

EXHIBITIONISM

sexuality at the museum

THURSDAY, 9 DECEMBER—SATURDAY, 11 DECEMBER · ONLINE

THURSDAY, 9 DECEMBER

11–11:30am

CONFERENCE OPENING & INTRODUCTION

Rebecca Fasman, Melissa Blundell-Osorio & Hannes Hacke

11:30am–12:45pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

Regulation and Radical Potential: Queer and Feminist Approaches to Reading Exhibitions, Archives, and the Politics of Display

Zeb Tortorici: Fabricated Fictions of Morality: The “Oral Pear” in Mexico’s Museo de la Tortura

The “oral pear” is proudly displayed in Mexico City’s Museo de la Tortura—a museum of torture instruments used by medieval and early modern Inquisitions and secular tribunals to punish heretics, sodomites, and witches. Made of iron and shaped like a pear, the instrument has three spiked prongs that open with the turn of an ornately decorated screw. The museum incorrectly and ahistorically asserts it “was used in the mouth against preaching heretics, in the anus against homosexuals and in the vagina against women accused of having sexual intercourse with the devil or her family.” There is no historical evidence that it was ever used as such. Rather, it is a fabrication of eighteenth-century French literature, which plays into the “Black Legend” of Spanish brutality. Nonetheless, the object—touted as “authentic” or “replica”—circulates throughout Inquisition/torture museums globally, in Mexico, Peru, Italy, Spain, and elsewhere. I argue that the display practices of the oral pear produce fabricated fictions of morality in the present. The performative act of asserting it was used to punish past gender transgressions reifies misogynistic and homophobic sentiments in the present, inviting museumgoers to eroticize and imagine obscene corporeal punishments on gendered bodies, both past and present.

Yetta Howard: Sexual Exhibitionism and Crip Spatiality in Sheree Rose’s Archival Performances

This presentation draws on my latest book *Rated RX: Sheree Rose with and after Bob Flanagan* (2020) and explores how Rose’s performance art and documentation recalibrates the relationship that illness, disability, and age have to archival-exhibition practices vis-a-vis sexual exhibitionism and corporeal display. Rose and Flanagan’s most well-known collaborative exhibition, *Visiting Hours* (1992–95), transformed the museum space into a hospital space that equally displayed the crip intimacies of their BDSM practices in life and art. Rose’s more recent collaborative and durational performances (2013–17) have taken place in spaces including rented hotel rooms (*Philosophy in the Bedroom*, 2016), dungeons (*Do with Me as You Will*, 2014), as well as galleries (*An Illegal Operation for Mary Toft*, 2017), and in the archive itself (*Dust to Dust*, 2015). In some of these spaces, visitors were invited to participate and/or watch within fixed but open periods of time, such as 24 hours. Reflecting a range of abilities and non-normative sexualities, these less-conventional exhibition spaces radicalized participatory encounters and permitted unrestricted forms of involvement, agency, and consent. Ultimately, I show how Rose’s work de-privileges ableist and heteronormative rationales that often define temporal and spatial

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arrangements associated with archival, exhibition, and performance practices.

Jennifer Tyburczy: Scapegoating Sex at the Museum

This presentation unpacks the museum exhibition *El Chivo Expiatorio: SIDA + Violencia + Acción* (The Scapegoat: AIDS + Violence + Action), which showed at the Museo de la Ciudad de México in Mexico City in 2018. In the face of internal controversy fomented by the conservative and state-run institution and the censorship of some of the more explicitly sexual works on display, Tyburczy analyzes the ways in which this exhibition confronted the uneven, international distribution of the AIDS crisis, drawing on interdisciplinary work across queer and sexuality studies, intellectual property law, critical race and gender studies, and the influence of free trade capitalism on the everyday sexual-social lives of Mexican queer and trans people. The scapegoat of the exhibition is sex itself, particularly the sexual practices of queer, trans, migrant, poor, and sex worker cultures. Alongside and elaborating on the museum exhibition's scope, Tyburczy shows how the exhibition, both in its planning and its execution, provides clear and often elusive evidence of how phobias and sex panics serve to cover over the deadly influence of macro-economic policies, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, to deny life-giving and life-preserving access to HIV/AIDS treatments.

