

SEPTEMBER 11-12
ONLINE



QUEER *as* Method

*Transdisciplinary Approaches to Art,
Research and Resistance*

Organised by
London Arts-Based
Research Centre

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Queer as Method:

Transdisciplinary Approaches to Art, Research and Resistance

Conference Brochure

*Please note that all timings are according to BST (London timezone).
Each presentation will be 15 minutes, followed by a joint Q&A session.*

Zoom link for all conference sessions:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84088511760?pwd=6EOuVOTqVxuHe7KbxcSLhqKqK5jpa8.1>

Meeting ID: 840 8851 1760

Passcode: 249364

Zoom link for Indelible Evenings open mic night:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82797767279?pwd=waLmwbc8hb0Q2xkGEIBwjLxTDMbGWV.1>

Meeting ID: 827 9776 7279

Passcode: 488672

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Opening Words and Housekeeping — 9.45–10:00

Session 1 — 10:00–11:30 — Queer Spaces and Temporalities in Visual Culture

Moderator: Arden Waterman and Emmy Vye

1. Yuanhan Han, Ningbo Childhood Education College, China
“Queering Socialist Femininity: Wang Xiaotang's Gendered Performances in Chinese Socialist Cinema (1949–1966)”

2. Zehang Jiang, University of the Arts London
“Queer Liminalities: Liminal Space, Desire, and Transnational Belonging in Ferzan Özpetek's *Hamam*”

3. Fangyuan Geng, Minzu University of China
“Compressed Queer Temporality: Embodied Presence and Collective Futurity in *120 BPM*”

Session 2 — 11:45–13:15 — Reframing the Normative: Queer as Lens and Method

Moderator: Arden Waterman

1. Ina Linge, Chloe Asker & Siân Docksey, University of Exeter
“Queer Natures: Critical-Creative Ecologies for the Arts and Humanities”

2. Saher Bano, University of Surrey
“Decoding Digital Diaspora and Heterotopia: Contextualizing Cyberqueer Safe Spaces in South Asian YouTube Poetics”

3. Emmy Vye, London Arts-Based Research Centre
“Promiscuous Fidelities: How Laplanche Makes Writing Psychoanalytically About Maternal Practice Outside the Mono-Heteronormative Nuclear Family Model Possible”

Session 3 — 14:00–15:30 — Uncovering Queer History through Literature and Art

Moderator: Emmy Vye

1. Clara Julia Escalera, Europa-Universität Viadrina
“The Dyke ‘At the Motorcycle’? Rethinking Gender Ambiguity and the ‘New Woman’ in Lotte Laserstein's Work”

2. Akiko Mizoguchi, Tokyo Woman's Christian University
“Rethinking Edward Carpenter's Queer Representation of the Samurai”

3. Nicholas Maniu & Philipp Gufler, Forum Queeres Archiv Munich / Tate Modern
“Queering the Archive: Paul Hoecker and Transdisciplinary Approaches to Hidden Queer Histories”

Session 4 — 16:00–17:30 — Gender, Disability, and Queer Embodiment

Moderator: Daniel Siuba

1. Elia Khalaf, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
“The Third Body: Surrealist Self-Portraiture and Queer Men in Art Therapy”
2. Gala Wilkie, Independent
“Misogyny Circus: A Spectacle of Disabled Queer-Fem Strength Facing Medicalization”
3. Dani Xena Knoll, Independent
“Too Big for This World: A Femme's Fate”

Session 5 — 18:00–19:30 — Creative Practice & Curatorial Method

Moderator: Nathan Lamarche and Ellora Sutton

1. Audrie Ford, University of Arizona
“Telling Herstory – Zines as Method & Data”
2. Robin Alex McDonald, MacEwan University, Edmonton
“Queer(ing) Curation”
3. Rachel Trusty, Appalachian State University
“An Interrogation of Queer Abstraction”

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Session 6 — 10:00–11:30 — Queering the Archive

Moderator: Saskia May and Arden Waterman

1. Adrian Deveau, Concordia University
“Telepathic Visions: A Psychic Investigation of Queer Hauntings in Canadian Archives”
2. Richard Sawdon Smith, Norwich University of the Arts

“Unpacking and Unknowing: Queering the Archive through Artistic Research and Photographic Practice”

3. Scott East, UNSW, Australia
“Creative Responses to the Queer Archive”

Session 7 — 12:00–13:30 — Storytelling, Poetic Inquiry, and Queer Epistemologies

Moderator: Jacob Davey Lambert and Chloe Campbell

1. Alex Martin-Carey, Central Saint Martins, UAL
“Fishing in Dungeness: Writing, Reading, and Rewriting Traditional Stories through Queer Experience”

2. Jessica Radicic, Claremont School of Theology
“Queer Appalachian Trickster Poetics and the Materiality of Opacity”

3. JodiAnn Stevenson, California Institute of Integral Studies
“Is It / Am I Queer or Fat Enough?: Complicating the Borderlands in Academic Poetic Inquiry”

Session 8 — 13:30–15:00 — Queer Joy, Trans Lives

Moderator: Arden Waterman

1. Rhys Dreeszen Bowman, Pratt Institute
“‘Any Act of Joy You Feel as a Trans Person Is Inherently Rebellious’: Explorations of Trans Joy in a Southern Context”

2. Dani Sondgeroth, Independent
“Encrypted Joy: Glitching Gender and Building Trans Worlds at Body Hack”

3. J. Audra Williams, Arizona State University
“Researcher Reflections: Centering Queer Joy through Photovoice in Higher Education”

4. Sydney Paluch, Cornell University
“(Un)Visible Mending: Trans Textual Epistemology as Queer Method”

Open Mic Night — 17:00–18:00

Presenter Abstracts & Biographies

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Session 1 — 10:00–11:30 — Queer Spaces and Temporalities in Visual Culture

Moderator: Arden Waterman and Emmy Vye

1. **Yuanhan Han**, Ningbo Childhood Education College, China
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“Queering Socialist Femininity: Wang Xiaotang's Gendered Performances in Chinese Socialist Cinema (1949–1966)”

Abstract: Scholarship on Chinese socialist cinema has often approached femininity through the opposition between revolutionary virtue and bourgeois or enemy-coded seduction. Taking queer not as an identity label but as a critical method, this paper reconsiders that opposition through the gendered performances of Wang Xiaotang, one of the most prominent stars of Mao-era cinema. It offers a comparative analysis of her roles as the female spy A Lan in *The Intrepid Hero* (Yingxiong hudan, 1958) and the revolutionary sisters Jinhuan and Yinhuan in *Struggles in an Ancient City* (Yehuo chunfeng dou gucheng, 1963).

In *The Intrepid Hero*, A Lan's glamorous costume, rumba dancing, controlled sensuality, and dangerous mobility associate intensified femininity with political and moral suspicion. Yet Wang's charisma also makes this supposedly negative figure unusually compelling, allowing embodied pleasure to exceed the film's ideological classification. In *Struggles in an Ancient City*, Wang's dual role turns the same star body into two contrasting repertoires: Jinhuan's firm voice, expansive gestures, and decisive physicality draw upon masculine-coded revolutionary authority, while Yinhuan's softer vocality, restrained posture, and emotional responsiveness approximate conventional femininity.

