

# OTHER



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.theshowroom.org/events/other-stories-of-hiv-slash-aids-slash-learning-in-a-public-medium-culture-history-and-the-ongoing-epidemic](http://www.theshowroom.org/events/other-stories-of-hiv-slash-aids-slash-learning-in-a-public-medium-culture-history-and-the-ongoing-epidemic). The website has a bright yellow background. In the top left, the text 'THE SHOW ROOM' is displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. To the right of this, there are navigation links: 'What's on' and 'About' in the first column, and 'Visit' and 'Support' in the second column. Further right, a 'More' link is visible. Below the navigation, the word 'Event' is underlined. The main event title is 'Other Stories of HIV/AIDS: Culture, History, and the Ongoing Epidemic'. Below the title, the date '24 Aug 2017' is listed, followed by the time '10am-7pm' and the note 'Free, all welcome'. At the bottom of the event details, it says 'RSVP essential to [louise@theshowroom.org](mailto:louise@theshowroom.org)'. To the right of the text is a collage of four images: a poster for 'AIDS 1969', a screenshot of a 1999 talk show, a colorful abstract painting with the word 'AIDS' in large letters, and a blue sign that reads 'KEEP CALM AND SUPPORT !! NHS !!'.

# STORIES OF HIV/AIDS

## WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document contains notes and background information coming from a 2017 meetup in London involving people doing work around HIV/AIDS. This document is meant to share a sense of the day's events for those in attendance and who were not able to attend. If you have any questions, want more information please contact Theodore (ted) Kerr at [kerr.theodore@gmail.com](mailto:kerr.theodore@gmail.com).

# BACKGROUND

OTHER STORIES OF HIV/AIDS took place at THE SHOWROOM in London England from 10am to 5pm on August 25th, 2017. It was organized by: Aimar Arriola, Theo Gordon, Theodore (ted) Kerr, Conal McStravick, Jaime Shearn Coan, and Dan Udy with the support of The Showroom. The marketing of the event stated:

Over the last few years writers, artists, activists, academics and others have been both bearing witness to and working to destabilize and de-centre dominant narratives circulating about the history of HIV/AIDS. At the crux of this work is the fact that too often, AIDS-related histories centralize white, cis male, urban, US-based gay men during the 1980s and 1990s. Lesser known and often overlooked AIDS realities have been unearthed, but they continue to remain largely unknown. Central to the destabilizing process have been three questions: How do we know what we know about the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis? What is being erased, forgotten? And, what has been put in place, created and/or ill-considered in the theorizing, documentation, archiving, and dissemination of the past as it relates to HIV/AIDS?

Over an informal, interactive day, participants will gather to speak about their AIDS-related projects, further consider the above questions and continue to build networks of knowledge as related to the past, present and future of HIV/AIDS, queer temporalities and utopian horizons.

All welcome for this free event, especially those who are living with HIV, impacted by the ongoing crisis and/or do AIDS-related work, and want to hear what others are doing. Artists, activists, academics, caregivers, performers, writers, and cultural workers are encouraged to attend.

The event will be structured in participatory sessions including presentations, small group discussions and regular breaks.

What brought the organizers together was a shared desire to hear more stories about HIV/AIDS than they were currently exposed to;

- an awareness that a history about the ongoing crisis is beginning to calcify within a mainstream public imagination that is a bias and incomplete;
- a feeling of isolation related to their HIV/AIDS work;
- and a hope that a community could form around people's HIV/AIDS related practice so that ideas, resources, and feelings could be shared. The idea was that OTHER STORIES would be a catalyst for a network of AIDS active thinkers and doers around the world.

Organizing began when Kerr reached out to Arriola, whom he had met when Arriola was a Curator in Residence at Visual AIDS, where Kerr was a Programs Director. Kerr queried Arriola

about the possibility of creating a one day think tank around HIV in London since Kerr and Shearn Coan would be in (relatively) nearby Norway for AIDS related cultural work. Agreeing that the event could take place, Arriola reached out to McStravick, and Kerr reached out to Uday who reached out to Gordon. Together, over emails, google docs and a conference call, the details of the one day event were worked out. Through his connection with The Showroom, McStravick was able to secure the venue. From there Arriola worked with the gallery on logistics and he was able to secure funding for the event (to pay for food and his travel to the event) from his school. The organizers invited friends, peers and colleagues. The Showroom also promoted the event.

People interested in attending OTHER STORIES were asked to RSVP to the gallery, after which they received an email prior to the event which broke down what to expect, along with other information including the organizers stated goals:

We created this one day meet up to bring together people, organizations, and communities currently responding to the ongoing AIDS crisis in the UK and around the world. The hope is everyone will get a sense of the wide breadth of work being done, and that a network can be formed in which folks can share resources, feedback and support to each other doing the work.

