Lounge. She is also the founder of “Circus Amok.”

Miller started the event by reciting the poem “Footnote to Howl” by Alan Ginsberg. While doing so she also broke a light bulb and ate the glass. The crunch of the glass in her teeth made more than one audience member cringe.

Miller started performing in the sideshows of Coney Island. According to Miller she was a born act.

“If you’re a born act you’re sideshow royalty,” said Miller, “but I felt like the most normal, I just happened to grow a beard.”

The work in the sideshow was hard. Acts ran one right after the other all day none-stop. The performers wouldn’t even have time for a dinner break.

“The work was hard, but I liked stomping around like I owned the place,” Miller said.

After juggling some machetes Miller read letters from fans. One in particular was from a young lady who also grew facial hair, but no one knew about it. She thanked Miller and told her she admired her for being so comfortable with herself that she could let her facial hair grow.

Miller is proud of who she is. According to Miller, “Hair is a symbol of the power. That’s why the men don’t want women to have too much of it.”

It was a combination of her self-confidence, the strive to do something meaningful, and political mentors that inspired her to create “Circus Amok”.

“Circus Amok” mixes circus acts with issues of social justice. According to Miller combining the two was a “natural mix.”

Miller performs in New York City during September Thursday through Sunday in twenty different parks.

In addition to the circus Miller also teaches at Pratt University and writes plays. She ended the evening by performing a fire eating act for the audience.



(Photo by Dennise Carranza/Beacon Staff) Bearded woman Jennifer Miller of Circus Amok performed in Sullivan Lounge Monday.

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