Through close analysis of voice, gesture, gaze, movement, costume, and screen presence, the paper argues that Wang's performances do not simply reproduce fixed female types. Instead, they reveal socialist femininity as a mobile set of techniques redistributed across enemy and revolutionary bodies, political virtue and erotic visibility, masculinity and femininity. Queering Wang Xiaotang's star image therefore exposes both the regulatory work of socialist gender representation and its instability: the very performances designed to secure ideological distinctions also demonstrate that gendered and political identities are constructed, repeatable, and never fully containable.

Bio: Yuanhan Han teaches in the Journalism and News Production programme at Ningbo Childhood Education College, China. He received his BA in Film Production from the University of Central Lancashire, graduating with Distinction and receiving the Best Student Award. He later completed an MA in Film Studies at the University of Manchester with Distinction. His dissertation, “Performing New China: An Analysis of the Star Identity of Chinese Socialist Film

Stars (1949–1966),” received the Outstanding Performance in MA Film Studies Prize for achieving the highest dissertation mark in the programme. His research interests include star studies, performance studies, and the history of Chinese socialist cinema. His publications include “A Study of the Communication Mechanisms and Strategies of New Mainstream Cinema: The Battle at Lake Changjin and Water Gate Bridge as Case Studies.” His current research examines how performance, stardom, and ideology intersect in the construction of socialist identities in twentieth-century Chinese cinema.

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2. **Zehang Jiang**, University of the Arts London
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“Queer Liminalities: Liminal Space, Desire, and Transnational Belonging in Ferzan Özpetek’s *Hamam*”

Abstract: Ferzan Özpetek’s *Hamam* (1997) employs spatial transitions between Rome and Istanbul, and between the domestic home and the public bathhouse, to foreground a crucial premise: queer experience never unfolds solely “within” identity itself; rather, it is produced through the displacement and reconfiguration of space. In other words, space is not merely the backdrop against which gender and desire are expressed, but the condition that enables them to become visible, mobile, and transformable. It is in this sense that the intersections between different architectural spaces in the film shape Francesco’s ongoing transformations in gender, desire, and cultural belonging.

Drawing on liminality and liminal space as its theoretical framework, and engaging with critical perspectives on the body, the gaze, and spatial regulation in queer cinema, this essay examines how the hamam functions as a multiple liminal space that accommodates both gender fluidity and transnational mobility. First, through an analysis of Francesco’s two visits to the bathhouse, the essay considers how thresholds, the male gaze, bodily nudity, steam, flowing water, and song gradually suspend his identity as a husband and his heterosexual masculinity, allowing same-sex desire to emerge before it can be clearly named. Second, it analyses the bathhouse-restoration montage and the sequence in which Marta discovers Francesco and Mehmet together, arguing that the hamam becomes a space in which the disunity and instability of Europeaness are made visible, exposing tensions surrounding transnationalism and Orientalism.

By comparing Girelli’s and Fernández-Carbajal’s differing interpretations of transnational Orientalism, the essay demonstrates that the hamam can both construct Istanbul as an ancient and sensuous Western Other and reorganise its historical and cultural meanings through architectural restoration, collective labour, and embodied relationships. *Hamam* (1997) ultimately presents neither a linear transition from heterosexuality to homosexuality nor one from Italian to Turkish identity. Instead, it depicts a queer subject continuously situated within processes of gender transgression, cultural encounter, and negotiations of power. Liminal space may open up new possibilities for desire and belonging, but it cannot guarantee the subject a stable social, cultural, or identitarian position.

Bio: Zehang Jiang is a 24-year-old filmmaker and researcher currently in the third year of the BA Film and Television programme at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. His work spans film studies and on-set production, with research interests centred on queer cinema, metacinema, and the analysis of musical films. Alongside his academic work, he practises as a director, sound recordist, and first assistant director.

He worked as a sound recordist on the documentary *Crumbs or Traces?*, which examines how internet cookies track and collect personal information. The film was shortlisted for the London RTS Student Film Festival in 2025. He also contributed as a producer to *So Happy You Came*, which was selected for the Short Film Unit of the 17th FIRST International Film Festival Xining.

His previous professional experience includes working in on-site production for iQIYI's musical variety programme *The Big Band 3* from June to July 2023. He has also worked as an instructor at Beijing Page Life Culture Co., Ltd., where he taught specialised courses for directing applicants preparing for art school entrance examinations.

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3. **Fangyuan Geng**, Minzu University of China
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“Compressed Queer Temporality: Embodied Presence and Collective Futurity in *120 BPM*”

Abstract: This paper approaches queer cinema not simply as a site of representation, but as a critical and methodological practice for rethinking normative understandings of time, embodiment, and political agency. Focusing on Robin Campillo's *120 BPM* (2017) within the broader context of French queer cinema's engagement with the AIDS crisis, this paper explores how cinematic practices can reconfigure experiences of survival, collective struggle, and futurity in a historical context where queer bodies were constructed as “dangerous” and “pathological” through medical discourse, media stigmatisation, and public health regimes. Rather than reading AIDS-related queer cinema primarily through frameworks of illness, trauma, and loss, this paper argues that queer cinema can generate alternative temporalities and political possibilities.

Through a close textual analysis of *120 BPM*, this paper examines how the film's cinematic construction of ACT UP-Paris activism, collective mourning, embodied performance, and intimate encounters challenges heteronormative temporalities organised around reproduction, progress, and futurity. Drawing on queer theories of temporality and futurity, particularly José Esteban Muñoz's concept of queer futurity and Jack Halberstam's theorisation of queer time, this paper considers how the film disrupts linear narratives of historical progress by foregrounding urgency, vulnerability, and collective presence.

This paper conceptualises the temporal condition articulated through *120 BPM*'s aesthetic and political practices as “compressed queer temporality”: a condition in which queer subjects confront a compressed horizon of the future while simultaneously creating new forms

of intimacy, political action, and collective imagination. While the AIDS crisis produces experiences of temporal uncertainty and precarity, *120 BPM* transforms this compression into practices of resistance and queer futurity. By reimagining the relationship between time, embodiment, and activism, this paper argues that *120 BPM* reveals alternative ways of understanding survival, resistance, and collective futures beyond normative frameworks of time and social reproduction.

Bio: Fangyuan Geng is a postgraduate researcher at the School of Journalism and Communication, Minzu University of China. With an academic background in Journalism and Communication Studies, she develops interdisciplinary research interests across film studies, cultural studies, media theory, and queer studies. Her research explores how cinematic and visual practices shape understandings of identity, embodiment, political agency, and social visibility.

Her current research focuses on French queer cinema and its intersections with questions of political history, bodily representation, and collective resistance. Drawing on queer theory and cultural analysis, she examines how films challenge normative structures of visibility, temporality, and belonging, while creating alternative ways of understanding marginalised bodies and political participation. Her recent work explores AIDS-related queer cinema and queer temporalities, particularly how cinematic practices reconfigure experiences of survival, activism, and collective futures.

Geng's broader research interests include the politics of representation, cultural memory, and the relationship between visual culture and social movements. Through interdisciplinary approaches informed by film studies, media studies, and queer theory, she investigates how cultural practices challenge dominant frameworks of representation, visibility, and knowledge production while creating alternative possibilities for political and social imagination.

Session 2 — 11:45–13:15 — Reframing the Normative: Queer as Lens and Method

Moderator: Arden Waterman

1. **Ina Linge, Chloe Asker & Siân Docksey**, University of Exeter
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“Queer Natures: Critical-Creative Ecologies for the Arts and Humanities”

Abstract: The Queer Natures project (2024-27, funded by AHRC, University of Exeter) aims to bring topics of queerness and nature into creative and critical dialogue, through the collision of artistic practice and academic research in languages, cultures, and societies. Through critical-creative practice involving artist partnerships — S.K. Marley with Peak Queer Adventures, Siân Docksey with Venus Pole Studios, and several micro-commissions — the project sought to make archival material accessible to new and broad Anglophone audiences to enhance cross-cultural knowledge about queerness and nature.