Jillian Hernandez: The Booty Don't Lie, or, Why Museums Need Black Femme Freakery

This manifesto-style presentation calls for curatorial practices that center the visions of freaky Black femmes. Drawing from L.H. Stallings's understanding of freakery as an integral aspect of Black sexual cultures that resists Western epistemologies that understand sex via labor and science, I explore how contemporary Black femme hip hop artists deploy tropes of museum display in music videos to stage radical sexualities. Videos such as Janelle Monae's *Q.U.E.E.N.* (2013, featuring Erykah Badu), Cardi B's *Money* (2018), and the controversial *WAP* (2020, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion), intervene in the history of Black women's sexual display in the museum context by avowing racialized hypersexuality while simultaneously troubling the colonial gaze. In theorizing the Black freak through the cultural practice of funk, Stallings notes that the genre "would deploy the affects of sexual pleasure and corporeal displays to situate the freak at the crossroads of resistance, spiritual transcendence, freedom, and art and entertainment" (2015, 34). In responding to the ways that Black femmes continue to be disciplined and exploited in museum spaces (as artists, artistic subjects, visitors, and students), I call for an embrace of the cultural work of Black femme entertainers to inform contemporary museum curation, particularly in the contemporary art context.

12:45–1:15pm

BREAK

1:15–2pm

Q&A PRESENTATIONS *parallel sessions*

Room 1: Reclaiming & Curating: Confronting Sexual Trauma through Art at the Museum of Sex in NYC

Eve Arballo & Emily Shoyer

Sex and violence share a complex and intertwined history. French writer and feminist theorist Simone de Beauvoir confronted the innate brutality of heterosexual intercourse in her 1949 book *The Second Sex*, writing: "Man does not merely seek in the sexual act subjective and ephemeral pleasure. He wants

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to conquer, take and possess." The discourse surrounding the interconnectedness of sex and violence neurologically, historically and sociologically is unstable and convoluted. This is because sexual violence, a phenomenon common to our societies on a global scale in times of both conflict and peace, takes on a variety of forms. Precisely due to its frequency and pervasiveness, sexual violence must be confronted by institutions claiming to address the full history, evolution and cultural significance of human sexuality. This presentation will outline our experience as the curatorial team behind Reclaiming and Making: Art, Desire, Violence (to open October 29, 2021) at the Museum of Sex in New York City which aims to open the discourse surrounding these complex issues by presenting the artwork of female-identifying artists around the globe who have faced and challenged sexually motivated violence from the 1970s until the present day. The presentation will query, how do we address sex and trauma without fetishizing violence? How do we display work depicting sexual trauma without retraumatizing, or traumatizing anew, viewers who might be triggered by such visuals? How might abstract versus representational artwork do different work by bringing attention to sex and violence? How does art depicting sexual violence require its viewers to bear witness and spend time with difficult topics?

Room 2: Archivo El Insulto: Sexuality Socialization from a Grassroots Curatorial Perspective

Michelle Davo Ortiz & Adolfo Vega

Archivo El Insulto is a Mexico City-based grassroots art platform and archive dedicated to the recovery, conservation, and promotion of printed and visual documents about sexual culture that have circulated in Mexico throughout the twentieth century. It is a political and intellectual response to the absence of such a space, where one can go to encounter the erotic past and reactivate affective relationships with the materials. My colleagues and I—who founded and run the archive—aim to foster a recognition of historical sexual culture and its relevance to contemporary sexuality through the creation of exhibitions and artistic explorations where we can collectively question the hetero-cis-colonial gaze and consumption of these documents, as well as share experiences and desires, connecting with past and present affects around pleasure. This presentation examines the different (queer) curatorial and display strategies—at independent art spaces and exhibits—that we have applied throughout our trajectory in order to foster discussion around new ways to activate archives for affective responses outside of the more common hegemonical, and often sanitized/surveilled spaces of traditional “reading room” consultation.

