

The Lesbian Lives Conference 2019: The Politics of (In)Visibility



Centre for Transforming Sexuality and Gender
&
The School of Media
University of Brighton
15th - 16th March 2019



University of Brighton

Centre for Transforming
Sexuality and Gender

Welcome!

The organising team would like to welcome you to the 2019 Lesbian Lives conference on the Politics of (In)Visibility. The theme of this year's conference feels very urgent as attacks on feminism and feminists from both misogynist, homophobic, transphobic and racist quarters are on the rise both here in the UK and elsewhere. It has been thrilling to see the many creative and critical proposals responding to this coming in from academics, students, activists, film-makers, writers artists, and others working in diverse sectors from across many different countries – and now you are here!

We are delighted to be hosting the conference in collaboration with feminist scholars from University College Dublin, St Catharine's College, Cambridge and Maynooth University. It is - what we think - the 24th Lesbian lives conference, although we are getting to the stage where we might start losing count. Let's just say it is now a conference of some maturity that remains relevant in every age, as the world's most longstanding academic conference in Lesbian Studies. What we do know is that the first ever Lesbian Lives Conference was held in 1993 in University College Dublin and has been trooping on since, with the dedication of academics and activists and the amazing support from the community. From this comes the unique atmosphere of the Lesbian Lives Conference which is something special – as Katherine O'Donnell, one of the founders of the conference, said: 'there is a friendliness, a warmth, an excitement, an openness, a bravery and gentleness that every Lesbian Lives Conference has generated'.

We are very pleased to welcome Katherine who has been so central to the conference, as one of our keynotes this year, for something that is going to be very special, alongside Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, the amazing Director and Co-Founder of UK Black Pride and activist-scholar and researcher of grassroots feminist social movements Julia Downes.

We would like to thank The School of Media for supporting the conference, and I would like to especially thank the administrative team and our volunteers for all their hard work.

Thank you also to all delegates who at this conference will come together to further probe what the politics of (in)visibility means to the LGBTQ community and individuals today, and we look forward to two days of stimulating papers, debates, performances, workshops and screenings.

Olu

Olu Jenzen on behalf of the Conference Committee:

Kath Browne, Caroline Gonda, Jenny Keane, Irmi Karl, Katherine O'Donnell and Patricia Pietro-Blanco

Keynotes

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, Executive Director and Co-Founder of UK Black Pride

UK Black Pride, Intersectionality, Race, Gender and Class

Widely known as Lady Phyll – partly due to her decision to reject an MBE in the New Year’s Honours’ list to protest Britain’s role in formulating anti-LGBT penal codes across its empire – she is a senior official at the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) trade union as the Head of Equality & Learning, as well as a community builder and organiser; a Stonewall Trustee; Diva Magazine columnist, and public speaker focusing on race, gender sexuality and class and intersectionality. Phyll has been nominated for and won numerous accolades including the European Diversity Awards Campaigner of the Year in 2017, she is also in the top 10 on World Pride Power list. Phyll is also the co-editor and author of the ‘Sista’ Anthology, writing by and about same gender loving women of African Caribbean descent with a UK connection. Phyll is a working class, family-orientated Ghanaian woman who understands the Twi and Fanti languages which connect her to a rich African cultural heritage that advocates for unity and equality. She also prides herself on being a passionate activist who commits to working diligently to make people aware of on-going inequalities and injustices facing the Black LGBT+ community. She has worked tirelessly to build up UK Black Pride by bringing together artists, activists, volunteers and supporters from across the LGBT+ community. Phyll supports Paris Black Pride and ensures UK Black Pride is part of the International Federation of Black Prides around the world.

Phyll cites her maxim as a quotation from Maya Angelou: ‘prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible’.

Katherine O’Donnell, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, University College Dublin

“Lesbians are not women”: Considering Trans Female & Lesbian Identities, Gender, Safety & Liberation

This paper begins with a personal reflection on the intoxicating essay of Monique Wittig from 1981, entitled “One is Not Born a Woman” where Wittig argues that a lesbian is ‘not a woman, either economically, politically or ideologically.’ I recall how Wittig’s essay allowed many young lesbians in the 1980s to think about female gender as something that was constructed and fixed by the demands of patriarchal heterosexuality and her essay led us to particular visions of political liberation. I also explore how Wittig’s vision of the lesbian as a fugitive from the class of ‘women’ might be described as a kind of ‘feminist misogyny’ that has profound limitations in imagining and enacting freedom from patriarchy. The phrase ‘feminist misogyny’ is not widely known but I think the kinds of depiction of women which we might describe as ‘feminist misogyny’ is very evident in classic feminist texts and is certainly useful in describing some of the ways in which I thought about femininity for much of my life. I discuss how reading work by trans lesbians helped me to recognise my own feminist misogyny and offered me ways to reevaluate the category of ‘woman’ and how I might relate to this identity.

I propose that revisiting Wittig’s remarkable essay allows us a lens through which we might gently consider polarised depictions of trans women by those who hold trans exclusionary radical feminist positions. The paper concludes with a discussion of how we might understand trans female identities to overlap and diverge with cis lesbian identities, proposing that the similarities of

experience in relation to gender norms might be the very reason for moments of incomprehension or misrecognition between the two groups.

Katherine O'Donnell is Assoc. Prof. History of Ideas, UCD School of Philosophy and is a member of Justice for Magdalenes Research. She studied feminist philosophy with Mary Daly at Boston College and also studied at University of California at Berkeley while completing her Ph.D. thesis on the Gaelic background to Edmund Burke's political thought. She was appointed as a College Lecturer in Women's Studies in UCD and went on to become Director of UCD Women's Studies Centre, a position she held for ten years until 2015. She has been involved in Queer and Feminist activist politics in Ireland since 1983 (including being a co-founder of the Irish Queer Archive held by the National Library of Ireland) and she has been a key organiser in the Lesbian Lives Conference since 1997. In the academic years 2015/16 and 2016/17 she taught modules in Feminist Philosophy on the University of Oxford's B.Phil programme. In 2017 she was appointed to her current position as Assoc. Prof. in the History of Ideas at UCD. She has published widely in the history of sexuality and gender and also the intellectual history of Eighteenth Century Ireland.

Julia Downes, Lecturer in Criminology, The Open University, UK

Re-imagining an End to Gendered Violence: Prefiguring the worlds we want

With discussant: Dr Deanna Dadusc, University of Brighton

Dr Julia Downes is a Lecturer in Criminology in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at The Open University (UK). She is recognised as an activist-scholar and researcher of grassroots feminist social movements and anti-carceral feminist approaches to gendered violence, abuse and harms. She was awarded funding from the Feminist Review Trust in 2015 to support a collaborative research project with survivors within grassroots social movements in the UK. This resulted in an accessible report and toolkit, blogs and workshop programmes to support transformative justice approaches to violence and harm within grassroots social movements. This activity led to invitations to speak internationally for the Candidature of Popular Unity (Catalonia) and the University of the Basque Country.

Throughout her career she has made academic contributions to contemporary understandings of gendered violence, ethics and research practice and grassroots social movements including journals: *Women's Studies* (2012), *Graduate Journal of Social Science* (2013) *Sociological Research Online* (2014) and *Justice, Power and Resistance* (2017) and edited book collections including: *Sexual Violence and Restorative Justice* (E. Zinsstag & M. Keenan, Routledge 2017), *Women's Legal Landmarks* (R. Auchmuty & E. Rackley, Hart 2018) and *Resisting the Punitive State* (J. Greener, E. Hart & R. Moth, Pluto 2019). She is a founding member of the salvage collective and coordinator of Sheffield Transformative Justice Learning Group.

Panel papers, performances and workshops

(in alphabetical order, as provided by delegates)

Author's Name(s): Kris Beaghton

Institution/Affiliation: PhD student, Centre for Film and Screen, Clare College, University of Cambridge.

Title: Off-screen space: Barbara Hammer's lesbian experimental cinema

Abstract:

Barbara Hammer is widely considered to be the "first" or "most prolific" experimental lesbian filmmaker. Since the 1960s, she has created over 80 films, as well as performances, sculptures, installations, poetry, prose, and essays. This paper explores how Hammer's cinema contributes to on-going debates surrounding lesbian self-identification, resistance to categorization, critical negativity versus utopianism, and the role of aesthetic or intellectual experimentation in queer activism. In *Dyketactics* (1974), often called the "first lesbian lovemaking film made by a lesbian," Hammer uses superimposition and editing techniques to question the distinction between essence and performance. In works such as *Pond and Waterfall* (1982) and *Bent Time* (1983), she tackles the politics of lesbian representation and the pressures of the avant-garde art market, asking what it means to make a "lesbian film" without any reference to lesbianism. *Available Space* (1978) addresses the boundaries of lesbian intimacy by doing away with the limits of the screen itself, while *Audience* (1982) documents the responses to Hammer's portrayals of lesbianism. In *Nitrate Kisses* (1992), Hammer interjects archival footage with erotic performances to ask what we, as queer activists or artists, censor within our own communities. Hammer's work is itself often neglected in histories of lesbian cinema due to its formal experimentation, and from accounts of avant-garde film history due to its lesbian content. In "The Invisible Screen: Lesbian Cinema" (1988), Hammer writes: 'In physics, light can be understood through wave and particle theories at the same time. So, too, there can be multiple, coexisting and different theories and understandings of "lesbianisms" through a variety of readings.' Refusing to see form and content as separable, Hammer's experimental cinema makes room for what Teresa de Lauretis has called the "off-screen space" between multiple readings of lesbian art and politics.

Author's Name(s): Rita Béres-Deák, PhD

Institution/Affiliation: Independent Scholar

Title: Revisiting the lesbian closet: Hungarian lesbians' decisions not to come out in their families of origin

Abstract:

The politics of visibility maintains that coming out is essential for the social acceptance and emancipation of lesbians, as well as for their personal well-being (Dank 2000). In this model, those who stay closeted from their immediate environment are seen as struggling with internalized homophobia or worried about their personal safety. While some researchers do problematize this approach to coming out in non-European contexts (e.g. Boellstorff 2005, Decena 2008), it is widely assumed also in academic circles that Western-type gay and lesbian identities automatically connect to an ethics of visibility characteristic of North American and Western European activism.

I would like to problematize this approach with examples of women I have interviewed during my ethnographic fieldwork in Hungary, which focused on the relationship between same-sex couples and their families of origin. In this context, maintaining connections with the family of origin is essential for the survival of lesbians in practical and emotional terms, and giving up individual goals for the sake of the family unit is widespread practice, including within the LGBTQ community. I will demonstrate that staying closeted from the family of origin may be motivated by emotional distance, a family culture of not talking about sexuality, or even concern for other family members' well-being. I will argue that coming out and the closet should be reinterpreted in a way that examines context, power relations and agency.

