When Walls Speak

Issue Thirteen, 2021
€10 £12 $15

Girls Like Us

ISSN 1879-7385
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9 771879 738004

PRELUDE

One can never have enough queer spaces, and where better to start than at the club. The queer club. Space of legend, gossip, hearsay and queer history. Through generations, the queer club has always been a place to gather, to build community. Feel safe to be yourself and take that attitude out to the world at large. Experiment with different concepts and for once give priority to an audience that's most often served last.

In 2015 we published our first guest-edited issue, DANCE & DANCING, to entrust the space of the magazine into different hands, and to make room for subjects that simmer in the margins of the magazine. Give them the space that they really need – and no pun intended, room and space is all what this issue is about.

In 2019 we decided it was time to make a guest-edited issue again. We'd been playing around with the idea to make a special edition around queer architecture. Not so much an intellectual analysis, but more a playful and most of all a personal experience of what queering architecture could mean and how to put it into practice.

And here is where Swedish queer art & architecture collective MYCKET stepped in. The collective has a long standing oeuvre of doing interventions in spaces, buildings, built environments, by ways of and inspired by theatre, the carnivalesque and political activism. They had just finished up a research project exploring the club, which fitted perfectly within the frame of this magazine.

To make this issue was decided long before the pandemic hit us hard, and who knew how much we would miss the club. It's interesting how time can move in parallel lines, and that the club scene MYCKET is recalling in this issue, overlaps with a current longing for clubbing, partying, dancing, making out. Missing clubs of the past is one thing, not being able to dance a whole other thing.

Let's hope we find each other on the dance floor soon again. And meanwhile, enjoy this reading, this space. You will find the bar, the dark room, the dance floor, and many more essential spaces where pleasure and politics dress up and make out. It might give a perspective, or two, or three, a party!

Jessica Gysel
Editor, Girls Like Us
Brussels, January 2021

When Walls Speak
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Join us!

Dear reader, welcome to go clubbing with us, the group MYCKET. MYCKET means 'much' in Swedish and that is how we like it; much is more. Together we will put on our best boots, follow our desire and curiosity, as we invite you to follow us on a personal, political, queer, lesbian, feminist, erotic journey through The Club Scene. The Club Scene is explored as a queer performative architecture acting as a supportive and life-sustaining space in dominator culture. A space that generates desire, generously supports our bodies and our bravest political ideas. A shared playground for nonconformist feeling and movement.

We are compiling this publication after working ourselves through the entire queer nightclub and then coming out again. It took us nine years. To begin, we had to find each other on the street/sidewalk to gather courage to enter. Together, we crossed the threshold, braved the entryway, hung up our coats, and got changed in the wardrobe. We then spent time on the dance floor, in the bar, the stairs, the dark room, and even the broom closet, until we were so filled with encounters, insights, feelings, movements, visions, conversations that we could leave – because the queer nightclub would never leave us.

Through fictional writing we invoke an archive of nightclubs, a unique archive not found in the library but in our bodies and in the crowd. An archive as diverse as the people who go clubbing. An archive that has been within and between bodies now takes a written form. Our hope is that it might enter our bodies again and begin to transform the habitual world. If it manages, even a little, to trouble existing histories and structures, it will be a success.

The queer nightclub is, in our case, the investigatory journey that we dared ourselves to go on. In order to find tools and approaches for us, as architects, designers, and fellow creatures, to create equal

opportunities for a variety of life forms to exist on this earth, we started the project The Club Scene. We received funding for artistic research from The Swedish Research Council and were hosted by the Swedish National Center for Architecture and Design, ArkDes, to test several situations at scale; to change, to renovate, to add on, and answer the questions: What makes us feel safe in a space? What makes us feel at home? How do we create rooms that support discussion, that inspire dreams and utopias? Activism? What are the material conditions necessary to achieve that? Can a space encourage reconciliation, repair? How?

We felt that the queer nightclub was the perfect object of study for an investigation into spaces and activities that have been, and still are, crucial to people who haven't had, or currently don't have, the freedom to act as they wish – where the relation between the social interplay and the material conditions are intimately connected. A room that is temporary (in that it exists at a certain place during a certain time) can create experiences that can linger in the body forever. It's also a place where boundaries between the staged and the real are touched upon, where fiction/myth/expectation can't be separated from reality. In the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987, p. 87):

> Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

When Walls Speak is divided into ten chapters; one for each spatial situation that has become essential to our research. The situations serve as metaphors but are also concrete locations. Through these, as well as through the elements that operate and speak through them and through our own characters, an architectural drama unfolds.

As a nightclub wandering through time and space, it highlights various voices and perspectives. Theoretical, reflective, and artistic texts stand alongside real-life examples, tools, and visions for the future. Our voices intermingle with the voices of others: collaboration and the voices of others are foundational to our work. We hope that this research project can help others in their artistic, architectural, design, or city planning practices, as those who have paved the way for us have helped us.

Warmly,
MYCKET
Mariana Alves Silva
Katarina Bonnevier
Thérèse Kristiansson

Cast of Characters In Order of Appearance

Thérèse

Hostess since childhood who nurtures many close relationships around the world. A supple spirit whether in dance moves or demonstrations none the less shows the sharpest fury against all oppression. The character is based on the artist Thérèse Kristiansson who is the colleague of Katarina Bonnevier and Mariana Alves Silva.

Mariana

Diasporic know-all and charmer with many tools in her box. With soaring visions and a gentle hand, she likes to carve and to polish her environment. The character is based on the designer Mariana Alves Silva who is the colleague of Thérèse Kristiansson and Katarina Bonnevier.

Katarina

Easily moved romantic who most preferably carries silk and wants to paint every surface. Enjoys moving herself over sticks and stones or to be enthralled by other violettes. The character is based on the architect Katarina Bonnevier who is the colleague of Thérèse Kristiansson and Mariana Alves Silva.

Tyra

The beloved poodle of Katarina's. White and shaggy. Always joins adventurous workdays.

Terra

Down-to-earth activist who lay the groundwork for the disability rights movement.

Curtain

Selective concierge born and raised in the Marais district of Paris. Helps keep the community safe.

Poster

Lesbian Avenger who made zines as well as countless nightclub-posters and flyers since the beginning of the eighties. Analogue, but has their own Xerox Machine[1].

Glitter Lash

Mestizx born in the Mexico-US Borderlands. Survived by living sin fronteras, being on crossroads. Has endured the suffering of others all over the world. The twilight unfolds their wings[2].

Banner

Tailor-made closet attendant from Sappho Islands, Kampala. Makes sure to measure each guest.

Slippers

Cuddly pantofle. A real softie.

Sneakers

Tall club kid who has bounced around on dancefloors in all the metropolises of the world since the mid-nineties.

Boobie

Non-binary drag activist who had their best years at Potta during the nineties in Oslo.

Stairway

Born during the former turn of century, in between the two stories of Admiralkroen in Copenhagen. A cog in the wheel who enjoys moving around, unfurling their arms in pirouettes. Can be perceived as frightening in all their glory but compensates with the most heartfelt hospitality.

Table

Life-taught academic with three hundred and thirty three years in their baggage. Checkered origin, made out of just as many trunks as it has annual rings, all just as load-bearing. Grounded they stand on their steady legs. Humble and thoughtful, constantly trying to widen their perspectives, unafraid of change.

Throne

Bookworm who gnaws holes in the canon. Has been expelled from and relocated to schools and universities several times, after giving voice to others.

Bar Counter

(reappears as Counter Top in the final chapter)

Bartender who served creatures from all corners of the world since the commencement of the gay bar ZanziBar, in Cannes in 1885[3]. Has seen and heard everything and is today blasé. Speaks Esperanto with their guests.

Window Sill

Well-off with plenty of cultural capital. Careful with their appearance. Dislikes definitions. Is often referred to as arty dyke or designer dyke.

Chair

Flamboyant femme-i-nist with major integrity. Accustomed to declaring their opinions in the agora. Is romantically involved with Grand Piano.

Grand Piano

Bulldagger from Philadelphia, who in their teens traveled alone to New York to sing dirty self-written songs performed along with contemporary hit music, often accompanied by a drag queen choir. Was forced to repress their identity during the McCarthy era. Is romantically involved with Chair.[4]

Horse Hair Whip

Devoted middle-aged horse girl, born and raised in a horse farm. Dressage judge on fire who always holds the reins. Is particularly careful with the rising of the throat and the neck as well as with the elevation of the chest. Offers riding lessons at Club Wish together with their apprentice GreyGasm riding crop[5].

Electric Bi-polar Paddle

DJ at Club Wish. Magnetic charm and perceptive to what others want to wiggle their hips to, both in front of and behind the curtain.

Grey-Gasm Riding Crop

Newly admitted PhD-student in Sexual Studies Towards a Post-Human Cartography of Girls Desire for Horses. Horse Hair Whip is their external advisor outside of the academy.

Rattan Carpet Cane

Former housewife. Now full time dedicated chairperson for Club Wish.

1 Lesbian Avenger is a direct action group formed in New York in 1992. In *The Lesbian Avengers Dyke Manifesto*, "Access to resources (Xerox Machines)" is listed under " TOP TEN AVENGER QUALITIES". IMAGE BELOW: *Lesbian Avengers Dyke Manifesto*, Carrie Moyer, 1993.

2 Combining the racial and cultural meaning the term Mestizaje is used as a metaphor for the kinds of borderland subjectivities produced by multiple discourses and practices of gender, race, class, nationalism, sexuality and colonialism. *In Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987, Gloria Anzaldúa affirms the new mestiza consciousness as a potentially critical, activist identity informed by material histories of oppression. In the poem "To live in the Borderlands means you" Anzaldúa writes "To survive the Borderlands, you must live *sin fronteras* (without borders), be on crossroads", p. 217.

3 ZanziBar is said to be the first gay bar in Europe. It was closed down in 2010, after 125 years.

Photo by an unidentified photographer, 1946–1949, from the Archive of the National Museum of African American History & Culture.

4 The character is built upon the American blues singer and pianist Gladys Bentley.

5 Club Wish, former known as LASH, is a separatist club in Sweden for people who are women, trans and/or intersexual with an interest in BDSM (Bondage, Dominance/discipline, Submission/sadism, Masochism) and fetishism.

Tired Tread Slapper

Dyke on bike who has taken the lead in the parade ever since it was called The Liberation Week.

Sea Shell Paddle

Mollusk from the island Lesbos. Thrives on salt beaches, in freshwater, at sauna clubs, pool parties and on the islet Långholmen.

Le Plume Feather Tickler

Performance artist of the collective Virago Nation reclaiming Two Spirit/Indigenous sexuality and gender.[6]

Metal Chain Flogger

Self-taught welder who specializes in friction welding. Blunt and harsh but not ruthless. Reliable cashier with experience of working at Club Wish.

Cup-board

Activist who fought for years in north-westerly headwind. Has worked within health and elderly care. Is currently suffering from fatigue depression with symptoms such as sound sensitivity, tiredness and anxiety.

Ring

Gregarious amazon who searches for their better half.

Screw-driver

Gladly turns up the atmosphere. Pragmatic.

Dandelion

Grew up under harsh conditions. Is still fighting to find their place in the world[7].

Creature

Thousand-year-old cosmopolitan with a scent of musk who can move themselves over time and geography. Carrier of magical forces, both terrifying and alluring in their wildness. Piles of waste and bulky waste rooms are their treasuries.

Sara

Graphic designer of the magazine *Girls Like Us*. Cutting edge queer designer-guru cutee with a mild tone, soft eyes and warm hug.

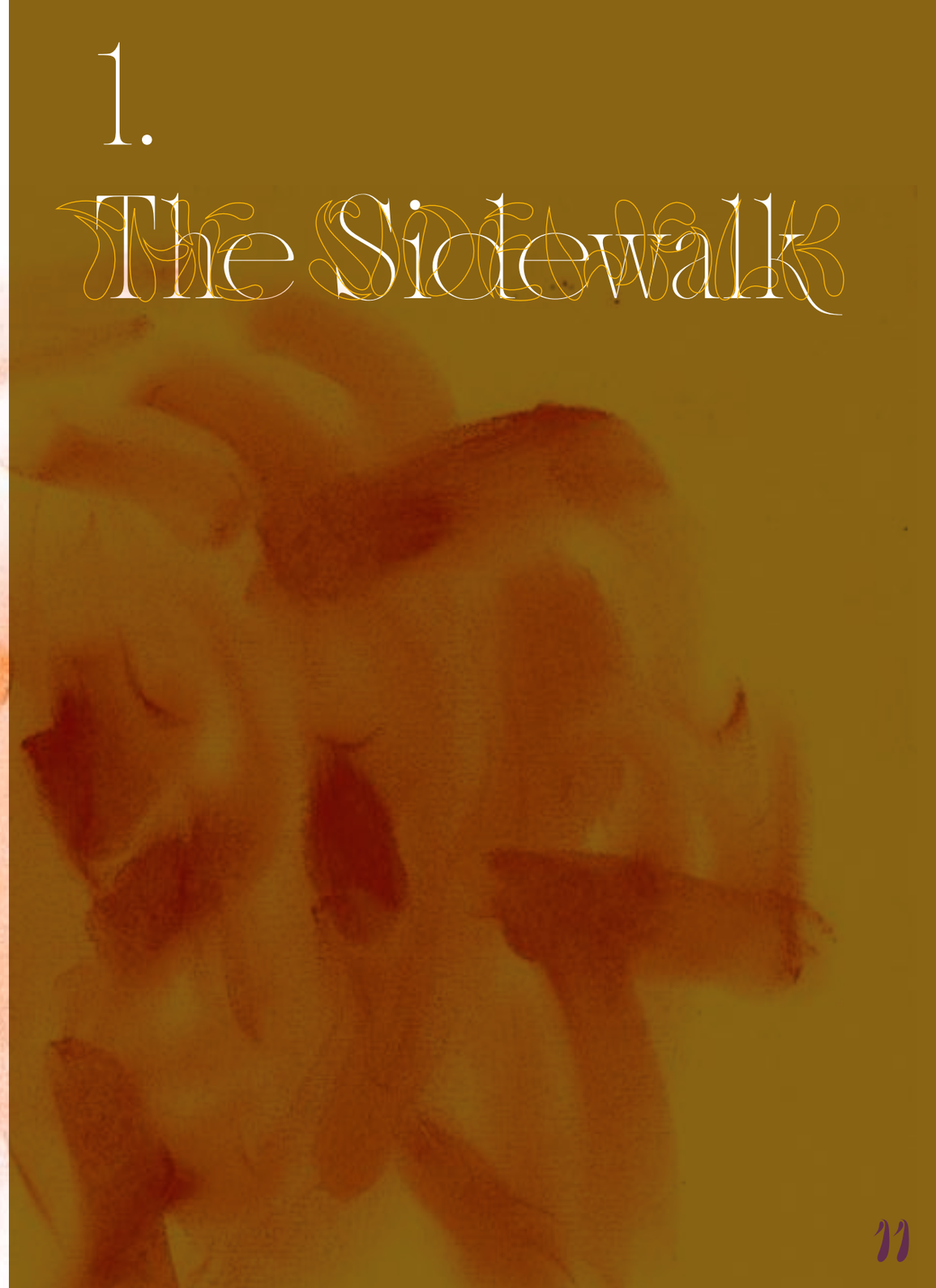
Jessica

Editor of the magazine *Girls Like Us*. Supportive, generous and courageous editor open for adventures and heartily collaborations.

6 Virago Nation is an indigenous burlesque troupe based in Vancouver in Canada and consists of the artists Ruthe Ordare, Shane Sable, Sparkle Plenty, Scarlet Delirium, Manda Stroyer & RainbowGlitz.

7 The Swedish expression *Maskrosbarn* (Dandelion Kid) was coined by the journalist Ami Lönnroth in 1987, in a series of articles in *Svenska Dagbladet* (The Swedish Daily Paper). The term describes children who pull through despite very hard upbringings.

1. The Sidewalk



THE SIDEWALK is an intermediary space between the houses and the street, where human and animal bodies move and linger, where bikes and scooters are parked. A semi-public space where the activities of the houses spill out, often in the form of ads for commercial activities, tables and chairs — sometimes as personal belongings: a stool or an ashtray, some flowerpots.

The sidewalk is a place made for pedestrians, careful and orderly. The smooth surface, curbsides, flutings, shifts of textures and painted markings tell us how and in which directions to move. The design carries implicit burdens of norms of behavior and functionality. Tales of what bodies and how they are supposed to move here. In some places, all roads are assigned to cars; not even the slightest path is left for you to cross over to your neighbor. It's impossible to take the kid for a walk in the stroller or roll a wheelchair, and to walk the dog you have to drive to a park. Everything conforms to *Trafikmaktordningen* (The power structure of traffic), where the car and those who own cars have priority. 'Trafikmaktordningen' is a term coined by the Swedish organization planka.nu, a network of groups who work locally in Stockholm and Gothenburg for toll-free public transportations. The term was accepted by the Swedish official organ for language care — Språkrådet — in 2014, who defines it as a "hierarchy that mirrors the societal priorities of traffic types".

When we tread paths outside of the sidewalk, we create what landscape architects refer to as 'desire paths'. Those are the beaten paths that we, for example, can find on a lawn, generated by people who have taken shortcuts to get to their destinations. Scholar Sara Ahmed has developed a theory of queer space based on these paths, and suggests that we — by moving in the ways we want, according to our desires — trouble societal norms. And when someone treads a path, others will follow.

SCENE 1. THE SIDEWALK

Mariana, Thérèse, Katarina and the poodle Tyra are standing on the wide sidewalk outside of Verkstadsgatan 4, in Stockholm, in an area that a hundred years ago felt like a concrete wilderness[8] but at the turn of the 21st century went from being "Knivesville" to "Queerville" – two names of the past. Housing in the area has become exclusive investments for new owners with tax-deductible mortgages that are being serviced by those who once lived here, the new precariat[9]. Those who infused the neighborhood with life are forced out of the city center to expensive rentals in the suburbs[10]. Only the 100 year-old plastered facade is the same, gray at street level and faded green all the way up through the remaining five storeys. Thérèse peeks in through the window and sighs:

THÉRÈSE:
Gosh, we spent so much time on that mural. They've painted it over now, cream white. That's so fucking depressing.

MARIANA:
It must have been a real pain in the ass to get rid of all that stucco[11]. (laughs)

KATARINA:
Look! Here's an illegal memento for those who know.

Katarina giggles as she's fiddling with some stickers. Making sure they become one with the drainpipe. The letters, round and bright yellow with the capital B and P in green[12]. There's another sticker above it with the writing, "Protect the rentals". Parallel stories are being told all over the city[13].

8 This description is from the novel Pennskaftet (Penwoman) by Elin Wägner, 2003 (1910), p. 42.

9 The precariat is a concept that emanates from sociology and is used to describe a societal group consisting of people who for a prolonged time have been outside of the established labor market or labor under uncertain conditions.

10 Turn the page!

12 Bitter Pills sticker

13 Turn to page 15!

11 MYCKET redesigned the dining room at the bar and restaurant Bitter Pills (run by Lotta Nordlander and Anna Classon Ekenfors) as a conclusion to The Club Scene, 2012–2017. One of the dining room walls became an enormous,three dimensional mural in which important clubs throughout time and place were depicted in one image, Space is pressing matter (The Club Scene Act: 12, Bitter Pills, Stockholm, 2016–2017). You'll find more about the mural in chapter 9. Photo by Linn Ahlgren.

Fire Speech

Hi fellow human beings, comrades!

I wish I was a poet. Researchers are so much more boring. If someone in my home country of Chile, where I operated within left-wing organisations, would have told me that the real revolution would be performed by BIPOC, fags and dykes, I would simply have laughed just at the idea of it. Yet here we are today. Today, I come with two announcements — one bad and one good. The bad one is that they are selling out our society. They are selling us! They've been doing so for a long time, but now they're even selling out the public; spaces that we've taken for granted. The other day I was told that the housing around the center of Hagsätra is about to be sold by the local authorities to the company Ikano (which is owned by IKEA). The public square, yes that's right; the square (!) has already been sold. Why does Ikano want to own a square? If we had wanted to host this very party at the Hagsätra square, where Ikano banners are waving everywhere, we would probably have been stopped. They've sold the health care, the school, the public housing, and now the public space. The good news is us, right here. This gives hope for the future! This gives us the realisation that we must unite and organise ourselves, in order to struggle united for social justice, for equality for everyone in the city — regardless of gender, race, sexual identity or the differences in the abilities of our bodies. The collective struggle is the only possible approach!

Thank you!

19

Brandtal (direct translation is Fire Speech, meaning rousing, impassioned and action-oriented Speech) Irene Molina, Human Geographer and anti-racist-feminist activist, gave this speech about gentrification at the nightclub Culture Club (The Club Scene: Act 2, Gallery Index, Stockholm, 2012)

Culture Club is the second act of The Club Scene, which begins with the deconstruction of gender identity and gender constructs that began in the '70s and '80s, the start of Swedish seminal feminist activist group *Lesbisk Front* (Lesbian Front) in 1975, and the birth of Queer Nation in the '90s following the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. Guests were invited to Culture Club by sms, directing people to call a phone number, which had a message directing people to the anarchist bookstore Kafé 44 and queerfeminist bookstore Hallongrottan, Stockholm. There, you got your ticket to the club: a tape roll with the print "ACT UP! CULTURE CLUB"; a bunch of posters with important slogans and the encouragement to put these in the public realm. The club was created in collaboration with designer and researcher Maja Gunn, Norm-Creative Settings/W.I.S.P. (later Settings; Rebecca Vinthagen, Lina Zavalia) and Index – Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, in October 2012. It was held at Index. Video still image by Santiago Mostyn from the welcome speech at Culture Club.

13

The sculpture *Systrarna* (The Sisters), 1945 at Mosebacke Square in Stockholm, by Nils Sjögrens is a statue depicting Lilly Sundberg and Lisa Ström, who bound themselves together with their hat veils and filled their bags with stones, before throwing themselves into Hammarby Lake in 1911. The tragedy gave rise to many speculations, became a chapbook and a model for this sculpture. But Lily and Lisa weren't sisters. They were lovers. This is a story that has been distorted, yet heteronormativity leaks. As always, we can find holes in history, and a newspaper article from the time leaks when it states: "There seems to have existed a raving girlish friendship between the two, somewhat overwrought." The execution of the sculpture can also be seen as heteronormative.

The "sisters" are standing naked in a pond with water, displaced from the center point of the square and placed slightly closer to the trees. Turned away from each other, back to back, they are exposed to the gazes of everyone else, yet lack a room of their own. This and other stories queerying the city is in the map by Katarina Bonnevier and Sofia Olsson, "Queer as Stockholm", *Rum*, 2008. In the novel *Lisa och Lilly: en sann kärlekshistoria* (Lisa and Lilly: A True Love Story, 2020) Mian Lodalen writes about the life conditions of homosexuals in Sweden, based on real life historical destinies. Image by MYCKET.

14

In May 2019, the closing night of Bitter Pills after only four years of operating, the establishment was threatened by a neighbour across the street who showed his rifle to the visitors from his window at 10 pm.

KATARINA:
Do you remember when we put these up, right before it happened?

MARIANA:
Obviously! It was just moments before the guy in the house next door waved with his rifle, right there in the window[14]. (points at the facade)

THÉRÈSE:
I remember my whole life flashing before me. And how everyone there protected each other. (places her paw on Mariana's shoulder) My god, those condo-owners complained so much from the very start. Even those who lived in the neighboring houses. It didn't matter what kind of event it was — release party, karaoke, stand-up, trivia nights.

MARIANA:
A real cultural institution. What a heartbreak that it had to close.

THÉRÈSE:
Just like the rest of them[15]. No one can keep it up forever. Rents are unreasonable! It's not

15

Hallongrottan (The Raspberry Cave), the feminist bookstore close to Bitter Pills (opened by Bitte Andersson, known for the movie *Dyke Hard*, 2014, and later operated by Vombat Publishing/ Alle Eriksson and Lotta Vilde Wahl) was closed down in 2013. The queer coffee shop Copacabana run by Susanne Mobacker, also on the same block (where the three of us—Mariana, Katarina and Thérèse met and started our collaboration) closed down in 2014.

like anyone's getting rich doing this, or actually there are — those who own the real estate[16].

Tyra shivers in the mist. Katarina lifts her up and pets her until she's warm, the curls rest heavy on her body.

THÉRÈSE:
I couldn't hear exactly what he was yelling, did you? And then the cops claimed that it wasn't a hate crime just intimidation. I can't believe that it's still dangerous to fly one's freak flag, to be openly queer, that people's freedoms can't be taken for granted.

MARIANA:
Yeah, the Pride flag was just lowered from the main square in Sölvesborg.

THÉRÈSE:
We're back where we were in Gothenburg thirty years ago, when queer people didn't feel comfortable participating in the big carnival because of all the hate crimes[17].

MARIANA:
It's easy to erase. Just lower a flag.
(clenching her jaw)

16 The queer nightlife of Stockholm has been depleted in the last years, as bars have been forced to shut down. The situation is similar in other cities all over the world with gentrification being one of the causal factors. In London, for example, LGBTQ+ nightclubs and bars have decreased from a number of 121 to 51 between the years 2006—2017. More about this in the research study *LGBTQ+ cultural infrastructure of London: night venues, 2006 – present*, conducted by Ben Campkin and Lo Marschall in 2017.