2-2:45pm

Q&A PRESENTATIONS

Ordering Desire Through Display Strategies in Collection Exhibitions. Analyses of Sexual Meaning-making Techniques in Museums of Modern and Contemporary Art

Juliane Saupe

Despite a rising awareness towards heteronormative structures in museums in the last years, as well as increasing activities related to “queering” museum spaces, exhibitions based on the collection of (art) museums remain more than often unaffected by these concerns. Whenever the activities of museums are not as obvious or easy to promote as community outreach activities or other public programmes, the presentation of the (art) collections appears to stick to references which stabilize the norm of heterosexuality and with this silences queer life realities, historical and current ones. Departing from Mary Ann Staniszewski’s unconsciousness of the exhibition display and Foucault’s idea of sexuality as knowledge-power-complex, this presentation will examine how sexuality and sexual desire are expressed and staged in museums of modern and contemporary art unconsciously through the display (parkour, light, curating, architecture, use of space) and the composition of the artworks in synergy with the

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mediating texts. Central question of this presentation is, which forms of lived sexuality and imagined desire are staged as the norm, and which are staged as deviant by the use of display strategies. Through several examples and in-depth analyses I intend to portray the implicit and unmarked meaning-making techniques around sexual desire in permanent collection exhibitions of large scale, publicly funded art museums in Germany and Austria, such as Städel Museum, Frankfurt / mumok, Vienna / Albertina, Vienna.

2:45–3:15pm

NETWORKING & SOCIALIZING

3:15–3:30pm

BREAK

3:30–4:45pm

PANEL DISCUSSION & INTERACTIVE SESSION *parallel sessions*

Room 1: From Socially Camouflaged Technology to Publicly Visible Objects: The Good Vibrations Antique Vibrator Museum and the Value of Retail-Based Exhibitions

Carol Queen, Rachel Maines & Lynn Comella

In 1917 there were more of them in U.S. households than electric toasters—but how did vibrators get there? Inspired by Rachel Maines' groundbreaking history of this notorious household helper, *The Technology of Orgasm*, and *Good Vibrations* founder Joani Blank's substantial antique vibrator collection, the Antique Vibrator Museum takes visitors on a tour of one of the 20th century's favorite small appliances—and certainly the one with the most surprising history. Museum curator and representative Carol Queen is joined by Rachel Maines and Lynn Comella, author of *Vibrator Nation*, to discuss how the vibrator evolved from a socially camouflaged household object to a tool of feminist and queer sexual liberation. Queen will discuss the museum's history and reception and show some images of the space and its contents; Maines takes us on a tour of formerly-hidden vibrator history; and Comella contextualizes the vibrator's shifting cultural significance and the role of retail spaces in displaying and cataloging sexual history.

Room 2: Pornography as Documentation and Archiving

House of Huitlacooh (Mayra Cortez, Cristal Alba & AmeThyzt Gem)

House of Huitlacooh is a Chicago-based QTPOC kink club focused on creating spaces for collective pleasure and sexual resilience. In this workshop we will share some of our pornography and how we use this as a tool for documenting and archiving our working class queer and trans of color sexual practices and lived realities. In addition to creating ethical erotica, House of Huitlacooh uses popular education approaches to sexual education and community organizing creating spaces for collective pleasure in our own communities by us, for us.

4:45–5pm

BREAK

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5-6:15pm
MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

A Live Tour and Talk from the Wilzig Erotic Art Museum
Helmut Schuster & Rebecca Fasman

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11-11:45am
Q&A PRESENTATIONS *parallel sessions*

Room 1: Loving Up to Our Potential: The Role of Sex Education in Advancing Social Justice Agendas in the Museum
Holly Bee

This presentation will share the findings of my 2020 research project exploring the experiences of UK museum educators delivering sex education programmes in both small, local heritage sites and prominent institutions, like the British Museum. Interviews with six museum educators highlighted their emotional journeys in tackling this complex subject matter, drawing strength from their values and community ties. They revealed their work with sex education as vital to multiple processes of pursuing justice in the museum, from advancing feminist agendas, to queering, to decolonisation, to supporting communities facing poverty. They celebrated the opportunities that sex education gave them in creating “brave spaces”, connecting the political and personal, intimate and intersectional, and in crossing disciplinary boundaries in mental and physical health, arts, sciences, history, and identity theories. Perhaps most importantly, they adopted the sex educator mantra “communication is key” to open previously suppressed conversations with youth audiences, tackling shame and misinformation with courage and compassion. What’s more, they brought this value into conservative, hierarchical, and pressured organisational cultures to open channels within the workforce, developing greater investment in socially engaged practice and risk-taking. The presentation will explore sex education as fruitful ground for growing socially engaged practice that touches a range of inequality issues. It will then share practitioners’ challenges and recommendations to help delegates implement progressive work, sex positivity, and supportive cultures in their own workplaces. Through these on-the-ground insights from educators, I will argue for the untapped potential of sex education programmes, both as a rich source of creative learning with youth audiences and as a powerful anti-oppressive tool in impactful, community-driven museum practice.