In the email was a note on how to prepare :

We hope that everyone who attends in the morning will respond to the question: **What Are The Stories You Tell (or Want to Tell) About HIV/AIDS, and / or Related Topics?**

- You can share an artistic, activist, academic, personal project you are working on, or an idea or project that you are thinking about.
- What you share can be directly related to HIV/AIDS and/or be related.
- Responses should be 3 to 5 mins long.
- If you want, you can hand out printed materials.
- If you want, you can show slides, or video clips (please have accessible through the cloud or a USB)
- BUT ALSO: you don't need to have printed material, slides, video clips, etc. You can just speak.

The organizers felt that they were asking people to commit a lot to the event by attending, and because the form was not obvious they felt pre-event communication was needed.

Of important note though, not discussed in a meaningful or sustained way in the planning of the event was the homogeneity of the organizing crew, nor was there enough or meaningful discussion around what was being done to ensure that the event was seen as open, welcoming and accessible to all. As a result, while the event was well organized, well intentioned, participants for OTHER STORIES largely reflected the organizers: they were primarily white, cis-male, under 40, HIV negative, and highly educated. The sameness of the group was noted early on during the event as problematic and something to be aware of, since it meant that while much information would be shared throughout the day, many voices, tactics, strategies, and ways of relating to HIV were not present in the room, and that this of course was counter to the

very idea of OTHER STORIES. At the same time, to not erase any identities in the room, amid the homogeneity there was difference in gender, age, class, race, education level and geographic location, which was important in the dynamics of the group and the projects shared.

The day of the OTHER STORIES event began with a communal sharing of goals for the day, followed by presentations of AIDS related projects that attendees are part of. After a break, small groups were formed based on common themes that emerged out of the presentations; those small groups then presented back to the larger group. The day ended with ideas of how to continue the conversation. For the organizers, the spirit of the event did not and does not end with the creation of the day, and then the roll out of the event. Below are notes from the event broken down by section.

## INTRODUCTIONS

People shared their hopes and goals for the day:

- Share resources
- Meet new people doing related work
- Look at work being done outside the USA
- Make loving connections and possible collaboration partners
- Look at historic work and what it means in the present
- Bring the work outside the academy
- Think and feel through the usefulness of the work
- Listen, learn, share
- Learn more about performance-based work
- Think about the many crises of AIDS, and how it is ongoing
- Think about the connection between graphic communication and HIV, and online communication
- Push back against the isolation of the work
- Work through fear and anxiety of the topic
- Explore the HIV-positive body
- Counter isolation, US bias
- Look at the work being done around Latinx culture and identity in relation to blood, history and HIV, as well as how it connection to the AIDS dissident movement in the SF and the transnational response.

## PRESENTATIONS



Each participant was invited to share projects they were working on related to the provided prompt: “*What stories do you tell?*” This being an HIV/AIDS related event, the stories were understood, even in the most abstract of ways, to be related to HIV. Some people used slides, or video clips, others brought in printed material to share, and others spoke without illustration. People were timed, being asked to wrap up if they went past 11 minutes. As people spoke, it was encouraged that people share any links, book suggestions or related resources to people via POST-IT notes shared on a wall.

**JESSICA VAUGHAN**

Art on the Underground has worked with Studio Voltaire and the Estate of David McDiarmid to present a selection of the artist’s Rainbow Aphorisms series at Brixton Underground station. David McDiarmid (1952–1995) was an Australian artist, designer and activist, recognised for his prominent and sustained artistic engagement in issues relating to queer identity and history. Rainbow Aphorisms are a series of printed multiples, produced from 1993 until the artist’s death in 1995 of AIDS–related illnesses. McDiarmid produced these works in response to his own, and his community’s, experience of the AIDS crisis, and the multiple forms of devastations it manifests –political, emotional, intellectual and medical. Over the course of a year, artworks from the Rainbow Aphorism series will appear intermittently at various locations across Brixton

and Clapham. This project forms part of a yearlong public arts programme delivered by Studio Voltaire in partnership with This is Clapham BID.

#### DAN UDY

My project explores how the theoretical, political, and visual strategies of early HIV/AIDS activism are remediated online. It takes the first ten years of YouTube – 2005 to 2015 – as a framework for analysing broader cultural practices throughout Web 2.0, and unpacks how the queer moment of early 1990s is remediated by and for those who came of age after antiretroviral drugs. It argues that The YouTube Decade bookmarks transformative changes in web technology, HIV treatment and prevention, and the study of gender and sexuality; collectively, these have transformed the way we can think and write about the epidemic.

