SENSUOUS DISCOVERIES

CONTENTS

ABOUT *5*

PANEL DISCUSSION *7*

PLAYSHOP 1: THE AFTER ARCHIVES *30*

PLAYSHOP 2: INTO THE ETHER *34*

PLAYSHOP 3: ARCHIVE TO ARCHIVE *38*

CONTRIBUTORS *42*

SENSUOUS DISCOVERIES
Ajamu X & 198 Contemporary Arts + Learning

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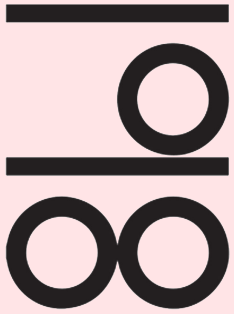


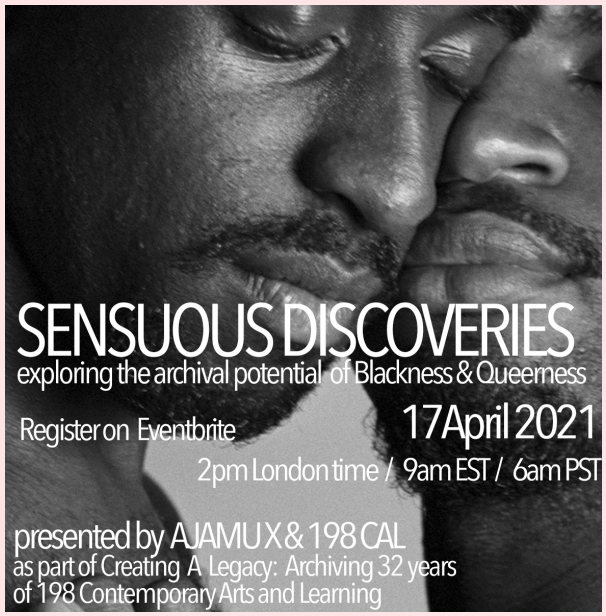
ABOUT

Sensuous Discoveries is a project devised by Ajamu X in collaboration with 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning and funded by the National Heritage Lottery fund. It was developed in conversation with curator Mattie Loyce on a sunny day in Brockwell Park, Brixton during which Ajamu and Mattie discussed their shared desire to bring together thoughts, feelings and practices that explore the archival potential of Blackness & Queerness.The material histories of Black queer artists, academics, activists, and cultural workers in the UK tends to be absent within the broader social and cultural history of the Black Community and the broader LGBTQ+ Community. Sensuous Discoveries builds on Ajamu's practice by foregrounding the smells, tastes, lustful looks and embodied experiences and the way that these form part of a living, playful and sexy archival world that reaches beyond the walls of institutions.

Sensuous Discoveries Saturday School builds on a long and rich tradition of independent learning of artists/free thinkers and marginalised communities taking control of their academic potential. This has included, Saturday Schools aimed at Black communities (UK) Harvey Milk High School (USA) Black Mountain College (USA) and artist-led and DIY art school initiatives such as Open School East, (London) Cannon Hill Art School (Birmingham) School of the Dammed, (London) LGBT Summer School (London).

The curriculum was designed and facilitated by leading practising artists, activists, scholars and cultural makers with a profile of working nationally and internationally. It consisted of four online events which were free to attend and now exist online on 198 CAL's YouTube channel - generating an archive all of its own. The events included a Panel discussion featuring ten artists, scholars and cultural workers from the national and international Black Queer community. This was then supplemented by three *Playshops* - a playful, experimental space that centralises a joyful and pleasurable exploration of an idea - led by Chandra Frank, Rudy Loewe and Ajamu X and Mattie Loyce who ran the final session collaboratively.

PANEL DISCUSSION



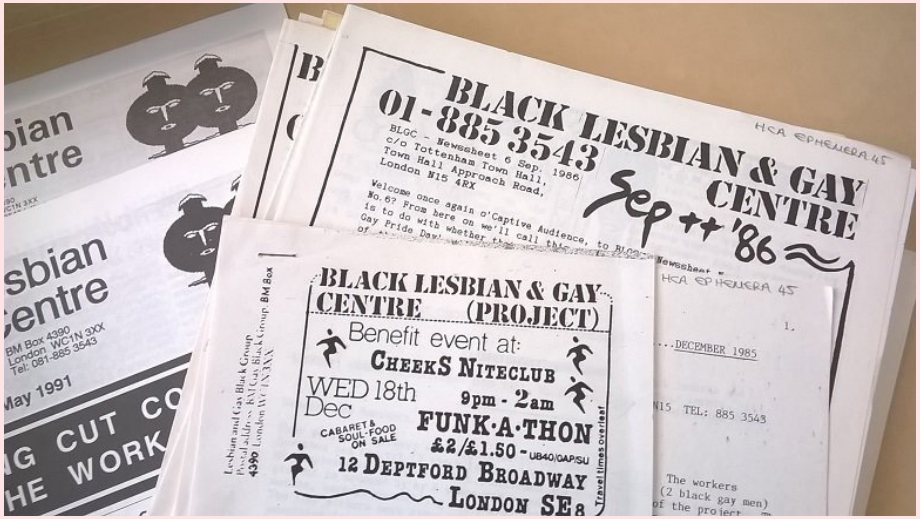
AJAMU X

"IF THE ARCHIVE IS SOMETHING THAT HOLDS MEMORIES, THEN BLACK BODIES, OUR NIPPLES AND ARSES AND DICKS, VAGINAS AND HOLES ARE ALSO ARCHIVES BECAUSE THEY HOLD MEMORIES.

WHAT I KEEP COMING BACK TO IS HOW DO WE NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE BODY IN TERMS OF THE ARCHIVAL WORK THAT WE DO?"

VERONICA MCKENZIE

"I remember at one of our parties, sitting on the stairs and then going down to look into the room and everyone was rubbing up and down. And there were two women dancing together. And I said to my mum, why are there two women dancing together, there are loads of single men that they could dance with. And she said *'mind your business'* And I was like, *'okay'*, and I watched them dancing. And when they pulled away from each other when the record stopped, they pulled away so slowly. And I saw a look between them. And that look was desire. And I realised that that's what I wanted in my life. And it's something that's always stayed with me. That kind of pure intention in that moment to be seen and to be reflected in each other's eyes."



"I started making a documentary about the Black Lesbian Gay Centre project, which led me to archives. And I felt so unwelcome. And I also realised that actually, what was happening is that our materials, our pictures, our histories, in a sense, had been put into these institutions. And now we were trying to get access to them, and sometimes feeling very uncomfortable in getting access to these materials... But part of that process was also building an understanding of the value of what we already had, so that we had to look not to the institution, but within the community to know that we already had our history here. We already have enough. We just need to disseminate that information. We need to tell more people about it."

"And the way I look at it is that the institutions need our archives, they need our materials, they need black queer material, they need feminist material they need working class material because that revivifies those institutions that gives them currency, and in doing so, we divest ourselves of the information of all the stuff that we hold within our community. It can be a problematic relationship."

WIGBERTSON JULIAN ISENIA

"My grandmother was a black woman who had to sell fish door-to-door to make money. And since this did not bring in enough money, my grandmother had a large group of women around her who supported each other in a homosocial way as friends. Together, they also played *Bon Ku Ne*. A Curaçao variant of bingo, in which three Tarot cards are stuck on a piece of cardboard. On each cardboard, are three cards, each with its own number. Twenty rounds are then played. After twenty rounds, you get a new card, the game moderator calls out the names of the pictures plus the corresponding numbers. When all the three cards have been called, you shout '*Bon Ku Ne!*', translated as 'good with them', thus, Bingo loudly in the room.