Room 2: From Marginality to Spectrum: A Critical Analysis of Queer Art Representation in Spectrosynthesis I and II
Kenneth Wong See Huat

Up to 2020, Spectrosynthesis is the only touring LGBTQI-oriented art exhibition in Asia, taking place at city-level public-funded contemporary art museums, both in Taipei and Bangkok. These iterations have stirred up the debate of queer art as a genre and the relationship between the artist’s self-identity, their artworks, and the exhibition that carries an overarching theme on sexual diversity. This paper investigates the potential and limitation in flagging the marginality and visibility of queer art across both Spectrosynthesis. Adopting the queer theory, Asian queer, queer art, and queer curating, the archival

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search on queer politics and queer art development in both Taiwan and Thailand is briefly assessed. The views of art critics and interviews with curators, Sunpride Foundation and the exhibited artists are being solicited to unpack how extensive and inclusive Spectrosynthesis is in reflecting queer art. As case studies, the curatorial methodologies of both Spectrosynthesis are being compared. Taipei version has wittily reflected the queer art exhibition and other art forms, together with the significant local queer movement milestones chronologically. The Bangkok version has not done so but has displayed the artworks according to eight different thematic sections. Spectrosynthesis II has somehow compensated the weakness of Spectrosynthesis I of being too gay and Pan-Chinese. Spectrosynthesis II, too, has a fair bit of selection of artists from Southeast Asia. Space limitation is, of course, an influencing factor for Spectrosynthesis I. In acknowledging the intrinsic limitation of artworks shown are merely the primary collection and commissioned works of Sunpride Foundation, the identity politics and aesthetics of such queer art's representation are further scrutinized. Coincidentally, all interviewees commented that both Spectrosynthesis just happened at the right place and the right time, with well-received responses from both artists and audiences. Regrettably, the findings from the interviews show a weak connection between queer art and queer politics locally, vice versa. Still, they upkeep the belief that art can be instrumental for social movement in the long run. This research gives a sensible critique for a possible curatorial footing on Asian Queer Art exhibition in the future with those remarks.

11:45am-12:30pm

Q&A PRESENTATIONS *parallel sessions*

Room 1: Queering the Collection as Institutional and Intersectional Practice

Liang-Kai Yu

Initiating a wide range of queer book clubs, drag-up events, and performative lectures that engage in the art collection at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the museum's Queering the Collection project, since 2014, aims to not only display LGBTQI-specific objects but also addresses intersectional subjects such as problems of diversity and coloniality concerning museum collecting and institutional practices. This paper examines the critical interventions performed by interns, workers and artists within this museum project. It situates their works, which leverage institutional resources towards sexual diversity, within a broader field of recent queer feminist art productions and gender activism. These queer cultural works productively reshape the art collection, the use of space, and body politics in a contemporary art museum. For instance, artworks from the collection were selected to rewrite and redress sexual knowledge through Qswearing garments; Marcel Duchamp's Fountain (a ready-made urinal) was restaged into the gender-neutral toilet that creates gender troubles; a residence program for three trans artists based in the Netherlands was organized to re-center marginalized voices. Drawing on queer and feminist of color theories of temporalities (Elizabeth Freeman 2010), space (Sara Ahmed 2006), and the practices of listening (Tina Campt 2017), I will argue these practices as museum activism that offer institutional and intersectional challenges to the sexual and social norms that an art museum tends to reproduce.

Room 2: Exhibitions on the History of Sexuality

Julie Peakman

This presentation looks at the history of sex museums to explore some of the problems they have faced, and the difficulties they continue to encounter. I ask why the history of sexuality is not being presented as an overarching necessity in the education of ourselves, our humanity and our evolution. What are the issues we need to tackle to ensure a thriving museum culture of sex, sexuality and the history of sexuality?

