

THE LESBIAN LIVES CONFERENCE 2024

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS: SOLIDARITIES, COMMUNITIES, NETWORKS AND ACTIVISMS

University of Brighton
Friday and Saturday
22 and 23 March 2024

ABSTRACTS



University of Brighton

Centre for Transforming
Sexuality and Gender



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Abstracts

Friday March 22nd

10:00 – 11:30 Parallel Sessions

Panel 1 Queering Desire: Lesbians, Gender and Subjectivity I

This panel session presents chapters from the edited collection *Queering Desire: Lesbians, Gender and Subjectivity* (Routledge, 2024). *Queering Desire* explores, with unprecedented interdisciplinary scope, contemporary configurations of lesbian, bi, queer women's and non-binary people's experiences of identity and desire. Taking an intersectional feminist approach and incorporating new and established identities such as non-binary, masculine of centre (MOC), butch and femme, this collection examines how the changing landscape for gender and sexual identities impacts on queer culture in productive and transformative ways.

Róisín Ryan-Flood: Queer Lineage

This paper proposes a new concept, 'queer lineage', which refers to intergenerational queer interpersonal connections that look to the past in ways that are significant in the present. It draws on Ken Plummer's theory of generational sexualities, to incorporate an intersectional approach to the generational narratives of sexualities that co-exist in the same present moment. Exploring contemporary representations of elder LGBTQ lives in visual culture and their popularity with younger audiences, the paper argues that cross-generational connections can be foundational to queer community and often exist alongside intergenerational dialogue and positive relationality. The paper includes some autobiographical reflections on the author's experience of queer lineage and concludes with some thoughts on queer grief.

Róisín Ryan-Flood is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC) at the University of Essex. Her research interests include gender, sexuality, kinship, digital intimacies, and feminist epistemology. She is the author of *Lesbian Motherhood: Gender, Sexuality and Citizenship* (2009), and co-editor of numerous books, including *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process* (2010), *Transnationalising Reproduction: Third Party Conception in a Globalised World* (2018), *Difficult Conversations: A Feminist Dialogue* (2023), and *Consent: Gender, Power and Subjectivity* (2023). She is also co-editor of the journal *Sexualities: Studies in Culture and Society*.

Ella Ben Hagai: Increased Lesbian Visibility and its Discontents: Comparing the coming out stories of women and nonbinary people across generations

In this paper we present an analysis of convergent and divergent themes in the "coming out," and "staying in" stories of people who identify as lesbians (or as women/femmes who are attracted to women/femmes) across different generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z (n=40). Our analysis is grounded in an intersectional framework that examines identity in relation to interlocking forms of oppressions including sexism, racism, homophobia, and class oppression. We juxtapose themes from lesbian coming out/staying in narratives with an analysis of shifts in the psychological theorization of lesbian desire across the decades.

Ella Ben Hagai was trained in Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her Ph.D. at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is an associate professor at California State University, Fullerton, and the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. Her research broadly focuses on processes that lead individuals from different social groups to develop solidarity and coalition consciousness. Recent theoretical publications explore intersections between queer and trans* thought and psychological research. Her recent book, *Queer Theory*

and Psychology: Gender, Sexuality, and Transgender Identities is the recipient of the American Psychological Association Division 44 Distinguished Book Award and the Association of Women in Psychology Distinguished Publication Award.

Eleanor Medhurst: Carabiners and Violet Tattoos: the desire for nostalgia in online lesbian space

There's an assumption, in the online spaces frequented by young lesbians, that lesbian history is clear-cut. Once upon a time, the story goes, lesbians would meet in bars and dance, drink, and fall in love. Butches and femmes always knew how to dress, fluently speaking the language of lesbian sartorial communication. This is a fantasy, the bare bones of history polished into a shine by a desire to belong. There is a hunger, among a new generation of lesbians dotted through the void of online space, to find themselves and others like them. "What codes were used in the past?" they ask. "How can I use them now?" This paper examines the desire, in virtual lesbian communities, for history in bite-size pieces. It considers and contextualises the growing demand to know historical style codes, as well as the reinterpretation of these codes in the present. From violets - first popularised in the poetry of Sappho - to the 'lesbian earrings' popular in the present day, this essay seeks to connect the search for the lesbian past with the construction of contemporary lesbian aesthetics.

Eleanor Medhurst is an independent lesbian fashion historian and author of *Dressing Dykes*, a blog about lesbian fashion history. She has degrees at BA and MA level from the University of Brighton, where she focused her research on queer and subversive fashion histories. Medhurst has also worked towards the sharing of queer histories through her involvement with *Queer Looks* and *Queer the Pier*, exhibitions at Brighton Museum.

Panel 2 - Literature, Coloniality, Race

Joao Paulo Tinoco - "Control Your Tongue": A Fronteriza Discursive Analysis from the Writing of the Chicana Mestiza Woman

This presentation, part of my thesis, proposes a study around the process of the identity construction of the Chicana/indigenous woman, from Gloria Anzaldúa's writing on the book *Borderlands/La frontera: the new mestiza* (2012), especially the possible identity representations from the bio and geo that the Black woman subject is situated. To do so, it is necessary a critic of the knowledge/power studies (FOUCAULT, 2012), under the archaeology and genealogy methods; of the Fronteriza Discourse Analysis, which allows the analyst seeks other links in the science field that might help with analysing the corpus, mainly from the decolonial studies; and conceptions on Geostoric Site which considerate the subjects (bio), places (geo) and narratives (writings) that are part of the fronterizo subject's biographical landscapes. From a decolonial option, this presentation intends to search in the writing produced by the Chicana/indigenous woman the silent identities which scape from the heteronormativity. My hypothesis is that from the position of the Chicana/indigenous woman subject, under the fronterizo epistemology thinking, it exposes the herida/wound relation between the human being, tongue, and identity, that is, there are marks on the Chicana woman's writing that overlap remains from the past that reach other peoples, other subjects who experience the marginalization, constructing resistance and denouncement through discursive practices and the fronterizo identity. The results highlight that Anzaldúa (2012) shows that being a Black woman in the margin, a Chicana/indigenous, being lesbian is to occupy the in-between place, so they can resist and exist. This presentation brings contributions with possible unfolding from different places of enunciation, even when we know that any discussion could not end the debates and the possibility of intersections that the theme around the social (in)equality may provoke in Human Science.

Joao Paulo Tinoco is a Brazilian researcher (PhD in Linguistics Studies), currently majoring in Applied Linguistics (Discourse Analysis), Decolonial Studies. In Brazil, I am an associate researcher at the Núcleo de Estudos Culturais Comparados (NECC) where I am researching *Rebel Poetics: Gloria Anzaldúa and Edgar Nolasco*. My major research interest is in the field of Decolonial Studies - Identity; Feminism; Exclusion/Inclusion; Fronterizo Studies; Gloria Anzaldúa; Writing of the self; Gender and Women's Studies; Marginalized Epistemologies; Translation; Michel Foucault - exploring how language can construct and deconstruct systems of thought and practices which can include and exclude groups of people.

Naoise Murphy - *Globalising the Lesbian Middlebrow*

This paper considers the global connections within lesbian 'middlebrow' fiction; popular novels of the mid-twentieth century featuring prominent lesbian or queer representation. Building on Ben Nichols' elaboration of the 'lesbian middlebrow' as 'a form of distinctly ordinary writing by women in which lesbian desire came into view' (2020: 120), this paper will suggest that global connections contribute to the distinctive ordinariness of lesbian desire in this mid-century period. By returning the global dimension to these depictions of lesbian normality, we can see how sexual dissidence exists in a complex web of entanglements with systems of empire and coloniality. The construction of a legible and respectable modern lesbian identity in the twentieth century depends on a hierarchical relationship with non-white Others. A key example comes from Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, in a pivotal scene of encounter between the white protagonist Stephen Gordon and some African-American musicians. Departing from this defining moment for lesbian/queer representation, this paper will consider scenes of global encounter in work by novelists such as Angela Thirkell and Kate O'Brien. Bringing the 'global', the 'lesbian' and the 'middlebrow' together offers a productive way of thinking through uncomfortable questions of proximity, difference and the problem of solidarity in lesbian literature.

Naoise Murphy is a Lecturer in English at Maynooth University. They received their PhD from the University of Cambridge Centre for Gender Studies in 2023, with a dissertation on queer readings of Irish women's writing. Their research and teaching interests are in queer and trans studies, gender and sexuality, modern and contemporary literature and postcolonial studies.

Chigozirim Miracle Nwaosu - *Homophobia in Afro-Queerness Stories and the Politics of Solidarity*

Issues surrounding African homosexuality are becoming more and more urgent due to harsh anti-gay and lesbian laws implemented in most Sub-Saharan African countries. Some African writers have mustered the courage to engage in this controversial debate from an African perspective about what it means to be Black, African, and queer, and the homophobic experiences of those who identify as queer. One of such writers is Diriye Osman whose short story collection *Fairytales for Lost Children* focuses on the experiences of exiled queer Somalians. Osman's 'Earthling' narrates the homophobic experiences of a Somalian lesbian woman named Zeytun, whose sister- Hamdi was getting used to the idea that her sister- Zeytun is a lesbian. However, Hamdi's boyfriend- Libaan decides against Zeytun's relationship with Mari because he felt it is haram, unnatural and repulsive for two women to fornicate. Through my analysis of this text, I propose to examine the homophobic experiences of the lesbian character- Zeytun and how her homophobic experiences from family, friends, colleagues, and strangers could be responsible for her development of psychosis. I will connect my analysis of this text to the Queer and Feminist theories of Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldua to help enrich my analysis of this text. Lorde contends that 'homophobia is a terror surrounding feelings of love for members of the same sex and thereby a hatred of those feelings in others' (1985, pp. 3-4). Therefore, what I bring to the analysis of this text is to demonstrate how Zeytun's psychosis becomes a source of solidarity between her, Mari, and Mari's mother.

Chigozirim Miracle Nwaosu I am six months into my PhD program at the University of Surrey, Guildford. My proposed PhD thesis title is 'The racial and queer experiences of black gay men and women in African, African American, and Black British novels'.

Panel 3 – Ethics of Care

Helen Aadnesgaard - *Queer Crip Care*

This paper explores the reconceptualization of theorizations of intimate labor by queer crips, emphasizing the distinctive aspects of care work within lived experiences. The focus on queer-crip subjectivity arises from the non-normative nature of this position, which challenges traditional care structures. Queers and crips often create alternative relations outside heteronormative family structures, necessitating non-normative modes of care. The study aims to make visible and inform theory about the intimate labor performed by and for queer-crips, addressing gaps in existing theorizations. Drawing from the work of Boris and Parreñas, the paper

expands their conceptualization of intimate labor to include unpaid queer crip care work. The researcher, a crip queer themselves, navigates this exploration through a feminist participatory action research (PAR) approach, incorporating autotheory and drawing on frameworks from Critical Disability Studies, Sick Woman Theory, and feminist queer crip theory. Theoretical foundations, including Critical Disability Studies, Boris and Parreñas' intimate labor framework, Sick Woman Theory, autotheory, and feminist queer crip theory, guide the research question: How do crip-queers redefine the conceptualization of intimate labor? The methodology integrates feminist PAR, the Shifting Perspectives Model, distanciation, and object intimacies theory to explore the lived experiences of queer crips. The findings reveal that queer crips redefine intimate labor by extending it beyond commodified tasks to include non-commodified care work, such as friendships and interview engagements. The paper contributes to the understanding of hidden knowledges in queer crip communities, challenging traditional notions of intimate labor through deep resonances, object intimacies, and non-commodified care practices. The study concludes by emphasizing the political potential of intimate labor for oppressed bodies and recommending further exploration of these radical dynamics.

Helen Aadnesgaard is an independent researcher who recently graduated from a Research Master's in Gender Studies at Utrecht University and the University of York. Aadnesgaard's main expertise lies in the criminalization of poverty in South Africa and indigenous knowledge systems however, as a queer crip themselves, they also write and research from this positionality.

Kris Clarke - *Queer Love and a Feminist Ethics of Care: Foundations of HIV/AIDS Care in Fresno, California*

This study tells the story of how the Central Valley AIDS Team (CVAT) was developed by lesbian activists in Fresno, California in the 1980s. There have been studies about the contributions of lesbians to combating the AIDS epidemic from the perspective of large urban centers in the US (e.g. Hobson, 2016; Schulman, 2021), but there have been fewer accounts of lesbian activists in smaller, more impoverished, and culturally diverse regions. The study is informed by: 1) the radical feminist ethics of care (Clark-Kazac, 2023), which centers the importance of reciprocal human relationships; and 2) the theory of queer love (Halperin, 2019), which highlights the complexity of affective queer kinship in advocating for social change. In this presentation, we explore how CVAT was formed by lesbian activists as a grassroots organization in collaboration with gay men from Queer Nation, public health officials and community members in the absence of HIV/AIDS support groups. CVAT played an important role in challenging homophobia and HIV/AIDS related stigma and in supporting out and unapologetic queer identities.

Kris Clarke is Professor of Social Work at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Christopher B. Sullivan is Associate Professor of Sociology at California State University, Fresno. They have been collaborating on an oral history of HIV in Fresno, California.

Clare Hammerton - *Dementia, Microaggressions, Heteronormativity, Citizenship, and the Assembly of Rights*

Globally the number of people with dementia is estimated at 55.2 million, with 944,000 people diagnosed in the UK (Alzheimer's Research UK, 2023). There are no statistics on the number of LGBT+ people with dementia either globally or in the UK, although conservative estimates conclude that up to 10% of the total population identify as LGBT+ (Coffman et al., 2017). Research shows that LGBT+ people and carers living with dementia have distinct experiences. Memory challenges make it difficult for some people to remember their identities, partners, and who they have told, or who they want to tell about their sexual orientation and gender identity. Experiences of prejudice and discrimination inhibit people from accessing services and talking about their identities. Health and Care institutions predominantly function on heteronormative structures, which alongside a void in staffs' knowledge and awareness means that LGBT+ people and carers are frequently required to come out, state their identities, and are othered through Person-Centred care.

Partners, families of choice, the LGBT+ community, and complicated relationships with biological families are often not recognised. Staff display microaggressions and non-affirmative behaviour through language, jokes, and questions, even though people are protected against discrimination and prejudices through UK legislation, with the demands of dementia on people and carers meaning that these incivilities are often not addressed. This is distressing in all circumstances, but especially when staff are entering people's homes to provide care. By talking with LGBT+ people and carers living with dementia, I capture examples of the microaggressions that they experience. My research participants have further opportunities to be part of a community of support, to present their experiences to effect change and exchange knowledge, to grow their voice, and to grow their capacity as Expert Researchers. This Rights Based Approach to research contributes to the assembly of rights and the social citizenship of LGBT+ people and carers living with dementia.

Clare Hammerton is a Senior Research Fellow working with the Institute of Public Health and Wellbeing (IPHW) at the University of Essex, UK. Her current research focuses on young people with dementia, their families, and intersectional identities and experiences such as disability, sexual orientation, gender, and ethnicity. Her PhD focused on the realisation and mainstreaming of Sexual Orientation Human Rights through international development, navigating socio-political positions of donor and participating countries on sexuality. Her research focus is on mainstreaming Human Rights through service provision to realise individual and collective needs and rights. It includes a focus on intersectional analysis, the transformation of power structures, and meaningful participatory and empowering approaches. Her work with statutory and civil society organisations in international, national, and local contexts, across the UK, Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia provides practical insights to her research.

Georgina Giner Domínguez - *Perspectives and experiences of young lesbians in Barcelona around sex-affective health: a critical approach to health*

Introduction: Lesbians have been historically invisibilized by an heteronormative paradigm. Consequently, their sexaffective health has been treated from this perspective without putting attention to their specific needs as a lesbians and the role that identity plays on it. This study has sought to explore the perceptions, experiences, needs and demands of young lesbian women in the city of Barcelona. Methods: A qualitative study with a feminist and participatory critical perspective was conducted. Three tirangular discussion groups and two semi-structured interviews to lesbian women among 20 and 31 years were held. It featured a motor group that collaborated with the group script and recruitment. Data were collected between January and March 2022. A thematic analysis was carried out from the transcribed data. Results: Findings were organized on five themes: i) The experience of becoming a lesbian is strongly influenced by compulsory heterosexuality. ii) Health and educational services are perceived as strongly heteronormative where participants are excluded of. iii) There are changes in the family before and after the coming out. iv)As for sexaffective care, the emotional is highly prioritised. v) They declare to learn where they can with rescources outside the formal circuits. The role that the control of the bodies in relation to reproduction as a historical process plays in these results is highlighted. Conclusions: The results of the study indicate that young lesbians have a relationship with sexaffectivity marked by a lack of collective account around lesbian experience and lack of referents. Young lesbians are disaffected towards health and educational services because of their heteronormativityand. Specific policies and programmes that take into account sexaffective diversity and identity are needed.

Georgina Giner Domínguez is a sociologist specialist in Public Health research. I have participated on projects regarding educational public policies and LGTBQ+ inequalities in health. My main research interests include qualitative analysis, lesbian health and social identities in a digital world.

Panel 4 – Queering Standards of Bodies, Beauty & Binary Identities

Emily Cousens - *Putting the Femme in Feminist: The Male Lesbian and Sex-Positive Trans Lesbian Feminism in the 1970s*

From the vantage point of the present, the identity of the male lesbian is a proactive one. If not consigned to a poststructuralist thought experiment, or recalling the humorous plotline from an early season of *The L-Word* (remember Lisa?), the male lesbian might conjure the interlinked histories of butchness and trans masculinity. However, rewind just fifty years, and the male lesbian was a thriving transfemme subcultural identity. This paper illuminates the links between 1970s radical feminist and trans feminine subcultures that developed from the category of male lesbian. Throughout the 1970s many trans femmes understood themselves as male lesbians, holding an imbricated identity which interlinked a womanly gender, male sexed body, lesbian sexuality, and ideological adherence to a uniquely sex-positive, femme-centred, and distinctly trans feminine feminism. Yet despite its impact, analysis of this sex-positive, feminist, radical, trans feminine formation is virtually absent from scholarship. Drawing on original archival materials, this paper highlights the intellectual and political significance of the male lesbian, arguing that the distinctly trans lesbian feminism that this community articulated offers a counter to histories, which pit lesbian feminism and trans feminism against each other, and offers a horizon for lesbian feminism as a trans inclusive, radical and visionary politics. This co-written paper will be accompanied by a slideshow that includes original archival images and examples of trans community print publications.

Emily Cousens is a Lecturer in the History of Gender and Sexuality at Birkbeck, University of London. Their interests are in feminist (trans, queer, lesbian radical) print culture from the 1970s, prefigurative politics of “liberation”, and alternative visions for gender. Emily’s new book, *Trans Feminist Epistemologies in the US Second Wave*, was published by Palgrave in August 2023.