Through reflections on the project, the presenters will think through 1) queer ecology as a mode of artistic exploration, practice, analysis, and methodology that provides a creative lens to explore nature/s; 2) the qualities of queerness as method — creativity and play — that are generative in nature and disrupt boundaries (whilst acknowledging that some boundaries are undisruptable); and 3) academic-creative ecologies of practice: the practical and theoretical methods that enable these kinds of projects. Our reflections will demonstrate the importance of collaborative, boundary disrupting, creative academic-artistic work in a time of academic precarity for the Arts and Humanities.

We intend for the presentation to be a space of creative reflection. If you would like to participate in the creative part, we invite you to bring some paper and pens with you to the presentation.

Bio: Professor Ina Linge (she/her) is Associate Professor in German, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Exeter and the project lead for Queer Natures. She is a leading expert in the language, culture and history of gender and sexuality in Germany. As part of the Queer Natures project, Ina is working on a book manuscript about the ways in which scientists and writers in early-20th-century Germany looked at animals and the environment to form new ideas about the social role of LGBTQ+ people.

Dr Chloe Asker (they/them) is an academic researcher and creative facilitator, currently working on a Wellcome-funded project at Culture& (an arts and heritage charity) with the University of Oxford. They are also an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Exeter. Chloe is the Impact Evaluator for the Queer Natures project.

Siân Docksey (she/her) is a pole dancing comedian, writer and Artist in Residence on the Queer Natures project. Her artistic practice combining pole dancing with comedy first premiered at Camden People Theatre's Festival of Feminism, leading to a 5-star run of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and sold-out run at London's Soho Theatre.

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2. **Saher Bano**, University of Surrey

"Decoding Digital Diaspora and Heterotopia: Contextualizing Cyberqueer Safe Spaces in South Asian YouTube Poetics"

Abstract: This paper examines how select South Asian diasporic queer poets address the intersectional struggles through digital media platforms such as YouTube and how their poetic performances craft/create transnational safe space(s) for queer community building. Through analyzing select YouTube poems, the chapter argues that these platforms function as the "other," heterotopic, liminal, and affective digital spaces that enable the articulation of queer South Asian diasporic subjectivities otherwise marginalized within dominant socio-cultural, religious, and heteronormative frameworks. Through their digital poetics, Sanah Ahsan and Fatimah Asghar negotiate intertwined questions of queer diaspora, race, gender, and belonging,

while resisting essentialist and homogenizing understandings of South Asian subjectivities and global queer discourses. Drawing on scholarship on digital queer cultures, heterotopia, “transnational connectivities” (Grewal 2005) and safe spaces, the paper situates YouTube as “in-between” and “elsewhere” (Dasgupta and Mahn 2023) spaces where alternative modes of subjectivity, intimacy, and collectivity can emerge. In doing so, their cyberqueer poetics resists assimilation into totalizing meta-narratives and instead foregrounds multiplicity, disidentification, disorientation, and (un)belonging as productive modes of transnational queer diasporic existence. As well, the paper highlights that the digital queer poetics of Ahsan and Asghar rethink and remap the geopolitics of the South Asian diaspora in Britain by crafting transnational queer safe spaces that foster alternative hermeneutics of belonging, solidarity, resistance, and LGBTQIA+ community building.

Bio: Saher Bano is a Commonwealth PhD Scholar, currently working in the Department of Literature and Languages at the University of Surrey, United Kingdom. She is also a recipient of the Charles Wallace India Trust Grant. In addition, she is a senior research fellow in the Department of HSS at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India. Her research interests include contemporary queer feminist poetry, digital media spaces, and cine-scapes. She has published articles in esteemed journals such as *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *English Academy Review*, *Journal of Cultural Research*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, and in publications by Springer Nature.

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3. **Emmy Vye**, London Arts-Based Research Centre
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“Promiscuous Fidelities: How Laplanche Makes Writing Psychoanalytically About Maternal Practice Outside the Mono-Heteronormative Nuclear Family Model Possible”

Abstract: Bersani (1998, p.11) describes a fundamental contradiction in psychoanalysis: that monogamy is “cognitively inconceivable and morally indefensible” in the Freudian model, and yet it has grounded its theory of subject formation and psychic functioning in the nuclear family and the mono-heteronormative couple. When I initially set out to write a psychoanalytic autoethnography of my experiences of pregnancy, birth and mothering young children, I had no idea how impossible this would make my task. In this paper I describe some of the difficulties I encountered in trying to understand my experiences of mothering young children in a non-monogamous family structure psychoanalytically, and how Laplanche’s practice of reading Freud against Freud finally helped me to find a position to write from. I sketch out how Laplanche’s ideas radically reconfigure psychoanalytic understandings of subject formation, parenting and childcare, and how they have helped me to reconcile queer, feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives on my maternal experience.

Bio: Emmy Vye is a writer and creative practitioner, currently finishing up her PhD in Counselling and Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research integrates

maternal studies, psychoanalytic feminism and ecopsychology through arts-based methodologies.

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Session 3 — 14:00–15:30 — Uncovering Queer History through Literature and Art

Moderator: Emmy Vye

1. **Clara Julia Escalera**, Europa-Universität Viadrina
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“The Dyke ‘At the Motorcycle’? Rethinking Gender Ambiguity and the ‘New Woman’ in Lotte Laserstein's Work”

Abstract: In her Berlin-period paintings Lotte Laserstein frequently engaged with the figure of the “New Woman”, the cultural phenomenon of a liberated woman, autonomous from traditional gender expectations. In 1929 Lotte Laserstein painted *At the Motorcycle*, with an androgynous person in heavy leather clothes in front of a motorcycle. By choosing this motif, Laserstein addressed a distinctly modern topic: a relatively new technological object in Germany with growing popularity especially for men.

Although she depicted her cousin Kurt Lazaros some authors discuss whether this is a depiction of a woman due to the androgynous appearance of the person. Given Laserstein’s characteristically subtle provocations, the gender ambiguity in the painting may well be intentional. If the figure could be a woman at a motorcycle, a new and even more progressive perspective emerges, since only a small number of women are documented as having participated in motorcycle racing, and the everyday use of motorcycles by women at that time is not well documented.

Combined with the questioning of the sexual orientation implicit in the concept of the “New Woman” (explored further in the presentation) this may suggest a queer woman posing in front of her bike. Taking this non-academic perspective seriously, Laserstein created a subtle glimpse of a queer reality in 1920s Germany and a strikingly modern work that can even be linked to today’s “Dykes on bikes”.

Drawing on Butler’s performativity and employing discourse analysis, this presentation examines how the painting’s title has oscillated between gender-free openness and gendered classification. As there is no biographical evidence of Laserstein’s queerness, it includes a discussion on queer visibility that deliberately disconnects biographical from pictorial interpretation, centering a queer gaze often found in non-academic publications and asking how the openness of Laserstein’s painting can be preserved.