The women pay 25 cents to play, you can win soap, food, etc. So it's a low cost, and fun way to buy things for the household. *Bon Ku Ne* was thus a way of survival for black women who were not supported by the state or society at large. They were not always eligible for loans or forms of state support, and so created their own structures and institutions to make it through the day. This also meant taking care of each other's children or cohabitating to save money. These forms of interdependence and homosociality were constantly criticised, condemned and seen as queer by pointing to a gambling addiction, but failing to consider the materiality of such homosociality. But more critically, these forms of homosociality were also intermingled with homosexuality, in descriptions where women who loved women took care of the children of others.

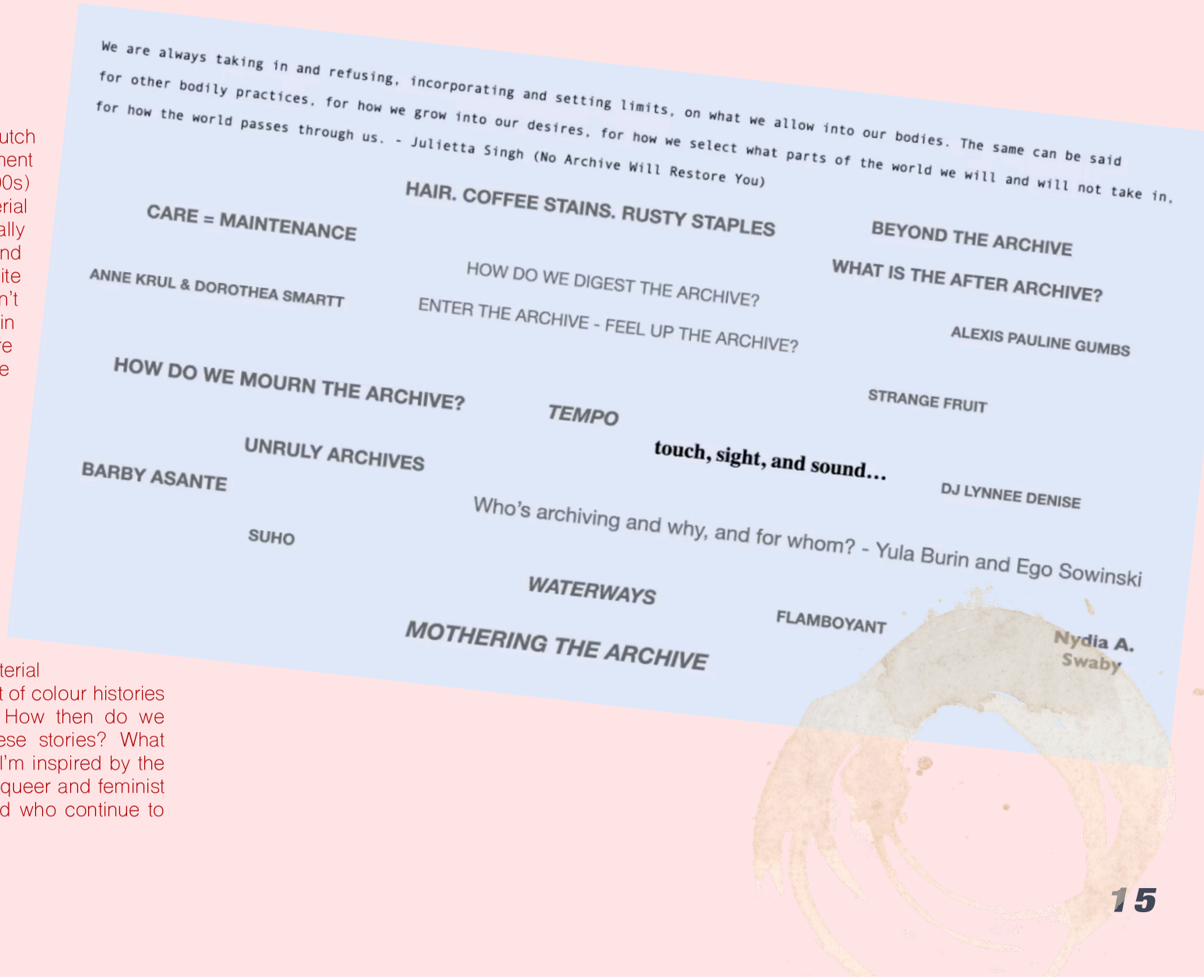
In my research, I traced the appearance of the term *kambrada* in the Dutch colonial archives by looking at the first three known sources that cite *kambrada* relationships in Curaçao society, and these three books appear between 1882 and 1923. The term *kambrada* can be translated as a *comrade* in English, *zami* in Caribbean English Creole and *mati* in Suriname's Sranan Tongo. The Caribbean terms *zami* and *mati*, like *kambrada* can refer to a non-sexual female or male companionships and female erotic relationships of the same sex (this is also something that professor Gloria Wekker writes about). I argue that through these three works that I found, it is possible to glimpse some crucial dimensions of women's lives that these male writers wrote about, despite their colonial narrative.