Sukrittaya Jukping - *The Abhorrence of the ‘Ugly’ Others: Other(gender)ing and Bordering Thai “Buffalo Ladyboys”*

The images of Treechada Petcharat, Thanyarat Jiraphatpakorn, Sirapassorn Atthayakorn, Jiratchaya Sirimongkolnawin as Thailand’s Miss International Queen of 2004, 2007, 2011, 2016, waving their hands whilst parading their ethereal beauty and dashing ‘Thai’ smile, became an icon of Thai beauty and womanhood in the 2000s. As Thai transwomen or colloquially known as “ladyboys”/ “Kratheoy” enjoy their popularity and recognition on a global level, though, another images of the ‘ugly’ transwomen or the “buffalo ladyboys”/ “Kratheoy Kwai” emerged as a visible parallel category. These images of the ‘ugly’ others provide the most publicized, most visible outcome of transwomen who fail to transcend both ‘physical’ and ‘imaginative’ worlds of the sexed bodies. This reminds the “buffalo ladyboys”/ “Kratheoy Kwai” of their distance to the ‘true’ Thai womanhood, that they are supposedly related by physical appearances and to imaginative femininity, and that the beauty queen is their ‘perfect’ female icon. Therefore, the core of my argument in this paper is that the negative construction of the “buffalo ladyboys”/ “Kratheoy Kwai” articulated by mainstream social discourse, is discursive of ‘ugliness’, rather than factual of it. This monstrous construction of ‘ugliness’ via the establishment of the ‘perfect’ beauty (trans)queens has entailed an institutionalizing of social imperatives of ‘beautiful’ transwomen as a ‘real’ woman whilst the ‘ugly’ others as an ‘artificial’ one. This abject subject is produced not by the refusal to identify with the normative gendered “self,” but rather through identification, a disavowed identification, with the non-normative gendered “other.” Key words: Buffalo Ladyboys (Kratheoy Kwai), Beauty Queen, Thai Womanhood and Femininity, Ugliness, and Abject.

Sukrittaya Jukping is a lecturer for the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies M.A. Program at Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand. She holds a B.A. in English Language & Literature from Chulalongkorn University, BKK (1997), a M.A. in Women’s Studies from Rutgers University, New Jersey, United States (2000) and a Ph.D. funded by the Royal Thai Scholarship—in International Education focused on gender & education theme from University of Iowa, Iowa, United States (2008). She is a Gender Studies scholar, with a wide range of fields of gender & education, gender embodiment, body politics and physical culture (sports), and gender geography. Her international publication: 1. Her ‘Soldiering On’: Female Athletes in Combative Sports, National Heroes, and Negotiating Thailand’s Gender Politics. Chapter 5 in *Women, Sport and Exercise in the Asia-Pacific Region: Domination-Resistance-Accommodation*, Routledge, UK. (2019). 2. Re-inventing the martial ‘hero’ and the weak ‘beauty queen’ through the sporting identity: a tale of

two competing gendered bodies, Muay Thai and the stability of the Thai nation-state (Sport in History June 13, 2020, Routledge, UK). While at the Global Center of RU, she volunteered at the 4th United Nation Women's Rights, Human's Rights in New York.

Theresa Schilling - *Interlacing Phenomenology with Queer and Feminist Theory: Insights into the Lives of Young Queer Masculine Individuals in Ireland*

The aim of this presentation is to showcase how a phenomenological framework, when integrated with the analytical prisms of queer and feminist theory, provides profound insights into the lives of young queer masculine individuals in Ireland. As part of my ongoing PhD pursuit, this research embodies an interlaced methodology that centres the participants' lived experiences. It endeavours to produce rich, textured narratives that intimately resonate with the complexities of navigating queerness and masculinity in contemporary social landscapes. Outline: 1. Research Objective: - Overview of the study's intent to illuminate the lived realities of young queer masculine individuals Ireland. - Clarifies presentation's aim to demonstrate the application of a tailored phenomenological framework blended with queer and feminist theory. 2. Methodology Context: - Introduction to the methodological approach grounded in my ongoing doctoral research. 3. Phenomenological Framework: - Outlines the significance of the phenomenological approach and describes the process of foregrounding the participants' experiences and making sense of their subjective worlds. 4. Queer Theory Integration: - Discusses role of queer theory in destabilising normative conceptions of identity and sexuality within phenomenological inquiry. - Describes how queer perspectives facilitate deeper understanding of friendship, intimacy, and community-building among queer masculine individuals. 5. Feminist Theory Synergy: - Highlights how feminist theory enriches phenomenological exploration by bringing attention to the power dynamics and intersecting categories of identity. 6. Research Contributions: - Points out the depth of insight provided by the methodological approach on participants' experiences of navigating queerness and masculinity. Emphasises how these textured narratives contribute to broader discussions on gender, sexuality, and identity. 7. Conclusion: - Sums up how the phenomenological method, enhanced by queer and feminist theories, delivers rich narratives and insights into queer experiences of masculinities in present-day Ireland. Keywords: Phenomenology, Queer Masculinities, Intersectional Feminism, Qualitative Methodology, Ireland

Theresa Schilling is a third-year doctoral candidate specializing in queer studies and masculinities and recipient of the UCD Ad Astra Doctoral Scholarship. Presently pursuing her PhD in the School of Social Justice at University College Dublin, her research explores queer masculinities, friendships, and intimacies, drawing upon intersectional feminist and queer theory. In addition to her doctoral work, Theresa is a Co-Investigator in a cross-institutional project studying LGBTQI+ intergenerational friendships in Ireland and serves as content editor of *SEXTANT*. Theresa holds a BA (hons) from the University of St Andrews and an MPhil (with distinction) from Trinity College Dublin.

11:45 – 13:00 KEYNOTE: DR SITA BALANI (QUEEN MARY), ORDINARY BUT NOT NORMAL: LIVING AGAINST THE CULTURE WARS

Dr Sita Balani is a fellow of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences and Senior Lecturer in English at Queen Mary University of London. She has published in *Vice*, *Tribune*, the *White Review*, *Novara*, *Salvage*, *Art Review*, *Ceasefire*, *Five Dials*, *Wasafiri*, and *Open Democracy*. Her first book *Deadly and Slick: Sexual Modernity and the Making of Race* was published by Verso in 2023.

13:45 – 15:15 Parallel Sessions

Panel 5 – New Directions in Lesbian Studies

In this panel, three special issue guest editors for the *Journal of Lesbian Studies* will showcase recent collections of published scholarship focused on Chicana Lesbian thought, Decolonial approaches to reproductive justice, and Central and Eastern European lesbians' voices to exemplify new directions in the field of Lesbian Studies.

Lesbian lives, theorization, and praxis play a critical role in pushing the feminist agenda forward and combating patriarchal assumptions of the place of women in society. The critical role of lesbian thinkers and activists in dismantling interlocking forms of oppression has also made lesbian studies vulnerable to attacks. For example, in recent years attacks on lesbian theorization have focused on Whiteness and claims of essentialist understanding of gender. Nevertheless, close observation to recent trends in the field of lesbian studies reveals key sites of lesbian knowledge production emerging from lesbian communities of color, working class lesbians, and lesbians living in and theorizing from marginalized spaces. The growing intersection of Lesbian theorization with subaltern studies, decolonial and postcolonial feminist thought, and women of color feminisms represents a new wave of lesbian scholarship. In this panel, three special issue guest editors for the *Journal of Lesbian Studies* will showcase recent collections of published scholarship focused on Chicana Lesbian thought, Decolonial approaches to reproductive justice, and Central and Eastern European lesbians' voices to exemplify new directions in the field.

Contributions from: Kris Clarke, Stacy I. Macías, and Aleksandra Gajowy

Ella Ben Hagai is an Associate Professor of Psychology at California State University, Fullerton, and the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*.

Stacy I. Macías: In 1991, Carla Trujillo published the anthology, "Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About". With its provocative subtitle and controversial initial cover art "La Ofrenda" by Ester Hernández featuring a hand offering a red rose to a Virgen de Guadalupe image tattooed on the bare back of a masculine-presenting woman, *Chicana Lesbians* marked an unabashed claim to a racialized sexual identity and politics captured in its range of essays, poems, and reflections. *Chicana Lesbians* sent "shock waves" across lesbian and Chicano/a communities. Breaking through racist, heteropatriarchal barriers, the anthology altered the very foundations of Chicana/o Studies, LGBT studies, and Chicana and Latina feminisms, catapulting them into more complex entanglements at the intersection of sexuality, gender, class, race, nationality, and ethnicity. Trujillo's anthology has reverberated with generations of artists, activists, and scholars and ignited conversations on the significance and complex underpinnings of Chicana lesbian existence. This talk will highlight the *Journal of Lesbian Studies* "Chicana Lesbians" special issue contributions to the future of lesbian studies and lesbian thought, with special attention to the emergence and establishment of comparative ethnic studies, women of color feminist thought, and queer and trans politics as robust sites of inquiry and activism.

Dr. Stacy I. Macías earned a Ph.D. in Women's Studies from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). She is currently an Associate Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at California State University, Long Beach. Her research and teaching are in women of color feminism, ethnic and cultural studies, feminist transnationalism, and queer of color theories. She is a co-founding member of Tongues, a queer, lesbian, and bisexual women of color project and zine. Her next research project examines disappearing Latina/Chicana lesbian and queer of color subterranean community sites due to gentrification and other structural processes.

Aleksandra Gajowy: Central and Eastern European (CEE) lesbian studies takes as its starting point the double invisibility of lesbian scholarship in CEE and the invisibility of CEE lesbians in global scholarship, and investigates these omissions through the lens of lesbians working in, from, and on the region. The

invisibilities of CEE lesbian lives and CEE lesbian scholarship and perceptions of CEE lesbians as inevitably bound to nationhood take center stage in the sparse scholarship devoted to lesbians in the region. Given this landscape of omissions and silences, this talk highlights contributions to the Journal of Lesbian Studies “Can CEE Lesbians Speak” special issue to recognize the significance of CEE lesbian lives, thought, and activism, and the contested histories of national identity in CEE. The aim of the special issue contributions is to move beyond nationhood as the primary marker of belonging and investigate the breadth and diversity of lesbian scholarship from CEE through an affirmative and critical lens. In particular, the scholarship showcased in this talk seeks to construct affinities and kinships in different CEE countries, as well as across the region, while also investigating cultural omissions, silences, and epistemic violences, as well as joy, fun, sex, friendship, community, and kinship.

Dr. Aleksandra Gajowy is a lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Art in the School of Art History and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin. Originally from Warsaw, she completed her PhD at Newcastle University. Her research focuses on art history and queer and postcolonial studies, particularly in Polish and Eastern European contexts, and transnational histories of activism and protest in Europe and the U.S. Her current book project explores modern and contemporary lesbian art from Poland, investigating lesbian art practices at intersections with spirituality and folklore, nationhood and citizenship, and intergenerational and transhistorical lesbian affinities.

Kris Clarke: From challenges to abortion rights, the right to parent, and access to basic healthcare and reproductive technologies, conservative actors and extremist right-wing political movements have used law and policy to deny people bodily autonomy and self-determination. Racialized women, queer, and transgender people have been especially affected and targeted. This talk draws from the Journal of Lesbian Studies special issue “Transformative Reproductive Justice Futures” to examine decolonial, anti-racist and lesbian visions of reproductive justice. Reproductive justice is an expansive and interdisciplinary framework that emerged from grassroots organizing led by Black feminists, lesbian feminists, and decolonial feminists. Today, reproductive justice theory and activism continues to challenge men’s control over women’s bodies, eugenicist projects designed to control the reproductive choices of diverse populations, and restricted access to care and reproductive technologies for lesbians, nonbinary, and trans people. Contributions to the “Transformative Reproductive Justice Futures” special issue are explicitly grounded in radical lesbian decolonial thought and liberatory strategies with the aim of dismantling systemic structures of racism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia, and lesbian feminist coalition building around reproductive justice. The talk will also explore how environmental injustice and extractivist logics impact reproductive justice in diverse communities, and linkages to gender self-determination praxis.

Dr. Kris Clarke is an Associate Professor of Social Work in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Her research has evolved from multicultural social work and care in the field of HIV towards themes related to decolonization. Her current research centers on decolonization, structural social work, abolitionist perspectives on social work, the significance of place and social memory, and LGBTQ+ issues in social work. She is currently collaborating on an oral history project about HIV in Fresno, California and on a project that employs critical race analyses of the carceral state through a case study in Fresno, California.

Kelsea McCready - *The Gaps in Between Law and Practice: Intersectional Barriers to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health among Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Women and Gender-expansive People in Ontario, Canada*

Canada is considered a leader in human rights protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite this, women and gender-expansive people who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or queer (LBQ) are largely invisible in policy and research. Based on a small, yet consistent body of work from various states, a specific area where this population experiences barriers is access to competent, affirming healthcare. To explore this phenomenon further as my MA in Human Rights dissertation project, in the summer of 2022 I conducted qualitative interviews with LBQ individuals in Ontario, Canada to further understand lived experience perspectives of accessing healthcare. A thematic analysis of interviews from 8 women and gender-expansive people who self-identified within the LBQ community revealed consistent barriers to the right to health in primary care and gynaecological health settings. While the persistence of cisheteronormativity within these spaces was a common thread, interview transcripts produced 4 themes or key barriers: 1) non-inclusive standard protocols, 2) provider attitudes and beliefs about LBQ service users, 3) inadequate attention to intersectional service-user identities and 4) real or perceived provider knowledge gap in LBQ health needs. These findings will be explored in relation to regional protections that exist within the law and the universal human rights framework to ultimately discuss whether rights claims alone are sufficient to address the needs of LBQ people.

Kelsea McCready (she/they) is a first-year MPhil/PhD student interested in access to family-building among lesbian, bisexual, and queer women from a sociolegal perspective. She also works in the NHS as an Advanced Lived Experience Practitioner where she leads the peer support programme in her trust's eating disorders service. Prior to this, Kelsea worked in the Canadian charity sector at organisations focused on gender-based violence prevention and mental health. Kelsea values community, collective care, and elevating diverse lived experience perspectives.

Helen Aadnesgaard - *Answering Hedva's Call*

This reflection delves into the nuanced exploration of future possibilities for queers with chronic illnesses, challenged by societal exclusion from conventional future narratives. Rooted in Johanna Hedva's call for disabled and sick futures, envisioning a utopia where care work and disability dismantle capitalism, this study investigates the ambivalence of desiring a queer sick future. The central inquiry revolves around the question: How can one envision desirable, sick queer futures? The methodology, informed by Critical Disability Studies, employs an embodied queer-crip art-activist approach, utilizing audio-visual documentation and editing for autotheory to make visible the hidden knowledges of the author's own body. Theoretical discussions revolve around Hedva's Sick Woman Theory, framing the body as a locus of political action and resistance. The research outlines challenges, insights, and ethical considerations encountered during the process. The praxis involves recording and editing movements, focusing on rendering the invisible aspects of chronic pain visible. Analysis reveals the transformative potential of the artistic process in altering the relationship to the body and its futurity. Repetition and editing prompt a reevaluation of temporality, challenging normative perceptions of time. The conclusion underscores the contribution of this deeply personal project to broader discussions on queer-crip futurities and alternative perspectives on embodiment, knowing, and temporality. Adopting an artist's approach emphasizes learning through experimentation and co-creating knowledge. Despite the complexities surrounding the idea of sick futures, the study highlights the potential for radical transformations in the relationship to the future and the embodied experience of chronic illness. Note: there is a 4min29sec video that can/should accompany this presentation

Helen Aadnesgaard is an independent researcher who recently completed a Research Master's in Gender Studies (cum laude) at Utrecht University and the University of York. Aadnesgaard's work primarily focusses on the criminalisation of poverty in South Africa and indigenous knowledge systems, however as a queer crip themselves, they also research and write from this positionality.

Katharine Rimes - *Role Models for Sexual Minority Women: Qualitative Interview Study of Characteristics and Impact*

Lesbian, bisexual and other sexual minority women are at an increased risk of experiencing low self-esteem and mental health problems. It has been suggested that role models may be used to improve self-esteem and wellbeing, but there has been little research into role models for sexual minority women. This study aimed to investigate sexual minority women's experiences of the characteristics and impact of role models. Participants were also asked how they thought that role models could be used to increase the self-esteem of sexual minority women in potential interventions. Seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who described their sexuality as lesbian (n=4), gay woman (n=2), bisexual (n=5), queer (n=3) and pansexual (n=3). Using thematic analyses, four themes about characteristics of role models were identified: "role models similar to me", "self-confidence about being different", "strong and kind", and "source of learning and support". Three themes about the impact of role models were developed "increased self-esteem", "inspiring personal growth" and "lack of role models makes me feel I don't belong". Content analyses identified a wide range of ideas about how the use of role models could be incorporated within therapeutic approaches, as well as potential limitation or challenges to this. The findings may help inform the development of interventions including role models to increase the self-esteem and wellbeing of sexual minority women.

Katharine Rimes is a Professor of Clinical Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London (KCL) and an honorary Consultant Clinical Psychologist working in the NHS. She co-leads the KCL LGBTQ+ Mental Health Research group. She conducts research into processes underlying mental health problems and applies the findings to improve interventions. Publications: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2634-455X>

Panel 7 – Migration & Routes of Dis/Connection

Xin Pan - *Solidarities in the Making: Queers of Colour, Migration, Politics*

Sexuality, like other social relationship, is "inherently spatial." (Mitchell 2000:175) How we move our bodies, which place is more comfortable thus we linger, what space makes us feel being stuck... these are shaped by who we think we are, by the power that defines the (in)visibility of the body, by how we negotiate with such power and our desires, by our own histories and the history of the place... The scholarship on spatiality of sexuality is abundant from the perspective of White gay men in Global North Metropolitan contexts, while limited research has paid attention to (more) marginalized groups like queer migrants, queer women or non-binary people, queer people of colour living in Ordinary non-Metropolitan cities, where alternative sexual politics may take shape (Brown 2012, 2019). This research focuses on everyday experience of queer women or non-binary people of colour who are first generation migrants in Leicester, UK; a provincial city where no group with specific ethnic background is more than 50% of the population (Census data 2021), and where a reputation of the "model" of multiculturalism is known. Assisted by (auto)ethnographic writing, in-depth interviews and participatory mapping, the researcher explores the city and its history with her research participants and tries to notice and understand fragmentary solidarity practices that are emerging throughout the researching process. In our turbulent times where racism, heteronormativity, strict(er) border control, authoritarian political violence... are permeating our everyday life and hinder us from taking actions: What brings us together? What comes into being?

Xin Pan is a queer Anthropologist in disguise, based at department of Geography. She is actively engaged in LGBTQ activism and non-governmental organizations, which draws her to constantly reflect on the possibilities, entanglements and ethics of doing research and activism. She is excited and inspired by diverse and creative ways of (non)academic knowledge outputs.