Author's Name(s): Dagmar Brunow

Institution/Affiliation: Senior Lecturer in Film Studies, Institutionen för film och litteratur, Fakulteten för konst och humaniora Linnaeus University (Sweden)

Title: From the safe space into cyberspace? The ambivalence of lesbian visibility in film archives

Abstract:

Visibility has long been an important goal in European lesbian activism and an important means of political empowerment. Yet, visibility can also bring about an increased vulnerability for marginalized groups, especially in times of hate speech and an increasing political backlash. Moreover, we need to ask: whose visibility is recognized by whom, and on what grounds? In my paper I look at the ways both national and grassroots film archives recognize lesbian lives through collection and selection policies, through the use of metadata and via the curation of online access. Presenting case studies from the Swedish and British Film Institutes, from the Hamburg-based archive bildwechsel as well as the Lesbian Home Movie Project in Maine, this paper discusses the ambivalence of lesbian visibility after (amateur) film footage has left the safe space of the archive to be widely circulated online. The paper looks at legal and ethical challenges archivists are facing when dealing with nudity, lesbian affection and other representations which challenge hegemonic heteronormative scopical regimes. How can an ethically conducted archival practice be guaranteed? How can archives avoid making lesbian lives invisible again? This paper presents some of the results of my research project "The Cultural Heritage of the Moving Image" (Swedish Research Council 2016-2018).

Author's Name(s): Mima Cabadađ & Gülden Ediger

Institution/Affiliation: Croatian writer, film and cultural critic, and a lesbian/feminist activist. And PhD at the Europa University Viadrina.

Title: Lesbian polytics: From the screen to the sheets and into the streets

Abstract:

For at least half a century lesbian (mainstream) on-screen representations have been focus of much academic and activist critique and discontent – (re)producing stereotypes of lesbian/female sexuality has been extremely reductive and thus oppressive and stifling to political potentials of sex and desire that excludes men and through this ellipsis challenges (hetero)patriarchy. Luckily, this critique, alongside political movements, micro- and macroactivist endeavours in outing different kinds of lesbianism and female sexuality, have borne fruit – and much of it of visual kind. Indeed, it can be claimed that the mainstream celluloid and digital portrayals of lesbians are more versatile

and complex than ever before – with TV shows such as the L-Word running for as many as 6 seasons (and the 7th on the way!)¹ – catapulting lesbianism, in word and in action, into the heart of mainstream, yet aiming for female/lesbian gaze, for a change. However, as victories for lesbian visibility can rightfully be celebrated (wholeheartedly, or with a grain of salt) – a new "alternative" sexual battleground is slowly being laid out in mainstream/popular culture, this one also embracing (representations of) lesbian desire: polyamory.

In the workshop we will briefly present the concept(s) of polyamory, particularly with regards to lesbian polyamorous practices, offering the main findings and insights of existing literature (the extent will depend on the participants' experience and knowledge of the topic). As is usually the case, male sexuality prevails in the materials representing polyamory, but we will dig deeper and offer closer readings of more popular and visible films and series representing lesbian polyamorous desire/practices (from dubiously polyamorous Allen's Vicky Cristina Barcelona to Angela Robinson's Professor Marston and the Wonder Women, or the latest Netflix series Wanderlust). The main aim of the workshop, however, is to encourage and spark up a passionate discussion about political potentials of lesbian polyamory and female non-monogamous desire, and perhaps seduce some participants into partaking in this revolution.

Author's Name(s): Nazlı Cabadağ & Gülden Ediger

Institution/Affiliation: activist And PhD at the Europa University Viadrina.

Title: Queer haven Berlin?: Lesbian* visibility within the queer of colour discourse in Berlin

Abstract:

Since the 1960s Berlin has been a destination for various waves of migrants from Turkey. Amongst the many migrating groups, Turkish speaking queers have been largely neglected in the mainstream, as well as academic and activist discourses on migration. In the literature, most of the debate focuses on space-making practices of Türkiyeli¹ queers, and most of the academic work foregrounds male sexuality and racial dynamics among male queers. Lesbians* of colour as sexualized and racialized subjects who negotiate their place and voice in the gay-dominated Berlin queer scene have been neglected in most of these discussions. Recently, with the new wave of queer migrants from Turkey, Turkish speaking queers started a group called Kuir Lubun Berlin. The group brings together LGBTI+s of various class, generation, legal status, activist experience, which is particularly important in the current political climate of the global rise of the right.

The FLT* (women/lesbian/trans) section of the group, that we are active members of, works on the particular questions related to the struggles and visibility of the FLT* of colour. In the workshop and discussion we will explore what we believe is the radical potential of the Türkiyeli FLT* activism in unsettling the dominant narratives of migration with a twofold intervention; first to the heterosexualized history of labour migration between two countries, and second to the West-centric sexist queer scene in Berlin. We want to engage with FLT* activists and academics (of colour), sharing insights, experiences and arguments in order to enrich and contribute to the existing research focusing on migration, sexuality and ethnicized/racialized difference that would challenge Western neoliberal accounts of queer subjecthood. We want to give an input we will play a keyword game that we will incorporate our own personal stories and research findings, and conduct a fishbowl discussion with the questions arising from the game.

Author's Name(s): Claudia Carvell

Institution/Affiliation: LGBT Foundation

Title: The Sexual Wellbeing of Women Who Have Sex With Women – What Do We Know?

Abstract:

Manchester based charity - LGBT Foundation – run one of the only funded wellbeing programmes exclusively for lesbian and bi women, in the country, including advice and guidance on sexual health and relationships. In response to the missing evidence base on these topics, in 2017 we conducted the largest known National Sexual Wellbeing Survey for Women Who Have Sex With Women (WSW), receiving over 2,500 responses in just 4 months.

Under the headings “Wellbeing, Confidence and Communication”, “Knowledge and Access to Support” and “Abuse and Risk”, this survey has asked women who have sex with women a broad range of questions around sexual wellbeing including on pleasure, body confidence, minority identities, testing, what constitutes “having sex”, negotiating consent, group sex and much more.

Following the analysis of this data in December 2018, which will be overseen by renowned researcher around sexual orientation and health – Professor Catherine Meads, LGBT Foundation would like to present the key findings to your audience of stakeholders and influencers and workshop together the “What next?” questions with the aim of identifying and meeting the sexual wellbeing needs of our WSW communities in the years to come.

Author’s Name(s): Rose Collis

Institution/Affiliation:

Title: FORTY YEARS OUT (AND COUNTING) — AN ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION

Abstract:

In 1979, a 20-year-old London lesbian — who had come out to friends the previous year — attended her first Gay Pride March. Both events marked the beginning of my 40 year (and counting) personal, political and cultural journey as lesbian activist, performer, writer and historian, reflected in my substantial private archive which chronicles and reflects the social and political history and evolution of a community’s fight for equality and justice: the battles, campaigns, victories and losses.

Jan Pimblett at London Metropolitan Archives has said, ‘History is a set of examples’. And it has been my fate to have witnessed, participated in and chronicled many such ‘examples’.

They include:

- Early 80s Gay Pride and Lesbian Strength marches
- The role of Oval House Theatre in lesbian and gay performance/activism
- The fight to save ‘Gay’s the Word’
- The creation of ground-breaking documentary Framed Youth
- The community’s response to the AIDS crisis
- The battles against Section 28, including the founding of Stonewall

- And, most importantly, my four years as first lesbian co-editor of City Limits magazine's 'Out in the City' section

This presentation affords a rare opportunity to explore forty years of lesbian history and experience, featuring first-hand anecdotes, cuttings, photos and ephemera from my archive — a 'taster' for a major multi-media project that will be produced in 2019. This will include online/physical exhibitions; public engagement events throughout the UK, and a new mixed media solo stage show, written and performed by me. In the last year, there have been shows by David Hoyle, Alexis Gregory and Flaming Theatre that have focused on the gay men's version of our community's history— now it's time to 'flag up the lesbian'. The stories, the songs, the slogans, the sit-downs, the sorrows and the solidarity.

Author's Name(s): Angela Cooper

Title: Invisible Women (Film screening and Q&A)

Abstract:

INVISIBLE WOMEN is a short documentary that will tell the untold story of the North West's LGBTQ past over the last 50 years through the lens of two women's incredible journey of activism and rebellion.

Angela and Luchia have spent the last half a century fighting for their rights as women and as lesbians. Their work has revolutionised Manchester whilst transforming the lives of thousands of women and yet no record of them exists in the city's archives; theirs is a story that risks disappearing from history. We want to change that with the film Invisible Women.

The Story: Manchester, 1969. Luchia Fitzgerald, a teenage Lesbian runaway from Ireland struggles to survive on the streets of Manchester. She's arrested and sent for a lobotomy to cure her of her "deviant sexual tendencies". Luchia escapes the lobotomy to seek solace in the New Union, a pub at the epicentre of Manchester's underground gay community.

Luchia is at her lowest ebb when she hears a female student at the next table giving voice to every frustration she felt; Luchia pulls up a chair to listen. That student was Angela and this chance encounter sparked a relationship that has endured fifty years of euphoric highs and earth-shattering lows in the struggle to change life for ALL women.

Under Angela's wing Luchia is educated and politicised through the burgeoning women's lib movement of the 1970s. The pair fall in love and form the Manchester branch of the GLF (Gay Liberation Front). Together they experiment with activism beginning by painting "Lesbians are everywhere" in yellow across Manchester. The couple then progress to helping form a rock band, opening a printing press and squatting a house that would become the city's first women's centre inspiring other local women in the process. When the police ask Angela and Luchia to start looking after battered wives Manchester's first women's refuge is formed.

As their work gains a momentum of its own and changes lives beyond the city Angela and Luchia's love affair begins to falter. The GLF disbands, the band splits up and the printing press closes. It's the 1980s and things are moving backwards not forwards. Set against this landscape of apathy comes a

bombshell: Thatcher's repressive Section 28 bill. It is this attack against their hard-won rights that forces the women to reunite and transform the city once again.

WHY THIS FILM MATTERS

2017 witnessed a rich variety of programmes and films that explored the 50 years since the partial decriminalization of homosexuality. However, the vast majority of this work focused almost exclusively on the experience of white, middle-class gay men from London. The women's story, and particularly the story of regional working-class women, has largely been ignored.

Whilst the film is ostensibly about Angela and Luchia's personal and political journey we are using their relationship to explore Manchester and, in particular, the forgotten and, up until now, untold story of the North West's LGBTQ past through a working class lens of rebellion and activism which is still alive today: Angela and Luchia are still very much fighting for their rights and the rights of LGBTQ people in Manchester.

Author's Name(s): Alice Denny

Title: Poetry show

Abstract:

The poems tell a story and describe the world from the position of a transgender lesbian (me) whilst raising issues of women's position in society, our sense of self worth, the place of transgender women in the world and our acceptance and otherwise within womankind and specifically the lesbian community.

I hope to stimulate thought and encourage honest debate on the above topics and to perhaps allay some perceived fears or misconceptions. The poems cover issues of acceptance and erasure including from within, the role of the notion of "Queer," the wonders, the joys of womanhood, woman love and a belief in the power of womankind. This would also give an insight, hopefully, into the emotional lives of transwomen and trans lesbians, (such as myself) out total immersion in and commitment to womankind and promote greater mutual understanding.