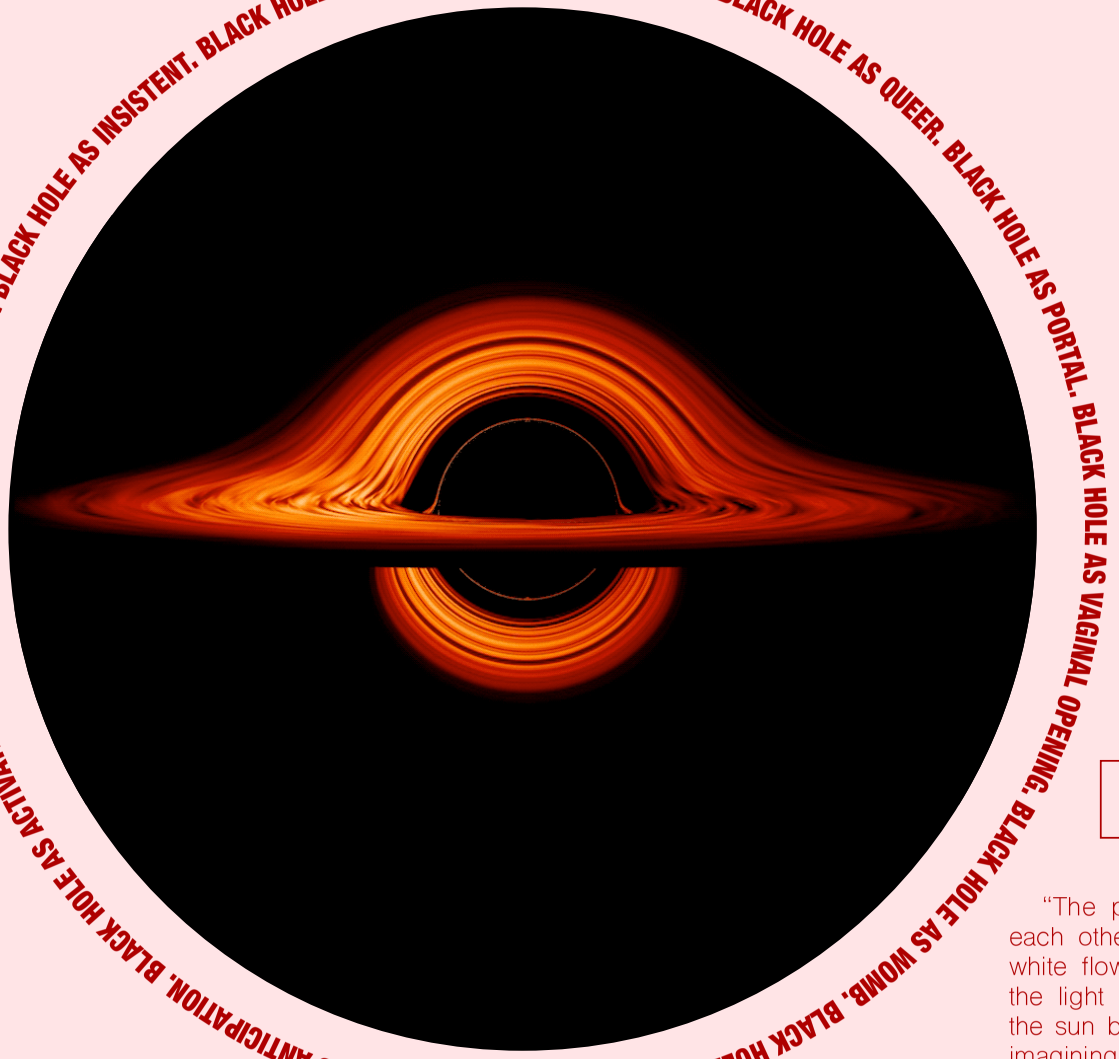
Two insights follow from the analysis of the descriptions of *kambrada* relationships in the colonial archives. First, one cannot conceptualise from these descriptions the sexual acts and practices of these *kambrada* relationships in terms of sexual identities, such as lesbian identity. The verb *tener kambrada*, to have *kambrada* relationships, implies a conceptualisation of sexuality that points to behaviour: women who have a *kambrada* relationship, or choose someone for a *kambrada* relationship, and these authors do not articulate these practices in terms of sexual identity. Second, the descriptions of these relationships did not make a distinction between homosociality and homosexuality. Also, women engaging in *kambrada* relationships aided each other financially by raising children together. So these kinship accounts provide multi-dimensional insights into these women's relationships in which questions of race, gender, class, sexuality, and colonialism intersect."

CHANDRA FRANK

"When I came to the history of the Dutch Black, Migrant and Refugee (BMR) Movement (active between the late 1970s and early 2000s) and started working with BMR archival material and stories, I realized the need to think critically about what it means to think with queer and feminist of color histories residing in white feminist archives. So much of this history isn't indexed or filed, and yet it's homed within this large white feminist collection. There are so many ways in which BMR histories are institutionally disappeared.

I wanted to dwell with the unruliness of archives and think about what slips through the official processes of categorization. How do we orient towards mess? Where does messiness take us? A stray hair, coffee stains, rusty staples. Archival experimentation opens up potential new stories and worlds within these material encounters. We know that queer and feminist of colour histories are necessarily fragmented and scattered. How then do we think about care and maintenance for these stories? What does maintenance work look and feel like? I'm inspired by the intergenerational efforts of Black and brown queer and feminist communities who have done this labour and who continue to invite us to think about care practices."





KAT CHEAIRS

"The people who lived here must have loved themselves and loved each other. Laughter happened here, the floor was swept, the wall had white flowers, the dust from their skin, reconstituted and rearranged as the light comes in from the window. A child stood at the window with the sun beaming across their face. They looked up at the trees and stars imagining elsewhere everywheres. The black hole is emitting, reconstituting, rearranging, encrypting, decrypting. Sounds like blackness behaving like queerness. The material, the metaphysical, the ancestral, the historical and ahistorical, the archive of the entire universe is held in that everywhere. Does that mean *I* am the archival everywhere? Are *we* the archival everywhere? Is this blackness a point of origin by which I/we can understand ourselves in relation to the archive with a capital A?"

COURTNAY MCFARLANE

"On October 31 2017 Ajamu gave a talk at OCADU, Ontario College of Art and Design University here in Toronto as part of the Black Love Matters un-conference organised by our friend Brandon Hay, and the Black Daddies Club. It was called Radical Black Queer Joy: the Entanglement of Art and Activism and it featured Ajamu and also a Jamaican born, Toronto based professor and global artist Honor Ford-Smith from York University. Ajamu shared his artistic work, he shared the history of the rukus! archives and quite a few images from the rukus! archive. Honor talked about black Canadian artists whose practices engage activism, with a focus on the work of Anique Jordan, and the notion of embodied archives; the understanding of the body as archived with the documents and records internalised and stored within the body, memories and individuals. It is an archive of orality, it's an archive of memory, not about simply objects and physical ephemera.

So you know how when you go to a talk, there's always a post-talk talk? This is an image from the post-talk talk. Brandon Hay in the bright plaid jacket was the organiser, and there's some other folks who were part of that talk who were captured in Ajamu's photographic series called Fierce: Toronto. So we were chatting, and I talked about just how similar I felt some of the things that Ajamu had shared were to things that I had, in my own personal archives and I know lots of other folks in Toronto had, and then the youngest member of this little group, David Lewis-Peart, who's an activist and educator here in Toronto, said Courtnay, it's great that you have this information, and Douglas has information that I may get this information, because I know you, but he felt like it was really important for other folks to get a sense of this history. And that those documents that we were holding in Rubbermaid bins in our closets and in boxes under our beds would be useful to be shared in some way.

And then I was invited by Elspeth Brown, who was the chair of the board at the ArQuives, to be part of a public talk with Ajamu when he came back to Toronto for his Fierce: Toronto show. And so on June 5th 2018 we held a talk called Promiscuous Archiving: the Joys of Curating Black Queer Legacies. In preparing my bio for the presenter to read prior to our talk I noticed that there was nothing in my bio that really connected at all to archiving. So just before I hit send I typed in, *and Courtnay is currently working on a black queer archival project-* send! And out it went into the ether, into the world and into the mouth of the person who introduced us. So we had the talk, and then comes the dreaded Q&A, and somebody who was present says, 'oh, Courtnay, could you talk a little bit about your black queer archival project', and I went ahum ahum ahum because there was no black queer archival project. It was a notion, an idea to kind of give me legitimacy on this panel with Ajamu and connect me somehow to archival work. Anyway, the executive director was in the audience and connected with me

From left:
Courtnay McFarlane, Lance T McCready, Ajamu, Brandon Hay, David Lewis Peart, and Nigel Barriffe
(photo by Dean Dori Tunstall)

