

Episode
5

Fri 24 — Sun 26 May 2013
Tramway, Glasgow

Arika¹³

HIDDEN
IN
PLAIN
SIGHT

Our languages, habits, desires; our race, sexuality and gender: none of these originate from within our selves so much as they're prescribed by social norms.

Are these norms a sort of unwritten script, hidden in plain sight but never commented on? Are our identities the performance of that script, one we're unaware has been handed down to us? Forced to mime our emotions - now cheap commodities - our impulses are conditioned, controlled and manufactured: imposed, organized, propagandized, and maintained by force to our detriment.

WHEN DO WE GET TO
THAT MAGICAL MOMENT
OF REALIZATION THAT
OUR BIGGEST THREAT
IS NOT A PANDEMIC OF
INFECTIOUS DISEASE, IT IS
OUR BELIEF IN MESSAGES
THAT SERVE US NO PURPOSE
BUT TO DESTROY OUR
MINDS, DETRIMENT OUR
SPIRIT, DEVALUE OUR SOULS,
SO THAT WE BECOME
SPIRITUALLY, POLITICALLY,
COLLECTIVELY IMPOTENT.



This last year we have met and worked with many people who reject and challenge the insidious nature of a key element of society's prescribed script - the oppressive and controlling notion of compulsory heterosexuality.

This challenge, in its most radical form, doesn't defensively seek equality or assimilation into conservative social institutions so as to alleviate the symptoms of homophobia and heterosexism, but rather proposes a direct challenge to the root cause of such symptoms: a rejection of our cultural conditioning, and a radical re-thinking of what an identity or self might be.

QUEER IS BY
 DEFINITION WHATEVER
 IS AT
 ODDS WITH THE
 NORMAL, THE
 LEGITIMATE, THE
 DOMINANT. THERE
 IS NOTHING IN
 PARTICULAR TO
 WHICH IT
 NECESSARILY REFERS.
 IT IS
 AN IDENTITY
 WITHOUT AN ESSENCE.

Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, Installation with Super 16mm film / HD,
13 min and archive, 2012. Photo: Ouidade Soussi-Chiadmi



The social spaces¹ and kinship structures that support this rethinking of the self are (like the normative ideas they reject) also often hidden in plain sight, indifferent to, passing for or deliberately undetectable to mainstream society, even while they explore the artificiality at the core of prescribed identities.

In what way do such social spaces allow unpredictable relations between identity, gender and sexuality to be nurtured? Do they rethink bodies as a ground for negotiating social relations? Are they too utopian, never managing to cultivate a language of failure that might allow us to grasp and change our material conditions now?

How might traumatic cultural memory be used as a resource for the construction of new forms of public culture?

THERE IS A KIND OF
SOCIAL FIELD ... HIDDEN
IN PLAIN SIGHT ... LIKE A
SECRET, SACRED PUBLIC
PERFORMANCE SPACE
THAT PERIODICALLY RISES
AND FALLS WITH THE
TIDES OF INSURGENCY.
[IT] MOVES IN THE SPACE
OF ITS OWN DENIAL OR
DISAVOWAL AND OUR
CAPACITY TO RENEW IT:
ITS CAPACITY TO RENEW
US IS WHAT WE LIVE FOR.

1 – Which variously might self-identify as trans, gay, bi, lesbian, queer...



boychild. Photo: Daniel Bolliger



And what is the connection between the rich languages, habits and gestures and the fugitive social spaces that produce them? Can we understand voguing, drag, lip-syncing, deep house, mimicry or exaggerated appropriation as ways of thinking through a politics, by enacting it so as to better understand it?

What does it mean that the tools used to create such modes of being are engaged directly with feelings, with mourning and militancy, with affect, emotion and melancholy as well as exuberance, flamboyance, artifice and (ironic) embellishment?

What might it mean to explore, here in Glasgow the links between these artforms and the communities that produce them? What do they have to say about public health or racism, about poverty or kinship, feminism, art or knowledge?

... MUSIC ALREADY
 ACTIVATES US SOCIALLY,
 SEXUALLY, INTELLECTUALLY,
 AESTHETICALLY. I SEE ALL
 THESE MODES OF BEING
 AS HAVING POLITICAL
 CURRENCY. IT IS NOT THE
 CASE THAT OUR POLITICS
 MERELY REPRODUCE OUR
 MODES OF BEING. RATHER,
 IT IS THROUGH THESE
 THAT THE CONDITIONS
 FOR OUR POLITICS
 ARE REPRODUCED.



