

20th Annual Lesbian Lives Conference  
15-16th February 2013  
BRIGHTON



# The Modern Lesbian

Hosted by University of Brighton LGBT and Queer Life Research Hub  
in conjunction with Women's Studies Centre, University College Dublin  
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**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**



# Journal of Lesbian Studies

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## ABOUT THE JOURNAL

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The *Journal of Lesbian Studies* examines the cultural, historical, and interpersonal impact of the lesbian experience on society, keeping all readers – professional, academic, or general – informed and up-to-date on current findings, resources, and community concerns. The journal is interdisciplinary in scope and is essential reading for independent scholars, lay people, professors, and students.

The *Journal of Lesbian Studies* fosters new scholarship without cutting ties to grassroots activism. The journal gives the lesbian experience an international and multicultural voice, presenting book reviews, poetry, letters to the editor, debates, and commentaries.

An enlightening balance of scholarly and practical information, the journal presents an interdisciplinary body of work in a completely lesbian context. The journal is a vital forum for research and theory, addressing the history, politics, science, race, literature, and life cycle issues of women who love women.

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**Friday 15 February 2013**

**Parallel Session 1: 9:50-11:20 am**

**1A: Film: Lesbiana- A Parallel Revolution** Dir: Myriam Fougère

**1B: Panel: Health and Well-being in Lesbian Lives**

1. Alex Karydi

**Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian Relationships: A Modern View**

*Abstract*

History has had authors examine the medical community's attempts to explore intimate partner violence (IPV) in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population. Their findings suggested that these communities needs have often been neglected. The authors identified that heterosexual women have been the focus of IPV screening and intervention. However, they argued that there is comparable prevalence of IPV in LGBT individuals and its detrimental health effects. In conclusion, they identified that sadly little had been done for LGBT relationships in regards to IPV. They were able to stress the difficulties of IPV in LGBT relationships, and outline the differences between LGBT and heterosexual IPV. In conclusion, they focused on actions clinicians should do when addressing IPV in their LGBT client. Through this paper, the discussion generated will provide community(s) or individuals with the following ideas:

- The importance of understanding IPV in Lesbian relationship
- Defining IPV in Lesbian relationships
- Responsibilities of providers and community organizations in helping women overcome IPV

Website: <http://www.thelesbianguru.com>

2. Dr Jasmina Cherguit (Clinical Psychologist), Professor Jan Burns (Salomons Canterbury Christ Church University), Dr Sharon Pettle (Consultant Clinical Psychologist), Dr Fiona Tasker (Birkbeck, University of London)

**Lesbian co-mothers' experiences of UK maternity health care services.**

*Abstract*

**Aim:** This paper is a report of a study of lesbian co-mothers' experiences of UK maternity health care services.

**Background:** With the increase in fertility provision to lesbian couples, maternity health care services are increasingly coming into contact with lesbian co-mothers. Literature highlights the need to investigate donor conceived lesbian families and an absence of research focusing on the unique experiences of co-mothers in the maternity process.

**Methods:** A qualitative study was carried out involving ten lesbian co-mothers, whose children were conceived via anonymous donor insemination to their partners. Data collection took place between May and September 2009.

**Results/Findings:** An interpretative phenomenological analysis revealed two main types of co-mothers' experiences, those connected with maternity service structures and interpersonal experiences with maternity care staff. Co-mothers

felt excluded by heterocentric organisational service structures. However, the co-mothers' overwhelming experiences with staff were positive and inclusive. Despite this, co-mothers reported that any ambiguous or non-inclusive experiences with professionals left them questioning whether these experiences were due to homophobic attitudes or professional incompetence.

Conclusion: The results indicate that these lesbian co-mothers felt predominantly included and accepted by maternity services. Ambiguous interpersonal experiences, however, evoked doubts in this regard. In addition, organisational heterocentric structural barriers remain. Structural service delivery changes could facilitate co-mothers' feelings of inclusion and highlight the important role practitioners have in contributing to co-mothers' experiences.

#### *Biography*

Dr Jasmina Cherguit completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Salomons/Canterbury Christ Church University in 2010 and is now working in learning disability CAMHS in West London. Her range of interests include, lesbian parents, donor conception and MAITS Charity (Multi Agency International Training and Support) developing manuals and training packages for parents of children with disabilities in India. Email: jcherguit@hotmail.com

**3. Professor Sally R Munt, Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies & Jane Traies, PhD candidate, University of Sussex**

#### **Life Histories and Health Narratives of Older British Lesbians**

##### *Abstract*

Our paper presents data from the largest research project to date on lesbians and ageing, the 'Lives of British Lesbians Over 60' Project. The research, undertaken in 2010-11, consisted of some 50 semi-structured life history interviews and around 400 online responses to a lengthy qualitative and quantitative questionnaire. The result is a wonderfully rich data set which is still in the process of interpretation, using life-history and narrative techniques as well as quantitative data analysis. This paper uses findings from the survey and from older lesbians' narratives which focus on physical and mental / emotional health. The data underline the importance of social factors to maintaining health. Emerging themes include: experience of childhood illness and social exclusion; being rejected by or estranged from parents; effects of pressure to conform to heterosexual norms; low self-esteem leading to abuse of alcohol, drugs etc.; stress of being closeted; lack of social support in crisis (e.g. bereavement) when closeted; 'disenfranchised grief;' dealing with homophobia from neighbours, people in pubs, employers etc.; illness and disability in older age; attitudes towards health services and services for older people; fears about failing health and loss of independence; mental and emotional resilience.

#### **1C: Workshop Title: Recognising Diversity?: Equalities in Principle and Practice**

Sally Hines

##### *Abstract*

Participatory Action Workshop: A Knowledge Exchange Project Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), led by Dr Sally Hines (Director of Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies (CIGS), University of Leeds.

The relationship between transgender and feminism and sexual politics has, and remains, contentious. This participatory action workshop seeks to explore this relationship by exploring the views of workshop participants about recent changes around gender diversity brought by the 2004 UK 'Gender Recognition Act' (GRA).

The workshop will disseminate the research report from Sally Hines' previous ESRC funded research on the Gender Recognition Act before moving on to discuss the aims and objectives of her current knowledge-transfer project. Sally will use case studies from a 'Gender Recognition Review' to facilitate knowledge sharing and strategy development around the policy recommendations from this previous research. Specifically, she will ask workshop participants to discuss their views on vignettes<sup>1</sup>. Workshop discussions will be seen as a data-gathering exercise through which to examine views about the current framework of rights for trans people in relation to issues of gender, sexuality, intimacy and the body. The workshop will identify issues of consideration and further recommendations for future redrafting of the GRA.

### *Biography*

Sally Hines is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies, and Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies (CIGS) at the University of Leeds, UK. Her work is concerned with transformations in gendered, sexual and embodied identities, and their legal and policy implications. Her forthcoming book 'Gender Diversity, Recognition and Citizenship: Towards a Politics of Difference' will be published by Palgrave in 2013.

### **1D: THE DIRECT PATH: Lesbians Creating Their Own Connection to Spirit** **Aleine Ridge and Felice Rhiannon**

Many of us have been turned off, turned out of and/or victimised within organised religions. Felice and Aleine have sifted through some of the existing traditions for ways to nurture our spiritual selves, to find practices that support our intention to cultivate the spiritual aspect of our lives.

The purpose of this workshop is to present some of those siftings.

We have chosen from a diverse smorgasbord of breathing, praying, moving and stillness which we can practice together and on our own...in silence, with voice, with body, with mind, with heart.

As a group we can experience our spiritual selves through these examples of experiential connections to different traditions, each of us finding a direct path to her lesbian heart.

Jewish woman's prayer

Shamanic calling in of the 4 elements/directions

Sufi greeting the divine in the other

Buddhist loving kindness meditation

Hindu goddess of creativity

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<sup>1</sup> A 'vignette' presents a hypothetical situation, to which research participants respond. The 4 vignettes presented at the workshop will be of hypothetical situations informed by interviews carried out by Sally Hines in relation to people's experiences of, and attitudes towards, the Gender Recognition Act.

### *Biographies*

Aleine Ridge

Came out in 1977, worked as a counsellor since 1973 and as a transpersonal psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer since 1990.

Ordained as an Interfaith Minister in 2010.

Brought up Christian, chose wicca and shamanic ways of working.

Explored Buddhism, interested in all paths, dedicated to my own.

Felice Rhiannon

An ordained One Spirit Interfaith minister and qualified Yoga Therapist, Felice came out in 1974. Her spiritual life blossomed from there after being raised in an observant Jewish household. She has inquired deeply into several paths to Spirit...Wicca, Buddhism, and Hinduism, seeking and finding the feminine energy in each path. She is currently exploring the path which has no name.

## **Parallel Session 2: 11:30-1:00 pm**

### **2A: Panel: Death of the Lesbian**

1. Liz Millward, University of Manitoba

#### **Disproportionate Death Rates: The Danger of being a Lesbian Character**

##### *Abstract*

Lesbian film and television characters seem to die at alarming rates. Tara in *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*, Paulie in *Lost & Delirious*, Eva in *Another Way*, and Maya in *Pretty Little Liars* are just some examples. Characters in subtextual lesbian relationships are not spared either: think Janet from *Stargate SG-1* or *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Following the work of Terry Castle, this paper examines the history of fictional lesbians' deaths, in literature and pulp novels, and then explores what proportion of on-screen lesbian characters continue to die. It suggests that the ongoing practice of violently killing off the lesbian subverts the impact of the recent proliferation of lesbian representations.

##### *Biography*

Liz Millward is Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Manitoba. She has published several articles on lesbian history, culture, and geography, including the Xenaverse, fictional lesbian pilots, lesbian conferences in the 1970s, and, with Dr. Janice Dodd, *Stargate SG-1*. She also researches the history of women and aviation. She is currently writing a book called "Making a Scene: A cultural geography of lesbian Canada, 1964-1984."

2. Janice Dodd, University of Manitoba

#### **"The Report of My Death....": Fanfiction resistance to narratives of erasure.**

##### *Abstract*

Noelle Collier et al. (2009) present evidence that lesbian viewers are able to draw affirmative meaning from representations of lesbians in television shows (*Buffy: the Vampire Slayer* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*) despite the "historically clichéd ending" of these characters. While many in the fan communities expressed a sense of betrayal at the violent deaths of lesbian characters, writers of fanfiction, as a further act of resistance, created stories that form an alternative canon, thus erasing the erasure. Using examples from online

fanfiction for *X:WP* and *Stargate: SG-1*, this paper examines such restoration of lesbian lives.

#### *Biography*

Janice Dodd is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Physiology at the University of Manitoba. She has published articles on the representation of women in science and, with Dr. Liz Millward, the representation of women scientists in television and fanfiction

3. Irene Fubara-Manuel, University of Manitoba

### **Boom, Bye Bye... And all is Well in Heteropolis: Homophobia, Sexism and the Reality of the "Lesbian Death" Trope**

#### *Abstract*

Sakia Gunn (May 26, 1987 – May 11, 2003), a 15-year old African American lesbian stabbed by a man whose advances she rejected; Eudy Simelane (March 11, 1977 – April 28, 2008), a South African footballer and lesbian, gang raped, beaten, stabbed 25 times in her face, chest and legs; and Mollie Judith Olgin (May 12, 1993 – June 23, 2012), 19 year old lesbian shot at close-range in Portland, Texas, with her girlfriend surviving a shot to the head. These women's lives, similar to the stories of lesbians represented in media, end with an abrupt fade to black. This paper explores the death of lesbians in reality, comparing it to the pattern in media in which, in an attempt to reclaim patriarchal power over women's bodies or restore the order of heterosexuality, lesbians are killed off.

#### *Biography*

Irene Fubara-Manuel is a Double Honours student with the department of Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Manitoba. Currently working on her Psychology honors thesis, she was awarded the Lambda Foundation for Excellence - Les McAfee Memorial Award for her 2011/2012 honors thesis in Women's and Gender Studies: "A Place Like Home: The Ideological Position of Queer Racialized Immigrants." She also presented this thesis by invitation to the Sexuality Education Resource Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Resonating with her identity as a queer African in Canada, her interests revolve around sexuality, intersecting identities, and the cultural aftermath of colonization.

### **2B: Panel: Delinquency, Sex Education and Reform**

1. Anastasia Jones, Yale University

### **Lesbianism and Juvenile Delinquency in the U.S. Public Imagination**

#### *Abstract*

In this paper, I aim to explicate popular connections between female juvenile delinquency and "anti-social sexuality," particularly lesbianism, in the interwar U.S. During this period, homosexuality and criminality, both of which were thought to revolve around issues of heredity, pathology, environment, and repression, were the subject of vibrant public debate and discourse. The link between sexual perversion and female juvenile delinquents in the popular imagination was especially strong. Adolescent girls frequently attracted the attention of police and social workers (and often eventually found themselves incarcerated in reformatories) for transgressing culturally accepted sexual mores. The most common criminal charges, "incorrigibility" and "immorality,"

were commonly used as code for any sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage—a fraught arena for a eugenics-obsessed public. Further, both female juvenile delinquents and the female directors of women's prisons attracted approbation for the supposedly rampant lesbianism that flourished behind the walls of the female reformatory system. Using reformatory records, sociological and medical studies of incarcerated women, and popular commentaries on juvenile delinquency, I will tease out the links—and disconnects—between the supposedly dangerously perverse heterosexuality that resulted in a designation of female juvenile delinquent on the one hand, and the unnatural but benign lesbianism of female reformatories on the other. This paper will be a truncated version of the final chapter from my dissertation, "The Normal Lesbians: Sex Between Women and the Growth of Modern Sexual Categories in U.S. Culture, 1920-1940." I am currently in the midst of writing this project, and have presented work-in-progress forms of earlier chapters at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women (2011) and the European Social Science and History Conference (2012).

*Biography*

Anastasia Jones is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History, Yale University.

2. Val Brown, Historian

**The Life of May (Toupie) Lowther**

*Abstract*

I am a local historian and have been looking at the life of May (Toupie) Lowther 1874 – 1944. She was a well-known sportswoman, she fenced and played championship tennis. She also served in France during WW1 and was a friend of Una Troubridge and Radclyffe Hall. I have researched her family since she has previously been wrongly identified as "Lady Barbara" Lowther. Toupie Lowther lived in Pulborough, West Sussex, in the last 10 years of her life: her brother is also associated with East Sussex and her mother and sister with Brighton and Hove.

*Biography*

Val Brown is a local historian. Her previous work 'Women's Hospitals in Brighton and Hove' (2008) has been published by Hastings Press.

3. Stephanie Westcott, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

**Educating the American Lesbian: 1950s Sex Education and the Birth of a Gay Generation**

*Abstract*

This paper will explore the ways that Cold War sex education taught school-age lesbians about their own sexuality. Countering historical narratives that the 1950s in the US were an era of silence and erasure for lesbians, my research into sex education materials of the era reveals lesbianism had a place in the public classroom. Popular psychoanalytic theories of the day reassured parents and teachers that a lesbian phase was a normal part of sexual development.

Curricular materials created with that in mind created space for questions about sexual deviance and revealed the extent to which children were already familiar with homosexuality and its erotic possibilities. Those possibilities were regularly both suggested and dismissed in the sex education films of the day. Popular with many sex education teachers, hygiene films were used in classrooms across the



United States in the post-World War II era, freeing instructors from the embarrassment of talking about sexual subject matter and controlling the messages students received about sexual behavior and sexual identity. But hygiene films guarded information about sex and sexuality carefully, simultaneously promising to reveal everything a student needed to know and obscuring sexual details to the point of absurdity. The result was a sex education curricula that offered glimpses of what lesbians looked like, where they went to find one another, what same-sex attraction might be like. By examining those hygiene films and the classroom curricula that accompanied them, I will argue that, rather than remain silent on the subject of lesbianism, these post-war sex education classes educated American students on sexual deviance and presented the possibility of lesbian loves and lives to a generation of girls.

#### *Biography*

Stephanie Westcott is adjunct assistant professor of Democracy and Justice Studies, in the history and women's studies programs, at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. She received her PhD in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May, 2012. She is currently revising her dissertation, "Producing Panic: Media, Morality, and American Sexuality, 1945-1970," and researching a project on the intersections of desegregation and queer popular culture in the 1960s US.

#### 4. Kate Turner, University of Westminster

##### **Homosexual Law Reform and Scottish National Identity, 1950-Present**

##### *Abstract*

Scotland's recent history is characterised by a political turnaround, which has seen it move from failing to decriminalise homosexuality until 1980 - lagging behind England and Wales by thirteen years in realising this reform - to currently leading the way on marriage reform in the UK. This project delineates the factors behind this change, taking formations of national identity as a point of focus in determining the changing treatment of homosexuality in Scotland. Analysis of sources such as the writing of historian Roger Davidson, everyday newspapers of the time, and gay and lesbian publications, uncovers a masculinised and heterosexist national identity in the Scotland of 1950-80, which is considered a significant factor underpinning the delay in decriminalisation of homosexuality at this time. The contemporary backing of equal marriage by the Scottish National Party (SNP) is assessed with these findings in mind. Analysis of contemporary visual campaigns for equal marriage, alongside the SNP and UK Conservative consultations, is implemented to assess whether the SNP support of marriage reform signifies radical progression or, alternatively, assimilation of queer identity into the majorative norm; both in terms of the institutions of marriage, and in traditional Scottish national identity bound up in heterosexism. The paper utilises the analysis of the political situation in Scotland to consider more generally what we mean by 'progression' in the 'modern' moment. The paper will also question broadly how marginal sexualities, and sexual identities, are negotiated against hegemonic structures of nationhood and traditional ideas of marriage in the contemporary moment.

**2C: Workshop: Queer Feminine Orientations: Come and Make Your Own Fab Femme Collage!**

Alexa Athelstan

### *Abstract*

Are you queer feminine identified and want to have some fun creating a visual representation of your queer feminine identity? This workshop offers you the opportunity to explore your ideas about queer femininity and identity by creating your own *fab femme collage*. Collages can be about any of the following themes or anything that is of specific importance to you and your identity 1)

How you embody your queer feminine identity in everyday life 2) How do you define femme and queer femininities? 3) Who inspires you? 4) How did you come to this identity? 5) What other aspects of your identity are important to how you experience and embody your queer femininity?

I will provide the basic materials for making the collages (e.g. card, scissors, glue, pens and magazines for cutting out pictures). If you are planning on coming to the workshop, it would be helpful if you could bring anything extra along with you that you definitely want to include in your collage to represent your identity (e.g. fishnets, lace, glitter, picture of Lady Gaga). The workshop will be roughly divided into two sections. The first section will give you plenty of time to create your own femme collage. In the second part of the workshop we will discuss how these collages represent your queer feminine identity, as a group. So, come along, bring your inspiration, creativity and your willingness to wield a glue stick and a pair of scissors and let's have some fun making collages!

### *Biography*

Alexa Athelstan is in the second year of her PhD at Leeds University, UK, pursuing a project that is interested in theorising queer, alternative and subversive modes of feminine embodiment subjectivity in everyday life. Using a theoretical framework of Bordieu's concept of the habitus, Butler's (1999) theory of gender performativity and particularly Sara Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenology concerning processes of orientation, the project investigates how subjects who self identify their femininity as being queer, alternative or subversive, manifest their gender identity according to the affects, objects, people, spaces, aesthetics and positioned intersections of identity, that they orientate themselves towards and away from. The project uses a mixed methodological approach involving analysis of three recent texts published on femme and queer femininities, Ulrika Dahl and Del La Grace Volcano's *Femmes of Power* (2008), Chloe Brushwood Rose and Anna Camilleri's *Brazen Femme* (2002) and Jennifer Clare Burke's *Femmethology* (2009), as well as interviews and visual materials in the form of collages and photographs, produced by 16 participants in the UK. In fact, a large part of the materials that I am looking at for this project are the collages and photographs that interview participants created about their queer feminine identities.

## **2D: Workshop: Trans men and women's spaces**

Rob Clucas

### *Abstract*

Two recent encounters with women's spaces have given me cause to reflect on the different ways of conceptualising trans masculinity. My first was a discussion with a thoughtful and theoretically sophisticated friend and colleague who volunteers at a women's centre. In an informal conversation (that doesn't represent the considered view of the women's centre concerned), she thought

that I wouldn't be able to volunteer there, as I don't identify as female. My second encounter was attending a meeting of a group that has 'Dykes' in its title, but which welcomes, among others, 'FTM persons who feel that they still have links to the women's community.'

I was reminded of two everyday ways of thinking about FTM people: trans men as opposite to women, and trans men as persons on a continuum of female masculinity. Halberstam, in *Female Masculinity*, rejects the 'opposites' and 'continuum' views of trans masculinity. She suggests instead that 'the lines between the transsexual and the gender-deviant lesbian inevitably criss-cross and intersect' (1998, 164). For Halberstam, it is essential to challenge the existing gender hierarchies, and she claims that this work can only be done by masculinities that are feminist, anti-racist, and queer (ibid, 173). Whilst I'm sympathetic to the queer theoretical approach in this political work that Halberstam identifies, I'm also aware that there are resonances in the 'opposites' and 'continuum' views of trans masculinity that seem to point to important personal truths for trans men, and for (lesbian) women. This workshop aims to facilitate the exploration of these views.