Laura Sjoberg - *Sex Acts/Bordering Practices*

Part of a larger project on sexual relations as international relations expanding on Spike Peterson's argument that 'making states is making sex', this paper argues that states and sex acts are inextricably co-constituted in contemporary global politics, not only in the production of the state, but in its constant reproduction. Looking theoretically and empirically at the contours, deployments, and significations of sex-based asylum and migration rules in the late 20th and early 21st century, the first half of this paper engages three key 'hot points' where sex meets border crossing: relationship 'genuineness' being judged by the performance of specific sex acts (with examples from Canada, the United States, and South Korea), hetero-/homo-sexuality being judged by the (non)performance of sex acts (with examples from Britain, France, and Chechia), and values compatibility being judged by exposure to and acceptance of sexual relationships (with examples from Netherlands, Germany, and Australia). The second half of the paper explores three potential implications of the intertwined nature of sex acts and permission to cross state borders. First, building on research on the ways that sexual relationships are constitutive of and constituted by state citizenship practices, this paper explores the direct voyeurisms involved in that (co)constitution. Second, building on research on pinkwashing that suggests that states make status-seeking claims about how they treat their queers, this paper suggests that the pinkwashing is not simply rights-rhetoric, intimate as well: in manufacturing good-to-queers 'public faces,' states examine, and use as examples, particular instantiations of sexual relationships. Finally, this paper links the role of sex acts in migration policies to the international politics of sexual relationships. It makes a case that states which define their borders and who belongs in them sexually also read each other in sexual terms both for relationship queues and embedded in matrices of relative power.

Laura Sjoberg is a British Academy Global Professor of Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway University of London and Director of the Gender Institute. She specializes in gender, international relations, and international security, with work on war theory and women's political violence. Her work has been published in more than four dozen journals of politics, international relations, gender studies, geography, and law. She is author or editor of fifteen books, including, most recently, with Jessica Peet, *Gender and Civilian Victimization* (Routledge, 2019) and with J. Samuel Barkin, *International Relations' Last Synthesis* (Oxford, 2019).

Aine Bennett - "Nobody fits into a box": Bisexuality, Bordering and Asylum

People claiming asylum on the basis of a bisexual+ orientation appear much less likely to be successful than gay or lesbian claimants, despite facing similar risks of persecution. Bisexual+ people are therefore simultaneously understood as "too queer" in their countries of origin but "not queer enough" to access international protection in receiving states. In this paper, I investigate the sites and ways in which bisexual+ people are filtered out of the category of the "good queer refugee," and thus out of international protection, in the UK and France. I explore the specific obstacles bisexual+ people face to a successful asylum claim and where these reflect or differ from those of other sexuality or gender identity-based asylum claims. To do so, I draw on semi-structured interviews with lawyers, workers and volunteers in support organisations, journalists, and people with lived experience. This interview data is supplemented with a critical discourse analysis of state documentary evidence such as tribunal decisions and jurisprudence. The analysis is informed by theories of racial capitalism, critical border studies and queer theory. The specificities of bisexual+ experiences in asylum systems provide an insight into the ways in which asylum contributes to bordering and the sexualised structuring of access to and ideas of deservingness of mobility.

Aine Bennett is a PhD researcher in Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research focuses on the experiences of bisexual+ people seeking asylum in the UK and France. She is interested in border abolitionism, critical migration studies and queer security studies.

Panel 8 – Queer Media Representations

Johanna Church - *Who am I? What am I? Intersex Representations in Film and Television*

XXY and MTV's *Faking It* both contain representations of intersex teens. The 2007 Ecuadorian film follows the story of Alex and her struggle over what gender she wants to be. In MTV's *Faking It* Lauren is intersex and has already chosen her dominant gender. Her struggle involves whether or not to become an outspoken advocate for other intersex children or remain quiet. Both films handle the struggle of each child with compassion, but one is a drama and the other is a comedy. Tonally they are extremely different. This paper will explore the representation of intersex individuals as well as how the chosen medium (TV vs Film) affects the presentation of the subject matter.

Johanna Church is a Humanities Professor at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI USA

Megan Collier - *Naivety, Bad Influences and Legitimate Voices – An Analysis of Autism and Queerness in UK Newspapers*

While paper newspapers may have declined in sales over the last few years, the power they hold over society certainly has not, especially through discourses surrounding neurodivergence and queerness (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013). In many ways depictions of these groups can be seen as steadily improving; lesbian representation has been seen to become more neutral over time and autistic representation is growing more diverse (R. and Susilastuti, 2020; Karaminis et al., 2023). However, following a previous project identifying the use of autism to discredit the identities of transgender children in newspaper articles, this study poses the question of whether these findings are similarly reflected across representations of other queer communities (Jenzen, Collier, and Trenner, 2022). 197 articles published by UK newspapers between June 2022 and June 2023 have been collected into a corpus database called the Autism-Queerness Corpus, with the intention of seeing how autism and queerness are represented in relation to one another. These articles were then split into two subcorpora based on whether they were published by a national newspaper or a regional newspaper. Using an analytical framework of Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis, it was found that national newspapers used both lesbian and autistic identities to discredit transgender individuals and those supporting them, as well as to grant more legitimation to those whose arguments aligned best with the journalists'. While regional newspapers also used legitimation to some degree, their audience appeared to align closer to queer and autistic communities, thus allowing these legitimation strategies to grant them more agency than usual. This study contributes to the fields of Corpus Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Discourse & Communication. It considers themes of media, division, and solidarity in the queer and autistic communities.

Lizzie Reed - *"If you're watching this, you're on lesbian tiktok!": LGBTAQ+ young people's digital Cultures and the Memeification of Identity*

This paper presents insights from Finding Queer TikTok: a project exploring LGBTAQ+ youth knowledge and identity construction in online spaces. In creative participatory workshops with LGBTAQ+ young people in the UK, we sought to understand how knowledge about queer culture and identity is shared on the video media platform, TikTok. In this paper we share preliminary findings from these workshops, as well as reflections on the methodological challenges of capturing authentic insights into the highly individualised experiences of TikTok. Previous research with young people has indicated that TikTok is catalyst for queer identity construction, collective political expression, and peer-to-peer information sharing. Rather than a non-hierarchical collaborative sharing of experience and creative exploration of identity, our research suggests that the architecture of TikTok creates a 'memeification' (Zeng & Abadin, 2021) of queer cultures; where specific influencers, granted reach by the platform's algorithm, determine what counts as lesbian, and what constitutes queer culture and lifestyles. Our findings also indicate that LGBTAQ+ young people use tactics such as self-censorship and multiple profiles to avoid harmful content and abuse on TikTok. We reflect on how these conditions (re)orientate community and shape the possibilities for imagining queer[ed] futures. References: Zeng, J. and Abidin, C. (2021) '#OkBoomer, time to meet the Zoomers': studying the memeification of intergenerational politics on TikTok, *Information, Communication & Society*, 24:16, 2459-2481. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2021.1961007

Lizzie Reed is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Southampton. She is a cultural sociologist whose research and writing focuses on LGBTQ personal life, families, contemporary childhood, and the role of media and cultural representations in identity-making.

Tanvi Kanchan – “Instagram is like a karela” Transnational digital queer politics in India

This paper explores the impact and influence of transnational political agendas on Indian queer and trans communities on Instagram, situating this in its limits and restrictions as a public sphere that is corporate- and state-governed and subject to conditions of profitability, censorship, regulation, and algorithmic disciplining. Social media comprise new forms of networked publics (boyd, 2010) in the landscape of the digital public sphere, extending participation to non-elites through the relative accessibility and ubiquity of digital technologies (Tufekci, 2017). Queer and trans social media users can assert, contest, reformulate and negotiate ideas of queerness and transness (Mitra & Gajjala, 2008; Wakeford, 2000), engage in discursive re/creations of the self and others, and build new forms of political organisation and engagement, through transnational and translocal information flows. However, the techno-optimistic view of social media platforms as wholly participatory and completely free is limited, as it ignores how the political economy of these spaces structures and limits its use (Fuchs, 2014). Contemporary platforms function on an attention economy where virality equals profit (for the platforms and advertisers on them), where users are subject to algorithmic structures that privilege certain content over others (Paasonen, 2020), and where state control and censorship muzzles dissent. Drawing on insights from 23 in-depth interviews with queer/trans women and non-binary Instagram users and community organisers across India, I argue that binaries of Western/indigenous, global/local, authentic/inauthentic are insufficient to understand Indian queer digital politics. I instead explore the political utility of agentic reclamations and negotiations of queer and trans identity by marginal queer and trans users. At the same time, drawing on participant experiences of content moderation, censorship and state surveillance, I examine how the potentialities of Instagram vis-à-vis community-building, identity-formation and cross-geographical linkages are restricted, thwarted and reconfigured by platform design and policing.

Tanvi Kanchan is a PhD candidate and teaching assistant in the Department of Politics and International Studies at SOAS, University of London. Their doctoral research focuses on queer and trans women’s digital cultures in India, sitting at the intersection of decoloniality, political economy, state surveillance and digital media. They hold an MA in International Journalisms from SOAS and a BMM in Journalism from University of Mumbai. They are Co-Managing Editor of the DiSCo (Digital Studies Collectives) Journal, funded by CHASE AHRC, and work as a tutor with The Brilliant Club. They have previously worked as a journalist and communications professional covering gender, sexuality, politics, music and culture, and digital justice.

Workshop 1 Lucy Aphramor - Queering Nutrition Narratives to Animate Anti-Colonial Imaginaries and Liberatory Practice

Background Public health nutrition messages about ‘healthy foods’ are inherently ableist and mobilise classed, raced, gendered and anti-fat moral judgement that hinder liberatory thinking and solidarity. The framing removes context and relationships, reducing foods to nutrient containers and constructing the body as an atomistic, placeless, calorie burning machine. This serves a neoliberal agenda that equates ‘health’ with personal lifestyle choice (sic) and erases climate injustice, racism, war, loneliness, insecurity, privilege, trauma, and other non-food factors that impact metabolism and are strongly correlated with diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. Given the hegemonic status of these beliefs, and the anxiety and blame they provoke, it can be hard to conjure alternatives. It is not surprising therefore that messages about food and bodies cause widespread suffering and confusion, and leave many people feeling alienated, a personal and political struggle that can be hard to reconcile using mainstream, self-help, or ‘love your body’ narratives.

Brief Description: This workshop explores how to hold these complications generatively by surfacing how beliefs and affect are shaped by the deep logics of white supremacy and its spin-off oppressive ideologies (healthism, anti-queerness, anti-fatness, ableism etc). It uses creative teaching activities to prompt people to consider how far standard nutrition discourse and practice hinders or supports health/disability justice and food systems/social change. Starting with topics raised by the group we will explore the hidden harms and other unintended impact of public health nutrition narratives in a way that destabilises the (binary) logic of coloniality to offer an alternative – queerer, more compassionate – route for thinking things through.

Lou Aphramor (they/qwe) is a radical dietitian researching gender, power and the right to food at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University. They have many years experience co-creating liberatory pedagogy in marginalised communities and are committed to queerly reimagining food and body story for personal/collective learning, healing, and flourishing. Lou is co-director of the Trans Nutrition Academy, a council member of the Food Ethics Council, co-founder of World Critical Dietetics and holds the British Dietetic Association Roll of Honour award. Qwe is also a critically acclaimed spoken word poet.

15.30-17.00 Parallel Sessions:

Workshop 2 – Building Lesbian Community Internationally: The Lesbians of Kakuma Camp

Juliet Wabule and Helen Thompson will facilitate a group of lesbian human rights defenders from Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya, to join the conference directly online. LGBT+ people in Uganda and Kenya face arbitrary arrests, extortion, loss of employment, and reduced access to healthcare. The lesbians of Block 13 have not only survived violence from families and communities in their home countries, they have continued to face rape, beatings, arson and other attacks in the camp where they have sought refuge. They have faced these attacks with courage and stubborn resolve and have organised themselves into a community, providing protection, medical care, and schooling for their children, while continuing to work towards the hope of finding permanent homes in a safer country. This workshop will offer the opportunity to meet some of the lesbians of Kakuma Camp via zoom, to hear them talk about their lives and articulate their needs, and to learn how you can extend the boundaries of lesbian community by supporting their struggles.

Panel 9 – Making & Mapping Networks

Lizzie Reed - *Participatory collaborative mapping of...Ikea? Finding lesbian community in a small city*

How do lesbians conceptualise the location and boundaries of their community in a small city, where there are few designated or permanent lesbian spaces? Using participatory collaborative mapping, we explored the experience of being lesbian in Southampton (UK) and the processes by which knowledge is shared and meanings negotiated. As we show, collaborative mapping can allow space for participants to chart their complex relationships to urban space and lesbian community formation, providing new insights into how lesbian people move from 'invisible' and individualised positions to shared and 'visible' spaces with other lesbian people. Our method uncovered places that would not make it onto an official map of LGBTQ life in the city. It took us to places we had not anticipated, to places unlikely to be recommended as a location to visit in search of lesbian social contact, but nonetheless central in the subjective lived experience of being lesbian in the city and of achieving a sense of place. This approach is especially valuable in the context of a cost-of-living crisis (which is accelerating most acutely in queer capitals such as London, Manchester and Brighton and Hove): which constricts the choices of economically precarious and working-class queers regarding where to settle or when to travel to queer scenes in large[r] cities. Focusing on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people in small cities is, we argue, essential to understanding contemporary queer life in Britain.

Elizabeth Reed is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Southampton. She is a cultural sociologist whose research and writing focuses on LGBTQ personal life, families, contemporary childhood, and the role of media and cultural representations in identity-making. Lizzie's research explores LGBTQ lives, queer families, kinship, everyday life, childhood, and media representation and identity-making.

Beth Charlton - *Global Spaces and Social Lives: Lesbian London's National and International Connections (c. 1980-c.2000)*

This paper draws on one of the key concepts examined in my doctoral research: the 'Lesbian Grapevine' (so coined by Gill Valentine). I argue that the lesbian grapevine – made up of complex and fluid connections between individuals, communities and spaces – played a pivotal role in the social lives of lesbians in London at the end of the twentieth century. Despite an absence of a consolidated, permanent, territorial based presence on London's landscape, my research argues that the complex and far reaching networks of women were at the heart of London's lesbian community, enabling the transference of knowledge and information and contributing to the fostering of an imagined lesbian presence in the city. This paper will explore how these connections extended beyond the margins of London's lesbian social scene, connecting to other cities in the UK and abroad. Utilising oral histories (including those collected by myself) and archival materials, this paper will document journeys and visits to London's lesbian social scene from those who lived elsewhere, as well as exploring the travels of London based lesbians to other towns and cities. In doing so, this paper will highlight the ways in which London's lesbian social scene was linked to, and perhaps influenced by, the lesbian communities, spaces and scenes of other urban centres, through the movements of individual women. Furthermore, the limits of the lesbian grapevine will be questioned, asking to what extent can the lesbian grapevine be considered as one large fluid network, or should it instead be considered as an amalgamation of separate, smaller networks, that only occasionally intersected, overlapped and interacted with one another. Ultimately this paper aims to reveal lesbian London's place within national and international queer cultures, emphasising the extension of the grapevine beyond London, connecting a whole host of lesbian communities, spaces and individuals.

Beth Charlton is a third-year PhD history student at UCL. Her research interrogates the spaces, place-making practices and social lives of LGBTQ+ women in London between c.1970-c.2000. Exploring the different types of lesbian space that appeared during these decades, Beth's thesis asks 'how, where and why did LGBTQ+ women occupy, create, and experience lesbian space in this period'; addressing an important, yet overlooked, part of Britain's lesbian history. Using oral histories, she hopes to diversify and expand British lesbian historiography, highlighting the experiences of those who have often been disregarded within the queer histories and geographies of London.

Katharina Schütz *An Affective Historiography of Munich's Lesbian Bars: Cross-Temporal Worldbuilding*

Lesbian nightlife has historically been a significant site of worldmaking. As public places of gathering, lesbian discos and bars have provided connection, pleasure, and intimate encounters for queer women, thereby contributing to the production of lesbian identity, community, and solidarity. Historiographies of lesbian bars and nightclubs reveal the complex experiences of lesbians in these spaces, from the excitement of crossing the threshold into a queer establishment for the first time to the fear of getting spotted by someone you know. Further, lesbian owners of nightlife establishments persisted financial hardships and discriminatory landlords in order to ensure the provision of these communal spaces. Researching this history in the present day, as queer and lesbian spaces have disappeared or are under continued threat of neoliberalism, gentrification, and queerphobia, testifies to past lesbians' perseverance in their strife for community which in turn can inspire queer women's contemporary hope for better ways of living together. My paper presents a historiography of queer-lesbian bars, pubs, and nightclubs in Munich, Germany between 1950 and 2005. Based on archive material and interviews with former patrons and owners, I paint an immersive picture of these spaces and relay the varied experiences and ambivalent

affects produced in them. Using affect theory, queer phenomenology, and theories of queer worldbuilding, my paper further argues that queer archive work is an act of worldmaking on its own, with the aim of imagining a better, more hopeful future by looking into the past. Through examples such as walking tours and immersive maps, I will present how this affective history can still “move” us in the present.

Katharina Schütz is a PhD candidate at the University of Bergen, Norway, researching affective worldbuilding practices engendered in the encounter of queer bodies in digital and physical space. I also hold degrees in Film and Television Studies (University of Glasgow) and Applied Gender Studies (University of Strathclyde).

Jacqueline Gibbs, Aura Lehtonen and Billy Holzberg *The politics of good sex and queer solidarities in Feel Good and Work in progress*

This paper reflects on the potential of good and exciting queer and lesbian sex for contemporary sexual politics, drawing on a chapter in our upcoming book, *Bad Sex: Sexuality, Gender and Affect in Contemporary TV*. In the first part, we consider how great lesbian and queer sex is represented in *Feel Good* (2020-2021) and *Work In Progress* (2019-2021), alongside often painful and uncomfortable stories of chronic mental health conditions, drug dependency and sexual assault. For the main characters of the two shows, Mae and Abby, the site of good feelings is sex, which is represented as playful, erotic, intimate and fulfilling. These representations provide a clear and exciting contrast to earlier hegemonic representations, where queer sex and desire, and particularly lesbian sex and desire, have tended to be either erased, domesticated or hypersexualised for the straight male gaze. While these newer shows position exciting, transgressive sex as a way of escaping the long-standing tropes of inevitable lesbian and queer sadness, at the same time they tend to portray such lesbian and queer sexual escapes as tied to isolated forms of queer sociality, and individualised, neoliberal narratives of self-improvement. Thus, in the second part of the paper we wonder if there is a point to representing good sex, if it remains otherwise untethered from personal happiness, social change and broader sexual politics? This question is particularly important in the context of ongoing backlash against LGBTQ+ politics and freedoms, where we wonder what possibilities remain to imagine and build more social and communal forms of queer sociality and connection. Are invigorated queer solidarities and activism possible, not just for the unhappy queers represented in these popular TV shows, but more broadly for the queer communities that often make up the audiences of these representations?