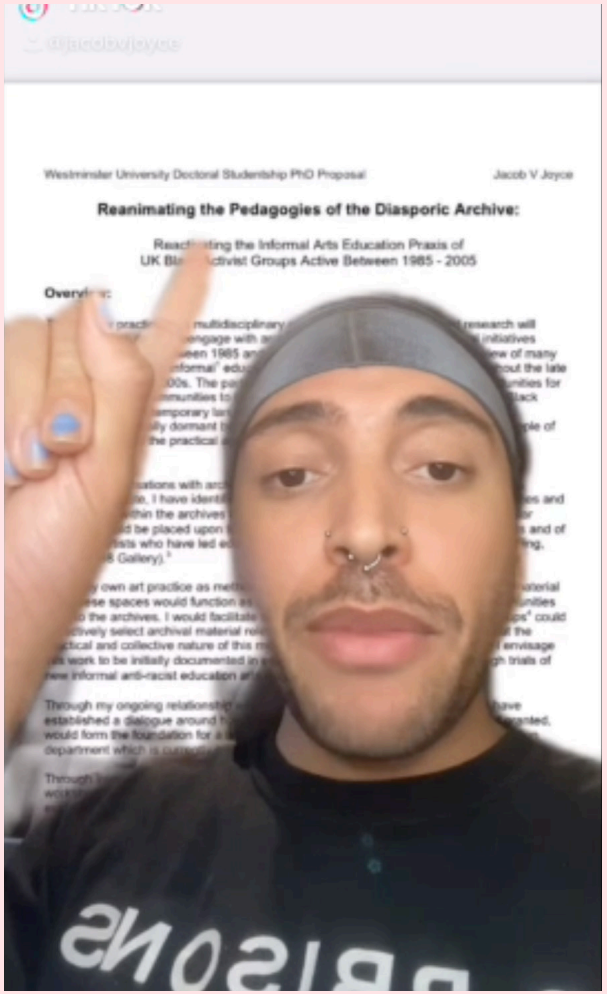
afterwards and said, you know, Courtnay, there's some funding I know is available for these kinds of projects. We work with groups before around this and we think it'd be great for you to work with us on this. So I said, sure. They connected me with the community outreach worker and I created a proposal that was submitted to Myseum for their Intersections festival of 2019 and was successful in getting funding for this project that I had previously no intention of actually creating. So with the funding I was now required to pull together this project and, with some inspiration from Ajamu, the project was called Legacies in Motion

In the exhibition I aim to honour the archival materials which were entrusted to me by about six folks who were active during the 80s and 90s and who entrusted me with these materials. As well as the notion of embodied or internal archives, to incorporate formal conversations between artists and activists about the contemporary moment, as well as the historical moment covered by the exhibition through images and artefacts, through moderated panels, and to incorporate the voices and informal stories that others shared with me as I gave my tour talk. It was two weeks into the exhibition before I actually put together any kind of information cards for the pieces on exhibit. So I ended up creating a tour, I would tour anybody who visited the gallery, and I came up with a story and one of the things that I found was I would be telling stories about a particular image or artefact and then oftentimes folks would add something that was similar or add on to what I did that sometimes was counter to my whole story around this item.

In one of the gallery spaces, we had a table that was full of photo albums that enabled folks to flip through, and there are images that I have of the show with lots of folks at the opening on weekends, sitting around the table flipping through the the photo albums pointing and laughing and telling stories. There's a story that I was told by the gallery director who came upon somebody who was there during the midweek and she could hear sobbing from the other room. So she went in and she found a man who was actually tracing the outline of a photograph in the album of an image of himself and a friend who was no longer with us."

“AND WE DO THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PAGES OF OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY ARE BEING TORN OUT AND BURNED– THE SEEMINGLY INEVITABLE HOSTILITY THAT’S FACED BY PEOPLE, AS CLR. JAMES SAYS, WHO ARE IN BUT NOT OF A COUNTRY.

IT’S JUST ONE REASON THAT WE NEED TO GRASP HOLD OF OUR HISTORY AS A FORM OF SELF PRESERVATION IN A CLIMATE WHERE WE’RE EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND AND TO FIND OURSELVES USING ONLY THE LANGUAGE OF THE MASTER CODE WHICH IS WRITTEN IN A WAY THAT OFTEN ERASES OUR EXISTENCE, OUR LABOR AND OUR VALUE.”



JACOB V JOYCE

ADRIENNE ADAMS

"And importantly, yes, these [black, queer] histories *are* excluded and marginalized in uneven ways. However, these [archival] projects proposed that finding, preserving and displaying more of these individual and communal histories are antidotes to these exclusions. Moreover, another value proposition of these projects is that an increased access to materials and knowledge about black people queer, trans and otherwise, will alter the unbelonging, oppression and inequities that black folks face in a given social or institutional context. And so, taking my work on Kosmetic and Collins, for example, there's a clear scale differential between the granular research on Collins and Cosmetic and the shifting cultures of anti blackness.

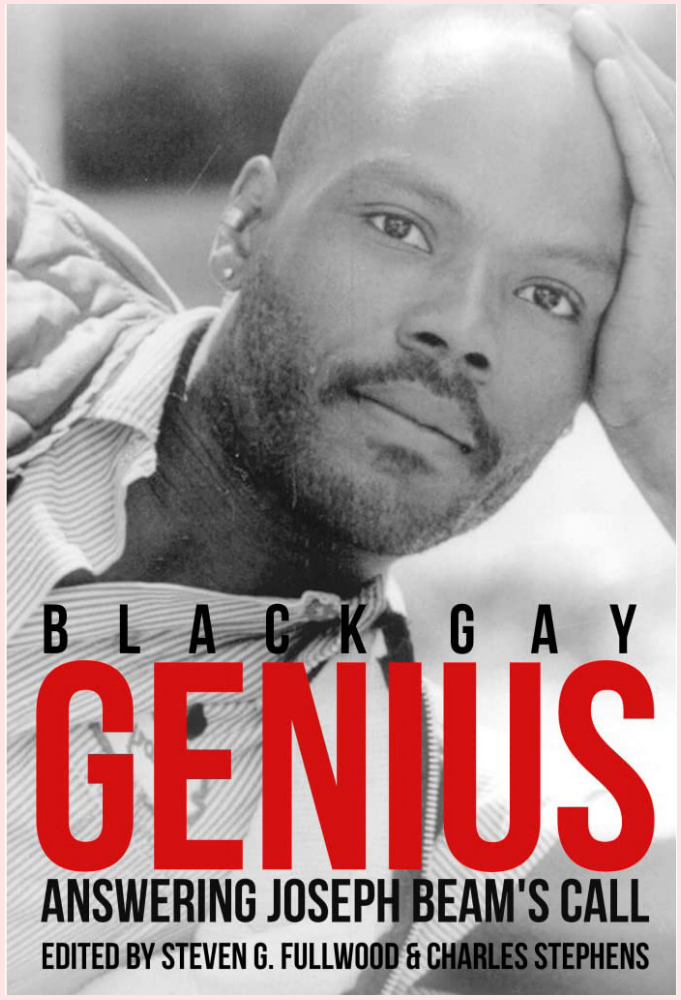
So in other words, the language around the potential impact of black queer archival display and research practice is grandiose and yet the reality is that the scope and feasibility of the project is tiny, is specific. And so the consequence is that the expectations/feelings/responsibilities of the archival research becomes skewed in the process; the project takes on a life that it was never meant to take. Additionally, a labor issue comes in the fold because the task becomes to always find and uncover new black, queer and trans feminist people, rather than reevaluating the systems of valuation that undergird these projects. So this labor schema and history of limited resources, beg questions about the sustainability of such a practice, as well as the pressure to make archival material speak in certain ways.

So what might it mean or look like to start from a place in black queer histories other than the large categories of exclusion to inclusion/invisible to visible/periphery to centre?"

Consuela Cosmetic. Still from *Mirror, Mirror* (1996)

Poet, filmmaker and civil rights activist Kathleen Collins

"WITHOUT FAMILY, I WOULDN'T BE DOING THIS KIND OF WORK."