#### *Biography*

Rob Clucas is Lecturer in Law at the University of Hull. His recent publications include work on the appointment of gay bishops in the Church of England. As B. Clucas he has published articles on jurisprudence; medical ethics, particularly conjoined twins; human rights, and children's rights and welfare, and with G. Johnstone and T. Ward, he co-edited the collection *Torture: Moral Absolutes and Ambiguities* (2009). Rob was the inaugural Chair of the LGBT Staff Network at the University of Hull, and is a Trustee of the Anglican pressure group Changing Attitude. His current research interests are in equality issues and the church, and feminist theory and pornography.

2E: Film: *Jan's Coming Out*, Director: Carolyn Reid

Keynote Address: Prof Lisa Downing, University of Birmingham  
**Bisexual Ethics and Contemporary Queer Lives**

#### **Parallel Session 3: 3:00-4:30 pm**

#### **3A: Panel: Art is Long, Life is Short: Modern women artists, collaboration and legacy at the Victoria and Albert Museum**

The papers in this session proposal all focus on collaborations between women artists represented in the V&A, who were involved in intimate relationships with other women artists during the period 1850-1950. They address the ways in which the modern era both facilitated and limited these women's artistic production and we hope that the ensuing discussion may explore both the work presented and the current place of such work within national museums.

1. Zoe Clayton

#### **The Boston Marriage of Judith Ackland and Mary Stella Edwards-watercolourists and diorama makers (1919-1971)**

*Abstract*

Judith Ackland (1892-1971) attended art school in her native Devon for several years before joining the Regent Street Polytechnic in 1919, where she met fellow student Mary Stella Edwards (1898-1989). They became partners for life, retreating each spring and autumn to a cabin where they painted the bulk of their pictures— topographical watercolour scenes of the surrounding coast and countryside of Bideford, North Devon. The pair also travelled widely on painting holidays and invented a new method of model making in 1945, specialising in historic dioramas. Now owned by the National Trust, the cabin is a uniquely preserved and faithful record of their artistic collaboration. In this paper, I will discuss their joint oeuvre and their work in the V&A collection.

#### *Biography*

Zoe Clayton is a Cataloguer in the Word and Image department. She has worked in documentary making, photography and film festivals in France, London, and Manchester, and specialises in early photography techniques, particularly stereographs and the history of queer film.

### 2. Dawn Hoskin

#### **The Suffrage Atelier: Working Together & Contesting ‘Womanliness’**

##### *Abstract*

This paper will discuss the Suffrage Atelier as a homosocial group that contested concepts of ‘womanliness’ and cultivated an environment that fostered personal and creative relationships between women. The Suffrage Atelier formed in 1909 to encourage artists to help forward the Women's Movement by means of ‘Advertisements, Banners and Decorations’. With a strong background in craft, these prolific women worked together to translate the suffragette message into powerful visual symbols. They supplied designs and instructed others in various production techniques and the use of imagery to propagate their message. Together they challenged dominant ideologies of femininity and constructed visible new interpretations of women's social roles.

##### *Biography*

Dawn Hoskin is an Assistant Curator in the Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department. She is currently part of the project team working on the renovation and redisplay of the Museum's Europe 1600-1800 Galleries, which will open in December 2014. She is a board member for the activist group Climate Rush who take their inspiration from the suffragettes. Dawn has previously spoken on the early history of bicycles in relation to women's emancipation and current research projects include: cross-dressing at 18th century masquerades; 18th century singeries; and the work of 1980s performer Klaus Nomi.

### 3. Mara Gold

#### **Collaborative ‘Arrangements’: the work of Frances Hodgkins and Dorothy Richmond**

##### *Abstract*

This paper will consider how attitudes towards the British Colonies allowed female homosexual and homosocial relationships to prosper within the Arts and Crafts Movement. The period of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, was one in which lesbian and bisexual women dominated within the literary, visual and performing arts of New Zealand, and this movement in particular, though their work historically has been neglected by scholars of this era. The

work of Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947) and Dorothy Richmond (1861-1935), especially their lithographs and drawings, emerged as a direct result of their close personal relationship and will serve as a case study to illustrate how such intimacy shaped the work of New Zealand women artists.

#### *Biography*

Mara Gold is a researcher in 'movement learning' in the Theatre and Performance Department. She has an MA in Advanced Theatre Practice from the Central School of Speech and Drama and is currently completing a second MA in Cultural Heritage at UCL. She has a background in professional theatre and her studies in Classics and History at Victoria University in Wellington culminated in a research post at Te Papa Tongarewa, National Museum of New Zealand.

### **3B: Panel: Centre for the Study of Sexual Dissidence Panel: Lesbian Representation in Late Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Fiction**

1. Katharine Harris, University of Sussex

#### **The lies of fiction are sometimes the only way to get at the truth': The modern lesbian in contemporary historical fiction.**

##### *Abstract*

This paper explores the invention of histories for the modern lesbian in recent novels by Emma Donoghue and Sarah Waters. Suggesting the importance of fictions about the past as much as facts, it analyses these imagined histories in detail. Through this, the paper explores the method that Donoghue and Waters employ to resist past marginalisations of the lesbian in historical record and in the literary canon. This also indicates that the anachronistic presence of certain politics and language from the present day, reminding us that this is fiction, not fact, and that the modern lesbian is essential to the construction of these new pasts.

##### *Biography*

Katharine Harris has an undergraduate degree from the University of Cambridge and completed a Master's in English at King's College London, with a dissertation on the novels of Sarah Waters and their construction of imagined histories. Katharine is currently a doctoral student at the University of Sussex, researching historical fiction in the twenty-first century. Her work places particular emphasis on the marginalisation of certain social groups in hegemonic heteropatriarchal History, and the potential for contemporary historical fiction to undermine this. This is inflected by ideas regarding postmodern historiographic narrative and questions of queer and gendered reinventions of past oppression.

2. Laura Ellen Joyce, University of Sussex

#### **Butchery and the Lesbian Detective in Daniel Woodrell's *Winter's Bone***

##### *Abstract*

This paper will consider the role of the lesbian detective in the 2006 North American novel *Winter's Bone* by Daniel Woodrell. The character of Ree Dolly is explicitly and implicitly coded as queer and butch. She also takes on the classic detective role. Through hunting and butchery, Ree navigates hunger, fear and destitution, culminating in the final act which secures her family's future, whilst simultaneously negating her own. Independence is not available to Ree once she has taken on the role of the dead father. Conversely, she is freed from the

necessity of heterosexual marriage, and is considered by her peers as 'as good as a man', a position which she enjoys. This paper seeks to investigate the links between meat and murder, between butchery and the lesbian detective in this novel, and will attempt to recover the excised and elided centrality of the lesbian relationship between Ree and Gail.

#### *Biography*

Laura Ellen Joyce is a second year PhD candidate in Creative and Critical Writing at The University of Sussex. Her research interests include masculinity and spatiality, criminal geography, psychogeography and the uncanny, 21st century radical crime writing and gendered reception of Classics. She teaches critical theory. She is on the editorial board of *Excursions*, an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal. She is project co-ordinator for the AHRC Global Queer Cinema project. She is also co-organiser of the NGender seminar series at Sussex University. Her first novel, *The Museum of Atheism*, deals with the murder of six-year old beauty queen, Jonbenet Ramsey.

### 3. Nozomi Uematsu, University of Sussex

#### **Queering Maternity in 1980s Britain: Investing the Reproductive Technologies in Lessing's *The Fifth Child* (1988) and Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* (1989)**

##### *Abstract*

This presentation will examine the relation between reproduction, happiness and technological innovation in the 1980s in Britain in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* and Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*. The 1980s are the decade when the body, the mother, and motherhood are radically called into question. Due to technological innovations in relation to reproduction, there became a fracture between the conventional figure of motherhood, 'mother nature' and new technological reproductive possibilities. Historically, in western culture and philosophy, the meaning and the significance of womanhood has been easily and unreasonably reduced to the body in opposition to the subject. However, with prenatal screening and surrogacy, both of which emerged and were hugely argued in the 80s, this 'natural' link is debunked as fictional. On the one hand, these technological innovations provide infertile and homosexual couples with the opportunity to construct a new kind of family. On the other hand, these same innovations alerted conservative people to the undermining of the 'traditional family'.

Through legislation on surrogacy, In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and other child care policies, the British Government controlled reproductive activities through the ideology of the conventional family. Thus, the 1980s are the decade when the concept of 'mother nature' and its scientific alternatives were negotiated.

As we will see, these technologies underlie the works of Doris Lessing and Jeanette Winterson: the rhetoric of eugenics for the prenatal screening sits behind *The Fifth Child* (1988), while IVF shadows *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). Lessing's *The Fifth Child*, insightfully exposes the lack of childcare by the Tories in the 1980s when a mother has a troublesome or disabled child: the monstrous child makes the mother monstrous, and this process alienates the mother from society. Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* seeks a new maternal intimacy that does not require biological kinship, as seen in the representation of monstrous mother, Dog Woman, and the description of grafting.

### *Biography*

Nozomi Uematsu is a student representative in Sexual Dissidence Committee in University of Sussex in 2012, and also she is a PhD student there, in School of English. Her research is funded by JASSO (2012), University of Hitotsubashi (2011), and Rotary International foundation (2010). She is interested in how the concept of happiness works as a regime in neoliberal societies, and investigates how women's writing in the 1980s subverts this ideology through the depiction of female sexuality and intimacy. This is a comparative feminist project and the authors she will investigate are: Doris Lessing, Jeanette Winterson, Angela Carter, Rieko Matsuura, Amy Yamada, Taeko Kono. She has given three conference papers at Sussex and in Japan on Monstrous Intimacy, Jeanette Winterson, Doris Lessing and Amy Yamada.

### **3C: Panel: Trans-cending Nations, Borders and Spaces**

1. Claire Bennett, University of Sussex

#### **Seeking asylum in the UK: The Perspectives of lesbian asylum seekers**

##### *Abstract*

Lesbian asylum seekers face significant issues when applying for asylum in the UK as both gender and sexuality are not covered in the 1951 Refugee Convention. Consequently, asylum claims based on 'persecution around same sex experiences' need to be argued for under the 'particular social group' category. This is the most controversial and arbitrary of all five Refugee Convention grounds. Like many refugee women, lesbians may have been subject to sexual and physical violence as part of the persecution and the stigma they experience in their country of origin. Many lesbians are also specifically targeted and experience 'corrective rape' as well as imprisonment, public beatings, family rejection and social isolation. As part of the asylum process, women have to disclose and discuss their experiences of rape, sexual and physical violence to a range of individuals in great detail. In addition, claims based on an individual's homosexuality also require them to 'evidence their sexuality' in order to convince the UK Border Agency personnel and immigration judges that they are a lesbian. This paper will discuss the methods and findings of my DPhil research which involved interviewing eleven lesbian asylum seekers and refugees (three times each) who had all experienced physical and sexual violence in their country of origin and sought international protection in the UK. The paper will outline the difficulties women associated with navigating the UK asylum process on the basis of their sexuality and in particular narrating their sexual stories through a legal lens. How women reflect on what it's like to be a lesbian asylum seeker in the UK will also be discussed.

##### *Biography*

Before my DPhil, I spent 11 years working in the voluntary sector including seven years in international development largely being involved in a range of projects with women and street children. I have extensive experience working in Africa and Asia, which has also included work in refugee and repatriation camps in Pakistan and Cambodia. Immediately prior to my DPhil, I worked as a researcher for an NGO working with women asylum seekers who had experienced gender based persecution. I have a strong identity as a qualitative

social researcher. I believe working directly with people and engaging with them helps to detangle the complexity of subjective experiences.

2. Marcia Poelman

**Coming out and coming in for first and second generation migrant, lesbian women. An explorative research in Flanders, Belgium**

*Abstract*

Flemish LGBT organizations hardly reach LGBT persons from ethnic minorities, especially women. Based on interviews with 10 lesbian women from ethnic minorities in the city of Antwerp, Belgium, we discuss the interplay of sexual orientation, ethnicity and gender. It entails specific thresholds concerning coming out and coming in. The mainstream Western standard of coming out is not always desired or attainable for these women. A desire for authenticity drives them to find new ways of reconciling their sexual orientation with their socio-cultural background. 'Coming in', or entering LGBT subculture, is thought to take place in a safe 'peer' environment. For ethnic minorities, the LGBT subculture often is no 'peer' environment. And if it is, the strict social control women from ethnic minorities face limits its accessibility. The evolution of LGBT venues into gay friendly and mixed places makes coming in even more complex for this group. To make coming in easier for this group, offering specific activities targeted at ethnic minority women remains a sound idea since the need is manifest. At the same time, mainstream LGBT organizations could work on intercultural communication, place homosexuality in a broad framework, discuss racism and prejudice within the gay community and develop a policy on privacy.

3. Clare B Dimyon MBE, PRIDE Solidarity

**On the Rainbow Trail of the Euro2012 Football Championships in Ukraine**

*Abstract*

In 2012 Poland and Ukraine jointly hosted the Euro2012 Football Championships, inviting people from across Europe to come to wear silly costumes, wave their flag and follow their team. Clare Dimyon from PRIDE Solidarity decided to do just that, although it wasn't quite what the Ukrainian government, then proposing a set of draconian "homosexual propaganda" laws, was expecting. As Clare saw that England was playing Ukraine (the host nation), her excitement increased as she identified that they were in the same group as Sweden and France whose embassies, with the UK have supported LGBT+ friendly initiatives across central & eastern Europe. She discovered a "full house" in Group B, (also playing in Ukraine) of Germany (with the first openly gay Foreign Minister), the Netherlands and Denmark, each with excellent LGBT+ credentials and Portugal, a Catholic country where same-gender couples can be legally married.

From the team colours, there were five colours of the rainbow: Red – Denmark (Germany), Orange – Netherlands (Germany), Yellow & Blue: Sweden & Ukraine Green: Portugal and Blue: France (les Bleus!) leaving only purple, which was achieved when the lesbian football team in Kherson (south Ukraine) that Clare visited was supplied with a purple kit from PRIDE Sports...following in the steps of her Quaker forebears. Starting with Kyiv PRIDE 2012, whose public manifestation was abandoned in the face of severe violence, Clare stayed creating a 6 week rainbow trail around Ukraine visiting LGBT+ people in six



major cities, proliferating PRIDE and LGBT+ culture. In a subversion of symbols, St Georgina with her Dutch crown, not very homophobic dragon and homophobia-zapping laser sword, paraded with a rainbow flag in three Ukrainian cities and just after midnight on 28<sup>th</sup> June made a one woman PRIDE inside the stadium in Donetsk, wishing stadium officials and celebrating Spanish fans a "HAPPY PRIDE".

4. Dr. Leanne Dawson, Department of European Languages and Cultures, The University of Edinburgh

**Queer Subjectivity, Time and Space in Angela Maccarone's *Fremde Haut/Unveiled* (2005) and Kimberly Pierce's *Boys Don't Cry* (1999)**

*Abstract*

*Fremde Haut* features an Iranian lesbian seeking asylum in Germany on the grounds of homophobic persecution in her homeland. When denied it, Fariba assumes the identity of Siamak, a dead male acquaintance who had been granted asylum. Asylum on the grounds of sexuality is a rather recent concept which may, rather crudely, locate the supposedly forward-thinking nation of Germany in a dyadic structure with Fariba's homeland of Iran. Homophobia, sexism, and xenophobia, however, prevail in the small German town where Fariba/Siamak's sensitive and foreign masculinity may pass as straight but is still considered 'other'. This may be compared to Pierce's filmic representation of Brandon Teena's story, *Boys Don't Cry*. Although Fariba claims a lesbian identity and Brandon most certainly does not, both use the small town (stereotypically traditional, repressed, even 'backward'), rather than the cosmopolitan city as a setting to explore their respective female masculinities. The coupling of both Fariba/Siamak's and Brandon's masculinity with their attraction to women ensure they are initially read as straight men indulging in relationships with local heterosexual women. This paper will, therefore, explore the notion of passing and how this may shatter a range of dyads relating to queer subjectivity, time and space.

*Biography*

Dr. Leanne Dawson is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in European Languages and Cultures at The University of Edinburgh, where she teaches and supervises within both German and Film Studies while working on a second monograph examining queer transcultural identities in contemporary German film. She has written a range of articles, published and forthcoming, on queer femininities in German literature, theatre and film. Her monograph, *Femme: Queer Femininities in German Culture* will be published by University of Chicago/University of Wales Press in 2013. She is Editorial Assistant for *Studies in European Cinema* and a literature reviewer for a number of other publications. Outside of the academy, she works as a freelance translator and academic text editor, teaches people of all ages about German cultural studies, film, and gender, and is a consultant on the representation of gender and sexuality to advertising and new media agencies, theatre productions and radio shows.

**3D: Performance:** Trudy Howson, lesbian poet and political activist  
Presents: The "L" Word.

"Love, laughter longing loss.

This is the promise  
This is the cost ...  
Of being a Lesbian"

Trudy will perform her own poetry exploring this fascinating theme, and budding and flowering poets are invited to bring along and share their own work. This session is an opportunity to take part in "The Ultimate Interactive Lesbian Poem". Or, to just listen and enjoy.

### *Biography*

Trudy was previously a singer and actress and worked for many years in mainstream and alternative theatre, radio and television. Trudy appeared in the following:

Sisterhood Of Spit ... 22 piece all female swing orchestra, playing London venues

Jesus Christ Superstar ... Rock Opera; London WE, and touring UK

I Like Me Like This ... Gay Sweatshop, touring UK and Europe

Coronation Street ... ITV

Worlds End ... BBC

Sacred Hearts ... Film4

Now she writes and performs her poetry at festivals, art/political events and on radio. She wrote "Going For Gold" for the London Olympics which was filmed by the BBC and used as a trailer in the run up to the 2012 Games. She has recently returned from touring Southeast Asia where she performed at Gay events (Chennai Daas) and for some of Myanmar's political activists. Trudy is passionate about justice, equality and civil liberty. She is also an active member of the "Hooray For Lesbians" club.

3E: Film Screenings  
3.00-3.30pm

**Return to Sender**, Dir: Lizzie Thynne, UK, 8'

**Barbara Jones, builder**, Dir: Lizzie Thynne, UK, 6'

With introductions by the director

3.30-4.15PM

**Butch Losses**, Dir: Janet Jones, UK, 12'

With introduction and discussion with the director

**Session 4:30 – 5:20 pm**

**Laura Doan in conversation with Chris Roulston**

**Session 5:30 – 6:30 pm**

Jane Hill (Presenter, BBC News); Kim Thomas (Senior Advisor, Editorial Policy); Amanda Rice (Head, BBC Diversity); and Kathy Caton (BBC Pride and Producer, Stargazing LIVE, BBC 2).

## **Dr Who, Vastra and the lesbian from outer space: Audiences, Workforce and LGB portrayal at the BBC**

**Saturday 16 February 2013**

**Parallel Session 4: 9:00-10:30 am**

### **4A: Panel: Counterpublics and alternative spaces**

1. Nicole Engel, The Ohio State University

#### **An Ethic of Love: What Happens When the Queers are Dykes**

##### *Abstract*

My dissertation links research on queer counterpublics with theories of feminist and lesbian ethics. It asks the following question: what kinds of ethical possibilities are generated at sites situated at the current intersection of the lesbian, the feminist, and the queer? I answer this question by examining two sites headed by queer women: the Chicago Dyke March and queer pornography. It is my contention that queer counterpublics such as these are currently mobilizing some of our most trenchant political critiques and relational alternatives - a direct result of the theoretical and activist legacies that inform these sites (the lesbian feminist, radical woman of color, and/or queer of color), and the embodied and economic specificity of the subjects who overwhelmingly create and maintain these counterpublics (lesbian, trans, of color, and/or economically underprivileged). For this conference, I will present my research on the Chicago Dyke March, sharing some initial findings emerging from my recent interviews with CDMC members, past and present.

It is impossible to overestimate the significance of the critical, political, and ethical work "the queer" has inspired over the past 20 years. However, without diminishing the importance of that work, it is necessary that we in the fields of feminist theory and lesbian studies continue to challenge the uncritical canonization of certain scholarship, the adoption of imprecise genealogies, and the continued devaluation of particular sites (the Midwest) and subjects (lesbians, youth, the impoverished, trans, etc.). This project furthers scholarship on the activist perspectives, relational practices, and political imaginings of queer women in the United States. As such, it serves as a corrective to scholarship in the field of queer theory that consistently neglects issues of gender (and race, class, nation), and the practices of women and lesbians. It is my hope that this project will contribute to the lesbian and queer of color scholarship that seeks to decenter the white and the male, the Western and the bourgeois, in the pursuit of ethical and political alternatives for a more just future.