Jacqueline Gibbs, Billy Holzberg and Aura Lehtonen work in Sociology and Social Justice at City, University of London, King's College London and the University of Greenwich, respectively. Their project 'Bad Sex: Affect, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary TV' focuses on contemporary cultural negotiations of sex, charting the move to representations of 'bad' – awkward, shameful, and non-normative – sex in popular culture.

Workshop 3 – Lesbian Lives Lived Well - Supporting Our Own Wellbeing

Karina Murray leads this workshop which aims to open up discussion on what we do well when it comes to minding ourselves and each other, with the aim of equipping participants with practical strategies for minding their health in three crucial areas: social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. The Lesbian community is a highly resilient group that has spent decades advocating for equal rights while also prioritising individual wellbeing – a challenging task when the world can, at times, be against us.

Karina Murray has a First-Class Honors Degree in Social Care followed by a Master's in Health Promotion. Over the years I have worked in homelessness, youth work, mental health, and LGBTQ+ community development. Volunteering is also a passion of mine. I have dedicated numerous hours to LGBTQ+ sports promotion through Sporting Pride and currently act as secretary for Aisteach Queer Housing Co-Op. I recently set up my own business in the area of health promotion in the LGBTQ+ community and would love the opportunity to run a workshop on this topic at the Conference.

Panel 10 - Autobiography in Literature & Film: Loss, Commemoration & Resistance

Caroline Gonda *Vanishing Stories: Meditations on Community, Grief and Loss*

This paper is a meditation on grief, loss, memorial, and community. Like the talk I gave at Lesbian Lives in 2022, it is a mixture of personal creative and academic work, cutting between present grief and past writings. I write from a transitional space between two memorial gatherings – one recent, one soon to come – held to celebrate beloved friends and elders and all they meant to me and to our communities. One of these gatherings was predominantly but not exclusively lesbian; one will be predominantly but not exclusively queer. I'm thinking about how we mourn our lesbian and queer elders and the spaces we shared with them; how we prepare for the losses ahead of us while dealing with those that are still so new and sharp. It is so important to find ways to do this, and also challenging. How do we hold on to what they meant to us, what we learned from them, what they created and sustained? How do we honour all the different individual experiences and versions of that person that those in the room hold in their hearts and memories? The physical and material lesbian and queer spaces we shared are in some cases no longer there, and I'm thinking about that too, in ways that have sent me back unexpectedly to some of the work on Romantic poetry I first did more than twenty years ago.

Caroline Gonda is Glen Cavaliero Fellow in English at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. Her publications include *Reading Daughters' Fictions, 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth*, *Queer People: Negotiations and Expressions of Homosexuality 1700-1800* (co-edited with Chris Mounsey), *Lesbian Dames: Sapphism in the Long Eighteenth Century* (co-edited with John C. Beynon), and *Decoding Anne Lister: From the Archives to 'Gentleman Jack'* (co-edited with Chris Roulston). She has stories and poems at *Reflex*, *Lunate*, *Ellipsis*, *Janus Literary*, *Second Chance Lit*, *NFFD Flash Flood*, and in *Tomorrow's World/Le Monde de Demain* and *Legerdemain: The National Flash Fiction Day Anthology 2021*

Lalu Esra Ozban - *A Tribute to Zeliş Deniz: Tracing "Prince Charming Don't Come in Vain"*

Since the late 2000s, queer/trans/lubunya feminist activists from Turkey have engaged in documentary filmmaking, utilizing this medium to represent themselves, self-historicize their existence, and construct audiovisual counterarchives. A groundbreaking example is *Prince Charming Don't Come in Vain* (Beyaz Atlı Prens Boşuna Gelme, 2009), a documentary on lesbian and bisexual representation in film and media that was collectively written, filmed, and produced by lesbian, queer, and lubunya scholars and filmmakers affiliated with LambdaIstanbul LGBTI Solidarity Association. In 2015, the queer community in Turkey suffered a profound loss of lesbian feminist activist Zelis Deniz, along with two other fellow queer activists, Boysan Yakar and Mert Serce, in a tragic traffic accident. Zelis Deniz was one of the film's writers, actors, and directors. *Prince Charming* was made available online immediately after the accident. In January 2016, during the 5th Pink Life QueerFest, the film was screened as part of the Queer Comradeship program aimed to create a space for commemorating losses within the community, fostering queer comradeship across generations. It was the first time the film was screened with English subtitles to make it available beyond the Turkish-speaking audience. In 2019, Pink Life QueerFest introduced Turkey's first queer cinema award, named after Zelis Deniz. The award was designed to inspire free-spirited grassroots filmmakers, echoing Zelis Deniz's immense contribution to queer cinematic histories and queer resistance in Turkey. As a queer/trans/lubunya filmmaker, scholar, film curator, exhibitor, and a former Pink Life QueerFest team member, *Prince Charming* not only inspired me as an emerging queer being but also motivated me to continue creating spaces for grassroots filmmakers. This paper serves as a semi-autoethnographic exploration, tracing the legacy of "Prince Charming" and its role in embracing collective documentary filmmaking as a form of resistance. It stands as a tribute to the prominent activist Zelis Deniz, a lifelong inspiration to lesbian feminist communities, acknowledging her enduring impact on the queer/trans/lubunya feminist movement and filmmaking in Turkey.

Lalu Esra Özban is a Ph.D. candidate in Film+ Digital Media with designated emphases on Feminist Studies and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Their hybrid

dissertation project, Koli Sinemaları: a lubunya feminist research-archive-creation, explores trans communities' experiences of collective filmwatching, community-building, and sex work in porn moviethatres in Turkey. Born and raised in Ankara, Turkey, Lalu holds a BA in Economics from Bogazici University and an MA in Film and Screen Studies from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Sally O'Driscoll - *Waiting for the Coup*

It's shocking to say it, but here in the U.S., we're preparing for a coup. It's not just that Donald Trump is highly likely to be the Republican nominee for president. The real problem is that a conservative think tank has produced an 800-page document that lays out in excruciating detail how the next conservative president could start on day one to do a lightning-strike end run around the constitution and remake the government. Their main goals? •Redefine sex as binary only •Redefine marriage according to the bible •Define trans issues as pornography, and jail pornographers •Rescind legal protections for LGBTQ+ people •Ban abortion completely The plan is Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise (known as Project 2025), and it proposes a sweeping rollback of recent progressive gains in the areas of gender and sexuality. If implemented, it would destroy any barrier between church and state and turn the U.S. into a de facto Christian theocracy. The plan amounts to a soft coup. And after the January 6, 2021, insurrection, we can't discount the possibility of an armed coup as well. My proposal is to tell the story of Project 2025, but in an accessible way. I'm a storyteller, and my medium is video. (At the last Lesbian Lives, I presented a video telling the story of how I left academia; in other venues I've presented a series of story-videos documenting my lesbian life.) The video I propose (approx. 12 minutes) is *Waiting for the Coup*; in it I tell the story of a group of LGBTQ+ activists who've banded together to publicize Project 2025 and strategize how to resist. The focus is on the gender and anti-LGBTQ+ sections. We should be scared; we must be activists. <https://www.stopthecoup2025.org/>

Sally O'Driscoll is a former professor whose research focused on gender studies and 18th-century British literature. She is currently working on a series of short videos that tell stories of her lesbian life.

Orla Egan - Film screening of LOAFERS documentary

Loafers Bar in Cork was one of Ireland's longest running gay bars; it opened in 1983 and closed suddenly in 2015. Loafers was much more than a bar – it was a crucial community space, a home for the weird and wonderful of Cork and a refuge for the Cork LGBT community. Its rooms were filled with love, laughter, dancing, political discussions and activism. The back room of Loafers was a haven for the lesbian community – Thursday night was Women-Only in the back room of Loafers. Each week local lesbians gathered, and visiting or returning emigrant lesbians found their way to the back room of Loafers. Some nights were quiet, others raucous. Love stories began, and ended. The seeds of political activism were sown. LOAFERS Documentary marks 40 years since the opening of Loafers Bar in 1983. Using a combination of interviews, archival footage, photographs, illustrations and animation it gives a glimpse into the legend and legacy of Loafers. The documentary explores what Loafers meant to the people who ran it, worked in it and frequented it, and the impact of the loss of such an important safe space for the community.

Orla Egan is a Queer Archival Activist and Founder of Cork LGBT Archive CLG. Orla is author of the Irish social activism graphic memoir *Diary Of An Activist*, in collaboration with Megan Luddy O'Leary. She is author of *Queer Republic of Cork*, *Cork's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities 1970s-1990s* and of the short theatre play *Leeside Lezzies*. She has curated a number of exhibitions, including *Cork Queeros* (displayed at Lesbian Lives in UCC) and *Art & Activism* launched during Cork Pride Festival 2023. She is Director of the Cork LGBT documentaries *I'm Here*, *I'm Home*, *I'm Happy* and *LOAFERS*

Yvette Taylor - *Working-Class Queers: Time, Place and Politics*

Drawing on the book *Working-Class Queers: Time, Place and Politics* (Pluto, 2023), this talk critically engages with the experience of working-class queers through cycles of austerity, recession, migration and crises. It engages with feminist-queer studies to critique the policy, theory and practice that have maintained queer middle-class privilege at the expense of working-class queers. Drawing on data from across the UK over a 20-year period, the talk considers the place of class and queer as no-go – or go-to – zones and uses queer-class data as a revisioning practice of ‘continual redoing, rewriting, and rethinking’. Some repeated questions are: Who cares about working-class queers? Are queers marginal to the study of class, and are the working-classes marginal to queer studies? What methods are best able to represent queer working-class lives, or do our subjects, participants, and ourselves always become ‘bad data’? Yvette Taylor critically engages with the experience of working-class queers through cycles of crisis, austerity, recession and migration to show how they have been underrepresented and demands that this changes. Drawing on growing academic, radical activism in queer studies and feminism, *Working-Class Queers* critiques the policy, theory and practice that have maintained queer middle-class privilege at the expense of working-class queers.

Yvette Taylor is a feminist sociologist at the University of Strathclyde, and has worked with the Scottish Government researching LGBTQ+ lives in the pandemic, and with Scottish Ballet on *Safe to be Me*, exploring inclusive curriculum in schools. Yvette is the author and co-editor of numerous books on queer life and class inequality, recently including *Working-Class Queers: Time, Place and Politics*, *Queer Precarities in and out of Higher Education*, *The Handbook of Imposter Syndrome*, and *Feminist Repetitions in Higher Education*.

Roisin Ryan-Flood & Amy Tooth-Murphy (Eds) *Queering Desire: Lesbians, Gender and Subjectivity*.

Queering Desire explores, with unprecedented interdisciplinary scope, contemporary configurations of lesbian, bi, queer women’s, and non-binary people’s experiences of identity and desire. Taking an intersectional feminist and trans-inclusive approach, and incorporating new and established identities such as non-binary, masculine of centre (MOC), butch, and femme, this collection examines how the changing landscape for gender and sexual identities impacts on queer culture in productive and transformative ways.

Within queer studies, explorations of desire, longing, and eroticism have often neglected AFAB, transfeminine, and non-binary people’s experiences. Through 25 newly commissioned chapters, a diverse range of authors, from early career researchers to established scholars, stage conversations at the cutting edge of sexuality studies. *Queering Desire* advances our understanding of contemporary lesbian and queer desire from an inclusive perspective that is supportive of trans and non-binary identities.

This innovative interdisciplinary collection is an excellent resource for scholars, undergraduate, and postgraduate students interested in gender, sexuality, and identity across a range of fields, such as queer studies, feminist theory, anthropology, media studies, sociology, psychology, history, and social theory. In foregrounding female and non-binary experiences, this book constitutes a timely intervention.

Róisín Ryan-Flood is Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of the Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC) at the University of Essex, UK. Her research interests encompass gender, sexuality, kinship, digital intimacies, and feminist epistemology. Her books include *Lesbian Motherhood: Gender, Sexuality and Citizenship* (2009), *Difficult Conversations: A Feminist Dialogue* (2023) and *Consent: Gender, Power and Subjectivity* (2023). She is co-editor of the journal *Sexualities: Studies in Culture and Society*.

Amy Tooth Murphy is Senior Lecturer in Oral History at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK. Her research interests include butch/femme identities and culture, and queer oral history theory and method. She is the co-editor of *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption* and is a Trustee of the Oral History Society.

Performance

The Rainbow Chorus will perform a short conference-focused selection from their repertoire.

The Rainbow Chorus are the largest community LGBTQ+ SATB choir in the south-east outside of London. Based in Brighton & Hove they have been celebrating diversity through music since 1997. They welcome people from all sections of our community.

Panel 11 – Lesbian, Queer, and Trans Perspectives on Gentleman Jack and the (re)discovery of Anne Lister

This panel features innovative new scholarship on Anne Lister and the Gentleman Jack phenomena published in a special issue of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. Panelists offer new reading of lesbian sex acts in Lister's diaries as they compare to Lister's depiction in different television dramas, a trans perspective on Lister's understanding of her gender, and an exploration of queer pilgrimage to key sites associated with Anne Lister and an account of Lister's own travel in her quest for lesbian kinship.

Contributions from: Ella Ben Hagai, Charley Matthews, Mette Hildeman Sjölin, and Sarah Wingrove

Ella Ben Hagai was trained in anthropology at the London School of Economics and in psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her Ph.D. at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is an Associate Professor at California State University, Fullerton. Her research broadly focuses on processes that lead individuals to develop intersectional consciousness. Her recent book *Intersections between Queer Theory and Psychology* with Eileen Zurrbruggen won the American Psychological Association Division 44 Distinguished Book Award Winner and the Association of Women in Psychology Distinguished Publication Award. She is the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*.

Charley Matthews is a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh. Their thesis examines the reading practices of queer women and gender-nonconforming people in the nineteenth century, working with letters, diaries, and other lifewriting from the period. Their research interests also include publishing history, narratology, and the novel.

Mette Hildeman Sjölin is a senior lecturer in English at Lund University. Her main research area is adaptation and appropriation studies. Her Ph.D. research is a gender-sensitive study of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century appropriations of Shakespeare's tragedies written for the stage.

Sarah Wingrove is a PhD student in English Literature at the University of Surrey, Guildford. She is currently working on an interdisciplinary doctorate on Anne Lister, focussing on Lister's travel journals and the impact of Lister fan communities on tourism and heritage. Sarah is a member of the Anne Lister Society and BAFTSS.

Panel 12 – Touching Archives

Anna Sephton and Robyn Phillips - *Other Lives of the Image: Collaborative Film-making in Engaging a Queer Archive from 1930s South Africa*

Irene 'Freddie' Heseltine's photographic collection —the basis of my doctoral research— tells an archival story of chance, hidden layers and the visible hand of the researcher. Made in South Africa in the mid-1930s, these photographs are a visual collision of familiar colonial tropes and the unexpected core of the collection: the magnetic gaze between Freddie and her life partner, Petronella 'Nell' Van Heerden. The radical, queer imaginings integral to their interactions with landscape, politics and one another relied also on a limiting of that imagination to their own White bodies, at a time when the legislative, social and material foundations for apartheid were being cemented. Towards the end of 2022, I spent three weeks in South Africa speaking to academics, archivists, museum curators, and anyone else I thought could help me answer one question: what, if any, life could Freddie Heseltine's photographic archive have in South Africa today? The answer came through conversation with Robyn Philips, a friend who was interested in bringing together visual storytelling and her own experiences of being queer in Cape Town to explore how marginality adapts within self-proclaimed progressive, and predominantly White spaces. At the end of

August 2023, our 14-person crew employed film as a creative, collaborative method for re-activating this displaced colonial archive. This paper will examine how the Heseltine archive became something both anew and living by following the direction of travel posed by a community—in this case, young creative professionals of different races and backgrounds, many of whom were queer, engaged in the politics of storytelling in a post-apartheid South Africa. Currently in the final stages of editing, our film *Seasons of Longing* will ultimately enter GALA, South Africa's largest queer archive at the University of Witwatersrand.

Anna Sephton is an AHRC funded Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) student, working with the University of Brighton and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Her research focuses on a photographic archive at the Pitt Rivers from 1930s South Africa by Irene 'Freddie' Heseltine, who navigated constructions of Whiteness and queerness in the pre-apartheid era with her life-partner Petronella van Heerden.

Katherine Hubbard - *Queer Connections Then and Now: Me, Margaret Lowenfeld and Margaret Mead*

Margaret Lowenfeld first met Margaret Mead in 1948 in London by kidnapping her during the World World Federation of Mental Health Conference. I too, 'met' Lowenfeld in London (albeit under less alarming circumstances) via her archive over 60 years later. In this paper, I explore the relationship Lowenfeld had with Mead, as well as the one I have had with her. In doing so I reflect on queer kinship in two parallel ways. The first is the queer kinship between Lowenfeld and Mead, paying close attention to how Lowenfeld was remembered by Mead in interviews conducted after her death in 1973. The second is the queer kinship across the historical divide between these queer women of the past and myself. Here, I reflect on the feelings of community that can form even in isolated archival settings. Doing such work is a historical 'touch across time' which is especially vital for queer historians. As Dinshaw (1999) explains: "The longing for community across time is a crucial feature of queer historical experience, one produced by the historical isolation of individual queers as well as by the damaged quality of the historical archive" (p. 37) This paper presents a queer women's community in Psychology and Anthropology from the mid-20th century between Lowenfeld and Mead, plus their partners Rhoda Metraux and Ville Anderson and expands into the lingering connections formed decades later between me and these women.

Tuula Juvonen *Creating Networks and Solidarities with Friends of Queer History*

The National LGBTQ human rights organization Seta and Culture For All Service initiated in 2018 the celebration of the first Rainbow History Month in Finland. Two years later an association Friends of Queer History (FQH) was founded to take up the ongoing organization of Rainbow History Months. It turned out, however, that FQH became a lot more than just a body for organizing the events for a month. By a generous funding from Kone Foundation we celebrated in 2021 the anniversaries of decriminalization and de-medicalisation of homosexuality and set up a website that continues to work as a hub for bodies interested in studying, preserving, and exhibiting queer and trans history. The intertwined networks of activists and scholars across the Nordic countries, but also beyond, including the founding of an International Committee of LGBTQ+ History Months show how the power of generosity can help to make a difference in society. In my paper I use the concept of generosity to analyse the successful activism and activities of FQH, much of which centres around collaboration with different co-actors. By using the "what can we do for you" approach with memory institutions we have been able to move forward initiatives that make sexual and gender diversity visible in places from which it has formerly been excluded. The inclusive approach to minorities within minorities has expanded possibilities to imagine queer past, and hence also its present and future. Uncomplicated collaboration with scholarly bodies, such as Society of Queer Studies in Finland and Trans Studies Network, as well as research groups has further increased the outreach of the activities promoted by us. This kind of networked activism based on generosity and solidarity can be a potent tool against the anti-gender politics that challenges the liveability of queer and trans lives.