17 *Göteborgskarnevalen* (The Gothenburg Carnival) was a grassroots initiative annually occurring from the beginning of the 1980's to the early 90's with close links to the large illegal club scene of the time — at its height involving 200 000 people. When MYCKET engaged with the material from the archive of Göteborgskarnevalen we were struck by the absense of overtly queer people. Our qualified guess was that shame, fear and hate made it impossible for an open expression of queerness at the time of the carnival. In collaboration with The New Beauty Council and Maja Gunn, MYCKET made a reenactment of the missing queer carnival called Exclude Me In (The Club Scene: Act 4, 2013) for Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (GIBCA) 2013. Over hundred people joined our queer float, starting at Esperantoplatsen and ending outside the nightclub Nefertiti. Esperantoplatsen is a site with multiple stories. Once, it's surrounding warehouses had stored cotton as a result of Sweden's colonial involvement and in the 20th century, the gay clubs Hellmans café and later Touch housed there (where also a bomb once had been placed). More about Göteborgskarnevalen can be found in "Through Our Dance We Weave the Dance Floor and Ceiling — A conversation amongst MYCKET" in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections*, 2017. IMAGES ON THIS SPREAD: The Gothenburg Carnival, 1986 and the Carnival program in 1989 from the Carnival Association's Archive material. Exclude Me In, 2013 by Maja Gunn and Stefan Nordberg.

KATARINA:
Gosh, you really got depressed! These stickers on the rain gutter are at least tightly secured now. Most people still fight for free love and equality! If I stop believing in people's ability to choose love over hate, then I can no longer bear it, the hate will inhabit a disproportionate amount of space in me. And I certainly don't feel like having it that way!
(turns around, walks up to the window and knocks)

While Katarina is waiting kindly by the window, Mariana grabs the doorknob, pulling it hard.

MARIANA:
Does anyone have a hairpin?

Rustlings while Thérèse scours her pockets. Katarina knocks again and waits by the window. Thérèse looks pleased as she pulls something out and hands it to Mariana.

MARIANA:
You're awesome! (turns to the door and pokes and prods at the lock)

It clicks into place after a while.

TYRA:
Woof! Woof! (jumps out of Katarina's arms and rushes towards the door)

Museum Leuven

ERICKA BECKMAN

09.10.20
→ 18.04.21

Ericka Beckman, 'Reach Capacity', 2020 © the artist

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Flanders
State of the Art

2. The Threshold

THE THRESHOLD is the surface that generates openings of rooms. Where a world ends and another begins. When we are standing on the threshold, we are half-way in, half-way out — from the threshold we can gaze in both directions.

In our case, the threshold is a place where a queer-feminist awakening takes place in relation to space and architecture. We stumble upon the threshold to see inequalities and power structures; we unravel the feelings, analyze and criticize. Yet we are still not in the other room, the one we actually want to inhabit. To describe this experience, we borrow the reasoning of Audre Lorde in *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power* (1978). Lorde writes about locating desires within ourselves. She describes a feminist awakening that can be revived when we become aware of the possibility to act based on our desires: in ourselves, in the creative and in relation to others. This insight becomes something like a yardstick: measuring what we can do and how we can relate to others. Lorde claims we have an ethical responsibility to ourselves to not settle on what is simply comfortable, expected or safe. Once we experience creativity based on desire, the lack of it appears crystal clear.

It can be hard to know where to look and where to go (towards which people, stories and spaces) when you realize that all that's been around you, all that you have oriented yourself towards or around in life, isn't where you want to be. Sara Ahmed writes about this in *Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology* (2006), and about how the directions we take put some things within our reach, while other things become remote. To describe the queer act of "re-orienting" oneself, Ahmed borrows the term "Habit Changes" from Teresa de Lauretis as a way of putting things (and people), that have previously been inaccessible, within our reach. Here, on the threshold, re-orientation takes place after experiencing something very special, after finding a home in ourselves. And it becomes impossible to forget that experience.

SCENE 2. THE THRESHOLD

The door feels heavy when Mariana pulls the handle and tries to open it. Tyra sneaks in as soon as there's a big enough gap for her to pass through. Katarina and Thérèse help make a bigger opening for them all to pass. They enter one by one and pause on the foot-wide threshold that connects to another wooden door. It gets crowded when the front door slams shut after Mariana being the last one to push through.

Katarina:
Ouch! I can't fit.

Tyra:
Woof, woof.

Thérèse:
I'm sorry but I can't get the door to open. (tries to open the wooden door)

Mariana:
And now me, I can't get this one to open either. (pushes back against the front door)

Katarina and Thérèse squirm and try to use each others' body weight, to push against doors and the doorframe, but can't get out. It just creaks. Tyra barks encouragingly. Mariana has noticed carvings in the doorframe.

Mariana:
Simona Castricum, Mo Hartmann, Li Tavor... was here[18]. Do you remember when we finally managed to get through that door to our first shared office, the one that led out to the roof with views over the city?[19] Lots have happened to MYCKET since then. (cackles)

Katarina and Thérèse nod their heads in agreement.

Thérèse:
Yes, that's when we understood, really got it, that real change happens when we live and create out of our desires, beyond what we've been taught is true[20].

Mariana:
What was difficult then, before, is the easiest thing today. It's like you said, Katarina, when you freaked out that we were getting so down talking about the shooter, which of course is well-founded. But being defensive all the time is exhausting, and it can be paralyzing. Choosing lust and care is much more healing for me than hitting back.

18
Read Q&A with Simona Castricum, Mo Hartman and Li Tavor about a queer awakening in relation to space and architecture, p. 27

19
We describe this journey in our piece "Circumnavigating and crushing" together with Bastion Agency, available on our webpage www.mycket.org. Originally printed in Swedish in the feminist magazine *Bang*, No 2, 2013.

20
See next page!

20

"It is as if I had been looking at a fishbowl — the glide and flick of the golden scales, the green tip, the bolt of white careening back from the gills; the castles at the bottom, surrounded by pebbles and tiny, intricate fronds of green; the barely disturbed water, the flecks of waste and food, the tranquil bubbles traveling to the surface — and suddenly I saw the bowl, the structure that transparently (and invisibly) permits the ordered life it contains to exist in the larger world." Toni Morrison, *Playing in The Dark: Whiteness and The Literary Imagination*, 1992, pp.16–17. IMAGE of aquarium in filtration pond by Samuel Hartmann, Ormestorp gård. Photo by MYCKET.

Katarina gazes smilingly at Tyra, and snuggles herself into her shaggy fur.

THÉRÈSE:
But seriously, I have to complain some now. (laughs) It took me so many wasted years to un-learn all that was imprinted on me. Not just during the narrow-minded and conformist architecture program, but all my teenage years and my childhood were colored by male approval and some kind of heteronormative gaze towards myself and how I envisioned my life! (pause) You know what, one of my first memories of feeling like anything was possible was actually when I was at a club, Bangcock at the Chinese Theater. It's crazy to think that I was only sixteen[21]. (giggles)

MARIANA:
Yeah, I was there too! Do you remember the balcony?

THÉRÈSE:
Yes! I especially remember that! I was standing on the balcony on the top floor in some see-through dress without anything much underneath, gazing down at everyone on the dance floor thinking that they were all so hot! And I felt

21

IMAGE ABOVE Thérèse with her teenage best friends Shire and Lasse, on their way to club Bangcock in Stockholm in the mid-nineties. Photo by Julia Altenhofer. IMAGE BELOW As adults, Shire and Thérèse chose to make a family together and are now (together with two other bonus parents) parents to Sidney, three years. Photo by Ninja Hanna. Idea by Christopher Insulander, all dolled up by Johanna Nomiey.

like coming home, even if the organizers of the nightclub were misogynistic, the audience made me feel right at home somehow. It set the standard for what I expected of life, what feelings I knew were possible. It was a big shock for me when, a few years later, I started going to straight clubs with a new group of friends. It felt loveless, impoverished, and boring. I didn't have any agency over my own desire without being seen as a slut. And being a slut was unfortunately seen as a bad thing in that context. I felt like I was supposed to be cute and agreeable, not wanted, not to want. But that's where my female friends wanted to go so I went along, but I was constantly looking for that feeling I'd had at Bangcock. I wanted to feel that way all the time.

KATARINA:
I never went. But I remember when some friends that I thought were really cool invited me along to Bitch Girl Club at Kolingsborg, that was a really powerful experience for me[22].

MARIANA:
I know exactly what you mean! I felt that way there. Both at Bangcock and Bitch.(excitedly) But it took me some time to find it. I remember when I was fifteen and had just heard about Liberation Week. I went all by myself on a subway filled with queers with amazing, colorful outfits and banners, and I thought they looked so happy. I followed the crowd, walked next to them to feel what it was like to be part of this community. I slipped out of the group when we reached the park and continued walking on the sidewalk alongside the park. I didn't dare go in. I didn't know anyone! That's at least what I thought. So I went back home with mixed feelings, elevated and sad at the same time[23].

TYRA:
Woof!!! (annoyed with all the self-pity)

Mariana, Thérèse and Katarina are surprised by Tyra's barking, they startle and inadvertently push the door open. They all tumble in. Tyra gets up quickly and runs around barking while Katarina is chasing her.

22

Katarina as a teenager. Bitch Girl Club, aka "Birran", at Slussen in Stockholm, was a motor in the lesbian scene for almost a decade (1994—2002). More about the club on page 104. Photo by Max Fredriksson.

23

Mariana as a teenager. Photo by Blanca Silva (Mariana's mother)

Simona Castricum, Mo Hartman and Li Tavor about a queer awakening in relation to space and architecture

Simona Castricum, architect, researcher, musician Australia, 2019

Simona Castricum. Photo by Alex Dubois

When and how did a queer awakening occur for you in relation to form/design/space/architecture? My queer awakening in Naarm—Melbourne's queer club scene gave me a sense of how music and architecture act as a multidisciplinary queer practice. I was always interested in how—as a transfeminine creative—the queer and fetish clubs I frequented were important places of queer community building and an evolution of a queer city: places of celebration, of resistance, of risk. These spaces are produced within the gritty urban infill that give rise to finding places of safety and belonging within hostile normative environments. Bars, dance floors, and stages are all spaces where queer and trans people are performers, story tellers, punters, and workers. At some point queers all come together through the festival, parade or the club; the park, the street, the underground. It's where we meet, hook up, get wasted, fall in love—we heal, share catharsis, explore our sexuality, and perform gender. We see ourselves reflected.

As I moved in and out of visibility for my own safety in my earlier years, those formative experiences informed my tactics to mitigate risk in public space, as well as my methods to interrogate architecture—also to deploy it. As I began to organise events and performances, I applied architectural strategies to produce space expressly for queer and trans people. This resonated with me during a conversation with NYC architect A.L. Hu who described my work back to me at the 2019 Transformations symposium: "it's like music creates the conditions within which to practice architecture."

My queer awakening isn't a singular event tied to a moment in time. Much like transition, awakenings are ongoing. It's connection to architecture and my personal experiences

of urbanism continue as I grow older. My cognitive maps of queer cities: how they are interconnected and why they are different, keep evolving between my archives of delight and trauma. Queer event spaces are always my centre of gravity; both microcosms and visions into queer utopia. There's something cinematic in imagining queer futures; music and architecture become a language to articulate both spatial and effective conditions. They will always be transformative places of liberation, connection, discovery, hope—vision and inspiration.

What are you working toward? What world do you want? Queer event spaces and urban precincts exist where queers have the capacity to curate representative artistry, to enact safer space practices, to destabilise normativity and sexual and gender binaries. Transfeminine people have contributed so much to these spaces historically, particularly trans women of colour: politically, physically, sexually, and architecturally. Music and club spaces embrace the diverse experiences of how trans feminism in queer womanhood, lesbian sexuality and femme identities destabilise normative essentialist binaries. My work is about furthering that lineage to build community and representation, but one that also recognises we are part of queer intergenerationality. As a transfeminine queer born in 1970s suburban Naarm, I think of my work within a wider custodianship of a queer lineage bigger than the individual creative self, or the social cliques that we find visibility, or even seek status, within.

We all carry a weight with us, and it's important to create space for that. Architecture—and the events we create within them—hold archives of trauma and delight for many of us. Critical in this is how I, as a white Australian of settler privilege, interrogate my own practice, and the white-western colonial frameworks I benefit from and operate within. This organising occurs on stolen land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people; of Brotherboys, Sistergirls and queer Indigenous people. It directly informs queer relationships to form/design/space; architecture, and the interrogation of its briefs, peak bodies, governance, and institutions—how architecture is an agent of administrative violence.

Ultimately, I hope for communities—urban and regional—where people who are sexually diverse and/or gender noncomforming feel safety and belonging. My music and architectural practice helps me influence that.

Mo Hartmann, architect Austria, 2019

When and how did a queer awakening occur for you in relation to form/design/space/architecture? Thinking back, I remember a sort of moment of arrival: at the small, queerfeminist bar Flinte in Vienna, during a time when I was feeling rather disoriented. Having only moved to the city recently,

I was sitting there, surrounded by people I had just met, tangling in the deepest conversations. It felt like the space had been carved out of the bleak, normative surroundings, and was slowly shaped into something that fits, if only barely.The space's transformations and struggles over the decades were visible in splintering layers of paint and the ever so colourful arrays of chairs and tables, arranged with care. I left there in anticipation of what was yet to come.

How has this experience influenced your spatial practice? At this particular moment in time, how do you articulate what you are working toward? What world do you want? This experience led me to being invited to work and organize within the Türkis Rosa Lila Villa, which is an amazing queer, community-led space in Vienna. It was also my initiation into a process of unlearning what and how I had been taught in ways so far in my architectural education. I am currently striving to find strategies for collective resistance and alternate, intersectional queer forms of knowledge production, that allow movement towards a structurally different kind of society.

Türkis Rosa Lila Villa is described by Mo Hartmann. Photo: Wikipedia Commons.

Li Tavor, architect Switzerland, 2019

Li Tavor. Photo by Nora Halpern

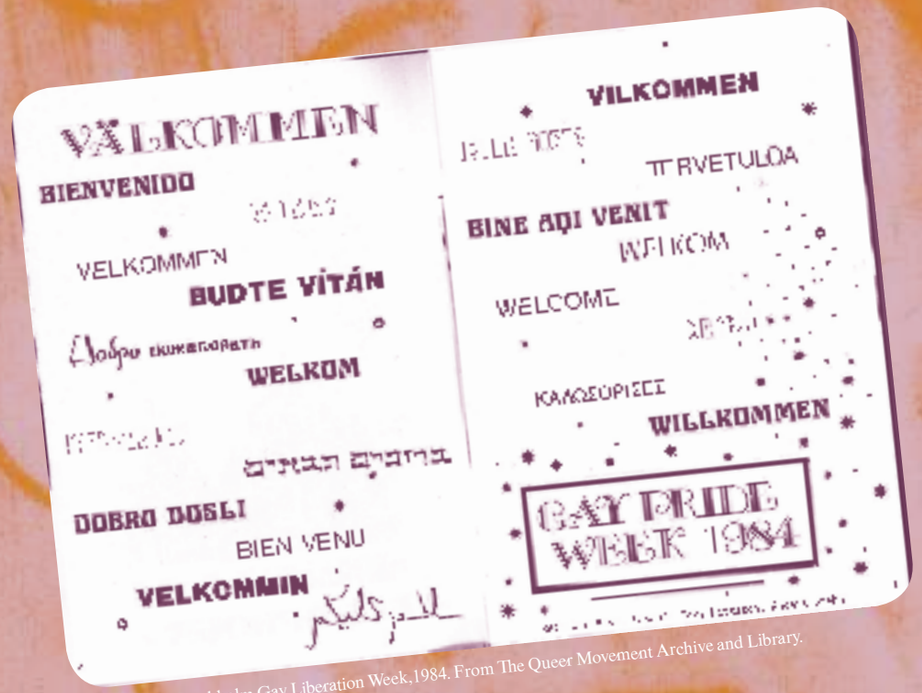
When and how did a queer awakening occur for you in relation to form/design/space/architecture? Awakening might be a too powerful expression for the first impulses that hit me, making me aware that space, the organization and materialization of space, might have something to do with social order, with gender and with forms of behavior related to gender. I grew up in a Jewish family. Religious rituals weren't shaping my everyday life, since my parents do not practice them and are considered to be rather liberal Jews. Nevertheless, we always went to the Synagogue for the most important Jewish holidays. The simple fact, that men stayed downstairs, obviously performing the things that were important for the ritual and women were supposed to go upstairs and just watch all the men from narrow and uncomfortable benches made me feel less valued as a human being. I had these feelings before, when we celebrated Jewish holidays at home and my father would sit at the head of the table reading from the prayer book, while my mother and I just stood there, watching the men do the important reading—like bystanders, creating a familiar background in which the men could act and we would serve them food. But then, going to the Synagogue and understanding that there was a space, a piece of architecture specially constructed to organize gendered behaviour within a large group of people, made me feel smaller and less important. It got under my skin, somewhat. It made me understand that there was a reason why I didn't feel entirely comfortable at home, or in places like the Synagogue.

How has this experience influenced your spatial practice? At this particular moment in time, how do you articulate what you are working toward? What world do you want? I would say it influenced my whole life. But understanding that social injustice can be generated by our constructed environment didn't mean that I was consciously aware of what I was doing and what my interests were. It took me some time to recover from decades of feeling disoriented and alienated in this world, before being able to work with these sets of realizations. But when I gained enough self-confidence, my work became all about ideas of constructed spaces that would create a sense of disorientation and alienation. Suddenly it was all about making visible that everything has an open-ended side to it, if you just try to avoid confronting yourself with what's usually expected.

So I started to focus my interest on topics within spatial production that concern a majority of people, but aren't of any concern to architectural discourse anymore. Like for instance the interior of contemporary housing. This continuous architectural shell is inhabited by all of us, and yet it somehow doesn't make it into the domain of architecture, because it's so highly formalized, normativized and homogenized by the rules of the industry. Architects simply don't think it's worth losing time thinking about these interiors anymore, because there is no scope for experimentation.

That's why I want to live in a world where architects and designers stop physical construction sites and start to think about plans how to really make a difference through architecture and design again. But different.

3. The Entryway



Program. Stockholm Gay Liberation Week,1984. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

THE ENTRYWAY is the first thing that those who enter encounter; it sets the tone and an atmosphere for what's to come. It can function as a portal to new worlds. Here, users and passers-by are invited to enter something we propose, such as MYCKET's staged nightclub spaces. These operate as a kind of 'critical fiction'; a feminist methodology that attempts to challenge and transform power relations and produce new knowledges through materials, situations, bodies, styles and intrigues. Rather than gathering around and criticizing what we already know, we try something new. There's a promise in the proposal that excites. A promise that the place we desire, and need, is just nearby. We simply have to take the future's hand.

The space of welcoming relates a great deal to the surface — the coating that encounters the eye and the hand: both touching and available to be touched. The tactile texture evokes feelings even if we abstain from stroking it. In *Touching Feeling* (2003), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes the correlation between surfaces and feelings. She relates to the surface as both material and the bearer of significance when meaning that if we attach attention to the surface, to that which touch, we can come further out of the risk of the critical perspectives locking us down — those who make it almost impossible to act since we will always miss some important perspective. Sedgwick highlights how highly sensitive people are at risk of being dismissed as overly "touchy". But who possesses the power to decide who is described in such terms and who is relegated to always only being described (by others)? What if the 'sissy' and the 'girl' — the ones that institutional (normative) power might describe as "touchy" are simply more in touch with their feelings, more able, more willing to allow feelings to touch them, and so be changed by feeling? Sensitivity and superficiality are connected to femininity. Our sensitivities need to be taken seriously, since they help us understand what's chafing: whether it's an issue of inequality and oppression amongst living beings, or one of material matters and constructed dwellings that is troubling our senses.

SCENE 3: THE ENTRYWAY

UNKNOWN:
Enter! Welcome!
Bienvenidxs! Well-cunt!

Everybody's scanning the room, trying to locate the nasal voice. It looks different than it used to when it was Bitter Pills. The walls aren't covered with posters for upcoming events, glued directly onto the walls to perpetuate the range of queer culture. There isn't much there other than a heavy, black velvet curtain covering most of the small space, a spinning disco ball making small dancing reflections on a poster on the wall. Not a living creature in sight.

MARIANA:
Yeah, hello, hi. (tentatively)

UNKNOWN:
Come in, come on in! There's room for everyone!

They lock eyes as they wait for a reply. Thérèse smiles cautiously, a nervous pulling at the mouth. Tyra is wagging her tail without a worry.

KATARINA:
Eh, thanks, but who's talking?

UNKNOWN:
I'm down here!

They gaze down at their feet and the smooth, tiled floor they're standing on vibrates so strongly that they can feel their knees tremble. Thérèse and Mariana bounce back to the threshold; Katarina grabs Tyra quickly before she follows them.

TERRA:
Come back, I won't bite!
It's so nice to have the four of you here again! What do the rest of you say, isn't it exhilarating?

THERESE:
But what, the rest who?

UNKNOWN 2:
Exactly, who are you?

The velvet curtain pulls itself to the side. The raspy voice follows the billowing movement as it takes the shape of a tightly tied bow. Another layer of velvet, purple velvet, can be discerned behind it.

Program. Stockholm Gay Liberation Week, 1980. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

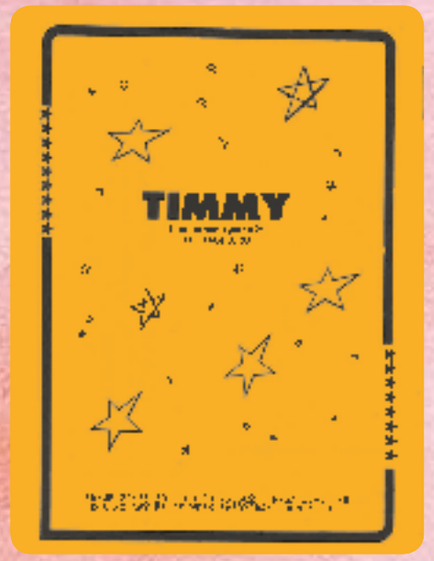
Program. Stockholm Gay Liberation Week, 1981. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Flyer. Club Rehab, Stockholm, 2013. From club Rehab facebook event page.

Beijing Lala Salon, 2012. More about the club on page 101.

Ad for nightclub Potpurriet in Oslo. In *Blikk magazine*, 2000. More about the club on page 47–48.

Ad for nightclub Touch in Gothenburg. In *QX magazine*, 1996. More about the club on page 17.



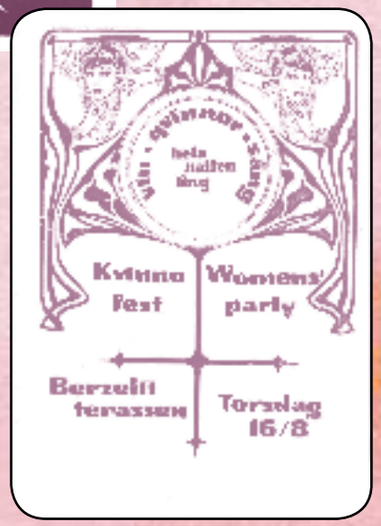
Ad for nightclub Timmy in Stockholm, 1981. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Personals. Swedish Club Transvestia's first ad printed in the erotic magazine *Piff* nr 12, 1964. More on Club Transvestia on page 104–105. From the National Library of Sweden.

Flyer. Stockholm BDSM-club LASH, 2003. More about the club on page 93 & 104.

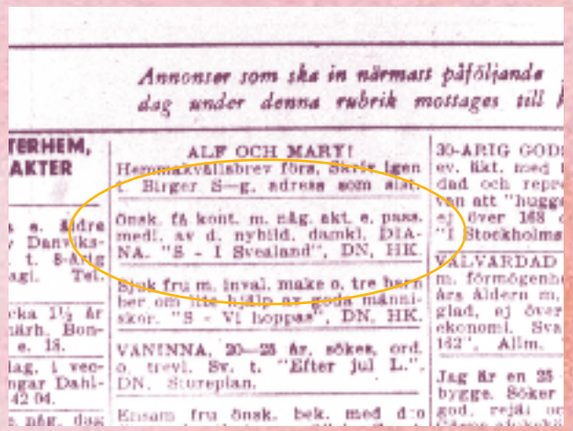
Program. Stockholm Gay Liberation Week, 1983. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Ad in Stockholm Gay Liberation Week program, 1983. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.



Ad for Womens party in Stockholm Gay Liberation Week program, 1984. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Ad for Cha Cha Gay Club in Stockholm Gay Liberation Week program, 1984. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.



Annonser som ska in närmast påföljande dag under denna rubrik mottages till

ALF OCH MARY!

Önsk. få kont. m. sång. akt. e. pass. medl. av d. nybild. damkl. DIANA. "S - I Svealand", DN, HK.

Sjuk fru m. inval. make o. tre barn ber om lite hjälp av goda människor. "S - Vi hoppas", DN, HK.

VANINNA, 20—25 år, söker, ord. o. trevl. Sv. t. "Efter jul L.", DN. Sureplan.

Personals. Open quest searching for members of the Stockholm club Diana, *Dagens Nyheter*, January 10, 1957. More about the club on page 99, 106.