2. CJ Rowe, University of British Columbia

#### **Michigan Womyn's Music Festival: Place Making and the Queer Persistence of Feminism**

##### *Abstract*

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was founded on a philosophical concept that arose out of the women's music movement and radical lesbian feminist politics of the 1970s. Since its inception, the women's movement has moved

through significant changes, from the rise and growth of women's only spaces, women's publications, women's shelters to the closing of women's bookstores and other women's only spaces (Case, 1996). At this point in time, it has become commonplace to hear the proclamation that feminism is at an end, that we are at a time of postfeminism. If feminism has served its purpose and gender equality has been achieved why then does this intentional women's community persist at a time when it, and the movement that it grew out of, is being told that it is done, is at an end, has achieved its goals, and is no longer needed?

This talk will draw on the experiences of longtime Festival workers to explore knowledge concerning the nature of feminism during a time of postfeminism. It will also explore contemporary conceptions of sexual citizenship, queer temporality, and the performance of memory as it is linked through remembrances, performance, and their ritualized tellings (Buckland, 2002; Muñoz, 2009).

#### *Biography*

CJ Rowe is the Diversity Advisor, Women at UBC's Access & Diversity and a PhD Candidate in the Center for Cross Faculty Inquiry in Education at UBC. Through her work as a Diversity Advisor, she uses a feminist intersectional approach to provide leadership in examining policies, processes, and programs through the lens of diversity to facilitate the positive experiences of all women students on campus. Over the years, she has worked and volunteered with national Canadian equality-seeking organizations conducting research, developing policy, and lobbying on such issues as same-sex marriage, transgender and transsexual human rights, women's access to internet communication technologies (ICTs), and violence against women. Her academic research is broadly focused on the persistence of feminism, embodied pedagogy, performance studies, and women's music.

3. Dr. Catherine J. Nash, Brock University and Dr. Andrew Gorman-Murray, University of Western Sydney

#### **Lesbian spaces in transition: insights from Toronto and Sydney**

##### *Abstract*

The paper examines the transformative processes currently underway in the (re)constitution of expressly lesbian urban spaces, through a comparative consideration of lesbian place-making activities in Toronto, Canada and Sydney, Australia. Contemporary geographical scholarship argues that more traditional and recognized gay spaces, such as established gay villages, are in decline as sexual and gendered minorities are able to move more freely and visibly across a variety of urban areas in light of progressive social and legislative changes. While lesbian visibility and place-making has always been distinctive from gay male spaces, lesbians have made use of gay neighbourhoods while claiming alternative residential and commercial spaces within distinctive social networks and visibilities. This paper explores the contexts and possibilities for new, expressly lesbian spaces to emerge within the transformative neoliberal social and political contexts in ways that both contest past formulations while asserting seemingly stable forms of lesbian identities and politics. Through an exploration of the similarities and differences in these processes in Toronto and Sydney, we seek to delineate the complexities of these emergent and expressly sexualized and gendered locations. Building on this investigation, we seek to develop a research

agenda which speaks to contemporary transformations in lesbian lives and spatial politics. We begin to consider lesbian place-making through processes of mobility, which (re)constitute identities, politics and belonging. This promises to contribute to conceptualizations of the sexual and gendered dimensions of mobility, which are often overlooked in 'new mobilities' scholarship.

#### 4B: Panel: Normativity, consumerism and lesbian identity

1. Marta Dora, Jagiellonian University

##### **Invisible but well-equipped: Sex toys for lesbians in Poland**

###### *Abstract*

Poland is a country full of contradictions in the field of sexuality, in particular those of its aspects which relate to women and sexual minorities. As lesbians, we have virtually no rights recognized by law but it does not stop us from sharing households and raising children. Also our sex life seems not to exist, as so called 'homosexual intercourse' is discussed only according to men. And yet, there are numerous places where we can provide ourselves with certain 'aids' and household equipment is not what I mean.

Being a woman and a lesbian obviously has a number of political drawbacks, however, primarily can be source of unique experience and unquestionable fun. I have decided to take a glance at the modern lesbians' beds and ask about whether girls use any 'additional gear' and if so, how happy are they according to the variety and accessibility of such toys in Poland. Is using sex toys O.K.? How and whether the phallic-shaped toys correspond to lesbian's identity? Do women prefer to shop online? Why/why not? Does a gender of a shop assistant matter? Simultaneously I have checked myself what a lesbian has to face when entering a sex store, not always dedicated exclusively to women.

Combining those two fields mentioned, my research consists of two parts. The first one is an online questionnaire focusing on women's (mostly lesbians) preferences according to sex toys, their pros and cons, accessibility, visibility and quality in Poland. The second part of my research is a kind of participant observation based on visiting 15 shops in both Krakow and Warsaw in order to examine, among other things, the attitude towards female client and the accuracy in responding to her needs.

###### *Biography*

Marta Dora - I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Institute of Psychology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. My research interests include the history of sexuality (the history of sexual perversions in particular), sexual education and sexual health.

2. Magdalena Mijas, Jagiellonian University

##### **Ideal and identity: Analysis of lesbians' online personal advertisements.**

###### *Abstract*

My paper will present the results of analysis of personal advertisements published within two months on two main websites dedicated to LGBT people in Poland: [www.innastrona.pl](http://www.innastrona.pl) and [www.kobiety-kobietom.com](http://www.kobiety-kobietom.com) [the latter dedicated exclusively to non-heterosexual women]. Analysis will include only personal advertisements written by and aimed at women. On the basis of distinguished „lesbians' most wanted" and „lesbians' most unwanted" [both expressed in terms of: masculinity/femininity, LGBT community membership, age,

social status, sexual orientation/identity and its specific aspects, emotional and sexual preferences or even hobby of potential partner] as well as personal characteristics, desires, fears and longings revealed by authors of advertisements I intend to reconstruct a portrait of modern Polish lesbian and lesbian relationship focusing on the norm/ideal of lesbian identity, lesbian desire and lesbian love repeatedly revealed in collected material. During further analysis I am going to discuss areas of exclusion and omission inherent in the design of lesbian ideal and identity. All this taking into account the specifics of the Polish social context against which lesbians construct their subjectivities.

#### *Biography*

I am PhD candidate in the Institute of Psychology at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow currently writing a thesis on the concept of sexual inversion in the scientific theories of female homosexuality. My research interests include history of sexuality and sexology, theories of sexual difference in psychoanalysis and feminism and LGBTQ sexualities.

### 3. Megan Chawansky, University of Brighton

#### **The modern lesbian sportgirl: Making space for lesbian subjectivities in sport for development and peace programmes**

##### *Abstract*

This paper examines both academic literature and training materials from within the new and growing Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) movement to highlight the omission of lesbian subjectivities within the movement. In particular, it examines materials from girl-centred programmes to argue that the movement foregrounds discussions of reproduction and sexual health while minimising explorations into the multiple sexualities and complex sexual lives of girls. While the historic linkage of lesbian identities with (certain) sporting practices helps to explain part of this omission, in this paper I suggest that foregrounding discussion of reproduction and sexual health operates to construct a certain kind of safe and appropriate sporting girlhood. This paper concludes with a call for more nuanced discussions of sexualities within the SDP literature and training materials and for conversations that acknowledge cultural and historical complexities surrounding gender, sexualities and bodies.

##### *Biography*

Megan Chawansky is a lecturer in the School of Sport and Service Management at the University of Brighton. Her current research examines the framing of girls and girlhood within the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) movement.

### 4. Corine Taylor (University of Leeds)

#### **Non-normative Gender Identities, Accessibility, and the Privilege of Identity**

##### *Abstract*

My PhD research is concerned with how queer and/or non-heterosexual people who are female-identified, or were assigned female at birth but no longer identify as such, experience, manage, and modify their breasts. Drawing on literature in the fields of cosmetic surgery, trans theory and body modification, and using Cressida Heyes' work on Foucault's theory of normalization and Zowie Davy's concept of 'bodily aesthetics' and distinctions between the 'social,' 'sexual' and 'phenomenological' bodies, my research aims to explore if, and what, norms

around breasts and identity exist in queer and/or non-heterosexual communities and how identities are negotiated in relation to breasted experience and across different social contexts. My fieldwork consisted of thirty semi-structured interviews and this paper will explore one of the themes that has emerged from this research: the idea of access in relation to queer and/or non-normative gender identities.

The use of non-normative terms to describe identity (e.g. 'genderqueer,' 'cisgender' etc.) was common amongst interview participants, which prompted me to consider how people came into contact with these terms. Participation in queer communities (both physical and online) and universities were key sites where people first engaged with these terms and concepts and from this I would suggest that having access to non-normative gender identities entails certain privileges in itself. This paper will explore the idea that having an identity that is different to widely understood and naturalised genders and sexualities is only sustainable when there are people who can understand and/or read the identity, and will address questions concerning who can have alternative gender identities and where these identities can be acknowledged. This will also provides a basis for discussing the usefulness of gender multiplicity as a tool for resisting gender normalisation.

#### *Biography*

Corin Taylor is a third year PhD student in Gender Studies at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, University of Leeds. She received her BA in Women's Studies with Critical Theory from London Metropolitan University (2005) and her MA in Gender Studies (Research) from the University of Leeds (2010). Her research interests include the borderlands between female and trans masculinities, transition vlogs and the use of social media by LGBTQ communities, and subcultural norms surrounding non-heterosexual, female bodies and transmasculine bodies. Her research project, Queer Technologies of the Breast, focuses on the modification and management of breasts, and the body more broadly, by queer and/or non-heterosexual people who self-identify as female or were assigned female at birth but no longer identify as such.

#### **4C: Workshop: Working With Lesbian Visual Texts in Educational Contexts**

**Andrea Francisco Amat**, Professor, Department of Education, Universitat Jaume I de Castellón (Spain) & **Beatriz González de Garay Domínguez**, Department of Media Studies (CAVP I), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain)

Embedded as we are in the information society, media space is growing at a dizzying pace and is increasingly encroaching on our personal and professional lives. The immediate consequence of this growth is the increased power of the media. Media messages can be considered as mirrors of reality, as windows on the world or as constructors of reality. This workshop is based on the idea of the media as constructors of reality, on the influence of the media on people's education and socialization, on the construction of social imaginary, and on ethical choices.

LGTBI community has traditionally been one of the groups the media industry has marginalized, not only through exclusion, but also through the use of

stereotypical images to represent it, thereby generating prejudices and negative attitudes. In these media constructions, lesbians and bisexual women have been doubly discriminated because they belong to two minorities. In fact, until relatively recent times they were almost invisible. The media helped to create the notion of lesbians and bisexual women as non-existent in the social imaginary, and this invisibility perpetuated the discrimination against them and restricted their possibilities of achieving civil rights.

The aim of this workshop is to promote critical and active citizenship by denaturalizing the stereotypes of lesbian and bisexual women constructed by the media and to achieve a new form of literacy able to embrace inclusion.

The study of stereotypes in the media is a useful way of examining the connection between image and ideology. One of the most relevant issues in approaching this subject concerns how stereotypes are constructed by the media, because although stereotypes are cognitively useful and not necessarily negative, they are loaded with ideology as well.

#### **4D: Panel: Lesbians and Ageing**

1. Jill Wilkens, Institute for Social Science Research, London South Bank University

##### **Loneliness and isolation in older lesbians – a discussion of some of the issues**

###### *Abstract*

Several studies suggest that lesbians and gay men suffer disproportionately from loneliness and isolation as they age (Musingarimi, 2008a; Kuyper and Fokkema, 2010). There is also evidence that group or network membership has positive benefits and may serve to reduce isolation and depression (Dietz and Dettlaff, 1997; Jacobs, Rasmussen and Hohman, 1999 and Grossman, 2006). This paper discusses the issue of loneliness and isolation in older lesbians. For my MA dissertation I investigated the impact of attendance at a same-sexuality, same-generation social group on loneliness and isolation in older lesbians. Using a focus group and semi-structured interviews, I explored the lives of ten participants of 'Older & Wilder' a group which meets at the 'Equity Centre' a dedicated LGBT centre in Bradford, West Yorkshire. The research demonstrates that the group offers some respite from loneliness and is highly valued by its members as an opportunity to meet in a safe place and with people with whom they can 'be themselves'. The group and the centre offer many members a sense of 'belonging', although not all members felt equally connected to the group which may be to do with several factors including social class. My research suggests the model of 'social space' offered by the centre is a highly positive one and suggests that the introduction of a range of same-sexuality groups in dedicated centres would be of benefit to sexual minorities of different ages, ethnicities and social class backgrounds.

###### *Biography*

Jill Wilkens graduated from the University of East London in 1986 with a BA in Sociology and then embarked on a career in post-16 education. Jill took a career break in 2010 to study for an MA in Women's Studies (Social Research) at the University of York, exploring the positioning of older lesbians in society, their susceptibility to loneliness and social isolation and their membership of



organised same-sexuality groups. Her MA research focused on an LGBT Centre in Bradford and the benefit of the social provision it offers. She is now undertaking a PhD at London South Bank University where she has an Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) Studentship.

2. Jane Traies, Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Sussex

### **Becoming Visible: Lesbians Over 60**

#### *Abstract*

My doctoral research investigates the lives and experiences of lesbians over 60 in the UK; it relates to this conference's concern with lesbians in the history of sexuality, and with its theme of age, ageing, and generation gaps. Although there is now a small but steady growth of interest in non-heterosexual old age, gay men are better represented than lesbians in such research, and there has until now been no large-scale systematic enquiry into the particular experiences of older lesbians in Britain. My work aims to redress that balance, drawing on a database of some 400 questionnaires and 40 life-stories. One of the results of this work has been to problematise 'old lesbian' as a category. Using intersectionality theory as a means of enquiry, this paper explores the multiplicity of conflicting and overlapping identities which might cluster around the categories 'old,' 'lesbian' and 'woman.'

#### *Biography*

After a working life spent teaching others, Jane became a full-time student herself in 2008. Her MPhil dissertation examined the lack of older lesbian representation in the media and popular culture of 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. Her doctoral research ([www.womenlikethat.co.uk](http://www.womenlikethat.co.uk)) is an attempt to redress that cultural invisibility through an empirical investigation of the lives and experiences of older lesbians.

3. Doreen Fumia, PhD, Department of Sociology, Ryerson University and Sheila Pardoe, Government of Canada

### **Staying Out: Lesbians and Aging in Brighton and Toronto (Canada)**

#### *Abstract*

At a workshop in Brighton, UK on LGBTQ and Aging in April 2012 about 20 people gathered to discuss the concerns facing older LGBTQ folk. In Toronto, Canada the 519 Community Centre runs an active group for older LGBTQ people. The research on which this paper is based addresses issues of Lesbians and Aging in these two communities. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identified and Queer women (and men) have protested for the right to be full citizens, for legitimate visibility, to come out of the closet, get married, have and keep their children - and are now dealing with a return to the closet as we age. While more success has been gained in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that allows us to stake claims to live openly as queer folk what happens when our safe spaces are dismantled? Many queer folk have formed "family" or community in non-traditional ways. As we age, we are returned to more traditional settings under heteronormative healthcare and service providers where our identities and relationships are often unrecognized. Factors such as alienation from our families of origin or depending on the "chosen families" may leave us both vulnerable to fewer supports and straining to access our chosen relationships as our abilities to make decisions on our own behalf erodes. The fear that LGBTQ

people are beginning to live with is that of extreme isolation and increased homo, bi and trans phobia. There is a real need to examine community services and policy makers to understand and account for the requirements and trends of aging populations. The stories told about and by aging LGBTQ women through in-depth interviews offer a rich social history to help us collectively face challenges as we age.

#### *Biographies*

Sheila Pardoe earned her Master's degree from the Immigration & Settlement Studies program at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada. While completing her Master's degree, Sheila focused her research on the socio-political and cultural notions of belonging of racialized lesbian women immigrants in Toronto. Her current research examines ageing lesbian women in Brighton and Toronto and she is also researching with the City of Toronto as the city prepares to host World Pride 2014. Sheila's research interests focus on diverse lesbian women and community cultures as well as urban politics and queer belonging.

Doreen Fumia is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada. Her current research on Lesbians and Ageing examines the social and cultural aspects of ageing in both Brighton and Toronto. She has published in the areas of lesbian motherhood, lesbian identities and same sex marriage. She is active in Canada's only school for LGBTQ Youth, The Triangle Program.

#### 4. Janne Bromseth, Gender Studies Department, Stockholm University **'A family of our own.' Elder lesbian and bisexual women narrating 'family' and close relations**

##### *Abstract*

LGBT persons' life conditions and strategies to create viable lives are historically and culturally situated, and so is the meaning and content of the concept of 'family'. The position of lgbt-people's rights and possibilities as citizens have changed radically over the last 30 years, in the Western world, along with larger structural changes of the organizing and meaning of family, intimacy and close relations (Budgeon & Roseneil 2004). The term chosen families was established in gay subcultures during the 70-ies, referring to families not restricted to blood relatives, but to different variants of important close relations, including friends, partners, lovers and ex-lovers, pets, biological/adoptive children as well as accepting biological relatives (Weston 1989). It also often included lgbt- and feminist-communities. Weston argues that the concept of chosen family thus puts weight on the agency of the individual to act outside of the prescribed paths of relational hierarchies and virtues of which lives and relations are considered real and valuable. The notion of choice have been criticized by several researchers over the years to follow and the social, economic and cultural resources as limits of choice, in particular as related to older age (Heaphy 2010). This paper builds on results from a Swedish qualitative study of the life conditions and resistance strategies of elder lesbian and bisexual women in Sweden. How do they relate to the concept of 'family'? How is it filled with meaning in negotiating, reproducing and contesting normative concepts of what family is, in discourse and practice? In the paper I will in particular focus on the

conflicting relations of the biological family in the past and the present – parents, children and grandchildren in particular, and the experiences of their conditions. How is heteronormativity and homophobia verbalized in narrating close relations and what is at stake?

#### *Biography*

Janne Bromseth, PhD, has been researching lesbian live and subcultures since 2001. Her dissertation, 'Genre trouble and the body that mattered. Constructions of gender, sexuality, identity and the body in a Scandinavian mailing list community for lesbian and bisexual women,' (2006), looked into the negotiation of group boundaries and norms of lesbian subculture in a mediated group-environment. Since 2009 she has been working on a project on the life conditions and resistance strategies of elder and younger queer, lesbian and bisexual women (18-30 and 60-94) (with Fanny Ambjörnsson). She has in particular focussed on the gendered and sexual conditions of aging amongst the elder generation of informants, and the complex co-constructions of heteronormativity, age and time in the life narratives.

#### 4E: Panel: Lesbian identity formations and disruptions

1. Sally O'Driscoll, English and Women's Studies, Fairfield University

##### **Contemporary Femme Identity**

###### *Abstract*

Femmes in the twenty-first century remain somewhat ambiguous in terms of identity and self-definition. In this presentation, I begin with classic definitions of femme identity from the late twentieth century, such as Joan Nestle's work. Nestle's essays map out a language of sexual positioning that theoretically separates sex from gender for femme identity, and thus opens up a more flexible interpretation, reclaiming butch and femme for contemporary queers. Yet the development of genderqueer identities in the last 15 years has complicated her argument. More recently, femme transwomen have further modified concepts of femme identity. As a self-identified femme, I find these discussions important for lesbian identity across a generational divide. The recent Femme Conference (held in Baltimore, Maryland, USA in August 2012) presented a vigorous discussion of how the very deliberate presentation of femininity practiced by femme transwomen modifies the category for all lesbians. This presentation then, begins with some basic theoretical grounding on the traditional meanings of femme identity and explores recent complications produced by genderqueers and femme transwomen. I conclude with some conclusions about the continuing vitality of femme identity across generations and its complex and different meanings for those who claim it.

2. Florence Binard, Université Paris Diderot, Sorbonne Paris Cité, France.

##### **Lesbian Resistance to Eugenics and New Psychology in *Surplus* (1924) by Sylvia Stevenson**

###### *Abstract*

This lesbian novel by Sylvia Stevenson is one of the rare inter-war novels that denounced what was then called "the new psychology". Sally and Averil, two former MT drivers during the First World War have set up home together in the countryside where they meet Dr. Barry Hope, whom they befriend but who soon

becomes a rival for Sally. In the unequal battle that will oppose them, Sally will have to face alone the society that reproaches her for her 'selfish attitude' in attempting to deprive the woman she loves of the right to marry and have children.

In this novel Stevenson/Sally aims to deconstruct the discourse on sexual instincts and show its incoherence. Public opinion praises the maternal instinct which, in women as in animals, is supposed to surpass everything, but on the other hand, it condemns the killing instinct. In the first case, Nature is considered as all powerful and wonderful whereas in the second case it is seen as dangerous. Women are assimilated to animals in that women/females obey their instincts whereas Man is a superior animal thanks to his capacity to control his instincts. According to Stevenson/Sally the maternal instinct does not exist, it is a construction of what she calls « paterfamilias ». But in the name of science, society worships « Pure Nature » and stigmatises women who do not feel the need to marry accusing them of endangering the « race » by their asexuality. The aim of this paper will be to show through the example of this novel how women constructed a feminist defence of lesbianism.