Author's Name(s): Bryony Evans

Institution/Affiliation: Independent Scholar/ University of Manchester

Title: Beyond the Visible: Articulating Lesbian Invisibility Through Vertical Logic and the Limits of the Bodily Horizon

Abstract:

Through a reading of Luce Irigaray's account of the symbolic order as still functioning largely in accordance with the Law of the Father, and a consideration of the subsequent feminist psychoanalytic work that endeavours to mediate the mother/daughter relation, I diagnose a pervasive and continuing determining adherence to a logic of verticality and filiation in the symbolic realm. I suggest that as a result, forms of female relationality that function on an explicitly horizontal axis are largely occluded and omitted both in the symbolic register and in theory. I argue that this is particularly the case with regards to lesbian sexuality, which functions off kilter to the logic of generational transmission. Further, in understanding the social realm and phenomenological experience to be the sites wherein symbolic structures are negotiated and enacted, I indicate that

lesbian sexuality is therefore radically discharged beyond the (vertical) limit of what is and can be perceived or tolerated in the socio-cultural register, and as such lesbians are necessarily rendered literally 'unseeable'. This invisibility, as I show both through reflexive practice and existing academic work, reveals itself relentlessly in everyday situations and as such, I argue, impedes the ability to properly constitute socially intelligible lesbian subjectivity(ies). I conclude the paper by suggesting that for lesbians to achieve social visibility and subjectivity proper, there needs to be a fundamental paradigmatic shift in the symbolic register to include thinking about relationality on a horizontal logic, but that this work of high theory should not come at the expense of thinking through lived realities.

Author's Name(s): Sarah-Joy Ford

Institution/Affiliation: Post Graduate Researcher at Manchester School of Art

Title: Queering Suffrage: an embroidered strategy for making lesbian lives visible

Abstract:

This paper examines textile practice as a method for disrupting the erasure of lesbians from Women's Suffrage history, in my own art practice. Last year: 2018, was the 100-year anniversary of The Representation of the People Act that granted women in the UK partial suffrage. In celebration of the centenary there was funding and support available for a wide range of cultural events leading to increasing engagement in women's history. However there was a lack of rigorous work undertaken to challenge the collective memory of the suffrage movement as universally white, upper class and hetero-normative. This has led to the continued obscurity of many suffragettes who had meaningful relationships with other women including Eva Goore-Booth, Esther Roper and Ethel Smith. This paper challenges this invisibility through a discussion of two art works made in response to the Vera 'Jack' Holmes archival collection at The Women's Library (LSE). Vera was a suffragette, actress, chauffeuse to the Pankhurst's, ambulance driver, prisoner of war and aid worker alongside her partner Evelina Haverfield. The archive holds an inventory of their home that includes a wooden bed with their initials hand carved on the end. Through the patchwork quilt and embroidered table cloth this small, domestic act of visibility is re-imagined in stitch as a memorial to lesbian love, longing and remembrance. Just as lesbians have been marginalized in mainstream history, textiles have been dismissed from the cannon of high art due to the associations with women's work, domesticity and traditional notions of femininity. It is this history of gendered dismissal, and injury that makes textiles such a powerful method for challenging historical lesbian erasure. Through embroidery these works begin to stitch the importance of lesbian relationships, alliances and narratives back into the fabric of suffrage history and memory.

Author's Name(s): Miranda Forrester

Institution/Affiliation: Non affiliated local artist

Title: Queering the female Gaze: Re-examining the invisibility of lesbian artists'

Abstract:

I will discuss hidden narratives in works of women by women, and talk about them in relation to my own practice. Taking an intersectional approach, it is important to look at specifically artists of colour

whose work is explicitly or implicitly queer, and has been overlooked where other factors such as their gender or race dominates the discussion around their work. There is a distinct lack of queer imagery by queer artists in the dominant history of western Art, and I will be examining how these images have been overlooked or discussed in a different context. I will be focusing mainly on Mickalene Thomas, Lubaina Himid, Laura Knight, and Ghada Amer. Furthermore, I will show images of my work and give a little background about me; I am a lesbian painter of colour, born in London and living in Brighton. My work explores sexuality, sensuality and intimacy between women, and how queer people have been or are restricted to the domestic sphere and how this impacts on their relationship with themselves and their bodies.

Author's Name(s): Kirby Fullerton

Institution/Affiliation: Cambridge University

Title: Boundary-making and the Management of Visibility: Lesbian lives in Seoul, South Korea

Abstract:

This paper explores the boundary-making practices of many Korean lesbians, understanding them as strategies to create 'lesbian space' separate from male-dominated, heterosexual, Korean society, and to reduce the risk of being outed publicly. I address the question of why these spaces exclude heterosexual men and woman, homosexual men and are suspicious of female bisexuals and gender non-conforming individuals, arguing that this boundary making allows for the protection and construction of lesbian subjectivity in the context of a Korean militarised patriarchal state, where men dominate cultural and political positions of authority (Moon 2005). Drawing upon anthropologist Mary Douglas's theory of pollution as expulsion of "matter out of place", I analyse the productive function of the exclusionary strategies women use to maintain lesbian spaces (1966:3). The exclusion of the straight male figure serves to reduce ambiguity and danger in the lives of my informants, while also allowing for the personal management of visibility. I draw upon ethnographic research conducted in Seoul, South Korea in 2017 to analyse how women subvert state instruments of control to create boundaries around lesbian space, attempting to prevent the dangers of masculine pollution (Foucault 1978; 1991). This illustrates Elizabeth Povinelli's theory of how recognition, camouflage and espionage are used by marginalized individuals to persevere within an increasingly neoliberal and securitized Korean state (2011:190). I examine the politics of boundary-making to reduce ambiguity and masculinized danger in four lesbian spaces: Bar Kwan, Come Together, the online forum Lnet, and the Seoul Queer Culture Festival. Exploring decisions individual lesbian women make that seem counterintuitive to a western LGBT framework that enforces unified diversity and inclusivity; this works to centre queer female experience in non-Western contexts, disturbing the focal point of Western gay men in LGBTQ+ studies.

Author's Name(s): Doreen Fumia

Institution/Affiliation: Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada

Title: Researching Lesbian Ageing using photo voice

Abstract:

After interviewing older lesbians in Toronto, Canada and Brighton, UK and analysing their experiences of aging, I have learned about aging on multiple levels. I have learned that family, year and age of coming-out and race, cultural, religious, geographic and class dimensions all have

profound influences on aging. I have also learned that there are many similarities between the wider population and lesbians. My intention is to focus on the particular aspects that arise from being lesbian. In order to tease out this aspect more, I have begun a photovoice project. This integrates experience as articulated through the camera lens by either putting a camera in the hands of the participant, or 'community researcher,' or journeying with the CR and taking photos with her direction. Women are asked to locate images that reflect their sense of aging. This methodology has proven successful as a way to specifically drill down into experience that doesn't solely rely on written or spoken words and the academic researcher as the authority. It shifts the power balance and allows for rich narratives to emerge. In this presentation, I will discuss the methodology of photovoice (Manasia, 2017) and briefly reference some of the narratives that develop from the images the women have shared. Drawing on semiotics studies (ex. Barthes, Maasik, Solomon, Saussure) I look at how 'signs and signifiers' of aging lesbians tell the women's stories. In this way, the aim is to make what is often invisible, visible. Signs often conceal some interest or other, whether political or commercial, and their proliferation makes it necessary to decode the meanings behind them. Thus, the use of semiotics is not intended for just individual reflection, it is equally a study of ideology and power.

Author's Name(s): Jacqui Gabb & Katherine Allen

Institution/Affiliation: Associate Director, Citizenship and Governance Research
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The Open University, UK and Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA

Title: Who's in and who's out: the (analytical) cost of research on LGBTQ parenthood

Abstract:

There have been great advances in socio-legal queer partnership and parenthood rights in recent years and LGBTQ-parent families are more visible now than ever before. As a consequence of these political gains and public recognition, LGBTQ-parent family research has arguably come of age. While a great deal of exciting research is now appearing around the globe, we will show that this area also faces numerous challenges in the context of sexuality and inclusivity. Empirical studies typically instantiate hetero-gender and sexuality through insufficient attention to everyday experience and the ways in which this queers kinship. Geo-political and socio-cultural contexts are used as scene-setting rather than being operationalized to prise apart the intersections of public-private intimacies. Biological imperatives are defining and confining families, with practices of conception invoked to separate one family from the next. We will address the conceptual, theoretical, intersectional, and methodological tensions that remain or have emerged around qualitative LGBTQ-parent family research, focusing on: (a) era, age, and generation; (b) class, sociocultural capital, and the economies of reproductive labour; (c) sexual-maternal identities. We contend that it is timely for research on queer parenthood to take stock; to refocus attention onto the everyday and more sufficiently contextualize experience. So, our provocation is, in these Janus-faced permissive and precarious times, whose lives matter in research on LGBTQ-parenthood? How is 'queer parenthood' materialised? How can our research better reflect contemporary ordinary LGBTQ experience?

Author's Name(s): S. Tay Glover

Institution/Affiliation: Doctoral Candidate, Department of African-American Studies, Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, African American Studies, Northwestern University

Title: Exploring Black Queer Lesbian Symbolic Annihilation and Southern Black Lesbian Rival Geographies of Pleasure and Resistance

Abstract:

Symbolic annihilation” is a term first used by Gaye Tuchman (1978), but mobilized by Sheena Howard (2014) in her research about Black lesbians, that refers to the social phenomenon of media underrepresentation or near total absence of representation whereby the mass omission, trivialization, and condemnation of certain groups in media relays the group's societal value. Black lesbian symbolic annihilation is a term I mobilize in my work to consider more fully how black lesbian symbolic annihilation is a colonial, historical-material, philosophical and socio-cultural construction that secures the status quo and the Grammars of Blackness, which is reproduced in society via discourse, intellectual genealogies, culture, and representation. “Southern horrors” and the historical genealogical “problematic of silence” around articulating black queer female sexuality and lived experience in archives, discourse, and theory are well documented in scholarship. My work interrupts protracted legacies of colonial slavery's impact on Black Southern lesbian and queer women today—namely uninterrupted patterns of epistemological erasure; and intersectional spatialized, racialized-gendered, sexual, homophobic, classist violence within symbolic and material home spaces—through studying the rival geographies and alternative economies they create and deploy for belonging and crevices of power. Renouncing respectable politics, methods of inquiry, and of codifying archives, this paper considers ethnography of Black Southern lesbian pride spaces and VH1's Love and Hip Hop Atlanta and Miami illuminate how the Hip Hop South and its music, entertainment, and sexual economy fosters a contemporary counter-culture and interstitial black queer sexual geographies where decolonial gestures such as funky love (Stallings 2015), sacred secularity, the representation of Black queer/lesbian relationships, and Black queer/lesbian femme crevices of power (McKittrick 2006), pleasure, and play appear in the context of the U.S. South's queer gender and sexual politics.