Ad for Club Confetti in Stockholm Gay Liberation Week program, 1984. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Flyer. Night Club Queer As Fuck, Gothenburg & Nyköping, 2012. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Flyer. Girls Club Cherrybomb, Gothenburg, 2003. From The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Flyer. Fiesta del G.A.G (Grupo de Accion Gay), Buenos Aires, c. 1984–1985. From Archivo Marcelo Pombo.

Ad for Damenklub Violetta in the magazine *Die Freundin*, Berlin, 1929. From The Archives of Schwules Museum, Berlin. More about the club on page 98.

TERRA:
Stop it! You're scaring them. They're alright, I promise! You're so paranoid.

CURTAIN:
Can you blame me? You can't be paranoid enough in this world. My paranoia is keeping me safe every day. It's prevented many surprises. It's also my responsibility towards those that I invite to keep them safe.

TERRA:
Well, there can be terrible surprises. However, there can also be good ones[24]. Why not strike a New Way pose and see what happens?[25]

CURTAIN:
Désolé, membres only.

Mariana moves one of her hands inside of her jacket, scours the inside pocket...

MARIANA:
This might do it?
(unfolds her wallet and shows the only membership card she has[26].)

UNKNOWN 3:
I endorse that with a permanent marker. They're okay.

The poster is bucking, letters glowing strongly of pink and fluorescent purple colours, making Tyra's fur shift in vivid shades.

POSTER:
Warmly welcome to the club walk When Walls Speak! Come as you are, we'll take you on a journey through time and space. A place for everyone.

TERRA:
A place for everyone? But those are really steep stairways further in. And what about the sound level? And are the lights good enough? And...[27]

POSTER:
Well well, still, it's completely free! Cash ain't queer.

CURTAIN:
And who is going to pay for this party, you think?
(tightens up again)

POSTER:
Shame on you! Everybody knows that queers aren't really bathing in money.

24

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes in the chapter "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction is about You" about the limitations of the paranoid approach. Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 2003.

25

New Way is a style within Vogue developed since 1990 and onwards. It involves great flexibility and precision, rigid movements with "clicks" (limb contortions at the joints) and "arms control" (hand and wrist illusions, which sometimes includes tutting and locking). New Way includes modified forms of mime, in which geometric shapes, such as a box, are "drawn" by the dancer's body during motion and moved around to display the dancer's dexterity and memory. Marcos Becquer & José Gatti, "Elements of Vogue", *Third Text*, 1991.

26

Marianas Club Wish-membership card.

27

In *Och aldrig mötas de två* (And never the two will meet), a pilot study concerning LGBTQ-people with experience of disabilities, respondents describe how places that claim to be for all LGBTQ-people still operate in highly inaccessible spaces. RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights) Stockholm, 2013.

28

International research has shown that alcohol consumption at a risky level is common amongst LGBTQI+-women, who drink more than LGBTQI+-men as well as more than heterosexual women and men. Besides the underlying causes that usually can be attributed to alcohol abuse, these studies point to the fact that LGBTQI+-women use alcohol to handle minority stress and that a high level of alcohol consumption is connected to the cultural and environmental elements that affect people within stigmatized and marginalized groups. *Alkohol spelar roll: en studie i HBT-kvinnors alkoholmissbruk* (Alcohol plays a role: a study in alcohol abuse amongst LGBT-women), 2014.

29

Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987, p. 67.

CURTAIN:
Right, but queers are bathing in l'alcool after all[28], and they can pay for that indeed.

TERRA:
Yes, and that has its reasons. In order to escape the threat of shame or fear, one takes on a compulsive, repetitious activity as though to busy oneself, to distract oneself, to keep awareness at bay. One fixates on drinking, smoking, popping pills, acquiring friend after friend who betrays; repeating, repeating, to prevent oneself from "seeing"[29].

CURTAIN:
It's not that I don't want to be généreux, but we have to make rent somehow. And nothing really is impossible these days. Nothing new under la lune so to speak. The responsabilité rests with all of us, to keep la communauté vivant.

TERRA:
Yes, it's our shared responsibility, but so is to keep each individual in our community alive.

THÉRÈSE:
We would like to pay for us.
(digs through her pockets)

KATARINA:
Couldn't you, for example, have some after work drink deals?
(thinks for a beat)
Or, why even call it after work? I mean, it's not the people who work who most need the low prices.

MARIANA:
That's such a Swedish thing: arbetslinjen[30]!

THÉRÈSE:
Totally! It should be called Without Work.
(thinks for a moment)
Or, LWP – as in Low Paid Work. But that isn't as catchy as Happy Hour.

30

Arbetslinjen (work first) is a contemporary Swedish political concept based on the principle that work should be more profitable than receiving state subsidies, regardless of any individual conditions. The conservative parties use the concept to justify lowering income taxes.

MARIANA:
What about Under-Paid then? UP. The queer pick me UP-drink[31]!

TERRA:
You keep talking about these cocktails that all queers supposedly want to drink! Many suffer from the lack of sober meeting places. It is our shared responsibility to make sure those exist!

TYRA:
Woof!
(nods her head approvingly)

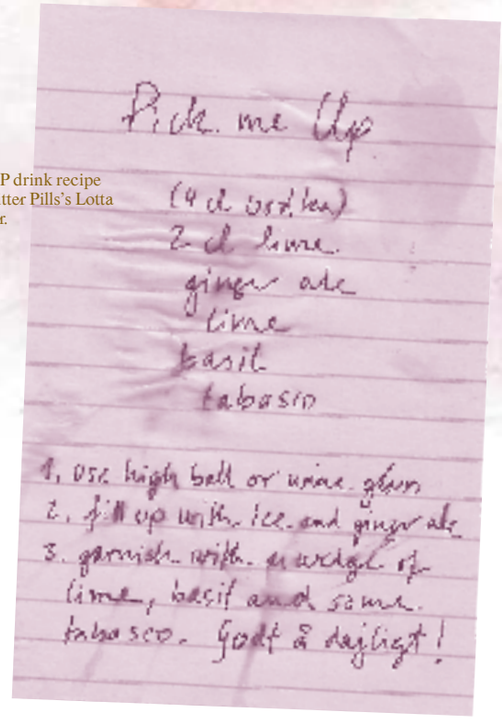
THÉRÈSE:
What about having an alcohol filled alternative as something to be asked for, and alcohol free as the standard, unless we ask for something else?

The velvet curtain loosens its tight bow and pleats its black and purple widths to a magnificent shirred pole swag with stacked cascades.

CURTAIN:
The most heartfelt, soft welcome, dearest guest. Remember – La fête, l'erotique et la politique sont inséparables[32]".

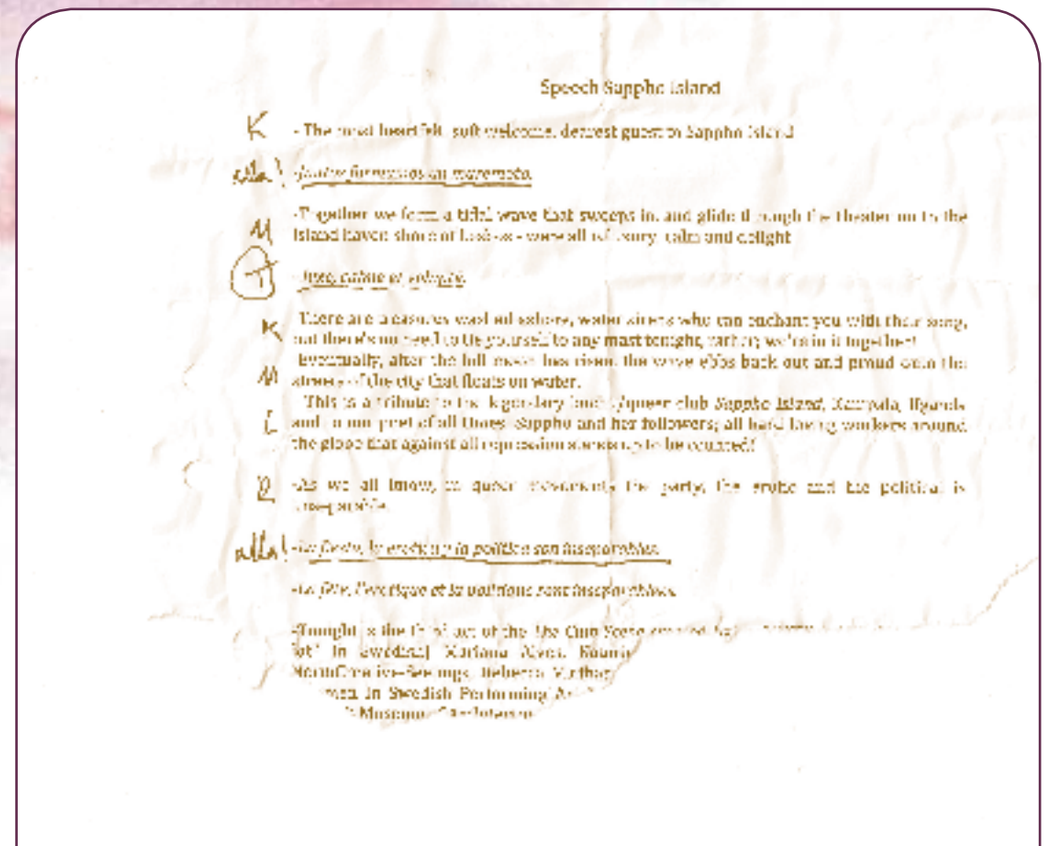
31

Pick-me UP drink recipe made by Bitter Pills's Lotta Nordlander.



32

LEFT:
Still image from MYCKET's invitation video to the club Sappho Islands, Theater Unga Klara, Stockholm, 2012.
BELOW:
Welcome speech. Sappho Islands (The Club Scene: Act 3, 2012)


Speech Sappho Island

K - The most heartfelt, soft welcome, dearest guest to Sappho Island

alla - [illegible]

M - Together we form a tidal wave that sweeps in, and glides through the theater on to the Island haven shore of Lesbos - washed ashore all of luxury, calm and delight

T - [illegible]

K - There are a seductive crowd of sailors, water sirens who can enchant you with their song, but there's no need to tie yourself to any mast tonight, cause we're in it together!

M - Eventually, after the full moon has risen, the wave ebbs back out and proud onto the stones - The city that floats on water.

L - This is a tribute to the legendary lesbian queer club Sappho Island, Xenopolis, Hyperion and a non-profit of all times: Sappho and her followers; all hand holding sailors around the globe that against all repression [illegible] to be counted!

Q - As we all know, the queer movement's the party, the erotic and the political is inseparable.

alla - La fête, l'erotique et la politique sont inséparables.

- La fête, l'erotique et la politique sont inséparables.

- Thought as the final act of the The Club Scene [illegible] 'Det' in Swedish: Kurtisane Kvast, Kaunis [illegible] Heberto Vorthar [illegible] in Swedish Performing Arts [illegible] Museum [illegible]

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FOR IOS AND ANDROID

4.
The Closet

THE CLOSET is a room in nightclubs and bars where outdoor clothing is temporarily stored. Here, we might leave the coat we've been carrying since we left our homes or the pre-party; a shield protecting us from gazes, harassment and violence. We undress this outer layer in the closet and reveal ourselves and the clothes, or the absence of clothes, that strengthen us in our identities. The closet is also used as a metaphor, especially in terms of describing whether someone (who's not heterosexual) is open about their sexual identity or not. When they "come out of the closet" they choose to make their identity public in heteronormative contexts with the hope of being tolerated, despite that.

When we organized nightclubs, the closet was infused with other meanings than its metaphoric heritage. We created The Walk-Through Closet.

The WALK-THROUGH CLOSET is a transforming passage, often opening up to a series of rooms filled with clothes, make-up and accessories; available to use in order to change, expand and support various bodies. The walk-through closet can also be filled with paint and tools, like in MYCKET's urbanisation project *Kepsen — en plats för dans på Råslätt* (The Ball Cap — a site for dancing at Råslätt. More about Kepsen on pages 116–119), where feet were dressed as paintbrushes and the ground became a canvas for the choreography of the dance. The bodies draw the room, rather than being constrained to what we already think or to the (in)ability of the words to verbalize needs.

Just like the cross-dressing of our bodies, buildings and constructed environments can also be re-dressed and adjusted. Make-up, accessories, costumes, furnitures, salons and houses are variations of scale rather than essentially different categories. In her dissertation *Behind Straight Curtains* (2007), Katarina refers to this as *cross-cladding* — a term that brings together the queer theoretic *cross-dressing* as it is described by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990) with the nineteenth century architectural theory of Gottfried Semper where he highlights *cladding* (the surface material of buildings); linking the theatrical performance of gender and sexuality with the masking and dressing of architecture.

SCENE 4: THE CLOSET

Vividly colorful pieces of cloth and clothes hang closely together on racks, forming an elongated corridor. A pair of blue glittery eyelashes hover above a shimmery draped podium. There are headpieces, wigs and glittery makeup. The lashes flutter like wing strokes and make the textiles billow, flittering towards the assembly. Katarina giggles when the lashes stroke her skin.

GLITTER LASH:
¡Bienvenidxs, tus ojos, they are adorable! May I?

KATARINA:
More than willingly.(Katarina stretches her back and slowly closes her eyes).

A rainbow colored cape slips off its hanger, throws itself out, flies and softly lands on the curly fur of Tyra's, embracing her neck. Tyra shivers from content. Above, from the ceiling, a black cloth banner lowers itself. The neon colored letters beam into the room: LOVE FOR ALL, HATRED FOR NONE[33].

BANNER:
Feel oh-so welcome dearest guests!
Feel free to slip into a Dry Martini, or not quite yet!(hands over a plate of cucumber canapés[34])First, have a bite.

A pair of colorful patterned carpet slippers slither themselves forward, bobbing in front of Thérèse's tightly tied boots.

BANNER:
Free your feet from those burdensome winter shoes of yours...

SLIPPERS:
...and slip into us.

Thérèse munches her way through the cucumber canapé and pants her boots off, places them neatly in front of herself and steps into the slippers.

THÉRÈSE:
I can warmly recommend this!(Gazes encouragingly at Mariana.)

MARIANA:
Do I have to...?
(Looks down at her heavy black platform shoes with steel toe-caps.)

33

"Love for all, Hatred for none" is the motto of the muslim group Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The quote is seen in the movie *Call me Kuchu*, by Malika Zouhali-Worral and Katherine Fairwax Wright, 2012. It was shown during Doc Lounge Festival in Stockholm in 2013, for which MYCKET did a banner (p. 48). *Call me Kuchu* is the story of a hate crime murder of the LGBTQI+-activist David Kato, and about institutionalized and nationally accepted oppression in Uganda. The funeral of David Kato took place at the first queer nightclub in Uganda, Sappho Islands in Kampala. The night club was staged at Unga Klara Theatre in Stockholm by MYCKET in collaboration with researcher and designer Maja Gunn, Norm-creative Settings/ W.I.S.P. (later Settings: Rebecca Vinthagen and Lina Zavalia) together with organizers and guests from the original Sappho Islands. (The Club Scene: Act 3, Theater Unga Klara, Stockholm, 2012). Sappho Islands, Kampala, was shut down in 2011. Read more on page 102.

34

Berthe Cleyrergue who worked for Natalie Barney since 1927, keeping most things in order (housekeeper, economy, portier etc.), cooked these cucumber sandwiches cut as wedges and served them at Barney's salon, at 20 rue de Jacob in Paris. MYCKET served them at Lalasalon (The Club Scene: Act 1, Årsta Castle, Haninge, 2012). Katarina Bonnevier, *Behind Straight Curtains*, 2007, p.121.

BANNER:
No no, only if you want to. We just wanna support you in the best of ways, so that you can feel comfortable in your own body. Maybe we have something else that you can find to your taste?

A pair of decimetre tall golden foliated sneakers bounces out from behind the banner, extending their tongues. Mariana laughs, steps out of her platform shoes.

SNEAKERS:
Toe to head – let your whole body talk[35]!

BANNER:
Remember - we're all born naked, the rest is drag[36].

The closet tempts with their extravagant attires. Katarina tries out a pair of boobies made of papier-maché, and turns to Tyra who howls in response. Thérèse fingers her way through hanging silk robes and chooses between a zebra or seashell patterned one. Mariana holds onto a glass jar, knocks with her pointing finger to shake out some grains of gold. Instead, the entire content of the jar ends up in the palm of her hand.

MARIANA:
Oops.

KATARINA:
I'll help you.

Katarina places Mariana's hand in hers, lifts it up towards her lips and whiffs, gently. A sparkling cloud of gold sails off in the air and lands softly. The gold glows on Mariana's skin and hair[37].

THÉRÈSE:
Me too!
(Puts her face forward and closes her eyes.)
I can do it on you later, Kat.

GLITTER LASH:
No te puedes imaginar how willingly everyone wants to be pampered, try out new expressions, how valiente you can become si extiendes tu mano, or lash!

35
RuPaul, "Cover Girl", *Champion*, 2009.

36
RuPaul, *Lettin' it all hang out: An autobiography*, 1995.

37
Mariana in gold, Förfesten (The Pre-party, The Club Scene: Act 11, Borås Art museum, Borås, 2016). Photo by MYCKET.

BOOBIE:
Yes, like when I visited the club Potta in Oslo and welcomed the guests in the lobby[38]. Ooh my Goddess! All these people I had never met before, high profile people from art universities, they all turned crazy and wanted to carry me[39].

BANNER:
The art of hosting is important. It's a question of being present in the moment, with each individual you encounter. Listen, help out, be humble. And then, you should know, they will share the responsibility of the host by being just as helpful to others. We pass it on, take turns. The difference between guest and host doesn't have to be razor-sharp.

CURTAIN:
Well, it's not like it's cute like cotton candy. Some feel cornered and really don't want to participate, they find it ridiculous and frivolous. We must respect that.

GLITTER LASH:
Disculpe, I am sick of being considered frivolous. It's diminishing. En serio, soy serious, as seria as one gets. Lo que se considera serious is only a matter of power and estatus en la sociedad.

BANNER:
Sure, and no one is being forced: participation is voluntary. Everyone can't like everything. Unless we dare to address certain groups, the whole thing is at risk of being so diluted that in the end, no one wants to join at all.

KATARINA:
I'm ready. Pick me UP!
(unfolds her arms as if to show herself off)

BANNER:
Here you go beloved ones! The bar is downstairs, there.
(fans towards the farther end of the room)

CURTAIN:
And remember, it's not about coming out of the closet, but rather about coming into the community[40]. Amusez-vous!

KATARINA:
Tyra! Wait for me!

38
"Potta" is the nickname of Potpurriet, a legendery lesbian club in Oslo (opened in 1995 by Sissel Hansen and Marianne Larsen), which was one of the few clubs open when other nightclubs closed at 1 am, resulting in a very mixed, exceedingly queer, audience.

39
See next page.

40
Kim TallBear, lecture "Making Love and Relations Beyond Settler Colonial Sexualities", Åjtte, Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum, during Jåhkåmåhke márkanii/Jåhkåmåhke márnánjida, Sápmi. February 2, 2017. Available on Youtube.

Katarina welcomes guests to Harder Better Faster Stronger (The Club Scene: Act 7, Maksitaksi, Oslo, 2014) a reimagination of the 90's club Potpurriet, also called Potta, wearing boobies made for Exclude Me In (The Club Scene: Act 4, GIBCA, Gothenburg, 2013). In the background hangs the banner LOVE FOR ALL — HATRED FOR NONE a tribute to the activist struggle in Uganda, see p. 45. Photo by MYCKET.

MYCKET's co-workers and party faeries Annie Jonasson and Frida Sandström at the Walk-through Closet of The Pre-Party (The Club Scene: Act 11, 2016) in preparation for Silvana Imam's concert, at Borås Art Museum. Photo by Karolina Pahlén.

Walk-through Closet at Lala Salon (The Club Scene: Act 1, Årsta Castle, Haninge, 2012). Photo by MYCKET.

Walk-through Closet at Sappho Islands, Theater Unga Klara, Stockholm, 2012. Photo by Johnny Friskilä.

Walk-through Closet at Sappho Islands, Theater Unga Klara, Stockholm, 2012. Photo by Maja Gunn.

Studio Staircase, Winter 2020/2021

5.

The Flight of Stairs

THE FLIGHT OF STAIRS, might be the queerest of all building elements. Buildings, in parts or as a totality, can be understood as choreographies: suggestions of activities and behaviours in material form, such as staircases that engage ascent and descent. This does not contradict it simultaneously being an exclusive space in terms of which bodies can freely roam a flight of stairs. A spiral staircase, which encourages bodies to climb, descend and turn around a central spindle, is like an illustration of Hélène Cixous' explanation of the term queer in *Méduse en Sorbonne* (2015, p. 144):

> "Queer, c'est torsion, c'est twist. [...] il s'agit de produire des entorses, de ne pas aller en ligne droite."
> (Queer is a torsion, a twist. [...] it's about producing wrenches, about not going in a straight line.)

'Queer' turns and pulls in order to destabilize divisive regimes that are based in dualistic thinking and perception: the thinking that constructs male and female as hierarchical oppositions, masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual. Material suggestions like building elements may operate as queer performative acts with the power to transform meanings, norms and hierarchical structures. In order to build a society with room for everyone we have to start dreaming. And materialized proposals have the power to be touched and shared.

SCENE 5: THE FLIGHT OF STAIRS

MARIANA:
But what the...
(her eyes widening)

THÉRÈSE:
Helvetica.

In front of them, a whirling room rises, a feather fan with horizontal stair landings unfolding from an octagonal, marble center column. The enormous construction looks like a spiral staircase and stretches out over at least a hundred square meters. It grows, dribbles and buzzes from its levels[41]. Tyra leaps over to the triangular landing, sniffing around on its weed covered ground, hunches and pees on the dandelions that sprout between shrubs, wild oats and lavender[42]. The whispers of the Gossip Herb sprout back and forth. Katarina first calls luringly, then takes a leap but Tyra shirks, bounces towards the column.

91 See next page.

GLITTER LASH:
Calma. This is mi tierra - la tierra entre medio[43]. It is safe for Tyra here.

Tyra scrapes her paw lightly on the marble, whimpers and scrapes again, now growls. The veins of the marble glimmer green against the pitch black surface.

STAIRWAY:
Dejlig hello! Let me introducere mig selv. I am the center of the world, always in movement, constantly shifting[44].

The spiral staircase turns around its own axis, Tyra and Katarina disappear from Mariana's and Thérèse's field of vision.

STAIRWAY:
At first you'll feel wobbly, dizzy, but it's similar to being at sea, you'll get used to it. Follow your own desire path[45]. You'll find your own rhythm, your dance moves, if you allow the staircase to lead you, wherever its steps take you. Widen your horizon, raise your eyes, and lower them, by all means, gaze slantingly, spøg til side! I'll treat you with everything you can wish for, and everything you didn't know existed, even in your wildest fantasies! There is only one rule here - do not hurry, neither upwards nor downwards. On the contrary, you are more than welcome to stay here forever.

95 More to read about desire paths in chapter 1, The Sidewalk, page 12.

92 Ever since Sappho wrote "all the violet tiaras, braided rosebuds, dill and crocus twined around your neck", in the poem "I Have Not One Word From Her", from Sappho, translation by Mary Barnard (1959, p. 42), the color of lavender and later the color purple have been queer symbols. The cabaret song and the first gay anthem "Das lila Lied" (Lavender song), written in 1920 by Kurt Schwabach and Mischa Spoliansky, is one example. Another example is the expression "lavender marriage", meaning a formal heterosexual marriage between two queers functioning as a disguise. The word lavender has also been used as a term to identify and point out queers.

93 Gloria Anzaldúa establishes the border between Mexico and the United States as a metaphor for all types of crossing—of geopolitical boundaries, sexual transgressions, social dislocations, and the crossing necessary to exist in multiple linguistic and cultural contexts. She calls this space "la tierra entre medio", ibid., p. 6.

94 The idea that buildings are in motion refers to twentieth century architect Eileen Gray who was active in France. Residing in the lesbian avant-garde of Paris, she proposed that buildings are living organisms. Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici, "E.1027: Maison en Bord de Mer", *L'Architecture Vivante*, 1929.

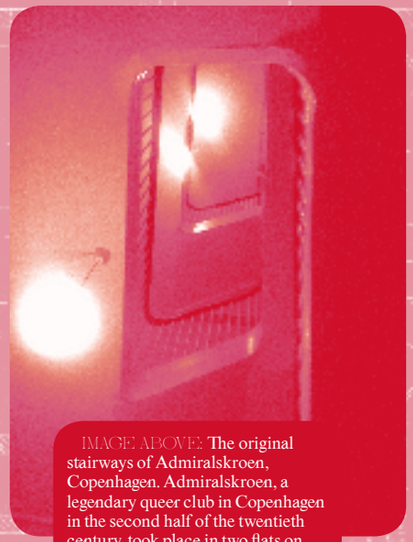


IMAGE ABOVE: The original stairways of Admiralskroen, Copenhagen. Admiralskroen, a legendary queer club in Copenhagen in the second half of the twentieth century, took place in two flats on the ground and first floors of an ordinary apartment building. The floors were connected by an internal staircase. The mythologies around this club are several: one story goes that the straights were downstairs while the gays and lesbians cruised the upper floor. On the stairs, in between, all sorts of people, in the uncertainty of difference, hung out. Thus, the staircase at Admiralskroen, which is always already in motion, constituted a queer ground without stable definition.
IMAGE BELOW: We are constructing the stairs for O my friend.
IMAGE TO THE RIGHT: We are decorating the spindle with a technique taught to us by Marie Carlsson and invented by Pontus Lindvall, so called "Spontaneous Marbling".
BACKGROUND IMAGE: Blueprint of the original staircase.

