

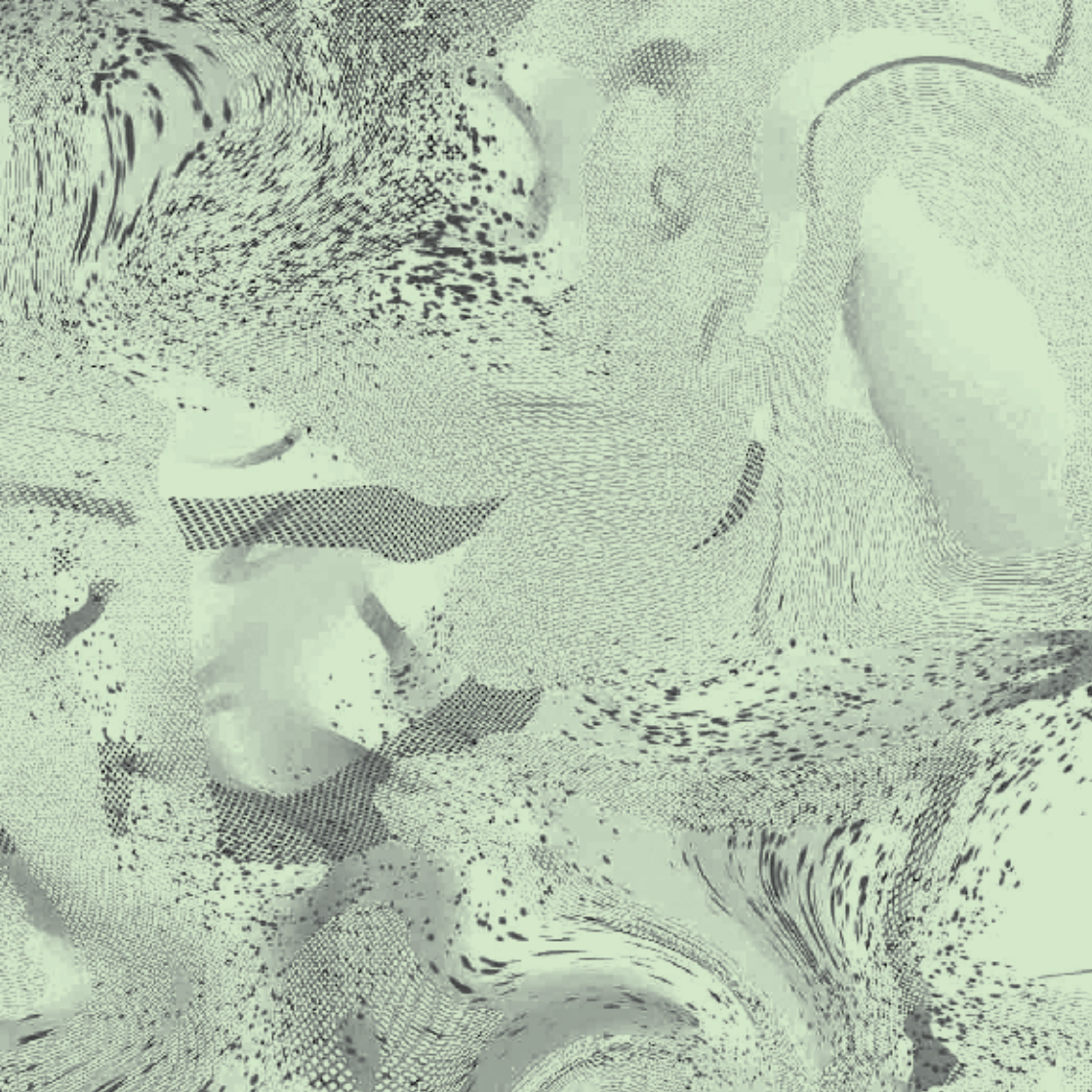
The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features a dense, wavy pattern of blue and red lines that create a sense of movement and depth. Overlaid on this is a fine, grid-like halftone pattern, which gives the image a textured, almost digital appearance. The colors are vibrant, with the blue being a deep cerulean and the red being a rich, slightly darker shade.