FRI

24

(M)IMOSA | *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church* (M) Choreographed and Performed by Cecilia Bengolea | François Chaignaud | Marlene Monteiro Freitas | Trajal Harrell

Friday 24 May | 8:30pm | Evening or Festival Pass

Harrell's series in seven sizes, (XS) - (XL), *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church*, charts a path through a choreographic labyrinth in the form of a question: *What would have happened in 1963 if someone from the voguing ball scene going on in Harlem had travelled downtown to perform alongside the early postmoderns at Judson Church?* (M)IMOSA is a choreographic collaboration authored by Bengolea, Chaignaud, Monteiro Freitas, and Harrell in response to this question, seducing the viewer with sculptural acrobatics, elaborate drag and amazingly virtuosic movement into considering the theatricality

“Gerard Mayen has written: “*Judson reunited middle and upper-middle class artists and audiences, white and culturally selective, politicized, and convinced of the democratic scope of their privilege for an everyday gesture and body - one that was neutral and full of ‘authenticity.’ The voguing ballrooms brought together poorer artists and audiences, non-white, inspired by pop and fashion culture and a search for the ‘realness’ of gesture.” This realness turns out to reveal the artificiality being performed at the root of all social identities.*” Trajal Harrell

HIDDEN

IN SIGHT : PLAIN CLUB

DJ Sprinkles, Vjuan Allure, boychild, The Legendary Pony Zion Garçon
Friday 24 May | 11:00pm | Club Ticket

A kind of fugitive, semipublic space that makes up for the failures of the public sphere, the club or ballroom has traditionally fostered alternate kinship and support. “*The club saved lives*” - Michael Roberson Garçon.

One of the originators of the “new sound” in ballroom music, **Vjuan Allure** revitalized ballroom by crafting and remixing bass-heavy house tracks specifically for it, giving dancers new beats that emphasised the dramatic: something to drop to beyond the likes of Masters At Work’s *The Ha Dance*.

DJ Sprinkles is Terre Theamlitz’s deep house persona, forever influenced by Manhattan’s 1980s club scene. He insists that club music grew out of struggle, which makes it inherently political: “*the house nation likes to pretend clubs are an oasis from suffering...but suffering is in here, with us.*” Dealing with sadness, pain, the threat of sudden violence and the fleeting promise of escape in a club, house, at once euphoric and subdued, proves that it can be deep; not just in terms of its sound, but politically and intellectually so.

boychild - #untitled lipsync 1 The young, black, transgender artist boychild’s lip-sync drag performances re-appropriate fashion, Butoh or mainstream hetero-pop, not to sing it but to change its meaning completely. As a startling re-imagining of performance and pop-culture, they locate the body as a site for the negotiation of sexuality and blackness, in all its messiness, mobility and excess.

The Legendary Pony Zion Garçon

A member of the House of Comme des Garçons, Pony is a legend in the Ballroom Scene in the category Butch Queen Vogue Femme. He is also the founder of Vogue Evolution, a vogue dance group focused on social justice concerns. Pony “walks” his category with a style that fuses flamboyance and athleticism, rapidly shifting between fluid sashaying, catwalking and duck-walking and dramatic lunges, dives and other “suicide” dips. His emphasis is on investigating the tones and vocabulary of vogue by transforming gestures and improvising combinations in both a conscious self-analysis and manipulation of tradition through erotic rupture, collision and augmentation.

SAT

25

We have something to say about ... Pt 1
A Historical Narrative of the Black and Latinola Transgender, Bisexual, Lesbian, and Gay House and Ballroom Scene.
Vogue’ology
Saturday 25 May | 1:30pm | Free

The House & Ballroom Scene is a creative collective and kinship system established and sustained by Black and Latino/a transgender, lesbian, bisexual and gay individuals. While the modern ballroom scene was constituted almost 50 years ago, its roots are in the Harlem Renaissance

and the strategies of survival and creative expression developed during slavery. Ballroom Scene members Michael Roberson, Pony Zion and Frank Roberts review this history in the context of centuries-long struggles for liberation. They also examine - through a conversation with Womanist theologian Eboni Marshall Turman and others - the Ballroom Scene’s struggle with and response to intersecting race, gender, sexuality and class oppressions.