In 2013, MYCKET constructed a tribute to Admiralskroen in collaboration with students at Copenhagen Art Academy (O my friend, The Club Scene: Act 5, Charlottenborg, The Royal Danish Art Academy, Copenhagen 2013)

Our staircase stretched across a one hundred square meter long and seven meter tall space. With a gigantic spindle it was a spiral of large stages that filled the space from floor to ceiling, wall to wall. It did not lead anywhere in a practical sense, but we could inhabit the entire volume of the space, so that the actual floor surface became almost twice the size.

We staged club O my friend to test the space and live out our fantasies about the staircase at Admiralskroen. Sometimes, we believe, it is that easy: to build an odd staircase and thus change something. But, of course, the stairs are also practical obstacles, they deny access for plenty of bodies and could not be an answer. Rather it is the shared experience of building a surreal architecture, to materially discover things we did not know, that is the significant step in this case.

THÉRÈSE:
That sounds too good to be true.
(hesitating)

STAIRWAY:
It's true, promise!

In front of them, furnishings now appear on a dirt floor - motley chairs around a triangular table. Mariana leaps over and immediately the staircase starts to rotate again.

MARIANA:
Come on Thérèse, it feels more steady than it looks!

On the triangular table, a knife sits right in the bull's eye, on its tip. The board of various kinds of wood, from dark brown to beige, rests on poles of tree branches. Mariana looks closer, smiles when she sees that they are painted on to resemble themselves, like the branches they are.

TABLE:
If I dare, you dare.

MARIANA:
What? Dares what?

TABLE:
To land.

The triangular table shoves itself a centimeter or so, creaking towards the thing next to it, something so carved that it hardly can be perceived as a chair. Mariana sits down, shifts around on her bum, struggles to make it comfortable.

THRONE:
Is it chafing?

MARIANA:
Yeah, it's not like it's comfortable.

THRONE:
It is supposed to be that way.

MARIANA:
Oh really, what do you mean?

THRONE:
Many sat here before you, where you're sitting. They have shaped and reshaped the seat with their bums.

MARIANA:
Who?

THRONE:
You can probably find them in the bar now.
(laughs)

Mariana gains her momentum, stands up.

TABLE:
Why in such a hurry?

THRONE:
Sit down, and I will tell you about all the bums.

Mariana grabs the knife handle, sits down with the knife in hand. While Throne describes one bum print after another, splinters and chippings fly around. Mariana works her way through the beech wood as if it was linden. Thérèse and Katarina sneak up and sit down alongside, listen for a while.

THÉRÈSE:
What are you doing?
(whispers)

MARIANA:
I'm carving life stories.

Figures emerge in the throne chair, one after the other. Vivid details and symbols, experiences materialized. They hold each others hands, linked together with their bodies[46].

THÉRÈSE:
So nice! All the details, so many references.

KATARINA:
Aesthetic expression is key for our political struggles to occur[47]!

THRONE:
Yes, like your tattoos for example, triangles. Dealing with triangles and triangulations invites a sea of references[48].

Thérèse, Mariana and Katarina looks at the tattoos on their arms[49].

TABLE:
Yes, and now here you sit, all three of you, around my triangular body. You can meet each other in a slanted way. The straight, forward glance passes the others by. You can get three perspectives, as well as three physical backgrounds. You can possibly make up for some of the blind spots in your respective orientations towards the world.

47

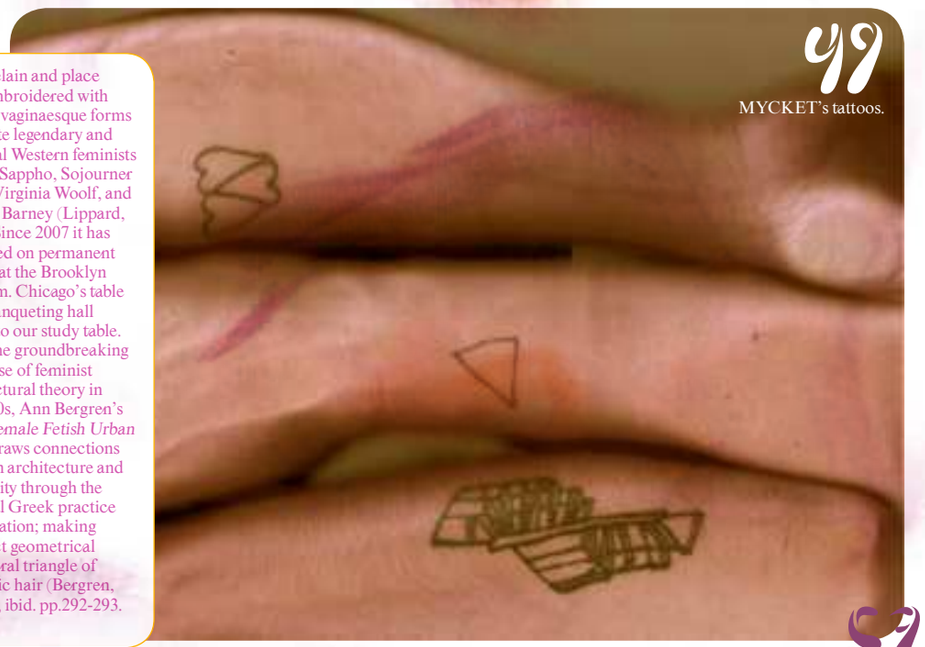
"References in styles, such as symbols, materiality, and colors, are important to any design project. However, they seem to be even more important in relation to queerness. Or perhaps they are just discussed more fiercely? A "straight" modernist expression passes as neutral and does not call for articulation of the aesthetic meanings that are invested. Time and again we are met by this absence of language, but that is part of our drive to do what we do. Perhaps through our efforts to articulate the aesthetics of our field, we can challenge this normative silence." MYCKET, "Table of Contents — Triangulations, Tales and Theories from MYCKET's Artistic Research Project the Club Scene", *After Effects: Theories and Methodologies in Architecture*, Frichot, Sandin and Schwalm (eds.), 2018, p. 293.

48

The Table character is based on the triangular study table MYCKET designed and built together with Madam snickeri. The triangle carries associations to the LGBTQI+ rights movement and to the female genitalia. "The pink triangle has been claimed as a gay pride and rights symbol. Its history from the Nazi concentration camps, where it was used as a badge to denote homosexual men as well as sexual offenders, is parallel to the black triangle. The latter was used by the Nazis to mark prisoners as "asocial", a wide category that included sex workers, homeless people, drug addicts, the functionally varied, and, in all probability, lesbians (Plant, 1986). The black triangle has since been claimed by lesbians and crips as a deviant symbol against repression and discrimination. Artist Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974–1979) is a large, open, triangular table set for thirty-nine. Painted porcelain and place mats embroidered with various vaginaesque forms celebrate legendary and mythical Western feminists such as Sappho, Sojourner Truth, Virginia Woolf, and Natalie Barney (Lippard, 1980). Since 2007 it has remained on permanent display at the Brooklyn Museum. Chicago's table is the banqueting hall cousin to our study table. From the groundbreaking discourse of feminist architectural theory in the 1990s, Ann Bergren's essay *Female Fetish Urban Form* draws connections between architecture and femininity through the classical Greek practice of depilation; making a perfect geometrical equilateral triangle of the pubic hair (Bergren, 1996).", ibid. pp.292-293.

46

Join-forces-chair, in collaboration with Annie Jonasson, made as part of the re-design of the interior at Bitter Pills, Space is a pressing matter (The Club Scene: Act 12, Bitter Pills, Stockholm, 2016–2017). Photos by MYCKET and Matti Östling.



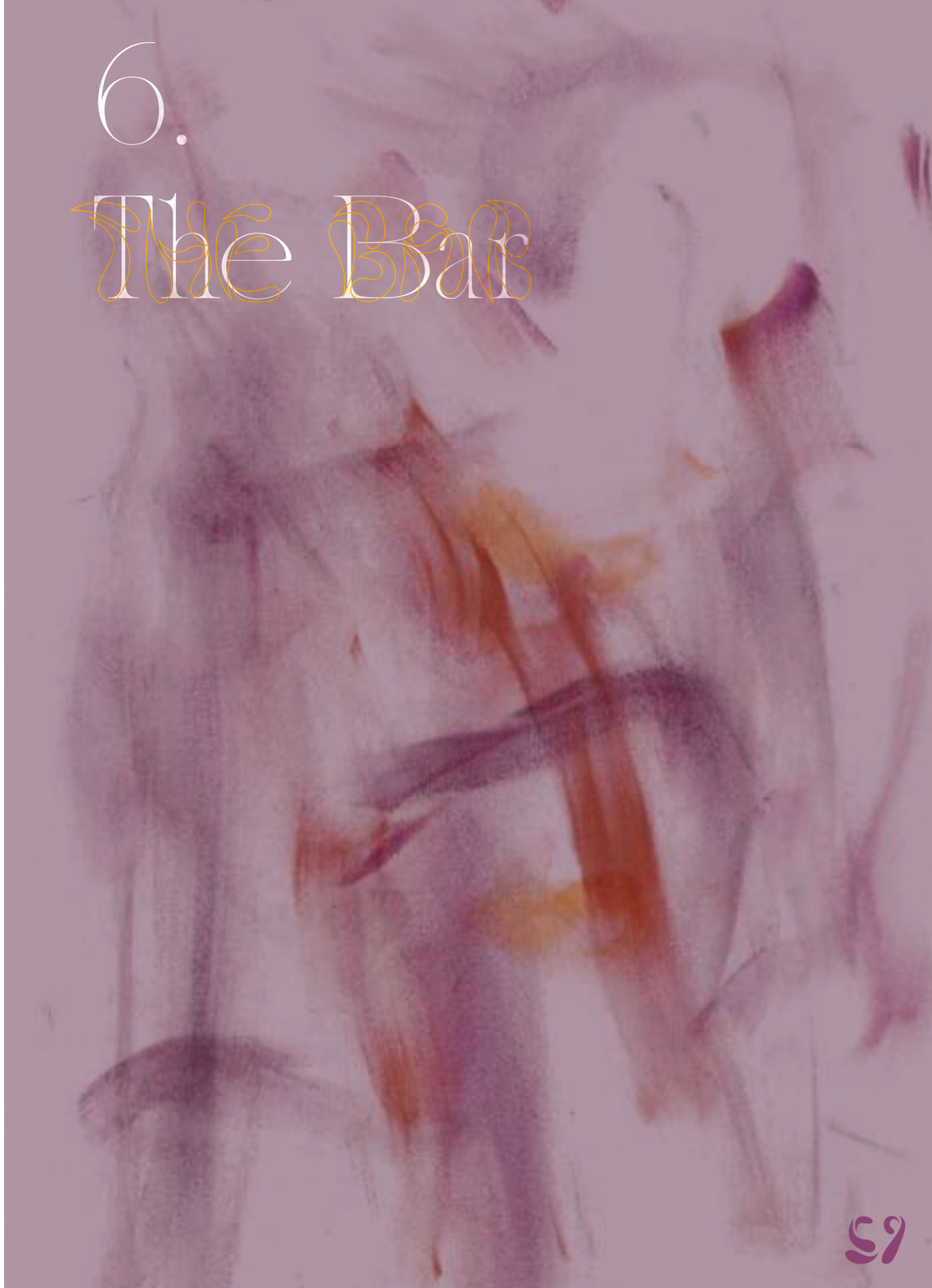
49

MYCKET's tattoos.

Jacqueline Fraser
Pati Hill
12.12.2020–21.02.2021
Julia Scher
05.03.–23.05.2021
Trajal Harrell
26.03.–23.05.2021
Liz Larner
12.06.–22.08.2021
Art Club 2000
03.09.–07.11.2021

Kunsthalle Zürich
kunsthalle zurich.ch

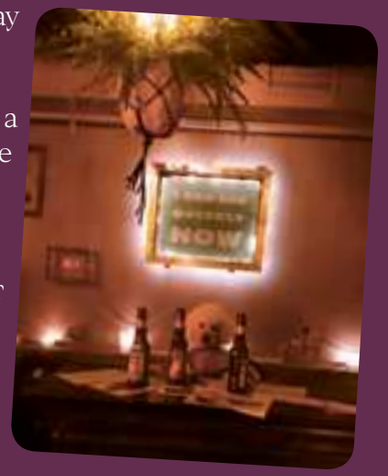
6.
The Bar



THE BAR is both the space and the counter where one makes purchases when you're at a place with self-service. The bar counter is often constructed as a straight, even if not a straightening, line. It's tall, when you loiter your weight shifts from one foot to the other. The way it's shaped expresses stories of bodily norms, standard length, width and functionality. Here, intoxicants are served. The alcohol norm is profound within the nightclub culture, but other, sober and non-alcoholic attitudes also exist here.

A foundational experience in MYCKET's research around nightclubs concerns the intimate connection between the physical space and those hosting it. We claim that a generous and supportive public space only comes to life if there is someone or several who work with that: who host. The physical construction can never be enough by itself — which doesn't mean that it is insignificant. In the nightclub, the hosting is often shared between agents with different roles (before, after and during), such as technicians, dishwashers, regulars, bouncers, coat checkers, performers, DJs, and — not least — those who work in the bar. The bar staff greets you, keeps a watching eye over the action, and acts as a kind of performer for the guests to rest their eyes on. The shaping of certain bars, like the circular bars in the 90's nightclub Tip Top in Stockholm or Panorama Bar at Berghain in Berlin, enhances the performative quality. These spaces are demanding to work within because one is visible from all directions, and they generate fantastic possibilities for bar cruising. The guests see each other over the counter, can flirt, move closer, pull away. The architecture can direct the gaze: provide a situation for hitting on, picking up, while not being intrusive. At the same time, the purchase in the bar can be something you want to get over with as fast as possible. Various roles and expectations intermingle by the bar counter.

In the extensive discussion around safer spaces, spaces that support and respect differences — which is to say vulnerability and unpredictability — a unilateral focus on either the material or the interpersonal often appears. When actually, those spaces emerge through the interplay of physical design, agents and events. As Elspeth Probyn puts it in *Lesbians in Space. Gender, Sex and the Structure of Missing* (1995, p. 81) : "Space is a pressing matter and it matters which bodies, where and how, press up against it. Most important of all is who these bodies are with." And, we would like to add, what they do together. This also serves as a critique of the idea that a singular genius, whether it be the nightclub organizer or the architect, creates rooms out of thin air.



SCENE 6: THE BAR

THE BAR COUNTER:
Rebovenon, agrable, ke vi povus veni!

THÉRÈSE
Il piacere è dalla nostra parte.

On a circular bar counter, colored with luscious purple and red tones à la Almodóvar, are four bottles. The floor slopes gently, making the height of the bar counter differ. With Katarina hot on her heels, Tyra skips over and stands up on her hind paws by the shortest end of the counter, just above the ramp from the floor. There, the carpet has traces of wheels[50]. Katarina leans comfortably with one elbow on the counter. With her front paws, Tyra lifts up one of the bottles and steers it to her mouth, bites with her canine tooth so that the bottle cap flies across the room for Mariana to catch with a one-handed-catch; "Ha!", makes a champion gesture. Katarina hands over the other three bottles to Tyra, who happily performs her moves over and over.

TYRA:
Woof, woof, woof![51]

The bottle caps fly in all directions, one lands sharply on the shiny windowsill of white marble in the corner. The window is covered by a drooping curtain of whips in various materials[52]. Ferns, the species called Venus Hair, dangle from above in hanging baskets made of braided ropes[53]. The light, sprinkling through the green, adorns the carved ornaments and lacquers. Some of the scattered furniture in the room rubs softly against each other, others are immersed in profound conversations. Along the walls, a mural paints the horizon of a vivid urban landscape where queer nightclubs all over the world meet; here all in one and the same location.

KATARINA:
Merci mon chérie!

WINDOW SILL:
Hello, I recognize you. We've met before, right?

Thérèse is just about to answer when a chair unfolds their well carved legs in front of the bar assembly, the saggy seat swells which causes the furniture nails to crawl out from their holes.

50
See next page.

51
Image on opposite page of Tyra at Space is a Pressing Matter (The Club Scene: Act 12, Bitter Pills, Stockholm, 2016 – 2017). Photo by MYCKET.

52
The curtain of whips at Space is a Pressing Matter (The Club Scene: Act 12, Bitter Pills, Stockholm, 2016 – 2017) was created by Ullis Ohlgren, member of MYCKET between 2016 – 2020, and the whips in this text have emerged from these.

53
They are straightly descending from their ancestors at the legendary gay club Admiralskroen in Copenhagen, which was filled with ferns. Read more about the club in chapter 5, Flight of Stairs, p. 54.

50

In 2018, MYCKET made a circular bar for, and in collaboration with, Architects Sweden, at the Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair, an homage to the bar counter at the nightclub Tiptop, Stockholm, and Panorama bar, Berghain, Berlin. Our bar stood on a tilted carpet floor, making the bar accessible at different hights.
IMAGES: Sketch and construction drawing, MYCKET, Panorama bar, 2018. Panorama bar at the Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair, 2108. Photo by Rebecka Gordon.

CHAIR:
Ignore. They come on to everything with bendy arches and leather-dressed butts.

Thérèse looks down at her fake leather pants.

WINDOW SILL:
I'm genuinely interested.

CHAIR:
Is that so?

WINDOW SILL:
What do you know about my intentions? You still claim that we've never met before, even though I know we have. I just can't remember...

CHAIR:
Believe me, I've heard that one before.
(fortifies their back arch)

WINDOW SILL:
Sorry to say, but that thing you're doing, your exaggerated femme-i-ninity, it doesn't work on me. Masquerades are not my thing.

CHAIR:
Hey, I don't dress up as something. I dress as me. No irony exists within this figure.

WINDOW SILL:
But you consist of layers. A couple of millimetres of jacaranda veneers.

CHAIR:
It's purple heart wood, if I may say so myself.

WINDOW SILL:
Tell me, what's hiding under there really, grumpy spruce?

Tyra stretches out her tongue, dog-laughs.

CHAIR:
So you're saying your body is more naturelle than mine?

WINDOW SILL:
Well, at least I'm not disguised, I am massive marble, marble all the way through.

BAR COUNTER:
Almodrama[54].

THÉRÈSE:
Oh, things are really vivid here, one must say.
(delighted)

54
"Almodrama" is a term used to describe the unique cinematic narration of Pedro Almodóvar.

CHAIR:
Excuse me. Even if many femmes have been assigned a female gender from birth and many orient towards masculinity in some, often lesbian form, femme is neither about a pristine femininity nor about lesbianism or an explicit critique of heterosexuality. It's not even about a specific sexual practice or even about a dichotomy and separation between the genders... (catches her breath)... femme is about feminine difference, about the difference that femininity performs[55].

THÉRÈSE
Il tocco femminile..[56]
(buzzes haughty)

WINDOW SILL:
Yes, yes, I know what you mean, but you orient yourself in relation to structures of heterosexuality and masculinity, nevertheless.

CHAIR:
You're purposely misunderstanding me. (infuriated) I take pleasure in being an object of desire for my own sake. It has nothing to do with heterosexuality or the male gaze.

WINDOW SILL:
But you say it yourself, that it is through the butch that you become subversive.

Close by the chair stands a grand piano. The window sill reflects their shine in the black glossy varnish.

WINDOW SILL:
Otherwise you are just...

CHAIR:
Just what, feminine? You're diminishing the feminine expression.

MARIANA:
...a woman without a man is like a fish without a bike[57].(giggles and contently toasts herself)

The closeby strings vibrate against the resonance board of American spruce, when the grand piano begins to tune.

GRAND PIANO:
Not to mention degrading the butch. (accelerando)It's so ignorant. Your goal is to pass in the heteronormative white rooms, by appearing neutral, independent. In what way are you challenging norms by doing that?

WINDOW SILL:
I don't use definitions.

55

Ulrika Dahl, *Skamgrepp: femme-inistiska essäer*, 2014, p. 241.

56

Italian saying which directly translates into 'feminine touch'. It is used to describe something that has that little extra which makes it all worthwhile, when a caring hand has blessed something with a finishing look. Eg. "Ma all'arredamento servirebbe davvero un tocco femminile." (transl. "But the decor could really use a woman's touch.")

57

The phrase is taken from a cover of a brochure, published by *Lesbisk front* (Lesbian Front) in 1978. From Queerrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek (The Queer Movement Archive and Library).

GLITTER LASH:
Eso es típico you. Keeping safe right there on the top-shelf. Instead of erasing all the denotations, why don't you embrace them all at the same time? Es posible ser de todo at the same time.

GRAND PIANO:
I have challenged gender norms with my appearance on a daily basis. Butches are known by their appearance...

CHAIR:
...and femmes by their choices[58].

GRAND PIANO:
If it wasn't because of us butches...

CHAIR:
... and us femmes, you would never even have had your freedom[59], nor the space to be an androgynous arty dyke or designer dyke today[60].

WINDOW SILL:
I am me, and that's enough. Don't get why it's so important to name everything as this or that.

GRAND PIANO:
Well, you are not hearing what I am saying. You have us to thank for your so-called floating identity. I would have hoped to avoid ending up here, but I'm gonna tell you...

WINDOW SILL:
Now you take me for a naive queer kid. I was actually not born yesterday.

CHAIR:
Well, that's what it seems like.
(dramatic pause)
Beloved one, tell your life story to the queer kids. (strokes the lion paw over the piano's sustain pedal).

GRAND PIANO:
By all means. It seems I was born different in 1907. At least I always thought so...from the time I can remember anything, even as I was toddling, I never wanted a man to touch me. Soon I began to feel more comfortable in boys clothes than in dresses[61]. Then and there, there was no space for me to be "floating". So I got out of there as soon as I possibly could, when I was sixteen, all by myself, I went into town. I didn't know anyone. Remember how scared I was. Fuck, I was in poor condition, really. And there were many there just like me, who had left everything behind and who were longing and hoping for something else. At least I had

58

Joan Nestle, *The Persistent Desire: a Femme-Butch Reader*, 1987, p. 141. Sue-Ellen Case writes about butch-femme aesthetic: "Historically, femme lesbians were rendered invisible, whilst butch lesbians were deemed anti-feminine and anti-feminist because of their appropiation of masculine style. With the rise of second-wave feminism in the 1970s, the butch and femme role-playing that was a prominent aspect of lesbian bar culture in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was considered backward, conservative and anachronistic by lesbian feminists, who were in favour of more androgynous style". Sue-Ellen Case, "Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic", *Discourse 11* (Winter 1988 – 1989), reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, 1993, pp. 294-306.

59

Elizabeth Laopovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis write about how the butch-femme relationship of the working class pioneered the expansion of the queer movement, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*, 1993.

60

Vicki Karaminas and Adam Geczy write that lesbian sexuality began to break free from boundaries of representations (via dress, accessories and stylistic codes) in mainstream and underground culture in the early 1990s. Throughout the tv series *L word* lesbians became visible because of their normalcy, at the same time 'straightened out' to become more palatable to a straight audience. This became especially favourable for lesbians in the middle class and upwardly mobile white lesbians. On "designer dyke" and "lesbian chic" in *Queer Style*, 2013, pp. 42– 48.

61

The words of Gladys Bentley, in a 1950's interview in *Ebony magazine*, quoted in an article by Irene Monroe, "Honoring notorious Gladys Bentley", *The Huffington Post*, April 2010.

my voice, thank God for that. Without it, I don't know what would have happened, even if it was dissonant to begin with. But I was only a bit off-tuned and needed some care. I didn't know back then that I was a Bulldagger, but I remember how nice it felt to meet someone just like me, to be valued for who I was. And that was what was needed for me to dare to intone my singing voice, for real.

Grand Piano squeezes the right pedal with their foot, and causes the Mendoza that's hanging on the wall to shiver. The bottle caps, nailed to its lumpy branch, rustle the beat. It disentangles itself from being a wall decoration, strikes in the air.

GRAND PIANO:
Comin' a time, B.D. women, they ain't gonna need no men[62].
B.D. women, you know they work and they make their dough.
And when they get ready to spend it, they know the place where to go[63].

EVERYONE:
Rawrau, waouh, guau-guau!
(the whole bar howls and barks in various languages, applause)

WINDOW SILL:
Thank you... but really, I understand that it has been hard on you, yes maybe in another way than for me. I know that the personal is political[64].
(has a mild tone)
Your skin colour, well that is in itself hard enough in this world we live in. I don't question that, not at all. Ugh, really... Sometimes I'm very ashamed of being white.

The chair stretches awkwardly, the intarsia inlay snaps.

VENTRILOQUIST:
And you should.

The assembly looks at each other, attempts to trace the voice. No one comes forward.

WINDOW SILL:
Meh, I'm actually ancient so experience is nothing I lack.

A pack of whips hanging in the window, like a curtain, start swaying synchronized, like hungry harpies[65]. One whip, with a tight corset waist, tickles the window sill in the blow of the wind.

HORSE HAIR WHIP:
I don't think you know what pain is[66].

GLITTER LASH:
¿Y como is that visible, if I may ask?
(lifts up Katarina's eye lid)
I mean you are what we see - massive marble all the way through, completely without sorpresas.