#### KEVIN O'NEILL

Using my life as lens I spoke about my responses to HIV/AIDS as an artist, activist, and gay man in the UK context from the early 1980s until now. Seeing the original London production of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* triggered my volunteering as a Buddy with the Terrence Higgins Trust. For me this was community support, not activism. My activism came with the Thatcher government's response to HIV/AIDS. I reacted to the message of doom by becoming a proselytising, self-identified "safe sex slut". I broadened my activism as increasing homophobia and AIDS fear fuelled the discrimination of Clause 28. This was explored through filmmaking and segued into a TV production career, including Channel 4's ground breaking, LGB (TQIA+ not included) magazine series, *Out on Tuesday*. In parallel, during the '90s, I started to make live performance work, autobiographical storytelling or "stand-up tragedy" as a colleague dubbed it. Some reflected directly on HIV/AIDS, while some included it as part of a wider queer experience. From my personal archive I shared promotional material for my performances including *Losing It*, a piece about a friend's AIDS death, presented in an ICA season on death and loss generally. In recent years, whilst my cultural production has been on the 'back-burner', my activism has continued, and continues to include HIV/AIDS in a wider context, with intersectional activism; racism in LGBT society, queer marginalisation in mental health provision. I finished speaking by raising some of the personal, ethical questions I am currently grappling with as PrEP campaigns start to change safer sex practices around condom use and how this impacts on people, like myself, who are precluded from antiretrovirals by interactions with medications for other health conditions.

#### THEODORE (ted) KERR

Inspired from black feminist ethicist Dr. Traci West, I am interested in how the stories we tell impact the ethics we have and the action we do when it comes to the ongoing AIDS crisis. For example, as I lay out in my essay for *DRAIN MAGAZINE*, *AIDS 1969*, how would the response to HIV be different if one of the more prominent early AIDS stories was not patient Zero, but rather Robert Rayford, who is understood to have died of AIDS related causes in 1969, his blood tested 1985 to 1987, and as reported by *The New York Times* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. How do the stories we tell about then also impact the stories we tell now? Is it an accident that as cultural production about the early days of the AIDS response begins to ramp up, the majority of the work that is being made, disseminated and discussed

focuses not on women, black people and people of color, but white gay men? What can we do to tell and hear different stories? How can we speak about activists, and caregivers, and those whose contributions can not be named or easily cataloged and understood?

#### JAIME SHEARN COAN

As I work with the archival traces left behind from queer performance work that was shaped by individual and group experiences of living with HIV/AIDS in New York in the 1980s and 1990s, I consider how archives are shaped by institutions and communities, and are as much about absence as presence. Performance is less likely to end up documented; this holds true as well regarding the lives of queer and trans people of color. Looking to the performance events, I am thinking through the body as an archive of experience, and the site of performance as a space in which individual experiences are exchanged, as collective experiences are being formed. Everyone who attends a performance then, holds embodied knowledge of that time and space, and this knowledge continues to travel and shape the present and the future. My dissertation takes up the work of individual performance-makers who brought other embodiments into their work, namely Assotto Saint and Neil Greenberg, as well as collectives and member-based creative organizations, House of Color and Other Countries, who produced group articulations: films and anthologies that allowed for collective but not unitary expression. As the onset of HIV/AIDS required the creation of new activist tactics, so too did it shape creative practices and protocols.

#### SIÂN COOK

I created a website, which is a historic visual archive of promotional campaigns and graphic ephemera, compiled in order to examine changes in health promotion approaches, messages and concerns around HIV/AIDS in the UK and Republic of Ireland. It is intended to act as a reference source for the development of future communications. It is not a complete or comprehensive collection, but provides a supplementary visual reference source for those interested in the design and study of HIV/AIDS materials. Downloadable summary briefing PDF documents provide further context and analysis. The site is a work in progress and Cook welcomes feedback and for the project to be shared. It is a not-for-profit personal project and efforts are being made to contact owners of copyrighted materials. If anyone has information to help with this process, please get in touch via the site.

