

QUEER ART / QUEER ARCHIVES

SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2024
LEXINGTON, KY • LOUISVILLE, KY



Letitia Quesenberry, *little darlings* series, 2014–ongoing. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Co-hosted by the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, *Queer Art / Queer Archives* brings together experts specializing in queer art, theory, and archival methods for two days of presentations, discussions, and exhibitions. Historically, queer practices circumvented institutions and experimented with media not sanctioned by museums. Artists and art historians concerned with queer practices therefore often devise new strategies to scour archives for the ephemeral objects and documents that constitute much of this overlooked work. By convening scholars who conduct queer archival research, this symposium centers practices that have been systematically marginalized by narratives of American art history. Our aim is to generate new interpretive frameworks to analyze intersections of queerness with race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, and socioeconomic status.

The symposium and exhibitions are generously supported by the Terra Foundation for American Art, The University of Kentucky School of Art and Visual Studies, and the University of Louisville Hite Institute of Art and Design.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 20 - Lexington, Ky

University of Kentucky | Bolivar Art Gallery | 236 Bolivar St

Welcome Remarks

10:00am - 10:15am

Miriam Kienle, Associate Professor, University of Kentucky

Jennifer Sichel, Assistant Professor, University of Louisville

Ruth Adams, Director, School of Art and Visual Studies, University of Kentucky

Panel 1

10:15am - 12:15pm

Josh T Franco, "Hanging Out": On Working Side by Side

Lex Lancaster, Archives in Ruins: Queer-Trans Methods for Working with What Remains

Jeannine Tang, Negative Space: Contemporary Art, Trans Life and Non-Performance

Lunch Break

12:15pm - 1:45pm

Panel 2

1:45pm - 3:15pm

Andy Campbell, At Hand Histories: Poverty, Queerness, Archives

David J. Getsy, Street Addresses: Performing the Queer Life of the Street in early 1970s New York

Coffee Break

3:15pm - 3:45pm

Concluding Roundtable

3:45pm - 4:30pm

Gallery Reception

4:30pm - 5:30pm

Bolivar Art Gallery

Sept. 21 - Louisville, Ky

University of Louisville | Bingham Humanities Hassold Theatre | 2216 S 1st St

Panel 3

10:30am - 12:00pm

Marika Cifor, Viral Transmission: AIDS Archives in Digital Cultures

Marcelo Gabriel Yáñez, On Sheyla Baykal (1944-1997)

Lunch Break

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Panel 4

1:00pm - 3:00pm

C. Ondine Chavoya, Disco Clones and Teddy Sandoval's Butch Gardens School of Art

Olivia K. Young, Black Queer Crip Embodiments in Indira Allegra's Documenting Disability

Julia Bryan-Wilson, Conceição's Queer Bugrinhos

Coffee Break

3:00pm - 3:30pm

Concluding Roundtable

3:30pm - 4:15pm

Gallery Reception

4:30pm - 5:30pm

Cressman Center for Visual Art | 100 E. Main St

Speaker Bios and Abstracts

September 20th | University of Kentucky

Josh T. Franco

As Head of Collecting at Smithsonian's Archives of American Art, Josh T Franco oversees the team that investigates and acquires personal papers, institutional records and oral histories that tell the stories of American art. He also advises researchers working in the Archives.

"Hanging out": On Working Side-by-Side

In early 2020, Charlotte Ickes (National Portrait Gallery) invited Franco to co-curate the exhibition *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Always to Return* (October 18, 2024-July 6, 2025) at the Smithsonian. The years spent developing the show have led them to reflect deeply on Gonzalez-Torres' work and their federally situated Institution side-by-side. Taken from the curators' co-authored contribution to the exhibition's pending catalog, this presentation presumes queer presence in discussions of Gonzalez-Torres's work. The focus is primarily on considerations of the co-curators' experiences through the lens of their methodological training as art historians and philosopher María Lugones' strategy of "hanging out."

Lex Lancaster

Lex Lancaster is Assistant Professor of the History and Theory of Art at Cooper Union. They are the author of *Dragging Away: Queer Abstraction in Contemporary Art* (Duke, 2022), and their work has been published in *ASAP/Journal*, *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, and *Texte Zur Kunst*.

Archives in Ruins: Queer-Trans Methods for Working with What Remains

How do we think and feel with historical materials that are not just overlooked but unmanageable? How do we work with images and objects that are irreparable, or that resist archiving? Thinking archival approaches between queer and trans, Lancaster considers how artists Kiyon Williams and Young Joon Kwak create and utilize ruins of the past, effectively challenging traditional archival logics and offering lessons in how to work with what remains from that which seems impossibly damaging. Their practices exceed institutional modes of knowledge production and preservation, demanding more sensual and embodied forms of study: materials attached to still-present historical traumas and ruins of the past that can't easily be reclaimed become vehicles for embodied queer and trans desires that guide how we do history differently. These works propose queer-trans methods for working the archive with a new affective and material sensitivity.