ELECTRIC BI-POLAR PADDLE:
Just close your eyes...[66]

GLITTER LASH
¿What have you experienced in tu vida that has been so damn hard, ni una cicatriz, as far as I can see!

WINDOW SILL:
Suffering can't be measured or compared. All of me consists of sediment, dead bodies, fossils of prehistoric creatures and all their gathered pain. I have many scars and cracks in my body. But I have handled them, repaired the damages. I have swabbed them with acetone to remove all the dirt and then I have sealed them with adhesive. Just because they are not visible doesn't mean they don't exist. Maybe I am just good at taking care of myself. Have you ever thought of that?
(confident)

GLITTER LASH:
Well, eso es stupid. Lying, cheating, being a bully, those are things to be ashamed of. But scars...they're maps of who you are[67].

WINDOW SILL:
But I don't find them attractive.
What do you want me to say?

GLITTER LASH:
Ser duro como una piedra, rock hard, kind of not feminista. Eso es una expresión del patriarcado. Well, look at me. What would I be without all the layers of glue, sticking onto me in all kinds of places, in a tear mixture of glitter and sorrow and laughter? It is the experiences that make me a complete pestaña. I pay tribute to el pasado, the scars, as a resource that can serve as a foundation for us to revision and renew our commitment to the present, to making a world where all of us can vivir fully and well, where everyone can belong[68]. Lo pasado me estira p´´trás y lo presente pa´´delante[69].

62 "B.D. Woman's Blues" is a song by Lucille Bogan aka Bessie Jackson released in 1935. In her blues Bogan explicitly explores prostitution, prohibition, sexually transmitted disease, lesbianism, asymmetrical power relations, transgender desire and the politics of sex. Read more about Lucille Bogan's blues in Lorna Wheeler's "Shave 'Em Dry: Lucille Bogan's Queer Blues", *Transgression and Taboo: Critical Essays*, 2005. During the same period of time, there were also several other queer Afro-American blues singers. Amongst them Gladys Bentley, Ethel Waters, Alberta Hunter, Ma Rainey & Bessie Smith. For an overview, see the documentary *T'aint' Nobody's Bizness: Queer blues divas of the 1920s* by Robert Philipson, 2011.

63 Maybe it's just Gladys' Clam House (orig. Harry Hansberry's Clam House) Lucille Bogan's song is about, "a small room with space for only eight tables […]where everybody goes.", *Niagra Falls Gazette*, July 23th, 1930. IMAGE: The Harlem renaissance map by illustrator E. Simms Campbell, 1932.

64 "The personal is political" is an approach that has followed the feminist struggle for a long time. The slogan was first published in Carol Hanisch's essay from 1970 with the same title.

65 Harpies (*vildvittror*) are hissing birds with human faces in the saga by Astrid Lindgren about Ronja Rövardotter (Ronia, the Robber's Daughter). "Beautiful and crazy and cruel were the harpies. With rockhard eyes they look out over the forest for something to rip the blood out of with their sharp claws". Lindgren, *Ronja Rövardotter*, 1981, p. 29.

66 Madonna, "Erotica", *Erotica*, 1992.

67 Says the character Emma to Mari in *Vida*, a drama television series created by Tanya Saracho (2018), inspired by the short story *Pour Vida* by Richard Villegas Jr. The characters, cast and production team of the series boast with Latinx people and challenge common stereotypes in favor of authentic representations, which is rare in the entertainment industry.

68 bell hooks, *belonging – a culture of place*, 2009, p. 5.

69 Gloria Anzaldúa, p. 25.

GRAND PIANO:
Speak so we can understand!

MARIANA, BAR COUNTER, THÉRÈSE, KATARINA, TYRA:
I understand!
(in chorus)

GLITTER LASH:
Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language. Until I am free to speak bilingual and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate[70].

WINDOW SILL:
Yes, we all adapt to English. That's your mother tongue, not mine.

CHAIR:
Yes, and my trunk comes from an olive tree on the Greek island Lesbos.

WINDOW SILL:
Now I figured it out, where we've met! It wasn't just in my fantasy. It was hundreds of years ago. καὶ στρώμναν ἐπὶ μολθάκαν ἀπάλαν παρ ὀπαυόνοων ἐξίης πόθον αἶψα νεανίδων κωὔτε τις οὔ τε τι ἶρον...

CHAIR:
...οὐδ' ὐ[71].
With the Sapphists?

WINDOW SILL:
I knew it!
It's me, the counter top from Sappho Square[72].

CHAIR:
But I remember the counter top to be poly.

GREYGASM RIDING CROP
I know you want me...[73]

GRAND PIANO:
So you two had sex?

CHAIR:
Dear, I mean poly as in polychrome, multicolored that is[74].

70
Anzaldúa in the chapter of *Borderlands* with the beautiful title "How to tame a wild tongue", p. 59.

71
"Fragment 94", poem by Sappho in original language, *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta*, Eva-Maria Voigt (ed.), 1971.

72
Sappho square is located in the town Mytilini on the island Lesbos, Greece. A statue of the poet Sappho stands here. Today, the square functions as a hub for political activism.

73
Madonna, ibid.

74
The classical Greek architecture as it appears in our times is naked. Its red, blue, pink and golden layers of color have been eroded leaving only the surface of the stone to remain. The non-painted marble architecture has served as a model for colonial styles with white buildings and columns, a white aesthetics that expresses patriarchal sovereignty. A fantastic book about this is the novel *Marble* by Amalie Smith, 2014.

7.
The Darkroom

THE DARKROOM is a space in the nightclub that's intended for intimate and sexual plays. In the world of photography, the darkroom is the place where images emerge from the dark. In the world of nightclubs, the room is often dark but not always; the appearance of the space varies and so does the lighting.

Darkrooms are one of few (semi)public rooms that openly provide space for us to be intimate with each other. Bodily experiences, and feelings, are often missing in the discussions around architecture. These discussions suffer from fear of touch, regarding the affirmative aspects of the constructed environment as well as its heartbreaking sides (discrimination, abuse and hate crimes). Architecture and design support the normalization of certain bodies and behaviors at the cost of others'. The absence of sexuality diminishes architects' and graphic designers' abilities to draw for all kinds of bodies and functions. The fears of society concerning touch, intimacy and sexual practices, are multiplied and enforced by the constructed environment.

MYCKET has developed the term *Sexytecture* to articulate the relationship between desire and aesthetic expression, which we claim to be one of the most central and generative forces when we shape the world around us. It is our deepest force of viability, expressed in so many ways, far beyond what takes place in the bedroom or the darkroom. Like Audre Lorde says in *The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power* (1978, p. 54): "the erotic is not a question of what we do; it is a question of how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing" where "every level upon which I sense also opens to the erotically satisfying experience, whether it is dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, examining an idea" (p. 56).

To do things together with others, to share this experience filled with pleasure and desire, "forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference."(ibid.). This interplay is something we use in many of our projects and we call the method D-I-G (doing in group). Just like in a darkroom, D-I-G depends entirely on the presence and commitment of the participants. The balance between the number of active participants and those who watch, rests on a fine line. The aesthetic capacity of the room — *Sexytecture* — plays a particularly important role when it comes to supporting our bodies. Regardless of situation and activity, one thing remains certain — they are fragile, and both rely on safety and community in order to function.

SCENE 7: THE DARKROOM

Thérèse takes a sip of Pick me UP, swallows and leans over the bar counter, whispers to Katarina and Mariana.

THÉRÈSE
You know what, it wasn't until I became an object of desire for myself, that I dared to fully own my own sexuality.

Katarina and Mariana shove away their bottles and put their palms across one another's on the counter, lean closer to Thérèse. In the background, the warblings of the whips are resounding, sweeping synchronized back and forth.

RATTAN CARPET CANE:
Once you put your palm in the flame
You can never be the same[75]

KATARINA & MARIANA:
Tell us. (in chorus)

THÉRÈSE:
Well, it happened late for me, maybe because the queer nightclub scene has changed throughout the years. But it was such a cathartic experience - to feel that I was allowed to be a fag in a female body - that there were people who would meet me on these terms and mirror these desires. That there was a space for me in rooms that I, up until then, had thought belonged only to homosexual men. That my old faghag body could have its own agency without necessarily shifting desires, to be just as complex and complicated as it is. To be completely at ease amongst the raw concrete, heavy basslines, black leather. I think that's what attracts me the most, when spaces and people surprise me, when what looks like hard concrete has a silky surface or when a body that has been packaged hard brings a soft smile.

TIRE TREAD SLAPPER:
I'll give you love, I'll hit you like a truck...[75]

MARIANA:
I know exactly. But I feel torn. On the one hand I get to experience these rooms because I insist, but at the same time, it's on certain terms[76]. Our so called shared, queer, sexual architectural story outside the bedchamber is defined by men who have sex with men. It's not that I oppose having casual sex in public or semipublic urban enviorments, on the contrary.... (laughs)

75 Madonna, "Erotica", *Erotica*, 1992.

76 Queer bar- and nightclub life is not an exception from society at large per se, in terms of overarching power structures. Marginalized groups lack the resources, whether it's real estate, capital or mandate. The physical conditions for meeting might therefore depend upon whether an already existing operation provides their premises with demands of financial profit, or that access to a space is limited to the night of the week or the month that already attracts the least people. As an example — the separatist BDSM-association Club Wish in Stockholm, for people who are women, trans and/or intersex, had their main activity in the space of SLM's (Scandinavian Leather Men Stockholm) once a month, up until the annual meeting in 2020 when the members of SLM voted in majority to no longer host Wish in their premises.

THÉRÈSE:
Yes, that has historically been out of necessity. And the possibility to live your life on the streets in the public has generally been different for men.

MARIANA:
But it's like I'm following this route that was once a desire path, but today rather is a highway. That I, as queer, in order to fit, must inscribe myself into this particular history.

KATARINA:
Yeah, we are all so different, I'm not at all attracted to that urban aesthetics, or I guess I am, in my mind, but not in practice. The hard, I think it feels hard, and a little bit dirty, I mean how many bacterias are in those rooms really?

All three laugh when Mariana displays her hands, covered by soiled, stained furrows from all the carving. The carpet whip halts their warbling abruptly, curbs the entire curtain of whips.

RATTAN CARPET CANE:
Latex gloves and alcogel are both dirty and hygienic.

TIRE THREAD SLAPPER:
Oh well, no one can really see some dirt under your nails anyways.

KATARINA:
But I prefer when it's illuminated, out in nature. I have a lovely memory from a rosemary scented macchia in Croatia. Available bodies stood naked in the sun and waited kindly for company. Heat, salt water and sex dissolving all contours, everything melting together. Mmm.

SEA SHELL PADDLE:
Salt beaches and steaming baths in bath houses and saunas, that's also a major part of our history, both within and outside of the urban environment. Once you put your hand in the ocean, you can never be the same[77].

MARIANA:
I also love the naked heat in the sun, the glittery water. Just as much as I love the hard, pounding bassline and the black sticky leather.
Everything goes. (laughs)
I'm drawn to shrubberies and interspaces regardless of where they are found. Like slipping in behind the heavy velvet curtains at a nightclub. So close to everything else that's going on, and at the same time a secluded space. Where the most intimate and the most public intersect.

THÉRÈSE
Is that the exhibitionist in you?

77 Madonna, ibid. Here, the word "flames" is swapped for "ocean".

MARIANA:
Well the voyeurist just as much if so. (laughs)

KATARINA:
I guess it’s a matter of inhabiting places, inscribe oneself and the queer into the heteronormative world we inhabit. To create fissures, leakages. Think about how charged public restrooms are, like the school toilet that Agnes and Elin exit... Aren’t there so many films that use the bathroom as a setting when there’s an issue of sexuality?[78]

MARIANA:
Yes, it’s there, in the interspace, that aesthetics emerge most clearly for me. Material and textures unfolding beyond the bedchamber, coming close to the body, the presence of other creatures surrounding me - humans, birds and trees enjoying themselves and living their lives around me.

THÉRÈSE:
Isn’t it about becoming real, part of something bigger. I’m thinking of the fact that promiscuity is so stigmatized...

KATARINA:
Not among all queers.

THÉRÈSE:
No that’s true, but it’s viewed upon as the opposite of intimacy, and as anonymous, regardless of whether we call ourselves by our names or not. On the contrary to myth, what one relishes in loving strangers is not mere anonymity, nor meaningless release. It is the pleasure of belonging to a sexual world, in which one’s sexuality finds an answering resonance not just in one other, but in a world of others. Strangers have an ability to represent a world of others in a way that one sustained intimacy cannot[79].

KATARINA:
Exactly, it's about the intensely experienced personal events and about how sex unfolds a completely different, queer public world of belonging and transformation. How queer culture cultivates and affirms intimate relationships that the society at large describes as scandalous, dangerous or even criminal. How we develop intimacy that doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with domestic environments, family links, coupling, property or nation[80].

MARIANA:
For me, that intimacy is about proximity and interaction with all kinds of materiality. That’s what turns me on, what I find sexy. Like when I’m carving and constructing and feel the structure and strength of the wood. I adapt the wood but I must take its lived experience into account - the specific type of wood, the direction of the fibres, surface- and heartwood and the twigs.

78 Referring to the epic coming-out scene of the Swedish film *Fucking Åmål* (Show Me Love), written and directed by Lukas Moodysson, 1998.

79 Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*, 1999, p. 179.

80 Lauren Berlant & Michael Warner, “Sex in Public”, Critical Inquiry: Intimacy, 1998, p. 558.

LE PLUME FEATHER TICKLER:
Desire has a terrifying precision[81].

MARIANA:
Just like our bodies, who carry scars and deformations, peculiarities. Those small characteristics make my existence sparkle, they bring out the passion in me. I guess I’m a true fetishist...(laughs)...and the workshop is my best darkroom. That’s where my sensibility is unleashed and where the full capacity of my body comes to use.

The feather flicker tickles Mariana’s arm, strokes themselves towards her hand, caresses the furrows.

KATARINA:
Ha! Once someone tried to accuse me of being turned on by architecture. And I was like: “Yeah! So?”. Defused that whole spiel. Mariana, do you remember when we crawled into the wall at that abandoned paper mill, pressed ourselves through the tight passage, stroked ourselves against the walls, before reaching the large room that was shaped like an urn?[82]

MARIANA:
How could I ever forget...
(gasps)

METAL CHAIN FLOGGER:
The workshop! Paper mills! Have you ever been to a darkroom? Or are these just pure fantasies?

Thérèse, Mariana and Katarina burst out in a wide laughter.

KATARINA:
Who are you to separate our fantasy from reality?
(giggles)

MARIANA:
...but we’ve never built an actual darkroom.

KATARINA:
True, maybe our ideas of how such a room should look differ too much from one another’s.

MARIANA:
Or, maybe all our spaces are darkrooms? They’ve turned sexy just because of the experience of belonging, community, intimacy - erotic power like Audre Lorde puts it[83].

THÉRÈSE:
Right??? One of the points of Sexytecture is to not hide everything between closed doors. Like the “filth” that the archaeologists found when they dug out Pompeii and Herculaneum, considered to be too obscene, like “this must be kept a secret to humanity”, and was locked up in Gabinetto Segreto at the museum in Naples. Imagine that they didn’t open it up to the public until 2000[84].

81 J. Halberstam, “F2M: The Making of Female Masculinity,” *The Lesbian Postmodern*, Laura Doan (ed.), 1994, p. 212.

82 Referring to when we climbed into the container where the pulp from recycled paper once resided, while visiting the cultural centre *Not Quite* in the former mill Fengersfors, north of Dalsland in Sweden.

83-84 Turn the page.

33

Twenty people gathered on Friday, April 8, 2015. During four hours we explored what happens to conversation when it is filtered through concrete memory. Collectively, we constructed a desire line through the garden of The National Architecture and Design Center at Skeppsholmen, Stockholm. The garden, also shared with the sculpture park of Moderna Museet of Stockholm, was engraved with a path of concrete plaques that the participants cast during the evening. The desire line, permanently on view in the park, is a monument constructed in memory and celebration of *Högkvarteret* (The Headquarters), a queer feminist art space, bar and nightclub that existed in Stockholm during 2009 –2011 (For more about Högkvarteret see npage 96). The plaques, placed in the garden to step on, thus not only trace the desire lines of the people walking through the garden, but also the desire lines of the non-normative bodies and sexualities that inhabited Högkvarteret. Each plaque is constructed by and filled with the memories of the people that constituted Högkvarteret, people who served, performed, cleaned, organized or frequently visited the space. We invited Patriez van der Wens to join the performance with their camera. Their video work is an intimate close-up documentation of the memories as they work themselves through the garden and through the concrete. Memory works (The Club Scene: Act 9, Garden of the Modern Museum, Stockholm, 2015) is a part of the work c.along, initiated and led by Hanna Wildow.

KATARINA:
Exactly! Who can handle talking about the division of private and public one more time? We should boycott those words entirely. They create a false segregation, everything in its place. Of course we can't push all the sex and intimacy into one stipulated room; what we want is to understand what happens when Sexytecture pervades everything.

MARIANA:
Yeah, I don't even have a physical workshop but rather I bring my toolbox wherever I go, cruising around.

Katarina excuses herself with a blinking, Glitter Lash flickers, and they leave the company.

THÉRÈSE:
You've heard pretty much all there is, I can imagine? (caresses the bar counter)

BAR COUNTER:
Miaj lipoj estas sigelitaj.

34

Erotics was an important part of the Roman culture, which can be seen in preserved sculptures and murals in Pompeii and Herculaneum, for example in the ritual in Villa Mysterioso.

The image shows a fragment of Roman fresco from Pompeii, Naples. Gabinetto Segreto, National Archaeological Museum, Naples, Italy. Photo: Public domain.

8. The Broom Closet

THE BROOM CLOSET is maybe the most important room in the nightclub, or at least, so is what it represents: that which happens behind the scenes. All the care work, such as cleaning, repairing and putting together, prerequisites the functioning of the nightclub as a living room and a meeting place — for joy, desires, bodily expressions, party and politics (the kind of politics that is about everyone's unrestricted right to participate in community and society). In the Broom Closet, everything that's not supposed to be seen ends up, the stuff which is needed to get things spinning. Here, we throw in cleaning buckets, mop wigs, brooms, swabs and cleaning detergent — all that is supposed to erase the remnants of the bodies. Here, screwdrivers, nails, a half-empty bucket of paint, measuring tape, light bulbs, shoe polish, and hundreds of crumpled plastic bags end up. To begin with, it all appears to be in some kind of order, yet rather soon it turns into complete chaos. In considerate floor plans, the Broom Closet has its place, but in most cases we need to search for one to the best of our ability. In order for us to meet and interact, an enormous amount of cleaning takes place — labour that's marked by gender, class and ethnicity. In the text 'Capitalocene, Waste, Race and Gender' (2019), Françoise Vergès writes about the globally exhausting and oppressing order within which ignored and undervalued brown women invisibly clean the visible, highly valued spaces of white visible men; where their apparent labour takes place.

In *Tid att städa* (Time to Clean, 2018, p. 4) Fanny Ambjörnsson writes that cleaning might be the "most trivialized, diminished and unattractive" of all mundane activities, so hidden that it becomes "un-anecdotal". Despite the fact that care of places and relations is an issue of reproduction of life and about our interconnectedness. The Broom Closet reflects this in a practical sense — our caring for the left-overs, the trash and the remainings can be a starting-point from which we unfold the act of caring for our shared needs on a societal level as well. Its content can provide openings for how to get things done: how to repair, lubricate, and make things shiny once again — and to do this together, both as people in need and as caregivers. The Broom Closet certainly deserves to come forward in its own right.

SCENE 8: THE BROOM CLOSET

The knob on the toilet door displays 'occupied', Katarina stands waitingly. A poster is placed on the door, presenting a poem by Cherríe Moraga. Katarina reads out loud.

KATARINA:
the difference between you and me
is as I bent
over strangers' toilet bowls,
the face that glared back at me
in those sedentary waters
was not my own, but my mother's
brown head floating in a pool
of crystalline whiteness

she taught me how to clean
to get down on my hands and knees
and scrub, not beg
she taught me how to clean,
not live in this body

my reflection has always been
once removed[85]

Next to the toilet, a door is left ajar. Light trickles out and Katarina peeks inside. The space isn't larger than about a cubic metre. On one wall, a shelf is sloppily installed without dowels. The weight has forced out the brackets, forming small piles of porous concrete grains on the rustic wooden cupboard beneath. On top of it lies a screwdriver, some crooked nails, a swab and a signet ring of silver, engraved with a double-edged axe[86]. Katarina tries to pull out one of the drawers, but it's jammed. She gathers strength, startles when it crackles open and starts stuttering like a vinyl record.

85

The poem "Half-Breed" by Cherrie Moraga in *Loving in the War Years: Lo que nunca pasó por sus labios*, 1983.

86

The double-edged axe — Labrys — has been used as a symbol of strength amongst lesbians since the 1970's. It is associated with Amazons and several goddesses in ancient mythology. The signet ring is also a symbol used to identify other lesbians. This is described in *En annan stad — kvinnligt och manligt homoliv 1950 – 1980* (A Different Town – Feminine and Masculine Gay Life in 1950–1980), by Margareta Lindholm and Arne Nilsson, 2002. IMAGE: from the magazine *Lila perspektiv* (Purple Perspective), 1981, The National Library of Sweden.

CUPBOARD:
Hope t-here is someone who will t-ake care of me when I die[87].

KATARINA:
Beloved one, there is always someone that will set your heart free. Nice to hold, when you are tired[87].

87

Antony and the Johnsons, "Hope There's Someone", *I Am a Bird Now*, 2005. Image of Mariana and Katarina hugging after the amazing and exhausting Culture Club (The Club Scene: Act 2, Galley Index, Stockholm, 2012). Photo by MYCKET.

The silver ring stands with its signet on the top of the wooden cupboard.

RING:
You're such a drama queer!(emphasizes the exclamation mark by back-heeling)

CUPBOARD:
Ouch!

RING:
I'm sorry, but seriously, there's no reason to be so blue, is there? It gets better[88].

CUPBOARD:
No, it gets bitter[89]. I can't move myself around, I can't do what I feel like. I lack escape routes.

RING:
What do you mean you can't? You have wheels. (spins around, swings back and forth)

CUPBOARD:
Where should I wheel to?
I'm too wide around my hips to get out of here and I can't get up the stairs with my brake-lacking wheels.

88

"It gets better" is the title of a project empowering LGBTQI+ youth and was popularized by gay activists Dan Savage and Terry Miller in 2010.

89

"It gets better" was criticized for simplifying the reality of many youths. As a response, the expression "It gets bitter" was used. The slam poetry group DarkMatter, consisting of Janani Balasubramanian and Alok Vaid-Menon, toured in 2015 with "It Gets Bitter Tour". The bar Bitter Pills made a collection of t-shirts with the same text.

90

Maya Angelou, quoted so many times that no one really knows the origin.

91

A statement borrowed from the reality TV-show *WE'RE HERE*, that empowers drag and queer lives in different towns across the US. The show features former RuPaul's Drag Race contestants such as Bob the Drag Queen, Eureka O'Hara and Shangela (2020).

IMAGES: Thérèse trying out a carnival costume together with collaborator Annika Enqvist, The New Beauty Council, with little Charlie climbing up Annika's leg. Katarina helping Thérèse dying her hair for Exclude Me In. Mariana's child Sam in the barn (a former saw mill, in the so called Lesbian Valley in Sankt Anna, Sweden) we used when making over a hundred costumes. Exclude Me In (The Club Scene: Act 4, GIBCA, Gothenburg, 2013); Children, friends, companion species, partners and lovers all took part in helping realize the project, whether they saw, drew, cooked or took care of the children. More on this can be found in "Through Our Dance We Weave the Dance Floor and Ceiling—A conversation amongst MYCKET" in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections*, 2017.

RING:
It's not like it's far to the bar.
Imagine meeting new friends, chit-chatting,
gossiping about who meets who and so on.
The kind of things that cheers you up!

CUPBOARD:
But I'm so worn, and torn, so tired.

The swab strokes itself across the shabby wood, wipes off the grains of concrete.

CUPBOARD:
There's no use. For years, I fought
against the cold wind in order not to
uproot. And eventually I got a home,
finally, but it was already too late.
The volume, tempo, all the impressions.
I can't take it.

GLITTER LASH:
Really te quiero muchisimo mi queridx
cómoda pero tienes que dejar con that
attitude. Y te lo digo con amor por que
te amo. We can only become a comunidad if
there is honest communication between us.

The cupboard pushes the drawer back in again. One can now hear a lament from inside, performed by some halfway burned tealights with their wicks drowned in white stearin.

GLITTER LASH:
Queridx estante, no te pongas chipped.

RING:
Oh well, stop feeling sorry for
yourself. If you don't like something,
change it. If you can't change it,
change your attitude. Don't complain[90].

CUPBOARD:
Brainyquote.com (sighs)

RING:
Yes, so? It's true. You still have a
chance. The shelf above you on the other
hand, that one is a lost case.
At least it tried.

GLITTER LASH:
Calma, es difícil, it takes a village
to make a queen[91].

KATARINA:
Dear, at first sight I felt the energy
of sun rays, I saw the life inside your
eyes, shine bright[92].

92

Rihanna, "Diamonds", *Unapologetic*, 2012. Cinematic music to the film *Girlhood* in the scene in the hotel room, directed by Céline Sciamma, 2014.

