

Queering U.S. History Museums: Heteronormative Histories, Digital Disruptions

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Abstract

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This dissertation responds to the problem of disproportionate representations in U.S. history museums, which currently struggle to collect and narrate histories that accurately reflect the diverse identities of our nation. Exclusions based on race, gender and sexuality have misrepresented U.S. history as predominantly white, male and heteronormative. Drawing from queer theory, intersectional feminist theory and museum theories, I create a conversation that engages both theoretical and practical interventions into the important work of museum representation. I call this framework critical feminist museology. Two main points of praxis arise from my analysis of intersectional feminist and queer theories: 1) reflect critically on the institutions, systems and procedures that structure our pathways and our choices and 2) draw from this conscious perspective to identify pathways in-between the simplistic, binary trajectories of normalcy.

With this guide, the principles of collaboration, reflection and relational responsibility were put into practice through a multi-year community-museum collaboration in Seattle. Exploring digital interventions, this research re-designs the process of narrative production in digital storytelling workshops. The result is a series of evocative, affective stories which fill an essential gap in historical archives while addressing issues of agency in representation. These

digital stories function as a new kind of artifact, one which I call the evocative object, capable of addressing the competing needs to tell broad stories while attending to the diversity of authentic experiences within those broad categories. This project is a unique collaboration between theory and praxis, applying long-standing feminist and queer theories, and re-theorizing from the results of these collaborations. The tensions between institutional and community practices, evident in this collaboration, provide a rich framework for highlighting the social change work that occurs even when we do not meet all of our goals. The challenge to queer what are inherently static, codified histories is met when we utilize third-space feminist framings and queer disruptions of temporality and linearity.

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and the first time I found a community asking questions about power, privilege and representation in the arts. Shortly after, I was introduced to Chicana Feminist Theory which opened up my world. This group of students, led by Dr. Habell-Pallán, made me believe that doctoral research was a real possibility for me. As a white woman, it is a great privilege to be educated by the wisdom and experience of women of color and I will always value that gift.

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Angelica Macklin is a very talented and established media producer, whose feminist foundations are driving innovations in community media. I am so grateful for your support, friendship and for your collaboration in bringing the vision I held to reality.

When I first imagined a digital storytelling project as part of my research, I did not have the skills or connections to easily manifest that vision. Thank you to Prof. Krabill for wholeheartedly supporting the idea, and helping me connect to the practical resources I needed to bring the concept to reality.

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Initialisms

CAC: Community Advisory Committee

DSP: Digital Storytelling Project

DSW: Digital Storytelling Workshop

LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

MOHAI: Museum of History and Industry

NWGLHMP: Northwest Gay and Lesbian History Museum Project

OLOC: Old Lesbians Organizing for Change

QTM: Queering the Museum

WLMAPAE: Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience

Introduction

On a 2013 visit to the U.S. National Archives, I was struck by the display of cultural norms evident in the Archive's welcoming statues. The Archives building is flanked by two impressive stone sculptures that urge us to not only "Study the Past" but maintain that "The heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future." The first statue of a man and the second one of a woman holding a baby in her arms are elevated on pedestals, gazing at the viewers who stop to read their messages inscribed in stone beneath their feet. As the national repository for our nation's history, this is an institution whose cultural structures reflect our social norms, as well as impact the perpetuation of those norms.



Statues outside the U.S. National Archives building. Photos by Nicole Robert.

These figures, elevated above the viewer, are appropriate symbols of the kinds of "past" that are collected and preserved in the major historical institutions of the United States. The important past that they urge us to both study and preserve is dominated by progress narratives featuring white men and the women in their lives. In Western cultural norms, masculinity is

associated with achievement in public and business arenas, with making progress from a less accomplished past to a more civilized present. James Clifford described this Western chronology as linking time with concepts of civilization,¹ a civilization grounded in “progress and modernization,” which leaves non-Western cultures in the timeless past.² This narrative is centered around a particular binary gender construction of male and female, assumes a heterosexual, reproductive pairing of man and woman and succeeds when this pairing performs their socially appropriate roles. Thus the very foundation of the ideals that anchor our National Archives building are also foundational in the construction of a heteronormative society. Centering the ideals of a white, accomplished, gender binary has ensured that the materials and narratives collected and exhibited by U.S. archives and museums have contributed to the idealization of white heterosexuality and all that is contained in that construction. Through selective collecting practices, classification systems and display, museums have been complicit in constructing social ideals that center a heteronormative race, gender and sexuality.