STEVEN G. FULLWOOD

"I live this Black, queer, archive life inspired by who and what influences me and my work and how they relate to my Blackness and queerness / or my never ending beautiful Black queer self / or I get to be this Black, beautiful queer man. And I'm present, kind and listening.

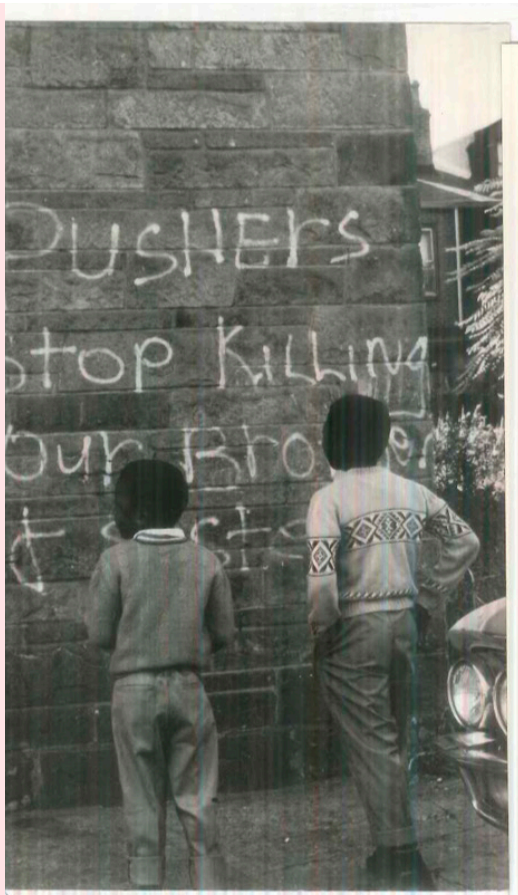
Joseph Beam was the editor of the first Black gay anthology called *In the Life: A Black Anthology* (1986). He died two years after he published that book. And because of his passing and his mother's mourning of him, instead of throwing away all Joe's stuff, Dorothy Beam instead kept her son's papers, moved poet Essex Hemphill into her house (along with his cat), and they finished *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men* (1991).

In addition to that, Dorothy donated her son's papers to the Schomburg Center in 1991 and they were made available to the public in 1992. It was one of the first Black gay collections at the institution.

Through Dorothy and Joe's work, Charles Stephens, executive director of The Counter Narrative Project, conceived *Black Genius: Answering Joseph Beams Call* (2014). We are co-editors of the project, and I published the anthology through my imprint, Vintage Entity Press. This was important to us because we felt that Joe had been lost in the Black LGBTQ narrative. Joe had such a short time on this earth. We felt it was important for us to honor him, to send this love letter to him through this anthology, which included people who knew him, people who contributed to *In the Life*, as well as folks who were inspired by the work of Joe Beam."

MATTIE LOYCE

"I THINK ABOUT ARCHIVAL WORK AS THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. I SEE IMAGES OF MY FUTURE IN THE PAST, OR SEE THE PAST AS THE PRESENT. AND ALL OF THE ARCHIVE IS BEING ABSORBED IN THE PRESENT AND WILL INFORM OUR FUTURE UNDERSTANDINGS AS WELL. *I LOOK TO THE ARCHIVE AS A FORTUNE TELLER, A HISTORY BOOK AND A MIRROR IN REAL TIME. A WORLD OF INFINITE POSSIBILITY, IMAGINATION AND RESONANCE."*



PLAYSHOPS

THE AFTER ARCHIVES
CHANDRA FRANK

Chandra Frank's interactive session, invited participants to collate into a collective Google Doc and work with any archival materials related to food, pleasure, and survival skills including family recipes and queer auntie wisdoms related to preservation, fermentation, or any other recipes related to food joys we might want to indulge in during apocalyptic times. The session also explored the relationship between pleasure and archives. What queer stories, ephemera and materials does your archive hold on pleasure? How can we use these stories to explore intimacy and kinship? What and who do we want to think and sense with? Finally, the participants shared and discussed survival skills that might help us through the end times (growing things, seeding things, tying things, making

When a woman has a new born child, she should be bathed in boiled rose petals and water. In the shower, the woman sits on a chair and the warm water is poured over her. Then, she lays in bed and balls of cotton with 'alcanfor' should be put on the belly, as to favor shrinkage of skin. A 40 day rest is due, and really really really: no stairs. (Also, tie a red string around the wrist of the baby, so it absorbs 'el mal de ojo'.)

When you want to repel bad weather, insert a knife in the garden.

A todos los niños hay que tronarles el empacho.

Preserve Lemons:

6 Meyer lemons or sweeter lemons work best
Kosher Salt

Rinse and scrub clean the lemons. With each lemon, cut off any stems. Cut off 1/4-inch from the tip of the lemons. Cut the lemons lengthwise in half, but keep the lemon attached at the base, do not cut all the way through. Then make another cut the same way, as if you were cutting the lemons into quarters, but not all the way through.

Open up lemons and sprinkle them with kosher salt - add them all to jar

Let lemons sit for a week and shake jar repeatedly

After a week add olive oil and herbs/peppers etc - wait for 3 weeks!

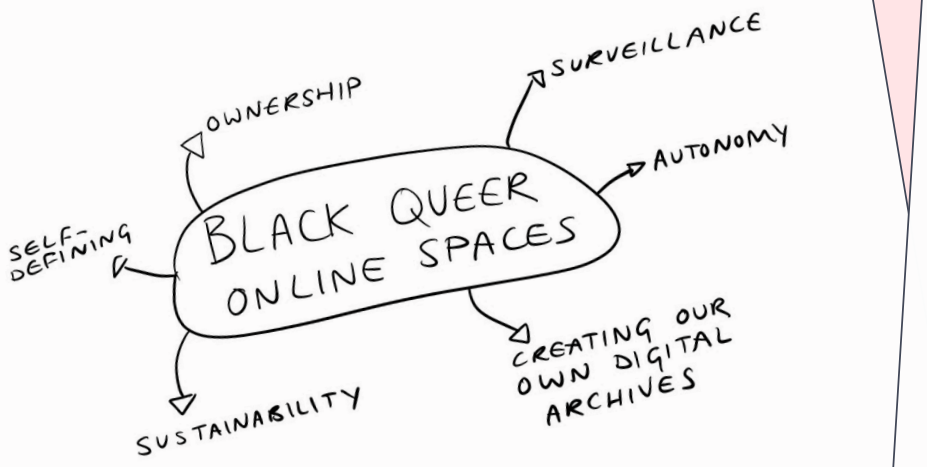
"I THINK ESPECIALLY THE TECHNIQUES OF PRESERVATION AND FERMENTATION, ARE REALLY INTERESTING, BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING THERE ABOUT HOW WE CONSERVE AND HOW WE THINK ABOUT THE LONGEVITY OF FOOD AS WELL AS THE DIFFERENT PROPERTIES THAT PRESERVATION AND FERMENTATION BRING TO US AND IT'S SOMETHING THAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM OTHER PEOPLE. I THINK THE FIRST TIME THAT I LEARNED ABOUT FERMENTATION AND PRESERVATION WAS FROM MY SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN GRANDMOTHER AND SHE WOULD ALWAYS MAKE MANGO CHUTNEY OR CHILIES OR DIFFERENT WAYS OF PRESERVING THINGS IN THE KITCHEN. SHE WOULD LET THE MANGOES RIPEN A LITTLE BIT IN THE SUN AND SHE HAD ALL THESE DIFFERENT WISDOMS AROUND WHAT TO DO WITH DIFFERENT SPICES OR SEEDS. SO I THINK THAT WAS MY FIRST INTRODUCTION. AND NOW DURING THE LAST YEAR I THINK EVERYBODY HAS SEEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA, PEOPLE ARE BAKING BREAD AND FERMENTING THINGS AND WHAT'S INTERESTING TO ME IS THAT A LOT OF BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES HAVE ALWAYS HAD THESE KINDS OF SKILLS IN THE WAY THAT THEY APPROACH THE KITCHEN AND LIFE AND PRESERVATION."