<https://www.hivgraphiccommunication.com/>

#### AIMAR ARRIOLA

All the work I do as a curator, editor and researcher is informed by HIV, even if it is not always obvious. Since 2012-2013, I work on the project 'Anarchivo sida' [AIDS Anarchive] together with my colleagues Nancy Garín and Linda Valdés. This research and archival project considers cultural responses to HIV in Latin America and Southern Europe, with a focus on Spain and Chile. The project has included research residencies, video screenings, academic seminars and most notably an exhibition and a related publication. This project serves as the basis of my current PhD dissertation in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths London (2014-2018), which looks at HIV through the lens of the animal, touch and the book, in a creative dialogue between different epistemic/ethical positions. This is a dialogue where 'the human' is ethically imbricated with

other beings, both living and non-living, organic and non-organic. As a specific viewpoint or critical approach to the HIV/AIDS archive, the dissertation resorts to the notion of *surface* as a driving concept; it aims at showing how deeply rooted surface is in Western dualist thought as well as in the discourses and representations of HIV/AIDS. I also work on other HIV-related side projects. For example, I am currently collaborating with the Spanish dancer Aimar Pérez Galí in the accompanying publication to his project 'The Touching Community', a personal dance and writing-led inquiry into the impact of HIV in the dance community of Spain and Latin America, following the thread of the parallel global expansion of AIDS and Contact-improvisation, the dance technique in which movement is improvised by touch and contact between bodies.

#### VICKY CARROLL

I have been working on the intersection of HIV/AIDS, queer desire, and Latino hybrid identity for over 6 years, as a PhD candidate and now as an Early Career Researcher. My doctoral dissertation – 'The half-breed, the half-dead: Blood-Mixing, Queer Latino Cultural Production, and HIV/AIDS, 1981-1996' – excavated the myriad ways that chronically underrepresented queer Latino writers, artists, and performers accentuated mixed-blood as a marker of their racial and cultural identity and as a fraught vector of HIV transmission before effective antiretroviral therapies emerged. Since 2015 I have been using a private archive to illuminate the cultural production and radical HIV/AIDS activism of queer Latino surrealist poet Ronnie Burk, a controversial and divisive figure, associated with the vitriolic if short-lived AIDS dissidence movement in San Francisco, who has, nevertheless, failed to engender sustained academic inquiry. My article 'Profit, Porn, and Protease Inhibitors: Ronnie Burk's Radical Activism in "Post-AIDS" San Francisco' was recently published by the European Journal of American Studies. The full article can be accessed at <https://ejas.revues.org/11691>

#### JACKSON DAVIDOW

My study, provisionally titled 'Viral Visions: Art, Epidemiology, and Spatial Practices in the Global AIDS Pandemic,' offers a history of artistic and activist responses to the pandemic, with an emphasis on transnationally-networked individuals, projects, and coalitions that conceived of the virus as a geopolitical, spatial, and temporal problem. In short, I am asking: How, why, and when did a range of artists, activists, critics, and curators take up the viral for thinking the global? The project tracks and theorizes cultural production across artistic and activist milieus in New York, London, and Toronto, and then Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, exploring the complex and powerful interplays between local and global, race and sexuality, and art and activism brought about by the pandemic. Towards the end of the twentieth century, HIV moved from being a latent disease agent to the overwhelming cause of a pandemic to the metaphor par excellence for globalization. This dissertation argues that more than a pathogen and more than a metaphor, the transnational activism, cultural tactics, and spatial aesthetics precipitated by the AIDS pandemic helped produce the theories and practices of a global postmodernism.

#### CHARAN SINGH

Exploring his "pre-English language" life, I am looking at languages, landscapes, legitimacies, and explores importance of storytelling, role of translation. A case study of sorts is around the language of MSM, and how the AIDS industrial complex can overshadow, co-op and fail those it



is intended to be helping. My work asks the question: whose story is being told? What would it mean to adjust the impact? Who has privacy in the first place? It also deals with the issues of speaking on behalf of others that intertwines with the questions representational and queer politics in India.

#### RICHARD SAWDON SMITH

I started my talk with a statement about surprise at this renewed interest in histories of HIV/AIDS in the academy; 'all this looking back but I'm more interested in looking forward'. I've survived over 23 years as a HIV+ person, I'm alive and kicking (as much as a 54 year old can do) and as an artist, engaged in making new work using the latest technology. Celebrating life, challenging stereotypes and trying to break down stigma. After all these years, I had hoped to move away from making work that is directly related to HIV but it keeps pulling me back in, and that's probably because there is still the need to make visible, and confront stereotypes in order to fight stigma. My talk was intended to concentrate on the recent virtual reality (VR) collaborative project with artist Jonathan Armour *InSideShow*. The lineage of that project starts from almost day one of diagnosis in 1994 and the resulting work *Observe* that came out of documenting the repetitive blood tests (revealing the behind the scenes of ill health) ever since. This led in 2009 to having tattoos of the circulatory system on my body (more needles, leaving a permanent, visible marker of an incurable disease) in the project *The Anatomical Man*. My body then scanned in 360 to create a digital 3D model of myself. Inverted so tattoos of veins and arteries returned to the inside and filmed to create a passage through the body in *Infinite Surface*. This became the basis of the VR domain, allowing the viewer to walk through and explore my inverted HIV undetectable body. The work becomes political in that it makes visible life living with HIV and in turn hopes to educate and reduce stigma.