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12:30–12:45pm
BREAK

12:45–2:15pm
Q&A PRESENTATIONS *parallel sessions*

Room 1: Sex Workers' Archives and Museums

Yin Q. & Empress Wu: Body of Workers; Sex Workers Museums

Body of Workers is an online gallery for artists and content makers in the sex industries to build and protect community in a virtual safe house. For the patron, it is a peepshow into the creative culture that sex workers pave.

Objects of Desire Collective: Archiving Desire: Telling Sex Workers' Stories Through Objects and Art

The sex-worker lead collective Objects of Desire serves as a platform for us to share and archive our stories. The objects in our exhibitions and archive are a defiant rebuttal to the voyeuristic gaze that seeks to discover who we are. Through narrating objects we encounter in our work, we instead tell stories of what we do. We will share some of the objects collected from sex workers in various cities, from bags to butt tunnels, as well as discuss our practice of research and curation, our playful engagement with ethnographic aesthetics, our experiences with museum institutions, and our commitment to archiving and art as activism.

Room 2: Queering Museums

Stuart Frost: Displaying and Interpreting the Warren Cup at the British Museum

Many museums confined sexually graphic material to basement stores throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, omitting aspects of cultures which challenged societies' norms' from public display. The British Museum was not an exception. From at least the 1830s until the early 1950s the Museum had a restricted collection known as the Secret Museum. Although the secret Museum no longer exists – it ceased to actively operate in 1953 – it arguably continued to influence the way the institution displayed and interpreted sexuality for decades afterwards. This paper focuses primarily on a Roman silver drinking vessel, known as the Warren Cup (after the collector Edward Perry Warren), acquired by the British Museum in 1999. The cup is decorated with two naturalistic, beautifully realised scenes of male-male sex which meant it was rarely displayed publicly before the Museum acquired it. This paper explores the extensive display history of the Warren Cup over the last two decades, and explores the ways in which the cup has been a catalyst for change, prompting the Museum to begin to display and interpret sexualities and LGBTQ histories proactively, and in more inclusive, collaborative and impactful ways. The Museum is working towards the complete redisplay of its collection in the years ahead. This raises the important question, how might objects like the Warren Cup be best displayed and interpreted in the future to present more inclusive and relevant histories of sex and sexuality?

Stephanie E. Yuhl & Robert D Tobin: Queering the Local Museum

This presentation showcases a three-dimensional digital tour LGBTQ+ Worcester: For The Record, an exhibition at the Worcester Historical Museum (Massachusetts), that drew from a major local archive-building and oral history project initiated to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall

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Uprising. By working with community partners and local institutions, the curatorial team sought to shift the focus of collecting, preserving, and disseminating LGBTQ+ history from its preoccupation with major US metropolitan centers to the often-overlooked realities of queer life in smaller cities, and in rural and suburban spaces. In what ways might our historical understanding of LGBTQ+ history expand and grow in complexity as a result of looking for it in new forms and in new places? How might the museum projects that emerge from this shift in geographic focus empower local communities toward social justice? This tour conversation will share curatorial decisions, collecting and community engagement strategies, grassroots methodologies, challenges, and successes: How do we integrate sexuality histories into the work of cultural organizations that have might traditionalist roots (and boards, donors, and staff, and...)? How do we represent the wide diversity of LGBTQ+ life experiences and resist replicating existing (white/heteronormative) institutions and power structures within our museums that silence sexuality as an historical force? How do we create paths for sustainable collecting and exhibiting around the history of genders and sexualities, especially after major commemorative moments such as Stonewall 50?

