

RuPaul's Drag Race

**intertextuality &
hybrid queer space**

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RPDR
herstory

2009

Season 1 on Logo
(The Lost Season)

Re-aired in 2013

2015

DragCon in LA
draws 13k fans

2017

RPDR moves to
VH1 for Season 9

DragCon NYC
debuts to 35k

DragCon LA
triples to 50k

1

take over the
mothertucking
world

RPDR as
Transmedia Franchise

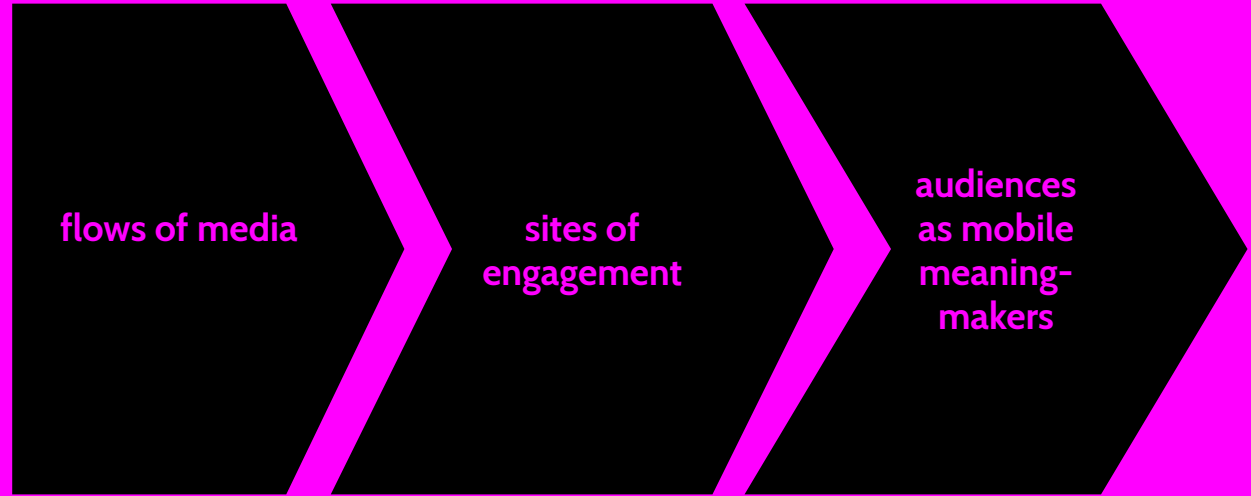
3





text + object

(Marwick, Gray,
& Annany)





transmedia cultural object

“contexts, intertexts, and cultural patterns are co-determinants in meaning making” (Lemke, 2009)



non-fiction narrative world

Oullette (2015) and Hill (2016) - “fact-fiction” mix and the highly mediated participatory experience of reality television

2

you better work

methods

7





RPDR as
ethnographic
object

- ⊙ textual analysis of TV episodes
- ⊙ virtual ethnography
- ⊙ interviews
 - DragCon
 - local queens
 - viewing parties

3

spilling the tea

findings & discussion





Semiotics & Performance





DragCon

- ⊙ between 40-60% straight
- ⊙ 63% under 30
- ⊙ increasingly “family friendly”
- ⊙ Meet n Greet



**fans,
family,
frenemies**

**Scenes from
Hell's Kitchen &
Beyond**

Viewing Parties

10+ bars in
Manhattan alone

- ⊙ Community
- ⊙ Identity
- ⊙ Comedy

Local Queens

More
opportunities
for everyone

Critiques

Feuding storylines

Transphobia
controversy

“bachelorette
party at the gay
bar”



4
the after party
future directions





Semiotics: Shantay, You Stay



symbols



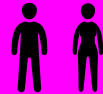
icons

How are the semiotics of drag related to

- subcultural capital
- tribal capital



artifacts



rituals

“


The show could never go mainstream because drag is the antithesis of the matrix.”

RuPaul, 2016



**the politics of
“gaystreaming”
(Ng)**

- ⦿ gaystreaming and consumer culture theory
- ⦿ normalization vs. outsiderhood
- ⦿ transmedia narratives



Thank you so much. 