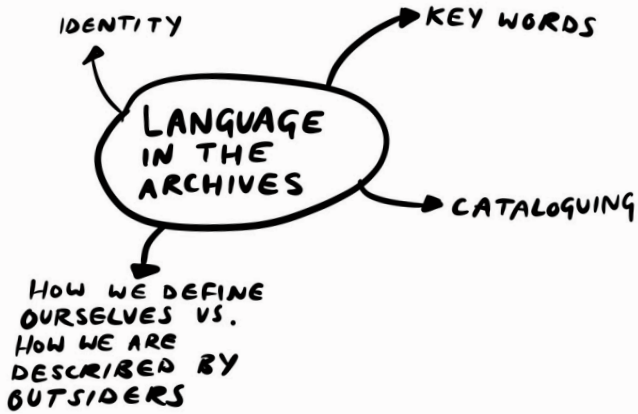
INTO THE ETHER
RUDY LOEWE

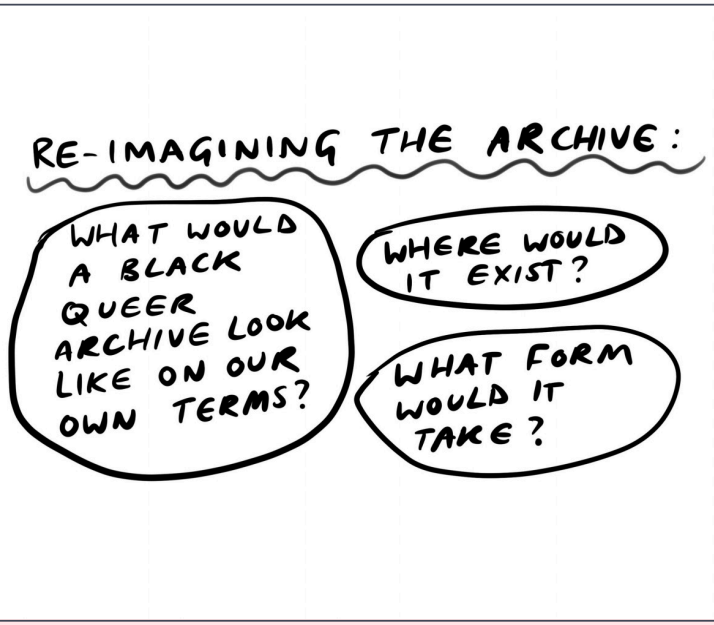
Rudy Loewe's Playshop titled *Into The Ether: A Black Queer Archive* opened space for participants to think together about different experiences with Black queer archives & online spaces. Led by Rudy Loewe's experience as an archivist, as well as other examples like Lubaina Himid's *Thin Black Line(s)*, participants were able to gather together words, feelings, (re-)imaginings and other creative responses to the idea of why a Black queer archive is important and what it might look and feel like to build it from a Black queer perspective.

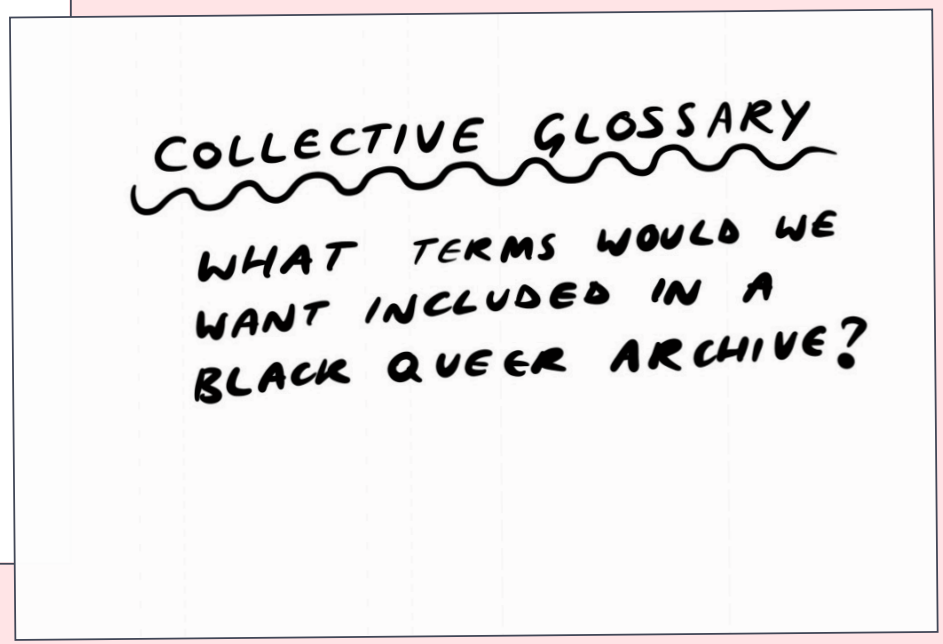
Poem by Jacob V Joyce written during Rudy Loewe's Playshop

Our archive is a spaceship leaving Babylon
Our archive is moving mountains of history
to reveal new suns on the horizon
Our archive is pregnant with its own future
Our archive is flirting with you, making eyes at you
and you want to kiss that archive
open mouth, licking the juice that dribbles down from your union.
Our archive is breaking the law
Our archive doesn't give a fuck about those laws
Our archive is screaming in flames that eat up silence
and burn up noise complaints
Our archive is transforming, transitioning,
transgendering, transsexual sex partying
Our archive is late for work
bored of work, belligerent at work
Our archive is on holiday
it will be back when capitalism is not looking
just to steal stationary and use the free Wi-Fi
Our archive is cruising
It's in the alley behind the club
sucking dick and telling lies
Our archive is pretending to be an institution
putting on a posh accent and talking through its nose,
"Hello! I am the Important Archive
of Extremely True and Historically Notable Events.
No running in my halls!
Show me your passport immediately!"
Our archive is lost but grounded in not knowing
Our archive doesn't use Google Maps
or paper maps, or satellite GPS tracking
Our archive is a spaceship, kinship, mothership
Our archive doesn't know its father
it was raised by lesbians and faggots.
Our archive is not interested in setting a good example
Our archive is offering you cheap thrills and escape
Our archive will not be a learning experience for you
You can educate yourself
In fact, our archive is closed to anyone who refuses to educate themselves.
Our archive has a trashy tattoo on its ass that says *NO FREE RIDES.*


BLACK QUEER ONLINE SPACES
OWNERSHIP
SURVEILLANCE
AUTONOMY
SELF-DEFINING
CREATING OUR OWN DIGITAL ARCHIVES
SUSTAINABILITY


LANGUAGE IN THE ARCHIVES
IDENTITY
KEY WORDS
CATALOGUING
HOW WE DEFINE OURSELVES VS. HOW WE ARE DESCRIBED BY OUTSIDERS


RE-IMAGINING THE ARCHIVE:
WHAT WOULD A BLACK QUEER ARCHIVE LOOK LIKE ON OUR OWN TERMS?
WHERE WOULD IT EXIST?
WHAT FORM WOULD IT TAKE?