The phrase heteronormative draws from Michael Warner’s introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*³ which calls attention to the heterosexual foundations of Western culture, embedding homophobia and heterosexism into a broad range of social institutions.⁴ The concept of heteronormativity names the normalization of a social structure which recognizes male and female gender categories as absolute and separate, confers specific qualities upon each gender and grounds community life around a family that springs forth from a heterosexual marriage.⁵

¹ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 232.

² Patricia Pierce Erickson. *Voices of a Thousand People: The Makah Cultural and Research Center*. (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln and London, 2002) 16.

³ Michael Warner, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

⁴ Warner, xiii.

⁵ *ibid.*

All those who do not fit within these clear and distinct gender boundaries fall outside of the norm in this system. This includes those whose gender expression blurs the boundaries of male and female, those whose gender identity does not match the identity assigned at birth and those whose romantic or sexual attractions do not neatly align with heterosexuality's opposite gender requirements. As Warner points out, this strictly binary gender norm is intricately intertwined with many other social systems including "racial and national fantasy," social display and "deep cultural norms about the bearing of the body."⁶ The construction of the heteronormative patriarchal family is built upon identities of race, gender and sexuality that implicate and uphold each other. Cultural concepts of normal gender and sexuality have been constructed in alignment with cultural norms of race. Our mythical norms⁷ of gender are constructed around white, upper class bodies that prioritize masculinity and heterosexuality. Thus to speak of the heteronormative, is to speak of the white, masculine, heterosexual hegemony that has been codified in the institutions of our society. Racialized, gendered and sexualized assumptions about who is part of our national histories form the foundations of our cultural institutions and are perpetuated by U.S. history museums.

Archives and museums that center the artifacts and narratives of white, heterosexual masculinity have created a problem of identity-based exclusion in U.S. museums. Museum professionals and activists have long grappled with this problem, inspiring many theoretical and practical responses. Considering the diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in our communities, including the stories of all the identities that make up our communities has proven to be a challenge. In many large museums there have been efforts to address broader exhibit

⁶ Michael Warner, "Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet" *Social Text* 29 (1991) 6.

⁷ Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Sex and Class: Women Redefining Difference" *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984,2007) 116.

topics through the temporary installation of exhibits that focus on a particular identity—such as women artists, for example *Elles: Women Artists from the Centre Pompidou* which was on display at the Seattle Art Museum in 2012 and 2013⁸—or tackle the topic of identities in general, for example the 2007 exhibit, *RACE: Are We So Different?*⁹ At the same time, marginalized groups have established their own identity-based museums; examples include the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian,¹⁰ the GLBT¹¹ History Museum¹² and the National Museum of Women in the Arts.¹³ With these interventions in historical narratives occurring in separate or temporary spaces, visitors to large mainstream museums continue to find primarily Euro-centric heteronormative collections and narratives. This approach to inclusion in museums has been both additive—adding in missing information—and fractional—focusing on a single identity. This approach fails to consider how these identity-based exclusions overlap, presenting museum professionals with the daunting task of fitting an ever-expanding rainbow of identities into existing museum archives, programs and exhibits. However, the idea that identities do not operate alone but intersect with each other in dynamic and complex ways—that identities are intersectional—presents new possibilities for solving the challenges of identity-based inclusion.