Katarinas's tenderness ignites a wick that's still breathing. Yet another drawer is pulled out, this time by its own force. Inside lies a recipe for fortune cookies with a list of affirmations; a paper copy that has been soaked and fermented, before drying itself into a wave[93].

93

All our guests at Sappho Islands (The Club Scene: Act 3, 2012, Theater Unga Klara, Stockholm) were welcomed with a unique pistachio fortune cookie, baked, shaped and written by us. It is a tiny, but concrete model of how writing, materiality, form and content can be integrated. See all the Sappho Islands fortune messages on pp. 84–87.

CUPBOARD:
Yes but, well maybe, but I doubt you have time
for that...

RING:
But please, make up your mind.

Katarina picks up the screwdriver in order to remove it from the Cupboard, and startles when it starts buzzing.

SCREWDRIVER:
Vroom, vroom... Finally some action in here!
Just let it all come out[94].

RING:
Yes, I'm sick of all the whining. There are
plenty of us who are troubled! If
everyone were to whine about this
and that we would forget about the
goal; where we are really going.

CUPBOARD:
But maybe I don't want to go to where
you're going.

RING:
Oh cut it off, you just don't have
the guts.

SCREWDRIVER:
What a ride! (buzzes cheerfully)

GLITTER LASH:
Calma, we are family.

SCREWDRIVER:
A little row won't harm. If it turns
out you don't want the same thing,
you might as well be clear about it now[95].

GLITTER LASH:
But we must remember that we are basically
and essentially connected. The willingness to
sacrifice is a necessary dimension of loving
practice and living in a community. None of us
can have things our way all the time. Giving up
something is one way we sustain a commitment to
collective well-being[96].

94

"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change." Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (1979) reprinted in *Gender Space Architecture. An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, 2000, p. 54. Yes, but if they are not just metaphors but also practical objects, we can find an opening. "Perhaps what you can do with them is to take apart that old mansion, using some of its pieces to put up a far better one where there is room for all of us? Lillian Robinson, "Canon Fathers and Myth Universe", 1987, p. 34.

95

The meaning of legitimate dispute rather than rational consensus is something that Chantal Mouffe discusses in *On the Political*, 2005.

96

bell hooks, *all about love: new visions*, 2000, p. 143.

93

SAPPHO ISLAND FORTUNE-COOKIE-BACCI-READER:

1. A golden egg of opportunity falls into your lap tonight.
2. Tonight you can be a passenger, stay close to a driver.
3. For hate is never conquered by hate, hate is conquered by love.
4. Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this planet
5. Lend a helping hand.
6. Communicate your vision and you will have followers.
7. Great works are performed not by strength, but by love.
8. Present your best moves tonight to an eager and welcoming audience.
9. Friends long absent are coming back to you.
10. The time is right to make new friends.
11. Life is a dashing and bold adventure, seize the opportunity to offer a drink to a stranger.
12. Do not hesitate to look for help, an extra hand should always be welcomed.
13. How can you have a beautiful take off without making beautiful mistakes?
14. What's vice today may be virtue tomorrow.
15. You have an unusually magnetic personality.
16. If your desires are extravagant, they will be granted
17. Every Friend Joys in Your Success
18. A Friend's Joy is Your Success
19. You should be able to undertake and complete anything
20. Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become.
21. Great thoughts come from the heart.
22. Judge not according to the appearance.
23. One who admires you greatly is right before your eyes.
24. Share great news with all people you love
25. You are always welcome here.
26. You have traveled and come into a fortune.
27. Open your heart (it can always be closed again).
28. Being happy is not always being perfect.
29. Next time you have the opportunity, go on a rollercoaster.
30. Try everything once, even the things you don't think you will like.
31. Dream your dream and your dream will dream of you.
32. Being alone and being lonely are two different things, we are here.
33. Tonight, take a moment to do something just for yourself.
34. Someone close to you is waiting for you to make contact.
35. You can never been certain of success, but you can be certain of failure if you never try.
36. It takes ten times as many muscles to frown as it does to smile.
37. Aim for the moon! If you miss you will still be amongst the stars.
38. Keep your eyes open. You never know what you might see.
39. Thank you for telling them what you really think. Otherwise, nothing will change.
40. Let your heart make your decisions - it does not get as confused as your head.
41. A pleasant surprise is waiting for you.
42. You are superbly perfect in every minute flaw.
43. The world is your oyster, go find the pearl.
44. You're a river and rivers need springs.
45. When all else seems to fail, smile for tonight and just make love.
46. When you look down, all you see is dirt, so keep looking up.
47. If you are afraid to shake the dice, you will never throw a six.
48. A single conversation with a wise person is better than ten years of study.
49. The object of your desire comes closer.

50. You will have unexpected great good luck.
51. You will have a pleasant surprise.
52. All progress occurs because people dare to be different.
53. We can't help everyone. But everyone can help someone.
54. Express yourself tonight: Don't hold back!
55. Feel and share your appreciation of the arts and the music.
56. Intelligence is the door to freedom and alert attention is the mother of intelligence.
57. Stay close to individuals who are impulsive.
58. Believe in the goodness of your kin.
59. A big fortune will descend upon you this night.
60. Now these three remain; faith, hope and love. The greatest of these is love.
61. For success tonight feel yourself.
62. Whenever possible, keep it simple.
63. Your dearest wish will come true.
64. Poverty is no disgrace.
65. You have an unusual equipment for success, let it flourish.
66. Emotion is energy in motion.
67. You will soon be honored by someone you respect.
68. Elegant surroundings will soon be yours.
69. Your smile brings happiness to everyone you meet.
70. Never underestimate the power of the human touch.
71. Hold on to the past but let the times go and carry the memories into the present.
72. In communication try to hear what isn't being said.
73. Your dearest dream is coming true, someone looks for you.
74. Your present question marks are going to succeed.
75. Who is the admirer concealing affection for you?
76. A wish is what makes life happen when you dream of rose petals.
77. You will kiss your crush ohhh lalahh
78. You will be rewarded for being a good listener in the next hours.
79. If you never give up on love, It will never give up on you.
80. Unleash your life force tonight.
81. There is a prospect of a thrilling time ahead for you.
82. No distance is too far, when hearts are beating together.
83. Land is always in the mind of the flying birds.
84. It's about time you talked to that gorgeous one.
85. You create your own stage ... the audience is there for you.
86. It is never too late. Just as it is never too early.
87. Life is beautiful, trigger some ones beauty tonight.
88. You can love but you can not possess.
89. Give yourself a wise decision tonight.
90. If you wait till tomorrow, you miss the opportunities of tonight.
91. Life does not get better by chance. It gets better by change.
92. People in your surroundings will be cooperative.
93. True wisdom is found in happiness.
94. Follow your bliss and the Universe will open doors where there were once only walls.
95. Create a peaceful place where you can make plans for the evening.
96. In music, one must think with the heart and feel with the brain.
97. When you speak honestly, everyone will listen.
98. Generosity will be rewarded.
99. Do what feels right, not what you should.
100. To effect the quality of the night is no small achievement.
101. Abundance and radiance will be the theme of your dress tonight.
102. Richness and allure will be the theme of your make-up tonight.
103. It's beautiful to have butterflies in your stomach.
104. Tonight everything will be ok.
105. Time will prove you right.
106. Let's finish this phase, someone is waiting for you inside.
107. If u love keep fighting for them.
108. Do what you want, when you want.
109. Let your fantasies unwind tonight.
110. The Wheel of Good Fortune is turning in your direction!
111. Share your happiness with others tonight.
112. Seize every second of tonight and savor it.
113. Those who walk in other's tracks leave no footprints.
114. Do not seek so much to find the answer but try to understand the question better.
115. Your way of doing what other people do their way is what makes you special.
116. Beautiful, smart, and loving persons will be coming into your life tonight.
117. Friendship is an ocean where you cannot see the bottom.
118. Life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change.

119. A pleasant experience is ahead.
120. Two small jumps are sometimes better than one big leap.
121. A new wardrobe brings great joy and change to your life.
122. The cure for pain is motion.
123. I do and I understand.
124. Ideas some suppose absurd ultimately lead to success!
125. Tonight is an ideal time to water your personal garden.
126. Things are never quite the way they seem.
127. The project on your mind will soon gain momentum.
128. To get the rainbow, you must both have sunshine and rain.
129. Vision is the art of sensing what is invisible to others.
130. You don't need talent to gain experience.
131. Wisdom is on her way to you.
132. You're with friends tonight.
133. A single kind deed will keep one warm for years.
134. Stop searching, happiness is next to you.
135. You don't need the answers to all of life's questions.
136. You will plant a tiny seed and it will become the greatest tree in the world.
137. A great pleasure in life is doing what others say you can't.
138. You will soon witness a miracle.
139. You create enthusiasm around you, share it tonight.
140. There are great changes for you tonight.
141. You will have many happy hours in the near future.
142. Out of confusion comes new patterns.
143. If you love someone set them free.
144. Sense your surroundings, what do you feel?
145. You will soon embark on a voyage.
146. It will come your way.
147. There is no time to be practical now.
148. Bend the cookie dough while it is still hot.
149. Even a small candle lights up the night.
150. Acting is not lying. It is finding someone hiding inside you and letting that person run free.
151. Your worst enemy has a crush on you!
152. Love Conquers All (try it tonite)
153. Follow your dreams.
154. Do not think that anyone have supreme control over what will happen to you.
155. Use the force.
156. Trust your intuition.
157. Encourage your peers.
158. Let your imagination wander with us.
159. Tell them, it's not too late.
160. Be assertive when decisive action is needed.
161. While you have this night, fill it with life.
162. While you're in this moment, give it your own special meaning and purpose and joy.
163. Even though it will often be difficult and complicated, you have what it takes to get it done.
164. Right now, put your powerful and effective abilities to purposeful use.
165. There is something you can do, that will move your life forward.
166. You will prosper in the field of wild and beautiful inventions.
167. Your tongue is your ambassador for pleasure.
168. Love Is in Your Hands, Pleasure at Your Finger Tips
169. Life is a bold and dashing adventure.
170. Stay with your inner-self, and you will benefit in many ways.
171. Stay with your outer appearance, and you will benefit in many ways.
172. Rarely do beauty and virtue dwell together as they do in you.
173. You are the master of this situation.
174. Go with the flow will make your transition ever so much easier.
175. Take Turns As Soon As You Can
176. A metaphor can save your life.
177. Don't wait for your ship to come in, swim out to it.
178. Tonight there are lessons to be learned by listening to others.
179. The rainbow is at your feet.
180. It takes more than a good memory to have good memories.
181. You are what you are; understand yourself with empathy.
182. Everything will now come your way.
183. It is much easier to look for the bad, than to find the good.
184. You are worth loving, you are also worth the effort it takes to love you.
185. Get off to a new start tonight- come out of your shell.
186. Life is a dancefloor, ask the DJ to play your song!
187. Focus on the color yellow tonight for good luck!
188. If you resist temptation it may never come again.
189. Love will lead the way, ask the DJ to play your song.

190. It is best to act with confidence, no matter how little right you have to it.
191. Soon, a stranger shall delight you.
192. Never regret anything that made you smile.
193. Love Takes Practice, Tonight is an Occasion!
194. Don't take yourself too seriously, no one else minds.
195. Tonight you can become one of your other selves.
196. The energy is within you, launch it tonight.
197. One of the best ways to get in contact with others is with your ears-by listening to them.
198. Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.
199. Before the beginning of great brilliance, there will be chaos.
200. A kiss is a kiss is a kiss.
201. Enhance your karma by engaging in various activities.
202. Be prepared for extra energy.
203. Enjoy yourself tonight.
204. The ultimate test of a society is to hold hands in public.
205. Don't let what you don't have prevent you from using what you do have.
206. What ends on hope does not end at all.
207. People enjoy having you around.
208. You are admired for your adventurous ways.
209. You are blessed, today is the day to bless others.
210. People in your surroundings will be more co-operative than usual.
211. Take a minute and let it ride, then take a minute to let it breeze.
212. We are here to love each other, serve each other and uplift each other.
213. To affirm is to make firm.
214. The nights that make us happy make us wise.
215. You have a great capability to break cookies - use it wisely!
216. You will discover your hidden talents tonight.
217. We will overcome difficult times.
218. Your problem just became your stepping stone.
219. I am a fortune.
220. The larger part of the expression "can't" is can.
221. The secret of getting somewhere is getting started.
222. Be most affectionate tonight.
223. Change your thoughts and you change the world.
224. Change someone's thoughts and you change the world.
225. Sing and rejoice, fortune is smiling on you.
226. All the preparation you've done will finally be paying off!
227. The vastness of your intelligence is a void no universe could ever fill.
228. An unexpected acquaintance will resurface.
229. If you want the rainbow, then you have to respect the rain.
230. You don't get harmony when everyone sings the same note.
231. The race is not always for the fast, but for those who keep on running.
232. The best things in life aren't things.
233. Don't bother looking for faults. The rewards for finding them are low.
234. Everything has beauty but not everyone experiences it.
235. Never cut what you can untie.
236. Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.
237. We could learn a lot from crayons: Some of are sharp, some are pretty, some have weird names, and all are different colors. And, they all have to learn to live in the same box.
238. Use your instincts tonight.
239. We are lovers and in our eyes, everything is beautiful.
240. A different world cannot be build by indifferent people.
241. The dream is within you.
242. Your dynamic eyes have attracted a secret admirer.
243. Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.
244. A pleasant surprise is in store for you tonight.
245. You can't go down the right path without first discovering the path to go down.

SCREWDRIVER:
One thing doesn't necessarily exclude the other. If you are explicit about what you want, you have that box ticked and can initiate getting something sensible done.

RING:
I already know what I want. I'm going to the bar, and that's that. (presses up against the tip of Katarina's finger)

CUPBOARD:
But I might not know what I want since I can't trust that I'll be looked after, regardless of what happens.

KATARINA:
We'll help each other out. Let´s dance like We've got diamonds at the meeting of our thighs[97].

Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise", *And still I rise*, 1978.

GLITTER LASH:
Qué sería la comunidad without the love of helping objects, sería en blanco!

Outside, Mariana is approaching.

MARIANA
How are things going Kat? Where are you?

KATARINA:
Here!(peeks out through the door)

MARIANA:
What are you doing in there?

KATARINA:
Just on time, I need your help here. We are all going to the bar but this cupboard is a bit heavy-hearted.

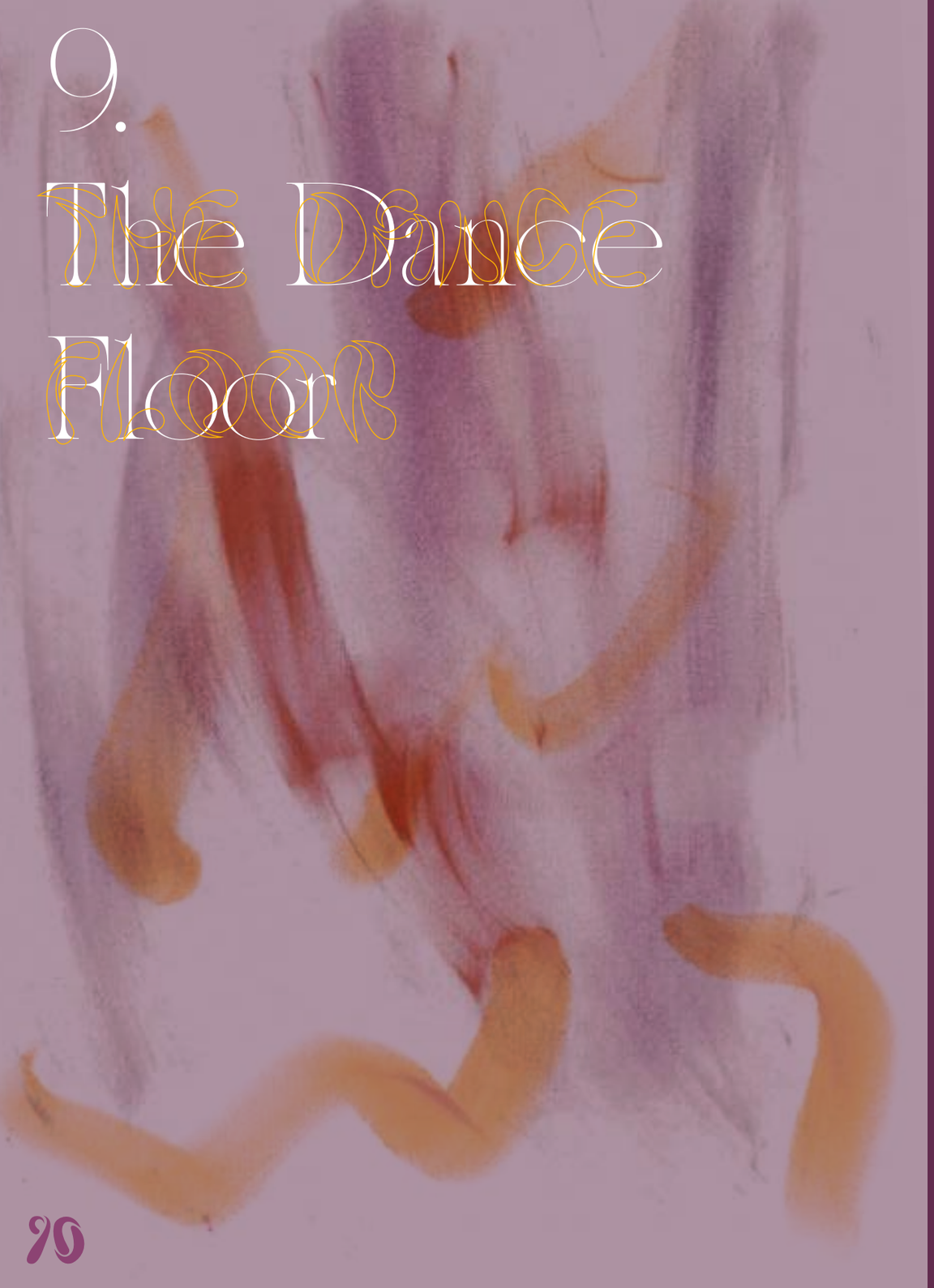
While Glitter Lash and Swab clean up the block brakes, Katarina, Mariana and Screwdriver work together to remove the decimetre-tall threshold.

THE CAMERA IS AN EXCUSE TO BE SOMEPLACE YOU OTHERWISE DON'T BELONG

Susan Meiselas

C/O Berlin www.co-berlin.org

9. The Dance Floor



THE DANCE FLOOR is one of the oldest spaces in human history. Performatively defined, or as Indra Kagis McEwen puts it in *Socrates' Ancestor — An Essay on Architectural Beginnings* (1995, p. 63) the space is created through the act of dancing: "The dancer's feet weave the dance floor". As a temporary room, it's formed when bodies move to rhythms. Here, we communicate without words, our movements speak for us and to each other. It can appear anywhere, at any time. Compared to other rooms, the dancefloor is not separated by walls.

The erratic and unrestricted character of the dancefloor, its queerness, the coexistence of bodies in public space, also brings surveillance. The space is subject to legislation, regulation and marginalization. As many dancefloors emerge in dusk and during night time, it also means that it transgresses the day-time norm of many public spaces. This obedience leads to limitations in terms of time, such as strict opening hours. Laws and norms become internalized in our bodies and movements, yet our bodies and movements also renegotiate and rebel. The right to dance is an issue of taking control of our bodies and their movements; physically, emotionally and socially. A Swedish law from 1956 demands that public spaces, events, bars and restaurants have "dance permits", making spontaneous dancing prohibited. In his solo-exhibition 'Dawning of the dancefloor' Daisuke Kosugi discusses similar legislations affecting the Japanese clubscene.

The dancefloor can be a repairing and reconciling space, one that we share with others, where we learn and become, together. The memory of the dancefloor generates a yearning that lives in the body. It can be repeated and recalled, by gestures, steps, posture and music. In *Cruising Utopia* José Esteban Muñoz writes about the meaning of dancefloor gestures — "such a tilt of an ankle in very high heels, the swish of a hand that pats a face with imaginary makeup" (Muñoz 2009, p. 67). These gestures tell a story of becoming and of queer possibilities. The dancefloor is temporary and something that occurs in the present, nevertheless it leaves traces, residues and stains. Muñoz describes these traces as distinctively material, even if not massive (Muñoz 1996).

SCENE 9: THE DANCE FLOOR

Pounding basslines rumble through floors and bodies. The bar counter vibrates, Chair dances on top of it together with the fern who's hanging from the ceiling, the whips in the window flick the air to every beat. Mariana snaps her fingers, dances over to Cupboard.

MARIANA:
Did you just say something?
(leans over to Cupboard)

CUPBOARD:
Ouch, ouch, ouch.

MARIANA:
Come on, it's gonna be fun! Let's have kiki[98]!

Thérèse and Katarina dance wildly, wailing along.

KATARINA, THÉRÈSE, MARIANA:
Lock the doors tight, I wanna have a kiki[99]!

Cupboard turns around, wheels over towards the Broom Closet.

TYRA:
Woof! (waves her short front legs, her gaze searching for the sound source)

DJ Electric bi-polar paddle stretches over towards the mural wall, carefully closes a small door; not higher than a thumb. The music is muted.

TYRA:
Woof, woof!(hops towards Cupboard)

CUPBOARD:
Thank you. (turns back again)

GRAND PIANO:
Gosh, that's so nice.
(Weighs down a chord of relief).
Everyone thought I was just playing along, when I tried to say the same.

THÉRÈSE:
I thought you loved music.

GRAND PIANO:
I do, but not just any music, and not at every volume. I need to be able to hear my own strings.

98 Kiki has many meanings, for one it refers to a social gathering, rooted in young Black and Latinx ballroom drag culture. The word kiki was used to describe the sound of laughter in the 1990 documentary *Paris is Burning*, which depicted drag culture in 1980s New York and also gave the name to the movie *Kiki* from 2016. It has also become to mean having "a good time," normally at a party or social occasion. In the 1940–1960s it also referd to lesbians who identified as neither butch nor femme nor had a marked preference for either butch or femme partners.

99 Scissor Sisters, "Let's have a Kiki", *Magic Hour*, 2012.

Katarina stands by the mural wall[100], sounds spill out from every small door; leaking into the bar. A basement staircase unfolds below, no longer than a few centimetres. A red lamp illuminates a pulsating door, the metal hammers strongly on the door frame; echoing its way up the stairs. Just above, slightly tilted, flickers a sign, making everything around it shift into pink. The door slides open[101].

A CAPPELLA CHOIR
... to call for hands, to lean on, wouldn't be good enough, for me noo...[102]

A disco ball inside one of the windows in the facade sheds patches of light colors, dancing on the floor. Some flyers dangle downwards like plunging swallows, one landing on Thérèse's hand. A black and white xerox copy, the ink sticky on fingertips.

THÉRÈSE
Look, it says that LASH is open tonight[103]!

KATARINA:
Slick is open too[104]! (holds another, colored flyer)

MARIANA:
And Häcktet[101]! And Tip Top[105]! And...
(pulls up one flyer after the other)

THÉRÈSE:
Christ, where should we go? We can't do all of them in one night.

GLITTER LASH:
Esta noche is always open as long as we want it to. Disfruta! (flopping between the different little entrances in the mural)

GRAND PIANO
Bm G A Bm G A Bm[106]
(plays the chords
with great passion)

WHIPS
Take us now, baby, here as we are.
Pull us close try and understand.
Desire is hunger, is the fire we
breathe.
Love is a banquet on which
we feed[107].

Tyra puts the palm o her paw against the wall, as far up as she can possibly reach, where the ground patterned like Copacabana meets the polished facade with subtle bricks. A small door of wood opens up inwards, ajarly. Not taller than a couple of centimetres.

100 See next spread for an image of the entire mural painted by MYCKET at Bitter Pills, Stockholm. Space is a Pressing Matter (The Club Scene: Act 12, 2016–2017). Photo by Linn Ahlgren.

101 See page 96.

102 The Knife, "Heartbeats", *Deep Cuts*, 2003.

103 Swedish BDSM club LASH run by Helene Delilah from 1995–2009 (after that it evolved into club Wish). See a membership card on page 104.

104–106 See pages 96–97.

107 Patti Smith Group, "Because the night", *Easter*, 1978.

chez
Moune

101

This is a recollection of the queer nightclub and art centre Högkvarteret (The Headquarters), Stockholm (2009–2011) run by Hanna Wildow, Elin Sandström Lundh and Ebba Hemberg. Högkvarteret was located in the basement of the queer bar and restaurant Roxy (2004–2012), run by Lotta Nordlander, Jeanette Landmark (who earlier had run Häcktet together, 1996–2004), Anna Classon and Åsa Hedman. Lotta Nordlander and Anna Classon later opened the bar Bitter Pills(2014–2019). IMAGE TO THE LEFT is a detail from the mural depicting all the above mentioned clubs. Photo of mural by Linn Ahlgren.

104

Slick was a queer night club in Stockholm was run by Asynja Gray and Daniel Bergqvist (2002–2016). Photo by Elin Björklund. Photo of mural by Linn Ahlgren.

105

Interior from *Grottan* (The Cave) at Huset, later named Hus1 and Tip Top in the premises of RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights). Please, if you know the architect behind Grottan, contact us, we want to know. Photo of mural by Linn Ahlgren. Photos from the Archive of RFSL.