# DECRIMINALISED FUTURES

2022









“It’s one thing to exist in art as a sex worker, as long as somebody else is depicting you. You can’t be in control of your own image.”

- Camille Melissa Waring

TECHNOLOGY, SURVEILLANCE AND THE  
STATE: HOW WE RESIST

Decriminalised Futures  
is a collaborative project  
using creative tools to  
explore a broad range of  
topics impacting on the  
lives of sex workers.

Our goal is to celebrate creative expression of all kinds as a tool for deeper solidarity between global justice struggles. Through creative interventions and popular education, we aim to highlight the ways in which sex worker movements are inextricably linked to struggles for racial and economic justice and trans liberation.

In late 2019, Decriminalised Futures shared a public call out for artists to submit proposals for an art exhibition and accompanying book. From 87 different submissions, a selection panel chose 10 final projects. Originally scheduled for September 2020, the global pandemic delayed the exhibition and artists were given extended deadlines for completing their work. We're very glad to now be able to share with you the wonderful work of these artists.

The groundwork for this exhibition lies in a three day festival hosted by SWARM (Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement) in early 2019. Audio recordings of discussions from that event were used by artists in the exhibition to influence and inspire their work, and speaker quotes are laid through the pages of this book and the walls of the exhibition.







**Aisha Mirza**

## Pussy not a place

### Aisha Mirza

While it's true that lesbians are angry at all times, it's okay because we're also fucking at all times. We're changing, trolling, loving at all times. We're playing it by ear, sweetie. We're bleeding at the altar of thank god i'm gay and lesbian culture is lying in bed with her and seeing who dies first. A lot of fast and gentle and hard. A lot of put it in my mouth now and we can work out what to call it later okay, daddy?

i always wanted to be a lesbian but i came out at 25 which was too late to pretend i didn't already know i wasn't gay enough or woman enough to be one however my earliest memories are of wanting to fuck mary kate and Ashley and the bald guy who presented crystal maze who looking back, was, i am sure, a lesbian.

it was a relief when i realized i could be a part time lesbian in the same way it was a relief when i realized i could prefer scented sanitary pads and still be a feminist. (i don't feel dickless anymore than i feel cuntless). in the same way that it was a relief when i got my tongue pierced, like the secret was out, not the lesbian secret but the other one. of things that stay inside that i can't bring myself to touch. of my soft pussy. it that i long to manhandle like it's nothing

One time this girl had just cum inside me and when I opened my eyes the room was full of people. They were in this kind of awkward semicircle around the bed positioned as though they were members of a 90s amateur dramatics company, or as though they were ghosts. fancy ghosts – as in ancestors – maybe that's rude, i don't know - but she was still on top of me, her mouth slightly open against my neck and it was quiet and they told me, "Aisha, everything you think is beautiful, is beautiful."

The first woman I ever loved, told me, shortly before we stopped speaking, that she felt like I had left her for dead. She, like me, was a manic depressive, though had already been living with it for years by the time I really began to feel its force. Whenever a depression envelops me, I hear her words, "You've left me for dead", because that is exactly what depression feels like. But you're not dead. You're not dead yet.

I have never owned a dog, for logistical and financial reasons, but also because one of my greatest fears in life is to own a dog who rather than periodically lifting me out of my depression, joins me in it. That is to say one of my greatest fears in life is that my sadness is contagious, that even a dog might wither at my feet.

I know people say they love getting tattoos because they like the pain - and by people I mean gay people - but i'm not really a bottom like that. I'm more of a *mental* anguish queen. I'm not even sure I like tattoos, to be

honest, but I am locked into a process now. My favourite tattoos are the ones I've given myself, on the floor of my friend's bedroom or on a toilet in the middle of the night in a motel somewhere.

i have never experienced power like that which i channel to hurt people with. Fire signs, usually, looking for a mother. just my hands and the back of your thighs, tight from anticipation, soft from exhaustion, blue from the pain.