COLLECTIVE GLOSSARY
WHAT TERMS WOULD WE WANT INCLUDED IN A BLACK QUEER ARCHIVE?

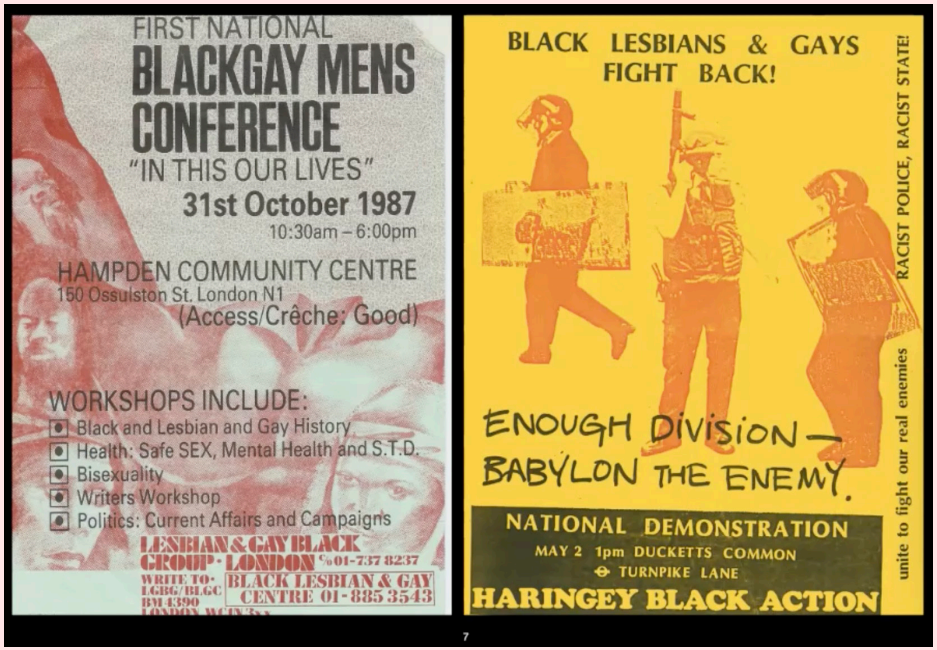
ARCHIVE TO ARCHIVE
MATTIE LOYCE + AJAMU X

The Playshop held collaboratively by Ajamu X & Mattie Loyce titled *Archive to Archive* shared conversations, archival images and experiments in abstract auto-ethnographic documentary filmmaking, encouraging discussion around what an archive not only looks like, but how it feels, smells and moves. The session generated conversation and ideas around what decentering institutional frameworks might be, and considered what happens when the archival world touches us, inhabiting and embodying its own sensual materiality.

Stills taken from Mattie Loyce's moving image works

"AND SO A LOT OF OUR THINKING WAS AROUND THIS POINT THAT A LOT OF BLACK AND BROWN AND QUEER WORK STARTS FROM A DEFICIT PARADIGM. AND THERE WASN'T REALLY A CONVERSATION WE FELT AROUND *CELEBRATION*, WHAT WERE WE ALSO CREATING AS A BLACK BROWN QUEERS, IN THE CONTEXT OF OF UK WHAT THEN DOES THIS THING CALLED A BLACK QUEER HERITAGE LOOK LIKE?"

"AND WHAT ABOUT BLACK QUEER HISTORIES THAT ARE INTANGIBLE AND THAT CAN'T BE ARCHIVED. WHAT THEN? WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE? LET'S SAY THOSE EXPERIENCES THAT WE HAVE IN CLUBS AND BARS— IT'S NOT JUST HOW PEOPLE ARE DRESSED, IT'S WHAT ARE THE *SMELLS* OF THOSE BODIES? THOSE *DANCE* MOVES? THE *MUSIC*..."



Images from the rukus! archive

CONTRIBUTORS

Adrienne Adams

Born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, Adrienne Adams (they/them) is a Ph.D. student in American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. Utilizing oral histories, mapping software, and archival research, their doctoral research seeks to investigate and archive Black Trans Angelenos' local and international information networks in the late 20th century. Prior to entering USC, they served as the 2018-20 Emerging Arts Professional Fellow at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Adams' work has been supported by grants and fellowships from the Ford Foundation, Point Foundation, and Elton John AIDS Foundation. Their publications appear or are forthcoming in American Quarterly, the Oxford African American Studies Center, and the Nomadic Archivist Press. They have spoken at the London Metropolitan Archives, Whitney Museum of American Art (NYC), Broad Art Museum (LA), and Cleveland Museum of Art.

Kat Cheairs

Katherine "Kat" Cheairs is a filmmaker, educator, curator, activist and community artist. Kat's areas of interest and research include: Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) histories in HIV/AIDS; quantum Black futurity, Black feminist/ womanist theory; visual culture; media arts therapy; community arts and social practice; and, critical race theory in art education. Ms. Cheairs is co-curator of Metanoia: Transformation Through AIDS Archives and Activism, an archival exhibition focusing on the contributions of Black women, transwomen of color, and women of color HIV/AIDS activists from the early 1990s to the present.

Kat is the producer and director of the documentary, Ending Silence, Shame & Stigma: HIV/AIDS in the African American Family. Kat's current film projects include Voices at the Gate and In This House, which explores HIV/AIDS narratives through the Black body. Kat has presented on panels at the Tribeca Film Institute, BAM, Pratt Institute, The New School, New York University, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Aperture Foundation, and UnionDocs. Ms. Cheairs holds a Master of Fine Art in Film and Television Production from the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts at Chapman University. Kat serves on the Archive Committee for Visual AIDS.

Chandra Frank

Chandra Frank is a feminist researcher who works on the intersections of archives, waterways, gender, sexuality and race. Her curatorial practice explores the politics of care, experimental forms of narration, and the colonial grammar embedded within display and exhibition arrangements. Chandra holds a PhD from the Department of Media, Communications, and Cultural Studies with an emphasis on queer and feminist studies, from Goldsmiths, University of London. She has published in peer-reviewed journals and exhibition catalogues, including Feminist Review, the Small Axe VLOSA catalogue, The Place is Here publication and the collection Tongues.

She recently co-edited a special issue on Archives for Feminist Review. Chandra's dissertation and book project looks at the everyday experiences of the transnational feminist and queer Black, Migrant and Refugee Movement in the Netherlands during the 1980s and the role of the archive therein. Currently, Chandra is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Charles Phelps Taft Research Centre at the University of Cincinnati.

Steven G Fullwood

Steven G. Fullwood is an archivist, writer, amateur photographer and filmmaker. He is the co-founder of the Nomadic Archivists Project, an initiative that partners with organizations, institutions, and individuals to establish, preserve, and enhance collections that explore the African Diasporic experience.

Fullwood is the former head of the Manuscripts, Archives & Rare Books Division at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. He is also the founder of the In the Life Archive, a project to collect, preserve and make available to the public materials produced by and about LGBTQ people of African descent, housed at the Schomburg Center.

Fullwood's published works include Black Gay Genius: Answering Joseph Beam's Call (2014) and Carry the Word: A Bibliography of Black LGBTQ Books (2007). He is a regular contributor to the podcasts, In the Telling, which explores

the experiences of the Black global family, and The American Age, a half-hour discussion framing the political as personal through the eyes of a philosopher, an art critic and coffeehouse wit.