Jeannine Tang

Jeannine Tange is Assistant Professor in the Department of Performance Studies at NYU, and has published in *Art Journal*, *Artforum*, *GLQ*, *Theory, Culture & Society*, *Journal of Visual Culture*, among other venues. Jeannine's book project *Living Legends: Contemporary Art and Transgender History* received a 2020 Warhol Writer's grant.

Negative Space: Contemporary Art, Trans Life and Non-Performance

This talk re-examines earlier debates in contemporary art history, on living artists and research methods, by incorporating arguments from affect theory, critical legal and performance studies. Weaving between works of art made in the 2000s by trans and queer artists, and a historiography of abandoned narrative, field notes and anecdote, I propose attention to the "negative space" of history writing, for trans art histories of the recent past.

Andy Campbell

Andy Campbell is Associate Professor and Chair of Critical Studies at USC-Roski School of Art and Design. He is the author of *Bound Together: Leather, Sex, Archives, and Contemporary Art* and *Queer X Design: 50 Years of Signs, Symbols, Banners, Logos, and Graphic Art of LGBTQ*. He lives in Gardena, CA.

At Hand Histories: Poverty, Queerness, Archives

When Harmony Hammond wrote "Class Notes" in "The Lesbian Art and Artists" issue of *Heresies* (1977), she outlined the ways her practice had been affected by her "coming out as a lesbian" and her concomitant "develop[ment of] a class consciousness." She wrote of how this twinned consciousness raised questions of "imagery, permanence, scale, ways of working, and concepts of art education [...] money and power, who sees my work, and what effect I want it to have on others." Almost fifty years later this paper revisits Hammond's insights, providing a general discussion of art historical archival methods, and a reframing of several key artists' bodies of works (Hammond, yes, and also Laura Aguilar, Beverly Buchanan, and Emmi Whitehorse—not all of whom identify/ed as queer), and, in doing so, alights on poverty as a key term in queer studies and art history. Move over Marxist bros, the tasks of daily living and survival call us again and again and again...

David J. Getsy

David J. Getsy is the Eleanor Shea Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia. His books include *Queer Behavior: Scott Burton and Performance Art* (2022), *Queer: Documents of Contemporary Art* (2016), and *Abstract Bodies: Sixties Sculpture in the Expanded Field of Gender* (2015/2023).

Street Addresses: Performing the Queer Life of the Street in early 1970s New York

In the late 1960s and 1970s, queer performance was most visible in the street. Long before Stonewall, queer life could be found Downtown, often but not only at night, as sidewalks became stages for drag, hustling, sex work, and communities of queer and trans street youth. At the moment of Stonewall and its immediate wake, critical performance practices were proposed from and about this queer life of the street. Two examples will be presented: Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt and the Hot Peaches troupe each drew on their experiences of poverty, public drag, and queer survival. Without institutional or commercial resources, these artists made their own spaces for performance in which queer community was visualized with street life at its center. Focusing on the archival challenges to the study of such performance practices, this talk discusses how impoverished queer and trans artists have been excluded from the received histories of art and how more inclusive histories might be proposed.

Exhibitions

University of Kentucky

Bolivar Art Gallery | August 30 - September 28, 2024

- *SAFE PASSAGE: The work of Robert Morgan*
- *Living Archives: A Contemporary Portrait of Queer Kentucky* by John Brooks, Ceirra Evans, Kat Smith, and Borealis
- *Black, Femme, Queer, and Here: Selections from the Faulkner Morgan Archive*

Gatton Student Center | August 15 - October 23, 2024

- *Queer Gear: Clothing from LGBTQ+ Kentuckians*

UK Art Museum | August 20, 2024 - January 18, 2025

- *Queer Views*

Speaker Bios and Abstracts

September 21st | University of Louisville

Marika Cifor

Marika Cifor is Associate Professor in the Information School at the University of Washington, where she is also adjunct faculty in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. She is the author of *Viral Cultures: Activist Archiving in the Age of AIDS* (University of Minnesota, 2022) and numerous articles on archives, affect, and information activism.