2:15–2:45pm

NETWORKING & SOCIALIZING

2:45–3pm

BREAK

3–4:15pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

Curating Visual Archives of Sex

Heike Bauer, Katie Sutton, Ashkan Sepahvand, Annette Timm & Jeanne Vaccaro

What are the visual histories of sex? What stories do they tell about sexual lives in the past? And how can we challenge archival gaps, historical inequalities and institutional constraints that shape whose lives are exhibited? This panel discussion brings into dialogue curators and academics from Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States to reflect on the challenges of putting sex, especially queer and transgender lives and histories, on display in museums and academic contexts. Participants include Ashkan Sepahvand, curator of the 2017 exhibition *Odarodle: An imaginary their_story of naturepeoples, 1535-2017*, which brought a postcolonial perspective to the work of the Schwules Museum (Gay Museum) in Berlin, Germany, Jeanne Vaccaro, co-curator (with Stamatina Gregory) of *Bring Your Own Body: Transgender between Archives and Aesthetics*, which presented work from both transgender artists and major archives to interrogate the tensions between institutional and personal documentation practices (shown at The Cooper Union, NYC, in 2015 and Haverford College, PA, in 2016), and Annette F. Timm, co-curator (with Alex Bakker, Rainer Herrn and Michael Thomas Taylor) of *TransTrans: Transatlantic Transgender Histories*, which showed at the Schwules Museum in Berlin, Germany, in 2019-2020, adapting an earlier exhibition shown at the University of Calgary, Canada in 2016. The conversation will be moderated by the historians of sexuality Heike Bauer (Birkbeck, University of London) and Katie Sutton (Australian National University), who are co-editors (with Melina Pappademos and Jennifer Tucker) of the 'Visual Archives of Sex', a special issue of *Radical History Review* on the complex visual histories of sexuality and gender (forthcoming in January 2022).

4:15–4:30pm

BREAK

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4:30–5:45pm

KEYNOTE

The Black Erotic Archive

Mireille Miller-Young

Mireille Miller-Young ties her work to broader questions of exhibition of sexuality in museum contexts, with a specific focus on Black sexualities and Black people's relationship to museum space and practice.

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11am–12:15pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

LGBTQ+ Museums in Latin America

Michael Andrés Forero Parra, Rolando González Rojas, Gledys Anael Macias, Tatiana Muñoz Brenes & Armando Perla

Today, there is still a lack of space for the meaningful exchange and critical reflection of the memories and experiences of LGBTTTQI+ communities in mainstream institutions around the world. In Latin America, four grassroots and community led initiatives are fighting to create new spaces and re-appropriate existing ones, where the lives of LGBTTTQI+ people can be represented, talked about in respectful ways, and celebrated.

Museo Di is a virtual museum space that is developed in social networks as a way to build the stories and memories of the LGBTTTQI+ community in Chile from a diverse, dissident and different perspective. Its aim is to take history out of the closet and into a space for debate, criticism, and creation, which is open and inclusive, free and proud. Museo Q is a museological initiative conceived by a group of queer individuals who felt there was a lack of space within museums in Colombia for their lives and histories. Far from creating a niche for queer people, Museo Q queers the space of others by being, knowing, and doing otherwise. Museo MIO is a space for the memory of the Costa Rican queer community as well as its struggles and achievements. It aims at generating a meeting space where contemporary issues can be discussed by the general population, based on respect, diversity, and human rights. The Museum of the LGBTI Memory - MuMe LGBTI is an online museum aimed at disseminating and reflecting on the memory of LGBTI communities in Ecuador. It was developed as an alternative to the erasure of the history that has marked the lives of LGBTTTQI+ populations in the country.

None of these museums are limited by physical walls. Using liminal, critical, and other types of participatory museologies, they promote decolonization, anti-oppression, social justice, and human rights in their museum work. And thus, empowering LGBTTTQI+ community members to tell their stories on their own terms. If, as Nikki Sullivan and Craig Middleton affirm, museums "shape the socio-political landscapes in which they operate" (2020: 1), the collaborative work of these initiatives creates spaces for LGBTTTQI+ people to exist free from prejudice and fear.

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NETWORKING & SOCIALIZING

12:45–1:15pm

BREAK

1:15–2:15pm

PERFORMANCE

Power & Pleasure: Desire in the Institution

Vicente Ugartechea

A performance lecture with objects that explores systems of power, desire, cultural capital and history building within institutions through the lens of marginalized struggle. Mixing theory, multimedia historical archives, and personal sexual autobiography, I engage the audience with a BDSM session as a visual analogy between material and context. BDSM is an activity compromised of one, two or more individuals where relationships and activities that involve inequality of power are enacted through clear communication and negotiated consent; a place where reconceptualized, reimagined forms of intimacy and desire manifest. This form of play allows for imagination and invites potentialities outside of the normative ideologies involved in sex/sexuality/gender – my temptation to the audience towards potentialities of what museums/institutions could be.