When I mark my own body with a needle or a knife I am victorious that out of nothing I have conjured walls, ceilings, a floor to lie down on – that this misery might have a language because I gave it one. It is a great relief to fall apart.

it is a great relief to meet that lesbian. that big dick lesbian who likes three sugars in her tea. that lesbian you can be a lesbian with. that lesbian who wipes ur tears away and then fucks you to sleep. who refuses to wither at your feet but stands tall on all fours, body electric, listening so carefully, so sweetly for the sound of metal. that lesbian who will look at you like she has never loved or hated anyone so much in her whole fucked up life.

do you remember that time i gave you head at the back of the bus without touching you? it's awkward because trauma bonding is real but so is the fact we're magic.

I never learnt my angles. Probably because I knew that if I did I would never think about anything else ever again. Probably for the same reason so many trans people I know can teleport.

the best dick i ever had was a thumb and good intentions.

...  
aron thurs?  
-cop?-cancel  
mir sched  
ohanna13:00  
sat

★ 2 new  
messages



Welcome to the White Savior Simulator.

Here you will experience a droplet, a crystalline moment, a tiny sliver of a role playing game that puts you in the shoes of that daring, heroic figure: the can't-mind-they-business white person. Onward brave adventurers!

Who are you saving? Turn to the page number to begin...

1. the children -----> p 26
2. whores -----> p 20
3. the poors -----> p 14

the poors → do they need your help? → OBVIOUSLY(22) / NAH(23)

“I struggle with this idea of people being voiceless or not able to articulate it; people are articulating their experiences at all times, it’s on us to listen and prioritise those voices.”

- Jade Bentil

IMAGINING FEMINIST FUTURES







Yarli Allison & Letizia Miro

## This is not for clients

### Letizia Miro

In my country,  
 whore is the worst thing you can say,  
 to a woman.  
 I remember 2012  
 I took a selfie in my knickers  
 I sent it to escort agencies: 200£ for an hour  
 of service,  
 Money for paying the rent (to think, how to get  
 ahead).  
 In 2012 - I realised that  
 I was alone in this thing of survival.  
 And that coming across as a princess was,  
 in fact,  
 never  
 a possibility.

Letizia was my first escort name  
 when I started working for an agency.  
 The madame chose the name for me.  
 "Like the Spanish princess", she said.

That my whore name was  
 a princess' name, had a fair flavour.  
 As if I was allowed the only space  
 in which I could impersonate a princess.

The branding for my first job was  
 one of a little town girl, naïve.

Before all this,  
 I was too normal  
 for being able to understand  
 subversive complexities - precarity, feeding jobs.  
 All my energies  
 focused on getting ahead,  
 That was "my normality".

We both seek a complicit gaze.  
 We are both guilty in this: raw energy vs. raw energy /  
 social monster vs. social monster.  
 Or so they say.  
 None can touch you (hurt you), when you move  
 stealthily.

That's why I am a good whore,  
 I need to make this image / every time / stronger.  
 Knowing oneself vulnerable, generates a bond /  
 A moment of truth / an endorphins' release.  
 That's why I'm a good whore.  
 I need to make this image / every time / stronger.

Gala was my second escort name.  
 I named myself as such  
 when I run out of strength  
 for being a princess.  
 So, I killed my princess.  
 Gala: a mad's person muse.  
 That's why I'm a good whore,  
 I need to make this image / every time / stronger.

Miss Faux Naif was  
 my first dominatrix name. I took it from a DJ at a  
 techno-fetish party: fairy face, builder skin.  
 That's why I'm a good whore,

I need to make this image / every time /  
stronger.