106

One of the dining room tables for Space is a pressing matter at Bitter Pills was carved into a Grand Piano by MYCKET, in honour of Gladys Bentley (The Club Scene: Act 12, Stockholm, 2016-2017). Photo by Linn Ahlgren.

WHIPS
Come on now, try and understand
The way we feel when we´re in
your hand.
Take your hand; come under
cover.
No one can´t hurt you
now, can´t hurt you now
Can´t hurt you
now[108].

GLITTER LASH:
Vamos a El Mejunje![109] Let me show you my neighborhoods. (glides through the door)

MARIANA:
Bien, I'll be there, we'll see each other on the other side!

WHIPS
Because the night belongs to lovers
because the night belongs to lust
because the night belongs to us[108].

Tyra, Katarina, Thérèse and Mariana follow the whips; into the mural. They are sucked in through doors, windows, chimneys and drain pipes. Switching in taking lead, showing their memories to each other, experiencing what they have only read of, or fantasized about. Stops over at the square, have a drink in the bar. The bouncers lure them back in again.

CHEZ MOUNE:
Allez mes dames, bienvenue[110]!

DAMENKLUBB VIOLETTA:
Meine Violetten, kommt rein ins Paradies[111]!

LALA SALON:
Welcome Lala's, take the elevator[112]!

SAPPHO ISLANDS:
Kuchus welcome[113]!

WOW CAFÉ:
Get in ladies, Carmelita is on in five[114]!

BITCH GIRL CLUB:
A rippipippi, a rippipi[115]

Back doors are fronts, windows are wide open, music and voices are heard from everywhere. People, furniture, bottles, lamps, plants, walls – everyone participates in the light of the night. The Glitter Lash takes the lead once again.

GLITTER LASH:
Sígueme, and I will take you to a lesbian speakeasy bar.

Everyone follows Glitter Lash and when they have entered through the small door they find themselves on a sidewalk in front of a house with sand colored polish, from the last century. The smell of a well known, wet cold night.

THÉRÈSE:
Wait, I've been here before! (shouts happily)

GLITTER LASH:
Calma, we need to be discrete.

THÉRÈSE:
I've been here to a meeting with the church. It was regarding some art project. (now whispering)

MARIANA:
It's cold, I'm freezing.

KATARINA:
Yes, can't we go inside, to the warmth?

GLITTER LASH:
Looking like you guys? Si, Tyra would fit right in, but not the three of you with those 2020-outfits. The girls would be terrified. And you need to be recommended by two members in order to get access[116].

MARIANA:
Well then we're already screwed...

GLITTER LASH:
Come on, let's peak in through la ventanita. I promise you that you'll feel the warmth, pronto. There is no place where we can feel as warm as in the rooms where we feel en casa.

They sneak quietly towards the misty window, wiping some wet off the glass. Inside, between the curtains, legs and arms flutter in shiny lights; couples and groups are lindy-hopping. Others sits around in clusters, debating about something, as if they're doing a quiz. Someone is standing by a threshold, gazing out over life from a distance.

THÉRÈSE:
Who are all those people inside?

108 Patti Smith Group, ibid.

109–110 See pages 100–101.

111 In 1928, the German lesbian writer Ruth Roellig (1878-1979) assembled a guidebook called *Berlins lesbische Frauen* to Berlin's lesbian clubs, where she describes the ambience and offerings of 14 Berlin clubs and dance halls that catered to lesbians. One of them was the damenklubb Violetta, organized by a lesbian journal called *Die Freundin*: Weekly Journal for Ideal Friendship Between Women which was published continuously in Berlin, Germany, during 1923–1932 (though banned in 1928). "Violetta" was a coded name, as violets were considered a sign of lesbianism at the time. Women at Violetta were known for singing "Das Lila-Lied" (The Lavender Song), which declared lesbians' difference and eventual liberation. The early lesbian club scene of Berlin was of great inspiration to us when forming Lala Salon (The Club Scene: Act 1, Årsta Castle, Haninge, 2012). An ad for the Club is to find on page 37.

112 See page 101.

113–115 See pages 102–104.

116 The Stockholm based nightclub Dianas's by-laws, §2 Membership, 1956–1970. Image of a Membership card for the Club, from the Stockholm city archive. MYCKET staged a tribute to this club, The Night of The Dianas, in collaboration with *Ottar* magazine (The Club Scene: Act 5, private apartment on Nytorgsgatan, Stockholm).

109

El Mejunje is a Cuban LGBTQI+ cultural center and space located in the city of Santa Clara, run by Ramón Silverio It is conceived as an open space, shared by everyone independently of sexual orientation, to promote social integration. The activities of the centre include a theatre, a café, an art gallery in the second roof and a little music venue in which are held concerts of various musical genres. People related to the centre are colloquially known as Mejunjeros. Image of El Mejunhe from Lahabana.com. Photo of El Mejunje in the mural by Linn Ahlgren.

110

Opened in 1936 by legendary Madame Moune, Chez Moune was for over 80 years a lesbian cabaret and ladies-only club in the heart of Pigalle's red light district. The all female cast provided a diverse and entertaining show, including dance, comedy and song. The staff were also exclusively female, and Saturday nights were reserved exclusively for ladies. In 2008 Chez Moune was sold to another owner, still keeping the club but catering to a heterosexual crowd as well as gay. Chez Moune is included in the mural MYCKET painted for Space is a Pressing Matter (The Club Scene: Act 12, 2016–2017) at Bitter Pills, Stockholm. Photo of Chez Moune in the mural by Linn Ahlgren. The image from the interior is from the magazine *Female Mimics*, 1963.

112

"Bejing Lala Salon" is a lesbian community, organised and developed by lesbian and bisexual activists in 2004 in order to support and serve non-profit public projects. Lala Salon hosts a salon every Saturday afternoon, a lesbian hotline, a website for lesbian women, cross-regional mutual support, and lesbian studies. "Lala" is mandarin slang for 'lesbian'.

IMAGE LEFT ABOVE is from when Thérèse had the opportunity to visit the salon as part of the project Who's the party? by Tove Sahlin/W.I.S.P. in collaboration with The Institute for Provocation, Bejing.

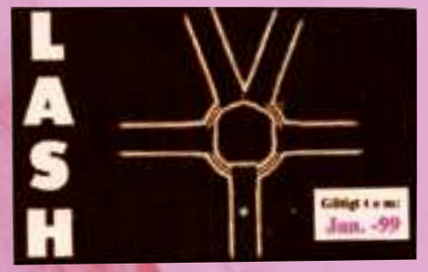
IMAGE BELOW AND SKETCH: MYCKET paid tribute to Lala Salon through our very first club act in 2012, calling it the same name and having members of the Salon in Beijing present in Stockholm. Photo of the mural by Linn Ahlgren & sketch by Elin Strand Ruin.

113

In 2010, founder and director of the LGBT rights organization Freedom & Roam Uganda, Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera (also known as Jacqueline Kasha) together with other Ugandan LBQ activists, opened Sappho Islands in Kampala, the only bar for LBQ people in Uganda. Sadly, it had to close in 2011 as a consequence of the country's crackdown on homosexuality. In 2015, Jacqueline Kasha was awarded the Right Livelihood Award. Kasha together with other Ugandan LBQ activists were present in Stockholm during MYCKET's tribute to their club Sappho Islands (The Club Scene: Act 3, Theater Unga Klara, Stockholm, 2012) as part of the international LGBTI conference ILGA. The night club was staged in collaboration with researcher and designer Maja Gunn, Norm-creative Settings/W.I.S.P. (later Settings: Rebecca Vinthagen and Lina Zavalia). IMAGES: Tableau Vivant at Sappho Islands (The Club Scene, Act 3, 2012) Photo by Mahshid Rasti. Photo of the mural by Linn Ahlgren. PHOTO FROM Sappho Islands, Kampala, Uganda. SIDA survey–Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons.

114

WOW Café (Women's One World) is a feminist theater space in New York City where amongst others the Cuban-American stage and film lesbian actress Alina Troyano, more commonly known as Carmelita Tropicana, started her career in the early 1980s. Carmelita Tropicana was of great inspiration for us when forming Culture Club The Club Scene: Act 2, Gallery Index, Stockholm, 2012) where Puma Berg and Lisa Gerholm created a Carmelita bar (in image). Photos by Patriez van der Wens.



115

Bitch Girl Club was an anticipated lesbian nightclub that opened in 1994 at Kolingsborg, Stockholm. With the work of organizers, Birgitta Jakobsson, Anna Wessling, Pamela Leal Vinals and Mille Berg, it lasted for almost a decade.

"A rippipippi, a rippipi" is from the song "Magic carpet ride" with Mighty DubKatz from 1995 played at every occasion of Bitch nightclub by DJ Pamela. Anna Gavanas & Anna Högström, *DJ-liv* (DJ-life: the history of Stockholm's DJ culture), 2016, p. 234. Stockholm. Photo of mural by Linn Ahlgren.

IMAGES: Eva Lisa Bengtson's membership card from Bitch Girl Club, Golden Ladies and LASH. Also two images from the club Transvestia at Spegelsalen, Österlånggatan in Stockholm and a photo depicting Eva-Lisa Bengtson with friends, unknown location. From Eva-Lisa Bengtson's archive, administered by Sam Hultin and The Queer Movement Archive and Library.

Eva-Lisa Bengtson was active in the feminist and lesbian movements as well as in the early transgender movement. In 1962 she started the first club for transgender people in Sweden called Transvestia, which between 1965–1966 arranged gatherings. She was also involved in *Lesbisk Front* (the Lesbian Front) in the 1970s and 80s and one of the founders of Kvinnohuset (the Women's House) on Snickarbacken, Stockholm. Eva-Lisa later became involved in RFSL Stockholm, the patient association Benjamin and faithfully visited clubs such as LASH, Wish and the association Golden Ladies.

116

"Vi är arga, inte snälla, vi är homosexuella. Nu ska sjukdomsstämpeln bort, annars blir processen kort." (We are angry, don't obey, we are gay. Now the disease stamp must distort, otherwise the process will be short.) This is how it sounded in the stairwell of the National Board of Health and Welfare in August 1979. Activists and members of RFSL (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights) occupied the stairs at the same time as they took sick leave — in response to that homosexuality, until the Swedish law was changed in October 1979 — was considered a disease. In 2012, an action was carried out in a similar performative spirit when activist and transgender Warren Kunce together with 400 other activists protested for the abolition of the law that said that people who wanted to change gender in their identification documents had to be or become sterile. During Warren's speech, Warren undressed garment after garment to show that it was Warren's body that the law was about, which Warren was not allowed to decide over, despite the fact that it is a human right to avoid coercive intervention. The activists won the battle and in 2013 the law which said that people who wanted to change gender had to be or become sterile was abolished.

IMAGES: QX Archive, photo by Eva Eijerfors, 1979. Magazine Ottar, 2012.

GLITTER LASH:
In the beginning, Diana was hosting in several apartments around here in Södermalm: the members opened up their homes to each other. But now they have been given the possibility to use these premises of The Temperance Movement[117].

THÉRÈSE:
But, there! Did you see that one in the checkered shirt, who pulled out the flask from her pocket?
(laughs)

MARIANA:
Working undercover.

GLITTER LASH:
They swap locations regularly so that no outsiders can understand what they are really up to. It's announced through coded messages in the newspaper[117].

MARIANA:
Cool.

GLITTER LASH:
I don't know about cool... you know this is way before homosexuality stopped being considered a disease[118]. Even if it isn't illegal to be gay in the 60's, it's still not looked kindly upon when someone hold hands with their loved one in public or displays homosexuality in any other way.

KATARINA:
Yes, and that would have been us if we'd lived seventy years ago.

MARIANA:
Oh I hope so. I hope I would have gotten to know someone and gotten access to this. Still, it must have been so hard, compared to now, to feel fully at ease.

GLITTER LASH:
Yes, that's the whole point with all of these parties, nightclubs, bars. These are places where we can stay true to ourselves, to and with each other. These experiences will live in our bodies and no one can take that feeling away from us. And when we re-experience this, repeatedly in safer spaces, we eventually gather enough courage to claim our indisputable right to be who we are in the unsafer spaces as well: in the places where hatred, prejudice and violence is everyday life.

KATARINA:
Yeah, that's how struggles for human rights all over the world have happened.

117 Marie Carlsson, "The Stockholm club Diana 1956", *Lambda nordica*, Vol.10, 2004.

118 See previous page!

MARIANA:
Often with violent consequences.

THÉRÈSE:
But also with major legal progress.

Suddenly, Thérèse ducks, and the others hastily follow.

MARIANA:
What happened?

THÉRÈSE:
Ssscchhhh! I think they saw us.

The small group hurries noiselessly down the street, taking a turn at the next intersection.

THÉRÈSE:
Phew!

KATARINA:
I'm so touched! They are forced to meet in the dark, but those are the ones who paved the way for me dancing on the streets, together with my entire queer family. All while people stand there, cheering and affirming me, wanting to show their solidarity and their support[119].

GLITTER LASH:
Tan cierto queridx.
(lovingly strokes away Katarina's hair)

THÉRÈSE:
Yes, to bring a place into existence by dancing. That experience not only allows us to feel desire, love and community...

KATARINA:
...but gives us the confidence and the knowledge to step proudly into other, more dangerous venues...

MARIANA:
...and seek, even demand, similar experiences from el mundo exterior[120].

GLITTER LASH:
The club provides us con estrategias of survival, but also with the comfort and pleasure of knowing que podemos return to its realm and experience once more esta comunidad utópica de queers[120]!

119 Katarina, Tyra, Marie and Magdalena of the Haga family at the Pride Parade. Photo by Joakim Rindå.

120 Ramón H. Rivera-Servera, *Performing queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics*, 2012, p. 143.

10. The Street

THE STREET is a place of occupation, most often by cars, sometimes by bodies. The expression "Take it to the streets!" means to physically transport something to the street and/or to transform this action into a public claim, a dialogue, a struggle. Carnivalistic expressions and tactics use aesthetics and humor to highlight the issues at stake in exaggerated ways, the current states of life, but also embody images of other possible futures. The Carnival and the Street are tricky places where various opinions and systems of values encounter one another, but as Chantal Mouffe says in her book *On the Political* (2005) "....there is no possibility of society without antagonism". It is boisterous when everyone shouts at once (when voices, sounds, different styles and operations collide), yet on the other hand silence bears witness of structural oppression, where those who deviate from the prevalent order can't make themselves heard. Contesting voices in the public realm are an integral part of vibrant democracies and, still, boundaries must be drawn, on all sides, when freedom of expression crosses over and becomes the instigation towards violence. In *Art and Architecture—A Place Between*, Jane Rendell points to a similar problem when cities are planned based on the principle of "the lowest common denominator". Rendell claims that the city becomes so impersonal and non-supportive that it eventually won't fit anyone at all: "Democratic public space is frequently endowed with unified properties, but one of the problems of aiming for a homogenous public is the avoidance of difference".

SCENE 10: THE STREET

A blush can be seen growing in the east. It's dawn. A seemingly endless night is approaching its closure and Lash flutters forward. The first beams of sunlight create a sharp silhouette of the city horizon, blending in amongst the copper roofs, slowly sliding over a dozen fire-orange colored disposable bags. In them, leftovers from torn out homes can be found: kitchen counters, tops of laminate and particle board, kitchen cabinet doors with their metal mountings still attached, interior doors, ceramic washstands and toilet seats, fragments of glass from mirrors and windows, rusty metal, cellular foam mixed with hay bales, stumps, soil, gravel, paving blocks and mud, all mixed up. Some pioneering plants have stubbornly taken root - birch bark, dandelion and raspberry hedge squirm their way out of the bag. Katarina, Mariana and Thérèse poke around in the clutter.

THÉRÈSE:
It's hard to imagine how anything could grow from that pile of trash.

MARIANA:
Look, just what I need!

Mariana pulls out a mahogany treated counter top, clip-on hinges tear up the veneer.

COUNTER TOP:
Ouch! Helpu me!

MARIANA, KATARINA, THÉRÉSE:
What are you doing here?

COUNTER TOP:
Ĝuste! La novaj owners at Bitter Pills threw me out kun la queers.

Mariana lifts up the counter top, puts it on two spruce stumps covered in bark, and wipes it off with her flannel shirt sleeve.

MARIANA:
I'm sorry.

COUNTER TOP:
The humans no komprenas ke most things povas be reused. Don't throw away, add a layer, anstataŭ.

MARIANA:
Yeah, remaking is the thing.

THÉRÈSE:
But it's actually not always that easy: to reuse can be just as, or even more, time demanding than building something new.

Thérèse lifts up a dandelion that's laying with its naked roots in a stainless washstand, touches the withering leaves.

DANDELION:
There's plenty of time, the resources are what's finite. (stretches their roots)

THÉRÈSE:
Totally right, but sometimes something is really missing and then it needs to be allowed to spring up. Don't you think? I think the resources are misallocated anyways and when there is nothing to reuse, then we must build something new.

Thérèse takes a pile of soil, packs it in the zink and plants the Dandelion. It shivers, tries to conform in the soil.

THÉRÈSE:
I hope you can take root now, Rose.

COUNTER TOP:
Ĝi postulas multon.

THÉRÈSE:
Yes I know, it takes a whole lot more. In most cases, we simply build new things because we lack the ability to imagine what we would be able to do with what we already have.

UNKOWN:
We and we?(coming from the pile of clutter)

A small head covered with hair looking like pig bristles crawls out. The creature is holding a screwdriver and a chair in each hand. Chunks of fabrics and slouching ferns are tied around their hips. Everything can be recognized from the interiors of Bitter Pills.

CREATURE:
I can help you with imagination!

Katarina, Mariana, Thérèse and Tyra move backwards, shocked by the indefinable creature.

THÉRÈSE:
But...but, but who are you? (stammers)

CREATURE:
Well. (looks deeply into Thérèse's eyes)
I am something you don't know much about, but that you might have a sense of. Tell me, don't you have a sense of being trapped in a superior supremacy on earth, one that is extinguishing and expending?

Thérèse stares daringly back at the creature.

CREATURE:
In order to free yourself you must think such things that are unthinkable for you. Yes, beyond what you can imagine, beyond beyond. Beyond beyond beyond, beyond.

THÉRÈSE:
And what would that be?

CREATURE:
Beyond queer theory dear friend, even if that comes in handy. (looks at everyone, one by one, deeply in their eyes) To think thoughts that have already been thought during other times than your short modernity, in other contexts, but things that you - with your urban gaze, so stuck in what you think is possible - need help with. You need to be one with the pack in order to be freed from this global industry, carving into the bodies of everyone; skin, meat, brains and hearts being endlessly multiplied in the material world of design and architecture.

THÉRÈSE:
Well, you read my worried heart I must say. (takes a deep breath)
That which has brought a child into this world with no real future.

MARIANA:
And what about the pack? How are we supposed to be one with the pack?

KATARINA:
Yes, tell us.

CREATURE:
You must sacrifice what you think is worth more to you than life itself.

The creature reaches over to Thérèse with the screwdriver and to Mariana with the chunks of fabric. Pulls out a tiny flute and hands it over to Katarina.

KATARINA:
What am I supposed to do with this?

CREATURE:
I wouldn't know, but I'm sure you'll come up with something. Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it happens in our minds first[121].

121 Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987, p. 109.

The creature puts down the chair and waves to Tyra to come over. (Tyra instantly jumps up) *Katarina first looks at Tyra, then at Thérèse and Mariana, before gathering all her forces to breathe life into the tiny flute. Nothing more than a small bleep emerges: ultra-light. Katarina looks at the flute with a long face. Then everyone starts laughing.*

CREATURE:
I'm just messing with you. Just wanted you to laugh some since you all looked so terrified. You don't have to be scared of me. I'm just like you. Well, or you're just like me, really. Look around carefully, in the light?

Katarina, Thérèse and Mariana turn around. They are no longer alone amongst the clutter. Plenty of people, animals and creatures are emerging from the masses.

THÉRÈSE:
Look! Our MYCKET-companions[122]!

KATARINA:
And Maggan and Marie[123]!

MARIANA:
And Carolina and Sam[123]!

THÉRÈSE:
And Inger and Kris[123]!

122-123 See page 121.

MARIANA:
Look, there's Sara Kaaman! And Jessica Gysel! Hi, hello Sara, Jessica[124]! (waves)

124 Jessica Gysel and Sara Kaaman are members of the editorial team of Girls Like Us.

Jessica and Sara step forward, carrying a booktable and a pile of all the editions of the magazine Girls Like Us.

JESSICA:
Hi! How are things going with the text? Are you almost ready to publish the new edition?

MARIANA:
Yup, almost done, we just need to wrap it up with a good ending. It's a bit tricky to get it right. We want to leave our readers dreaming about possible futures. Filled with hope, if anything.

127

KÄMPAOKE — karaokebaren med sånger som bryr sig (STRUGGLEOKE — The Karaoke Bar With Songs That Care) by MYCKET maps historical, recent historical, and ongoing civil rights struggles and justice movements, as well as the material traces they leave behind. It is also an actual karaoke bar where fight songs can be performed, and a shared workshop where banners and pins can be made, 2019. IMAGES: Choreographies of the Social, Public Art Agency Sweden, during Stockholm Cultural Festival, 2019. Photos by Binyam Berhane & Ricard Estay.

SARA:
Well, others will be able to take part in it soon. That, if anything, is hopeful!

MARIANA:
Yes, that's true. All these small things we do to change our situations and bring hope.

THÉRÈSE:
Look over there, the dream castles with Rachael Shannon and Irina Mutt[125]!And that's Mix Dancers, under the purple ball cap, right[126]!? And a Kämpaoke (Struggle-oke)[127]!

128
129
See pages 121–122.

KATARINA:
And look, that's all our wonderful stylistas and co-creators[128]!

MARIANA:
Yes, even our employers[129]! Incredible! (laughs)

131
Tracy Chapman, "Talkin' bout a Revolution", Tracy Chapman, 1988.

TYRA:
Woof!

CREATURE:
Yes, finally the tables are starting to turn. Talkin' bout a revolution,[131] yeah!

126
More about The Ball Cap – A Site for Dance and Movement in Råslätt can be found on the next page. The piece was originally published in Swedish by the Public Art Agency Sweden, 2020.

125
Artist Rachael Shannon generously taught us how to construct airborne textile pavilions during a one-week sewing workshop in Stockholm together with other makers and creators. Irina Mutt later invited MYCKET to show Luftslottet – när vi bygger den stad vi vill leva i (Dream Castles – when we build the city we want to live in, The Club Scene: Act 10, 2016–2018), as part of her exhibition *A break can be what we are aiming for*, La Capella, Barcelona, 2018. Images: La Capella, Barcelona, 2018. Photo by Pep Herrero.

about Kepsen a site for dance and movement

In June 2020 we put the final touches on Kepsen (The Ball Cap), a site for dance and movement in the district Råslätt of Jönköping in Southern Sweden. It's the first day of summer break and Råslätt is wonderfully welcoming: precisely the way we've gotten to know it. The teenagers have connected themselves to the sound system in the ball cap through BlueTooth, choosing what music to play as the soundtrack to our digging. We are installing a notice board where events and schedules for dance classes can be announced. Some children are helping out with pick and shovel.

Kepsen is a pavilion shaped like a giant ball cap, painted in the signature lavender color of Mix Dancers Academy. It rests upon five columns and has a dancefloor of solid wood, changeable lightning, LED-ropes and light masts, an integrated sound system, as well as five free-standing mirrors for the dance classes. The surrounding lawn has been shaped with a hill and a slope; furnished with MYCKET's benches and tables. The ball cap is tilted backwards, so that the visor is pointing upwards. It's oriented towards the school and Stadsgården (The City Farm) — a low building that contains a library, a swimming pool, after-school care and spaces for local sports and culture organizers.

It was Rose Akdogan (the mother of Sibel Akdogan who started the dance group Mix Dancers), that in 2015 initiated the project, during a neighbourhood meeting when The Culture and Leisure Administration were formulating an application to The Public Art Agency Sweden's project *Konst händer* (Art Happens). Mix Dancers were dancing here long before Kepsen was built. What started as imitating music videos in the living room of the Akdogan family, has fifteen years later grown into dance education in styles such as street dance, afrobeat, dancehall and hip hop. Year after year, groups of mostly female-identified children have gathered to learn how to dance, how to take responsibility, and how to create attitude. They perform and they compete. They gain respect. Sometimes during the classes, they move the amplifiers and speakers outside, leaving their basement space behind to use the windows of the building as mirrors for their practice. Parents who had accompanied their children to the dance class would hang out on the lawn and the fence nearby, looking at the dance and listening to the music along with other passersby.

The very first time we arrived at this place, in December 2016, we met with Mix Dancers and representatives of The Culture and Leisure Administration, together with the housing company Vätterhem who owns and manages the buildings at Råslätt. Walking round in the neighborhood, the location manager of Vätterhem, Annika Vikström, and Maria Carelli-Martinsson from the sustainability department, tell us about the foundation of their visionary work: about how they've articulated the lack of meeting points for female-identified people at Råslätt, and their wish to change that. Vätterhem sees themselves as community builders; they manage their buildings carefully, and perform continuous renovations as well as being extensively present in the daily maintenance of Råslätt. Sibel and Rose Akdogan point to the locations where they dance; the neglected stage where they perform on Råslättdagen (The Råslätt Day) and the asphalt outside of the basement space at Stadsgården. Together, we are thinking through where to situate the new site for dancing, which we've already started dreaming about building.