Vogue’ology is an investigative team consisting of members of the House & Ballroom scene and Ultra-red.

Soullessness - Introduction Terre Thaemlitz

Saturday 25 May | 4:00pm | Free

Transexuality is most often discussed as a process of becoming: maybe in line with Simone de Beauvoir’s statement “*one is not born, but becomes a woman*”. Doesn’t this sound worryingly like the positivism and self-actualisation of capitalism / humanism? What if we were to think of transexuality as an unbecoming (stemming from an inability to live with your birth body)? Does it allow us to think more about our material conditions rather than some transcendental other? Would it allow a kind of deprogramming in relation to ideas of the self, the soul or religion? An introduction to Thaemlitz’s later audio and video performance.

No Church in the Wild Jack Halberstam

Saturday 25 May | 5:30pm | Free

Jack’s low theory makes important contributions to issues relating to tomboys, female masculinity and drag kings, anarchy, failure and chaos, mining mainstream culture for its queer potential. By weaving a story about emergent forms of life through the glimpses we catch of it in popular culture and subcultural production - in this case Jay Z and Kanye West’s “*No Church in the Wild*” - Jack points to a kind of emergent cultural idiom that speaks in the language of anarchistic revolt and takes issue with the logics of success and failure that have riddled every aspect of modern life.

Soullessness – Cantos I-IV

Terre Thaemlitz

Saturday 25 May | 7:30pm |

Evening or Festival Pass

Starting from his notion of Soullessness, Terre has spent over four years actively investigating a series of seemingly disjunctive events and contexts through video and audio. “*Canto I is concerned with the ways medical gender transitioning fosters essentialist ‘gender cults’ that further entrench patriarchal gender constructs. Canto II attempts to decipher the social messages underlying the unusual frequency of ghosts and hauntings experienced by undocumented Filipina(o) workers in Japan. Canto III investigates the use of electronic audio devices by nuns in their convents. Canto IV uncovers the secret anti-war functions of all-male Catholic military prep schools in the US.*”

#untitled lipsync 2 boychild

Saturday 25 May | 9:15pm |

Evening or Festival Pass

Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church (S)

Trajal Harrell

Saturday 25 May | 9:45pm

Evening or Festival Pass

In turns smart, sensuous and stark, (S) is a stripped down, solo performance of ‘twenty looks’. Together they create a rich, imaginary space in which to examine: fashion and the evolution of Cool; race, gender and class; and dance history’s canonisation of Judson and relative neglect of voguing; all staged on a runway as an ode to both traditions’ interest in walking. “*I am most interested in how the imagination can re-think the “omissions” of history. In this way, performance can be a way in which we collectively reimagine the impossibilities of history and thus make room for new possibilities in the world we make today.*” Trajal Harrell

SUN

26

An Archive of Feelings

Ann Cvetkovich

Sunday 26 May | 11:00am |

Studio | Free

Ann is one of the leading voices discussing queer archives, exploring how traumatic cultural memory catalyzes their creation, alongside political communities and new forms of public culture. She argues for the importance of recognizing - and archiving - accounts of trauma that bear witness to the effects of a sexism that does its work precisely by being constructed as normal. This event is an informal chance to take stock of what’s going on with LGBTQ archives internationally and locally.

Public Feelings

Ann Cvetkovich

Sunday 26 May | 2:30pm | Free

Ann suggests ways in which the visceral and emotional qualities of queer life bring into being new possibilities for physical bodies and their meanings, with implications not only for queer sexual lives but for others, too. Connecting the intimacy of sexuality and the way in which it is shared as public feelings, she sets out an understanding of how counter-languages, gestures and impulses (aesthetics?) are a way in which to embody and communicate a queer community politics; of how queer affect and feelings are de-pathologised to create new modes of creative survival.

Suspended closure, suspended

Jimmy Robert

Sunday 26 May | 4:00pm | Free

Jimmy’s performances are eloquent and limpid: sensitively and suggestively, links between ideas and objects are carefully implied and revealed. They rethink identity, language and selfhood as an ongoing process, rather than a pre-construction we must adopt wholesale. With subtle mimicry and quotation, restrained gestures and language, Jimmy makes visible the vulnerability of bodies: of how through a subtle form of feedback, the body becomes an image of the social situation it is experiencing, even as it contributes to that situation.