Tuula Juvonen DSocSci has published awarded and ground-breaking monographs about Finnish LGBT history. Currently she is interested in queering national history writing and conducting collaborative queer activism in memory institutions. While working as a senior lecturer in Gender Studies at Tampere University, she leads a Research Council of Finland funded research project Affective Activism: Sites of Queer and Trans World-Making (AQT, 2021–2025).

Han Tiernan - *Reading the Lesbian Pages from Ireland's GCN Archive*

A Reading of the Lesbian Pages from the GCN Archive, 30 years on. Co-founded by Tonie Walsh and Catherine Glendon in 1988, GCN (Gay Community News) has been Ireland's LGBTQ+ paper of record for over 35 years. Throughout this time, it has documented Ireland's seismic cultural shift from criminalising sexual acts between men to becoming the first country in the world to introduce same-sex marriage by public vote. GCN has always been committed to diversity and inclusion, platforming and amplifying the most marginalised voices in our community. In March 1994, in keeping with this ethos, GCN launched the Lesbian Pages, a two-page feature dedicated solely to lesbian content. The aim of this new feature was not to create division in its readership but conversely to encourage new readership and contribution from women. For the subsequent five years, the pages, developed in collaboration with LOT (Lesbians Organising Together), provide a vivid and essential insight into lesbian life in Ireland in the late nineties. As well as the regular 'LOT News' update, content from early issues ranged from poetry to an article series highlighting notable lesbians throughout history to comics by Margaret Lonergan. As the pages became more established, they often featured full-page interviews with writers, musicians, and other celebrated Irish lesbians. Social and educational events were also regularly highlighted, such as the Cork Women's Fun Weekends, the annual Women's Camp, and the Lesbian Lives Conferences. The pages were also firmly committed to expanding the focus beyond Dublin and regularly highlighted activities by regional organisations. On the 30th anniversary of the publication of the Lesbian Pages, in what was then a groundbreaking act of solidarity with the lesbian community, this paper will ask how might we adapt similar approaches to highlight and impact contemporary struggles.

Han Tiernan (they/them) is a writer, producer and artist based in Dublin. Han is the co-founder of REWIND<<FASTFOWARD>>RECORD (RFR), a series of talks, tours and workshops exploring Irish queer history and queer representation in a local context. Since September 2021, Han has been the Editorial Assistant with GCN (Gay Community News) and oversaw the digitisation of the GCN Archive. In May 2021, Han researched the Queer-in-Progress. Timeline, mapping expanded narratives within Irish queer history. Most recently, Han created the Dublin Lesbian Walking Tour and co-produced Unshrinking Violets: 50 Years of Lesbian Activism for the Bealtaine Festival 2023.

Panel 13 Queering Desire: Lesbians, Gender and Subjectivity II

This panel session presents chapters from the edited collection *Queering Desire: Lesbians, Gender and Subjectivity* (Routledge, 2024). *Queering Desire* explores, with unprecedented interdisciplinary scope, contemporary configurations of lesbian, bi, queer women's and non-binary people's experiences of identity and desire. Taking an intersectional feminist approach and incorporating new and established identities such as non-binary, masculine of centre (MOC), butch and femme, this collection examines how the changing landscape for gender and sexual identities impacts on queer culture in productive and transformative ways.

Amy Tooth Murphy: The butch on the ferry: The affect and effect of butch longing

In this paper I reflect on the personal affective impact of my current oral history research into butch identity and lived experience in the UK and USA. Self-reflexivity is integral to good oral history practice and has always been at the heart of my research process. As a queer oral historian interviewing LGBTQ people, I am used to the personal affective impact of my research. Nonetheless, I have been struck by how deeply this particular project has touched me. In particular, the project has shone a spotlight on my experience of what I term 'butch longing'. Tracing the trajectory of my own journey to butch identity and identificatory practices, I utilise work on queer affect by scholars such as Heather Love and Elizabeth Freeman to interrogate the place and power of butch longing in butch research. Ultimately, I argue that centring and embracing affective states, even those that might be considered 'negative', such as longing, can bring

drive to queer oral history practice as well as provide a direction and focal point for affective states common to queer people living in a heterocentric world.

Amy Tooth-Murphy is Senior Lecturer in Oral History at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she specialises in queer oral history. Her research interests include butch/femme identities and culture, post-war lesbian history and literature, queer oral history theory and method, and queer temporalities. She is a Founder and Co-editor of the peer-reviewed blog, *Notches: (re)marks on the history of sexuality* and a Trustee of the Oral History Society. Her current British Academy/Leverhulme-funded project, 'Historicising Butch: Narrating Butch Lesbian Identity, 1950-Present', is an examination of butch lived experience in the UK and US via oral history interviews. She is co-editor of a special issue of *Oral History* on 'LGBTQ+ Lives: History, Identity and Belonging' (2020) and co-editor of *New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Desire* (2022).

Sarah-Joy Ford: Beloved: Crafting Lesbian Desire and Femme Intimacies with the Ladies of Llangollen

This paper examines the lesbian desire, and femme intimacies at play, and out of time in the research project, and exhibition *Beloved: crafting intimacies with the Ladies of Llangollen* that took place at Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens in 2022. Plas Newydd was home to Lady Eleanor Butler (1739–1829) and Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831), who captured the imagination of Regency society when they eloped from their families in Ireland to begin a life of exquisite retirement together in their carefully crafted cottage orné, escaping the confines of their gendered fates of the convent and marriage. Through the lenses of quilt making as practice based research and auto-ethnography this paper examines my own pursuit to engage and identify with the desire between the ladies, within the wider discourses of lesbian lust for a sapphic history. At the heart of the exhibition is a quilt, created posthumously for the ladies' bed with a newly created coat of arms designed to represent both Butler and Ponsonby, inspired by Sarah's own sketchbook of heraldry held at the National Library of Wales. Through a combination of handcraft and digital techniques Sarah's artistic legacy is woven back into the fabric of the house. The new works are a loving intervention, and embroidered embellishment of this extraordinary tale of women who lived and loved differently and an explicit stitching of my own femme desires into the history of the house.

Sarah-Joy Ford is an artist researcher working with textiles to explore the complexities and pleasures of queer communities, histories and archives. Her practice sits at the intersection of digital and traditional: using strategies of quilting, digital embroidery, digital print, applique and hand embellishment. She was a recipient of an NWCDTP award for her PhD research, and her work is held in permanent collections including ONE Archives, The Pitt Rivers Museum, Islington Mill and The Whitworth. Recent solo shows include *Beloved* at Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens, Llangollen and *Looking for Lesbians* at the ONE Foundation Gallery, Los Angeles.

Kimberley Mather: 'In their loving gaze I saw who I could be': Revisiting the butch/femme couple as joint subject through Esther Newton's My Butch Career

In this paper I reimagine the transformative potential of the butch/femme couple as joint feminist subject. By reading Esther Newton's autobiography, *My Butch Career* through a lens of butch/femme erotic codes, I consider how Newton constructs a femme who holds the transformative potential to recognise, name and bring into being that which she desires. By interrogating the narrative construction of the femme and femme desire in the formation of butch subjectivity, this paper also brings into question the transformative potential of the femme's gaze, considering how the femme may become lost, or made invisible, in this process. I take as my starting point Sue Ellen Case's proposition in the 1990's that the butch and femme hold a joint feminist subject position and are mutually constituted through the performance of erotic codes, suggesting further that the subsequent shift in theoretical focus onto the butch's gender transgressions, lead to the uncoupling of the butch/femme couple and the disappearance of the femme within queer theory. By positioning the femme at the centre of my argument, this paper adds to ongoing conversations in *Femme Theory*, seeks to recover the queer potential of the femme, and reimagines the transformative potential of the butch/femme couple as a mutually constitutive joint feminist subject.

Kimberley Mather is a 3rd year PhD student at The University of Manchester. Her research centres on butch and transmasculine autobiography and explores how the boundaries of butchness and transmasculinity are continually negotiated and reconstructed through autobiographical narratives. Her research interests include butch and femme identities, transmasculinity, queer theory, autobiography and life narratives, queer temporality, and queer failure.

Workshop 4 – Lesbian/Dyke Solidarity in Action

Naoise Murphy leads this workshop which brings together lesbian/dyke activists from UK queer and abolitionist groups, including Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants, the Dyke Project and SOAS Detainee Support, who will draw on their experiences to spark a conversation about lesbian solidarity organising today. From New York to Nicaragua, from #Repealthe8th to #EndSARS, lesbians and dykes have long been at the forefront of global political struggle, organising on our own behalf and in solidarity with other movements. Some of the questions this workshop will pose include: Why have lesbians/dykes been central to global liberation movements? What tactics and priorities can we learn from the history of lesbian/dyke activism? What does solidarity organising look like for dykes/lesbians in the global North? What should it look like? What is lesbian/dyke organising? And what is organising with lesbians/dykes in it? How do lesbians/dykes relate to the rest of the queer community in organising contexts? Is there a difference between dyke organising and lesbian organising? What work do lesbians/dykes/queer women/nonbinary people do in organising? How are activist spaces gendered? How do these dynamics change in an exclusively dyke/lesbian space? How do we relate to histories of separatism? How do we build solidarity across difference within dyke/lesbian spaces stratified by race/class/ability/gender identity etc? How does rising transphobia and queerphobia in the UK affect or alter dynamics of lesbian/dyke solidarity organising? What is the future of lesbian/dyke solidarity organising? The workshop will begin with short reflections and provocations from lesbian/dyke solidarity activists. It will then open out into a wider conversation, providing a space to explore the distinctiveness of lesbian/dyke solidarity organising today. Attendees are invited to share their thoughts and experiences, drawing on knowledge from activist or academic contexts.

Parishma, Aine, Catherine, Naoise and Saskia organise with activist groups across queer, anti-racist and abolitionist movements. Their interests include lesbian and queer literature, postcolonial theory, histories of anti-racism, and critical migration and border studies.

Workshop 5 – Let's Make Queer History

Ellie Priest will lead the workshop as an interactive presentation focused on Queer methods of producing history. The presentation will explore the importance of community history making in the making and sustaining of Queer community and activism. They will begin by discussing some key theoretical practices in Queer history making, drawing particularly on the works of Jack Halberstam Ann Cvetkovich and Eve Sedgwick. We will then explore some particular examples of Queer historical projects, with particular focus given to Ann Cvetkovich's idea of 'archives of feeling'. We will consider the 'ephemeral' and 'fictional' nature of Queer history as well as emotional and reparative imperative of doing such work. I would also like to share some of the work produced by participants of my research. My research focuses on the ways that Queer communities make their own histories in the wake of enforced secrecy and erasure, and how it affects us to do such work. Due to this I employ the use of workshops within my research where participants are given space to produce their own responses to 'Queer History'. These responses often take the form of zines exploring personal and communal histories. I would like to bring this approach to this proposed workshop/presentation. During the presentation participants will be encouraged to produce their own responses, in the form of artwork, collage or writing (fiction or non-fiction), allowing them to practically engage in types of Queer history work being discussed and reflect in how we are all producers and 'users' of history within our community. Following the presentation participants will be given time to discuss their work.

Ellie Priest is a doctoral researcher at the University of Sussex, their research focuses on Queer community history work and alternative methods of researching and producing history. Their work aims to centre the work and experiences of Queer community members and facilitate Queer community intervention into established historical method.

Roundtable Discussion – Lesbian Sauna and Translesbofeminist Sexual Perspectives

Mercè Nebot, Marta Vusquets, Irene Cruz and Alba Juventeny lead this roundtable and community discussion, drawing on the experiences of *Bolleras al vapor* (Steamed dykes). *Bolleras al vapor* (Steamed dykes) is a lesbotransfeminist collective located in Barcelona that every two months facilitates a non mixt (flinta, no cis men) party at a gay sauna. The space pretends to be free from all kinds of phobic attitudes (lgbtqia+phobic, racist, ableist, ageist, and a long so on). *Bolleras al vapor* claims that in a city where gay saunas for cis men are abundant, there are almost no non-mixt spaces in which we can sexually interact with each other and explore our pleasure. We claim our pleasures and our sexualities as political and in particular, we claim the possibility of promiscuity as a space that can be inhabited from joy. Up to this date *Bolleras al vapor* has held up to 10 parties with much success. In this round table proposal we would like to discuss and think about stereotypes, notions and realities of what lesbotransfeminist sexualities currently are, challenge them and through speculative fiction think how the future could look like.

Marta Vusquets: Member of *Bolleras al vapor* collective. Degree in Law, Master in Gender Studies (University of Barcelona). Poet (*En el reino de las gatas*, Lastura editions, 2023). Part of the round table *La mala sexualidad* (The bad sexuality) at the Centre de Cultura Contemporànea de Barcelona (2023). Translesbofeminist activist. Author of various publications, including academic, books and texts. www.martabusquetsgallego.com.

Mercè Nebot: Member of *Bolleras al Vapor* collective. Filologist, translator. Highschool teacher. Translesbofeminist activist. Activism against fatphobia. Expert in sexual education. Author of various publications, has been part of different events and round tables. Moderator of the round table “Lesbianes ahir, avui i sempre” (Lesbians yesterday, today and forever) at the Journeys for lesbian visibility 2023.

Irene Cruz: Devoted regular at *Bolleras al Vapor* events. Sociologist, researcher . Translesbofeminist activist, antisppeciesist, dilettante drum player. Author of various publications on many unrelated, mostly uninteresting topics, but utterly thrilled to share stage with such wonderful lesbians.

Alba Juventeny: Exmember of the former *Guerrilla Travolaka* collective. Translesbofeminist activist. Mathematician. High school teacher. Amateur dancer. Explorer of mathematics education from both an anti-racist and an embodied perspective.

11:00 – 12:15 KEYNOTE: PROF NIHARIKA BANERJEA WITH UMA AND DHIREN BORISA, LESBIAN STANDPOINT: ARTICULATING LIVEABILITY WITH UMA

Niharika Banerjea is Professor at the O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat. Her research and teaching interests and commitments are in the areas of gender-sexuality studies, queer studies, social theory, transnational feminisms, queer feminist and collaborative methodologies. Niharika identifies as an academic-activist, to critically address familiar binaries between academia and activism – in classrooms, activist spaces, and writing practices. Across all these sites, along with her co-thinkers, co-writers and co-workers, Niharika tries to make ‘theory’ relevant to interrogate everyday hegemonic relations and self-referential understandings of ‘lived experiences’. At the same time, she invests in bringing the complexes of lived experiences to interrogate familiar theoretical endeavours. Niharika identifies as queer, and this identification includes an assemblage of socio-political histories of varied journeys rather than an already arrived moment.

ELC* Launch of Academic Circle 12.30- 13.15

Lesbian Academic Circle - EL*C Presentation & Plenary Conversation

Are you interested in forming a community of lesbian academics and activists who want to deepen the connection between academia and activism? You are invited to come and join the conversation.

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12:15 – 13:15
LUNCH

The EL*C would like to foster a conversation and structures to produce more lesbian-focused research, share opportunities for lesbian collaboration, and create a sustainable community of lesbian academics and activists working together to advance lesbian knowledge production and lesbian rights.

For the moment, we want to do this slowly and carefully, not to jump into big plans, but to see where the path takes us. EL*C is currently working on a lesbian limited access platform with user profiles (we call it "intranet") and we can use this to facilitate Lesbian Academic Circle.

13:15 – 14:45 Parallel Sessions

Panel 14 Queer Women, Music, Time and Spaces

This panel will explore intergenerational spaces and temporal zones of queer women's musical culture, activism, and reception, drawing attention to the intersectional dynamics of these imaginaries and locations. Pivoting between virtual cyberspace, global online queer congregations, and London of the 80s and 90s, queer women's spaces and time will be explored where music brings queer women together.

The queer world-building of the London women's scene of the 1980s

This paper takes the Sister Sledge song 'We Are Family' as a textual starting point to consider the queer world-building of the London women's scene of the 1980s. As the needle hit the record and the first bars of the familiar song played, the dancefloor filled up. What did queer women take to the dancefloor, and what did they leave behind? What connections could be made through women's bodies moving together, away from the straight gaze. The women's club scene was not always a comfortable escape from society's fissures of differences. Possible nostalgic myths of lesbian community can be contested here as points of conflict are exposed around race and class. Reflecting on and valuing difference while acknowledging points of solidarity provides connections and acts of resistance that were sought and found in women's spaces. Women found expression, a new home where we could be 'Lost in Music', imagine, and enact the defiance of Lyn Collins' lyrics in 'Think About It!' There's an intimacy with strangers where these sonic worlds disrupt the external pressures that many women experienced. Seeking, finding queer desire and pleasure through moving and grooving as a sonic body, affective connections are made when dancing with others.

Post-internet music as internet-mediated queerness: is online space a queer space?

My paper investigates an electronic music genre that emerged in the 2010s. The genre does not have a definite name; however, attempts have been made by critics (see, for example, Waugh 2017) to categorise it under the umbrella term "post-internet music". The latter has three distinguishing features: a) many artists operating within it identify as queer; b) on the sonic side, the genre comprises complex sound design, loud mixes, a wide stereo field, organic drum samples, pitched-up vocals, and beats that elude conventional time-signatures, so as to sound "deconstructed"; c) the music often makes overt or subtle reference to internet culture, and the digital domain. By providing a close reading of the genre's sonic features and the virtual

spaces it produces, I question what it means to be queer in the contemporary era, how this might historically differ from previous elaborations of queerness, and to what extent electronic music- a genre so entrenched in masculinist narratives of technology- can act as a vehicle for counter-normative expression.

Community in the Virtual: Queer Music, Queer Time, and Queer Culture Without Limits

Using the hyperpop artist Dorian Electra's sophomore album *My Agenda* as a springboard, this paper examines the role of queer music made by queer artists in facilitating an online queer community. Owing to the explicit references to queer culture, far-right diatribe, and broader internet discourse in *My Agenda* and other records, these works make space for an online congregation of queer-identifying peoples, transcending geographical location and limitations in public presentation. The use of music and elements associated with online delivery - primarily social media and the streamed music video - create a unique queer space in which the messaging and shared values espoused within are not espoused on their own, but instead affirmed through their codification within familiar forms of media. In addition, the listening and re-listening of these works with their in-jokes linked to a specific moment invoke an examination of queer time, in which aspects of culture can be revisited and critiqued in ever-changing contexts. It is these unique characteristics that allow queer music to create an online community, and its propagation and impacts will thus be analysed within this paper.

Contributions from:

Lucia Affaticati is a PhD researcher in Music at the University of Sussex with an interdisciplinary background. She is currently researching the intersection between queerness and contemporary electronic music.

Anjali Prashar-Savoie Anjali is a cultural producer, writer, yoga teacher and DJ. They hold a BA in Social Anthropology (SOAS) and an MA in Art & Politics (Goldsmiths), and were a research resident with the University of The Underground, with a specific focus on clubbing & community organising. Their work focusses on collaboration, creating opportunities that challenge inequalities in the cultural sector and alternative modes of making & being together.