Intersectional feminist theories provide a framework for addressing the long-standing issues of heteronormative museum practices. Working from queer theory, women of color feminist theory, and museological theory, I argue for a critical feminist museology¹⁴ that flexibly responds to the unique institutional frameworks of individual museums. As a public scholar

⁸ For more information, see <http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/exhibitions/pompidou>

⁹ For more information, see <http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html>

¹⁰ For more information, see <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>

¹¹ GLBT stands for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender

¹² For more information, see <http://www.glbthistory.org/museum/>

¹³ For more information, see <http://www.nmwa.org/>

¹⁴ Museology is the study and theorizing of museums.

working across professional and theoretical terrains, this scholarship is a work that investigates, translates and reframes. My aim to speak to multiple audiences necessarily involves making what is clear to one audience legible to a different audience. I am a museum professional, a community worker, a scholar, a feminist and a teacher. I am a white cisgender¹⁵ queer¹⁶ woman. I ground my practical labors in theory and use the experiences of practice to inform theory. I am in conversation with activists, scholars, museum professionals, theorists and community members. My claims must, then, be legible to multiple audiences. These are audiences that don't often speak to each other and who employ different strategies for both the ways in which they speak and the means of communicating their messages. This document strives to provide theoretical and practical responses to identity-based exclusions in museums that are meaningful and impactful to museum professionals, activists and scholars alike.

Occupying this multi-sited position comes with unique challenges and dangers. The language spoken within critical feminist theories and queer theories calls upon a vast archive of scholarly conversations. Yet, these are conversations largely unknown to practicing museum professionals. Likewise, very few queer or critical feminist theorists have experience with the practical challenges of museum operations. While there are many museum professional training programs in the form of master's programs, there are currently no doctoral museum programs in the United States. The depth of theoretical investigation that doctoral research allows is necessary for thoughtful, long-term changes to be effective in museum work. Still, this is a luxury granted to very few museum professionals. As a museum professional myself, I approach my doctoral research with a true love for, and commitment to, the work of museums. I have

¹⁵ Cisgender is used in this dissertation to name people whose gender identity aligns comfortably with the sex-gender assignment they received at birth.

¹⁶ I use the word queer for my own identity to claim sexual and romantic attractions that fall outside of heteronormative binaries and resist easy labelling.

personally struggled with the daily practical challenges of museum work, and recognize that our efforts to address inclusion must account for these day-to-day choices. At the same time, I believe there is much to be learned by applying queer and intersectional feminist theories to the practices of museum work. The resulting praxis is a rich source of theoretical interventions that can deepen and expand our scholarly endeavors. As such, I strive to make these practice-based discoveries legible within the university systems of scholarly production, through relevant scholarly conversations and peer-reviewed productions. Similarly, my work brings relevant theory to the practical tasks of museum professionals. The danger lies in the fact that these audiences require very different languages of production. For example, the theory of queer failure, which I utilize in Chapter Four, offers a useful framework for understanding both the accomplishments and the shortcomings of our practical museum endeavors. This is a theory with which feminist and queer scholars will be familiar, and a framework of analysis that will be comprehensible and useful to that audience. However, the word failure stands out, writ large as an indicator of deficiency, to museum professionals who must frame museum projects within the language of funders as successful and worth the risk. I use this theory for a complex analysis of things that went well and areas of improvement, but the risk of museum professionals latching onto the term failure as the entire codicil of a complex and dynamic project is significant. As such, both this activist project and this scholarly investigation risk being dismissed as not scholarly enough *and* as not practical enough, depending on the audience. Yet, I embrace these risks as I strive to bring together the practices of museum professionals and the theories offered by feminist and queer scholars.