2:15–2:45pm

BREAK

2:45–4:15pm

Q&A PRESENTATIONS *parallel sessions*

Room 1: Exhibiting Sex Workers' Art and History

Lena Chen: Is Moderation Violence?: Exhibiting Sex Worker Art

Sex workers today are on the frontier of the battlefield for labor rights, civil liberties and freedom of speech. Often spoken for, rather than being listened to, sex workers – particularly those of intersecting marginalized identities – are frequently subject to criminalization and social ostracization. Recent legislation, such as FOSTA/SESTA, has increased digital surveillance of content pertaining to sexuality, leading to deplatforming and social media censorship of sex workers and artists alike. A variety of curatorial efforts in the early 21st century have highlighted the history of the sex worker's rights movement while amplifying the work of present-day groups who are organizing to improve online safety and working conditions for sex workers. These exhibitions serve multiple functions as platforms for self-representation, community-building, and public education. Yet sex worker artists continue to face barriers to artistic expression, as they are targeted for censorship in both on- and offline contexts. Artist and sex worker Lena Chen presents two collaborative projects – Play4UsNow (2020), a participatory digital performance, and OnlyBans (2021), an interactive game – which explore censorship of sex workers and which faced artistic censorship themselves. Using these incidents as points of departure, Chen discusses the role of curators and art institutions in exhibiting work from sex workers and other communities of marginalized sexual identities.

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Brit Schulte: Reflections from a Movement Art Whorestorian/The Sex Worker Gazes Back

Reflections from a Movement Art Whorestorian / The Sex Worker Gazes Back will be a presentation space that documents, names and traces sex worker movement organizing, art making, curating, and resistance from 2015-2021 in Chicago and NYC as the notions of "Decrim" and sex work positivity took hold in ways previously unseen by mainstream artists, art workers, and the general public. This presentation will specifically reflect upon: the "/Sanctuary/" exhibition of sex worker and undocumented immigrant art works at the University of Illinois at Chicago, art and protest vigils mourning the murder of massage worker Yang Song, the first Hacking//Hustling convening at Eyebeam NYC which featured the resistance-object installation "Whores Will Rise," the indoor and outdoor art protest happenings against the closure of Backpage.com and against SESTA/FOSTA in Chicago and NYC, craftivist whore meet-ups at Bluestockings Books, the community participation and programming of "ON OUR BACKS: The Revolutionary Art of Queer Sex Work" at the Leslie Lohman Museum, the short-lived (and complicated) installation "Sex Workers' Pop-Up" that debuted as the pandemic hit NYC, and Sophia Giovannitti's performance work "Untitled (Incall)" which opened at recess art just as NYC began to reopen cultural spaces. This list, while long, is not exhaustive. This is only a cross-section of the explosive art/protest activity that the last six years has seen (most notably) in the US (as our movement spaces have not garnered such mainstream notoriety) and internationally for sex workers' rights and the movement for decriminalization. My presentation places these unfurlings, happenings, and intentional actions to take back gallery and public space led by sex working people, hustlers and survivors amongst the broader acknowledgement of sex/sexuality in art spaces.

Room 2: LGBTQ* Museum Tours

Siren Deluxe: Bringing Sex, Sexuality and Gender Identity to the Noble National Narrative: Auckland War Memorial Museum's Queerseum audio guide

The Auckland War Memorial Museum is New Zealand's second largest national museum. Opened in 1929 as a memorial for fallen soldiers, it has an encyclopedic collection of approximately 4.5million objects. The building is an iconic landmark and a revered institution. In 2019, following the introduction of an Inclusion and Diversity Policy and a raft of initiatives supporting the recruitment, retention and support of LGBTQIA staff within the museum, rainbow staff created an audio guide for the public interpreting objects through a queer lens. Available to be downloaded free, the self-guided tour is offered alongside other traditional offerings such as the Taonga Māori tour, and a guide overviewing the establishment of Auckland city.

4:15-4:30pm

BREAK

4:30-5:45pm

KEYNOTE

We've Come a Long Way - What's the Future of Sex on Display?

Annie Sprinkle & Beth Stephens

5:45-6:15pm

CLOSING SESSION

Rebecca Fasman, Melissa Blundell-Osorio & Hannes Hacke