

A black and white photograph capturing a theatrical performance. In the center, a person is seated on a stage, wearing a dark, polka-dot swimsuit and a matching studded hat. They have a dramatic, wide-eyed expression and their hands are positioned near their face. The background is dark, with a few other figures visible, including one in the upper left wearing a cap and glasses with their arm raised. The foreground is filled with the backs and heads of an audience, some reaching out towards the performer. The overall atmosphere is one of intense, theatrical drama.

EMPIRE OF ILLUSIONS

LAURA ALVAREZ

Imagine a space where illusion and the illusory fuse, forming an amalgamous mystique; one where spectacle and identity converge into one body, one moment. This is Drag. This is the “Empire of Illusions.”

A photo project sharing a culture overflowing with glamour, fun, intimacy, and marginalization, Drag creates safe spaces through entertainment, opening doors that a hegemonic society has closed. Images brimming with ecstatic screams, laughter, complicity, and humanity. Photographs free of color, using black and white strategically to honor elaborate wigs and makeup, but not to center on them. At its core lies the experience and the people, observed from within. “The Empire of Illusions” makes us all participants in the vulnerability of the night.