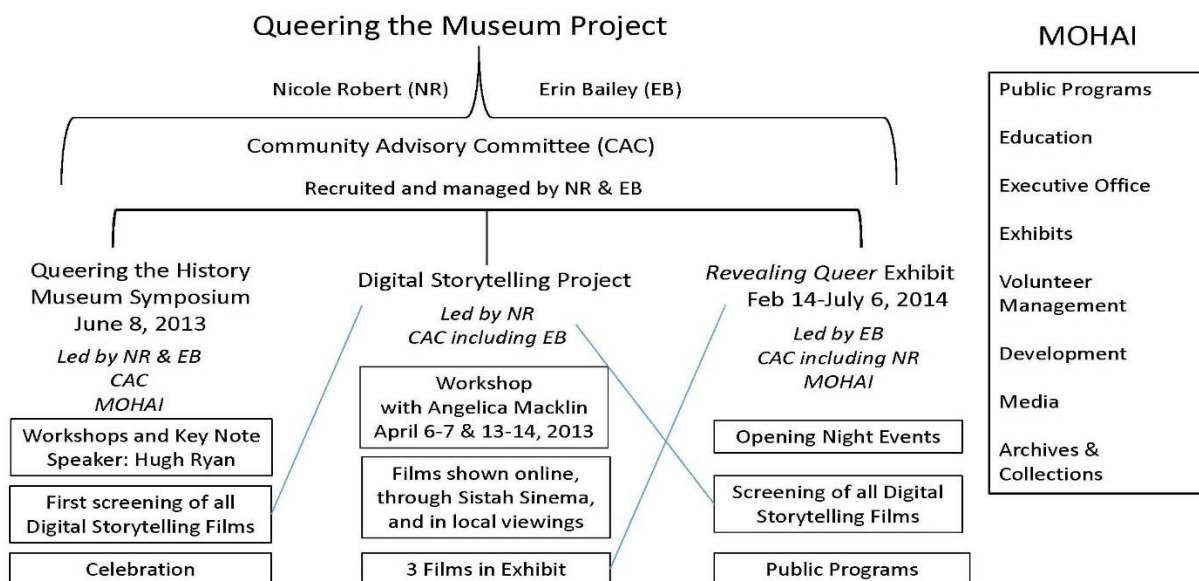
This research is a multi-site and interdisciplinary engagement that unites theory and praxis in a public scholarship project. Beginning from a theoretical framework that is inspired by

scholars and activists, this project moves to an application of critical feminist museology. A collaboration between Queering the Museum project (QTM) and the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle, Washington is the context of this application. In 2012, Erin Bailey was an M.A. student at the University of Washington who saw an opportunity to engage discussion about queer cultural production in art museums when the Tacoma Art Museum hosted *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*.¹⁷ Having completed my M.A. thesis on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender¹⁸ (LGBT) representations in Seattle-area history museums, Bailey and I connected over our common interests. Together, we dreamt of a multi-part project that would continue the discussion about queer culture, shifting our attention to history museums. I drafted a proposal of our vision that included a history symposium, a digital storytelling project and a queer history exhibit. Bailey brought the proposal to the Museum of History and Industry. Operating under the moniker Queering the Museum project, Bailey and I negotiated a multi-year collaboration with the region's largest history museum, the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI).

We committed to a truly collaborative model of project management, working with a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) populated with representatives of local LGBT organizations. The CAC met monthly and oversaw all major elements of the QTM—MOHAI collaboration. As full-time students, we divided the responsibilities for this volunteer project. Throughout, we consulted with each other on major decisions and, even when we were not taking the lead in that moment, were accountable to each other for all work accomplished through QTM. Below is a graphic detailing the division of responsibilities:

¹⁷ For more information, see <http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org/explore/past-exhibitions/hideseek/>

¹⁸ I use the term transgender broadly to encompass all those who identify differently than the sex-gender they were assigned at birth.



Baily and I co-managed the QTM project as a whole, and worked together to recruit and manage the CAC. We co-facilitated each monthly advisory meeting, bringing in our different areas of leadership as appropriate. We both worked with MOHAI to plan the national history symposium, which was hosted at MOHAI on June 8, 2013. This symposium featured Hugh Ryan of the Pop Up Museum of Queer History in New York as our Key Note speaker.¹⁹ Throughout the day, participants attended sessions led by the Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, Social Outreach Seattle, the GLBT History Museum of San Francisco, the Pride Foundation and MOHAI staff.²⁰ The day ended in celebration featuring the Seattle Men’s Chorus performance group Captain Smartypants.