Katherine Griffiths is a former and some-time DJ. She played 'rare groove' at gigs and parties in London, Manchester, and Paris in the 1980s and 1990s on the lesbian and straight club scenes. She is currently reading her PhD in history tentatively titled 'Going Out, Coming Out, Playing Out'.

Wren Jayasekara is a researcher of cultural studies at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. She specialises in music culture and queer and feminist theory, and is particularly interested in their intersection. Wren has been a longtime fan of many EDM genres, and is an amateur synthesiser builder and performer.

Panel 15 – The Archive as a Resource for Connection

Katherine Wallace - *Searching for Lesbian Lives: Utilising Gay Switchboards and Lesbian Lines to Understand Queer Women's Experiences in 1970s and 1980s Britain*

This paper will focus on the role of queer and lesbian infrastructures of the 1970s and 1980s to showcase how we can utilise gay switchboards, lesbian lines, as well as travel guides, to understand the experiences of lesbian women seeking information, advice, and community. Focusing on queer infrastructures such as gay switchboards and lesbian lines enabled women to find their desires, connections, as well as different spaces and communities. The paper will focus on three main aspects: discovery, movement, and connections. Beginning with the role of gay switchboards and lesbian lines we can discover how lesbian women could find one another. The paper will then discuss how through engaging with this queer technology, women forged connections, moved, and built communities through these networks. Queer scholarship by Cait McKinney, Alex Ketchum, as well as Matt Cook and Alison Oram has helped to illuminate how we might utilise the work of queer women as information activists. In order to demonstrate the advantages of my methodology, the paper will be approached utilising a case study of the city of Birmingham. However, the paper will demonstrate the methodological advantages of gay switchboards, which allow us to trace beyond one place and move into networks across the nation. Piecing together local, national, and international ephemeral material, demonstrates how gay switchboards, lesbian lines, as well as travel guides, enabled queer women to search, move, and locate their desires. Utilising queer infrastructures to understand the experiences and desires of

queer women provides a new methodological approach to locate lesbian desire within lesbian and queer British history.

Katherine Wallace is a second year PhD researcher at the University of Birmingham, funded by The Wolfson Foundation Postgraduate Scholarship. I am supervised by Professor Mo Moulton, Dr Chris Moores, and Dr La Shonda Mims. I previously completed my BA in History, and MA in Modern British Studies at the University of Birmingham in 2020 and 2021 respectively. My current research focuses on feminist and queer experience of social and leisure spaces in 1970s and 1980s Britain. I am a recipient of the Baxter Prize for local history for my BA dissertation, and also a Lead Editor at Midlands Historical Review.

Louisa Bethan Rimmer - *Coming 'in' to the Archive: Reading the Reoriented Closet in the Archives of Common Lives / Lesbian Lives Magazine (1981-1996)*

This paper develops an argument for the value of reorienting conventional structures of the queer closet, when reading queer archival materials, replacing 'coming out' into heteronormativity, with mechanisms of queer world-making, a coming 'in' to queerness. The paper makes transtemporal lesbian community its focus, considering how these connections are activated in the space of the queer archive. This is demonstrated through an analysis of the archival materials of Common Lives/ Lesbian Lives, a literary magazine published out of Iowa City between 1981 and 1986. The Common Lives/ Lesbian Lives archive at moments produces and, at others, supports and reinforces this reorientation of the closet structure as a valuable framework for reading the queer archive. The value of this reorientation is revealed through an exploration of the role of archival eroticism in producing the reoriented closet's gay world, since the archivist's erotic touch becomes a tool for transtemporal connection. This is evidenced by an analysis of the magazine's tropological hand, functioning as both a sexual and a literary tool, and a reading of the archive space as a cruising ground that is at once public and private, as well as a consideration of how the literary magazine's epistolary construction erotically produces the open letter-closet. The reoriented closet is further reinforced by the community-building mechanism of mutual witness-hood, that arises through a consideration of the connection between Common Lives/ Lesbian Lives and the US lesbian canon at the end of the twentieth century. Alongside a specific analysis of the works of Judy Grahn and Adrienne Rich, a reading of the magazine's amateurism as a queer chronotype produces the reoriented closet's gay world. Finally, an exploration of imagination shows it to be a valuable archival tool, generating utopic gay worlds in the gaps left by the damaged record of queer histories.

Louisa Bethan Rimmer (she/her) is an English Literature postgraduate from the University of Edinburgh (2023). Her research interests include 20th century queer poetics and queering the literary archive.

Dulcie Newbury - *'Beyond the Binary': Funerary Archaeology, Gendered Identity, and its Impact on Mental Health and Wellbeing*

Archaeology can be used to critically engage with the present, inform our views of gender identities, and challenge contemporary biases, as well as enhance our understanding of the past and improve contemporary mental health and wellbeing. Today, gender inequality and discrimination impact mental health and wellbeing, with individuals in the queer community showing higher rates of mental illness, often linked to issues faced as a result of their identity. This research uses archaeological materials to challenge interpretations of gender by eliminating predetermined ideas of identity based on binary sex and gender, with the aim of utilizing archaeology in gender debates today. The binary idea of sex and gender is not representative of identities and limits our understanding of people and identity today, and in the past. To determine the influence archaeology has in contemporary society and on wellbeing, academic and public facing workshops were conducted in May-November 2022 in Bradford. The aim of these workshops was to determine the role archaeology can play in informing, accommodating, and enhancing contemporary discussions surrounding sex and gender identity, with the goal of using these discussions to enhance mental health and wellbeing. The workshops required participants to work in small groups to engage with archaeological and contemporary case studies focused on sex and gender. The materials used challenge the binary concepts of sex and gender. This can provide individuals with a sense of history and community, which is proven to improve mental health and wellbeing. The workshops showed that participants feel that the sessions and the use of archaeology can improve

contemporary mental health and wellbeing by challenging cultural norms and highlighting diversity beyond the binary, both in the past and present.

Dulcie Newbury is a PhD student at the University of Bradford. Their work focuses on funerary archaeology and challenges conventional ideas and notions of sex and gender, aiming to dismantle binary interpretations prevalent in the field. Dulcie also seeks to determine how our understanding of the past can influence debates surrounding gender identity and mental health in contemporary society.

Georgia Dimdore-Miles - *From Attics to Lesbian Archive: 'Queer Archival Activism', Silences and Embodied Intimacies*

Lesbian archives exist to resist centuries of lesbian erasure and invisibility in collective memories and traditional hetero-patriarchal collections. Yet they remain fragmented, incomplete and full of silence. Critical engagement in them in a wholehearted manner, that attends to archives as active subjects, not just sources, is vital. This dissertation takes on an auto/ethnographic 'queer archival activist' journey that spans from lesbian attics¹, including an autoethnographic exploration into my own personal archive, to the Glasgow Women's Library, lesbian archive (GWLLA). Upon this journey I draw upon queer and lesbian archival theory such as Cvetkovich's (2003) *Archive of Feeling*, Detamore's (201) 'Queer archival activism' and anti-normative, queer stances including the work of Munoz (2009) and Mills (2006). Intimacy also weaves its way throughout this auto/ethnographic journey. Methodologically and ethically in its commitment to Detamore's (2010) 'queer ethics' and Howitt's (2022) 'Intimacy as method.' Empirically this is in the way I trace intimacy across attics and into the silences it is embodied within, in the GWL lesbian archive. Engaging in this challenge could radically reimagine what the limits of the GWLLA could constitute: connecting an institutional lesbian archive to real lesbian lives, objects and 'embodied memories.'

Georgia Dimdore-Miles presented a paper at the Lesbian Lives Conference 2022 based on her award-winning undergraduate research on the hidden spaces of the 20th-century Bristol lesbian scene. This research inspired her to co-found Misscoteque, a queer community events project that aims to reconstruct Bristol's lost lesbian scene, and in doing so queer the boundaries between nightlife, culture, activism. She has run sold-out music and cultural events for over two years in the heart of Bristol's queer scene, including stage takeovers at Glastonbury Festival 2022 and 2023. She undertook an MSc in cultural geography at the University of Bristol, with a research focus on critical approaches to lesbian archiving. She is now living in London, volunteering as a cataloguer at the Bishopsgate Institute archives and pursuing a career in the archive and heritage sector.

Workshop 6 – *The Body Hotel: Queer Movement Celebrations*

Thania Acarón facilitates this dynamic, interactive workshop, where we will have a chance to reconnect, revitalise and celebrate our queer identity. We will explore the themes of connection and isolation through movement, music, and arts-based reflection. You will explore ways in which you can cultivate a positive relationship to your body and connect and engage with others in a safe environment. All activities will include elements of creativity, play and dance/movement. There is no need for prior movement experience, as you can tailor each activity to your own comfort level and ability. Let's move together! The Body Hotel CIC is a Wales-based social enterprise focusing on movement for wellbeing which focuses on employee wellbeing and working with underrepresented communities. The company has provided services for Wales NHS, LGBTQ+ organisations across the UK and international training workshops and research on creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ Global Majority people

Dr Thania Acarón (she/her) is a Puerto Rican dance movement psychotherapist, researcher and lecturer at University of South Wales (USW), and director of The Body Hotel CIC. Acarón offers workshops on embodied decision-making and applying Global Majority LGBTQ+ approaches within therapeutic work. She led international webinars on therapeutic competencies and creating LGBTQ+ affirmative spaces for mental health practitioners and published a book chapter on collaborative LGBTQ+ arts therapies. Dr Acarón is chair of USW's LGBTQ+ Equality Group. Acarón also co-directs Fflamingo, a Wales-based queer performance company, and provides supervision for arts in health projects. @thebodyhotel <https://linktr.ee/thebodyhotel>

Panel 16 - Kinship

Erin Lux - *Kinship, Family & Support Networks in LGBTI+ Communities*

At last year's Lesbian Lives conference, my colleague Dr Rebecca Crowther gathered data about participants' experiences of Kinship, Family, and Support Networks. These have now been fed into Equality Network's report "Kinship, Family & Support Networks in Scotland's LGBTI+ Community". In addition to this work, through this past year, Equality Network has also held events and conducted research around the cost of living crisis. This paper looks at data from the Kinship survey and data that Equality Network has gathered about LGBTI+ people's experiences of the cost of living crisis, alongside the broader literature on kinship and chosen family to understand how LGBTI+ people have navigated the ongoing COVID pandemic and cost of living crisis. This paper connects with the Conference's themes of 'connections and communities', 'care as activism', and 'creating networks of solidarities' by presenting rich, qualitative, lived-experience data of kinship formation and community structures. It also looks at how those structures support LGBTI+ people through crisis as well as how they can be undermined by government policy that does not recognise connections outside the nuclear family, as was the case during the COVID pandemic, and seeks to inform work on how our forms of kinship, family, and community are better recognised and supported in future crises.

Erin Lux is a Policy Officer at Equality Network, Scotland's LGBTI+ policy organisation. She is also a PhD candidate in history at the University of Strathclyde, studying youth justice and child and adolescent mental health in the United States.

Xiaowei Long - *Reimagining Kinship Through Lala Families in Transitional China*

This study explores the transformative dynamics of kinship within the unique context of Lala families in transitional China. The term "Lala" is commonly used for the self-identification of non-heterosexual women in China and serves as an umbrella category for female same-sex sexuality within urban settings in the country. Since the Reform and Opening-Up, traditional social structures in China have undergone tremendous changes. This transformation, occurring within the economic and cultural systems, reflects a vibrant coexistence and fusion of modernity and tradition. Concepts of family, marriage, and gender roles have evolved compared to before. In this process, families formed by same-sex female partners challenge and reshape traditional kinship concepts. In this study, through participants' narratives of their personal life experiences, I observe the emergence of three distinct forms of Lala families. These include the extra-marital family practised by Lalas trapped in traditional marriage families; contract marriage families based on traditional family norms which require understanding within the context of Chinese culture; and planned Lala family benefiting from advancements in reproductive technologies to fulfil their dreams of parenthood, creating new practices in kinship, parenting, and intergenerational interactions. To date, research and literature on kinship have primarily focused on mainstream family situations, lacking attention to changing family structures and the complexities of multiple family issues. Therefore, this research places greater emphasis on 'lived experiences' or people's daily life practices. Through a Thick Description of various family forms, it highlights their diversity and resilience in redefining family relationships within the evolving social landscape of China. This exploration contributes to a broader discussion of queer kinship in mainland China, revealing the inherent complexity and possibilities of family transformations during times of social change. It also aids in reimagining future, diverse concepts of family.

Xiaowei Long (Pronoun: they/them) is a first-year PhD student in the sociology program at the University of Essex and awardee of the CHASE Studentship. They are affiliated with the Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC) and are supervised by Professor Róisín Ryan-Flood and Dr Phoebe Kisubi Mbsalaki. Their research interests include kinship, assisted reproduction and gender. Before joining the University of Essex, they received a BA and Master's degrees in Social Work from Northwest University, Xi'an, China in 2019 and 2022, and another MA degree in Sociology from the University of Essex in 2021.

Moss Berke and Bianca Arnold - *Luminous Matter of the LesbianQueerTrans* Domestic: Home Videos as a Lesbian World-making Practice*

Re-examining home video as both technology and location of queer play and trans*formation, we offer the intra-active experience of collaborative use of handycams as particularly suited to document and encourage lesbian, queer, and trans* subjectivity formation. Furthering Haraway's (2008) theory that subjects do not pre-exist encounters (of gazes, bodies, fluid), we trace a practice that is both documentation and participation in the emergence of lesbianqueertrans* subjects, environments, and visions. Filming is a moment of relation, one that creates us anew. Challenging the notion that home videos document a "longing for paradise" (Halter 2023), we conceptualize lesbianqueertrans* home videos as fleeting offerings/creations of paradises, constructed through experimentation, mutual recognition, and self-documentation. Paradise emerges co-constitutively with the daily materials of our lives; bodies, gazes, imaginations, sex. Using Wittig, De Lauretis and Preciado, we explore home videos as a genre that deconstructs the authority of the cinematic gaze through its re-appropriation, while queerly extending and transforming bodies through the prosthesis of handycams. Herein, the hegemonic relation between filmer and filmed, penetrator and penetrated, subject and object collapses. Refusing static binaries, these home videos instead demonstrate relationality and entanglement as forces of emergence of lesbianqueertrans* selves. Our presentation includes stills from our home videos, which we hope encourages others to create their own, and to see the activist core within play, love, and the documentation of lesbian lives in our time of heightened, right-wing anti-LGBTQIA+ backlash. Though our presentation is particularly aligned with the theme of lesbian, bi, queer and trans world-making, as we are a duo working together despite distance and international borders, we also find alignments with connecting and disconnecting and visual activism.

Moss Berke and Bianca Arnold are recent graduates of the GEMMA Program, a university-consortium masters in Gender Studies, supported by the European Commission. They began working together at the University of Granada in 2022. Bianca and Moss are writers and artists, interested in thinking about queer desire and the environmental humanities through a transdisciplinary and multi-media approach, using critical theory, film, poetry, and the visual arts. As a collaborative duo, they work together to document their lives and co-create their visions as practices to generate proximity. Their short film, *Carbon*, will debut this year at the Albametraggi film festival in Rome.

Panel 17 - Global, Local & Glocal Responses to 'Anti-Gender'

Kath Browne - *Insights from the Beyond Opposition project: Everyday Experiences of those who are opposed to/concerned about socio-legal changes to sexualities/genders/abortion in Ireland, Great Britain and Canada*

Contemporaneously, fundamental disagreements around sexualities, genders and abortion not only persist, but are becoming more central to political and social lives including in places where socio-legal changes have been extensive like the Great Britain, Ireland and Canada. Whilst there are extensive explorations of the limitations of these socio-legal changes to the possibilities of queer transformations including the creation of 'new others', much less understood is how these changes affect those who are concerned about them, or disagree with them. These experiences are central to understanding contemporary sexual and gendered landscapes, but are often overlooked. This paper is a follow up for those who attended Lesbian Lives in 2017 and heard me ask for listening to those who disagree. The world and feminist/lesbian politics has changed significantly since that moment, not least in the UK since that talk. It uses 168 Beyond Opposition interviews undertaken between 2020-2022 (www.beyondopposition.org) with those who oppose or have concerns about socio-legal changes such as same-sex marriage, abortion, and/or gender recognition. It will use these to outline what these interviews found about the everyday lives of those who have concerns about recent changes or who disagree with them. The paper will focus on empirical material to give a broad understanding of the insights these interviews offer including the problem with 'sides' and assuming sameness within those who participated in interviews, the experiences of being 'on the other side' and the ways in which they navigate this.

Kath Browne's (Professor Geographies of Sexualities and Genders) research focuses on social justice, inequalities and polarisations. She has explored how LGBTQ lives can be ameliorated, including through Liveable Lives (with Niharika Banerjea). She has explored opposition to sexual and gender equalities through

the concept of heteroactivism (with Catherine Jean Nash). Her current ERC project, Beyond Opposition, investigates the experiences of people who are concerned about sexual/gender/abortion socio-legal changes, and how we might engage with each other where we seek different realities/futures. She co-leads the RESIST project a horizon Europe project.

Sarah Lambie - *Are Gender-critical Feminists Neo-fascists? Situating Britain's Gender-critical Movement within the Wider Transnational Anti-Gender Movement*

In a public lecture at Cambridge University in April 2023, Professor Judith Butler argued that the contemporary transnational 'anti-gender' movement is a neo-fascist phenomenon. Butler noted that particular strands of British feminism have become part of the anti-gender movement, despite holding key differences in perspective. This assertion raises important questions, also posed in other public forums, about the relationship between British gender-critical politics, the global anti-gender movement, and the far-right. Is the gender-critical movement in Britain neo-fascist? If so, what are the wider implications of this claim? Does it help or hinder efforts to challenge this movement by describing gender-critical feminists as part of far-right movements? This paper makes the case for a context-specific analysis of the British gender critical movement which is attentive to cross-political differences within that movement. While some strands of gender-critical politics are openly allied with far-right politics, many of the most outspoken gender-critical advocates come from left-wing positions, including left feminists and lesbians. Fierce debates also persist among gender-critical feminists on whether 'strategic' alliances with the right are justified. The paper argues that challenging gender-critical politics in Britain requires a reckoning with the cross-political nature of the movement and an analysis of the range of factors that unite these different strands across left and right - including invocations of victim politics, mobilisation of racialised fears of violence, and investments in carceral politics.

Sarah Lambie is Professor of Criminology and Queer Theory at Birkbeck, University of London. Lambie's research addresses issues of gender, sexuality, and imprisonment as well as community engagements with alternative forms of justice. Lambie is currently researching the 'gender wars' in Britain.