Laia is my low cost name.  
High volume. High volume - low price.  
In order to survive,  
I have passed, forever,  
to the side of the 'anormals'. Of the crazy /  
of the misfits.  
The stigma or your life, they asked.  
The stigma, I responded.  
Being a victim is the best angle  
from which you can be a persecutor.  
The land of the misfits: a game of mirrors.

Only we know when we survive. (Dirty).  
However, in spite of everything,  
we do survive.  
With this thing of being 'anormal',  
not only society doesn't see us.  
We also don't see each other.  
Invisible -  
- how are we going to face  
such an emotional weight?  
Because, from the outside,  
this is what people do  
when they encounter a whore:  
their eyes secretly chase the door's cracks.  
Their eyes focus on their long legs.

Up till the 'public' hair [the *pubic hair*]. Is it wet?  
They, the 'no whores' say,  
I'm not like her,  
I'm an actual person.  
\*\*We \*\* are actual people.

contrary to those (non-existent) holes.  
In spite of everything,  
I know when I survive. That's why I'm a good whore.

At my fourth name, I stopped crying. I made this  
image every time, stronger.  
Stronger, I said. Game of mirrors.

Vulnerability vs a life rehearsing  
disappointment.  
Fantasy. I mean.

*What stays here and what leaves the room?*

whores—> do they need your help? OBVIOUSLY(22) / NAH(23)



“Our criminalisation is what is being used to exploit us and also to create further oppression for sex workers.”

- Rosa Caradonna

COLLECTIVE ORGANISING AND SEX WORKER  
UNIONS

# OBVIOUSLY

no need to ask them if they need help or what kind, the situation clearly requires your gentle patronage. But what type?