Photo by Ricard Estay

To try out where to build it, we throw two "dance-paint-workshops". The first one takes place outside of Stadsgården. We unfold transparent plastic on the asphalt, tape sponges onto our feet, pour paint in trays and put on the music. Mix Dancers dip their feet in paint and start dancing; first cautiously, later more wildly. We unfold more plastics and just go for it. Our sticky material site investigation provides a clear answer; this is a fantastic place for dancing, close to the centre, yet still just by the park. The residential

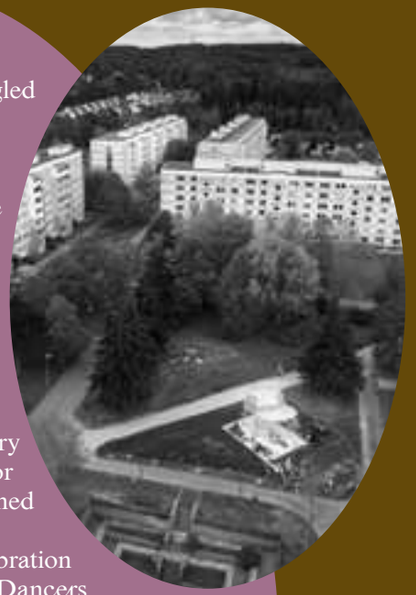
buildings on the other side of the lawn provides a backdrop and the room is both active and enormously large.

Later, we try out the other site: the sad outdoor stage. The small stage building, red with white trimmings, is anything but festive. Like a box with a pent roof, it resembles a shed of the Park Service. It's very worn down, some planks from the wood panelling have been broken off, the stage floor has burn holes in it and someone has sprayed FUCK in black straggly letters on the facade just below the stage. During an afternoon in June 2018, about 60 people — most of them young — join the dancing and repainting of the box. We have colors and make patterns to match the palette of the residential buildings. It is intense and hot, Rose makes sure that everyone is provided with fruit syrups and snacks. After just a few hours we have a new site for festive activities. The result is striking.

MYCKET calls this method D-I-G (meaning doing-in-group). We establish the prerequisites for a shared material creation, where everyone's contribution can be seen both as their own entities and as parts of the combined appearance. In the beginning, no one knows how it will turn out. It's a way through in which one can both investigate and also shape something. At Råslätt, the D-I-Gs also functions as a site analysis anchored by the people who live here.

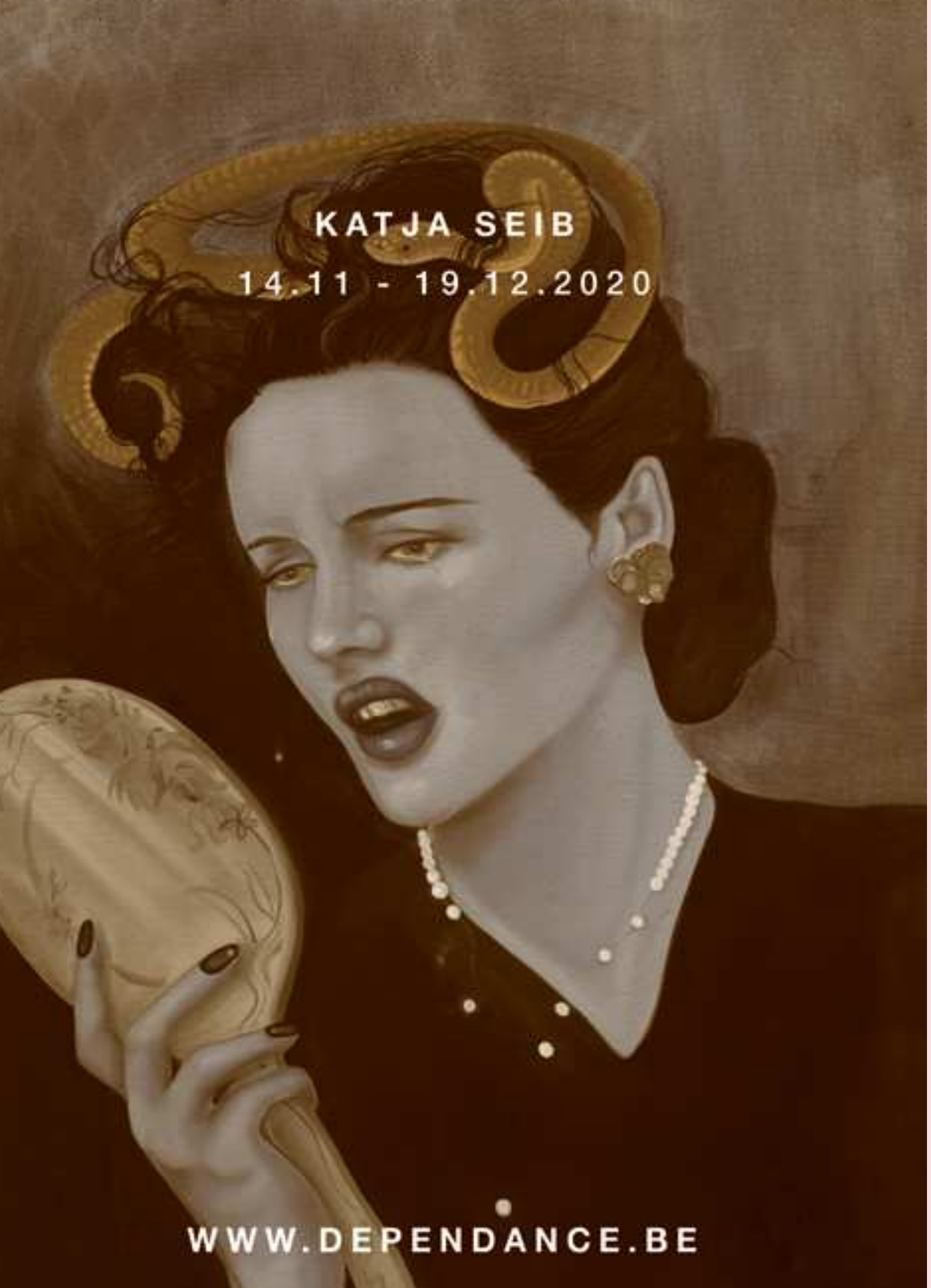
During the four years that have passed since then, we've joined the Mix Dancers' classes (at least the warming up exercises), presented semi-finished sketches at the neighborhood meetings (sketches that are too good looking and well-polished don't open up for constructive feedback), developed ideas and aesthetics together with the teenagers in Mix Dancers (we brought pizza every time so that they would have the energy to contribute with their perspectives), applied for and received additional financial support from Boverket (the National Board of Housing, Planning and Building) in order to bring the project into real life (the money from Konst händer [Art Happens] only covered the process of sketching, not the actual construction of Kepsen), reenacted how Råslätt must have appeared in the 1960's (we lived in the museum apartment), juggled the project in dialogue with the several operators involved (Hyresgästföreningen [The Tenants's Association], ABF [The Workers' Education Association], Stadsbyggnadskontoret [Urban Planning Department], the school, the soccer club, the church, and last but not least, all the skilled workers who realized Kepsen). We exhibited the documentation of the entire process of making the work at Jönköping City Library as well as at the local library, and applied for a construction permit, then designed, planned and supported the building process.

Photo: DZC FOTO vip



The purple ball cap is a celebration of the dancers and the activities within Mix Dancers Academy, as well as of their support groups — especially the moms and friends. We've worked with style — aesthetic expression — to generate accessibility by addressing and appealing to the specific target group. In order for that to work, care, collaborative participation, courage and joy is needed. We have checked in to make sure that we are going in the right direction, repeatedly rejected and returned to the ball cap. Thus, we have made a public site that exists for everyone to use. The material result is important, yet it would be nothing without the social interaction amongst the various operators, associations, administrators and social institutions that have collaboratively woven the site through their dreams and actions. And — in reverse order — this built environment invites you to dance through its appearance, permanent presence and possible usages. In this way, it supports the social life of the neighborhood.

♥



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MANY THANKS to the interior architects Ullis Ohlgren and AnnaMärta Danielsson, the designer Moa Sjöstedt, the crafter Annie Jonasson, MADAM snickeri (crafters Marie Carlsson & Magdalena Marano), the producer and writer Frida Sandström, the design intern Minna Magnusson and the filmmaker Patriez van der Wens who worked with The Club Scene for longer periods. Also many thanks to the designer and researcher Maja Gunn who collaborated with MYCKET on The Club Scene (Act 2–4) as part of her dissertation *Body Acts Queer: Clothing as a Performative Challenge to Heteronormativity*, 2016. Many thanks to Jorun Kugelberg, Emma Lundqvist and Yvonne Rock who acted as play-leaders and hostesses at different nightclubs.

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MANY THANKS to these creatures who helped and supported us and who stayed patient enough during all these years, so that we could conduct this work. Marie Carlsson and Magdalena Marano, Carolina Hemlin and Sam Alves, Kristian Persson and mom Inger Kristiansson.

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MANY THANKS to our stylistas and co. creators of The Club Scene – the alchemists who make magic with spaces and bodies:

STYLES SALON (Act 13): Ingela Stefaniak, Ullis Ohlgren, Malin Kent, Gloria Hao, Cassandra Lorca Macchiavelli, Vilde Stampe, Magdalena Marano, Marie Carlsson, Nisella Åhlund, Susanne Mobacker, Brita Lindvall Leitmann, Patriez van der Wens, Sanna Ohlgren, Viktor Svälas, Cecilia Roos, Anna Efraimsson, Frédéric Gies, Orlando Ravandoni, Fredrik Heimdal, Simona Castricum, Yvonne Rock, Fanny Söderbäck, Sofia Wiberg, Stina Nyberg, IDA (Institute for the Decolonization of Art - Estella Burga, Macarena Dusant, Isabel Löfgren), Teresa Hoskyns, Helen Stratford, Joe Crowdy, Elke Krasny, Hannah Le Roux, Gem Barton, Harriet Harris, Jos Boys, Julia Dweyer, Sophie Handler, Elin Strand Ruin, Ellen Söderhult, KROPPSFUNKTION (Alexander Malmgren, Amanda Krantzen, Anna Bring, Camilla Lien, Donna Magnusson, Fadia Audri, Henrietta Savage, Julia Hedenström, Kristin Kamrén Lundström, Linn Bergman, Magdalena Westin, Masheed Saber, My Edberg, Tove Sahlin), Hanna Wildow, Moa Franzén, Goedele De Caluwé, Tomas Montulet, Marion Preez, Angelica Falkeling, Claudia Roselli, Nadja Hjorton, Katarina Winter, hannah goldstein, Karin Reisinger, Meike Schalk, Katja Grillner and Helene Frichot at AHRA conference Architechture & Feminisms, Royal Institute of Technology and Stockholm University of the Arts in Stockholm 2016.

SPACE IS A PRESSING MATTER (Act 12): Annie Jonasson, Ullis Ohlgren, Britta Tegby-Frisk, Malin Kent, Bitter Pills (staff and owners Lotta Nordlander, Anna Classon Ekenfors) and MADAM snickeri (Marie Carlsson, Magdalena Marano) at Bitter Pills in Stockholm 2016-2017.

THE PRE-PARTY (Act 11): Annie Jonasson, Frida Sandström and Karolina Pahlén at Borås Art Museum in Borås 2016.

DREAM CASTLES (Act 10): Rachael Shannon, Emmy Linda Al-Ghussein, MyNa Do, Emma Lundqvist, Jimmy Gustafsson, Moa Sjöstedt, Britta Tegby-Frisk, Hanna Kisch, Ays Alayat, Maria Nilsson, Joakim Rindå, Annie Jonasson, Elisabeth Ek, Magdalena Marano, Marie Carlsson, Maria Munck, Patriez van der Wenz, Frida Sandström, Mira Nylund, Jill Wrethagen, Elias Lundgren, Leo Häger, Emira Lundgren, Amina, Denize Björkman, Alba Luna, Sofia Hedberg, Oli Malmros, Niclas Sandin, Jonas Fernström, Nilla Hägg, Vilde Stampe, Malin Kent, Lotta Wikander, Birgitta Sjöblom, Ulf Svärd, Sven Norberg, Per Dahlgren, Rojne Olander, Olle Viktorsson, Lena Jehrin, Tommy Lithander, Helén Hedensjö, Jimmy Gustafsson, Ann Sofie Stjernlöf, Emma Samuelsson, Adam Gustavsson and Felice Rova at Norrtälje konsthall, Norrköping Art Museum, Körsbärsgården, La Capella Barcelona, Marabouparken, ArkDes, Mjellby konstmuseum and Borås Art Museum 2016–2018.

MEMORY WORKS (Act 9): Hanna Wildow (c.along), Karin Drake, Charlotte Wandt, Alexandra Falagara, Brita Lindvall, Britta Tegby Frisk, Charlotte Wandt, Ebba Requin, Emma Fredriksson, Izabella Borzecka, Lisa Requin, Lotta Granqvist, Moa Edlund, Moa Schulman, My Carnestedt, Pärnilla Zetterlund, Sofia Engdahl, Zelal Ösgökce and Magdalena Marano at the garden of Museum om Modern Art in Stockholm in 2015.

¡TO CALL FORTH! (Act 8): Living Archive Stockholm Edition: Dada Polis, RED MIN(E)D (Danijela Dugand, Katja Kobolt, Dunja Kukovec, Jelena Petrovi) and ccap/ c.off (Hanna Wildow) at c.off/ccap in Stockholm 2014.

HARDER BETTER STRONGER FASTER (Act 7):
FRANK (Sille Storihle, Liv Bugge), Kosugi Daisuke, Ina Hagen, Kajsa Dahlberg, Goro Tronsmo, Brynjar Bandlien, KUUK, DJ Ingebling, DJ-collective Too Many Girls, Linn Cecilie Ulvin and Reidar Engesbak at Maksitaksi in Oslo 2014.

THE NIGHT OF THE DIANAS (Act 6):
OTTAR magazine (Kristina Lindqvist, Carolina Hemlin), Sarah Norling, Viktor Olsén, Iki Gonzalez Magnusson and Lisa Bartfai in the home of Inger Kristiansson, Nytorgsgatan in Stockholm 2014.

O MY FRIEND (Act 5):
Katya Sander, Banaan Al-Nasser, Mette Clausen , Ingrid Borgfjord, Mateus Nowak, Dina Friemuth, Lucas W. Rasmussen, Anne Fischer, Lola Rennt, Elena Lee, Inger Kryck, Eduardo Rodriguez Chain, Emilie Kjær, Miriam Haile, Hannah Tooticki, Kari Storø, Maja Thomsen, Pia Eikaas, Mattias Agerskov, Thomas Locher, Anna Moderato and Jonas Fredskov Jensen at Charlottenborg, The Art Academy of Copenhagen in 2013.

EXCLUDE ME IN (Act 4):
Maja Gunn, Annika Enqvist, Marie Carlsson, Stefan Nordberg, Patriez van der Wens, Hanna Kisch, Moa-Lina Croall, Karin Drake, Emma Lundqvist, Alireza Arabi, Adam Gustafsson, Rebecca Vinthagen, Malin Holgersson, Iki Gonzalez Magnusson, Eddie Mio Larsson, Carolina Hemlin, Sam Alves, Inger Kristiansson and Hannah Goldstein at GIBCA/The Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art in Gothenburg 2013.

SAPPHO ISLANDS STOCKHOLM (Act 3):
Saima, Sam Hultin, Bombastic Kasha, Puma Berg, Tzeli Hadjidimitriou, Latheem, Jorun Kugelberg, Simka (Simon Häggblom & Karin Lind), Maja Gunn, Gina, RutoNoomi, Isabel Cruz Liljegren, Anna Classon, Indra Linderoth, Emma Hedlund, Christine Bylund, Brady Burroughs, Nanushka Yeaman, Lisa Agerholm, Tova Rudin, Katta Pålsson, Suzanne Osten, staff of the costume and props storages at Stadsteatern (The City Theater), Stockholm, Christina Zetterlund, Emma Lundqvist, Charlotte Bydler, Karin Lenke, Marie Alemo, Tsomal Oga, Rebecca Vinthagen and Lina Zavalia at Theatre Unga Klara in Stockholm 2012.

CULTURE CLUB (Act 2):
Clara Isaksson, Sandra Perment, Elin Hallberg, Maja Gunn, Brita Lindvall Leitmann, Sara Kaaman, Malin Holgersson, Emma Lundqvist, Lotta Sjöberg, Eddie Mio Larsson, Lawen Mohtadi, Ylva Habel, Martha Wilson, Eva Bohlin, Irene Molina, Joanna Zawieja, Irene Berggren, Malin Träff, Katarina Elfvén, Horst Sandström, Puma Berg, Lisa Gerholm, Peggy Sands, Josephine Krieg, Bitte Andersson, Rebecca Vinthagen, Lina Zavalia and Diana Baldon at Gallery Index in Stockholm 2012.

LALA SALON
Stockholm (Act 1): Rebecca Vinthagen, Lina Zavalia, Clara Gustavsson, Efwa-Wiktoria Ewik, Shi Tou, Ming Ming, Bahareh Razekh Ahmadi, Nasim Aghili, Jorun Kugelberg, Moa Kange, Malin Träff, Helena Lindblom, Annelie Carnelid, Vilda Kvist, Gunnel Stenqvist, Moa Lina Croall, Amanda Fritzén, Alexandra Falagara, Elin Strand Ruin, Ingela Östgård, Suzanne Osten, Ann-Sofie Barany, Jojo Stenberg, Stefan Nordberg and Patriez van der Wens at Årsta Castle in Haninge 2012.

THANK YOU
everyone who supported us during this work with funding: Vetenskapsrådet (The Swedish Research Council) which has been the main financier of the project and ArkDes who hosted us during the research period. Konstnärsnämnden (The Swedish Arts Grants Committee), stiftelsen Längmanska kulturfonden, Arkus, Estrid Ericsson, Kulturförvaltningen Stockholm stad. Rebecca Vinthagen and Lina Zavalia who organized The Club Scene together with MYCKET during 2012, as part of their pedagogic project within Norm-Creative Settings (later Settings) within W.I.S.P. (Women in Swedish Performing Arts). Many thanks to everyone who collaborated with us in relation to specific nightclubs: The Fredrika Bremer association, Årsta Castle, Gallery Index, Unga Klara (Stadsteatern), Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, The Art Academy of Copenhagen, the magazine Ottar, c.off/ccap, Borås Art Museum, Norrtälje konsthall, Norrköping Art Museum, Körsbärsgården, La Capella Barcelona, Marabouparken Stockholm, Lotta Nordlander and Anna Classon Ekenfors at Bitter Pills, Stockholm University of the Arts, School of Architecture KTH Stockholm.

THE AGAINST NATURE JOURNAL
Published by Council

Issue #2 Winter 2020

The Against Nature Journal is a biannual arts and human rights magazine exploring "crime against nature" laws and their legacies, in print, in person, and online. Authors and readers from law, activism, social sciences, and the arts are brought together to foster dialogue on sexual and reproductive rights and rethink nature anew.

The second issue revolves around the theme of migration, featuring essays by JASBIR K. PUAR, FATIMA EL-TAYEB, ZEB TORTORICI; a legal analysis by WARUGURU GAITHO; stories by CARL COLLISON and ABDELLAH TAÏA; an interview with ALOK HISARWALA GUPTA; poetry by GLORIA ANZALDÚA, DIVYA VICTOR; columns by MARIAH RAFAELA SILVA, PAWAN DHALL, KARIMUGO, DAYNA ASH, NAOUFAL BOUZID, ELIEL JONES, and a visual contribution by ZOE LEONARD.

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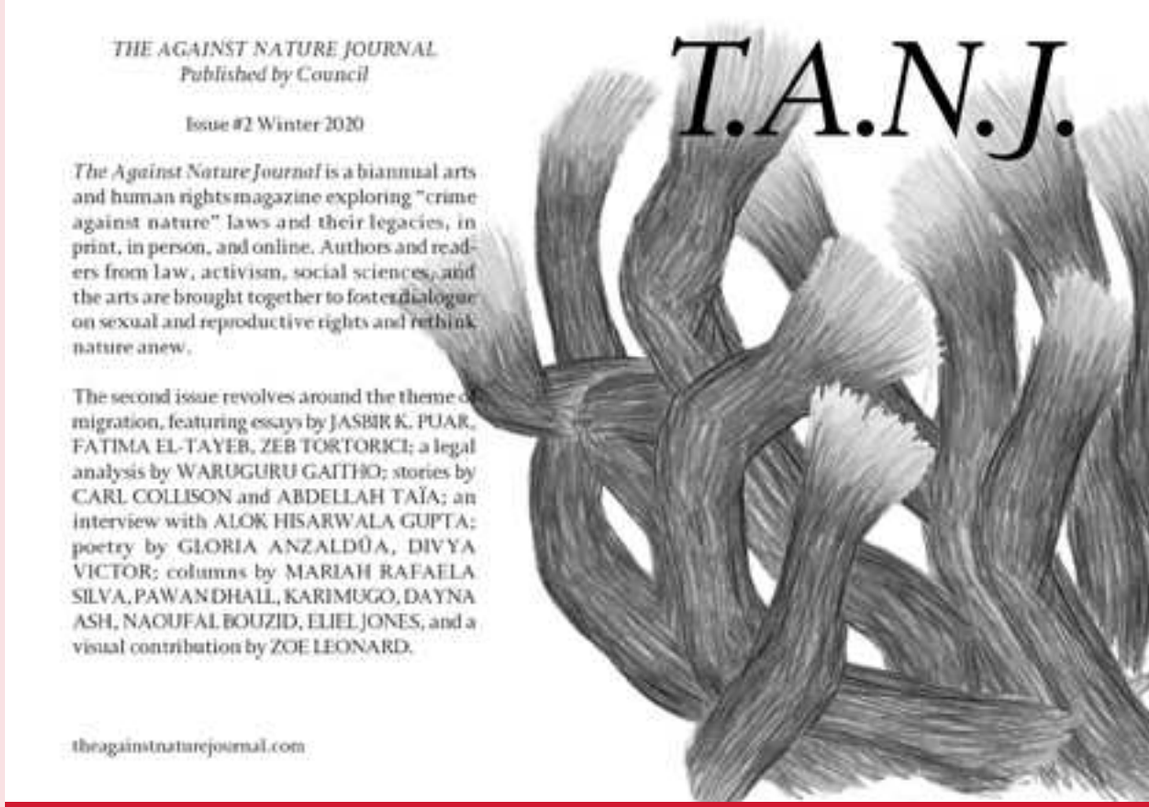

GALLERY

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Colophon

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Sara Kaaman
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PROOFREADER: Litia Perta
PRINTER: BALTO Print, Lithuania
TYPEFACE PARTY: Communal Times by Lars Høie, Ovo by Nicole Fally, Aliénor Display Light by Lou Rainaldo and Anne-Dauphine Borione, ORIP, Ortica by Benedetta Bovani, [illegible] by Rory King, [illegible] by Lars Høie
COVER IMAGE: Mural by MYCKET, Space is a pressing matter (The Club Scene: Act 12, Bitter Pills, Stockholm, 2016–2017). Photo by Linn Ahlgren.

PUBLISHER: Girls Like Us (Jessica Gysel, Katja Mater & Sara Kaaman)

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A Note on the Make Up by Sara Kaaman

Piles of unused lipstick, eye shadow and nail polish found their way into these pages – instead of into the clubs we would have visited this year. A paper parade of smudges, smears, of glitter, purples, oranges, pinks. Promises of kisses and pulsing lights. Smudge, sweat, reapply.

A warm thank you to

Emilia Åkesson, Moa Lina Croall, Carolina Hemlin for their thorough and heartful reading and significant comments to forward this manuscript.

The Swedish Research Council which has been the main financier of the project and ArkDes who hosted us during the research period. Konstnärsnämnden (The Swedish Arts Grants Committee), stiftelsen Längmanska kulturfonden (The Längman Cultural Foundation), Arkus Foundation, Estrid Ericsson Foundation, Kulturförvaltningen Stockholm stad for funding the project in various parts and this publication.

MYCKET

MYCKET collaboration, Stockholm & Östergötland, founded in 2012 by Mariana Alves Silva, Dr. Katarina Bonnevier and Thérèse Kristiansson. The architecture, art and design practice MYCKET develops artistic research from intersectional perspectives such as anti-racist and queer-feminist theories. Together they rummage through the borderlands of the lives we live, and the environment that surrounds us. Between 2016–2020 MYCKET expanded to include co-worker Ullis Ohlgren and also between 2018–2020 AnnaMärta Danielsson. Recent work includes; the public space for dance and movement Kepsen at Råslätt, Sweden (Public Art Agency Sweden, Mix Dancers Academy, Vätterhem, Jönköping municipality & Boverket, 2016–2020). KÄMPAOKE–The Karaoke Bar With Songs That Care, (Choreographies of the Social, Public Art Agency, Stockholm Culture Festival, 2019), The Grotto of Naiads (transformation of pedestrian tunnel, Haninge municipality, 2018), exhibition design Aiming for Democratic Architecture (Swedish Institute, Architects Sweden, 2017–2019). Current research project: “Troll perception in the Heartlands” (affiliated to Linnaeus University, Växjö, funded by the Swedish Research Council 2020–2024), a transdisciplinary design, craft and animation project emerging out of southern rural Sweden, expanding research imagination to generate sustainable future scenarios informed by folktales and mythology.

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