Viral Transmission: AIDS Archives in Digital Cultures

A vital supplement to scholarship on North American AIDS activism during the 1980s and 1990s, Marika Cifor's *Viral Cultures: Activist Archiving in the Age of AIDS* (University of Minnesota, 2022) critically examines the archives that keep the history and work of AIDS activists alive. AIDS archives hold a powerful, if underacknowledged, significance in contemporary viral media cultures. In this talk, Cifor examines how by queerly digitally remediating and transmitting viral imagery, aesthetic practices, and political actions from AIDS archives online through vital nostalgia practices contemporary artists Jess Mac, Kia LaBeija, and Demian DinéYazhi' are reckoning with the whitewashed dominant narratives of the AIDS past. The artists use AIDS records as catalysts in art-activist mobilizations of virality that navigate the tensions between a longing to understand AIDS activist histories and the urgency of generating action to challenge the injustices that undergird current crises. Their work demonstrates the power of a vital nostalgia approach: activist longings for a past time and a way of accessing and using AIDS archives that identifies, addresses, and repairs structural power inequities. Positioning vital nostalgia as both a critical faculty and a generative practice, Cifor examines the act of saving this activist past and reanimating it in the digital age.

Marcelo Gabriel Yáñez

Marcelo Gabriel Yáñez is a photographer and art historian based in Stony Point, NY. He is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art and Art History at Stanford University. He is currently at work on a dissertation titled *The Disappearance of Landscape: Artists on Fire Island, 1937-1983*.

On Sheyla Baykal (1944-1997)

This talk is an introduction to the work of the Turkish-American photographer Sheyla Baykal, who was active in Downtown New York between 1963 and 1997. Across four decades, her photographs and films documented her immediate queer artistic community in the East Village. A devoted participant and producer of Off-Off Broadway theater, she formed part of the Angels of Light before starting her own Palm Casino Revue in 1974. Beyond serving as the first art historical consideration of Baykal's photographic practice, this talk also traces her acts of archival stewardship and "death-mothering" during the AIDS crisis to friends like John Eric Broaddus and Paul Thek. In discussing the current stewardship of Baykal's estate by the artist Penny Arcade, I move between the third and first person voice to recount our opening up, for the first time, the boxes of Baykal's belongings as she packed them in 1997 before her final hospitalization.

C. Ondine Chavoya

C. Ondine Chavoya is the John D. Murchison Regents Professor in Art in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin and was a 2023-24 MoMA Scholar in Residence. Chavoya co-curated the traveling exhibition *Teddy Sandoval and the Butch Gardens School of Art*.

Disco Clones and Teddy Sandoval's Butch Gardens School of Art

Disco Clones and Teddy Sandoval's Butch Gardens School of Art explores the connections between art, gay bars, and disco and new wave music in the 1970s and early 1980s. This queer synergy informed Teddy Sandoval's art and his creation of the fictitious art school, the Butch Gardens School of Art named after a

short-lived gay bar in Los Angeles. The talk considers the movement engaged in Sandoval's art between mail art, alternative art spaces, imaginary institutions, such as the Butch Gardens School of Art, and gay bars and discos.

Olivia K. Young

Olivia K. Young is an Assistant Professor of African Diasporic Art in the Department of Art History and the Center of African and African American Studies (CAAAS) and affiliate faculty member of Rice's Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality at Rice University. Their manuscript, *How the Black Body Bends: Sensorial Distortions in Black Contemporary Art*, foregrounds the relationship between concepts of blackness, sensate formations, and the never before theorized keyword 'distortion' in the artwork of black contemporary artists.

Black Queer Crip Embodiments in Indira Allegra's Documenting Disability

The only remaining remnants of Indira Allegra's eight-hour performance, *Documenting Disability* (2015), are an 8-minute video, a delicately woven oral document, and a statement on the artist's website that reads: "By securing warp threads to my teeth in an oral loom, the act of speaking about disability not visible to others creates a woven document – proof of the substance of my word." In this lecture, I consider what is lost in leaning on visual analysis alone to consider Allegra's multimedia performance. Instead, I center proprioception—the sensory register responsible for understanding the body in space – to consider a new method of orienting. Foregrounding proprioception in the theorization of orientation (Ahmed, 2006), institutes a conceptualization of space less interested in directionality or even relationality, and more concerned with the intimate perception of movement – the subtle gestures of black, queer and crip bodily being.

Julia Bryan-Wilson

Julia Bryan-Wilson is Professor of Contemporary Art and LGBTQ+ Studies at Columbia University. She is also a widely published critic and Curator-at-Large at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, where she is co curating the exhibition *Queer Histories*. Her most recent book is *Louise Nevelson's Sculpture: Drag, Color, Join, Face* (Yale, 2023).

Conceição's Queer Bugrinhos

This talk investigates the wooden carved sculptural forms of the Brazilian artist Conceição Freitas da Silva (1914-1984), proposing that queer objects have worlds of their own in distinction to the lives of their makers.