Bio: Clara Julia Escalera is a scholar in cultural studies working interdisciplinarily at the intersection of Queer Theory, Gender Studies and Visual Studies. She is currently completing her doctoral dissertation at Europa-Universität Viadrina (Frankfurt/Oder) on queer discourse around the work of Lotte Laserstein and the promotion of diversity through art. Alongside her academic work, she maintains an artistic and curatorial practice: she is writing a graphic novel

based on her dissertation to make its content accessible to a wider public, and is conceiving and directing an inclusive art project with people with and without disabilities, with exhibitions in Berlin and Basel. She also gives workshops on queer perspectives on Lotte Laserstein and life drawing for queer communities, and teaches artistic methods to social workers. She is part of the organizing group of the queer feminist publication *brav_a* and of the network Museen Queeren Berlin.

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2. **Akiko Mizoguchi**, Tokyo Woman's Christian University
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"Rethinking Edward Carpenter's Queer Representation of the Samurai"

Abstract: Edward Carpenter, a utopian socialist and early advocate for gay rights in early twentieth-century Britain, sought to relativize the heteronormative Euro-American discourse on sex by adopting the methods of his contemporary European sexologists in presenting the same-sex practices of historical and cultural "Other" societies. In *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk* (1911) in particular, reflecting the intimate relationship between sexology and anthropology of the era, he discusses how in "pre-Christian times and among the early civilizations," "intermediate people and their corresponding sex-relationships played a distinct part in the life of the tribe or nation, and were openly acknowledged and recognised as part of the general society" (v). His queer representation of these "Other" societies helped, to a certain extent, to avoid racializing them as "abject." Particularly when advocating his ideal of "uranian" love, he favorably categorized Japanese samurai same-sex relationships as a form of military comradeship, much like that of the ancient Dorians. However, in his representation of these practices, he struggled to account for the complex dynamics of how contemporary Japanese intellectuals—whether negating or affirming the existence of pre-modern samurai homoerotic and homosocial culture—were actively redefining and reconstructing their "national" identities and sexualities under the constraints of Western modernity, constraints that simultaneously shaped Carpenter's own sense of social and sexual subjectivity. This paper examines the possibilities and limitations of Carpenter's "progressive" queer reading of samurai sexual practices, specifically in relation to how he viewed modern Japanese society through the lens of his ideal of same-sex love.

Bio: Akiko Mizoguchi completed her MA at the University of Leeds and completed her doctoral coursework (ABD) at Tsuda College in Japan. She is a Professor in the Department of English at Tokyo Woman's Christian University. She has published 21 papers and co-authored 11 books, focusing primarily on British colonial literature concerning Africa and African literature in English. She has also written a paper on the Black British writer Caryl Phillips, and published both a paper and a short article on the South African film *District 9*. She served as an editorial board member for *Black Studies* (published by the Black Studies Association in Japan) for several years, and was the chief editor of the journal for 5 years. She is currently beginning newly

funded research on early twentieth-century intellectuals, such as Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter, and Olive Schreiner, examining how their “progressive” representations of gender and sexuality intersected with their representations of racial “Otherness.”

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3. **Nicholas Maniu & Philipp Gufler**, Forum Queeres Archiv Munich / Tate Modern
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“Queering the Archive: Paul Hoecker and Transdisciplinary Approaches to Hidden Queer Histories”

Abstract: How can queer archival research challenge established categories of art history and generate alternative ways of knowing, and remembering? This presentation introduces the interdisciplinary Paul Hoecker research group at the Forum Queeres Archiv München (FQAM) and explores our collaborative research as a queer method of engaging with hidden histories.

Paul Hoecker (1854–1910), one of the first progressive professors at the Munich Art Academy, remains an understudied figure in queer art history. In a private letter to sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, Hoecker acknowledged his same-sex desire. His paintings repeatedly return to handsome young men, often represented as Pierrot, as well as to nuns and Catholic imagery. These works open up tensions between desire, repression, religious symbolism, social norms, and the visibility of queer experience in late nineteenth-century Germany. The research also considers allegations concerning the use of a male sex worker as a model for a depiction of the Virgin Mary, alongside Hoecker’s later erotic works produced for Jacques d’Adelswärd-Fersen and their problematic sexualization of youthful bodies.

While I have recently published an article on this research in “Arts” (MDPI), the proposed contribution would not simply reproduce that publication. Instead, it would foreground the collaborative research process at the FQAM and its potential as a queer archival methodology. The research group brings together art historians Christina Spachtholz and myself, architect Stefan Gruhne, and artist Philipp Gufler.

Gufler would contribute an artistic perspective, discussing his own use of archival material in his artworks and his engagement with hidden queer histories. His practice opens a further question: how can archival fragments be reactivated artistically when queer lives and experiences have been omitted, obscured, or encoded in historical records? Bringing together art history, artistic practice, and archival research, the presentation asks how interdisciplinary collaboration can queer established forms of knowledge and create new ways of making queer histories visible.

Bio: Nicholas Maniu is an art historian based in Munich, Germany. He received his PhD from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. His doctoral dissertation, “Queere Männlichkeiten – Bilderwelten männlich-männlichen Begehrens und queerer Geschlechtlichkeit” (Queer Masculinities – Imagery of Male–Male Desire and Queer Gender Expression), was published in 2023 by *transcript Verlag*. His research focuses on queer visual cultures, masculinities, and the representation of gender and desire in art.

From January 2023 to December 2024, Maniu was a scientific curatorial fellow (wissenschaftlicher Volontär) at the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus and Kunstbau Munich, where he co-curated "Turner. Three Horizons" and "The Blue Rider. A New Language," and contributed to several exhibition, catalogue, and research projects. In 2024–2025, he worked as a research associate at the Museum Brandhorst on the exhibition "5 Friends. John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly." Since June 2025, he has been a research associate at the Lenbachhaus. From June to December 2026, he joins the Brooks International Fellowship programme to explore the theme "Ecology of Migrating Identities" through an examination of how artistic practices negotiate shifting forms of identity and belonging.

In addition to his curatorial practice, Maniu has extensive experience in archival research and scholarly editing. He has volunteered at the Forum Queeres Archiv München (FQAM) for over ten years.

Philipp Gufler studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Among other artist residencies, he attended De Ateliers, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, from 2015 to 2017; Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Maine, USA, in 2019; and Delfina Foundation, London, UK, in 2021. In 2015, he received the Bavarian Art Promotion Award; in 2020, the Media Award from the German AIDS Foundation; and in 2021, he won the Dutch Royal Award for Painting.

He has had solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Mainz, Kunstverein Göttingen, Françoise Heitsch in Munich, BQ in Berlin, and Kevin Space in Vienna, as well as group exhibitions at Haus der Kunst in Munich, Centraal Museum in Utrecht, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin.

He lives and works in Amsterdam and Munich. He is an active member of the self-organized Forum Queeres Archiv München, or Queer Archive Forum Munich.

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Session 4 — 16:00–17:30 — Gender, Disability, and Queer Embodiment

Moderator: Daniel Siuba

1. **Elia Khalaf**, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
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“The Third Body: Surrealist Self-Portraiture and Queer Men in Art Therapy”

Abstract: This mixed methods qualitative case study explored how surrealist self-portraiture functions as an art therapy intervention for queer men navigating body image concerns shaped by normative beauty ideals. Queer men experience disproportionately elevated rates of body dissatisfaction and appearance-based distress due to compounding pressures from both heteronormative and gay male beauty standards that valorize specific body types (muscular,

lean, youthful bodies) while marginalizing diverse embodiments. Despite this documented need, therapeutic interventions specifically addressing queer men's body image remain sparse. This study examines surrealist self-portraiture as a culturally affirming intervention that leverages surrealism's emphasis on distortion, dreamlike imagery, and resistance to realistic representation to allow participants to explore and subvert normative bodily ideals.