#### *Biography*

Florence Binard is a Senior Lecturer in British history and gender studies at the Université Paris-Diderot, Sorbonne Paris Cité. She has published widely on the history of sexuality in late nineteenth and twentieth century Britain.

3. Lital Pascar, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel.

#### **Reading the Lesbian Romance, Leaving the Lesbian Romance**

##### *Abstract*

This paper examines the reception of Lesbian romance literature by Lesbian Israeli women of various social, economic, and age groups, in order to ask broader questions about the interrelations of subgenre consumption and processes of identification in sexual minority cultures. Based on fieldwork within the Israeli Lesbian community, and using insights from cultural and feminist studies of reception, the paper traces the unfolding of Lesbian romance reading within individual readers' lives as well as across a specific community, focusing on differences and distinctions in consumption and identification. The analysis addresses key questions such as what is a lesbian text, how is it identified, used, and interpreted as such by Lesbian readers at specific moments in their lives. The interviews show that a significant portion of the participants construct their lesbian identity using a progression narrative, that constructs a one-way movement from indistinct consumption of lesbian text around the 'getting out of the closet' stage, to a more selective pattern of consumption in the current stage of the participant's lives. The turning point toward selective reading was marked by the participants as part of a "lesbian maturation process" they went through. My claim is that these consumption patterns are a consequence of the participant's aspiration to construct their lesbian identity as a stable and consolidated one, through the creation of a linear lesbian maturation narrative.

##### *Biography*

I'm currently working on my M.A. thesis in the Cultural Studies department of the Hebrew university of Jerusalem. My B.A was in psychology and sociology in Tel-Aviv University. I'm on Dean's list, and recently received a scholarship of excellence from the Lafer Institute for gender studies in the Hebrew university of

Jerusalem, and another one from the Mandel institute for excellence in advanced studies in the humanities. My main research interests are gender and queer issues and their interaction with popular culture. This paper includes part of my thesis paper and concerns the same issues. I intend to elaborate on these subjects in my future PhD research. In the last two years I've planned and produced the first and second queer studies conferences to take place in the Hebrew university of Jerusalem: "Mind the Gap". In my spare time I volunteer as an activist in the Israeli LGBTQ community.

#### 4F: Artistic and Filmic Presentations

9.00-9.30

Deborah Alma Wheeler, Michigan State University

Artist presentation

Abstract

The power of consumer products/objects to move beyond their conscious intentions is as obvious as it is insidious; for example, the apparently random size and proportion of the a video game joystick controller or the delicate layers found tucked inside a folded wallet. The libido has brought several veiled undercurrents of meaning to the forms found on the production line. These sensual and objectified products/objects reach from the realm of utility to the realm of trophy or ornament. In connection to the objects themselves, I have purposely used mannequins or artificial women to reinforce the role of the consumer as well as to illustrate the significance involved in gestural movement of these seductive marketing tools.

One of my particular bodies of work, the Womankinn Series, features a team of such 'artificial women'. These sculptures therefore continue the discourse surrounding 'women's social domination' by juxtaposing phallogocentric objects with leather

strap-ons. This mixing of hetero and homo erotic sensibilities is an effort to not only disrupt that discourse, but also to harness the powerful and culturally hypnotic object that is the phallus. Products/objects themselves reference a language and conform to a system that is produced in tandem with the object. When objects are removed from the material frames they exist invisibly in, the shifting context exposes them brightly in a new light, one in which the viewer can begin to perceive them differently. Such an example would be my S/Hims series, which focuses on the poetic nature of the word/language and also the functionality of the object. Which in turn exemplifies the spaces in between and references the notion of a third gender. Inevitably, objects set the stage for a hidden cultural curriculum, one that regulates individuals and perpetuates the norms and forms that accompany sex and gender.

**4F: Film: The Purple Place Dir: Ana Belen Jarrin, Purple shoelaces Dir: Steph M. Anderson , A field (of interconnected realities) Dir: paula roush and maria lusitano**

Keynote: Robyn Pierce (10:30-11:00 am) Lip Service (BBC3) and social media communities.

**Parallel Session 5: 11:15-12:45 pm**

## **5A: Performance (double bill): Gory Gory Alleluia!**

Rosie Lugosi, The Lesbian Vampire Queen AND Bird la Bird: Holding Court with Bird la Bird

Rosie Lugosi

*'Greetings Mortals... I do hope you're all sitting uncomfortably.'*

Celebrated as 'spanktastically superb!' by **Bizarre** magazine, Rosie Lugosi is a mistress of musical mayhem. She is an electrifying comic cabaret singer, one of the UK's most in-demand femme-cees, and certainly the kinkiest. Not content with five solo collections of poetry under her glittery belt and debut novel, *The Palace of Curiosities*, winning the inaugural **Mslexia** Novel Competition, she has been tantalising audiences worldwide with her unique blend of camp humour and twisted tunes for ten years. She revels in subversive parodies of Andy Williams, Shirley Bassey and Gloria Gaynor (to name a few poor victims) in a queer-vamp-fetish style. She has appeared throughout the UK as well as Europe and the USA, and sings with cult goth band **The March Violets**. She features in both Rachel Adams' photography project **The Modern Lesbian**, and **Femmes of Power** (Del la Grace Volcano & Ulrika Dahl). [www.rosielugosi.com](http://www.rosielugosi.com)

*Biography*

Winner of:

**Dada Award for Performance Artist of the Year**

**Erotic Oscar for Solo Performer**

*Press Quotes*

'Splendidly eclectic... Britain's only radical lesbian separatist feminist bitch goddess top femme vampire queen' **Skin 2**

'The English undead lesbian singer-comic icon'. **Time Out New York**

'A flamboyant hostess. Six feet of immaculate PVC... Rosie's superior attitude and school-marm promises to see us after the show repeatedly win her fans... she's never had anything but squeals of delight from her audience. Terrifyingly terrific!' **The Pink Paper**

'Six foot tall in six inch stilettos, she lays into the audience with a finely judged battery of insults and double entendres – and they love it.' **Diva**

Bird la Bird

Bird la Bird is an artist who straddles comedy and performance art, she has been described as a "Queer Pearly Queen" and a "Haute Couture Fishwife". Bird favours collaboration and works with a host of artists and designers to create surreal and satirical performances. Bird's performances explore couple culture, austerity, adoption, terrorism, catholicism, class, feminism, and queer femininity. Bird was a collaborator on The FeMuseum project, a performative archive exploring Femme legacy and lineage led by Lois Weaver. She often works with

the Duckie collective and appeared in their anti-capitalist neo-panto "Copyright Christmas" at the Barbican Theatre in 2011. Bird graces the cover of *Femmes of Power* by Ulrika Dahl and Del LaGrace Volcano (2009). She founded Bird Club in 2006 with Maria Rosa Young, and went on to organize Bird Pride, the UK's first-ever Femme presence at the annual Pride march.

Bird Club was a shell-breaking, queer femme cabaret night which blurred the boundaries between art, politics and partying. Bird will discuss why she prefers clubs to gallery spaces. In this "eggcciting" lecture, Bird will hold forth on her favorite subject—herself—in a witty and amusing manner. She will also show documentation of recent shows—in other words, lots of images and video of herself. You are invited to join in and ask questions, if you can get a word in edgeways.

### 5B: Panel: Queering Families

1. Dr Kate O'Riordan, University of Sussex and University of California Santa Cruz  
***'Two of my parents were lesbians' and other stories...***

#### *Abstract*

Many adults in the LGBT and queer community have had LGBT parents, guardians or significant carers in their lives. This presentation draws on autobiography, interviews with LGBT adults, and on media sources to put together an understanding of some of these experiences and to explore questions about how to engage with this material. It aims to open up some of the complexity and unpredictability of these experiences and to develop this topic for audience discussion and participation. It asks about the representation of experience in relation to those of today's modern lesbians and other LGBT people who may sometimes have had lesbian parents. Stories about intergeneration community and kinship are not often represented or accessed either in community media or in mainstream representations of LGBT lives. This is linked the relative invisibility of older lesbians. The rich literature on LGBT kinship sees work on representing family and youth, the doing of queer parenting, and access to IVF and adoption figure. But surprisingly perhaps the experience of previous generations of queers who had queer parents is largely invisible. After all, coming out is usually about coming out from the straight family to the LGBT family and community. Although there are multiple types of LGBT visibility and invisibility addressing this particular gap is important for today's increasingly familial and networked politics.

2. Julia Erhart, PhD, Department of Screen and Media, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

### ***Bearing Children: Representations of 'Family' in Queer Theories***

#### *Abstract*

Feminist theorists, historians, and historians of sexuality have long been interested in notions of the family as a technology in the fostering and maintenance of heterosexuality and gender norms. The construction of 'family' as a powerful yet oppressive force can be seen in countless literary and philosophical texts throughout the twentieth century, by writers such as Virginia Woolf, Adrienne Rich, Monique Wittig, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and numerous others. These words from Patricia Murphy Robinson (contributor to

*Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* 1984) are emblematic of an on-going but seemingly omnipresent opposition between the apparently burdensome and repressive production of children (on the one hand) and the pleasures of sexuality (on the other): 'the essence of the matter is that we work for and in the interests of the bourgeoisie and we bear children for that class to use.... This conference... is an opportunity to share our longing for sexual pleasure without the responsibility of bearing children to be exploited by males and the bourgeoisie' (252 – 3).

The terms of the opposition between family-making (seen as repressive) and sexuality (seen as liberatory) see their most recent incarnation in the area of research on queer temporality, that includes texts by Elizabeth Freeman, Lee Edelman, and Judith Halberstam. Identifying cultural investment in the future as a) normative and b) emblematised most typically in the social investment in children, queer temporality theorists essentialize 'family' to indicate all parents living with children, regardless of sexuality, intra-parenting relationships, number of parents, and so on. In so doing, they leave no room for investigating how differently-configured families might trouble the status quo. The aim of this presentation is both to identify the representation of 'family' within queer theories and to explore moments of such 'troubling' in works by photographer Catherine Opie and others.

#### *Biography*

Julia Erhart is Head of the Screen and Media Department at Flinders University, in Adelaide Australia. She researches and teaches in the areas of Gender and Screen, Non-fiction media, and Australian Screen comedy. Articles by her have appeared in numerous anthologies and journals including *The Queer Screen Reader* (Oxford UP, 2007), *Camera Obscura*, *Screen*, and *Screening the Past*. An article by her on the TV comedies of Chris Lilley is forthcoming in *Continuum*, and an essay on the subject of donor conception is forthcoming in an edited anthology to be published by Palgrave, entitled *Queer Love*. Julia is currently at work on a manuscript on queer families and repro-normativity. Email: [julia.erhart@flinders.edu.au](mailto:julia.erhart@flinders.edu.au)

3. Hila Amit, SOAS, University of London

#### **Free Radicals: choosing a non-birth life among Palestinian Lesbians in Israel**

##### *Abstract*

In her paper "Pro-Natalism and its 'Cracks': Narratives of Reproduction and Childfree Lifestyles in Israel" (2010), Orna Donath identifies Israel as a Western country with a pro-natalist ideology: a complex of beliefs, attitudes and practices that encourage reproduction. Likewise, the Palestinian society in the 48 borders of Israel have assigned motherhood a significant place, as in the Jewish society, but a parallel research focusing on Palestinian women's refusal to give birth haven't been written so far. On the contrary, the research dealing with Palestinian women haven't addressed motherhood as an option or as something to be put under questioning.

In her writing, Bell hooks articulated the marginal location, a liminal space in all of its meaning, an unsafe place which the individuals who occupy it are always at risk. Hooks also discuss the resistance potential that lies in this position. The



marginalized location enables to create and invent locations of radical openness, which allow the outcast individuals to survive within them. In many aspects, one might think of Palestinian lesbians as occupying hooks' marginal location, or what Homi Bahaba called Thirdspace.

Interviews with Palestinian lesbians indicate that these women perceive their sexual identity as a core identity that constructs and develops their personality, releasing them from marginal positions of power and enabling them more freedom of action, both in their original Palestinian communities and in Jewish space.

These women's choice not to get pregnant allows us to think of their refusal of birth-giving as a choice driven by radical unique thinking that cuts across discourses. The women address their personal level, disconnected from politics and ideological choices. However, they all frame their individual choices within a political discourse and a social context in which oppression of women stems, among other things, from their being mothers.

Based on these women's narratives, I will present a potential for a radical thinking of parenting, mothering and family structure. I will articulate how marginal position allows re-building of family norms. Specifically, I will discuss how this position allows creating a unique and radical discourses, which rise from concepts of kinship, and deals with feelings of commitment, solidarity and support, even though they do not necessarily based on biological connections.

#### *Biography*

I'm a PhD Candidate in the center for gender studies in the SOAS, University of London. I'm working under the supervision of Dr. Raul Rao (working title: Queer Palestinians in the West: Home and Away). I recently finished my M.A (magna cum laude) at the Gender and Women studies program, Tel Aviv University. My thesis "Free Radicals: choosing not to be mothers in Palestinian lesbian community in Israel", was written under the supervision of Professor Hanna Herzog. I was granted twice (2010-2010) an excellence Scholarship: Full living scholarship, The Faculty of Humanities, Tel-Aviv University. In 2011-2012, I participated in a research group at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute dealing with Arab Feminism.

#### 5C: Panel: Back to Sappho, and again: Lesbian spaces, lesbian times and community in Skala Eressos, Lesbos

In this session we aim to foreground and explore the significance of community, place, space and recurrent time – coming backs, coming together and coming home – in lesbian lives. With scholarly, artistic and activist attachments, the presenters engage with Skala Eressos, Lesbos, the birthplace of Sappho, as a venue for lesbian tourism, attracting women-loving travellers from all over the world since the 60s. How can community evolve in such an apparently fragile context, where women come and go every week, and how are boundaries of community negotiated? This will be looked into by taking the practices of “the Skala Women’s Rock Group” as point of departure, an open group of women who go swimming every morning in the sea to ‘the Rock’, a big cliff 400 meters from the shore of Skala. Hundreds of women of different generations, home places, birth places and subcultures have been swimming in the group since its

beginnings in 2010. We ask – what makes the spaces and times of community and how do we inhabit them?

1. Brady Burroughs, Critical Studies in Architecture, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, KTH, Stockholm

**Meditations on lesbians who meditate on Lesvos: An exploration on the role of vulnerability, desire and empowerment in the inhabitation of lesbian space**

*Abstract*

At the end of the beach in the tiny Greek village Skala Eressos, Lesvos, Sappho's birthplace, stands the main blue-stuccoed building of Zorba the Buddha - the beachfront café where The Skala Women's Rock Group gather every morning at 10 am for their daily swim and breakfast. From this place, springs a series of spaces where lesbian women bath together.

Through short fictional *meditations* on specific situations encountered within this context, this paper looks at how our most vulnerable, passionate and empowering moments affect and transform the spaces we inhabit. Key theoretical references are bell hooks' writing on spirituality and community building, Sara Ahmed's ideas on orientation and inhabitation in describing systems of social norms, and Monique Wittig's *The Lesbian Body* as an important fictional source of inspiration. This work explores *affect* in the inhabitation of space and fictional modes of writing as a critical methodology, to examine contemporary sites of study in an ethically responsible way.

*Biography*

Brady Burroughs is an architect, teacher and researcher at the School of Architecture and the Built Environment, KTH, Stockholm, within Critical Studies. She has taught design studio in both foundation studies and masters level since 2000. Recently, she began a PhD project on "women only" bathing places. More specifically, this research is based on a case-study around The Skala Women's Rock Group, an all women swimming group, located in Skala Eressos, Lesvos, Greece. Her research bridges the gap between architecture and gender, with the support of feminist and queer theory. Key references are the works of poststructural theorist Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti's writings on nomadic subjectivities and Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenological approach to things and bodies. A parallel, not unrelated, interest in Brady's research lies in the experimentation and development of critical pedagogies within architectural education. A related publication on these themes "Do Bodies Matter?: Stone, water, light, skin and material performativity in Therme Vals" (2007) can be found in the DIVA webarchive: <http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?searchId=1&pid=diva2:197264>

2. Tzeli Hadjidimitriou, photographer & travel writer

***Dancing Nudes – L'incontro (the meeting)*** light and the female form through underwater photography in Skala Eressos, Lesvos, Greece

*Abstract*

This series of photos is an experimentation of the play between light, water and skin. The *Dancing Nudes* are a series of underwater female nudes, photographed over a period of 4 years within the waters of Skala Eressos, Lesvos.

The photos arise out of play and curiosity, rather than choreography and direction. With my camera, I capture the sensual transformation of female bodies within the weightlessness of the salty sea, where bodies follow other rules under the water – due to the distortion of light and movement of the sea. They find the transcendental qualities of the ancient goddesses, leaving behind the ideal forms of the modern day. It is an eulogy to the female body in all its forms and representations in a free and flowing way.

The presentation consists of a 10 minute slideshow of images accompanied by the music of an all-female music group I collaborated with from Italy called Shivadiva.

#### *Biography*

Tzeli Hadjidimitriou was born in Mytilene, Lesbos. She holds a degree in Economics and pursued further studies in the field of Direction of Photography for the Cinema, in Rome. In 1985, on a scholarship, she attended a series of seminars by Michelangelo Antonioni on the art of cinematography. A professional photographer in Greece since 1988, she has worked in television and also in the cinema industry, collaborating with many film and photography directors.

Although mostly described as an “artistic landscape photographer”, her “lens” has also focused extensively on artworks, interiors and archaeological subjects and she collaborates with museums, galleries, architects and publishing houses. Her work is presented regularly in individual and group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. She is a regular contributor of articles and photographs to several newspapers and magazines.

She has published 3 travel guides and 6 photographic books, all centering on architectural, historic and cultural places of Greece. Some titles include: *In Communion With Stone, The Rural Architecture of Lesbos* (2009), *A girl's guide to Lesbos* (2012), *39 Coffee Houses and a Barber's shop* (1997), *Urban Housing of the '30s; Modern Architecture in Pre-war Athens* (1998).

3. Faye Rickett, activist, Skala Eressos, Lesbos, Greece

### **Reach out and Touch – The flowering of Community: activism through community building**

#### *Abstract*

The Skala Women's Rock Group is a woman only swimming group, based in a small Greek village called Skala Eressos in Lesbos, Greece. This village is iconic as the birthplace of Sappho, the high priestess of Aphrodite, the 10<sup>th</sup> Muse and the source of our identity as “lesbians”.

The modern female companions of Sappho are creating a unique experience of lesbian community. The Skala Women's Rock Group was set up in 2010 to reach out and welcome all “lesbians” home. It provides a safe place to enter into community with other lesbians from all over the world; offering a reference group to exchange stories, life experiences, explore our creativity and develop our powerful potential as a collective.

I would like to present a digital documentation of the Skala Women's Rock Group and the many activities that have arisen out of the community and creativity of the group.

#### *Biography*

Faye Rickett completed her career in the City of London, as a change manager and productivity consultant. She is qualified with a BA in Social Psychology and Social Studies and a MA in Strategic Human Resources and Change Management, specialising in learning organisations. She has spent time researching the Findhorn Spiritual Community, Scotland exploring alternative community building. In 2008 she moved to Skala Eressos, Lesvos, Greece where she has been an activist and community builder as one of the founders and main organizers of The Skala Women's Rock Group.

Chair and discussant:

**Isabelle Dussauge** is a researcher and activist and works at the Center for Gender Knowledge, University of Uppsala, Sweden. Dussauge holds a Ph.D. in the history of science and conducts research in the history and sociology of medicine and of the body. She has previously been working at the Dept for historical studies (KTH, Stockholm) and the Dept of thematic studies / technology and social change (Univ. of Linköping).

**Janne Bromseth, PhD**, is a researcher and a teacher at the Gender Studies Department at Stockholm University. She has been researching lesbian lives and subcultures since 2001. Her dissertation, 'Genre trouble and the body that mattered. Constructions of gender, sexuality, identity and the body in a Scandinavian mailing list community for lesbian and bisexual women,' (2006), looked into the negotiation of group boundaries and norms of lesbian subculture in a mediated group-environment. Since 2009 she has been working on a project on the life conditions and resistance strategies of elder and younger queer, lesbian and bisexual women (18-30 and 60-94) (with Fanny Ambjörnsson). She has in particular focussed on the gendered and sexual conditions of aging amongst the elder generation of informants, and the complex co-constructions of heteronormativity, age and time in the life narratives. She has a particular interest for queer and lesbian feminism as social movements and resistance cultures, and the continuity and changes taking place over time and across generations of non-heterosexual and queer feminists in creating alternative life scripts and communities.