Exhibitions

University of Louisville

Cressman Center for Visual Arts | August 21 - October 5, 2024

- *it was not written down: Stephen Irwin x Letitia Quesenberry*

Schneider Hall Galleries | September 12 - October 31, 2024

- *Not Yet / Always Been: An Archive of Queer Louisville*
- *Interventions: Alivia Blade, J. Cletus Wilcox, and Ren Velez*

Ekstrom Library Archives & Special Collections | April 18 - December 31, 2024

- *Fairness Does a City Good: A 25 Year Retrospective*

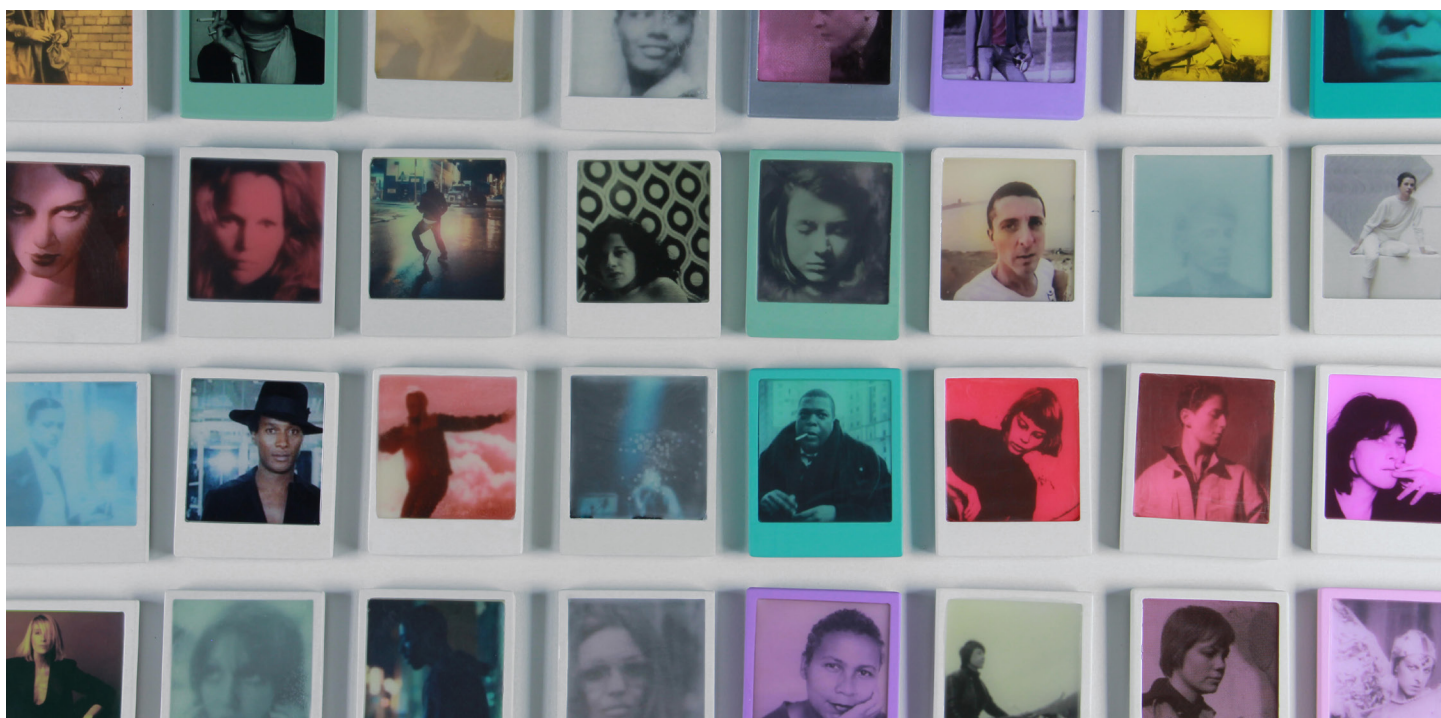
Symposium Organizers

Miriam Kienle

Miriam Kienle is Associate Professor of Art History, Visual Studies, and Curatorial Studies at the University of Kentucky, specializing in modern, contemporary, and American art. A prolific author and curator, her research has been supported by many external grants. Kienle's book, *Queer Networks: Ray Johnson's Correspondence Art* (Minnesota, 2023), analyzes Johnson's role as an initiator of the international correspondence art movement through the lenses of network studies, queer theory, and histories of interpersonal communication.

Jennifer Sichel

Jennifer Sichel is Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art and Theory at the University of Louisville. Her research focuses on 20th-century art, criticism, and visual culture of the United States, with an emphasis on queer forms of attachment and belonging. Her book, *Criticism without Authority: Gene Swenson and Jill Johnston's Queer Practices*, is forthcoming with University of Chicago Press.



Letitia Quesenberry, *little darlings* series, 2014–ongoing. Photo courtesy of the artist.



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