Self-portraits created by six adult queer men (ages 18+) currently receiving art therapy services are showcased as a queer arts-based research project. The project included pre- and post-intervention quantitative assessments (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Body Image States Scale, Body Appreciation Scale-2) and qualitative data collection via audio-recorded interviews, participant artwork, artist statements, and researcher process notes. Grounded in queer theory and psychoanalytic frameworks, this study employed reflexive thematic analysis alongside visual analysis of artwork to examine how participants negotiate, resist, and reimagine normative body representation through creative practice.

Outcomes include qualitative descriptions of participants' lived experiences, identification of common visual and verbal themes in queer surrealist self-portraiture, preliminary evidence of changes in self-esteem and body appreciation, and practical clinical recommendations for art therapists working with LGBTQ+ populations. This research contributes to bridging gaps between art therapy, queer studies, and body image literature while centering queer voices as central to knowledge production. By demonstrating how creative practice functions as resistance and meaning-making around embodiment, this study advances both theoretical understanding and clinical practice in affirming, justice-oriented mental health care.

Bio: Elia Khalaf, PhD, LMHC, ATR-BC (he/they) is a professor, board-certified art therapist, psychotherapist, artist, and scholar. As an Arab-American, non-binary immigrant, Dr. Khalaf positions their practice and research at the intersections of wellness and social justice, Eastern wisdom and Western science, and art and mental health. They hold a PhD in Counseling Education and Supervision from Oregon State University.

Dr. Khalaf earned their MA in Art Therapy with a focus on clinical psychology at New York University. They apply a variety of tools including art therapies, mindfulness, somatic practices, nature-based therapy, and EMDR to support BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities and empower emerging therapists.

In 2025, their peer-reviewed paper was published in the *International Journal of Art Therapy* (2025). This paper, titled 'Blooming names: nature-based art therapy and poetry honoring Black lives', documents and analyzes an interdisciplinary project of the same title, that took place in 2020 in Miami, FL. The publication offers art therapists, mental health professionals, and community-based practitioners a case study of how nature-based art therapy can facilitate collective healing and amplify marginalized voices. More recently, they were invited as a guest speaker at the International School of Analytical Psychology (ISAP) Jungian Odyssey in Zurich in 2026 to present on queer surrealist art as a form of resistance, exploring how queer artists subvert oppressive structures.

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2. **Gala Wilkie**, Independent

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“Misogyny Circus: A Spectacle of Disabled Queer-Fem Strength Facing Medicalization”

Abstract: Identity-transforming medical experiences are represented through autobiographical and embodied art — my tattoos. In my YouTube channel I occupy public space while ageing and sharing the negative effects of my physical disability. Sexist and ageist comments on my vlogs prompted my latest art project; I visualize the persistence of misogyny in the field of women’s health care, despite decades and waves of feminism. I reflect on cultural and medical misogyny by drawing on imagery of the circus freak and performer. An analysis of the geometrical structures inherent in the artwork, depicting a tightrope walker, an elephant’s pyramid, and a fortune-telling hag, leads to my envisioning an alternative: queer circles of care. Queer-feminism incapacitates misogyny through feats of collective strength.

Bio: Gala Wilkie is an artist, teacher, and author, who researches subjective experience through autobiography. Blending art practice methodology with queer and feminist theories, Gala explores personal and cultural meanings of body-taboos intersecting with public expectations of women in all life stages. Gala’s preferred art media include portraiture in oil paint and linocut prints. Her main interests include the social perception of mother and child archetypes and images of queerness and disability acceptance.

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3. **Dani Xena Knoll**, Independent
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“Too Big for This World: A Femme's Fate”

Abstract: Being seen as too much, too loud, too emotional, too big, is a time-honored rite of passage for femmes. Since such perceptions are largely outside one’s control, this rite carries the force of fate. Jungian analyst Liz Greene traces fate’s mythic association with the feminine to embodiment, mortality, and that which conscious will alone cannot overcome. Yet fate sits uneasily within modern views of agency, where accepting limitation can look like passivity or the loss of free will. While not everything can be chosen, how we relate to a fated largesse can shape where life takes us, often through unexpected and enchanting waylays.

Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* suggests that “too much” points less to an inherent defect than to a failure of fit between bodies and the orientations of a cis-heteronormative world. Disorientation from this failure of fit can be epistemologically productive, revealing lines that organize environments around certain bodies. Along these lines, Jack Halberstam’s *The Queer Art of Failure* reclaims failure as a way of knowing beyond normative measures of success. In Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science*, amor fati and an experimental play with error further elaborate a way of relating to fate that transforms one’s relationship to what cannot be changed without endorsing every circumstance.

Drawing on mythology and autobiographical sharing, this presentation sees failure as a method, allowing interruption, contradiction, and misdirection to influence argument and form. Bringing these thinkers together, it proposes a queer understanding of Jungian individuation, not as orienting towards a fixed or perfected Self, but as an emergent, asymptotic process of self-becoming with unconscious mistakes and happenings. It argues that a loving relationship with failure can help disarm stigma's hold and keep one open to change, through which the folly that interrupts well-laid plans may become a guide.

Bio: Dani Xena Knoll is a psychotherapist and scholar whose work explores the intersections of culture, psychology, and philosophy. Their intellectual interests have been informed by ethnographic inquiry, community-based research, and clinical practice, with a focus on how transformation can occur through creative processes from ritual to the conscious integration of unconscious experience. Their scholarship has grown out of living intentionally in community for over a decade at the Los Angeles Ecovillage, as well as from their work with Solidarity Research Center, where solidarity, care, and collective life became central themes in their research. Alongside maintaining a psychodynamic psychotherapy practice, Dani's current research brings queer theory into conversation with depth psychology, pulling from mythology, autobiography, and philosophical reflection to reconsider questions of fate, failure, and individuation. Across these areas, they seek to bridge disciplinary boundaries while remaining grounded in lived experience, reckoning with how uncertainty, contradiction, and the limits of conscious control can illuminate new possibilities for relationships, self-understanding, and collectivity.

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Session 5 — 18:00–19:30 — Creative Practice & Curatorial Method

Moderator: Nathan Lamarche and Ellora Sutton

1. **Audrie Ford**, University of Arizona
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“Telling Herstory – Zines as Method & Data”

Abstract: This paper hones in on zines as both method and data for qualitative studies of queer and trans* lives, especially as seen through the lens of Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR). FPAR sees knowledge creation as inherently political and understands gender to be a critical lens for examining the lives of marginalized populations, and in this case zine-making made it possible for QTBIPOC students to tell their stories without using "the tools of the master," as many undergraduate research experiences rely on. In a forthcoming dissertation study, queer and trans* undergraduates engaged in feminist activism created zines to tell their stories, make sense of their lived experiences, and share the knowledge they hold about discrimination, sexual violence, and activism in their communities. This presentation will explore how zine-making specifically queered the research to center and amplify the voices of the most marginalized.

Bio: Audrie K. Ford (they/she) is a queer femme and PhD candidate at the University of Arizona, studying critical feminisms and Higher Education. In both their full-time and personal work, they engage in activism alongside the bad-ass youths of Tucson, Arizona. They are passionate about the powers of storytelling and art in uplifting the lived experiences of QTBIPOC populations, and believe that queer and trans* liberation is liberation for all.