#### 5D: Panel: **Making Art, Living Life in the Mid' Twentieth Century**

1. Mark Cornwall, University of Southampton, UK.

##### ***Exiles of Love: Lída Merlínová and the World of the Czech Lesbian, 1918-1945***

###### *Abstract*

This paper is a first analysis for a western audience of the work of the prolific Czech writer Lída Merlínová (1906-88, born Ludmila Skokanová). In 1929 she published the first lesbian novel in Czech, *Vyhnaní lásky* [*Exiles of Love*], which sold out in a few months. Highly praised for its realism by the Czech decadent poet and homosexual campaigner Jiří Karásek, it secured for Merlínová a post-bag of three hundred female 'tragic letters and confessions'. Despite this sudden impact, the novel has received virtually no attention in Czech or any other language. Like all of Merlínová's works it was banned under Communism after

1948. Only recently (first in the official Czech literary lexicon of 2000), has Merlínová rated a mention. In the 1930s she had written a range of novels for young women and teenagers. Some of them promoted the New Czech Woman with a lesbian sub-text, notably the *'Marie and Marta'* series or the 1938 novel *Čínská dívka* about a Chinese woman trying to cope in an alien central European environment. This paper then will assess the lesbian dimension of Merlínová's writings, while also evaluating her contributions to the Czech journal for homosexual emancipation, *Hlas sexuální menšiny* [*The Voice of the Sexual Minority*]. Lastly there is the context of her private and professional life – as a dancer in the Czech city of Olomouc, turned author in Prague, who had a marriage of convenience but then (post-1945) found a female partner for the rest of her life. The paper draws on some key novels and plays and on a range of vivid illustrations from Merlínová's untapped archive in Prague, in order to assess an unknown 20<sup>th</sup> century lesbian writer.

#### *Biography*

Mark Cornwall is Professor of Modern European History at the University of Southampton. He specialises in the history of East-Central Europe including the history of homosexuality in that region. His latest book on that theme is *The Devil's Wall: The Nationalist Youth Mission of Heinz Rutha* (Harvard UP, 2012).

2. Danielle Cooper, York University, Canada.

#### **Agnes Martin and the Critical Sexuality of Abstraction**

##### *Abstract*

From October to September 2011, the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. hosted an exhibition entitled, "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture." The show featured a never-before exhibited work by the modern artist Agnes Martin, entitled "Nude Portrait" from circa 1949. Including this work in the exhibition was not only striking because Martin's famous works from the 1960s onwards strictly adhere to an abstract, line-based and often grid-like idiom, but also because Martin spent most of her life reclusively in the New Mexico desert and never directly spoke about her sexuality or romantic life.

Inspired by Martin's presence in the Hide/Seek exhibition, this paper traces the ways in which Martin and her work are discussed in relation to gender and sexuality, highlighting recent claims that she was lesbian, queer, and/or sexually "different." The goal of this paper, therefore, is not to make pronouncements about Martin's sexuality or gender presentation, but rather, to develop a critical approach that considers how sexuality and gender operates within interpretations of Martin's work. In doing so, I will not only reveal how such claims reflect assumptions made about gender and sexuality in art scholarship, but also demonstrate how certain sexual categories – most notably, the ambiguous "sexual difference" and "queer" – are privileged over others – such as "lesbian" or "asexual" – for specific political ends.

##### *Biography*

Danielle Cooper is a doctoral student at the Graduate Program in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University. Her research focuses on LGBTQ identity and community representation in cultural and information-based institutional contexts. She also holds a Masters degree (M.I.) from the

Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto in collaboration with the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies and an undergraduate degree in Fine Art History (B.A. Hons) from the University of Toronto. Her recent research includes ethnographic projects at the Pride Library at the University of Western Ontario and the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn, New York.

3. Tamsin Whitehead, University of New Hampshire, USA.

**Lesbian Self-representation and the Politics of Honesty in Valentine Ackland's Autobiography, *For Sylvia***

*Abstract*

In 1949, the poet Valentine Ackland wrote "*For Sylvia, An Honest Account*," an autobiography she addresses in the title to her partner, Sylvia Townsend Warner. It is a rare and remarkable record for its time, yet it has not received the critical attention it deserves. In this paper I examine some of the possible reasons for this. I argue for the importance of the work, which has value not only as an historical example of lesbian autobiographical writing from a woman who grew up during the Modernist period and lived through two world wars, but also in terms of its relevance to current tensions in queer politics today.

In *For Sylvia*, Ackland is open about her lesbianism, expresses joy in the discovery of her love for women, and is determinedly gender-transgressive. However, she is also committed to being truthful about what may be seen as negative aspects of her life: promiscuity, alcoholism, depression and self-disgust. This could explain why her autobiography has not gained greater recognition even within queer circles, as emphasis becomes increasingly placed upon positive representation of queer lives as a means of counteracting homophobic opinion, most particularly in the current fight for the legalization of lesbian and gay partnerships.

This drive toward admitting only positive images of queer people acknowledges the political nature of representation, but to disavow the difficult and painful struggles that queer people experience is to depoliticize those struggles, and the feelings and effects they produce. The political once again becomes the personal and is driven into invisibility. This is to place a part of queer lives and histories back in the closet. It is to deny a part of who we are.

*Biography*

Tamsin Whitehead is a Lecturer in the Women's Studies Program at the University of New Hampshire. She is also a PhD candidate in English Literature at the same institution. Her current scholarship focuses on the significance and radical potential of queer self-representation. She is particularly interested in how the relationship between the experimental form and expression of the complexity of queer identities functions as social and political intervention. Recent publications include *Foreign Bodies and Intimate Encounters: Politics and Identity in Gregg Bordowitz's Fast Trip, Long Drop and Habit*; *Intersex and Intersections: Gender, Sex and Sexuality in Lucia Puenzo's XXY*; and *Rejecting the Margins of Difference: Strategies of Resistance in the Documentary Films of Pratibha Parmar*.

**5E Panel: Desiring Identities – Sex and Lesbian History**

1. Linda Garber, Santa Clara University, California, USA.

**The Fulfillment of the Love': Writing Sex into Lesbian History**

*Abstract*

Before we had Ann Lister's diaries, there was almost no trace of lesbian sex in history, besides pornography for men, and therefore little concrete evidence of lesbian history at all. In the mainstream, proof of 'genital sexual experience' is the *sine qua non* of believable 'lesbian existence' in history. Lesbian scholars may not need or be able to prove that Roosevelt and Hickok, or Pankhurst and Smyth, were having sex; still, lesbians need lesbian sex in texts - for pleasure, but also for a sense of self, for validation - and we frequently find it in literature. Barney needed Sappho; Grumbach needed The Ladies; Lorde needed Carriacou women whose 'love [for] each other is legend.' We need Barney, Grumbach, and Lorde. In some sense, there is no modern lesbian without her counterpart in the past.

Even though 'we are everywhere,' it's important to see that we were there as well, and one way we reassure ourselves is through historical fiction. Where the historian's profession limits her to surmise, the novelist's requires her to describe, and it's easy to guess whose books enjoy wider readership. Researching a monograph on lesbian historical fiction, I began to see a pattern of sexual encounters, from prestigious novels to titillating 'Bold Strokes' romance titles. My book will discuss 'historiographic metafiction,' failed recuperations of the American Western, confluences of trans and lesbian histories -- and the central chapter, titled 'An Interlude,' explores the importance of sex to the lesbian historical imagination that underpins modern lesbian identity. The talk I propose, like the chapter, is an experimental blend of scholarly analysis and creative pastiche of sex scenes from the novels. With this paper I aim to entertain as well as edify, to scratch the persistent itch that, according to one author, requires 'the fulfillment of the love.'

*Biography*

Linda Garber is the author of *Identity Poetics: Race, Class, and the Lesbian-Feminist Roots of Queer Theory* and the editor of *Tilting the Tower: Lesbians / Teaching / Queer Subjects*. She is a contributor to several volumes, including *The Lesbian Premodern*, and she recently published the first entry on lesbian poetry ever to be included in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. She is a co-founder of *Out There*, the first conference in the United States of Catholic university staff and faculty working on queer issues. She is an associate professor of Women's and Gender Studies, and the Director of the Critical Gender Studies Research Initiative, at Santa Clara University in California.

2. Caroline Gonda, St Catharine's College, Cambridge, UK.

**The Epitome of Sapphism and the First Modern Lesbian: Anne Damer and Anne Lister**

*Abstract*

This paper focuses on the contrasting stories of two women who in different ways challenge what Terry Castle mischievously calls the "no lesbians before 1900" myth (Castle, 1993): the sculptor Anne Damer (1748-1828) and the Yorkshire heiress Anne Lister (1791-1840).

Anne Lister (1791-1840) is frequently though contentiously referred to as the first modern lesbian. Following the extraordinary impact of her sexually frank



diaries, first brought to light by Helena Whitbread in 1988, Lister has often been made to bear the whole evidentiary burden of proving lesbian or proto-lesbian existence in the early nineteenth century, and James Kent's 2010 film *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister* reinforced the impression of Lister as an isolated figure. Yet as Stephen Colclough's work has shown (Colclough, 2010) she was part of a network of intimate female relations sustained in part through shared practices of queer reading.

In contrast to Anne Lister, Anne Damer left no record of sexual relations with other women, but her same-sex intimacies nevertheless made her the subject of lampoons, jokes and scurrilous epigrams from the 1770s to the 1790s. As Emma Donoghue states (Donoghue, 2010), Damer was seen as "not just a Sapphist, but the epitome of Sapphism": a contemporary, Hester Thrale Piozzi, wrote in 1795 that "'Tis a joke in London now to say such a one visits Mrs Damer." Regardless of any private sense of sexual identity, Donoghue argues, Damer was "haunted for more than two decades by the *social* identity of a woman who desired women". Piozzi's description of Damer as "a lady much suspected for liking her own sex in a criminal way" suggests an identity based on *desire* rather than sexual acts.

#### *Biography*

Caroline Gonda is a Fellow and Director of Studies at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. She is the author of *Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth* (1996) and co-editor of *Queer People: Negotiations and Expressions of Homosexuality 1700-1800* (2007, with Chris Mounsey) and *Lesbian Dames: Sapphism in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2010, with John Beynon). She is the co-organizer of the biennial Queer People conference series held at Christ's College, Cambridge, which she co-founded with Chris Mounsey in 2002 and now runs with Steve Joy. She has published on contemporary Scottish lesbian writing, twentieth-century lesbian theory, lesbian feminist literary criticism, and representations of the lesbian in fiction. Her current research is focused on lesbian narrative possibilities and the queer work of allusion from the eighteenth century to the present day.

3. Anna Borgos, HAS Institute for Psychology, Budapest and Labrisz Lesbian Association, Budapest

#### **The *Amor lesbicus* in the medical literature and social reality of pre-war Hungary**

##### *Abstract*

In my presentation, I am going to explore the reception of lesbian attraction as represented in the psychiatric and psychoanalytic literature available in Hungary in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period is transitional in this sense, too: we can find pathologisation, searching for biological explanations, as well as the first human rights and liberating discourses. The structure of the texts is quite typical: if they mention women at all, they usually discuss the lesbian "types", the "origin" and "function" of same-sex love, the potentials of "curing", the spaces of the lesbian subculture, and some of them also represent the beginning of a human rights discourse.

I will also introduce some Hungarian pre-war cases of female same-sex love available in the sources. Besides briefly presenting the cases of Sándor/Sarolta Vay, Cécile Tormay, and Sophie Török, I will also reflect on the theoretical



problem of present-day denominations of same-sex attractions between women of an earlier historical period. Behind the different labels we can find different concepts of lesbianism and different historical approaches. One group of arguments claims that all women attracted to their own sex are forerunners of today's lesbians. From another point of view, this "over-rehabilitating" attitude seems ahistoric and generalizing, covering a whole series of shades and self-definitions developed in different social circumstances.

#### *Biography*

Anna Borgos is a psychologist and women's historian. She is a fellow at the Research Institute for Psychology, Budapest. She holds a PhD in psychology from the University of Pécs. Her research field is situated at the borderland of psychoanalysis, gender studies and literary history; she has been exploring and publishing studies on Hungarian women intellectuals of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. She is also engaged in feminist and LGBT history and activism; she is a founding member of Labrisz Lesbian Association. Her book, *Portrét a Másikról* (Portraits of the Other) came out in 2007. She published a monograph with Judit Szilágyi in 2011: *Nőírók és író nők. Irodalmi és női szerepek a Nyugatban* (Women writers and poetesses. Literary and women's roles in Nyugat).

4. Chris Roulston, University of Western Ontario, Canada.

#### **Identity or Identifications: Is Queer History Changing?**

##### *Abstract*

Recent writings on queer temporalities and queer history have been questioning how we think about the queer past, and the implications of our investment in it. We have shifted from a mode of historiography that looks for queer identities to one that questions the very notion of identity in relation to the past. This paper will consider the difference between the idea of queering history, and that of looking for queers in history.

##### *Biography*

Chris Roulston is Professor of French Studies and Women's Studies and Feminist Research at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. Her last book, *Narrating Marriage in England and France* (2010) is published with Ashgate Press.

#### **5F: Film: Circumstance** Dir: Maryam Keshavarz

#### **Keynote: Sarah Schulman, Writing Lesbian: The First Thirty Years**

#### **Parallel Sessions 6: 2:30-4:00 pm**

#### **6A: Film: Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same**

Dir: Madeleine Olnek

#### **6B: Panel: Lesbian Emancipation in/through the media**

1. Monika Pater

#### **Ending invisibility and challenging fear: The emergence of the German lesbian movement and the role of the media**

##### *Abstract*

"Yes, you have come so far that you can reveal your inclination, but I - I'm afraid."

I found this statement in a letter to the LAZ (Lesbisches Aktionszentrum/lesbian action center), Berlin, written in 1974. It was written as response to the film "... und wir nehmen uns unser Recht" ("... and we take our rights"), aired on public TV in January '74. The LAZ, founded in 1972, was able to influence the film heavily; one of their conditions to take part was that their address was shown together with the invitation to contact them. This was the second of two films aired on public TV 1973/74 in which lesbians, their everyday lives and the discrimination they faced were portrayed, along with demands for social recognition. Only a few years before, the topic of homosexuality was a no-go for media, women who loved women were not present in every day encounters, the media or the public. On the basis of archival material from Spinnboden and a qualitative analysis of press coverage, my paper will try to trace the developments that led to the emergence of lesbian emancipation groups and the crucial role of media (alternative and mass media) in this process. In this discussion I am inspired by the ideas of A.K. Appiah in "The honor code" on the reasons for a moral revolution, especially as in both films, the fear of being ostracised becomes very clear. Therefore I concentrate on the circumstances that enabled women in the early '70s to combat their fear and present themselves as lesbians, demanding respect. The first step they had to take was to challenge the social rules, heteronormativity, under which their way of living and loving was deemed abnormal. Much has changed since the '70s and I would like to discuss if the changes can be described a moral revolution and if yes, if we can consider this revolution to have been successful.

2. Tuula Juvonen, University of Tampere, Finland

### **'Can two women live happily together?' Images of lesbians in the Finnish magazines of the 1970s**

#### *Abstract*

I concluded my Ph.D. thesis about the construction of the post-World War II Finnish homosexuality by stating that "there were no lesbians in Tampere in the 1950s and 60s" (Juvonen 2002). Although I was able to identify for my thesis some female couples and even to interview older women who had had same-sex sexual relations during that time, by the end of the 1960s there seemed to be no shared concept of a lesbian available in Finland to identify with. In my current research project "Queer Narratives: Intimate and Social Lives of Women with Same- Sex Sexual Attractions in Tampere 1971–2011" I lay out how embracing a lesbian identity emerged in Finland as a viable option for women after the decriminalisation of female and male homosexual deeds. My paper argues that the lesbian images, which became available in the media during the 1970s were one crucial step in that process. It juxtaposes two textual materials together, which both started to introduce their own discourses about lesbianism during the 1970s. First of them is a popular entertainment magazine *Hymy*. Despite of its scandalous tone *Hymy* was among the first publicly available venues, which allowed lesbians to speak up for themselves. The second is a small magazine called *96*, which was founded in 1969 and published by Finland's first registered lesbian and gay organisation Psyke. I am currently in the process of collecting and analysing the materials. Already now it is evident that the invention of a lesbian from a scratch was not an easy task for either of the magazines. Both had to invent their own ways to tackle, among other things, the lack of language and

the isolation and fear felt by women with same-sex sexual attraction. In my paper I discuss the textual strategies chosen by the respective magazines and the various images of lesbians they made available for their readers.

#### *Biography*

Tuula Juvonen is an Academy Research Fellow in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Tampere, Finland.

### 3. Beatriz González de Garay Domínguez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid **Lesbian Characters in the History of Spanish TV**

#### *Abstract*

In 2005 Spanish parliament passed the same-sex marriage law. At that time a great number of TV series were seen as revolutionary in relation to the homosexual representation. Nevertheless, Spanish TV productions haven't been so prolific with regard to LGBTBI characters inclusion in other historical periods. The causes must be traced in the idiosyncrasy of the political history of Spain and in the peculiar TV broadcasting system. From the beginning of Spanish television broadcasting until the end of Francoism, Spanish fictional productions just didn't deal with the homosexual issue because it was simply a prohibited behaviour. The first homosexual characters documented on Spanish TV appeared after Franco's death. They were guest stars in a certain episode of a series and therefore the short of representation was incidental. They were characters such as a teenage girl who has "masculine" hobbies and who has grown up with her three brothers and an authoritarian father that turns out to be in love with her teacher in a 1986's episode, not by chance titled "Taboos", of the ideologically progressive show *Segunda enseñanza* (TVE 1: 1986) [*Second Lesson*]; or a couple inside a squalid drug-dealing-inside-death-babies atmosphere in an episode in which one is raped and the other ends up death. Later on, lesbian characters that claim the equality of their sexual orientation started to appear. The discourse still focused in the sexual orientation of these characters and the problems it led to, but now the message is to promote tolerance. After that there were no necessity for a vindicator speech or for the homosexual characters to self-acceptance so an integrated kind of lesbian character appeared. In this paper we will examine examples such as *Médico de familia* (Telecinco: 1995-99), *Aquí no hay quien viva* (Antena 3: 2003-06), *Hospital Central* (Telecinco: 2000-) or *Los hombres de Paco* (Antena 3: 2005-10).

### **6C: Panel: Queer Femininities and Modes of Attraction**

1. Sarah Stevens, Ohio University School of Film

#### **The Tyranny of the Clitoral Orgasm: Hysteria and Queer Femininity in Post-Feminist Film**

#### *Abstract*

Billy Kent's *The Oh in Ohio* (2006) and John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus* (2006) sound the alarms of post-feminism and the post-queer, in which women and queer folks everywhere seem to be having orgasms and satisfactory sex lives, except for their primary female characters. Pricilla (Parker Posey) in *The Oh* and Sofia (Sook-Yin Lee) in *Shortbus* both display the classic symptom of the hysterical woman, the inability to have a "real" orgasm, meaning one that is "given" by a man, specifically the husband. This paper focuses on how both films

negate alternative modalities of sexuality that resist androcentric models of sexuality. Further, I examine the transformative power of queer femininity as it is suppressed in both *The Oh in Ohio* and in *Shortbus*. Further, using Gramsci, as an organization framework, I argue that the films contain “traces” of the hysterical woman, within their negotiation of “the myth of the clitoral orgasm.” Five years after Pricilla and Sofia experienced bliss on the big screen, Emile Jouvét’s queer, radical sex positive, road documentary *Too Much Pussy!* premiered at Cannes Film Festival. The film attempts to take an “inventory” of traces like those presented in Mitchell and Kent’s film. The film queers the post-feminist, responding to both the discrepancies between queer theory and the embodied experience of performing queer femininity. The film makes an attempt at taking “inventory” through employing the historical feminist practices of consciousness-raising, performance art, and live sex acts. Additionally, Jouvét’s film allows viewers to explore queered temporal and spatial elements of film, providing alternative ways for mediating and negotiating queer subjectivity in film spectatorship. Finally, these three films point to a discrepancy between the “post” in post-feminism (and in the “post-queer”) and the perpetuation of androcentric modes of sexuality.

## 2. Rosie Garland, Writer and Performer

### **Rosie Lugosi, Lesbian Vampire Queen – ‘Performing queer femininity and performing it all wrong’**

#### *Abstract*

In this paper I propose to examine the sources of & inspirations for the costume performance alter ego of Rosie Lugosi, The Lesbian Vampire Queen, featured in both Rachel Adams’ photography project *The Modern Lesbian*, and *Femmes of Power* (Del la Grace Volcano & Ulrika Dahl).