Author's Name(s): Caroline Gonda

Institution/Affiliation: Fellow and Director of Studies in English at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

Title: Queer visions: lesbians in the archive and the politics of (in)visibility

Abstract:

For the sculptor Anne Damer (1748-1828), public visibility was a complicated and sometimes dangerous affair. As Andrew Elfenbein suggests, her status as an aristocrat and her self-presentation as an artist, in an unusual medium for a woman, both exposed her to attack and in some ways protected her from it. For much of Damer's life, Emma Donoghue has argued, she was “haunted ... by the social identity of being a woman who desired other women.” One of her contemporaries described Damer as “a lady much suspected for liking her own sex in a criminal way”, noting that “'Tis a joke in London now to say such a one visits Mrs Damer.” As Donoghue notes, Damer was seen not just as a Sapphist but as “the epitome of Sapphism”; her hyper visibility in the role means that those who visit her are queered by association.

Damer's private self is more difficult to interpret, not least because almost all of her papers were destroyed after her death at her request. One of the few pieces of evidence to survive is a series of four notebooks recording Damer's close relationship in the 1790s with her last attachment, Mary Berry. This paper explores what the notebooks make visible as they frame or intersperse extracts from Berry's letters with quotations from Greek and Latin literature. While Alison Yarrington has

noted the importance of classical models to Damer's public image and her work as a sculptor, little attention has been paid to Damer's private engagement with the Classics. A place of refuge and resistance, the Classics enable Damer's construction of a private identity, and provide a way of envisioning intimate friendship and same-sex love.

Author's Name(s): Alva Gotby

Institution/Affiliation: University of West London

Title: Making work visible: Wages Due Lesbians and the labour of queer life

Abstract:

This paper explores the queer politics of emotional and sexual labour, through the practice and writings of the activist group Wages Due Lesbians (WDL). The group was part of the international Wages for Housework campaign, a political movement which centred on feminised work. WDL had a pivotal role in the campaign, as their refusal of sexual and emotional relationships with men prefigured the strategy of the movement as a whole.

WDL practices redefined the theme of visibility within LGBT politics. What they wanted to make visible were not queer individuals per se, but rather the material conditions of lesbian lives. While lesbian women can refuse certain forms of labour, in particular the emotional and sexual labour that heterosexual women perform for their male partners, the lived reality of lesbians calls for other forms of labour. In particular, lesbians work to build alternative forms of sociality in the face of a hostile society. This work, WDL argued, is often invisible in both feminist and LGBT movements. Through calling for a wage for this work, WDL strived to highlight both the utopian potentials and daily struggles of lesbian life.

In making visible the everyday material practices of lesbianism, WDL also wished to emphasise the class-differentiated conditions of queerness. Striving to make lesbian politics discernible as part of a broad working-class struggle, they were persistently critical both of bourgeois gay politics and leftist movements that neglected issues around sexuality. Their politics of visibility, then, aimed to politicise the everyday and create the potential for new forms of sociality.

Author's Name(s): Ann Marie Hanlon

Institution/Affiliation: Programme Director, BA (Hons) in Applied Music / Lecturer in Music
Dundalk Institute of Technology

Title: The Politics of Visibility in Irish Popular Music

Abstract:

In 1992 the pop-jazz duo Zrazy, vocalist Maria Walsh and saxophonist and pianist Carole Nelson, emerged on the Irish popular music scene with the release of their first album Give it all Up. Importantly, from the outset, Walsh and Nelson decided that they would be out as lesbians, a brave and bold political move in a conservative period of Irish history characterised by Catholic hegemony, and in which homosexuality was still illegal. They are icons for many lesbian women, particularly those who grew up in Ireland at a time when the sexual identity of lesbian was shrouded in shame and secrecy. Songs such as 'Come Out Everybody' (1997) and 'You Make Me Happy' (2015) address

LGBTQ+ themes and the duo have won awards recognising their contribution to LGBTQ+ cultural life, including an Out Music Award and a Gay and Lesbian Music Award (GLAMA).

Zrazy stand out amongst their peers in their consistent commitment to making explicitly lesbian feminist art and they are a rare Irish example of "women's music" - a musical genre that emerged in the 1970s as a cultural manifestation of second-wave feminism and the women's liberation movement in the United States. Over the course of their twenty-six year long career their musical output has engaged in a range of Irish socio-cultural debates, from the abortion referendums in the 1990s and 2010s to the role of women in the 1916 Easter Rising. Ahmed argues that lesbian and radical feminist politics are characterised by 'wilfulness' defined by the acts of standing against and as creativity (Ahmed, 2017). This research explores Zrazy's lesbian feminist art as a site of activism and protest and investigates how they have used their unique position, their visible position, in a period of almost complete invisibility to engage in a variety of cultural battles for women's rights in Ireland.

Author's Name(s): Evan Hazenberg

Affiliation/ Institution: Lecturer in English Language and Linguistics, School of English, University of Sussex

Title: 'Sounding lesbian' in New Zealand: Then and now

Abstract:

Lesbian identities have tended to be invisible in the linguistic study of the sociophonetics of sexuality. This has partly been because of the high social salience associated with 'gay-sounding' men, but also arguably because there are qualitative differences in the tensions that exist between gay and heteronormative masculinities, and those that exist between lesbians and heteronormative femininities (Zwicky 1997; Cameron 2011).

New Zealand presents an interesting case study to examine the sociophonetic landscape of gender and sexuality in a context where an oppositional relationship has existed between normative and non-normative femininities. Homosexuality was decriminalised in New Zealand in 1986, and although most of the legal/moral debate was focused on men, the national discussion also drew attention to non-heterosexual femininities, foregrounding sexuality as a socially relevant and politicised dimension of womanhood in New Zealand. Post law reform, social attitudes have shifted dramatically and rapidly towards the mainstreaming of non-heteronormativities, at least in urban centres.

This project draws on two age groups of New Zealanders in Auckland: an older cohort who came of age at a time of criminalised homosexuality, and a younger cohort who have grown up in an environment more broadly supportive of queer identities. This paper considers the social use of linguistic cues associated with lesbian-identified women in the specific context of social reform in New Zealand. Differences between lesbians and straight women in the older age cohort are found in three vowels of New Zealand English, which are not salient enough to be perceived as stereotypes but nevertheless seem to index sexuality (see e.g. Pierrehumbert et al. 2004). Interestingly, these differences are neutralised among younger speakers, suggesting that the rapidly-diffusing social changes that swept New Zealand in the mid-1980s have had an observable impact on the linguistic resources available for signalling affiliation and identity within a speech community.

Author's Name(s): Dr Nina Held

Institution/Affiliation: Research and Teaching Fellow in Sociology at the University of Sussex.

Title: 'Here, I have no choice': being a lesbian and a refugee –Intersectional experiences of time and space

Abstract:

Whilst Europe is proud of its record on LGBTQI* rights and presents itself as a haven for LGBTQI* people, the situation of individuals who seek international protection on grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity looks rather bleak. Not only has the 'welcome culture' (in Germany, for instance) been replaced with right-wing rhetoric and the closure of European borders, but LGBTQI* refugees also face additional issues such as the impossibility of proving their 'gayness' and social isolation, especially when their claim is refused. However, these experiences are not homogenous. The 'stereotypical' refugee is young, male and cis-gendered, and often LGBTQI* refugee support groups cater most for cis-male gay refugees. The experiences of lesbian (and bi and trans) refugees often remain invisible. In this paper, I will draw on the ERC-funded project SOGICA – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum (www.sogica.org), which explores the social and legal experiences of LGBTQI* in Germany, Italy and the UK (and beyond). I will specifically focus on the intersectional experiences of lesbian refugees in Germany and explore how these experiences are not only shaped by sexuality, gender, 'race', religion, age and class but furthermore by being 'marked' as a refugee. As I will demonstrate, being a lesbian refugee constitutes the experiences of time and space in particular ways.

Author's Name(s): Levi Hord

Institution/Affiliation: MSc student in Women's Studies at the University of Oxford and a 2018 Rhodes Scholar.

Title: Non-Binary Lesbians: Rediscovering Lesbian Specificity in 'The Moment of Trans'

Abstract:

How is lesbian specificity being rearticulated in and through a moment of undeniably heightened transgender visibility?

In the past two decades, transgender identifications have notably increased. Non-binary gender identities have emerged as a form of hybrid queer-trans subjectivity (including, sometimes only discursively, a movement away from an initial gender assignment). The popularity of "non-binary" for younger generations echoes some of the historical tensions between lesbian and transmasculine identities, as the particularly and politically 'queer' openness of the category seems to refute the need for a sexual identity based on gender.

However, "non-binary lesbian" has more recently been gaining traction as an identity label, suggesting that there is something about lesbian specificity that contemporary queer gender identities cannot fully capture. Besides marking an important reconstitution of lesbian as an identity, I argue that how "lesbian" is being chosen to match and supplement "non-binary" will increase the visibility of "lesbian" as a richly specific but non-essentialized identity, refuting past accusations of narrowness.

Non-binary lesbian identity (somewhat contentiously) suggests that what some people experience as lesbian specificity is separable from womanhood. This both distances lesbian identity from a fraught essentialist politic and demands a new definition of lesbian specificity rooted in relationality rather than internality. Re-reading lesbian relationality through a post-structuralist foundation of anti-essentialism, this paper will examine why “lesbian” is still a necessary identity in the “moment of trans,” and will demonstrate that rather than being lost to either the openness of queer or the gender politics of transition, lesbianism can find a new expansive expression in the intersubjective spaces left unfilled.

Non-binary lesbians may expose a lesbian specificity that honours rich veins of history and feeling while taking a trans ethos as foundational, reiterating lesbianism in a form primed for 21st century gender politics.

Author’s Name(s): Jane Hoy

Title: Hiding in Plain Sight

Abstract:

In this multimedia presentation we use live theatre, slides and music to ask how a female couple in the late 18th century manipulated the in/visibility of their relationship– and how later commentators made them more visible. We are Living Histories Cymru, creating theatre from the queer histories of Wales.

Jane Hoy was previously a lecturer in adult learning at Birkbeck, University of London. She now lives in Mid Wales where she is involved in lesbian history and participatory theatre. She and her partner, Helen Sandler, organise Aberration, an LGBT+ arts night in Aberystwyth. Helen is a writer and editor who also runs Tollington Press. The presentation expands on our latest theatre project, An Extraordinary Female Affection, about Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby –the Ladies of Llangollen.

They were two upper -class Irish women who eloped in 1788 and settled in North Wales. Travellers came from far and wide to gaze at the two women And their picturesque cottage and gardens. We will move beyond our usual show to explore the impact Eleanor and Sarah’s 50 - year relationship had on ‘women loving women’ of the time.