#### THEO GORDON

I examine aggression in HIV/AIDS related art in the USA in the early 1990s, using psychoanalytic theory, queer theory, and Anglo-Saxon feminist theory. I am in the final months of completing my thesis, which includes chapters on Gregg Bordowitz video *Fast Trip*, *Long Drop*, Ann Meredith's photography and the representation of women with AIDS, and destruction and the oral drive in Felix Gonzalez-Torres's work.



### ELOY V. PALAZÓN

As a dancer, performer I am interested in how do we narrate neoliberalism through HIV. My multifaceted investigation, entitled, HIV/AIDS and Queer Futurism, is rooted in the idea that, as Paul B. Preciado contends, AIDS was the first constructed “disease” of the Neoliberal era. From there I wonder, can we narrate the history of Neoliberalism as the history of HIV/AIDS (or vice versa)? If we can, what is the role of AIDS in finding an egress to capitalism? How has HIV as a virus can shown us the pathway to a postcapitalist and queer future? In that sense, I am interested in how the impact of HIV/AIDS from the 80s has developed a particular way to understand our identity, how this is related with neoliberal tales about the subjectivity (homonationalism, homonormativity), but as well in how in the reappropriation of these tales we can envision a queer future (As example I showed a clip of the film *Introducing the Star*, by Federico Strate and Pablo Esbert). So if we might understand Neoliberalism as a performatively reproduced system, how can HIV/AIDS hint us to find glitches in the “performative machine”..., if AIDS has a role in heteronormativity and neoliberalism, how can AIDS then be the cure for both? And related: what about dance? Through new queer mythologies and new gesture archives, we find answers.

### LAURA GUY

I am currently undertaking postdoctoral research as part of *Cruising the 70s: Unearthing Pre-HIV/AIDS Queer Sexual Cultures in Europe* at the University of Edinburgh. My current writing focuses on the idea of an economy of lesbian cultural production, specifically polemic, pornographic and other illegitimate forms. I have published texts relating to lesbian visual culture in the context of the AIDS crisis in the US and UK (Zoe Leonard, *On Our Backs*, *Stolen Glances*). My background is in DIY queer feminist organising. I now work as an academic. I also collaborate with artists to produce projects in collaboration with cultural venues.

### CONAL McSTRAVICK

Learning in a Public Medium is a research project developed by London-based artist Conal McStravick in 2015 to offer a contemporary context to explore the works and legacies of artist, activist, educator, writer and curator Stuart Marshall (1949-1993) to reactivate broader cultural and political debates that intersect with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, how Marshall's analysis of the AIDS crisis prefigures Douglas Crimp's statement that, 'AIDS intersects with and requires a critical rethinking of all of culture.' That despite the reactivation of AIDS cultural criticism figures like Marshall remain less acknowledged in the cultural critique and recent scholarship that re-shapes these debates. Recognising this the project aims to spur active dialogue between Marshall peers and collaborators, those in complementary and parallel research and those new to the work in the UK and overseas. Following from a 2015 LUX artist's residency I have conducted research and research interviews around the UK and overseas with those that knew and worked with Marshall. As a live research project and an active learning situation where knowledge is shared in public, artists and non-artists explore the ethical and political demand of Marshall's work, to establish new critical contexts while acknowledging channels that Marshall sought out and helped to develop. Screenings, workshops and events have taken place at AMIF 2015, Glasgow; BIMF Essay Film Festival, London and the HIV/AIDS Community Lecture Series at Concordia University, Montreal and a host of UK venues including MAC, Belfast, The Northern Charter, Newcastle, and more recently the ICA, London and Showroom, London.

#### ISMAIL BINGOR

Ismail, shared the ways in which fears around HIV has governed him and the work he has done.

#### RACHEL STRATTON

As a representative of the Wellcome Museum and Collection, I am doing a PhD placement, looking at potential acquisitions in contemporary art. Given Wellcome's strong collection of posters and institutional archives relating to HIV/AIDS, this has become my principle focus. We are currently looking into collecting art from groups that have been under-represented in the history of the HIV/AIDS crisis, as well as constructing a picture of the London-based cultural responses to HIV/AIDS. Wellcome pharmaceuticals have a contentious history with the HIV/AIDS crisis. Now that the Wellcome Trust is entirely independent from the pharmaceutical company, Wellcome Museum and Collection are keen to tell the whole narrative of HIV/AIDS and own their part in the history of the crisis.