Wigberston Julian Isenia

Wigbertson Julian Isenia is a Ph.D. candidate of cultural analysis at the University of Amsterdam. His project, "Sexual Citizenship in the Dutch Caribbean" in collaboration with the University of Curaçao, centres on the concepts of gendered and sexual citizenship beyond their legal conceptualization in Curaçao and Bonaire through an analysis of cultural articulations and practices such as archival collections, literature, theatre, and cultural performance.

He co-curated the exhibition "Nos Tei" (Papiamentu/o for we are here or we exist) at IHLIA LGBT Heritage (2019), a response and addition to the exhibition 'With Pride' by IHLIA (2018–2019). He co-edited the special issue "Sexual politics between the Netherlands and the Caribbean: Imperial entanglements and archival desires" (Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies, 2019). His article, "Looking for Kambrada: Sexuality and social anxieties in the Dutch colonial archive, 1882–1923," received an honourable mention for the Gregory Sprague Prize. His latest article appeared in the Routledge Companion to Sexuality and Colonialism.

Jacob V Joyce

Jacob V Joyce is an artist, educator and researcher with a community facing practice that amplifies historical and nourishes new queer/anti-colonial narratives. Their work is grounded in afrofuturist world building and includes workshops, murals, illustrations and performance art.

Rudy Loewe

Rudy Loewe (pronouns they/them) is a visual artist and arts educator engaging in critical social issues through painting and drawing. Their practice interrogates what has become truth in the collective memory, envisaging alternate futures that centre Black queer and trans experience.

Alongside their collaborator, Jacob V Joyce, Rudy was the Early Years Artist-In-Residence at the Serpentine Gallery for 2020. In 2021 Rudy became a PhD candidate at the University of the Arts London to research Black power and British colonial legacies in the archive through painting and drawing.

Mattie Loyce

Mattie Loyce is an interdisciplinary artist / curator / community advocate born and raised in San Francisco. A large focus of her art practice is socially engaged work that she develops through mutual relationships within communities she is connected to. She centers her work on engaging socio-political content that offers space for critique and empowerment for all those that participate. Throughout her career she has made a commitment to amplifying the voices and supporting the lives of people with marginalised identities, specifically people and artists of the African Diaspora, Queer people and People of Colour. Over the last 10 years she has worked across United States, Brasil, the Caribbean, and United Kingdom collaborating and producing community-based projects and artworks.

Mattie is currently working as the Community Development Manager at DISH (Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing), in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, where she is delivering holistic and generative programmes for residents of their sites.

Courtnay McFarlane

Courtnay McFarlane a Jamaican-born visual artist, curator and poet whose work has been published in several African Canadian and Queer anthologies including: Fiery Spirits, and Voices: Writers of African Canadian Descent, Word-up, and Plush. He co-edited, along with Douglas Stewart, Debbie Douglas, and Makeda Silvera the ground-breaking Canadian anthology from Sister Vision Press Ma-ka: Diasporic Juks, New Writing by Queers of African- Descent. His performance poetry was featured in Phillip Pike's 2019 documentary "Our Dance of Revolution"

A long-time activist, he was a founding member of groups from the 80's and 90's such as Zami, AYA Men, The Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention and Blackness Yes, the organizing committee Blockorama at Pride Toronto. These groups and organizations were forerunners in providing voice and visibility to Black LGBTQ issues locally, and laid the foundation for events, organizations and movements addressing those issues today.

In April 2018 he created Legacies in Motion: Black Queer Archival Projects and curated, in April 2019, its first exhibition: See We Yah! See We Yah! - which unearthed and celebrated the political and cultural activism of Black LGBTQ communities in Toronto - was exhibited at BAND Gallery as part of Myseum's Intersections Festival and later remounted at the ArQuives.

In February 2021 he curated the TD Black History Month's Exhibition Joints +

Junctions: PRESENTing Hogan's Alley, which commemorated Hogan's Alley, the disappeared historical Black community in Vancouver, and featured documentary images of Toronto's Black queer and trans dancehall scene by photographer Rose-Ann Marie Bailey-Thomas.

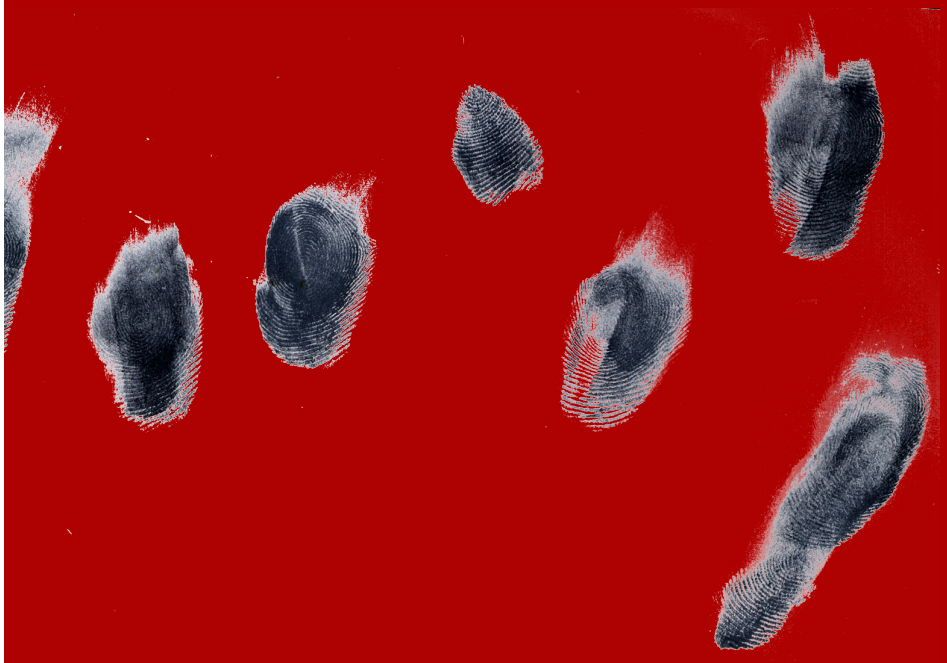
In his other life, Courtnay works in the community health sector where he is currently Manager of Children, Youth and Adult Services at Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre in Toronto.

Veronica McKenzie

Veronica is a history buff, filmmaker and speaker. Her documentary UNDER YOUR NOSE (2017), charting the history of the Black Lesbian and Gay centre, was called a 'seminal work' by the Black Cultural Archives. Haringey Vanguard, her National Lottery funded oral history project, captures the lived experiences of the UK's black LGBTQ+ community in the 70's and 80s, and resulted in an exhibition We Have Always Been Here currently installed at Bruce Castle Museum. Debut feature NINE NIGHTS (2019) won a PAFF Award and was recently released on Amazon.

Ajamu X

Ajamu is a fine art/commercial photographer and archivist, with over 25 years of experience of exhibiting in museums, galleries and alternative spaces worldwide. His work includes portraits and self-portraits , which unapologetically celebrate black queer bodies, the erotic senses, desire and pleasure as activism.

*“THE DIASPORIC ARCHIVE MUST BE A **LIVING** ARCHIVE... SOMETHING THAT IS PRESENT, UNFINISHED, OPEN-ENDED AND ONGOING.”*

Jacob V Joyce