“selfie with them” → p30

“write accusing thinkpieces about their plight” → p46

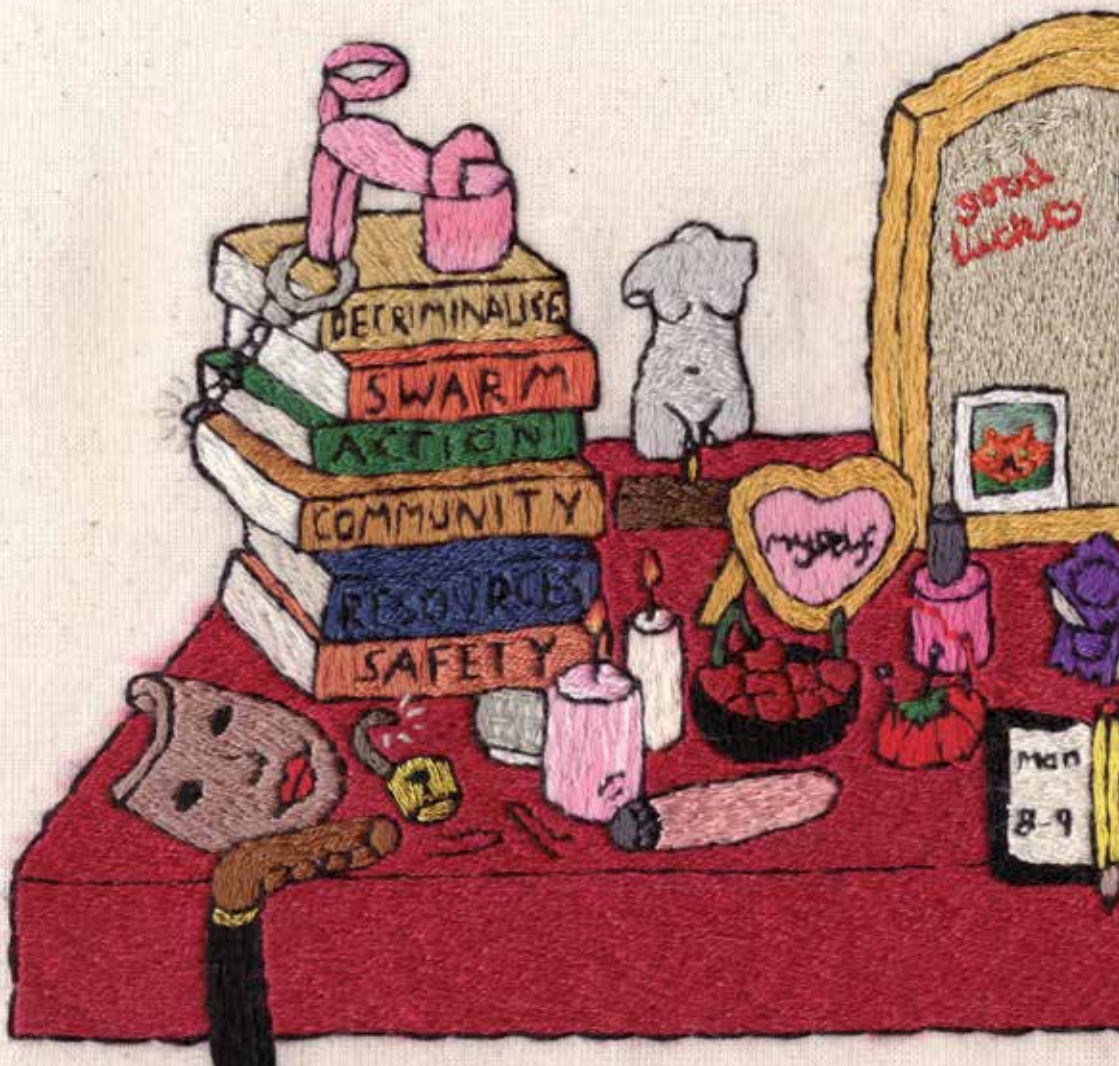
“remove their exploitative work” → p50

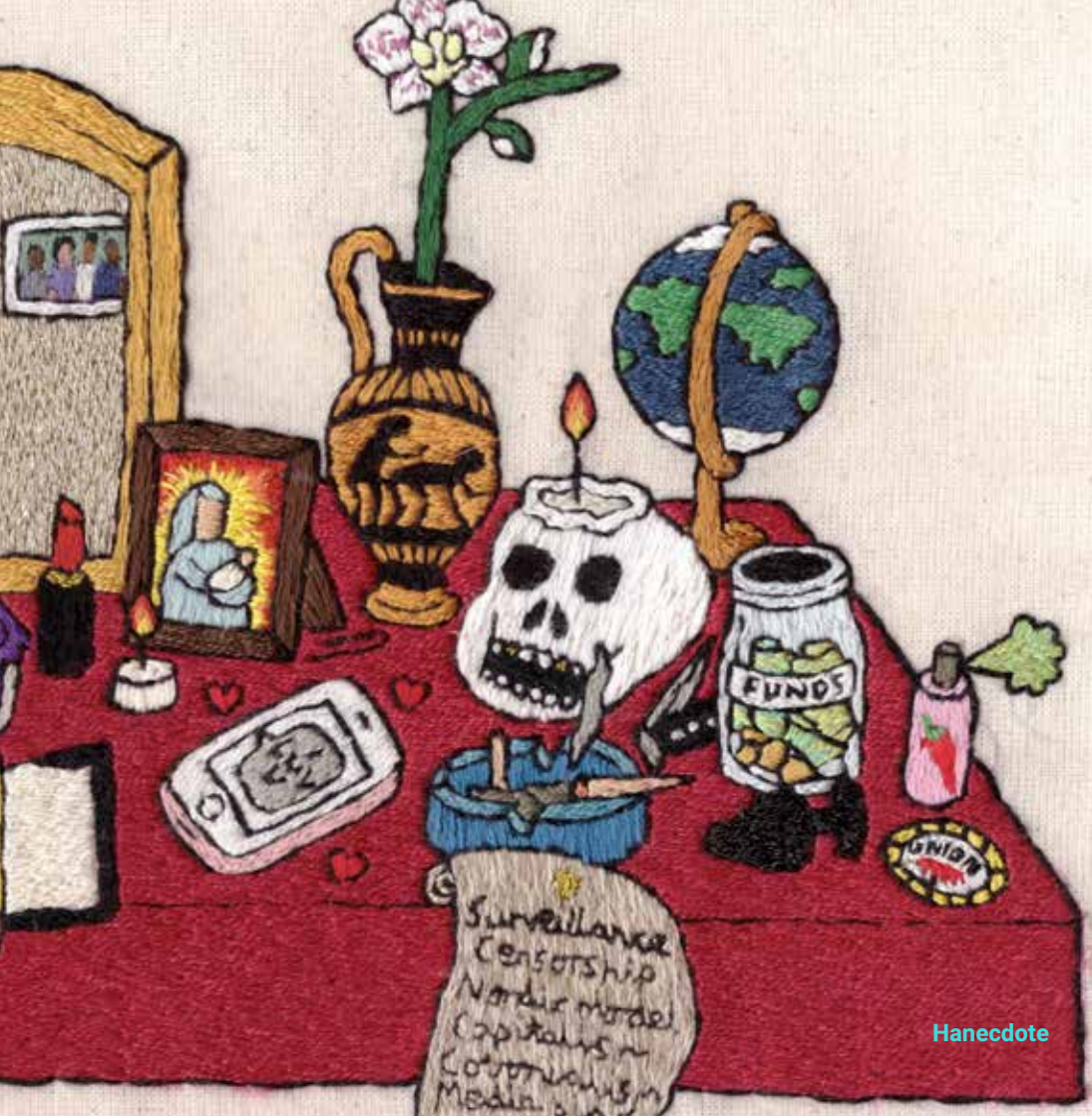
# NAH

nah --> you know what, maybe... they don't need me. They need structural change that removes barriers to a healthy, comfortable quality of life. Maybe I will work toward that change?

"yes" --> p34

"no" --> p36





the children --> do they need your help? --> OBVIOUSLY(22) / NAH(23)

“Austerity is a really violent policy and it’s a form of social cleansing. They want to kill us; they want us to die. If I have one thing to say to you it’s: don’t let them kill you. Stay here, stay fighting, your life is worth it.”

- Mercredi Addams

THE IMPACT OF AUSTERITY







It's important your friends know you've had a brush with the impoverished and downtrodden, so a selfie it is. A sentence about your empathy for these poor humans is the caption. Your work here is done.

“The nation state is inherently violent. What do we do when the way that bodies are organised is inherently a violent thing? Someone will always have to be inherently excluded for a nation to make sense. So you can have all of this different rhetoric, people will be talking about assimilation, multiculturalism, they can be talking about exclusion, they can be talking about genocide, but all these conversations actually are the same conversation which is about who is allowed to be here and who is not.”

- Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan  
(RESISTING) SYSTEMS OF VIOLENCE





Tobi Adebajo

It turns out there are a lot of people and organizations working on labor rights, migration rights, prison abolition, mutual aid, and other issues that materially help people. This is a good path.

“Ethical porn is always about the labour rights and working conditions of the performers, and that’s it.”

- Hello Rooster

AESTHETICS VS ETHICS: EXPANDING  
DEFINITIONS OF FEMINIST PORN

Let them all fend for themselves, you know that at least you're not making it worse by getting involved. On a random Sunday you send money to someone who could use it via their fundraiser or something because why not?



“For me, being Black, literally impacts everything I do in every walk of life. Being a Black sex worker just makes it bloody difficult. Your perceived worth in this industry is lower. Very much like in other areas of life you have to do more, give more, and be more, just to be level with your white counterparts.”