The lesbian vampire as ‘Quintessential outsider’: Examining crossover images of vampires / lesbians as outsiders / outcasts / abject. Re-queering the Lesbian Vampire. Examining the de-queering of the vampire image since the rise of the Twilight phenomenon. ‘How queer is queer? - Lesbians don’t dress like THAT. Or at least they shouldn’t: How Rosie Lugosi transgresses notions and perceptions of how lesbians perform and present ‘lesbianism’ to straight and queer communities. ‘But you don’t look like a REAL lesbian’ - Performing the monstrous-feminine: How Rosie Lugosi physically embodies the monstrous-feminine through the outward trappings of the dominatrix-lesbian vampire-crone: Disturbing and challenging identity systems, and outraging social order. Performing the tensions that lesbians / women in general feel about how ‘real’ lesbians / women are represented in society/media. Exploring how ‘normal’ society is entranced, fascinated, obsessed and repulsed. Performing the ‘crone’. Transgressing age boundaries (eg; how women are supposed to dress at a particular age). Linking the horror of vampires with the horror of older sexually active women. ‘Performing the ‘feminine’ and performing it all wrong’: Rosie Lugosi as a (unique?) female drag queen - a woman dressed up as a woman. Rosie Lugosi as a perverse deployment of femininity. A caricature, shifting between polarised views of gender. ‘I do hope you are all sitting uncomfortably...’: Sado-masochism and laughter. How Rosie Lugosi queers the image of the ‘lesbian dominatrix’, using comedy to subvert notions of normative sexuality and gender-specific behaviours.

3. Melina Alice Moore. City University of New York

**Katy Perry 'Kissed a Girl' and 'Liked It': Pop Music's Obsession with 'Lesbian Chic'**

*Abstract*

In her most recent book, *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (2012), J. Jack Halberstam explores the decline of traditional marriage, the visibility of the “pregnant man,” and the presence of queer families as a means of identifying a tangible cultural shift in modern popular articulations of love, sex, and gender. For Halberstam, Lady Gaga, as a powerful cultural figure and persona, represents a significant culmination of these gradually building challenges to heteronormative hegemony—ushering in a new era of chaotic feminism that embraces and celebrates both gender fluidity and alternative sexuality. Halberstam’s text provides a powerful vision of rebellious queer feminism recognized and glorified by the cultural mainstream. However, in the wake of Gaga, what are we to make of the rapid appropriation of queered genders and sexualities by the pop music machine in general? What does it mean when combat boots and ace-bandage bound chests begin to surface in music videos and media that fall outside of the scope of what may be termed Gaga’s radical “feminism”? A July Style.com article heralds “lesbian chic” as one of this fall’s “hottest trends,” noting pop star Rihanna’s newfound penchant for combat boots as one example of the Sapphic shift occurring in the modern fashion landscape. In her recent video for “Part of Me,” former-Christian-rock-singer-turned-pop-icon Katy Perry (already infamous in the lesbian community for her offensive breakout single “I Kissed a Girl”) joins the Marines after ending a bad relationship. The video, which almost functions as a bizarre military recruitment tool, features Perry cutting off her hair, binding her breasts, and donning camouflage as well as combat boots while singing about female empowerment. Engaging with these and other recent popular appropriations of experiences and styles typically interpreted as “lesbian,” this paper considers the implications of the mobilization of these visual cues by female icons who remain invested in the approval of both the male gaze and young, heterosexually identified female fans.

*Biography*

Melina Alice Moore is a doctoral student in English at the City University of New York Graduate Center. She holds a B.A. in English from Smith College and a master's degree in Liberal Studies from the Graduate Center. Her research interests include women writers, queer theory, disability studies, and autobiography and memoir.

4. Andrea Francisco Amat, Universitat Jaume I, Spain

**El Banquete de Safo. A dialogic gathering around media discourses about love with lesbians and bisexuals**

*Abstract*

The aim of this paper is to explain the bases of the research project called *El banquete de Safo*. This initiative seeks to create a critical view of media discourses about “love” and “models of attraction” with lesbian and bisexual women through dialogic learning. The objective is to achieve the empowerment of the participants and to generate new models of attraction based on egalitarian and transforming relationships. Throughout the talk, we explain the theoretical framework that inspired the project and the methodological principles that

guided it.

*Biography*

Andrea Francisco Amat is Professor in the Department of Education, Universitat Jaume I, Spain.

## **6D: Panel: Practices of performance, translation and migration**

1. Sarah Mullan, Queen's University Belfast

### **Fragments of Identity: Using Queer Performance Strategies to Reclaim Lesbian Identity**

*Abstract*

This paper will examine the ways in which queer strategies in performance can renegotiate 'lesbian' identity. Through an analysis of Jane Montgomery Griffith's performance, *Sappho...in 9 Fragments*, this paper interrogates the use of queer performance practices, such as Elizabeth Freeman's idea of 'temporal drag' (2000), and discusses the way in which these practices are utilised to facilitate the reclamation of a lesbian identity.

It takes as its starting point Sue Ellen Case's challenge to the benefits of queer theories with the suggestion that it is responsible for lesbian invisibility. Case argues that the insistence on fluidity and anti-essentialism within queer has led to 'the term "lesbian" being evacuated' (1996, p.1). Alongside the continuing development and discussion of queer performance, there has appeared to be a parallel lack of discussion around lesbian performance, suggesting that Case's argument has some merit.

It is the negotiation of the rupture between queer theory and lesbian feminism live performance that this paper will consider. Griffith's *Sappho...in 9 Fragments* is particularly appropriate for examination given its use of non-linear history to reclaim an identity for Sappho, one that is fluid, rescued from the impositions of male history and relevant to the 'modern lesbian'.

This paper analyses the way in which 'temporal drag', use of 'queer temporality' (2010) and employment of a 'queer dramaturgy' (2011), have been negotiated alongside the 'lesbian subject' to offer an identity which, although it is more fluid, is not entirely detached from its history. It argues that these practices can function as a means of destabilising the lesbian binary categories associated with lesbian identity politics offering 'a perpetual dialogue between sexual identity and its critique' (2005, p.187), without compromising on lesbian representation or erasing lesbian history.

*Biography*

Sarah graduated from Queen's University Belfast with a joint degree in English and Drama and MA in Drama and Performance. She will begin funded doctoral study at Queen Mary University of London in October 2012. The working title of her PhD thesis is 'A 'Post-Lesbian' Trajectory? Stages in Lesbian Performance 1996-2014'.

2. Michela Baldo, University of Birmingham

### **Transnational lesbian performances: queer drag kings Italian style**

*Abstract*

This paper aims at investigating the translation/migration of the notion of queer outside English speaking countries. More specifically, it intends to analyse how

the concept has been used for self- definition by the 'Eyes Wild Drag', a drag king group founded in Rome in 2007. Drag king shows are performances in which women impersonate male gender roles, a genre which has gained popularity in Italy only recently. The three lesbian women of this group, formed in 2007 in Rome, look at themselves not simply as a drag king group, but more as a queer group, because of their interest in exploring the multiple nuances of gender. Theirs is a sort of ironic cabaret and experimental theatre and their particularity rests on the fact that, contrary to other drag kings groups in Italy, two of the components of the group impersonate a woman. Moreover, they organise not only drag king workshops but also 'F to F' ones, that is workshops for women who want to explore their femininity differently, using the repertoire employed by drag queen impersonators. This paper will present the analysis conducted taking into account the Eyes Wild Drag's official blog and website, TV programs and reviews about the group and my interview with them, in order to ascertain which theorisations on queer the group has drawn from in building their own notion of queer. The fact that the group took inspiration, for example, from American performers such as ATKM, Lauren LoGiudice, from New York, Dred from Zurich and Océan LeRoy from Berlin shows that this is a transnational phenomenon and that translation plays a big role in it. Although translation studies as a discipline has become more visible in the last years, a concept which has hardly been interrogated within the field, with the exception of Harvey's work (2003), and the recent issue of the journal *In Other Words* (2010), is that of queer. This paper goes into this direction by linking sociological theories of translation to queer theories, and using a critical discourse analysis approach (Wodak 2003) to explore the discourses circulating in the media about this group and those produced by the group themselves.

#### *Biography*

Michela Baldo is a Teaching Fellow in Translation Studies at the University of Birmingham (UK) where she teaches courses in translation theory and practice and intercultural communication. In 2009 she obtained a PhD in Translation studies at the University of Manchester with a thesis focussing on migrant literature (Italian-Canadian writing) translated into Italian, and she has published articles on bilingualism, Italian-Canadian literature and translation, queer studies, film dubbing and subtitling. [michelabaldo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:michelabaldo@yahoo.co.uk)

3. Ming Chih (Michelle) Wu, University of Surrey

### **Migrant Identities and Translated Identities in the Translation of Female *Tongzhi* /Ku-er Fiction**

#### *Abstract*

In recent times Translation Studies has begin to address the effects of globalisation, in which sociological phenomena such as cosmopolitanism, migration and global hybridity are discussed alongside the process of translation. In addition, contemporary formations of global identities can also considered to be facilitated by the translation process. Michael Cronin, in his study on identity and translation, for example, compares the identity of the migrant person with the "condition of the translated being" (2006: 45). To paraphrase Cronin, the mobility of the migrant identity is akin to a translated identity, where both are expected to 'translate' themselves from their home culture to their designated culture. Here, the word *translation* functions

symbolically and practically, contributing to the changes in contemporary culture.

Using Cronin's idea of translation as a starting point, the current study aims to look at the translation of Taiwanese female *tongzhi*/*ku-er* fiction in the English language. The two Chinese terms 同志 [*tongzhi*] and 酷兒 [*ku-er*] are used to describe contemporary Asian homosexual identities that has come into formation in the last two decades. *Tongzhi* and *ku-er* culture in Taiwan take inspirations from local subcultures and global identity politic movements, most notably Western gay, lesbian and queer movements. In the translations of *tongzhi* /*ku-er* fiction therefore, the translators are not only dealing with a 'niche' form of Chinese literature, but also engaging with 'glocal' sexual culture. Looking at female *tongzhi*/lesbian translator Fran Martin's anthology *Angelwings: Contemporary Queer Fiction from Taiwan* (2003), the study argues that Taiwanese *tongzhi* and *ku-er* fiction are already in a culturally 'migrant' position, constantly moving between domestic and foreign influences. Their translations therefore, are not only transferences of information from one culture to another, but an engagement with multiple cultural frames: *translating from an already translated culture*.

#### *Biography*

I am a part time Translation Studies PhD candidate in the University of Surrey. The topic of my research is the translation of Taiwanese *tongzhi* and *ku-er* literature from the Chinese to the English language. Despite the fact that there are currently very few *tongzhi* and *ku-er* texts available in English, I consider *tongzhi* and *ku-er* literature a portal into the wider global networks and movements in relation to the formations of sexual identities. I am primarily interested in topics such as Taiwanese *tongzhi* and *ku-er* culture/literature, globalisation, political frameworks, hybrid and *metis* identities and the roles literature and translation play in facilitating social and cultural changes.

### **6E: Panel: Ugly Feelings and (Un)Becoming Lesbians**

1. Prudence Chamberlain, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

#### **Political Discontent: Considering Unhappiness as Integral to the Formation of a Lesbian Feminist Identity in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* and Eileen Myles' *Cool For You***

##### *Abstract*

This paper will consider the political discontent experienced in the formation of a lesbian feminist subject within the work of Eileen Myles and Alison Bechdel. Drawing on cultural theorist Sara Ahmed's 'Happiness and Queer Politics', I will explore the ways in which lesbian unhappiness is vital to the cultivation of a feminist sensibility in both women's work. Although writing within different genres, Bechdel and Myles both work within an autobiographical mode. Through this, each explores her development as a twice-marginalised subject, unpacking the effect of this social positioning on their expression of feminist politics. My aim is to consider specifically the place of genre within the expression of unhappiness, and its role in conveying both politics and sexuality to a reader. Myles' text explores the development of her lesbian awareness through her personal experience, including near-prostitution and experimentation with drugs. In contrast to this, the development of Bechdel's self-characterisation is



far more academic, emerging through her study of lesbian literature and psychology, whereby she theorised her lesbian identity. However, the two autobiographical figures have two characteristics in common: their feminism and their unhappiness. Myles' first-person expresses a sense of loneliness and frustration, while Bechdel's self-illustration is very open about her need for analysis, in addition to her problematic relationship with her parents. This paper will consider the individual ways in which both women document their evolution, both in sexuality and politics, and the extent to which unhappiness drove their ultimate identifications.

The paper will also consider the relationship between unhappiness, sexuality, politics and the extent to which the three mutually influence one another. It will also explore the possibility that ideological fixity results in a rigidity or inflexibility that forces both Myles' and Bechdel's autobiographical characters into continuous engagement with a repeatedly disappointing society.

### *Biography*

Prudence Chamberlain is a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her practice-based research develops a poetics of flippancy through which to position first person within fourth wave feminism. Her work has been disseminated through print as well as performance at POLYply: A Certain Slant of Light (2010), Feminist Cultural Carnival in York (2011) and The Jam, hosted by Arts Admin (2012). Her recent collaborative fluxus piece 'in her regime', was commissioned as part of the 'Play!' multidisciplinary arts event at the Firestation in Windsor and also performed at POLYply: Re-Flux (2012), while her adaptation of Titus Groan was staged by Blackshaw Theatre Company at the Actors' Church in Covent Garden in April 2012. Prudence is an associate of POLYply, a series of avant-garde multi-disciplinary events, and is a co-founder of Praxis, a seminar dedicated to the study of practice and politics, both held in Central London.

2. Ásta Kristín Benediktisdóttir, University of Iceland & University College Dublin, Ireland

### **The Book that Came Out of the Closet: A Small Piece of Icelandic LGBT Literary History**

#### *Abstract*

So far very little research has been done on Icelandic LGBT literature before 1980, and the absence of texts that focus on love between women in Icelandic literary history is striking. However, it is highly unlikely that these texts do not exist. A more probable reason for this absence is that they have not yet been found or acknowledged as queer texts.

In December 2011 a short article by Freyr Þórarinnsson appeared in the newspaper *Fréttablaðið*, stating that the poet who published a book of poetry, *Kirkjan á hafsbótini*, in 1959 under the male pseudonym Arnliði Álfgeir, was in fact not a man but a woman. Many of the poems in this collection express the poem's speaker's love for a woman and his/her anxiety and depression caused by not being able to be with the woman he/she loves. After more than 50 years „in the closet“, this book must now be acknowledged as one of the first pieces of lesbian literature in Iceland and thereby an important part of Icelandic literary history.

In this presentation the story behind this book will be told and how it was rediscovered in 2011. The content of the poems will furthermore be explored.

The title of the book refers to Claude Debussy's piano prelude *La cathédrale engloutie* (The Sunken Cathedral) which is based on the legend of the sunken city of Ys. The city was condemned because of the sinful sexual life of the princess Dahut, who sunk with the city and became a mermaid. Like Dahut, the unknown Icelandic woman who composed the poems was forced to live a secret life beneath the surface of the homophobic society because of her sexual desires.

*Biography*

Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir received a BA in Icelandic Studies and an MA in Icelandic Literature from the University of Iceland. She has published three articles in Icelandic journals on her MA project on narrative methods in the works of Jakobína Sigurðardóttir, and given talks about various subjects at literature conferences and seminars in Iceland. She has furthermore served as a parade manager for Reykjavík Gay Pride since 2010. Ásta is currently based in Dublin and Reykjavik while working on her PhD project on queer Icelandic literature, which is funded by The Icelandic Research Fund for Graduate Students.

3. Clare Tebbutt, University of Manchester

**The Modern 'Man-Woman' à la Mode**

*Abstract*

At once confounding and embracing modernity, the figure of the 'man-woman' appeared with some regularity in the 1930s British popular press. The 'man-woman' defies current identity categories but was employed to cover what would now be considered a range of different identities. In the 1930s the term was most frequently applied to accounts of those who had changed sex from women to men, but also encompassed masculine women and, less frequently, feminine men. This paper examines how discussions of 'man-women' appealed to notions of scientific modernity, the modern woman and the spectre of the lesbian. How did scientific modernity intersect with technologies of the body and new concepts of gender to support the creation and acceptance of a new generation of 'man-women'?

*Biography*

Clare Tebbutt is completing a PhD in cultural history at the University of Manchester on popular and medical concepts of sex change in 1930s Britain, under the supervision of Profs Laura Doan and Frank Mort. Major research interests include understandings of the body, transgender and intersex histories, queer representations and cultural productions and social change. Her MA thesis on appeals to space in the narrativisation of Manchester's queer history helped develop a fascination for queer urban history. The co-organisation of a conference on transnational feminisms and the subsequent co-editing of a special issue of the journal *Women* arising from the conference, reflect a strong commitment to feminist and anti-racist activism.

4. Julie Norris and Emma Bidwell

***Vice and Virtue: Are We Good Girls Now?***

*Abstract*

What role in our lesbian lives do these two practices play? Have we gone from that "nameless vice between women" to a time where lesbians "want to take on virtues of marriage"? Is there an attraction to being viewed as wicked? Is vice

queer? Can virtue be queered and would you still be a lesbian if it was considered virtuous?

Dr. Jules Norris and Dr. Emma Bidwell will present a wide-ranging analysis of the attractions and drawbacks of vice and virtue. As a psychologist Jules will examine how they relate to our lesbian identities, while Emma, a queer theorist, will argue for the pleasure of vice.

#### *Biographies*

Dr. Emma Bidwell is the Director of the Screening Ireland program for the University of Limerick Summer School, she also teaches on the MA in Women's Studies for University College Cork, and runs workshops for primary teachers on using literature in the classroom for the West Cork Education centre. She is currently in the process of setting up West Cork College, a centre for face-to-face and online learning, with Dr. Bernie McCarthy. Emma lives in West Cork, Ireland, and has presented at Lesbian Lives many times.

**6F: Film: Secret Years** Dir: Maria Takacs

#### **Parallel Session 7: 4:15-5:45 pm**

#### **7A: Music Performance: Jan Allain**

***'Britain's best kept songwriting secret'. -Rollingstone Magazine.***

**Jan Allain:** London born, Independent recording and performing artist and teacher of art and music. [www.janallain.com](http://www.janallain.com)

Singer songwriter, guitarist and harmonica player who has established a lesbian cult following in Germany where she toured extensively as duo 'Jan & Ilse' and as a solo artist for more than two decades. Jan Allain has released seven self-penned albums on her own Big Boots Record Label. Jan Allain is currently completing her eighth album **'Freedom's Daughter'** (working title). This much anticipated release is a collection of big ballads and groove based acoustic soul songs and was recorded at Eastcote Studio London and features live band and selected guest players.

**'Freedom's Daughter'** is due for release in September 2013 with album launch concerts planned for London and Brighton.

Jan is a qualified teacher in both Art and Music. Her background in education includes states schools, alternative educational projects in performing arts with children, women's groups and adults with learning disabilities in both the UK and Germany. She teaches her own 'songmagic' songwriting workshops ([www.songmagicbrighton.com](http://www.songmagicbrighton.com)) and mentors bands and up and coming new artists. Jan returned to the UK from Germany, where she lived for seven years, in 2007. She currently resides in Hove, sings with Brighton's Soul in the City choir, is a freelance teacher and is about to release her first big studio album in ten years and begin touring again.

Jan Allain developed her song repertoire in north London clubs and pubs from 1980-90, often performing with Irish cellist, Sherry Robinson. In 1990 she formed a duo with Australian cellist Ilse de Ziah. "Jan & Ilse" toured extensively for seven years and when the duo split in 1997. They had developed a devoted lesbian fan base of over 5000 and sold 12,000 albums outside of the 'music industry'.

Jan Allain continued to record and perform with fiddler Clare Lindley from Scotland.

In 2000 Cooking Vinyl Records discovered Jan and released 'A Kind of Glory'. She quit the record deal following her second controversial release with them 'Apple Size Golden Clitoris' which she then released herself. It became a cult classic abroad.

### **7B: Workshop: Queer sensibilities in Tango Argentino dancing**

The Queer Tango term was coined by Ute Walter, who is based in Hamburg and belongs to the first generation of European Tango teachers and dancers: "*A queer perspective frees tango from the restrictions of heteronormative and gender-specific structures and representations... [it] values instead its capability to accomplish an emancipated dialogue*". The first Queer Tango Hamburg Festival, now on its 10<sup>th</sup> edition, set an example that has ricocheted across Europe, the US and Buenos Aires. Queer tango communities promote the exchange of the leading and following roles regardless of one's gender, encourage same sex dancing and welcome anybody who wants to participate.

During the workshop participants will:

- Be introduced briefly to the Queer Tango history and its recent developments
- The implications of choosing and changing the roles
- Be encouraged to use the Queer Tango model as a form for developing leadership, dialogue and empathy and for challenging the status quo.

### ***Biography***

Adriana Pegorer is an interdisciplinary independent dance artist and tango teacher. She was the recipient of several awards and presented internationally experimental works mixing choreography with improvisation, video, new technology and installation. Adriana taught and performed at the 7th Queer Tango Festival Stockholm, the 10th Hamburg Queer Tango Festival and at the 2nd Queer Tango Festival Berlin. She performed at the LGBT History Month at the Islington Town Hall in 2011 with Asta Moro and in 2012 with Ute Walter (organized by Wotever Club).

In academic settings she performed in Marta E. Savigliano's 'Wallflowers and Femme Fatales' at Harvard University (2007, USA) and presented her own research at various conferences, most recently at 'Touching and to be touched: Kinaesthesia and empathy in dancing' (Berlin) and at the Colloque International 'Tango: Creation, Identification, Circulation' (Paris).