Anne Lister of Shibden Hall wrote about them in her diaries; others sent letters, poems... and a cow. But the Ladies were disturbed by correspondence from random sapphists and newspaper slander. We will use extracts from our show and other sources to ask how they survived in the public eye while avoiding disgrace. From Colette’s musings and Elizabeth Mavor’s biography, through the ‘sex wars’ of the 80s, the Ladies have lived on as a symbol; their house is a venue for same sex weddings.

We will invite delegates to explore the fantasies and friendships –and what they teach us about in/visibility .

Author’s Name(s): Dean Inwood

Institution/Affiliation: PhD researcher in Sociology at the University of Surrey

Title: LGBTQ+ individuals’ lived experiences of coming out

Abstract:

This research project is inclusive of the participant's voice, keeping LGBTQ+ experiences at the centre of the research. The research focusses on the intersections of age, class, disability, sexuality, mental wellbeing, and rurality, and the impact of these on participants' experiences of coming out. The methods consisted of six semi-structured interviews, where an inductive approach was used to ensure the data collected and analysed was what directed the project. Through thematic analysis of the transcripts, three themes were produced: coming-out, the community and LGBTQ+ individuals' uses of technology. For this paper, the participants' experiences of coming-out provide insight into the psychological stress and familial reactions of the participants. Five out of six participants experienced psychological stress due to coming out; this ranged from anxiety about familial/friend reactions to suicidal thoughts. The participants' views of whether coming out had a positive or negative effect on them, was positive overall. The participants did not view coming out as part of the process of joining the LGBTQ+ community, as only one in six felt part of the LGBTQ+ community. Intersectionality is integral in understanding participants' experiences of coming out. Overall, the psychological stress of coming out was examined in detail, and how participants felt about themselves pre and post coming out were highlighted. There is a need for further intersectional LGBTQ+ research that is focussed on the participants' experiences. For future research, I am exploring LGBTQ+ individuals' uses of dating/hook up apps. This research will provide further intersectional analyses and keep the participant at its core.

Author's Name(s): Janet Jones

Title: A Lesbian Life: Outing the 70s & 80's

Abstract:

I am a lesbian in my 50s living in West Yorkshire, my political activism since my teens has been in defence of women's rights and LGBT equalities.

This is a screening of a collaborative film (31min) by myself and Amanda Russell who was a manager of London bookshop "Gay's the Word" in the 1980's. In interview format we share specific details of what it was like for Amanda who is a lesbian in her 60s coming out in the 1970s, the discrimination and events which led to a raid in the early 1980's by HM Customs and Excise on 'Gay's the Word' Bookshop, and also the searching of her own home. Prior to the recording of these interviews, full details of the experience and the impact of the raid remained an untold story, which is a significant part of hidden LGBT history. Amanda's role as manager of the bookshop at the time put her in the position of potentially appearing at the Old Bailey on charges of fraud and the importation of obscene material. The case was dropped just prior to being fought but not before she was questioned for several hours, had her home searched and was harassed by customs officers for several months. Her experience was also a key part of the introduction of Section 28 as she was the person who, at their request, deposited the title 'Jenny lives with Eric and Martin' into the school's library for material showing positive images of young people and homosexuality. The visibility of her activism in setting up the Lesbian Discussion Group and the facilitation of other meetings at the bookshop was entirely omitted from the 2004 film Pride. The reasons for this are unclear but raise a question about lesbian visibility, which elements of her story demonstrate.

Author's Name(s): Mary Leontsini & Persefoni Kerentzi

Institution/Affiliation: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Title: "(In)visible homoerotic practices of Greek women: (Im)possible relationships or strategic practices"?

Abstract:

Due to the accrued importance of family, marriage, and motherhood within contemporary Greek society, most scholarly works on lesbian lives focus predominantly on invisibility, unintelligibility, and absence. However, Greek homoerotic women, more or less visible within their families of origin and their workplaces, do engage in lesbian relationships and live with their female partners. Situated in a 'grey zone' of visible and invisible desires within the social worlds of the family and work, Greek lesbians gauge potential reactions within their families and their workplaces and effectively create boundaries between themselves and the homophobic world, while at the same time they create new arenas of recognition.

Based on life narratives of urban Greek women in their early thirties, who engage in lesbian practices and cohabit with their partners, this paper explores the meanings of visibility and invisibility of lesbianism through these women's discourses, experiences, and perspectives. More specifically, it examines the multiple ways in which homoerotic Greek women perform lesbianism, reconstruct their subjectivities and renegotiate their everyday lives. How do they deal with family (of origin) expectations and what meanings do they make out of their "new" (chosen) families? How do they negotiate their position in the (usually homophobic and heteronormative) workplace?

This paper challenges the predominant victimising notion of the invisibility of lesbianism and analyses it as something that is partly hidden from view and intentionally "encrypted", making difficult to interpret and decipher its multiple meanings. As it is furthermore suggested, this hidden and (often) invisible practice could be considered as a deliberate strategy and as an act of resilience, aimed at challenging an intrusive, hegemonic social gaze that seeks to re-inscribe the subject exclusively within the confines of heteronormative parameters of an existing system of power/knowledge.

Author's Name(s): Jessica Mancuso

Institution/Affiliation: PhD candidate, Sociology, Manchester

Title: Lesbian (In)Visibility in Manchester: How socio-cultural factors influence lesbian visibility in LGBTQ spaces

Abstract:

This paper explores the idea of lesbian visibility in LGBTQ social spaces by discussing how lesbians in Manchester experience inclusion, exclusion and a sense of belonging in the city's LGBTQ social scene.

Lesbians are often labelled "invisible" due to the small presence the collective has on the scene.

Lesbian invisibility has previously been explained by the decline of lesbian spaces and the dominating presence of predominately white, cis, young, able-bodied gay men in commercial LGBTQ areas.

Since the scene is the most visible space for LGBTQ identities (Formby, 2017), gay men are arguably the most recognised identity. This visibility provides gay men collectives with a lot of influence that inevitably marginalises other LGBTQ members, including lesbians. This paper provides a standpoint about lesbian visibility from the viewpoint of lesbians and bisexual women, via focus groups and interviews with research participants who have experiences in Manchester's commercial and non-commercial LGBTQ spaces.

The se interviews explore the participants' perspective of Manchester's commercialised gay village and the last lesbian bar in the village.

Although most participants are happy that the village exists, many expressed feelings of exclusion from the space due to intersecting socio-cultural factors, such as gender, race, age, and sexuality. Due to these experiences many participants attend and create non-commercial LGBTQ spaces that they find more diverse, inclusive, and women-focused.

This demonstrates how lesbians in Manchester navigate commercial and non-commercial spaces to make their identity visible and seek a sense of belonging in women-centred spaces. Furthermore, this paper illustrates a tension between lesbians' reputation and feelings of being invisible and their desire to be visible via accessing and creating lesbian-focused spaces. This tension indicates a level of complexity in the politics of lesbian (in)visibility that this paper tries to address.

Author's Name(s): Zoe McCluskey

Institution/Affiliation: Amsterdam University

Title: "I kissed a Girl and I liked it": Navigating through Cis-Gender Female Subjective Experiences and Pop-Song Representation of the 'Heteroflexible Discourse'.

Abstract:

Proposal: I began this research by interviewing 12 cis-gender women, between the ages of 20-29 on their own subjective experiences of sexuality in contemporary Britain. From listening to these interviews, I discovered unexpected prominent narrative which ran through each interview in some form. This was that each female regarded their sexuality as heterosexual; yet they, on some level, had experienced a sexual experience with another female. As well as the interviews; I began to look outwards at mainstream societal representations of this phenomena. This drew me to look at pop-songs, and their music videos. The two songs I chose were 'I Kissed a Girl' by Katy Perry (2008) and 'Girls' by Rita Ora (2018). A subsequent literature review convinced me there had been no previous research on regarding 'heteroflexibility' as a discourse or investigating the phenomenon from the representations of contemporary popular music. Furthermore, the form of sociological post-structuralist feminist analysis I have applied was scarce within existing literature on the subject. The analysis of my research resulted in similar outcomes on two levels; mainstream cultural representation and subjective experience. This 'heteroflexible discourse' demonstrated practically identical privileged ideologies of the heteronormative narrative, which reflected this 'new sexually liberated female'. This form of liberation I suggest, is in fact, just a representation of the shift that society deems more socially acceptable for heterosexual women. Though seen as a form of progressive female sexual behaviour, it can only be accessed by a certain privileged individual,

creating further sexual hierarchies which are less likely to be so 'obvious'. Coupled with this, the cultural representations show a lack of diversity when it comes to other forms lesbianism, sexuality narratives and femininity.

Author's Name(s): Professor Catherine Meads

Institution/Affiliation: Professor of Health, Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University

Title: The invisibility of lesbians, bisexual women and women who have sex with women in health research

Abstract:

There is considerable invisibility in research on the health of sexual minorities, particularly women. This has had multiple and profound impacts. One example is the lack of information on the sexual health of UK sexual minority women. For many years the Korner Returns from UK sexual health clinics recorded heterosexual men, men who have sex with men, and women. There was no differentiation into women who have sex with women and women who have sex with men. So how the statistics were collected meant that there was no information available. It is unclear why this was set up in this way but gives the message that sexual minority women's sexual health is not important, or same as heterosexual women's health, or not worth collecting. Public Health England have only just realised that they need to collect sexual health information for women by sexual orientation. Another example is where physical health condition prevalence has not been investigated by sexual orientation. A recent publication by Meads and colleagues (2018) showed that there are higher rates of asthma but not cardiovascular disease in sexual minority women. Why this is so is very unclear but warrants further investigation. Also, it is important to note as to why it has taken so long to discover this. The recent action by the US government to cancel recording of sexual orientation in government-collected statistics means that important health-related information about prevalence rates and other useful data will be rendered invisible again. This presentation will outline a number of areas where sexual minority women's health has been rendered invisible or less visible, the implications for sexual minority women and health professionals, and offer some suggestions as to how this can be reversed.

Author's Name(s): Eleanor Medhurst

Institution/Affiliation: University Of Brighton Student

Title: Walking Lesbian Flags: the re-appropriation of pink within queer femininities

Abstract:

Pink is a colour heavy with associations of heterosexual femininity. It has been seen as oppressive; campaigns such as Pink Stinks have warned of the damage it does to women and girls, while gendered branding has exploited pink to produce stereotyped gender differences for the capitalist market. When associated with homosexuality, pink has settled only in male spaces, with divisions between its meanings within different areas of the LGBTQ community.

Recent studies such as the Museum at FIT's 2018 exhibition *Pink: The History of a Punk, Pretty, Powerful Colour* have brought pink into the limelight as a colour with a distinctive voice. However, the role of pink within the women-loving-women community is one which is thriving and subverting the power relations of femininity in the brightest sartorial way.