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2. **Robin Alex McDonald**, MacEwan University, Edmonton
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“Queer(ing) Curation”

Abstract: What might it mean to curate an art exhibition using a queer methodology? What kinds of artworks would be included? What kind of space(s) would house the show? How would the artworks be installed? Who would be invited to attend, and how would they be made to truly feel welcome and included in the gallery space?

I begin this presentation by posing this line of questioning to the audience. I invite them to consider art that they love, why they love it, and what kind of conversations they would want to have about that art. I ask them to imagine the ideal conditions and space(s) in which that art could be experienced with others, and how they imagine themselves feeling (emotionally, physically) in that space.

I ask audience members to keep their utopian art-viewing experiences in mind as we turn our attention to examine the typical contemporary gallery space: the quiet, disembodied white cube. Mobilizing queer theoretical critiques of disciplined bourgeois subjectivities, I discuss the problems and limitations inherent in the modernist invention of white cube galleries. Using my own independently-curated exhibitions as case studies, I consider what standard curatorial practices could benefit from a complete re-imagining, as well as what certain “queer” (or queer-er) exhibition components could look like. Drawing on histories of feminist and queer alternative spaces in the 1970s, as well as queer approaches to kinship and care in the 1980s and 90s, I suggest that heeding queer historical lessons can help us to make more inclusive art exhibitions in the present. Ultimately, I aim to use the space of this presentation to (re-)envision how we might come together in different ways, in different spaces, to better enjoy, learn from, or engage with artworks.

Bio: Robin Alex McDonald (they/them) is an independent curator, arts writer, and Assistant Professor of Art History at MacEwan University in Amiskwacîwâskahikan (also known as Edmonton, Alberta). Working at the intersections of contemporary art and critical theory, Robin’s research explores queer and trans contemporary art, theories of affect and emotion, histories of psychiatry and medicine, and discursive constructions of “depression” and “mental health.” They are the co-editor of the 2021 anthology, *Re/Imagining Depression: Creative Approaches to “Feeling Bad”* (with Julie Hollenbach, NSCAD University), and have published in *Literature and Medicine*, *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *Queer Studies in Media and Popular Culture*,

n.paradoxa, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *esse* and other arts magazines and academic journals. Their curated projects, which they undertake both independently and collaboratively (as Minor Hockey Curatorial Collective), have been presented at a construction site, on Zoom, atop a frozen lake, at a Provincial Archive, and inside a chicken coop. Their cat is named Opie after Catherine Opie, an artist best known for her photographs of the L.A. leather dyke community.

3. **Rachel Trusty**, Appalachian State University
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“An Interrogation of Queer Abstraction”

Abstract: “Queer Abstraction” as an artistic genre exploded into popularity in 2015. With over a dozen exhibitions, the genre was lauded as a way for LGBT+ artists and makers to express embodiment, sexuality, and being without the constraints of figurative representation or threats of censorship. These arguments rang especially relevant during the first Trump Administration’s wave of anti-LGBT policies. The peak of “Queer Abstraction” discourse appeared to culminate with the publication of *Dragging Away* (2022) by Lex Lancaster, a text which solidified the genre’s relevance in the canon.

With the beginning of the second Trump Administration, I expected “Queer Abstraction” to reemerge, more organized and relevant than before – but nothing. While the same artists continue to use abstraction thoughtfully in their personal practices, museums and galleries have largely abandoned the theme. Unlike other identity abstraction movements (Black Abstraction, Feminist Abstraction, Lesbian Abstraction), Queer Abstraction has no material or aesthetic cohesion. My concerns that the genre was “queer” in name only - and a way for museums to participate in DEI initiatives without actually showing visible queerness - seemed to be realized.

In this paper presentation, I will outline the history of Queer Abstraction for unfamiliar audiences. I will then outline major concerns in order to raise the questions: What is Queer Abstraction and has it truly been successful? I am deeply interested in feedback from other conference goers about the rise (and in my opinion now fall) of this genre.

Bio: Rachel Trusty is a Teaching Assistant Professor of Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. She holds a Ph.D. in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from the University of Kansas and a M.F.A. in Studio Art from Lesley College in Cambridge, MA. Trusty’s research and artistic practice center queer theory and history, visual culture, and contemporary art.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Session 6 — 10:00–11:30 — Queering the Archive

Moderator: Saskia May and Arden Waterman

1. **Adrian Deveau**, Concordia University
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“Telepathic Visions: A Psychic Investigation of Queer Hauntings in Canadian Archives”

Abstract: In August 2020, I was chosen as the Long Days Artist-in-Residence at Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre in Kingston, Ontario, to conduct an engagement with their Nan Yeomans Research Library. The library archive compiled ephemera, film, funding budgets, and public documents from artist-run centres across the land we now call Canada, dating back to the beginning of the 1970s and spanning into the 2020s. My residency project, entitled Telepathic Visions, aimed to establish a practical concept of telepathy to parse through queer ephemera, connecting myself with embodied queer histories untapped by the material world of art history’s grip on positivist Western Enlightenment philosophy. In this talk titled “Telepathic Visions: A Psychic Investigation of Queer Hauntings in Canadian Archives,” I will draw from my upcoming book chapter in *Museum Queeries: Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, and LGBTTTQ* Interventions into Museums and Curation* (Jagiellonian University Press) and explore a methodological framework of telepathy to establish alternative modes of psychic connection within archival spaces. The curatorial aims for the methodology of telepathy are two-fold: to escape the rigid boundaries of commodification and depersonalization in museum collections while simultaneously introducing alternative modes of queer hauntology into the archives and galleries.

Bio: Adrian Deveau is an art historian and artist based in Montreal, QC, and holds a PhD in Art History from Concordia University (Montreal). Their work has appeared in *Museum Queeries: Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, and LGBTTTQ* Interventions into Museums, Archives, and Curating* (Jagiellonian University Press, 2026), *Ampersand: An American Studies Journal* (Boston University), *Asian Diasporic Cultures and the Americas* (Brill), *Network in Canadian History and Environment* (NiCHE), and in *Les Lieux des Savoirs Photographique* (Artexte). Adrian currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Third Floor Journal*.

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2. **Richard Sawdon Smith**, Norwich University of the Arts
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“Unpacking and Unknowing: Queering the Archive through Artistic Research and Photographic Practice”

Abstract: What happens when artistic research resists fixed outcomes, stable narratives, and conventional forms of knowledge production? This paper brings together two interconnected strands of practice-led research: the public unpacking of a living HIV/AIDS archive through *A Life Lived Through Photography* in Norwich, and the development of a queer photographic methodology grounded in “unknowing” and “becoming.” Together, these projects propose queerness not simply as identity, but as a critical and creative method for rethinking how knowledge is produced, shared, and experienced.

The first project explores the archive as a “gathering” of artworks, ephemera, memories, communities, and transnational networks of artists, activists, and cultural workers connected through HIV/AIDS visual culture. Through a performative residency in which archival materials were continuously reconfigured in dialogue with audiences and partner archives, the exhibition activated new relationships across generations, geographies, and histories.

The second project develops a queer artistic methodology of unknowing, informed by experimentation, play, and the refusal of predetermined outcomes. Emerging through photographic works produced in domestic and temporary queer spaces, this approach positions not knowing as a productive condition of becoming, transformation, and knowledge creation. By embracing uncertainty and lived experience, the work challenges normative epistemologies and opens possibilities for alternative subjectivities, temporalities, and futures.