### **7C: Presentation: A girl's guide to Lesbos book release and slide show**

Tzeli Hadjidimitriou

The guide is called *a girl's guide to Lesbos* and includes travel information, historical facts about the island and its connection to Sappho, descriptions of the Greek food and culture specific to Lesbos, as well as a selection of my photography. In addition to the guide, I have prepared a slideshow of images from the book, accompanied with music by an acquaintance from Lesbos, as an introduction to my book. The music for the slideshow has been composed by Min Wilde.

This book is my contribution to the lesbian community, in order to share a place and culture I love with women from all over the world. My hope is to raise awareness within the lesbian community about the heritage of our foremother Sappho and to encourage an interest in the history and culture of this special place.

#### *Biography*

Tzeli Hadjidimitriou was born in Mytilene, Lesvos. She holds a degree in Economics and pursued further studies in the field of Direction of Photography for the Cinema, in Rome. In 1985, on a scholarship, she attended a series of seminars by Michelangelo Antonioni on the art of cinematography. A professional photographer in Greece since 1988, she has worked in television and also in the cinema industry, collaborating with many film and photography directors.

Although mostly described as an "artistic landscape photographer", her "lens" has also focused extensively on artworks, interiors and archaeological subjects and she collaborates with museums, galleries, architects and publishing houses. Her work is presented regularly in individual and group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. She is a regular contributor of articles and photographs to several newspapers and magazines.

She has published 3 travel guides and 6 photographic books, all centering on architectural, historic and cultural places of Greece. Some titles include: "In Communion With Stone, The Rural Architecture of Lesvos" 2009, "A girl's guide to Lesbos" 2012, "39 Coffee Houses and a Barber's shop" 1997, "Urban Housing of the '30s; Modern Architecture in Pre-war Athens" 1998.

### **7D: Panel: Lesbian Activism: past, present, future**

1. Andrea Ritter, Labrisz Lesbian Association, Hungary

#### **Family history of lesbian generations in Hungary: a psychologist's view**

##### *Abstract*

A Hungarian documentary made in 2009 presents interviews with lesbian women who lived in Hungary during the communist era, experiencing their emotional changes, finding their partners, and searching for their own ways of life in the often repressing, prohibiting political atmosphere. Later these interviews were also published in a book. The title of the film and the book is „Secret Years”. The interviewees' personal and social relationships, family background, and their sexual orientation all contributed to how they experienced the period of "soft dictatorship", and how they managed to shape their psychological identity in those circumstances. Their short-term and long-term life strategies, and self-image were influenced by the secret system of connections they were involved in, and the social and political threats that they were exposed to. This situation resulted in a peculiar group dynamics, cross-generational communication, and coming-out strategies. The film gives an insight into the world of different lesbian generations, and an illustration of the psychological significance of secrets. In my presentation I shall offer a psychologically interpreted summary of this historical document, accompanied by a brief show of some episodes of the film itself.

#### *Biography*

Ritter, Andrea PhD is a psychologist living in Budapest. She gained her PhD in the

Theoretical Psychoanalysis programme of the University of Pécs in 2007. She specialises in researching the connections of French and Hungarian psychoanalytical schools, researching theoretical and practical aspects of transgenerational traumas, analysing psychological changes resulting from the use of information and communication technology, and researching questions of identity in the case of different sexual orientations.

In 2011, the author started a psychological seminar in Budapest called SZEX-MA. The more theoretical aim of the seminar was to understand contemporary forms of sexual identity, and analyze them in light of psycholanalytic and sociological literature. The seminar lasted for 1.5 years and the participants included psychiatrists, psychologists, and LGBT people from other professions. A more practical goal was to establish a dialog, increase knowledge and reduce hidden prejudice by all parties involved. At present the seminar is still being continued in a slightly different form. She has a private practice in Budapest ([www.valtozasrendelo.hu](http://www.valtozasrendelo.hu)).

2. Megan Paslawski, The Graduate Center, CUNY

### **Rope of Gold: Marriage Politics and the 1930s**

#### *Abstract*

Dishearteningly for anyone who thought fluidity was integral to queerness, LGBT\* discourse about marriage has solidified in the past few years, at least when we consider the views most commonly aired. Painted in broad strokes, the same-sex marriage discussion has two sides. The first is a consciously queer point of view, as expressed by such theorists as Michael Warner and Lisa Duggan, which critiques the heteronormativity of marriage and often suggests that combatting economic and physical violence against marginalized people has more political potential. The second is a liberal position, as found in Evan Wolfson's *Why Marriage Matters*: marriage equality is a question of civil rights and the progression of society. As outlined here, these positions obviously lack the nuanced and multi-faceted perspectives that many people have brought to this discussion, but the description gestures at a polarization that we frequently accept as a matter of course. However, both sides often share one point of similarity: history usually appears only as an oppressive force, leaving it to homophobic discourse to claim history in the guise of "tradition." In an attempt to challenge this erasure, I suggest the literature of the 1930s as an alternative starting place for theorizing the relation of radicalism, liberalism, and queerness to marriage. By focusing on the work of Josephine Herbst, Meridel LeSueur, and Ruth Suckow, I hope to complicate current understandings of politics, economics, and marriage by considering the lesbosocial spheres these women created in their fiction. In these spheres, radical women married and divorced, liberal women eschewed marriage, and authors struggled to marry modernist ideals with socioeconomic realism. This work, in which these authors struggled with the same questions of community-building, fairness, and societal participation that mark conversations about marriage, deserves consideration as part of our tradition.

#### *Biography*

Megan Paslawski is currently a doctoral student in the English Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is the editor of Michael Rumaker's *Selected Letters (Lost & Found)* and the co-editor, with Ammiel

Alcalay, of an expanded edition of Rumaker's Robert Duncan in San Francisco (City Lights). Her areas of research include memory and historical fiction, queer theory and family sagas, 1930s US literature, and narratives of disease. Megan lives in Brooklyn and teaches writing and literature at Queens College, CUNY.

3. Finn Mackay, Centre for Gender & Violence Research, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

**Is the Modern Lesbian a Feminist, is the Modern Feminist a Lesbian?**

*Abstract*

I shall draw on research with over one hundred feminist activists across the UK, conducted for my PhD in 2011. While the majority identified as heterosexual, thirty six respondents identified as lesbian; ages ranged from late teens to late sixties. I shall address the issue of lesbian invisibility in UK feminist activism and the perception that sexual identity is no longer a relevant category within feminist communities. While younger feminists in particular felt that homophobia and heterosexism were not live issues in contemporary feminism, older feminists bemoaned the demise of lesbian feminist autonomous spaces within feminist communities. Participants were aware of common stereotypes regards feminists as hairy-legged, man-hating lesbians. I shall discuss the homophobia inherent in such stereotyping; frequently sustained and promoted in academic and activist texts. The stereotype of the feminist appears almost universal (Scharff, 2010; Baker, 2008; Rich, 2005; Budgeon, 2001) and is regularly used as shorthand, invoked as received wisdom; presupposing that readers will immediately know what is meant by references to stereotypical feminists; such as this statement from Walby (2011): "[feminism] is a signifier of something very particular and comes with additional meanings attached, which many seek to avoid" ... "It has acquired connotations of separatism, extremism, men-avoiding lesbianism" (ibid) (2011:3). Awaiting for the disclaimer, I was disappointed; there is no following sentence challenging the assumption that separatism or lesbianism are inherently undesirable, instead the use of such labels as an insult is left unquestioned and the sexual, and political, identity of a new generation is policed as a result. Indeed, what often seems missing in debate on such stereotypes is the possibility that some feminists may indeed be lesbians, may indeed choose to pursue largely separatist lives; and the possibility that these are personal and political feminist positions with merit and purpose, is completely ignored.

4. Hila Amit, SOAS, University of London

**When there is No Past and the Future is Unseen: thoughts of Queer Temporality in Palestinian Lesbian Activism in Israel**

*Abstract*

Queer subjects are considered to be beings with no past: without a childhood, without an origin in the nature, without a familial tradition or heritage. Similarly, in the heterosexual imagination, queer subjects have no future, mainly because they are not creating a future generation so have nothing to offer to the political "tomorrow". Scholars suggested several solutions for these two problems. On the one hand, a widespread corpus dealing with queer historiography was created. On the other hand, academics and activists have worked to create a collective future: establishing archives, museum exhibitions and attempting to provide the

next generations an access to queer "pasts". Criticism of these practices states that it symbolizes a homo-normative timeline - Constructing individual and collective lives into a linear and chronological framework, extracted from hetero-normative history. Halberstam criticizes hanging on to the narrative of freedom that lies in the future. Edelman claims that queer theory and politics should refuse the expectation of a better society, and Freccero suggests using a terminology of passion that arises in different times, which does not rely on the past or the future. She dictates a demand for the present. In the space that these questions bring about, I wish to examine where do the politics of Palestinian lesbian in Israel is positioned. On what timeline do these women position themselves? How do they conceptualize the future, the political and the social horizon awaiting them? From where do these women draw their motivation for activism in their community?

*"I don't really see a pink future, I can't say that. The pink is at every stage and stage, that is what I can say. We shall find the pink in every different stage" (Nor, Palestinian lesbian, 32 years old).*

The presentation will describe ways in which narratives of Palestinian lesbians in Israel situate them between the wish to aspire, a plan for the future, and the inability to see a clear horizon. This impossibility to position themselves clearly on a linear timeline, even while yearning one, creates an activist practice that concentrates on the present. That activism is a politic of "here and now", when the objectives and aspirations of the present action are always dynamic and flexible. This way they succeed in establishing a radical space that enables them to continue working, even when change is out of sight, even when some don't expect a change at all or at least, not one that they would see in their lifetime.

#### *Biography*

I'm a PhD Candidate in the center for gender studies in the SOAS, University of London. I'm working under the supervision of Dr. Raul Rao (working title: Queer Palestinians in the West: Home and Away). I recently finished my M.A (magna cum laude) at the Gender and Women studies program, Tel Aviv University. My thesis "Free Radicals: choosing not to be mothers in Palestinian lesbian community in Israel", was written under the supervision of Professor Hanna Herzog. I was granted twice (2010-2010) an excellence Scholarship: Full living scholarship, The Faculty of Humanities, Tel-Aviv University. In 2011-2012 I participated in a research group at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute dealing with Arab Feminism.

### **7E: Panel: Queer Time and the Revealing Dark: Lesbian Places**

1. Ewa Opalka, Jagiellonian University, Poland.

#### **Through the (Looking) Glass House – The Representations of Lesbians Film Characters in Atom Egoyan's *Chloe* in the Context of Classical Gothic Movies and the Discourse of Modern Architecture and the Public Space**

##### *Abstract*

In my paper I would like to concentrate on the problem of representation of the Atom Egoyan's film title character Chloe. The central issue of my analytical research is connected, on the one hand, with the tradition of representability of



lesbian characters in classical Hollywood gothic movies such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and Fritz Lang's „Secret Beyond the Door” (1947) where the heroine is juxtaposed with the space of the gothic haunted house, on the other – the connection between the specificity of the contemporary public space and the construction of lesbian character. I would like to refer to such researches as Lee Wallece's *Lesbianism, Cinema, Space. The Sexual Life of Apartments* in which the author presents very interesting analogy of using interior spaces in films as a *lesbian chronotope* but the main theoretical proposition of the paper would be the analogy between *phantom* public space (Rosalyn Deutsche's *Evictions*) and, as Monique Witting accurately named it, lesbian as a *ghost in the (film) machine*.

#### *Biography*

Ewa Opalka is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Audiovisual Arts in Jagiellonian University, Poland.

2. Paulina Palmer, UK.

### **Queering ‘the lesbian postmodern’ in Ali Smith’s *Girl Meets Boy* and Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods***

#### *Abstract*

In 1994 Laura Doan published *The Lesbian Postmodern*. Robyn Wiegman and other contributors to the collection discuss the influence of postmodern perspectives on lesbian theory, while Dana A. Heller and Doan analyse the significance of postmodern narrative strategies to the fictional representation of the lesbian. Today, as a result of the advent of queer theory and the poststructuralist concepts of the decentred self and identity as provisional and contingent that it reflects, postmodern perspectives and strategies continue to play a key role in lesbian fiction. The critique of realist writing as incapable of evoking the complexity of lesbian subject positions in contemporary culture since the interplay of the personal and the political they reflect are, as Jill Dolan writes, ‘excessive to representation’s conventional codes’ also prompts writers to reject realist narrative practices in favour of postmodern.

Contextualising my discussion in the light of these ideas, I shall explore in my paper the utilisation of postmodern strategies in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods* (2007) and Ali Smith’s *Girl Meets Boy* (2007), examining the way the writers employ them to represent lesbian subjectivity and gender as performative, as well as to evoke the tension between lesbian/ feminist and queer perspectives. Intertextuality and the recasting of traditional motifs and genres, practices typifying postmodern narrative that the two novels share, will receive particular attention. *Girl Meets Boy* is set in present-day Scotland and reworks the myth of Iphis and her transformation into a boy by the gods, as narrated in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*. *The Stone Gods*, in contrast, is situated in the future and, in depicting a cross-species relationship between a female human and a robot, recasts utopian narrative. The differences the two novels display illustrate the varied approaches to the postmodern in contemporary lesbian fiction.

#### *Biography*

I’ve recently retired from the post of senior lectureship at the University of Warwick, where I taught in the English Department and helped establish the MA in Women’s Studies. I’ve also taught as a sessional lecturer for the MA in Gender and Sexuality at Birkbeck, London University. My publications include

*Contemporary Women's Fiction: Narrative Practice and Feminist Theory* (1989); *Contemporary Lesbian Writing: Dreams, Desire Difference* (1999); *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions* (1999); and *The Queer Uncanny: New Perspectives on the Gothic* (2012).

3. Tamara de Szegheo Lang, PhD Candidate, York University

### **Queer Nostalgia and the Demand to Progress**

#### *Abstract*

As we approach what Lauren Berlant claims is the death of the 'good life', more and more people are becoming dissatisfied with the insufficiency of the present economic, social, and political situation. Though many want to hold onto what Sara Ahmed proposes as the "promise of happiness" – a continually deferred future ripe with the potential to achieve mainstream acceptance and economic privilege – some marginalized people are losing hope.

This paper claims that futurity – often implicated and used coercively in creating the narrative of the 'good life' – contributes to a present that makes promises of progress, which serve to keep queer people (and other marginalized groups) pacified. This paper explores the words and artworks of queer people today who, instead of turning to José Muñoz's future-oriented "critical idealism," turn to a critical nostalgia, which expresses a desire to return to an imagined past. Some of these people envision themselves as part of a community formed around AIDS activism, though they are too young to have actually participated in it. Others revisit the joys of lesbian communities in the 1960s in Canada instead of expressing the common historical narrative of isolation and oppression. All look to the past as offering something that the present does not and cannot offer.

Critical nostalgia, as a method of decentering the present, signals a deep dissatisfaction with and, in turn, a critique of modern political tactics. A refusal to live for the present – a present that moves toward a future, that makes promises, that is always progressing – might be another way of showing that the present is not good enough.

#### *Biography*

Tamara de Szegheo Lang is a PhD candidate in the Graduate Programme in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada. Her research focuses on mid-twentieth century Canadian lesbian history, queer temporalities, affect studies, and collective memory. Her current work investigates gay and lesbian archives as the sites of affective connections between past and present.

## The Modern Lesbian Film Programme 2013

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The film programme runs alongside the main conference programme and hosts an exciting and diverse range of short films, documentaries, fictional features and artist's moving image that relate to the conference theme, and are drawn from across the UK, Europe, South Africa, Canada and North America. Some of the screenings are accompanied by presentations and Q&As with the directors and filmmakers, these are indicated in the individual screening details.

As well as submissions from individuals and independent companies responding to the conference call, the programme also includes two exclusive feature film screenings\* kindly provided by *Peccadillo Pictures*, one of the UK's most recognised distributors of Art House, LGBT and world cinema titles.

The film programme has been convened by Dr Sarah Atkinson from the Faculty of Arts, University of Brighton. Dr Atkinson is an academic and filmmaking practitioner specialising in interactive cinema and transmedia storytelling. Her own multi-screen interactive cinema installation *Crossed Lines* has been exhibited internationally and her first monograph *Beyond the Screen: Future Fictions and Audiences* will be published by Continuum in December 2013. Her most recent interactive documentary *Anatomy of a Film* features on the BluRay edition of *Ginger & Rosa (Artificial Eye)*, Dir: Sally Potter, 2012). This is part of a wider investigation into the impact of the digital revolution upon feature filmmaking where she has spent the last eight months documenting the entire production process of the film.

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### Friday 15 February 2013 | 9.25-9.50am | Sallis Benney



#### From GLF to WLM

Producer/Director: Lizzie Thynne  
Editor: Peter Harte  
University of Sussex, UK  
2012

6 minutes

To be screened as a tribute to Mary McIntosh

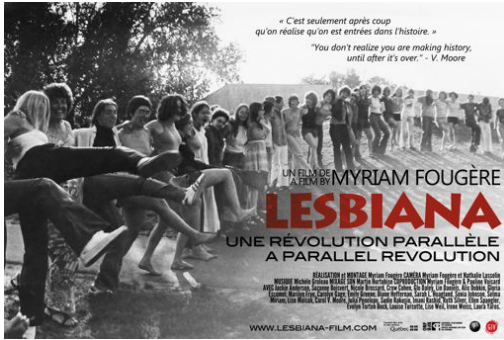
Mary McIntosh, sociologist and author of key papers and books such as 'The Homosexual Role' (1968) and *The Anti-Social Family* (1982), recalls coming out in the 1960s. She recounts her early involvement in the Gay Liberation Front's actions such as kiss-ins and protests against the commercial club scene including 'The Gateways', whom the GLF thought was taking advantage of queers. The theatrical tactics learnt in the GLF were put to further use when on a trip to the 1971 Women's Liberation Conference at Skegness, the GLF women took decisive action to stop male activists running the show.

One of a series of films from *Sisterhood and After: the Women's Liberation Oral History Project* led by Margaretta Jolly at the University of Sussex. The project is the first to publicly archive a comprehensive collection of interviews with this generation of feminists. A spectrum of campaigns and voices are featured exploring the inner workings and lasting significance of the 'second wave' of feminism. The collection will be housed at the British Library and the accompanying British Library Learning website will be launched on 8 March 2013.

*Sisterhood and After* is funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

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Friday 15 February 2013 | 9.50-11.20AM | Sallis Benney



## LESBIANA A PARALLEL REVOLUTION

Dir: Myriam Fougère Coproducers: Myriam Fougère and Pauline Voisard  
Documentary | Québec, Canada | 2012 | 63 min  
English and French /English subtitles  
Produced with the financial support of: Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, NFB – ACIC- Et PRIM.  
Distributed by GIV (in Canada)  
[www.lesbiana-film.com](http://www.lesbiana-film.com)

In the 1980's, lesbian culture was flourishing in many cities and small towns across Canada, the United States, in Europe as well as in Israel and Japan.

*LESBIANA- A Parallel Revolution* tells the story of that movement through interviews with some key players of the time. They were activists, writers, philosophers, teachers, carpenters and nurses, trying to invent a different way of life centered on women. This movement was born out of the Feminist Movement of the 1970's.

At the root of it all was the liberating feeling that women-loving-women was the source of their strength, that together they could live differently. By taking themselves and each other seriously, they could change themselves, and ultimately, change the world.

### **Myriam Fougère, director, editor, director of photography, co producer:**

Myriam Fougère is a multidisciplinary artist born in Quebec City, Canada. While living in New York City from 1987 to 1992, she organized the "East Coast Lesbians' Festival" with Lin Daniels. Myriam wrote, shot and directed a poetic, innovative documentary about breast cancer entitled, *On a Moving Path*. This documentary won Best Experimental Documentary at the Baltimore Women's Film Festival, 2008, and Second Prize at the Image et Santé Festival in Liège, Belgium, 2008. With a grant from the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec, Myriam shot, directed and edited a documentary about the rise and fall of the lesbian movement of the 1980's called *Lesbiana - A Parallel Revolution*.

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Friday 15 February 2013 | 11:30-1.00pm | Room 204

**With introduction and Q&A with the Director and Producer:**



## Jan's Coming Out

Dir: Carolyn Reid  
Producer: Alison Thompson  
UK  
2011

75 minutes

Written and directed by Carolyn Reid and produced by, Village Films, 'Jan's Coming Out', is a fun filled, entertaining, feel-good documentary, celebrating contemporary lesbian life. Featuring interviews with a host of recognised names from the UK and the USA, this award-winning documentary has 'wowed' audiences around the world.

Presenter, Jan Walker, is a previously married, 50 year old 'Baby Dyke', who unexpectedly discovers her sexuality, after watching 5 full seasons of, 'The L Word' – in one long viewing session! Alongside women facing the camera for the first time, award-winning entertainers, entrepreneurs and writers; such as, Val McDermid, Stella Duffy, Zoe Lyons, Jen Brister, Julie Goldman, Cathy DeBuono, Jill Bennett and Meredith Baxter; share Sapphic insights, anecdotes, dating and flirting tips. Locations include Hebden Bridge, London, Manchester, Provincetown, West Hollywood and an Olivia cruise in the Caribbean.