- Amber

SEX WORKERS OF COLOUR ROUNDTABLE



*"I mean, I would say that like that sex work was just the way that I was able to, like, materially enact all my dreams."*



*"My pussy, my pussy. my pussys got power; my pussy pops, but my pussy don't pop for just anyone."*

**Stone Dove: Chi Chi Castillo & May May Peltier**



“We need to talk more about poverty and also that access to resources is not equal. Trans people and sex workers are excluded from the working market. Or we are discriminated against for being who we are. If we do not attack the real problem, the real cause of this kind of problem - capitalism and nationalism that come together to deprive us from the rights and the resources that all of us deserve to have equally - if we do not attack this kind of issue, the heart of the problem, we will suffer more and more with the same problem, it will be reproduced.”

- Mimi Aum Neko

IMAGINING FEMINIST FUTURES



(pxrxmxtxr)

(sung...) \*perhaps by faerie\*

by river you'll find me

you've discovered that you need me

(spoken)

are you asking for

perimeter

or

parameter

one is my service top and one is my

sadist

bebe you're not ok are you

you're in the fray

da di dum (many riffs)

(audio domina)

I am a black woman  
I am a black trans man  
Is my duplicity sinister







Khaleb Brooks

Everyone MUST know what is happening here. And they must read about it in the most sensational way possible, in order to make sure they feel guilt and sorrow and very titillated. No need to fact check or include ways to help, what is important is a lot of words that induce pearl clutching, and furtive bdsm porn watching.

“Interpersonal violence is patterned by state violence. The two are fundamentally interlinked and inextricable, and you see that really clearly in terms of sex work. Obviously poverty is already violence, but people try to survive poverty through selling sex and then they’re criminalised, which is again a form of violence enacted by the state. And then that criminalisation produces the conditions in which they’re vulnerable to interpersonal violence, because they are marked out to violent people as legitimate targets for violence.”

- Molly Smith

(RESISTING) SYSTEMS OF VIOLENCE



A person wearing a costume with a pink wig, a lace mask, and a white tulle dress is holding a white sign with black text. The person is also wearing red gloves with white tips. The background is a green field with trees.

**THE  
POLICE  
IS  
NEVER  
ON OUR  
SIDE**

Liad Hussein Karimowicz

DEP

You know what these people need. Their jobs are exploitative and their lives are just horrible. If we remove their awful, icky job they will be just fine. It doesn't matter that they still need a way to pay bills and buy food, as long as they're not doing a job that makes the skin crawl.

“If we don’t make this art about our experiences, other people are going to do it. It’s going to be made by people who are doing it in this voyeuristic way and then that representation is just out there and there’s nothing to counter that. It’s important that we find ways to tell our own stories or else they’re going to be told for us.”

- Rori

ARTISTS TALK BODIES, VISIBILITY,  
AND VIOLENCE







## THANK YOU

Jo Helfer, Barry Esson, Bryony McIntyre, Cloudberry McLean, Emma Macleod, Sara Sassanelli, Nydia A. Swaby, Steven Cairns, Rosalie Doubal, Richard Birkett, Dave Ronalds, Morgan M. Page, Imani Robinson, Hello Rooster, Polly Blake, Natasha Bloor, Sherry Ostopovich, Anita Castelino, Tamara Schreiber, Radio Ava, Hollis Robin, Sammi Ingamells, Imo Vee, Zara Bain, everyone at Academic Audio Transcription, Luca Stevenson, everyone at SWARM & everyone who helped make the 2019 conference happen, Open Society Foundations, Katarzyna Pabijanek, Melody Ledwon, Sebastian Kohn, Alessandro Rossi, and to everyone else who made this exhibition possible.

## ARTISTS

Tobi Adebajo, Yarli Allison, Khaleb Brooks, Chi Chi Castillo, Cory Cocktail, Hanecdote, Liad Hussein Kantorowicz, Letizia Miro, Aisha Mirza, Annie Mok, May May Peltier, Danica Uskert, pxx•mxt•r

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Dedicated to sex workers everywhere.