#### SUNIL GUPTA

For the last 30 years Sunil has been at the center of the AIDS response in the UK. Using culture as a foundation for political power, his work has been an ongoing example of what happens when people come together, have a chance to express themselves and listen to each other. Through curating, picture making, book editing, mentorship and writing, his cross discipline work explores queerness, desire, race, and the importance of play and community.

# SMALL GROUPS



As a group, before lunch, we spoke about what common themes emerged out of the presentations. After lunch, we narrowed the common themes down to three, and formed small groups based on them, with the understanding that people could move freely among the groups. Each group was tasked with bringing to the larger group, the conversations from their small group. The three themes the small groups formed around were: GEOGRAPHY, EMBODIMENT and ARCHIVES, with an understanding that MEDIA, and GENERATION were overarching themes connecting all conversations. Below are notes from the small group presentations to the larger group with some notes added after the fact:

## GEOGRAPHY

How the group defined it and the places the conversation went:

- Space
- Place
- Questions of globality, what is it to be in the world?
- Language of sexuality, of health, of...
- Cruising spaces
- Activism and accessibility of activism

- AIDS
- Organizations
- Institutions
- AIDS documentaries coming out of the US that overshadow or disappear the stories of women, people of color, black people, people around the world.
- Globalization
- Affinities of men
- Digital configurations: language, meetings, landscapes
- Viral, viral, viral
- Hyde Park
- Chorography
- Telling HIV stories in Europe
- Visibility
- Not falling into binaries
- Not excluding rich histories
- “other locations”
- Xenophobia
- Cindy Patton, Simon Watney, Paula Treichler
- “African AIDS” an unhelpful way forward
- Many people in communities and counties very impacted by HIV did not / do not have access to cultural production about the virus and their locations
- Passports
- Building a collection is a making of a map, an argument
- Not everyone has access to the internet so what does accessibility mean
- Censorship of the web
- Internet curated by US companies
- Tragedies shape how we know places, but what about before, after and alongside tragedy?
- We can build stories without having to decenter other stories
- Britain is also a colonial power (meaning, US is not the only problematic country in the world)
- Anti-apartheid, and independence are also lens through which you can tell the story of HIV
- We get categorized by our country of origin and in the eyes of the state, that determines our level of risk and risk taking
- Love
- Creating a love story of HIV to remind people that people are at the core of care and prevention
- Affect and the structure of feelings
- HIV programs perpetuate otherness
- What are the experiences of heterosexuals living with HIV?
- HIV programs have been formed by ideas of the other



## ARCHIVES

Below are notes from what the small group shared with the large group. APPENDIX 1 offers a much more in-depth view of the ARCHIVES small group discussion.

- There are 2 sides to the archives: discursive but also the practical and political sense
- Access
- Re-imagining responsibility on terms of co-responsibility of materials: the institution, the individual, and the archive
- Moving away from acquisition and towards more communal responsibility
- Sharing economy a time with an eroded public, alongside parallel stories of HIV and neoliberalism.
- Intergeneration: lack of responsibility of institutions, failure
- Double bind of responsibility that comes with visibility: how it happens (whose terms)
- Emphasis on PhD on archiving and finding: complicated political generators, object study, and those who ecru cultural capital
- Part of the AIDS response, thinking of the archival as a space
- “Old people are providing content for young people”

## EMBODIMENT



Things discussed:

- Dance
- Subjectivity
- Disembodiment
- Queens
- Trans theory, coalition
- AIDS crisis made it impossible to say that the body is abstract
- Marginal bodies
- Richard's Death of Youth photography project (Daddy as role model)
- Porn
- Public to private: porn as an example....theater, VHS, digital
- What about audience?
- Audience members' recollection of performances that were not documented and how that relates to ideas of embodied archive of witness
- Testosterone
- *The Archive and the Repertoire* by Diana Taylor
- "Steam Clean" by Richard Fung
- "Tracing this Body: Transsexuality, pharmaceuticals & capitalism" & "New Flesh, New Struggles self discovery thru porn & kink," writings by Michelle O'Brien
- What about embodiment of undetectability?
- PrEP and hormones, routes of generic medications
- How does HIV intersect with other structures?