This paper aims to present the potential of pink as a symbolic means for lesbian and queer women to distort a patriarchal devaluing of femininity. It will explain, from a fashion history perspective, the visibility politics of performative acts of hyperfemininity. Through interviews that I have conducted with a selection of young queer women who proudly dress in predominantly pink styles, and an analysis of the outfits that they wear, I will explore pink as a political symbol of queer self love, sapphic love, and a distinct removal from the oppressive forces of masculinity. This argument is developed by engagement with theoretical works; Luce Irigaray's concept of mimicry explains how visible tools of oppression can be re-appropriated as a subversive act, while an application of the Foucauldian analysis of "reverse discourse," enables a new understanding of how wearing pink can help re-write the social narrative of lesbian dress and identity.

This is a topic which affects anyone who has been shaped, shunned, or silenced by stereotypical images of heterosexual femininity.

Author's Name(s): Flavia Meireles

Institution/Affiliation: full Dance Professor at CEFET/RJ (Brazil) and Ph.D. Candidate in Communication and Culture at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

Title: Marielle Franco – a lesbian in politics and her strategies

Abstract:

This paper examines the brief but remarkable presence of leftist politician Marielle Franco, executed in 2018, in Brazilian politics. During the 2017 municipal elections, her candidacy was not qualified as lesbian, but as a black woman favelada (poor from the shanty towns).

During her term – brutally interrupted after one year by her execution in circumstances that still have no solution – she could foster to put the "Lesbian Visibility Day" for the municipal vote. Her proposal was defeated in the municipality and this day, August 29th, was chosen to celebrate the 1st. National Seminar of Lesbian (SENALE), in 1996.

Monica Benício, Franco's widow, became known broadly in mass media journals. Since then, Benício has spoken publicly in order to pressure governmental institutions and she is now a strong figure to support leftist political struggles in Brazil against the Conservative turn.

My aim is to examine Franco's intersectional agendas of class, race, gender, and sexuality through her institutionalized political struggles during her term as a minority force in the parliament. With the theoretical support of Franco's intellectual work and that of Angela Davis, Audre Lorde and Brazilian black lesbian thinkers, such as Fátima Lima and Edmeire Exaltação, I try to address Marielle's intersectional agendas with her life as a politician in Rio de Janeiro. It is worth to mention that Lima and Exaltação's work is both theoretical and practical and that they organize a house called Casa das Pretas – the very last public meeting of Franco. Yet standing for black poor women's very overtly, her lesbian aspect only became public after her election. Even so, she was able to gather a

strong lesbian movement that almost won the Lesbian Visibility Day in the municipality. This context shows how ambiguous (in)visibility can be, especially in the intersection of class, race and gender discussions.

Author's Name(s): Ellie Milne-Brown

Institution/Affiliation: Third Year undergraduate student in English Language and Literature
University of Oxford

Title: '...that eventually became queer': queer women's becomings-with queer men in the context of HIV/AIDS

Abstract:

Queer women's identity formation does not occur in a vacuum. This paper contends that queer women's identity formation has been vitally informed by their affiliations with queer men. These 'becomings-with' (in Donna Haraway's terms) and 'against' shape how queer communities interact. By using literary and archival texts alongside my own experience as a lesbian trans woman, I propose to approach identity formation in a way which prioritises relationships across queer identities.

Drawing upon Donna Haraway, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's theories of identification, I locate my analysis of lesbian identity formation within the HIV/AIDS Crisis in America. This period saw extraordinary cooperation between queer men and women, and created a set of social spaces, such as those within ACT UP New York, in which queer becomings-with thrived. In order to discuss the specific processes of queer identity formation in the period, I examine literary works (including Sarah Schulman's *Rat Bohemia* and Rebecca Brown's *The Gifts of the Body*) alongside archival material from the ACT UP Oral History Project. In doing so, I contend that the specific contexts of queer activism and of caring for dying loved ones created spaces for becomings-with between queer men and women in this period.

Complementing these readings will be an autotheoretical discussion of my life as a lesbian trans woman who was previously in a homosexual relationship with a man. My process of becoming-with/against my former self will be used to inform my theoretical approach and suggest a new model of queer and lesbian identity formation. Although the AIDS crisis has been articulated as a site of gentrification and the destruction of cross-LGBTQ spaces and relationships, the parallel reading of my own identity alongside texts from this period points towards an alternative future of queer cooperation.¹

Author's Name(s): Dr Julie Mooney-Somers

Institution/Affiliation: Senior Lecturer, Qualitative Research in Health, The University of Sydney, Sydney Health Ethics, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney

Title: Why mass media anti-smoking campaigns fail to engage lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women in Australia

Abstract:

There is robust international data showing lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women smoke at higher rates than their heterosexual peers. As part of a program of work funded by Cancer Institute NSW

and in collaboration with a community health promotion organisation (ACON Health), our study sought to understand the significance of smoking for LBQ women. We conducted 6 focus groups with 28 LBQ women smokers and ex-smokers in urban and regional settings in Australia. We report here on perceptions of mass-media anti-smoking campaigns.

Mainstream messaging failed to connect with participants for three reasons. First, messaging and imagery were simply un-relatable; not as expected because LBQ women were invisible but because participants saw old men, unhealthy people, no one 'like them'. Women, when featured, quit smoking to fulfil family responsibilities. Second, LBQ women talked about resisting what they saw as an attempt to control them (often through scare tactics; they didn't believe government messaging reflected a genuine care for them as LBQ women. Finally, women reacted negatively to the shame, guilt and stigma implicit in the campaigns they could recall. We'll look briefly at what participants thought would resonate for women like them, and then demonstrate how this was articulated by the Smoke Free Still Fierce smoking cessation community campaign developed by ACON Health.

Author's Name(s): Dr Julie Mooney-Somers

Institution/Affiliation: University of Sydney

Title: The SWASH survey of lesbian, bisexual and queer women's health: How community shaped and sustained a 22 year collaboration in Sydney, Australia.

Abstract:

In 1996, health workers at the AIDS Council of New South Wales (Australia), concerned about a lack of evidence about HIV risk for women partners of gay and bisexual men, worked with researchers to run the first Sydney Women and Sexual Health Survey (SWASH). SWASH quickly became a means to capture and track critical health indicators (beyond sexual health) of community-engaged lesbian, bisexual, queer (LBQ) and other non-heterosexual identifying women who engage with LGBTQ communities in Sydney. It has been conducted every two years since 1996, making it the longest running (perhaps only) periodic survey of LBQ women's health in the world. In the absence of a 'mainstream' evidence base, SWASH has driven and informed action.

SWASH is run by researchers in collaboration with a community health promotion organisation, where members of LGBTQ communities work in and for LGBTQ communities. In this presentation we will tell the SWASH story from our perspective as researchers. We will reflect on how the lived experience of LBQ women (and more recently non-binary people) in the community has shaped and sustained the collaboration and profoundly influenced the way we research. The community has a strong sense of ownership over the project; we will talk about the accountabilities and challenges this produces for the researchers and for our community partner. In producing scientific evidence, SWASH makes LBQ women and their health needs visible to the mainstream (and by extension, our findings become a demand for action). But it also acts to tell LBQ women about their health, and construct the very notion of common health interests.

Author's Name(s): Gail Neill

Institution/Affiliation: Lecturer Community Youth Work, Ulster University

Title: 'And so I was reminded that I was not normal': Young women with disabilities reflect on their experiences growing up LGBTQ in Northern Ireland.

Abstract:

'Reel Life Data' was a competition that sought to bring to life, through film, data from a LGBTQ attitudinal dataset. The aim was that this would increase data accessibility but also widen its reach beyond academic audiences. This paper explores how one group of LGBTQ young women with learning disabilities engaged with this project and the impact of their involvement. The paper highlights the topics they raised (community, education, politics and future aspirations) but also considers the use of film production, by non-filmmakers, as a means of making visible their experiences. It considers how the anonymity of being behind a camera enabled these young women, who previously had not spoken out on such matters, the confidence to do so. The paper concludes by screening their 3-minute film 'Growing up gay in Northern Ireland'.

Author's Name(s): Rachel O'Connell

Institution/Affiliation: University of Sussex

Title: "Thigh gaps are a currency where I come from": Willam Belli, Commodification, and Queer Femininities

Abstract:

This paper considers how performance, specifically drag performance, represents the complexities of the embodied self. Returning to Judith Butler's canonical argument that drag reveals the performative nature of gender, this paper explores the output of the controversial YouTube performer and RuPaul's Drag Race alumnus, Willam Belli. I argue that Willam's work constitutes an embedded, enmeshed, and complicit commentary on the commodification of femininity and the hypersexualisation of the female body in the contemporary "attention economy" of social media and digital self-entrepreneurship. The title quote of this paper is Willam's tongue-in-cheek protest against the body-positivity mantra that women don't need to have thigh gaps. Declaring this "hate speech," Willam displays his allegiance to thigh-gap ideals of femininity and thus to celebrated body culture in LA (his hometown) and online, and the idea of the "hot" body as currency. The winner of Drag Race's wet t-shirt competition during his tenure on the show, Willam's performance consistently focuses on "hotness," the kind of "sex-tape femininity" that, commentators have noted, emerges at the nexus of postfeminism, entrepreneurial neoliberalism, and digital and social media. Consistently posing himself as "slut" and "whore," through his exaggerated, dragged-out version of this form of femininity, Willam seems to reveal how digital media's attention economies are currently constructing femininity, and in particular, constructing femininity as commodity. In Willam's work this lurid nihilism of the feminine feeds into an overall aesthetic of humour that is racist, transphobic, ableist, and misogynistic, such that we certainly cannot read Willam as a queer theorist or political heroine of drag. And yet he is of interest as an ambivalently located cultural performer, both critical and compelled, both detached and embedded; even while he performs a post-mortem on the postfeminist body, he chooses to perform and embody that body and self-declaredly identifies with it. Displaying an abrasive and abject body-non-specific feminine performativity, Willam seems to show us something about femme subjectivities beyond the cis-female but simultaneously outside of the transfeminine; a kind of self-annihilating femme negativity that reveals a new side of queer femininities.

Author's Name(s): Kate O'Riordan & Sharon Webb

Institution/Affiliation: Head of School, Media Film and Music, University of Sussex

Title: What's in a name: queer politics on campus

Abstract:

This paper draws on interviews and archival work examining the history of LGBTQ+ student society at the University of Sussex. It reflects upon the significance of the name changes of the societies on campus over time and considers their role in concerns and political movements in wider society. It explores the experience of student societies in relation to individual and group identity. It looks also at how the Sussex groups were positioned as political through activism, and beyond LGBTQ+ issues and the university. It also considers the relationship between life on campus and other spaces in Brighton and Hove and explores how town and gown are interwoven in the political, social and cultural experiences of queer community in Brighton and Hove. The project assembled material over a timeline from 1970 to 2017; from Gay.soc to the LGBTQ+ society. Three key themes are developed from the primary materials:

* Identity exploration and creation

* Queer politics and beyond

* Town and gown

This research is based on material gathered by two student researchers who worked with the University of Sussex Student Union. They identified previous society members, a timeline and media coverage of the Society. They carried out interviews with members, past and present, and identified media materials, including a combination of materials from participants and broader media coverage in local and national media. They identified a number of key events, demonstrations, issues, exhibitions and controversies including: actions against British Home Stores (1976); the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (1979); protests against Section 28 (1988); engagements with Pride; alliances and antagonisms around the inclusion of L, B, T, Q and +; and controversies over the words dyke and faggot.