Drawing on queer theory and artistic research, the paper argues that both the archive and the studio can function as queer sites of encounter where memories, bodies, histories, and speculative possibilities are assembled and reassembled. Through gathering and unknowing, artistic research becomes an intervention into dominant knowledge systems, generating new forms of connection, remembrance, and queer world-making.

Bio: Richard Sawdon Smith is Professor of Fine Art and Director of Fine Art and Photography at Norwich University of the Arts. Recognised as an internationally established Queer artist for his work with AIDS cultures, his photographic practice has been published, exhibited and screened extensively around the world. He is a Patron of Norwich Film Festival, Co-Chair and Trustee of Norwich Pride, Advisor to Queerfest CIC, is on the Editorial Advisory Panel of the *Journal of Photography & Culture* and a Reviewer for *Compendium Journals*. He is a member of the Visual AIDS Artist+ Registry in NYC for which he has curated and been selected for a number of ‘virtual’ exhibitions. A former Trustee of the Council for Higher Education in Art & Design (CHEAD), founding Board Member of bookRoom Press, and previously on the Editorial Advisory Board of Mustard TV. A winner of the National Portrait Gallery Photographic Portrait Award, he is co-author of Langford’s *Basic Photography* and *The Book is Alive!*

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3. **Scott East**, UNSW, Australia
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“Creative Responses to the Queer Archive”

Abstract: This presentation discusses two contemporary art projects, Todd Fuller's 1727: Adriaan for Pieter (2021) and Drew Pettifer's A Sorrowful Act (2020) which contest the invisibility of queer people. Both these artworks take a 1727 sodomy trial as the inspiration for creative reimaginings which revisit archives to rescue queer stories. A close reading of these two art projects is undertaken engaging with Erin Manning's concept of the anarchive which disrupts linear concepts of time: unsettling the event from a historical occurrence towards the transformative power of historiographical resistance (Manning 2020). This resonates with ongoing struggles to contest queer legal erasure and physical and political invisibility. This presentation argues for the role of art in contesting histories of silencing through the practice of anarchiving sodomy.

Bio: Dr Scott East is a Lecturer at UNSW Art & Design committed to engaged research with the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) and broader cultural sectors having presented his research in policy, academic and industry settings. His research interests span museums, culture, gender, queer theory, practice-led research, cultural policy and critical and creative pedagogies.

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Session 7 — 12:00–13:30 — Storytelling, Poetic Inquiry, and Queer Epistemologies

Moderator: Jacob Davey Lambert and Chloe Campbell

1. **Alex Martin-Carey**, Central Saint Martins, UAL
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"Fishing in Dungeness: Writing, Reading, and Rewriting Traditional Stories through Queer Experience"

Abstract: In the Autumn, I felt an old story call. A story I thought I knew. It spoke again in a language I couldn't follow, in a voice I'd never heard, familiar as breath.

In 2025 I set out to write a contemporary queer retelling of the traditional story, *The Ballad of Lord Bateman*. My version, Bateman, seeks to hold the source story up to the light, to turn it around and to wonder about the cracks and uncertainties that emerge from a careful observation of this traditional love story that is also harbouring pressing questions of power and politics. Beneath this, though, Bateman is also story about loving stories. It asks how the stories that move us travel with us through life, how they shape us and change us, and how we shape them in return through living with them and re-telling them. It tells the story of Lord Bateman through queer characters, queer experiences, and the accumulated cultural flotsam of queer lives — both mine, and my characters.

Fishing in Dungeness is an experimental creative critical paper which explores the process of writing and re-writing, writing through, with and alongside, traditional tales and queer lives. It gives voice to the peculiar ways in which the stories we have known for decades, and which our cultures have known for centuries, are knotted into the fibres of identity, place, experience and creative practice.

Bio: Alex is a writer and performance maker, with a particular interest in the spaces where storytelling, activism and community intersect. She is also the College Admissions Tutor for Art, Performance and Curation at Central Saint Martins, UAL. Alex has completed a PhD in Contemporary Fiction and a PG Dip in Theatre Directing, and has two decades of experience teaching at universities, schools and in the community. As well as performance work, Alex has previously published a novel, *The Greater Thief*, and a range of essays, short pieces and academic papers.

2. **Jessica Radicic**, Claremont School of Theology
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“Queer Appalachian Trickster Poetics and the Materiality of Opacity”

Abstract: This presentation introduces “Queer Appalachian Trickster Poetics,” a practice-based, transdisciplinary scholar-artist methodology that treats creative making as a primary site of critical research. Rooted in the specific survival strategies, speech patterns, and folklore traditions of rural, working-class Appalachian queer life, this framework investigates how formal artistic tools can execute a “trickster operation”: a practice of dual-addressed making that appears safely compliant to potential hostile auditors while reserving resistance, intimacy, and sacred reclamation for an in-group audience.

Synthesizing Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology*, José Esteban Muñoz’s *Disidentification*, and Édouard Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation*, the methodology operates via three core mechanics to disrupt normative, rigid structures of knowledge production. First, polysemy acts as a defensive code-switching device, hijacking hostile cultural and/or religious scripts—such as the biblical liturgy of Hineni—to mask radical queer and process panentheistic reclamation in plain sight. Second, enjambment physically bends the straight lines of formal structure to isolate and shelter intimacy within spatial shadow. Third, a shifting interpretation logic insists that data remains fluid and dynamic, directly resisting reductionist surveillance.

Crucially, this paper demonstrates that while the framework is deeply informed by Appalachian material conditions, its underlying logic is highly portable. By focusing on the intersections of specificity, survival, and making, the presentation details how the trickster operation can be translated across diverse geographies and disciplines. Whether utilized through unreliable narration in fiction, scriptural hijacking in liturgy, or visual framing in media, this methodology provides artists and researchers with a formal apparatus to subvert dominant systems and safeguard sovereign creative spaces.

Bio: Jessica Radicic is a PhD student and Teaching Assistant at Claremont School of Theology. She is a scholar-artist whose research engages postmodern theopoetics, process thought,

queer theory, and Appalachian studies, with attention to embodiment, visibility, and survival under conditions of precarity. Based in southwest Pennsylvania, her creative practice includes poetry and visual art, which she uses as both analytic method and cultural expression. She is currently developing a collaborative poetry chapbook on religious deconstruction. Her forthcoming chapter will appear in *Wide Branches, Deep Roots* (West Virginia University Press).

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3. **JodiAnn Stevenson**, California Institute of Integral Studies
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“Is It / Am I Queer or Fat Enough?: Complicating the Borderlands in Academic Poetic Inquiry”

Abstract: Queering academic research in critical weight studies through transdisciplinary poetic inquiry politicizes my work in ways that call forth questions of my most obvious and deepest identities. How queer do I, myself, need to be to be a queer researcher or to queer my research? How fat do I, myself, need to be to engage in critical weight study scholarship? How do the multiple other ways my body shows up in Anzaldúa’s borderlands complicate or politicize my research enough to push queer/fat boundaries? Is it possible to find deeper integration in these borderlands? To push back on the notion of the not-enough-ness that academia offers me? This paper and presentation will offer a personal reflection on the journey toward my recent completion of a transformative studies dissertation grounded in critical weight studies and poetic inquiry which encouraged me to negotiate questions of queerness, gender identity, ability/disability, middle-age-ness, and fatness simultaneously.

Bio: JodiAnn Stevenson is a writer and academic living in Northern Michigan in the United States. She is currently finishing up a PhD in Transformative Studies in the research area of critical weight studies and poetic inquiry. Her poetry, fiction, and non-fiction have appeared in numerous publications since 1996.