# CONVERSATION AFTER SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS

After the presentations, a small discussion within the larger group was had about what had just been shared. Some notes:

- No one left their small groups
- Some overlaps noted: performativity /performance; Cindy Patton; internet; public/private
- How to share space; space is a way to control the epidemic
- In the UK, sex clubs came after AIDS
- AIDS was used by governments to deal with / respond to / control gay communities
- In the UK, there was some pre-AIDS activism and organizing that happened that allowed for a strong AIDS response: Black Arts movement; Thatcher brought "us" together; anti-establishment activism. By the time AIDS was emerging, people who would be deeply impacted by the crisis were already galvanized.
- And even before all that there was the women's health movement, lesbian organizing, the peace movement, etc.
- And a lot of communal organizing was done in the UK around porn.
- Also, in the UK there was a lot of working with the political system on local levels. Whereas it is seen in the US there was more focus on Washington.

- (As we are discussing all this, someone had a great question: Why are we coming back to all this in the present?)
- The internet - the ways that representation, HIV, identity and understandings of the other are mediated by technology such as radio, the internet, etc.
- Important to remember that the internet is not the only technological advance related to HIV. There is the video camera, etc.

## POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

At the end of the day, the group had a discussion around how to keep the conversation going. As part of that process, we exchanged emails and agreed to send out notes:

- Create a London / UK AIDS archives?
- Work with the Queer Museum in London?
- Submit an idea for the London Culture Festival?
- Share notes?
- Share resources: with an eye on how to include folks not in the room, folks not already with access, folks directly related, etc
- Sharing payroll / Sharing paywall
- Thinking about interventions
- Submitting papers to the Art History conference panels that Laura and Jackson are co-chairing (different ones!)
- Whatsapp Group?

## LAST THOUGHTS

As a way to wrap up the day, people went around and shared a word, or a thought that they feel or will take with them:

- Overwhelmed
- Decentralize
- Inspired
- The vitality of the work we do
- Voices in the room
- Exhausted but energized
- Stories of HIV brought us here, what would other similar aligned conversations look like?
- I still don't know enough about current AIDS activism in Great Britain
- Knowledge isn't everything
- I am so glad that people want to know about about AIDS activism in Great Britain
- 1973, Montreal: how can we get activism out into the world?
- Pub
- Connected to the group, disconnected from self
- Talked too much, but it felt nice to have a discussion in public, good to talk things out.
- Touched



- Future, social, positivity, communication, connectivity, inside, visualization



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## APPENDIX 1

Notes on Archives group discussion:

Aimar Arriola, Siân Cook, Sunil Gupta, Laura Guy, Conal McStravick

Aimar:

Introduced the parallel considerations of the theoretical and conceptual archive and the practicalities that inform archives and archiving.

Conal:

Asked Aimar to clarify the 'anarchive' term used in the ongoing Anarchivo SIDA project (established by Aimar Arriola, Nancy Garín and Linda Valdés) described in Aimar's introduction given that this is a Derridean term to describe the constitutive/ countervailing destructive impulse in tension with the archive's imperative and purpose as a place to store and preserve.

Aimar:

Acknowledged that this use of the term predates an awareness of Derrida's 'Archive Fever' 'anarchive' and while taking that on board, especially how Derrida situates the archive or 'arkhaion' as the locus and transmission of power, the preferred notion of 'anarchive' for this particular project responds to the attempt to reconstruct archives in a way that challenges the correlation between archive and property. A proposition that foregrounds a different ethical premise as an ethics of co-responsibility.

Conal:

Added that the queer archive in particular implies a future facing necessity given the practical and political implications of such archives for future generations given the prior marginality or the non-existence of archives with queer material for social or political reasons. This draws attention to what are deemed to be archival practicalities in terms of what can and cannot be archived and how this shapes queer discourse on archives such as theories of the queer archive that hinge on affect, the ephemeral as a counter to the history of violence associated with the medical, legal and penal archiving of queers.

Sunil:

Introduced questions of accessibility to LGBTQIA archives citing that since the Carpenter Hall Archive has been acquired by LSE it appears to be more difficult for non-academics to gain access to. Questions of accessibility and language/accessibility given the increasingly academic or institutional academic location and the subsequent use of archives was cited as another problem as the means of access to archives through institutions or institutional affiliation limits those from outside of academia or those who lack similar institutional support. The politics of who can access these materials was also acknowledged, referring to the number of post-graduate and PhD students at the day's event.

Conal:

Examples given in terms of the shift to more publicly accessible archives like the LGBT Archive at Bishopsgate Institute suggest ways that more diverse material (the leather archive for instance) can be accommodated and retain a more open and friendly community basis given that archives such as Carpenter-Hall are acquiring less new material and questions have been raised over LSE's stewardship.