Author's Name(s): Enrica Pianaro

Institution/Affiliation: Centre d'Information GAY et LESbien – CIGALE

Title: The L-files: Writing lesbian lives from scratch

Abstract:

This paper will give an overview on the difficulties encountered to collect and to write lesbian history in Luxembourg. Starting point is the publication of a book on "Women and Gender" which led to the observation that there is almost "zero" material on lesbian lives, voices and bodies. The questions that arose were: how can public policies integrate lesbian perspectives if lesbians don't exist in the Luxembourgish social, cultural and political space? How can lesbians be visible (and stand for their rights) if they don't have a trace of their past? How can we use the existent to create a lesbian genealogy? In order to find answers to those questions, this presentation would like to open a discussion and enable participants to share similar experiences from other countries or cities.

Author's Name(s): Erin J. Rand

Institution/Affiliation: Associate Professor, Communication & Rhetorical Studies, Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York, USA

Title: "Ravishing Resistance: The Radical Aesthetics of Queer Feminine Fashion"

Abstract:

Masculine of center fashion has received unprecedented publicity in the last decade, with new fashion bloggers and brands featuring menswear styled for butch women, trans men, and gender non-conforming folks. The allure and transgression of these looks are undeniable, but when that transgression is assumed to occur through cross-gender stylization—female-assigned bodies donning masculine-coded clothing—the potential political and aesthetic resistance of queer feminine fashion is obscured. This paper thus engages with a variety of feminine-leaning queer styles, described and embodied in fashion blogs and independent brands, in order to investigate the way they navigate, on one hand, the hypervisibility and display demanded by femininity and, on the other hand, the invisibility and disregard that often characterizes feminine style in queer communities. Specifically, I consider three queer feminine fashion blogs (Defiant Femme, Fit for a Femme and DapperQ's "sibling project," "Hi Femme!"), as well as two brands that cater to queer feminine people of all genders, races, dis/abilities, and body types (Cilium and Rebirth Garments). In order to understand how these blogs and brands embrace, reinterpret, and refuse patriarchal and heteronormative cultural norms of appearance and style, I bring together scholarship in fashion studies, queer studies, and rhetorical studies, as well as histories of clothing as a means of expression and resistance. Ultimately, I suggest that queer feminine aesthetics, working in the interstices of hypervisibility and invisibility, engage with, rewrite, and sometimes subvert the rules of fashion, the expectations of gendered and sexual categories, the meanings associated with particular sartorial signifiers, and the value accorded to particular bodily configurations.

Author's Name(s): Dr Fiona Rooney, Tom Vlietstra & Yalda Tomlinson

Institution/Affiliation: NHS Foundation Trust

Title: (in)visible sex: LGBTQI Identity, meaningful sex and Intellectual Disability.

Abstract:

Inclusivity movements have focused on improving the sex lives of those with physical disabilities. This taboo has also been challenged in intellectual disability services since the 1980s, however the focus of this is often in the areas of 'safe sex', 'mental capacity' or reducing 'challenging sexual behaviour.' People with intellectual disabilities who are members of the LGBTQI community have been largely neglected from research and remain a hidden and marginalised group in society. There is a sad history of the discussion of sexuality and gender identity being constructed as 'perversion' or ignored within the field of intellectual disability. Positive changes are taking place, however more can be done to increase service's confidence in providing support. This talk aims to explain what an intellectual disability is, discuss the importance of discussing 'meaningful' and 'pleasurable' sex, and explore the barriers such individuals face in terms of expressing their identity, accessing appropriate

services and negotiating this within their lives. Particular focus will be given to sharing to results of research based on interviews, focusing on how cis-women with intellectual disabilities describe and understand their LGB identity, where they felt included and excluded in their day-to-day lives and if they felt supported in their expression of same-sex attraction; three main themes were identified: 'non-heterosexual identity as difficult', 'the impact of invisibility and difference' and 'visibility and a positive sense of self'.

Author's Name(s): Dr Róisín Ryan-Flood

Institution/Affiliation: Senior Lecturer, Director, Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC)
Department of Sociology, University of Essex

Title: 'Haven't you literally been on a date with every single woman in London yet?!': Lesbian Online Dating

Abstract:

This paper will explore how the digital realm impacts on lesbian personal relationships via the experience of online dating. The growing popularity of online dating websites and apps demonstrates that this is an increasingly commonplace activity for people seeking a partner. Yet little is known about how online dating is potentially transforming intimate relationships. In particular, the experiences of lesbian, bisexual and queer women have been almost completely unexplored. This study provides new insights into technology, gender and intimacy through in-depth interviews with 15 women who live in London and have experience of online dating. It is argued that online dating both reinscribes and subverts prevailing gender norms. Topics explored include gender and ageing, harassment and new normativities in the digital era. The paper explores new understandings of the role of digital intimacies in contemporary life, as well as the changing context for gender relations and sexual citizenship.

Author's Name(s): Isabelle Salem Diego Sentis

Institution/Affiliation: activist

Title: Let's celebrate the riots of Stonewall by documenting the history of our (lesbian) bars

Abstract:

We archive the history of Geneva's festive and militant places frequented by lesbians, bies, heterosexual, cis and trans friends, non-binary people from the 70s to the present day. We work in a collaborative and DIY approach. We are presenting these archives now, in anticipation of Stonewall's 50th anniversary commemorations, which will, unfortunately, continue to make the history of LBTs and LBT racialized people invisible.

We organize an intergenerational mobilization of lesbian and bisexual, cis and trans people. We want them to realize that they are actresses of this story. It is crucial that they could appropriate these stories and become producers of knowledge and archives.

We will present the playful participative devices set up to learn how to document our individual and collective histories ourselves. We will share tested strategies to encourage a collective involvement of everyone, especially for the less aware of these issues and the most vulnerable.

We are in the process of enriching and strengthening the already existing archives, such as those of the lesbian association Lestime or those of the city, thanks to the collections carried out within the framework of the project.

We chose to create a digital cartography to mediate these archives collected, archives created and digitized by the city, television and other institutional archives, or archives that we have helped to create. We will share our questions about other mediations to put in place to make this story and these archives visible.

Author's Name(s): Isabelle Salem Diego Sentis

Institution/Affiliation:

Title: Speed dating with our archives

Abstract:

The workshop will be an opportunity to allow participants to meet by discovering together archives brought by participants, lecturers, members of the University ... The workshop will also help to question the archives that we miss, those that have been destroyed or that are not communicated to us.

The idea is to create a playful and convivial framework of shared discovery of archives in the form of a speed dating: we use the codes of speed dating, a timed time, a protocol of questions ...

After showing up, the participants will discover an archive hidden in an envelope and an envelope with a representation of the mechanisms of invisibilisation of the history of lesbians. They will be invited to exchange and draw comic bubbles and to write inside what this archive evokes to them in relation to their personal history and then in relation to the history of our community. Then they will annotate together the rubrics of an archival presentation. Once, the time dedicated to the speed dating elapsed, the participants are invited to gather the archives and notes and to discover what the other pairs or trinomials have discovered and expressed. Thus a collection of archives will be collectively constituted ephemeral in connection with the colloquium and a digital trace will be carried out later (see the example * of digital trace of a workshop that we animated in a Marseille Museum MUCEM).

We want to allow participants to become aware of their legitimacy to discover archives, to constitute and contribute with their / our vocabularies. We want to share a sorority moment.

Author's Name(s): Elisabeth T. Sandler

Institution/Affiliation: Researcher, Cambridge University

Title: Female same-sex parents' visibility in connection to leave

Abstract:

This paper discusses findings from my MPhil research (University of Cambridge, 2017/18) which explored how leave affected ten female same-sex parents' experience of their parental identity. Semi-structured interviews and two-week diaries (diary-interview method) shed light on parental identity experiences within the settings of shared parental, maternity, and adoption leave, as well as ineligibility for leave in the UK. Participants identified as 'female', 'mothers', and 'same-sex' which includes sexual orientations such as 'lesbian', 'gay woman', 'bisexual', and 'pansexual'. Findings suggest that being on leave increased participants' visibility as parents, but not necessarily as same-sex parents. This parental (in)visibility is two-layered: (1) to oneself and (2) to others such as their partner, child, health practitioners, or strangers. First, in providing focus, presence, and time, leave allowed participants to live up to their parental identity definition through engaging in tasks they imagined a parent to do. In engaging in parental tasks, participants became visible to themselves as parents. Second, being on leave increased participants' interactions with others in their parental role. These interactions facilitated parental visibility to others and, in being viewed and treated as parents by others, increased parental visibility to themselves. Interestingly, this visibility layer is not dependent on confirmed knowledge. Parental identities were often assumed by strangers, based on the assumption that a female with a child is this child's mother. This assumption, however, is heteronormative in expecting only one mother: When in public as a family, in contrast to being out with their child(ren) alone, strangers often did not recognise both participants as the child's parent/mother. The act of outing their partner and family constellation was then necessary in order to be both visible within their parental roles. Due to heteronormativity, being on leave together can then lessen parental visibility.

Author's Name(s): Karin Schönplflug

Title: Lesbian identities in neoliberal economics

Affiliation/ institution: IHS - Institut für Höhere Studien - Institute for Advanced Studies

Abstract:

The first part of this paper discusses the invisibility of lesbian identities in economic theory. Starting from the inaugural moment when Hobbes and Locke legitimize private property in their contract theories, personal identity was created in a patriarchic, (heteronormative), colonial and capitalist process that needs a hierarchic interaction between sexes, races and classes. Lesbian existence is not an issue in economic theory and sexual "deviance" is ruled out from neoliberal models of family economics. The second part of this paper is specifically concerned with processes of lesbian identity formation against the backdrop of an economic system and culture that has rendered lesbians invisible for centuries, but now offers a place for all that are economically and personally successful: Neoliberalism demands self-optimizing of minds and bodies in private and public spheres as well as in activist settings: In a dynamic market place a plethora of identities are available and ready for personal integration. In the 1980s the default lines between the "good" and the "bad" lesbians were

sexual activities, in the 2010s lesbian identities are played against each other and the competition is once again fierce!

Author's Name(s): Victoria Suvoroff

Title: (In) Visibility in language attributed to representations of female masculinity as exemplified by Soviet history.