Evie Browne - *How are LGBTQI+ Movements Fighting Gender-based Violence in Challenging Contexts Experiencing 'Anti-gender' Backlash?*

This paper is based on a broader piece of research around how LGBTQI+ movements around the world have been impacted by the backlash to progressive gender norm change and the effectiveness of their strategies, such as advocacy campaigns, strategic use of the law, media influencing (offline and online), direct action, and coalitions with other movements, to counter this backlash. It focuses specifically on movements that tackle GBV motivated by anti-LGBTQI+ sentiment, and how activists advocate for changes in cultural norms that permit such violence. It is based on a review of the literature and key informant interviews with LGBTQI+ activists to gain further insight into the impact and strategies deployed by their movements. For Lesbian Lives, the presentation will draw out specific movements countering violence directed against lesbian women, and discuss alliances, fissures, and points of complementarity with other parts of the movement. I take a global perspective, with contemporary examples drawn from around the world. The paper takes a positive viewpoint, identifying what works and which strategies are effective to maintain human rights. It aims to draw lessons together from activists in different countries working on similar but context-specific iterations of the global backlash.

Evie Browne has a PhD in International Development from the University of Sussex with a focus on LGBTQI+ issues and gender normativity among lesbian and bisexual women in Cuba. Her research interests centre on sexualities, gender norms and normativity, intersectional feminism, rights, and social justice. Evie works at ODI as a Research Fellow in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion team (<https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/gender-equality-and-social-inclusion/>), bringing a queer lens to work on gender norms.

Workshop 7 – *Proclaiming the Category “LGBTQ+ Women” through Community-Based Research: Findings of the US National LGBTQ+ Women’s Community Survey*

Dr. Jaime M. Grant leads this session - *Proclaiming the Category “LGBTQ+ Women” through Community-Based Research: Findings of the US National LGBTQ+ Women’s Community Survey*

In 2019, US-based activists Urvashi Vaid and Dr. Jaime M. Grant launched the first national LGBTQ Women’s survey, gathering a dream team of veteran activists and researchers to co-create an original 170-question instrument that in the end drew 5002 respondents. <https://lgbtcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LGBT-Womens-Survey-Full-2023.pdf> The study invited: Any woman or non-binary person who has or does identify as a womxn, and centers their emotional, social, sexual and/or familial life on women, and looked at key domains of our lives including identity, education, housing, economic security, health and health access, disability, policing and incarceration, family and parenting, sociality, sex/sexual practices, religious upbringing and religious life, aging, political and civic engagement, and interpersonal violence. In her final activist project, Vaid, who passed in May of 2022, aimed to push back on TERF destruction of LGBTQ+ women’s community and to recreate LGBTQ+ and women’s movement agendas in the US and beyond. A passionate and proud lesbian, Vaid often noted that lesbian “is a verb” in the study, and its findings demonstrate how racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ+ animus, and fatphobia distribute discrimination and violence in LGBTQ+ womxn’s lives across a broad swath of identities. Dr. Grant will share findings of the report which includes data on 15,000 write-ins to the question: What are your 3 favorite things about being an LGBTQ+ woman? and invite conversation about community-based methods as revolutionary fuel.

Dr. Jaime M. Grant, author of *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*, and co-editor of *Friendship as Social Justice Activism: Critical Solidarities in a Global Environment* is a veteran queer feminist organizer and researcher. As project director for the first US-based National LGBTQ+ Women’s Community Survey (www.lgbtqwomensurvey.org) she co-authored its principal report, “We Never Give Up the Fight”: A Report of the National LGBTQ+ Women’s Community Survey. Grant’s research has appeared in *The Harvard LGBTQ Policy Journal*; in *SIGNS, the Journal of Culture and Society*; and the *National Women’s Studies Association Journal*.

15.00- 16:45 Parallel Sessions

Panel 18 – Strategies of Global Literary Resistance

Juliette Staroz -*The Representation of Revolts and Revolution in French Queer Feminist Literature*

As feminists and Queer people living in a gendered and patriarchal societies, we often wish to revolt against the norms, to change the system we live in. These desires can be found in manifestations, movies, debates about how to... And in literature. My paper proposes the study of two French novels written by Queer and feminist authors, to see how each of them imagine and portray revolts and revolution, not in the same way, but both against the gendered norms that weight on females and queer people.

Juliette Staroz is in Master 2 at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne, in France, where they study both gender studies and literature studies. They are currently writing they researches about the representations and effects of revolts and revolution in feminist literature. They have presented their first paper at the "Congrès International du Genre" in July 2023 in France.

Denyse Rodrigues - *Contested Books: Old Wine in a New Bottle*

Mount Saint Vincent University Library and Archives houses a collection of over 200 books constituting the Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection, a sub-genre of pulp fiction paperbacks from the mid-20th century. When placed in the larger context of 2SLGBTQ+ communities and their histories, this collection supports the teaching and scholarship of the histories of censorship and popular culture treatment of 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Documenting, preserving, and celebrating diverse and intersectional 2SLGBTQ+ histories is more important than ever, given the increased hate targeting 2SLGBTQ+ communities globally. This presentation seeks to engage scholars and community members in an exploration of the critical issues of censorship and

marginalization embedded in the Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection. To facilitate broader access and understanding, we have developed an innovative online exhibit that transcends traditional bibliographic elements (title, author, etc.). The exhibit showcases metadata highlighting titles featured in governmental reports on obscenity in North America. It also incorporates excerpts from reports by religious groups contesting these books and includes reader reviews from the mid-20th century lesbian newsletter, the Ladder. By providing context and background information, the online exhibit serves as a gateway to a nuanced comprehension of individual books within the Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection. Moreover, we are actively exploring supplementary means to foster connections and enhance transparency surrounding the decision-making processes inherent in curating a special collection. Our primary objective is to render the Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection more accessible and comprehensible. This initiative aims not only to forge links between the collection and the communities it represents but also to bring to light the contemporary challenges of censorship faced by 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Through this presentation, we aspire to contribute to a deeper understanding of the collection's social implications and to underscore its role as a conduit connecting historical narratives with present-day issues of censorship.

Denyse Rodrigues (she/they) practices librarianship at Mount Saint Vincent University. Through their liaison work with the Women's and Gender Studies department and their sabbatical project in 2017, Denyse created the online curated database, Lesbian Pulp Fiction @ MSVU, making this valuable collection more accessible to researchers. With a commitment to opening dialogues and engaging students through digital media, Denyse is actively shaping conversations around lesbian pulp fiction and its cultural significance.

Anna Klimek - *Solidarity and Community in Polish Lesbians' Autobiographical Writing*

In the last few years, the Polish LGBTQ+ community has experienced multiple hate campaigns. Several parts of Poland declared themselves "LGBT-free zones" in 2019. In 2020, a famous trans activist was wrongfully arrested and dozens of people were detained during subsequent protests. In 2021, a group of citizens submitted a project for a legislature that was supposed to put an end to "homosexual propaganda" in the country. Meanwhile, influential politicians and religious figures would call members of the LGBTQ+ community a "rainbow plague" and say that they are not people but a dangerous ideology. Despite all this, queer people in Poland have persevered. 2022 saw the publication of an almost 1000-pages-long volume of diaries, testimonies, and accounts from members of the LGBTQ+ community - "Cała siła, jaką czerpię na życie" [All the Strength I Draw To Live]. It contains autobiographical texts of 79 people of different ages, identities, and places, who decided to share their experiences of being queer in Poland: both the bad sides and the good sides. In my paper, I would like to focus on chosen texts submitted by lesbians and how they discuss the presence, influence, and importance of their community and solidarity with other community members. I plan to showcase how lesbian authors chose to talk about these notions in their most intimate writings and what role the presence and support of others played in their lives. As I want to emphasise Polish perspectives, I will mostly refer to Polish works on queer solidarity (such as Justyna Struzik's "Solidarność queerowa" [Queer Solidarity]), as well as other non-fiction publications on Polish queer community (such as interviews with LGBTQ+ people and reports on queer people's situation in Poland).

Anna Klimek (she/her) is a PhD student at Jagiellonian University's Doctoral School in the Humanities. Her research interests include life-writing, lesbian literature, queer and feminist poetry, as well as the broader topic of (self-)representation in media. She is working on a dissertation researching how contemporary lesbian writers approach the questions of womanhood and femininity across various life-writing genres. She used to be a volunteer in local queer activist groups and, in 2019, she founded a student organisation fighting for LGBTQ+ visibility and rights at her university.

Phoebe O'Leary - *Intertemporal Connections: Critical Nostalgia and Lesbian AIDS Activism in Performance*

This paper contends that examining lesbian AIDS activism through the lens of critical nostalgia is a useful political tool to destabilise the present and catalyse political solidarity. In the past decade, we have witnessed a landslide of AIDS cultural work, from high-profile theatrical revivals to popular TV shows. These revivals and retrospectives aim to resurrect the vital political energy that characterised AIDS activism. Nonetheless, they

also risk perpetuating a form of nostalgic longing that obscures the ongoing HIV/AIDS epidemic as over, ignoring its gendered and racialised dimensions. This paper contends that lesbian narratives, far from being secondary or peripheral, contest simplistic recollections of AIDS activism. As highlighted by Ann Cvetkovich, lesbians were amongst the first to mobilise politically around AIDS and amongst the first to disappear from its history (2003, 158). Focusing on the recent performance of *Once Before I Go* by Phillip McMahon at the Gate Theatre Dublin (2021), this paper examines how lesbian AIDS narratives disrupt the prevailing focus on white gay male bodies as instruments of change. Using Svetlana Boym's differentiation between reflective and recuperative forms of nostalgia, the paper considers the turn to nostalgia in performance, arguing that the character of "Lesbian Lynn" embodies a form of critical nostalgia that has the potential to destabilise the present (2002). Reflecting on the current desire for past forms of solidarity and community activism can offer new perspectives on what might be recovered from previous lesbian movements. As such, the paper highlights the vital role of lesbian AIDS activism in the past, but also as part of the ongoing struggle against discrimination, transphobia and homophobia, emphasising the significance of intertemporal connections in effecting societal and political transformation.

Phoebe O'Leary is an artist and interdisciplinary researcher focusing on the intersection of performance practice and AIDS histories. She is currently a doctoral candidate in Drama and English at University College Dublin. Her research and teaching interests span contemporary performance, queer theory, biopolitics, health policy, and social epidemiology. She is also the co-founder of UCD's Viral Imaginaries network, where she explores narratives of contagion in performance practice. She holds an MSc in Sexuality and Gender from the University of Amsterdam and an MPhil in Performance Studies from Trinity College Dublin.

Panel 19 - Encounters with Exiles, Challenging Lines

Wendy Sloane - 'Why did Putin invade Ukraine? Blame it on the Gays'

State-sanctioned homophobia and transphobia, coupled with rampant anti-gay rhetoric, is making life untenable for Russia's LGBTQIA+ community. In November, Russia's state Duma dubbed the international LGBT movement an "extremist" organization, with citizens who participate in or fund LGBT groups facing up to twelve years' imprisonment. This is the latest draconian law that Vladimir Putin has put into effect following his invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022 in a bid to shore up domestic support, under the guise of maintaining traditional values and protecting the country from decadent, "Satanic" Western influences. The queer community is being used by the Russian government as a scapegoat for all Western evils, with new laws introduced that label LGBT organizations "foreign agents", ban gender reassignment surgeries, hormone replacement therapies and trans adoptions, and prohibit disseminating any information on non-traditional gender identity. Happily, several groups have sprung into action to help Russia's LGBT community emigrate. Queer Svit, a London-based charity helping BAME and queer people affected by the war emigrate from mainly Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, has helped over 1,000 people relocate. Others, like Pink Armenia and the Argentine LGBT Federation, help the displaced integrate into a new society. Inside Russia, groups such as Center-T, the Russian LGBT Network and Coming Out risk everything to help LGBT people hold onto their jobs, their liberty, and even their children. This paper will incorporate research and interviews to investigate the problems Russia's LGBT community is facing, and explore how and why Putin – and the Russian Orthodox Church - is blaming the gays for his invasion of Ukraine. It will also shine a light on what grassroots groups are doing, within and without Russia, to help Russia's LGBT citizens find shelter outside the country's borders. With Russian presidential elections in March, what is the future for queer Russians?

Wendy Sloane worked as a interpreter in Russia in the late 1980s, then as journalist in Moscow from 1989 to 1995, writing mainly for Moscow Magazine, The Associated Press, and the Daily Telegraph. Currently, she freelances for the British Journalism Review and is an associate professor and principal lecturer at London Metropolitan University, and the Journalism course leader. She is a University Teaching Fellow and a Senior Fellow in the HEA. Follow her on Twitter: @wendyutah

Victoria Suvoroff - Gatekeeping of Queer Art-Practices in the Context of Exile

The proposed paper is looking into the intersecting roles of a gatekeeper and a researcher while conducting a fieldwork for the research titled “The impact of exile: Using non-representational methodologies to examine displaced contemporary queer visual art practices between 2020-2024 in the UK”. Two case-studies are explored, where the respondents were recruited through the United Queerdom organisation which they are part of. The researcher, on the other hand, is a co-founder and an organiser of the United Queerdom, the first Russian-speaking LGBTQIA+ community in the UK. United Queerdom brings members from a diverse range of national and ethnic backgrounds together and is a first LGBTQIA+ community in the UK uniting people from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The organisation brings migrants together and provides assistance to LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. The goal is to support the integration of its members in the UK through educational programme workshops, organised events and activities in a safe and inclusive environment. Nevertheless, uniting a wide range of national and ethnic backgrounds together presented an urgent need to re/define a Russian speaking LGBTQIA+ community while examining how to create a shared space for diverse people coming from the regions ravelled with conflicts. Against this backdrop, the paper aims to elaborate on the aspects of gatekeeping of queer art-practices in exile from different angles. Firstly, United Queerdom will be examined as a platform for queer solidarity and support negotiated in exile. Then, it is explored in relation to the art-practices by two respondents affiliated with the community. What role does United Queerdom play in queer art practices in exile in the UK? Secondly, the multiplicity of professional roles of the researcher as well as United Queerdom organiser is explored in relation to the respondents. What happens with positionality of a researcher when intersected with the role of a gatekeeper?

Victoria Suvoroff is a researcher, contemporary artist, independent curator, and a founder of the United Queerdom. She a PhD candidate at School of Languages, Culture and Societies at University of Leeds. Her current research is looking at the impact of exile while using non-representational methodologies to examine displaced contemporary queer visual art practices between 2020-2024 in the UK. She holds an MRes in Arts and Cultural Research from the University of Brighton.

Cat Walker - *Who gives a ££££? The Inadequacies of UK Funding for International LGBTQI Issues*

Around the world, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people face discrimination, violence, and other serious human rights abuses simply for being who they are. In recent years, the Covid pandemic and a series of humanitarian crises have had specific impacts on LGBTQI people, while those who oppose LGBTI human rights have leveraged the situation to create a backlash against these communities. Against this backdrop, local, national and regional LGBTQI not-for-profit and community organisations worldwide create energy, resilience and clear ambition to make change happen. But they need a resilient and sustainable funding supply. While global funding in this area has been increasing, many LBQ, trans, and intersex organizations are working in survival mode, with almost half (47%) operating on less than \$10,000 per year and fewer than one in four groups receiving sufficient funding to fully implement their strategies. A research project was initiated by GiveOut and The Baring Foundation, and carried out in conjunction with Brighton-based consultancy, The Researchery, as a first attempt to evidence how much the UK gives collectively across Government, trusts and foundations, corporates, and individual philanthropic sources to support LGBTQI communities internationally, especially in the Global South and East. The research found that average annual funding from the UK was £13.4 million in 2019 and 2020, equivalent to 3p in every £100 given to charities in the UK. The researchers will outline key findings as well as presenting additional, as yet unpublished, analysis focussing on the breakdown of funding to different LGBTQI communities served; showing that lesbian, bisexual, queer women and WSW are more underfunded than their male-identifying counterparts, and exploring the reasons for this. The barriers to supporting LGBTQI activism internationally will also be discussed.

Dr Cat Walker have held senior positions in the voluntary sector where she has worked for the last 24 years, and founded The Researchery in 2015 as an independent research consultancy working exclusively for the voluntary sector. The Researchery’s mission is to help build, shake and evaluate the evidence base that charities, grant-makers and philanthropists rely on to make effective decisions. Clients span government and public bodies, grant-makers, charities, community groups and campaigns. An expert researcher, Cat’s articles and reports have been cited over 700 times in academic books and journals.

Panel 20 - Trans Ethics & Plurisexual (Un)Belonging

Mijke van der Drift - *Trans Ethics: refusing Separability by Embracing Complicity*

In this talk, I will interrogate a possible basis for what Denise Ferreira da Silva (2016) terms the greater ethical challenge of our time; thinking difference without separability. By making the case for a trans activism that does not focus on positionality and thereby highlights separability, I will instead focus on trans as ethics. This allows joining wider struggles and forging connections that build trust to escape the liberal trap of institutional inclusion. Inclusion demands silence and compliance, to shape spaces free from friction. While positionality is often cast in relation to social pressures, limits and limiting conditions, I will in this paper make suggest this upholds hidden notions of innocence that function as hindrance for a broader understanding of solidarity. Instead of foregrounding social pressures, I will argue for an understanding of complicity that underlines entanglements within and outside of hegemonic structures. Drawing on Moten and Harney (2021), Sanyal (2015), and Rothberg (2019), my argument makes a proposal for a positive understanding of complicity. Embracing conflict in solidarity struggles in combination with understandings of complicity does not reduce solidarity to a managerial understanding of smoothly functioning organisations. I will cast solidarity as the refusal of separability, and in that movement trans solidarity takes the form of an ethics that is founded on showing up, collaboration, and curiosity to interconnecting struggles for freedom. As I have argued elsewhere (Drift and Raha 2020) trans as an ethics that escapes encapsulation by neoliberal forces is fundamentally revamping relationality, which casts its movements as ethics. Where Marquis Bey (2021) underlines the anarchic-feminist quality of these movements, I will make the case in this paper that escaping normative pressures entails bringing complicity into struggles.

Mijke van der Drift is a philosopher and educator working on ethics, trans studies, and anti-colonial philosophy. Mijke is a tutor at the Royal College of Art, London. Mijke's work has appeared in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, in various independent publications as well as chapters in *The Emergence of Trans* (Routledge 2020), and *The New Feminist Literary Studies Reader* (Cambridge UP 2020). Van der Drift is founding member of the art collective Red Forest. They have made work for the Milano Triennale (2022), the Helsinki Biennale (2023) as part of their research into Extractivism, Fossil Fascism, and cultures of resistance. With Nat Raha, Mijke is writing *Trans Femme Futures* (Pluto Press).