Laura:

Highlighted the problems for lesbian and feminist histories inherent in archival content and how these have been defined historically by community versus more recent institutional uptake and inclusion. These factors shape research and historicization or in part explain the subsequent lack of or invisibility of certain histories e.g. radical lesbian, lesbian sex cultures and so on in terms of institutional exclusion, dominant LGBT attitudes or particular historical/ political standpoints e.g. anti-porn lesbian attitudes shaping archives and archiving at different historic moments. Also more generally how the limits of accession of certain materials - given the institutionalisation of archives - arguably points to a return to the primacy of the document that countermands the efforts of feminist activists, queer activists and feminist historians in particular to question what is archived and therefore more precisely what is valorised by history and the archive. Not least as institutions have acquired archives and therefore gained control over the material and viability of their contents. A situation that with unforeseen cuts is leading to archives and future archivable material and histories being undermined or put at risk. So as well as problematising documents as the basis of factual evidence more acknowledgement is required towards labour, time and care implied by informal archives.

Aimar:

Offers the example of how the acquisition of the archives of LSD (?) the first gay liberation movement by Reina Sofia, the Spanish national museum for modern and contemporary art has raised issues in terms of how these histories are being instrumentalized as 'culture.'

Laura:

'Make Women's Archive'?

The photographic archives and therefore the artistic legacies of Rosy Martin and Tessa Boffin hang in the balance while their archives remain in the care of friends and colleagues. Most recently the fate of the Jo Spence Archive saw the archive divided between London and the Ryerson Archive, Toronto because no one UK institution would take sole responsibility at the same time that works were put up for sale by Richard Saltoun Gallery, London (who now represents the estate). This example as indicative of larger problems in the field of archiving in the UK and elsewhere.

Sunil:

Acknowledged that he holds the archive of Tessa Boffin's work, as well as a number of other archives including materials recently acquired from an elder Indian historian that contains decades old photo documentation representing counter-cultural same-sex activity in India. On one hand Sunil recounts that having acquired Boffin's archive he attempted to donate the materials to the National Photographic Museum who responded that while the value of the work was recognised the institutions itself lacked a category and therefore a facility for archiving lesbian photography and as such this material (which he would like to archive with an institution) remains outside any such archive. On the other hand by contrast he feels that it would be unethical to give the 'historical' materials from India to a public archive as the individuals documented are likely closeted and these materials could not be shared as an accessible resource within their lifetime despite such materials doubtless being of interest due to their

historical significance. Sunil also described a certain ambivalence about displaying images of friends that are not out in his studio following the widespread use of social media and apps like Instagram meaning that these works could be re-photographed and immediately shared with large numbers of people.

Laura:

Addressed how institutional archives produce or perpetuate invisibility and uneven power dynamics through archives. For instance institutions are often keen to acquire archives and archival research given research kudos but then offer little in return to these archives, former archivists or those who continue to research archives. Recently, the acquisition of archives by institutions so often encounters problems as funding priorities change as currently seen with cuts in arts and humanities funding in further education. Also the recent acquisition of the Brixton Gallery Archive by Tate and how little evidence as mentioned already of the great amount of unpaid labour, care and affect required to keep the archive together up to this point.

Ethical problems surrounding the recent institutional mishandling of the 'On Our Backs' Archive Website where historic lesbian BDSM images from the original publication were presented on an online platform. This created problems in terms of how the online presentation of these historic images impacted those photographed as work distributed through magazines amongst the BDSM scene combined with or in addition to subsequent changes in sexuality and gender identification amongst participants resulted in complaints or requests to take down certain images. Further mis-apprehension of the issues raised resulted in the entire site being taken down by the host citing 'consent' issues, wherein matter of access and visibility were traduced with one of consent.

Sunil:

Mentioned the many problems presented during a time when HIV/AIDS activism tried to lobby the 'AIDS industry' troika of big pharma, politicians, and NGOs as HIV/AIDS funding achieved a global reach, observing an alarming lack of moral or ethical concern in terms of how funding was spent. Elisabeth Pisani's *The Wisdom of Whores* was cited as an account of the AIDS industry as a mechanism of international/ geopolitical biopower.

Laura

This lead to a brief discussion with Sunil in terms of the context that spurred AIDS activism: Feminism and movements like Women's Health, Greenham Common, Anti-Thatcher activism and the overall inclusivity agenda of the GLC up to the events that lead to the introduction of Section 28.

Sunil:

Reflected on the significant changes in sexual cultures in London during the 70s and 80s into the AIDS crisis and after from a very prohibitive, policing culture to a sex-positive one where cruising and sex clubs were permitted and became commonplace.

Laura:

The role of lesbian sex clubs in parallel and after.

Siân:

Sian spoke about the work involved around 'Graphic Communication'.