Hailed as 'a festival highlight' of the BFI's 25th London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, by The Times newspaper, 'Jan's Coming Out', is a positive, unique and inspiring movie. Laugh- out-loud as the cast share their stories; offer Jan new chat up lines and reveal the meaning of terms such as 'pillow queen', 'gold star', 'chapstick' and 'kiki'.

'Jan's Coming Out', both celebrates contemporary lesbian life and highlights the importance of being out, loud and proud, in a fun, upbeat and positive style. To quote, Stella Duffy, 'Jan's Coming Out' is, "... the most positive, diverse, inclusive lesbian film I've ever seen."

### **Carolyn Reid; Writer, Director and Cinematographer**

Carolyn is an experienced writer, director, cinematographer and editor, who has worked in the film and TV industry for over 20 years. She runs a successful film and publishing company without compromising her enthusiasm for creating visually exciting films to engage and educate viewers. Large, small or no budget, broadcast or non- broadcast, the passion for telling stories in a compelling style remains.

Whether working with experienced actors/presenters or with people facing the camera for the first time, Carolyn has a natural ability to put people at their ease, producing high quality material for each project she works on.

### **Alison Thompson; Producer and Location Sound**

Hailing from a commercial background, Alison has transferred her skills seamlessly into the broadcast film, TV and publishing industry. She has been prepared to work from the ground up to broaden her skill-set and to understand and participate in the production process. Her wealth of experience in a commercial environment has led to the success of Village Films' independent revenue generation. Her attention to detail in all aspects of media production, from budgets to logistics, creates a smooth and painless working environment.

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**Friday 15 February 2013 | 3:00-4:30pm | Room 204**

**With introductions from the director, 3:00-3:30pm:**



Image copyright: Raissa Page/ Photofusion

## **Return to Sender**

Producer/Director/Editor: Lizzie Thynne  
University of Sussex, UK  
2012

8 minutes

Twenty years ago, the Greenham women's peace camp got US cruise missiles sent back home. The camp began in 1981 when a group of Welsh women arrived at the US base in Berkshire to protest against the weapons being sited there. Rebecca Johnson arrived at Greenham Common as a young woman in 1982 and lived there for five years. She is now Vice President of CND and an internationally recognized expert on disarmament and co-chair of the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#). She is the author of *Unfinished Business*, (2009) on civil society and government strategies to achieve the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This short film follows Rebecca Johnson, still a tireless campaigner for disarmament, to Burghfield, where nuclear weapons are still being made in the UK and and to the now tranquil common where the US missiles were once installed.

One of a series of films from *Sisterhood and After: the Women's Liberation Oral History Project* led by Margaretta Jolly at the University of Sussex. The project is the first to publicly archive a comprehensive collection of interviews with this generation of feminists. A spectrum of campaigns and voices are featured exploring the inner workings and lasting significance of the 'second wave' of feminism. The collection will be housed at The British Library and the accompanying British Library Learning website will be launched on 8 March 2013.

*Sisterhood and After* is funded by the Leverhulme Trust.



## On Tools

Producer/Director/Editor: Lizzie Thynne  
University of Sussex, UK  
2012

6 minutes

Barbara Jones was co-founder of the first women's building collective 'Hilda's Builders' in the 1980s. Then as now, there are only 4% of women working in the practical building trades. We catch a glimpse of Barbara and colleagues at work on her own house in scenic Todmorden as she recounts the struggle to get training and respect in such a male-dominated industry. Barbara won a lifetime achievement from Women in Construction on 2011. An inspiring speaker and teacher, she now runs Straw Works, which designs and creates straw bale buildings and trains a diversity of students on site. Straw Works and Associates have worked on over 300 buildings in the UK and Europe.

One of a series of films from *Sisterhood and After: the Women's Liberation Oral History Project* led by Margaretta Jolly at the University of Sussex. The project is the first to publicly archive a comprehensive collection of interviews with this generation of feminists. A spectrum of campaigns and voices are featured exploring the inner workings and lasting significance of the 'second wave' of feminism. The collection of life stories will be housed at The British Library and the accompanying British Library Learning website will be launched on 8 March 2013.

### Filmmaker biography:

Lizzie Thynne is a film-maker. She is Senior Lecturer and Convenor of the MA Digital Documentary at the University of Sussex, where she also supervises practice-led PhDs. Her work encompasses visual and written practice. She completed *On the Border*, a family biography tracing the impact of war and exile in 2012. Her work on Claude Cahun, the surrealist photographer, has appeared as a film *Playing a Part* (2005), several book chapters and in *Papers of Surrealism* (2010) and *History of Photography* (2005).

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**With introduction and discussion with the director, 3.30-4.15pm:**



## Butch Losses

Dir: Janet Jones  
UK  
2011

12 minutes

Reflections on a personal journey through the emergence of a 'Butch' lesbian identity and the development of a progressive neurological condition. The film explores some of the issues around disability and inclusion and the mapping of sexual territories within a deteriorating body and the wider lesbian community.

Beginning with descriptive landscapes of a 70's childhood, the emergence of 'butch' markers, through to work in various trades and the development of neurological symptoms, the film goes on to look at the challenges of communication within sex and for sexual partners. The links to self esteem are highlighted with personal support needs, interpersonal negotiations, and the challenges of inaccessibility in the built environment.

Within this journey, the overall perspective reflects on what it means to live with the daily experiences of loss, coming to terms with a changing body and how the shape of our world impacts on individual choice for people with disabilities.



**Filmmaker Biography:**

Emerging from a dysfunctional 70's childhood into a variety of practical jobs in her teens and early 20's, Janet Jones emerged from a long heterosexual experimental 'phase', found her way back into education and out into her butch lesbian identity.

With feminist politics, community theatre, visual expression, creative writing and lots of work and activism, life moved forward.

Halfway through her 30's the most common degenerative neurological condition affecting women emerged and five years into a Community Development and Food Policy role, life changed.

Disability and medical retirement necessitated a new creative direction and 10 years on, a different life has taken shape.

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**Saturday 16 February 2013 | 9.00-10:30am | Room 204****The Purple Place**

Dir: Ana Belen Jarrin

Spanish with English subtitles

Spain

7 minutes

(9:05-9:15am)

"The purple place" appeals to an indeterminate space between feminine and masculine. It was built out of some photographic series in which the main characters have changed their bodies, moving in a border area and a transgression of the conventional norms governing body and relations between sexes. In a black space with no handles, "The purple place" runs away from the description to suggest the physical vulnerability. Bodies alone or leaning, sliding or playing with others. Speaking to the camera, the stark expression reveals the tensions generated by the physicality and the need of every individual of self-recognition on the body. The pictures are exploring the hinterland that skin contains and includes pain, confinement, fragility, fear, challenge, need ...

With these choices of transformation, "The purple place" characters are challenging the standards of beauty and helping to question the imposed regulations.

**Filmmaker Biography:**

Ana Belen Jarrin is from Ecuador, living and works in Barcelona, her photographic work focuses on the portrait of people living in bodies and unusual circumstances. She worked several years with the group of transsexuals in Ecuador and Barcelona and maintains contact with people with different types of disabilities. She received the prestigious scholarship for his project CONCA The Purple Place, was PhotoEspaña Discovery 2008 and Discovery of the Llotja Pati, Emergent-Lleida 2010. She has exhibited several times at festivals such as Encounters TRAFFIC, PhotoEspaña, Spring Photo. Directs specialize in portrait photography workshops and creative photography in Barcelona, Tolosa and Ecuador, is also reader of portfolios.

**Purple shoelaces**

Dir: Steph M. Anderson

USA

22 minutes

(9:20-9:45am)

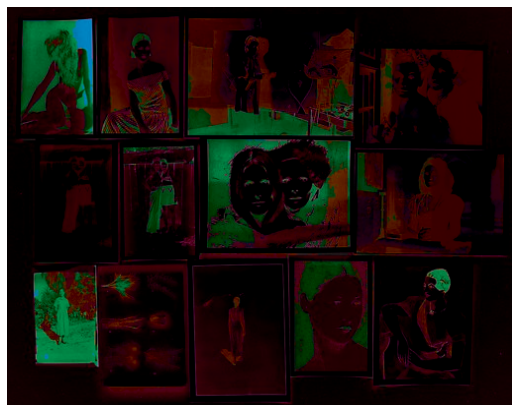
In part a response to the heteronormativity of sport, over the past couple decades, gay-identified sport leagues have developed locally, nationally, and internationally and strive to offer an inclusive sporting environment to LGBTQ athletes. Initially starting with only 25 players across four teams, the New York City Gay Basketball League is currently home to over 180 female athletes on 19 teams in the city.

During the Fall 2011 season, filmmaker Stephanie M. Anderson took time away from playing to raise questions about the purpose of gay-identified sport and (continual) need of “safe spaces” for marginalized groups and individuals. A playful and thoughtful blend of research and film, the documentary short, “Purple Shoelaces,” explores the liminal spaces of gay sport to offer a portrait of an athletic space where sexual and gender diversity are creatively and candidly normalized. The film centers on the experiences of 4 women – diverse by gender presentation, race, and skill level – and documents one team’s pursuit of a championship title. Through these women’s stories, idiosyncrasies, and humor, it is revealed that while solidarity around sexuality may define the league’s identity, for the players, the experience is about more than being “gay.”

### Filmmaker Biography:

Stephanie M. Anderson is a freelance Videographer and PhD Candidate in Social Personality Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. In her academic pursuits, she is interested in using film throughout the research process and in particular as a means to engage in public discourse. Her film, “Purple Shoelaces” is a complement to her dissertation work, and more generally examines constructions of gender, sexuality, race and competition among men’s and women’s gay-identified basketball leagues within the United States. Anderson is currently in the process of expanding the film and hopes to release the extended version in Fall 2013.

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## A field (of interconnected realities)

paula roush and maria lusitano

2012

UK

35 minutes

(9:50-10:25am)

The video extends our ongoing research onto the study of the modernist collage-novel, Valentine Penrose and her book *Dons des Féminines* (1951). This pioneering collage-poem is both a re-enactment of Max Ernst’s *Une Semaine de Bonté* (1934) and a critique of the patriarchal hegemony evoked in Ernst’s work. Women are depicted outside of the domestic sphere, as travelers into exotic places. The female figures maintain their integrity and appear always in pairs, expressing female erotic desire towards each other. Through these and the poem, it is possible to follow and visualise the adventures of two Victorian women, Maria Elona and Rubia, as they travel by ship or balloon, to glamorous landscapes.

The poetic depiction of female friendship, combining elements of neo-gothic and surrealist verse and collage make *Dons des Féminines* into an early precedent of the *écriture féminine* with its claim for a language of female desire and transgression.

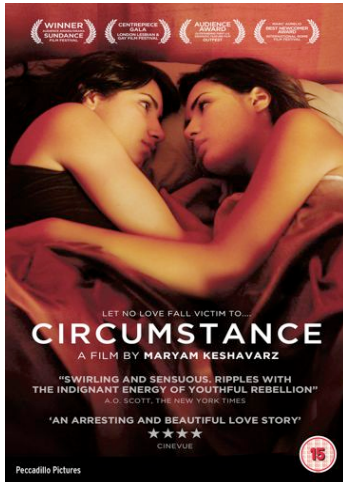
Valentine Penrose’s relationship to Max Ernst, Anthony Penrose and particularly to Alice Rahon - to whom it is speculated that *Dons des Féminines* refers to - have all been scrutinised by art historians and literary critics alike, with the rigor of detectives when dealing with the scene of a crime. Whilst this attention has made *Dons des Féminines* into one of the most intriguing feminist and queer publishing case studies, there are still many gaps that we found the most stimulating and decided to look closer into. The resulting work combines historical archive, speculative fiction, intertextuality and collage.

### Artists biographies:

paula roush and maria lusitano are Portuguese London-based artists whose work draws on historiography of genders and sexualities to develop trans-disciplinary visual essays such as ‘A field (of interconnected realities)’ a work that integrates collage, drawing and video. It has been shown at BOOKLIVE! London June 2012, Kaleid 2012 European Artists’ book event, London July 2012, Kunstfilmtag: Language is the House We Live In, Dusseldorf November 2012, Sexuality at Home, University College London, December 2012. It will be presented as a solo show at the 198 Gallery, London April 2013 and at the Museum of Electricidade, Lisbon June 2013.



Saturday 16 February 2013 | 11:05am-12:50pm | Room 204



## \*Circumstance

Dir: Maryam Keshavarz  
UK  
2011

107 minutes

Screening courtesy of Peccadillo Pictures, in association with Cine-Excess

Set in contemporary Iran in the unseen world of Iranian youth culture, filled with underground parties, sex, drugs and defiance, *Circumstance* is the story of two vivacious young girls - Atafeh and Shireen - discovering their burgeoning sexuality, struggling with their desires and the boundaries placed upon them by the world they were born into.

Winner of the Sundance Audience Award, *Circumstance* is a thrilling exposé of an Iranian culture rarely seen. Maryam Keshavarz's directorial debut has blazed a promising trail at film festivals the world over, challenging audience's pre-conceived perspectives of a society and how women can defy the rules imposed upon them, despite the dangers they face.

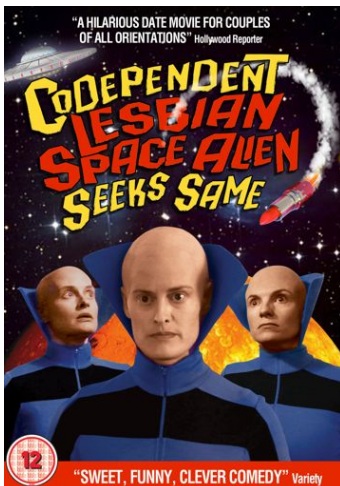
### Director biography:

Maryam Keshavarz received a BA in comparative literature from Northwestern University and an MA in Near Eastern studies from the University of Michigan. Before turning to filmmaking, she served as a visiting scholar at the University of Shiraz's department of Language and Literature. She then received her MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in film direction and has been making award-winning films for ten years. Keshavarz's first feature documentary, *The Color of Love*, an intimate portrait of the changing landscape of love and politics in Iran, won awards at top-tier festivals and was broadcast internationally. Her short film, *The Day I Died*, garnered top accolades at Mar del Plata, Clermont-Ferrand, New York Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival, and was the only short film at Berlinale to win two awards: the Gold Teddy and the Jury Prize.

Keshavarz's first narrative feature fiction film, *Circumstance*, premiered to critical acclaim at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, garnering the coveted Sundance Audience Award, leading to Maryam's inclusion in Deadline.com's 2011 Director's to Watch. *Circumstance* has won over a dozen international awards including Best First Film at the Rome Film Festival and the Audience & Best Actress Awards at Outfest.

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Saturday 16 February 2013 | 2:30-4:30pm | Sallis Benney



## \*Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same

Dir: Madeleine Olnek  
2011  
USA

76 minutes

Screening courtesy of Peccadillo Pictures, in association with Cine-Excess

CODEPENDENT LESBIAN SPACE ALIEN SEEKS SAME tracks the adventures, misadventures and experiences of three aliens from the planet Zots, sent down to Earth on a mission to rid themselves of romantic emotions, which are considered toxic to their planet's atmosphere. They are told to have their hearts broken on Earth, where such heartbreak is considered a given. Two of the aliens, Zylar (promiscuous and sassy) and Barr (codependent and clutchy) fall into an unfortunate romance with each other, but Zoinx, the third, meets Jane, an Earthling of mild manners who lives an uneventful life and works in a stationery store. Unaware that the sudden object of her affection is an alien (despite her bald head and monotone speech), Jane falls hard for Zoinx. The feeling is mutual.

CODEPENDENT LESBIAN SPACES ALIEN SEEMS SAME is an original mash-up of a lo-fi New York City romantic comedy and a sci-fi B-movie spoof, exuding elements of CONEHEADS, EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY and a touch of MARS ATTACKS, full of extra-terrestrial laughs, loves and a dazzling soundtrack.

### Director Biography:

Madeleine Olnek is a filmmaker, director and playwright. Her plays have been described by Newsday as "Uproariously Neurotic Comedy." Filmmaker Magazine called her short Countertransference, "unforgettable... a comedic goldmine." Her plays have been described by playwright Paula Vogel as "incredible contemporary masterpieces" in American Theater Magazine. Olnek is also one of the authors of "A Practical Handbook for the Actor" (foreword by David Mamet). She holds an MFA in film from Columbia University, where she was given the Adrienne Shelly Award for Best Female Director. She has had two short films at Sundance; at Sundance 2009, Olnek was awarded the L.A. "Women in Film" grant for outstanding direction. "Countertransference" has won Grand Jury prizes from Outfest and Newfest, as well as an award from the Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival. Olnek's first film, the award-winning short comedy "Hold Up," was an official selection of Sundance 2006.

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**Saturday 16 February 2013 | 2:30-4:00pm | Room 204**



## Secret Years

Dir: Mária Takács

2009

Hungary

90 minutes

Eleven lesbian women 'confess' about the 'Secret Years': on women, love, family, happiness and pain. They discuss their identity searching during the Kádár era, the subculture-tolerating 80s, the movement following the transition and their personal struggles.

Many Hungarians believe that before 1989 no Gay and Lesbian life in Hungary existed, as socialist society forced Lesbians and Gays into a life of secrecy and invisibility. Hungarian society is still very hostile towards minorities and 'differences'; in public discourse, someone who is recognisably 'different' supposedly cannot speak for or represent the whole of society. However, we are convinced that an authentic reflection of any given political and social system can be found by looking at that systems marginalized groups.

Our documentary surveys the generations of lesbians in Hungary that lived, and continue to live, a closeted existence since the 1960s (with few acquaintances and in limited company), and those generations that – thanks to freedoms afforded by the 1989 collapse of Communism – lead increasingly open and accepted lives. Their life stories will acquaint the audience with both the former system's crippling methods of asserting power over the individual and communities, and with the freedom accompanying the post-communist transition. What had been a taboo topic prior to 1989 gradually has entered into political discourse; but in recent years, visibility brings on new challenges too.

No Hungarian documentary has yet dealt with this subject matter. This film will compensate for a blind spot not only in the public's awareness of the former Communist system, but will also strengthen the identity of the lesbian community and other minorities by extension.

#### Director Biography:

Mária Takács has covered both intellectual and practical dimensions of audio-visual studies. For years now, she has been documenting the various activities of LGBT and green communities. She is a freelance video-reporter and director of various TV shows.

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**Saturday 16 February 2013 | 4:15-5:45pm | Room 204**



## Breaking Out of The Box: Stories of black lesbians

Dir: Busi Kheswa & Zethu Matebeni  
2011  
South Africa  
English and Zulu (with subtitles)  
40 minutes

Buhle Msibi's poem *I Break the Boxes* provides the title for this wide-ranging, touching, often funny documentary highlighting the lives of black lesbians in South Africa. The title is appropriate; by telling the tales of six high profile women, the sheer breadth of experience in the black lesbian community is revealed, the profiled women all having redefined their set parameters in one way or another. They are a well-thought out mix of voices and bear compelling witness to an epoch that has seen gay rights go from zero to hero. There are the mother figures, Mary Hames of UWC's Gender Equity Unit and Dr Yvette Abrahams of the Gender Commission for Gender Equality, who set the scene with stories of the anti-apartheid activism years (and falling hopelessly in love). The traditional healer, Fikile Vilakazi of the Coalition of African Lesbians, one of the country's most eloquent spokespersons on the rights of gay people, offers a compelling argument against the gay-is-white argument; "if you say being gay is not African then you insult me, because you are saying I am not African". Another strong voice is Out in Africa's Theresa Raizenberg, activist and film buff, who remembers the early ABIGAIL years and the changes since. The youth is represented by Jozi FM DJ Charmaine 'Fino' Dlamini and soccer star Portia Modise, both completely out and succeeding in their fields, despite being largely male-dominated sectors. A warm, compelling and satisfyingly affirming film.

#### Biographies:

**Sbusiso Kheswa** has been working in the South African LGBTI sector since 2002, where he has held positions at Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA), Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), and the Lesbian and Gay Equality Project. He is a passionate advocate for the most marginalised in society, a role he carries out currently at the organisation, Gender Dynamix. He has worked on various research projects, public education and oral history projects. *Breaking out of the box*, is his first co-directed documentary film on black lesbian lives.

**Zethu Matebeni** holds a PhD from Wits University and is currently a researcher at Huma (institute for humanities in Africa) at the University of Cape Town. Author of *Black lesbian sexualities and identities in South Africa*, 2012, Zethu has published extensively on lgbt issues in South Africa. She is also co-curator of the multi-media exhibition *Joburg TRACKS: Sexuality in the City*. Zethu is currently working on a second documentary film at the University of Cape Town.

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**Acknowledgements:** Special thanks to Peccadillo Pictures, Paul Smith and Xavier Mendik: Cine-Excess.

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