Jay Szpilka - *Please, Love, Hatecrime Me Real Bad - Extreme Trans BDSM as a Practice of Survival*

In one of the most memorable scenes from Alison Rumfitt's 2021 trans horror novel *Tell Me I'm Worthless*, the lead trans characters engage in extreme BDSM play. In its course, the submissive Alice is all but hatecrimed by her partner, subjected to a torrent of vicious transphobic insults and humiliations. And yet, instead of threatening her sense of self, this sexual encounter allows her and her partner to survive the horrors to come. Starting with this scene and working my way through other depictions of extreme BDSM in trans literature, as well as drawing on the online trans feminine cultural productions such as memes, I want to use my presentation as an opportunity to ask about cruelty, kink, and care. Time after time, trans feminine culture produces examples of sexuality at the edge of cruelty that nonetheless functions not as torture - in Elaine Scarry's sense of unmaking the victim's world - but rather as a practice of mutual care. This, in turn, produces a number of questions. What are the conditions in which being told by an intimate partner that you are worthless trans trash helps you survive atmospheres of violence that surround contemporary trans life? How can resilience be built through actions normally associated with cruelty and trauma, not thriving and resistance? And finally, what potential dangers lurk in an overly uncritical embrace of sexual play with sheer violence and trauma, and how are those dangers worked around in extreme trans sexual practices?

Jay Szpilka is a post-doctoral fellow at the SWPS University in Warsaw, Poland, where she is currently working on a research project dedicated to investigating the affinities and tensions between trans femininity and BDSM sexualities.

Robin Rose Breetveld - *Knowing Your Place: The Artistic Queer Space & The Power of Narrative Ownership*

This paper draws on the doctoral thesis *Bisexual (Un)Belonging: Exploring the Socio-Spatial Negotiation of Plurisexual Individuals in LGBT+ and Queer Spaces* (Breetveld 2023) and explores queerness as a site of belonging. Focussing on plurisexual theorisation and community connection, the paper puts a spotlight onto an otherwise invisible demographic. Presenting data from semi-structured interviews, ethnographic observations, and artistic fieldnotes, the paper provides an alternative narrative surrounding the challenges of plurisexual lived experiences. Rather than a primary focus on socio-spatial negotiations where plurisexuals feel unwelcome, unwanted, and marginalised, there is an avid engagement with connection, belonging, and a “kinship of liminality”. The ethnographic account particularly engages with a queer space which adopts an explicit feminist queer ethos that works to celebrate intersectional differences and fluid identities, rather than reifying them. The venue, vFd (Hackney, London) operates through a feminist queer framework of “radical acceptance” that allows for the (re)production of empathy, relationality, and expression through art. I argue that a queer space, such as vFd, allows for narrative ownership which is not experienced by plurisexual individuals in LGBT spaces – creating different experiences of (thrown) togetherness. The feminist and intersectional framework through which vFd produces queerness allows for a counter narrative around sexual citizenship and inclusivity that transgresses sexual identity. This paper explores the themes of (1) radical acceptance, (2) transgressive relationality, and (3) empathic assimilation, as ways for a queer space to create meaningful socio-political relationships and a sense of belonging which can be cultivated and felt – by plurisexuals and allies alike.

Dr Robin Rose Breetveld is a Lecturer at the University of Kent, teaching on programmes such as Sociology, Criminology, Social Work, and Cultural Studies. Their academic focus is on plurisexuality and inclusivity, visual research methods, and art and affect. Their doctoral thesis (2023) researches the feelings of belonging of plurisexual individuals within LGBTQ+ spaces through an intersectional feminist framework, gaining insight in the spatial and affective (re)negotiation of socio-sexual identities that experience double discrimination and marginalisation. They are equally passionate about developing visual art-based research dissemination and teaching qualitative social research skills. Their chapter “Forms of Bisexual Injustice” can be read in the 2020 anthology *Bisexuality in Europe* (eds. Maliepaard & Baumgartner, Routledge).

Trude Sundberg *The Other Gendered Activist Social Researcher*

“The time has come to drag the analysts’ couches into the streets and collectivize speech, politicize bodies, debinarize gender and sexuality and decolonize the unconscious” (Preciado, 2019:75). The starting point of this paper is my own position as an other gendered activist scholar, and the continued journey to that position. The paper will discuss this journey which changed how I do research and what I see my role as a social researcher as being. This role has become one of an activist scholar doing research that aims to deconstruct and reconstruct, and creating more environmentally and socially just societies through collaborative, coproduced research with communities. The journey has been one filled with struggles and challenges, in many forms, within academia, and the paper will discuss some of these and how they have and keep shaping my academic life and struggles. The paper will be divided into two entangled parts of my own personal journey, both professionally and in terms of my own gender, and one part that will explore research projects that serve as examples of a collaborative, transgressive approach to social research, and social research methods that is closely related to, my own gender journey. These examples will include work on working conditions for LGBTQIA+ staff in Higher Education in the UK as well as transdisciplinary work on Water Security in West Bengal.

Dr Trude Sundberg is a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research. Their academic research involves working with LGBTQ+ and feminist communities in mainland China and India as well as improving the working conditions in higher education for LGBTQ+, disabled and BIPOC staff in higher education. Trude's research with these communities, and others, aims to improve research methods research through radically inclusive and innovative research methods and to create inclusive and safer spaces within universities and learning spaces.

Room: Chair: Evie Browne

Clare Geraghty - *Queer Feminist Hip Hop as a Means of Creating Inclusive Feminist Spaces*

This paper analyses a performance by non-binary lesbian hip-hop duo, Krudxs Cubensi, to generate insights about how we can create more inclusive feminist spaces. I illustrate theories from disability justice advocate Mia Mingus and literary critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, using Krudxs Cubensi's performance as an example of how we can enact and thus bring to life such theoretical frameworks. In particular, I use the affects of paranoia and desire to suggest strategies for moving towards more expansive and inclusive feminist movements. I share clips, images, and lyrics from 'Mi cuerpo es mío' [My body is mine], which is a transnational call for solidarity on the issue of reproductive rights, an area not typically represented by gender non-conforming queers (2014). This performance brings together several key elements of their work, including their playful approach to gender and their emphasis on intersectional activism. Krudxs Cubensi have been queer feminist music makers, visual artists, community educators, and activists since they first began working together in 1990's Havana, Cuba, and migrated to the US in 2006. Grounded in the cultural context of present-day Cuba, which continues to suffer under a dictatorship that suffocates the rights of political dissidents to express their opposition to the regime, this paper offers theories that will be useful to academics, activists, and all community members seeking to challenge exclusionary movements and ideologies.

Clare Geraghty is a PhD candidate in the department of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies at University College Cork, funded by the National University of Ireland Travelling Doctoral Studentship award. Her research interests lie at the intersection of queer and feminist theory with Latin American cultural studies. Her current research focuses on inclusion within and among feminisms in the context of queer Cuban feminist hip-hop. She is the author of 'Topless in La Habana: Space, Pleasure, and Visibility in Ethically Representing Gender-Based Violence' in *Representing Gender-Based Violence: Global Perspectives*, eds Sinalo and Mandolini (2023). She is also a queer educator, activist, and enthusiastic home cook.

Ruth Griggs - *The Forgotten Potential of Queer Vegan Activism*

Veganism has long been seen as marginal in the West, yet recently its shift into the mainstream has prompted a series of dialogues over its potential as a radical, alternative practice. These current debates, however, have lost sight of the underlying sexual politics of veganism and its integral connections to queerness, ultimately leading to a lack of recognition of veganism's full potential. Through a specific focus on the transformation of the sexual politics of veganism this paper establishes the integral historical and cultural connections between veganism and the queer community. Tracing the multiple forms of queer activism that have emerged at different junctures, the paper calls for the reinvigoration of veganism's queerness, advocating for its position as a political and transformative practice of often overlooked community activism. Firstly, the paper briefly turns to the reshaping of the popular imaginary of veganism as it has moved away from its stereotypes of emasculated hippy men, 'granola lesbian' vegans, and dedicated vegan activists. Here it draws attention to multiple contemporary associations with veganism, identifying contemporary veganism as a heteronormative practice. Secondly, turning to the work of queer vegan spaces, the paper surfaces the complex interactions between vegan and queer activism, many of which have emerged in response to these aforementioned shifts. Through an ethnographic study of queer vegan cafes and a queer festival, this paper characterises the queer values that have emerged in these innovative constructed spaces of vegan and queer activism. Using participatory research and interviews the paper explores the many ways in which such spaces have sought to redefine activism altogether. Indeed, several themes emerge, such as queer conceptualisations of care, pleasure and community, all of which are examined through a more-than-human lens, to offer a new understanding of radical queer vegan activism.

Ruth Griggs is a third year Sociology PhD student at the University of Edinburgh, with a Masters in Gender, Sexuality and Culture Studies. My thesis focuses on the intersections between queerness and veganism, examining spaces of alternative and radical practices. Through queer ecology and ecofeminism I study the potential of an queer conceptualisation of veganism.

Simone Cavalcante and Alexa Santos - *Glocalesbian: Glocalizing Lesbian Experiences, Promoting Community Building, and Fostering Innovation in LGBTQI+ Volunteering in Portugal*

LGBTQI+ organizations worldwide encounter a range of obstacles in their endeavors to combat discrimination, violence, and oppression or, simply, to exist, and be allowed to support and assist the LGBTQI+ population. Clube Safo is no exception. These obstacles include local and global policies that affect the national and foreign LGBTQI+ population in a specific geographic location as well as a lack of local and global opportunities for financing and development of programs aimed at assisting the LGBTQI+ population. A practical approach to overcoming these obstacles could involve implementing a glocal strategy to promote and disseminate LGBTQI+ epistemologies, policies, and programs from global to local branches and vice versa. Strategic partnerships with LGBTQI+ organizations globally and locally are fundamental to this endeavor. We refer to this concept as “glocalesbian life/existence.” In this presentation we explore how the idea of glocalization can be adapted to suit the unique experiences and subjectivities of lesbians. In doing so, we will showcase the products, practices, and perspectives promoted by Clube Safo that help create spaces that foster knowledge, collaboration, and exchange, and cater to the specific needs of the lesbian community. So, by examining the glocal dynamics at play, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of how global and local factors interact in shaping the experiences of lesbians in Portugal, and how organizations like Clube Safo navigate and contribute to these dynamics in their efforts to promote inclusivity and equality.

Beatriz Santos Barreto - *Queer Christian Utopia: The Activism of LGBTQ+ Christians in Brazil*

In Brazil, the saying goes ‘política, futebol e religião não se discute’. That means that one should shy away from arguing about politics, football, and religion – each person has a personal position on these topics and discussing them is pointless. In the past ten years, amidst protests over the 2014 World Cup, Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment, and Jair Bolsonaro’s election, not discussing these topics – sometimes all at once – has proven to be a risky choice. This paper focuses on those who have made it their mission to discuss religion and its entanglements with politics, gender, and sexuality: LGBTQ+ Christian activists. In a moment when the opposition to LGBTQ+ rights is strongly grounded in a narrow reading of Christianity, their activism can be transformative by showing that (a) a non-normative and accepting Christianity is not only possible but already exists, (b) traditional Christian values are a discursive tool used to sustain the marginalisation of gender and sexual minorities, and (c) that the view of religion as immutable and necessarily anti-LGBTQ+ issues has limited the scope of actions from the progressive side as well. These activists differ from their LGBTQ+ peers by devising strategies focused on a deep cultural shift that challenges the discursive grounds of political oppression. In this process, LGBTQ+ Christian activists occupy a precarious position both in the mainstream LGBTQ+ movement and within Christian institutions. In both these arenas, these activists present challenges to well-established views and arrangements, at the same time as they claim their belonging to them. Their ambitious goal of queering the prevalent forms of Christianity is grounded in their faith, but their strategies are focused on localised impact as a tool for broader change.

Beatriz Santos Barreto is a Brazilian PhD candidate at the Centre of Latin American Studies, University of Cambridge. She has a MA in Gender Analysis in International Development (University of East Anglia, UK). Beatriz’s research interests include gender, sexuality, race, intersectionality, social movements, judicialisation of politics, NGOisation of social movements, and queer methodologies.

Panel 22 – Twentieth-Century British Lesbian Communities

Alison Oram - *Primroses and neo-Paganism: Lesbian Spiritual Connections to Rural England 1870s-1970s*

Historians have begun to challenge the idea that queer life and community is synonymous with the city. When we look for the history of queer connections to the rural, we find that lesbians and queer women have often had a deep spiritual relationship to the countryside and to nature. This paper will discuss a selection of such women. I will argue that together they contributed to the diverse threads of queer spiritual thought and experience that by the late twentieth century made up queer versions of ‘New Religion’ and neo-Paganism. Octavia Hill, who sought to preserve open green spaces for city dwellers and was a co-founder of the National Trust, had mainstream Christian beliefs, though she may have been influenced by the transcendental idea that the divine was inherent in both nature and people. The Spiritualist beliefs of Lady Eve Balfour, first organic farmer and founder of the Soil Association, led her to argue that the “living soil” should be protected as part of

the wider 'cosmic plan'. Sylvia Townsend Warner, brilliant lesbian novelist, had her heroine Lolly Willowes escape from suburban spinsterhood to a rural village where she found her true self as a witch. Also in the interwar years, some followers of the spiritual practice of Theosophy, derived from Eastern and western traditions, downplayed gender differences to the extent that they celebrated same-sex love and non-binary identification. The women I discuss, all in same-sex partnerships, followed different spiritual paths, but were precursors of lesbian-feminist explorations of patriarchy and alternative religions in the 1970s and 1980s and of contemporary queer neo-paganism.

Alison Oram is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London and Professor Emerita of Social and Cultural History at Leeds Beckett University. She has published widely on lesbian and queer history and on queering the historic house. She led 'Pride of Place: England's LGBTQ Heritage' 2015-16 for Historic England. Her most recent book is *Queer Beyond London* (2022), co-authored with Matt Cook.

Katherine Hubbard - *Lesbian Community and Activism in Britain 1940s–1970s: An Interview with Cynthia Reid*

In this paper, I will provide a micro(oral)history of Cynthia Reid, one of only five women who founded the Minorities Research group—the first known lesbian organization in Britain, in 1963. Such activism paved the way for further lesbian liberatory action and the group did a great deal to combat the isolation experienced by many queer women across the country. They provided social opportunities as well as advice, and made more public calls for greater social acceptance. The group has been central to the interests of 20th-century queer historians, especially as the Minorities Research Group also produced the first lesbian magazine in Britain *Arena Three*. As a microhistory Cynthia's story informs many threads within queer history, including conceptualizations of masculinities, community, and change; while also challenging dominant notions that families and medical professionals were consistently unsupportive of queer people in the 1940s–1970s. I will highlight my favourite parts of Cynthia's interview and in particular focus on what she had to say about community and activism in the past and present.

Ellen Durban - *Grassroots Support for Married Lesbian Mothers in England, 1970-1990*

"Married lesbians" – women who desired women but were married to men – blurred the binary division of homosexual v heterosexual. Often assumed to be bisexual, these women were married members of the patriarchal institution of the family, despised by both the women's liberation movement and the Gay Liberation Front. Although women who desire women have married men throughout history, married lesbians became visible in the 1970s in media coverage about custody battles. The media publicized that lesbian mothers were unlikely to get custody because their sexuality was assumed to make them unfit mothers. This paper argues that support for these women came primarily from lesbian mothers who had lost custody of their children; support from the wider gay and lesbian community was minimal. Lesbian publications from the 1960s through the 1990s illustrate the distrust and misunderstanding of married lesbians. What began in the 1960s as small groups of wives corresponding about their mutual problems, women began to organize in earnest in 1974 to aid lesbian mothers fighting for custody of their children. Eventually, the need to help lesbian mothers led to the Rights of Women establishing a Lesbian Custody Group in 1982, funded by the Greater London Council. Nonetheless, individual women and small groups around the country continued advise women seeking to maintain custody of their children.

Ellen Durban is a PhD candidate in History at UCL. Her thesis examines how women who desired women experienced marriage, motherhood, and divorce in post-World War II England. Ellen's research illustrates that women who desire women have been compelled by economic and social forces to marry men and that sexual identity, as influenced by politics and society, is fluid. Although lesbianism was never criminalized, Ellen's thesis argues that common law's interpretation of statute law that was not specific to homosexuality had a significant impact on women who desired women, even those who never saw the inside of a courtroom.

Jane Traies - *'The work of international liaison' – Caroline Spurgeon and her Circle*

This paper considers the formation of international lesbian connections and female community in the first half of the twentieth century, as exemplified in the personal relationships and wider friendship circle of Caroline Spurgeon (1869-1942). Spurgeon was the first woman appointed to a professorial chair at the University of London, was a Visiting Professor at Barnard College in New York, co-founded the International Federation of University Women and was widely known as the author of important books on Chaucer and Shakespeare. Like many of that first generation of graduate career women, she chose female companionship rather than marriage, and lived for many years in a small Sussex village with her 'steadfast friend' of forty years, Lilian Clapham. Their graves, lying next to each other in Alciston churchyard, suggest a lifelong lesbian idyll. However, closer inspection challenges the easy romantic assumption of untroubled coupledness. Indeed, archival research reveals that 'loving in triangles' was not confined to the members of the Bloomsbury group living just across the fields at Charleston farmhouse, but was also alive and well at the Old Postman's Cottage. This paper unravels a transatlantic tangle of passionate relationships among some of the most distinguished academic women of the day, as well as considering the importance of the chosen family formed around the charismatic figure of Caroline Spurgeon.

Jane Traies is a queer historian whose work foregrounds the experiences of marginalised women. (She has also been described as 'the lesbian headstone sleuth' since some of her research projects – like this one – have been triggered by graveyard inscriptions.) Jane's books include *Now You See Me: Lesbian Life Stories* (Tollington Press, 2018) and *Free to Be Me: Refugee Stories from the Lesbian Immigrations Support Group* (Tollington Press, 2021), as well as four historical novels written jointly with Jacky Bratton. Jane is an Associate of the University of Sussex.

16:45-17:45 – Final Plenary: Fisun Yalçinkaya, Büşra Mutlu, Seçil Epik, and Şafak Şule Kemancı
TITLE: Creativity in Flux

As part of the 2024 Lesbian Lives conference, we have invited a group of Turkish queer feminist publishers, editors, and art critics to lead a discussion on queer feminist creative work, across activist and institutional realms. Join us for this plenary roundtable on Creativity in Flux which will close the conference.

Seçil Epik is an Istanbul-based publisher, editor, and art critic. She is the editor of the online contemporary art magazine *Argonotlar* (argonotlar.com) and co-founder of queer feminist publishing house Umami Kitap.

Şafak Şule Kemancı is an interdisciplinary artist and educator based in Istanbul. They are a part of the queer activist/artist run curatorial team called *Border/less* since 2019.

Büşra Mutlu born in Istanbul and currently based in Berlin, is a publisher and an art professional. With a background in communication and public programming within museum contexts from 2017-2023, Büşra co-founded the queer feminist publishing house Umami Kitap in 2020. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in English Studies at Freie Universität Berlin.

Fisun Yalçinkaya born in Istanbul, worked as a journalist for daily and weekly newspapers from 2009 to 2019. Currently an art writer. Since August 2023, Fisun has been organizing monthly independent workshops for women, focusing on contemporary art and creative protests.