We divided labors between the Digital Storytelling Project, held on April 6-7 and 13-14, 2013 and the queer history exhibit, *Revealing Queer*, on display from February 14-July 6, 2014. Bailey took on the role of curator for the exhibit, in collaboration with the CAC. This meant that

¹⁹ For more information, see <http://www.queermuseum.com/>

²⁰ For a complete program, see <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2013/05/14/symposium-program/>

all major decisions were approved by the CAC, with the CAC weighing in on details ranging from major themes, sub-topics, artifacts and exhibit labels. For this section, I contributed as a member of the CAC, in addition to co-managing the CAC meetings. I led the Digital Storytelling Project in consultation with the CAC. This meant that the CAC supervised development of the application to participate, helped recruit applicants, and selected participants based on those applications. For this section, Bailey contributed as a member of the CAC, in addition to co-managing the CAC meetings. The lines in the graphic above denote some of the overlapping connections between the digital stories and the other elements of the project: the completed films were first screened publicly at the Queering History Museum Symposium. Three of the films were on display in the *Revealing Queer* exhibit, and all eight of the films were screened throughout the opening night celebrations on February 14, 2014.

As a Co-Producer of the QTM collaboration, I worked in conjunction with colleagues and community members to redesign practices of history collection and display that are capable of addressing historical exclusions through ethical representations. Reflecting on the results of these collaborations, my research brings practice back into theory—proposing the evocative object as an interventionary tool.

The struggle that I encounter as a publicly engaged scholar to present my work in a meaningful way to different audiences is not unlike the struggles of activists to build alliances across difference. This is a struggle that has been well documented amongst feminist activists as well as activism within LGBT communities. Even when individuals share a common identity, such as race, they may experience differences in how they express gender, their economic status, who they are attracted to and what resources they have access to. Bridging these differences is an essential step in creating strong alliances that can effectively work towards social change.

The eight queer-identified individuals who participated in the digital storytelling workshop which I produced, as part of the larger QTM project, engaged this struggle on a smaller scale during the 4-day workshop. Brought together for an intensive experience of self-reflection and story production, the only common factor was that they all identified as queer in some way. In the first day, individuals encountered misconceptions about gender, age, pronoun use, racial stereotypes and even sexuality. Through their labors, in pairs and as a group, they found common experiences and by the second day had begun to construct meaningful alliances despite their differences. The first time that their stories were screened together at the Queering the History Museum Symposium in 2013, the filmmakers and audience alike felt the palpable connections between, not just the stories, but the storytellers themselves. Though each video has a unique style, pace and message, the threads of connection that developed during the workshop are clear between the films. In fact, several of the filmmakers have expressed the desire for their short film to be shown with the other short films in order for audiences to understand not only the context of the video creation but also the connections across differences that these films display.

The idea that the films convey additional meanings simply by their co-presentation is an embodiment of feminist theory, museum practice and social change work—in a form that was unanticipated. This is a proposal that objects can be juxtaposed in a meaningful way, a way that collaboratively communicates a message which one object alone could not render. These films, produced collaboratively, reframe significant social categories, such as race, gender and sexuality—a reframing that is visible in a single film, powerful in the combination of films, and dynamic when the relatable content of the films collaborates with viewers to expand the meanings.

Together, their cohesive meaning communicates information which is difficult to speak. The compilation of individual experiences in these movies allows viewers to see several different ways of embodying race, gender and sexuality, to understand how these embodiments impact lived experience, and to see how those experiences are related to institutionalized codifications of identity—codifications that privilege some and marginalize others. These videos play with existing identity categories while communicating the complexity of identities. The use of reframing, of highlighting connections and communicating within the gaps, operates in this compilation in powerful ways. The productive use of gaps, time lags and third spaces—evident in these films—is not new. Emma Pérez,²¹ Chela Sandoval,²² José Esteban Muñoz²³ and Elizabeth Freeman²⁴ all explore these interstitial spaces as resources for change, a concept that I develop in Chapter One. This chapter provides the theoretical grounding for my research, connecting intersectional feminist theories, queer theories and museological investigations to propose a critical feminist museology. Through an analysis of museum exhibits and policies, I demonstrate the flexibility of this critically conscious approach to museum work, specifically investigating its power to respond to identity-based exclusions in museums. Two main points of praxis arise from analysis of intersectional feminist and queer theories: 1) reflect critically on the institutions, systems and procedures that structure our pathways and our choices and 2) draw from this conscious perspective to identify pathways in-between the simplistic, binary trajectories of normalcy. The digital filmmakers collaborated in production of their individual stories, through a workshop that facilitated critical reflection. Working collaboratively, across

²¹ Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), Kindle Edition.

²² Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

²³ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

²⁴ Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

differences, highlights the meanings which are hard to name and illuminates the structural connections which we have learned not to see.

The participants of the QTM digital storytelling workshop translated their lives into visual and emotional narratives. They did this together, supporting each other across barriers. Drawing from theoretical analysis, the QTM digital storytelling project is an intervention that prioritized critical consciousness, relational responsibility and collaboration. Practices were designed around these values, and theoretical discoveries highlight the impact of these tools. Chapter Two explores the application of these theories through the QTM project. I introduce the ways that these values—critical consciousness, relational responsibility and collaboration—were implemented in the QTM-MOHAI collaboration generally, and our queer digital storytelling workshop specifically. Implementation is considered as praxis, connecting practical workshop choices with the theories that informed our work. Utilizing critical reflection in a collaborative digital storytelling workshop, queer storytellers author their own representations, consciously moving between subject and narrator, presenting individual histories that speak to the structural norms of heteronormativity. Historical artifacts were created with digital tools that supported these values. If the heteronormative is linear, progressive, static, simplistic, binary and hierarchical, then digital tools can be a potent resource of disruption. Digital narratives are capable of crossing boundaries—physical and geographical, of containing complexity, invoking affect and building resonance across identity-based differences.

In Chapter Three, I analyze the product of the digital storytelling workshop—a series of individual, personal narratives in a digital audio-visual format. These films exploit the in-between spaces named by queer and intersectional theorists, disrupting simplistic, binary representations that support heteronormative narratives. The affective resonance of the personal

histories creates opportunities for audience-subject connections across differences. This affective connection draws the viewer into narratives that disrupt static notions of identity and highlight connections between personal experiences and the social institutions of religion, family, immigration and education. These films function as historical artifacts that exceed the boundaries of the archive; recording a collaborative experience of film production in its creation and inviting audience collaboration in the impact of the completed film. In between the archive and the repertoire,²⁵ the films function as evocative objects.

Drawing application and theory back together, Chapter Four creates a conversation between the application of critical feminist museology and the theories that guided the work. Specifically considering the goal of queering a museum, I explore the tension between the queer impulse to resist codification and QTM's efforts to expand museum representations of queer lives. Analysis of the methods and impact of queering MOHAI considers the institutional failures of the QTM-MOHAI collaboration, as well as the spaces for queer resistance that those failures contained. Collaborations create potential for shared authority and increased inclusion, but critical consciousness must ground those relationships. We cannot develop interpersonal partnerships outside of the existing normalizing structures of our worlds. We cannot build trust and maintain relational accountability with our collaborators if we blindly recreate processes of exclusion. The processes and histories of the institution absolutely shape the possible impacts of efforts to queer historical representation. Expanding identity-based representation in museums requires that we approach all areas of our work with knowledge of past failures as well as accountable commitments to the relationships that we are building. Working intersectionally

²⁵ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

means working on the systems that shape the work and thinking across functional boundaries. When grounded in critical consciousness, respectful, equitable collaboration is a powerful tool for expanding representation without creating new hierarchies of belonging.

The results of my research hold rich theoretical and practical possibilities for queer, feminist, digital and museological scholars within the academy. There is discovery in the practice, a creation in the process that we would not find in theories alone. Practices can become more powerful when consciously guided by well-constructed theory. The problems of difference are encountered in a multitude of ways both inside and outside of the museum. In this enactment of intersectional scholarship, difference becomes the opening of new possibilities. Digital tools, grounded in collaborative, critically conscious work, can produce the kind of artifacts that are needed to both address and redress the disparities of historical representation that result from heteronormative social and institutional values.