Abstract:

From monarchs to arts and culture, Russia has had strong links with Europe, but the Revolution of 1917 followed by the creation of the USSR changed the dynamics by closing the iron curtain between the two worlds. Censorship and isolation from the West have created a culture that is not exposed to ideas of sexual and gender diversities but how different are the histories of lesbian lives in Russia and the UK during the past century? For example, decriminalisation of homosexuality after perestroika in 1993 , federal law introduced in 2013 criminalising the distribution of materials in support of LGBT community amongst minors is reminiscent to Section 28 from the past that prevented “homosexual propaganda” in the UK.

The proposed visual presentation concentrates on images of female masculinity throughout Soviet history and aims to avoid misinterpretations of the identities behind these images. The problematics of identity labels are subject to a current debate in the UK. This can be seen on fliers and badges distributed by Brighton and Hove city council (Fig. 5) on the use of pronouns. This flux state of language in relation to gender is also exemplified by the rainbow plaque dedicated to Anne Lister (1791-1840) referred at first to Lister as “Gender-nonconforming entrepreneur” (Fig. 6). Controversy surrounds the terminology used on the plaque creates a space for the critique of contemporary terminology in defining historic figures. In presentation the correct terminology in relation to representations of female masculinity in Soviet history from 1917 through Soviet era to Perestroika is established and follows the tendencies of the language in representing female masculinity.

While approaching representations of female masculinity in a format of an archive creates a form of visual affirmation of the diversity in gender representations in history, what is the role of the language attached to them and what form of (In)Visibility it has a potential to create?

Author's Name(s): Tena Thau

Institution/Affiliation: DPhil Candidate in Philosophy, Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, University of Oxford

Title: “Love Drugs” and Queer Visibility

Abstract:

A growing philosophical literature is exploring the ethics of “love drugs” – biotechnology that might, in the future, influence who we are romantically attracted to. In a recent paper, Earp, Sandberg, & Savulescu (2014) consider whether it would be morally permissible for a gay person to take drugs that would make them straight (were such drugs developed in the future), in order to escape severe

discrimination. In this paper, I ask the opposite question: would it be morally permissible for a straight person to take drugs that would make them gay, or pan?

There seems to be something morally troubling about unnaturally changing one's sexual orientation, in cases where one would go from a privileged orientation to a marginalized one. I explore both consequentialist and non-consequentialist versions of this worry. The consequentialist version of the objection would contend that changing one's orientation to queer could result in harm to the queer community. The non-consequentialist version of the objection contends that changing one's orientation from straight to queer is morally wrong, apart from any negative consequences it might have for queer folks.

After considering the objections to straight-to-queer love drugs, I consider whether a positive case could be made in favour of their use. In particular, I explore how the use of such drugs would introduce a novel kind of "queer visibility" – one that would enable previously straight people to see what it is like to be queer through their own eyes.

Author's Name(s): Jane Traies, Pip Scott, Marguerite Saffery, Barbara Young

Title: 'How many old lesbians does it take to write a history book?'

Abstract:

This collaborative panel presentation addresses the politics of (in)visibility as it applies to older lesbians, by putting four women in their seventies and eighties centre stage. The panellists are all contributors to *Now You See Me* (ed. Jane Traies, 2018), a collection of life stories told by lesbians born before 1950. Rather than three discrete academic papers, it features readings, personal reflections and discussion. The participants will read from their own stories, as well as describing the process of co-producing the book and reflecting on what this experience of 'becoming visible' has been like for them.

Moderator, Jane Traies.

Speakers: Marguerite Saffery, Barbara Young, Kate Foley

Speaker biographies:

Marguerite Saffery: Born in 1946, during a heatwave followed by one of the worst winters on record, a life from the start full of juxtapositions. Educated by Anglican nuns, expelled twice, hung on until I was 18. Studied theology. Wanted to be a priest: no chance. Spent 37 years teaching English, opening a world for people to be the best they could be in a universe of glittering choices. Married, because you do; two girls; divorced. Joined a consciousness raising group, and my life became even more complicated; born again. Had first relationship with a woman, met my now wife, a home for ever. Retired, able to take part in social action, helped to start and run a foodbank. Became a grandmother. Always aimed to change the world – failed in the big attempt, maybe some success in the smaller efforts.

Barbara Young: I am 70 years old. I totally changed my life at the age of 40, when I realised that I had to look at who I am before it was too late. I now view myself as lesbian. I have two adult

children who are very open about my identity, and my ex-husband of 25 years gave permission for his photo to appear in this book. I am in a civil partnership and will this year celebrate this relationship's 25 years. I retired 8 years ago from a career in social work. I now enjoy being creative with wood.

Kate Foley: My working life ranged from delivering babies to conserving delicate archaeological material. My last job was as Head of English Heritage's scientific and technical research laboratories.

Although I have always written poetry, it wasn't until I gave up the day job that I began to publish.

I now live, with my Dutch wife, between Amsterdam and Suffolk, where I perform, write, edit, lead workshops and work with artists in other disciplines. *Electric Psalms: New and Selected Poems* was published by Shoestring Press in 2016 and *A Gift of Rivers*, my 10th collection, by Arachne Press in 2018.

Jane Traies: I am an independent scholar, writer and researcher loosely attached to Sussex University. I have been recording the experiences of the oldest generations of lesbians in the UK for about ten years. Some of these stories featured in my first book, *The Lives of Older Lesbians: Sexuality, Identity and the Life Course* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). I continue to record the life-narratives of women born before 1950 who identify as lesbian or bisexual; my second book, *Now You See Me* (Tollington Press, 2018), is a collection of some of these stories.

Author's Name(s): Siyang Wei

Title: The Visibility of Identity: Lesbian Encounters with 'Compulsory Sexuality'

Abstract:

In the growing field of asexuality studies, the notion of 'compulsory sexuality' has increasingly been called forth to explain the apparent invisibility of asexuality in contemporary Western society. In a 2015 conceptual overview, Kristina Gupta argues that the "privileging of sexuality and the marginalisation of nonsexuality" (147) makes sexuality – analogous to but independent of heterosexuality – a system of compulsory regulation. Evidence is found in such places as archaic marriage consummation laws, the 'male sexual drive discourse', and sexualisation as "the increasing visibility of and importance afforded to sex and sexuality in the public and private spheres" (139) – underpinned by the "assumption of universal sexual interest" (141). As such, she writes: "Our society's definition of the human and the normal is tied to the sexual, but not necessarily any longer to the heterosexual." (142)

However, I argue that proponents of compulsory sexuality as an explanatory concept have failed to critically interrogate the 'visibility' the asexual identity category as an emancipatory goal, nor have they sufficiently explored dimensions of visibility beyond cultural representation. As a result, this work simplifies the troubled relationship between (a)sexuality, agency, and gender in context of the growing commodification of the erotic. It also functions to invisibilise the subjective articulation of qualitatively different asexualities in relation to the continued heteropatriarchal structuration of sex.

My paper seeks to address this gap by paying specific attention to the intersection of lesbian and asexual experiences. Building on three in-depth interviews with women who identify with both

‘queerness’ and asexuality, I demonstrate the ways in which dominant narratives of asexuality – as invisibilised by ‘compulsory sexuality’ – mask the more fraught role of sexual desire in lesbian and otherwise ‘queer’ womanhoods. Accordingly, I argue that any emancipatory theory of asexuality must not marginalise the analytic framework of compulsory heterosexuality.

Author’s Name(s): Jinfang Yang

Institution/Affiliation: PhD student of Social Psychology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona

Title: The constructed and legitimized heteronormativity in academy: “Invisibility” of the female-homosexual population & “Invisibility” of the heterosexual population in the Psychology of Spain, Portugal, Latin America and China

Abstract:

Many social psychologists we affirm that we investigate male homosexuality and lesbianism fighting for social equality. But in fact, precisely our investigations are constructing and legitimating the heteronormativity. The objective of the present work is to identify the academic construction of heteronormativity of the Psychology of Spain, Portugal, Latin America and China.¹

Through a review of the published articles of the Psychology of the mentioned countries and areas on male homosexuality and lesbianism during 2012-2016, there’s a striking difference between the number of the articles about general/male homosexual population and the number of the articles about the female-homosexual population. In the 80th of the last century, Kitzinger (1987) has indicated the invisibility of the female-homosexual population, Stein (2007) also states that until now researchers still only occasionally study lesbians, this “invisibility” still reminds us that, like always, the academia is somehow ignoring the female non-heterosexual population. In conditions of the normative heterosexuality, occasionally monitoring gender is a way of affirming the heterosexuality (Butler 2007), moreover, scientific discourses legitimize and/or illegitimize individuals’ behaviours in a specific society (Jualiano, 2017), then the simple fact that researchers study male homosexuality and lesbianism without questioning heterosexuality has already legitimized and naturalized heterosexuality as the normative sexuality.

The research reveals that the actual Psychology is still working under the heterosexual logic, and both “invisibilities” imply that the academia has constructed and legitimized the heteronormativity of our society and is still doing it. This work seeks to rethink the heterocentric logic, the constitutive power of scientific discourses and the ethical and political effects of our investigations.

Author’s Name(s): Dr Laine Zisman Newman

Institution/Affiliation: Centre for Sexual Diversity, Studies at the University of Toronto.

Title: Troubling ‘inclusive’ spaces in queer women’s communities

Abstract:

On November 20, 2018, Glad Day Books and XTRA Magazine hosted a workshop in Toronto, Canada, focused on a lack of space for queer women in the city. Though free, the event required reservations, which quickly sold out online. Queer, lesbian, bi, and trans women were eager to be

part of an intersectional discussion on the very tangible spatial inequities they had experienced in their daily lives.

While the event provided an essential space for discussion, it was scheduled on the same day, at the same time as the Trans Day of Remembrance Ceremony, just a few blocks away. When confronted about this scheduling conflict multiple times on their Facebook page, the organizers responded to every critique and question with the same word-for-word reply. Ultimately, they did not change the date or time of the event. As one person asserted on the Facebook page, simply acknowledging the error and continuing with the event is insufficient: “Queer cis women (myself included) need to transparently acknowledge the transphobic history of many lesbian/queer spaces/institutions in Toronto and work to address and rectify this problem--acknowledging this error and rescheduling this event--and signal boosting the 519 event!--should be a start.”

Though adamant about their inclusive approach, XTRA’s refusal to shift the date and time of the event demonstrates a lack of care, concern, and inclusion for those who are most marginalized and invisible within our communities. The concurrent events are an indication of how marginalized groups within queer communities are expected to thrive with not only less space, but also split time. Indeed, XTRA noted in their posts that attendees could move between the events, slipping in and out of the spaces as they see fit. The assumption that marginalized bodies should move through space more quickly is one way in which privilege (and oppression) manifests. Privileged bodies are not only permitted to take up space, but to take it up for longer periods of time.

Thinking through the spatial and temporal dynamics at play in this incident, alongside other recent acts of exclusion in queerwomen’s spaces, in this paper I consider the consequences of cis-centred white lesbian activism and simplistic empty assertions of inclusivity. Through discussions of allyship and trans invisibility, ultimately, this paper explores how the expectations of space and time use impact not only who is present to speak in the room, but also who is spoken for and spoken about.