We have something to say about ... Pt 2

A Historical Narrative of the Black and Latinola Transgender, Bisexual, Lesbian, and Gay House and Ballroom Scene.

Vogue’ology

Sunday 26 May | 4:30pm | Free

The House & Ballroom Scene is internationally known for its creation and practice of the dance form Vogue, its influence on fashion and house music, and its practices of gender performativity. While celebrated and studied by musicians, dancers, visual artists, and sexual and gender theorists, little recognition is given to how these creative endeavours are situated within the community’s multi-generational commitment to collective artistic production and social action. Ballroom Scene members Michael Roberson Garçon, Pony Zion Garçon and Frank Roberts discuss the scene’s creative practices and their relationship to other black arts movements with poet and theorist Fred Moten, composer and DJ Terre Thaemlitz, and others.

Toxic | No Future | No Past | Charming for the Revolution

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Sunday 26 May | 7:30pm |

Evening or Festival Pass

With a mixture of punk, drag, queerness and droll European affectlessness, Boudry / Lorenz’s razor sharp but often coolly funny films carefully re-present and reconsider composite and jumbled characters: individuals and groups that have historically been marked as ‘other’, freaky, perverse, racialised or socially outcast. Through mimicry and imitation, (is that a drag Fassbinder, Poly Styrene or Benjamin’s tortoise walking bourgeois time-waster?) and with halting delivery, staged dissatisfaction or disdain, the visceral pull of the past is mined so as to interrogate the conditions of the present in a kind of trans-temporal drag (multiple times existing at once, queerly).

Suspended closure, suspended

Jimmy Robert

Sunday 26 May | 9:00pm |

Evening or Festival Pass

My Dog is My Piano

Antonia Baehr

Sunday 26 May | 9:30pm |

Evening or Festival Pass

What if we extended the queer blurring of borders between genders and social hierarchies further, to also re-write human-animal relations as a kind of companionly intra-activity? “*My Dog is My Piano*” sketches a subtly analytical and subjective acoustic portrait of the affinity between Baehr’s mother and her dog. Can the house they share be read as the musical score for stories of canine-human living together? What kind of language emerges from this long duet of everyday comings and goings, of these choreographies of affinities?

#untitled lipsync 3 boychild

Sunday 26 May | 10:45pm |

Evening or Festival Pass

VENUE

Tramway

25 Albert Drive, Glasgow, G41 2PE
0845 330 3501
www.tramway.org

TICKETS

Festival Pass — £14

Provides entry to all ticketed Tramway events (does not include club ticket).

Friday Evening Pass — £6

Provides entry to all ticketed evening events on 24 May (does not include club ticket).

Friday Club Ticket — £4

Provides entry to club event at Stereo on 24 May.

Saturday/Sunday Evening Pass — £6

Provides entry to all ticketed evening events on either Saturday 25 or Sunday 26 May.

All day events are free but unticketed. Turn up early to guarantee entry.

Please refer to schedule to see which events are ticketed and which are free.

Online

www.tramway.org

In person

Tramway, 25 Albert Drive
Glasgow, G41 2PE

Phone

0845 330 3501

Box Office

Open: Mon to Sat 10am – 8pm,
Sun 12noon – 6pm

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Episode 5

Co-produced by:

Arika

TRAMWAY

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Design by Julia
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Our Episodes are intended* as a kind of convivial, exploratory cross between a salon, festival and live magazine; a kind of concentrated space in which ideas about art and its social use can be investigated through intense performances and thought-provoking discussions with leading international artists and thinkers, and hopefully with the people in Glasgow who might have the most to say to in return.

** But anyway, we don't particularly care about what individual people intend, ourselves included: what this weekend turns out to be about is really up to us all.*

What is the link between the exuberance, flamboyance, artifice and (ironic) embellishment of queer, gay, lesbian, trans or bi artforms – voguing, drag and lipsync, deep house – and the communities, politics and specificities that produced them – a politics of race, class and gender, of public health, of mourning and militancy, affect, emotion and melancholy?

This Episode explores these and consequent concerns with: choreographers and dancers, deep house and ballroom DJs, queer theorists, performance artists, archivists, theologians, visual artists and filmmakers.

More information at:
www.arika.org.uk