Chapter 1: Critical Feminist Methodologies Engaging Museums

In this chapter, I explore the methods of critical feminist museology, which are applicable to the work of museum professionals in a variety of capacities. I begin by exploring the feminist formulations of method and how a critical feminist approach, in particular, differs from a feminist approach. Working from Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*, I outline the theoretical foundation of this methodology and demonstrate its application in museums. Critical self-reflection is a foundational practice in critical feminist museology; I apply this reflection to myself an individual researcher, locating myself within this research and the development of critical feminist museology. These reflections ground the connections of research to practice, drawing strategies of resistance from queer theorists and intersectional feminists. Finally, I explore the opportunities presented by mapping this critical intersectional approach onto museum spaces.

Feminist Methods

What makes critical feminist museology feminist? Sandra Harding explored the question of a feminist method in 1987, engaging a larger conversation that sought to define a feminist method of research.²⁶ Harding defined a method as a “technique for gathering evidence.”²⁷ She concluded that there is nothing inherently feminist about a particular technique, but rather that the theoretical foundation is what determines both the methods employed and whether the research is a feminist project. This theoretical foundation forms the methodology, which Harding defines as “a theory and analysis of the ‘the special ways in which the general structure of theory

²⁶ Sandra Harding, “The Method Question,” *Hapatia* Vol. 2 No. 3 (Autumn 1987): 19.

²⁷ Harding, 23.

finds its application.”²⁸ Thus the theory selected to ground the research is critical in determining the direction of the research, including the methods applied.²⁹ A feminist project, then, is grounded in feminist theory. Part of what makes feminist thinking unique, according to Harding, is the recognition of epistemologies unacknowledged in other academic fields. She points out that the knowledge systems upon which research is grounded have deep political and moral implications.³⁰ For Harding, feminist research acknowledges the political and moral implications of relying upon one set of knowledge practices over another. In addition, Harding believes feminist research directs a critical gaze at all genders, is grounded in the lived experiences of women, and demands a process of reflexivity on the part of the researcher.³¹ It is this theoretical foundation that directs the feminist researcher towards a particular method. Rather than claiming one method or even one methodology as feminist, Harding concludes that framing a research project with feminist theory will guide the researcher towards the methodology and the methods appropriate for that particular project.³²

To build the methodology for my project, I turn to Chela Sandoval’s *Methodology of the Oppressed*³³ which is grounded in the epistemologies of U.S. third world feminism developed by women of color in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁴ Similar to what Harding describes above, methodology of the oppressed resists attachment to any one method, and also resists a single ideology. Sandoval explains:

²⁸ Harding, 24.

²⁹ Harding, 24.

³⁰ Harding, 32.

³¹ Harding, 32.

³² Harding, 19 and 32.

³³ Chela Sandoval 2000.

³⁴ Sandoval 2000, 10.

The 1970's-80's social movement called U.S. third world feminism shattered the construction of any one ideology as the single most correct site where truth can be represented. Indeed, without making this kind of metamove, any 'liberation' or social movement eventually becomes destined to repeat the oppressive authoritarianism from which it is attempting to free itself.³⁵

Methodology of the oppressed is explicit about its political intention towards the liberation of the oppressed, an objective that is consistent with my desire to intervene in the marginalization of non-normative bodies through current museum practices. This goal is also in harmony with the project of critical feminist museology, which seeks to provide training and technologies to museum practitioners for this same purpose. Acknowledging these political and moral aims, while consistent with Harding's conceptualization of feminist methodologies, aligns my work more closely with critical feminism. Like critical studies, I am committed not just to liberation, but also to grounding that liberatory goal in the deconstruction of cultural knowledge. The term 'critical' also acknowledges this project's scope, which reaches beyond a singular attention to gender and instead advances an approach that operates at intersections of identities.³⁶

Sandoval also sees her methodology of the oppressed as working beyond the limits of feminism's hegemonic model. What Sandoval refers to as '1980s hegemonic feminism' attempted to construct new historical narratives and theoretical bases for the liberation of women.³⁷ But these constructions failed to integrate discussions of racism into feminist theory, and even went so far as to describe the writings of women of color as "mainly at the level of

³⁵ Sandoval 2000, 59

³⁶ This intersectional approach attends to the ways that lived experiences are disciplined through social institutions that regulate power and shape identities. This understanding permits an analysis that sees the formations of race, gender and sexuality as co-constituted and thus responses to exclusions based on identity must begin at this point of systemic constitution.