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Session 8 — 13:30–15:00 — Queer Joy, Trans Lives

Moderator: Arden Waterman

1. **Rhys Dreeszen Bowman**, Pratt Institute

“‘Any Act of Joy You Feel as a Trans Person Is Inherently Rebellious’: Explorations of Trans Joy in a Southern Context”

Abstract: This talk explores experiences of trans joy as resistance in a Southern American context. Through 25 interviews with trans South Carolinians, I interrogate participants’

experiences of joy and how they impact participants' ability to live in a conservative state. The findings indicate that while there are significant legal, financial, social, and medical barriers, trans people in South Carolina report overwhelmingly positive experiences of Southern transness, countering prominent deficit narratives. Most participants did not desire to leave the South. All but two participants expressed that instances of trans joy made them more resilient to overcome the challenges of the current American sociopolitical climate. Some of the ways participants found joy were through embodying and expressing their genders, trans community, and intersectional identities. Trans joy from gendered embodiment included loving their body even if they wished to change it, finding euphoria through dress, seeing their true selves reflected in the mirror, and making a conscious decision to love themselves. Participants found joy through their intersectional identities, including disabled people exploring their gender through mobility aids, claiming womanhood through an ancestral language, and celebrating the resiliency of working-class identity. Participants found joy through being together in community with other trans people, making trans friends, participating in trans community organizations, and attending trans events. Being with other trans people helped participants feel safer navigating the South as visibly trans people. Finding and celebrating trans joy was a way for participants to push back against an often oppressive sociopolitical climate to live fulfilling lives in the South. Trans joy is resistant in a climate where the United States government does not want trans people to exist. Trans joy does not ignore hardship but is a defiant response to it; trans people will continue to find joy and beauty, and our spirits will not be diminished.

Bio: Rhys Dreeszen Bowman has a PhD from the University of South Carolina, a Master's of Library and Information Science from Simmons University, and is a former high school librarian. They are an assistant professor at Pratt Institute, where they are currently researching how concerns over digital privacy in the wake of Trump's presidency and a migration to encrypted messaging apps are impacting trans information sharing. Broadly, their research studies trans information practice through a lens of resistance and joy. They have recently been published in *Library Quarterly*, *In the Library with a Lead Pipe*, and the *International Journal of Information, Diversity & Inclusion*.

2. **Dani Sondgeroth**, Independent
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"Encrypted Joy: Glitching Gender and Building Trans Worlds at Body Hack"

Abstract: Encrypted Joy argues that communal spaces of communication and their design are essential to queer events and spaces that celebrate and support the collective instead of the individual. Queer spaces emphasize the communal good, whether through fundraising for specific causes, promoting mutual aid within the community, or encouraging action and advocacy, whether political or personal. Encrypted Joy explores these criteria through the design of event communications, including posters, online posts, and other ephemera from BodyHack, a party held at the Brooklyn, NY rave venue Nowadays. Through BodyHack's unique internet memes, event posters, and communication design, the organization fosters grassroots advocacy. BodyHack is not just a rave and trans-centered party, however. The event

itself is a monthly fundraiser for one of various queer advocacy and mutual aid organizations, including GLITS which provides direct support to marginalized communities (especially for QTPOC) through donations, clothing swaps, harm reduction, and other services.

Bio: Dani Sondgeroth (they/them) is an interdisciplinary writer from Brooklyn, NY. Much of their work focuses on the design and themes found within queer nightlife spaces in NYC and how this relates to queer theory and the art historical canon.

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3. **J. Audra Williams**, Arizona State University
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“Researcher Reflections: Centering Queer Joy through Photovoice in Higher Education”

Abstract: This paper proposal offers a reflexive account of a six-week photovoice study exploring queer joy with an intentionally diverse group of queer participants in higher education, including BIPOC, disabled, and multiply marginalized individuals. Rather than centering findings alone, we foreground our own experiences as queer researchers navigating this work amid unprecedented legislative attacks on queer and trans communities. This context raised a central tension: how do researchers study joy while their own community is under siege? We position photovoice itself as a queer method, one that resists the fixed categories and linear, deficit-based narratives that so often structure research on marginalized populations and that destabilizes the boundary between researcher and researched. IRB-mandated restrictions on faces and identifying markers pushed participants—and us—to reconsider how individuals can represent queerness without recourse to stereotypical visual markers, unsettling our own assumptions about how people see and know queerness. Throughout the study, we returned again and again to an uneasy question about our own role: were we contextualizing participants’ experiences through our theoretical frameworks, or genuinely thinking alongside them? We did not always know the answer, and we treat that uncertainty as central to the work rather than as a problem to be resolved. This proposal foregrounds our reflections as queer researchers grappling with our own positionality, discomfort, and shifting interpretations over six weeks, presented alongside participant voices to preserve the messiness of the work rather than smoothing it into a tidier narrative. In doing so, we offer an account of what it takes, and what it costs to queer research itself while researching queer joy from within a community under siege.

Bio: J. Audra Williams (he/they) is an Educational Policy and Evaluation PhD student in the Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation at Arizona State University. J. Audra’s research centers the stories and narratives of queer and trans students, staff, and faculty in colleges and universities. He is specifically interested in challenging the tragic trope that is often portrayed for queer and trans people and instead highlighting aspects of queer joy.

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4. **Sydney Paluch**, Cornell University
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“(Un)Visible Mending: Trans Textual Epistemology as Queer Method”

Abstract: In this paper, I turn to the slow-stitched revolution as a radical response to the epistemic violence embedded in trans life. When gender becomes a regime of recognition tied to labor, capital, and legibility, trans bodies are positioned in a constant state of precarity—hailed into visibility, policed by recognition, and coerced into normativity by “passing” and the trans standards of care paradigm. I posit that the collective network of care in stitched together communities of the handmade (Vacarro, 2014) offers a mode of trans textile epistemology which embraces opacity as a method of knowledge creation. This knowing together resists neoliberal legibility, and holds knowledge as collective, embodied, and outside of the trans standards of care model of performative imperative.

As illustrated by Vacarro, the figuration of craft connects trans life to the collective, embodied, and aesthetic through the handmade. Following this example, I follow the motif of the stitch as it recurs throughout trans life: in the sutures of gender-affirming surgeries, the DIY alteration of clothing, communal sewing circles, and textile-based artistic practice. I argue that this is more than just a motif, but like Harroway’s string figures and Hartman’s critical fabulations, these material encounters of un-visible mending function as simultaneous figuration and embodied archive.

Focusing on LJ Roberts’ *Carry You With Me: Ten Years of Portraits*, Carter Shocket’s *Maricare_2023_Pssy.gsheet**, and the collective exhibition *Crafting Queer Futures*, I further examine how textile artists and craft communal practices create alternative epistemic practices that resist the demands of visibility forced upon trans bodies living under late capitalism. Through thread, repair, and foregrounding the undone constructive, these pieces offer a trans epistemology of the textile, handmade and opaque elements of everyday, rhizomatic becoming.

Bio: Sydney Paluch (They/Them) interrogates the intimate infrastructure of queer kinship at sites of craft, kink, and care. Working at the intersection of English Literature, critical trans studies, trauma and performance studies, their research traces how pain is incorporated into the body in the afterlives of violence. Across projects, Paluch questions how queer kin are made through traumatizations held in embodied archives, forms of violent intimacy, and stitching together community. They are currently focused on curating figurations of kinky kinship, masochistic paraontology, and trans textile epistemology.

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Open Mic Night — 17:00–18:00