³⁷ Sandoval 2000, 46-52.

description”³⁸ and dismiss them as failing to make any theoretical contributions towards women's liberation.³⁹ The typologies of feminist thought and action that were named and recognized under this hegemonic feminism created rigid categories which excluded women of color and created oppositions. “Movement activists became trapped within the rationality of its structure, which sublimated and dispersed the specificity of a differential U.S. third world feminist theory, method and practice.”⁴⁰ Sandoval turned to U.S. third world feminists for an “alternative typology” influenced by “struggles against gender domination [and] race, sex, national, economic, cultural and social hierarchies that marked the twentieth century.”⁴¹ In these struggles, subjects that operate on the margins of our social structures developed what Sandoval calls ‘oppositional consciousness.’⁴² In the self-conscious recognition of their position within marginalized spaces, subordinated subjects can transform those very spaces into “effective sites of resistance to an oppressive ordering of power relations.”⁴³ Grounded in this knowledge, Sandoval developed both a “theory and method of consciousness-in-opposition.”⁴⁴

The application of hegemonic feminist theories in museums has similarly failed to effectively move beyond the category of gender alone. Marjorie Schwarzer, for example, applies a feminist approach to museums by reflecting on the kinds of positions in which females are employed.⁴⁵ Hilde Hein, in contrast, uses feminist theories to deconstruct the epistemological

³⁸ Sandoval 2000, 50.

³⁹ Sandoval 2000, 52.

⁴⁰ Sandoval 2000, 53.

⁴¹ Sandoval 2000, 54.

⁴² Sandoval 2000, 54

⁴³ Sandoval 2000, 55.

⁴⁴ Sandoval 2000, 55.

⁴⁵ Marjorie Schwarzer, “Women in the Temple: Gender and Leadership in Museums” in *Gender, Sexuality and Museums* ed. Amy K. Levin (New York: Routledge Press, 2010) 16-27.

foundations of Western museums.⁴⁶ While Hein acknowledges that feminism “makes common cause with various minority, postcolonial, racialized, gendered and multicultural analyses,” her analysis is a deep engagement with issues around gender, and does not consider the ways that gender interacts with race, class, or sexuality.⁴⁷ Barbara Clark-Smith’s application of feminist theory to her work as a curator centers women,⁴⁸ but hegemonic feminist theory falls short of providing Smith with the tools to complicate the concept of women. She wants to imagine her audience as “women of color, lesbian women, women with disabilities, working-class women, and poor women,” but struggles with how to include so many identities.⁴⁹ The application of hegemonic feminist theory in museum spaces has failed to yield the kinds of radical changes that would allow a coalitional framework across marginalized populations and address the intersectional deployments of museum exclusions. Conversations about feminist interventions that are applied to race, gender, *and* sexuality are extremely rare. Even in the context of writings about feminism in museums, texts tend to be focused on gender, or on sexuality, or on race.⁵⁰ One of my reasons for selecting Sandoval’s methodology of the oppressed for critical feminist museology is that it attends to the goals of feminism, but also creates a foundation for this kind of coalitional work that hegemonic feminism has struggled with. Critical feminist museologists can create opportunities for coalition across difference, and locate methods for change in critically reflexive practices of structural recognition, deconstruction, and reformulation.

⁴⁶ Hilde Hein, “Looking at Museums from a Feminist Perspective” in *Gender, Sexuality and Museums* ed. Amy K. Levin (New York: Routledge Press, 2010) 53-64.

⁴⁷ Hein, 56.

⁴⁸ Barbara Clark Smith, “A Woman’s Audience: Applied Feminist Theories” in *Gender, Sexuality and Museums* ed. Amy K. Levin (New York: Routledge Press, 2010) 65-70.

⁴⁹ Smith, 66-67.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the chapters in the book *Gender, Sexuality and Museums* ed. Amy K. Levin (New York: Routledge Press, 2010) as well as the themed editions of the journal *Museums and Social Issues* published by Left Coast Press, Inc. A brief review of art journals reveals this same separation.

Methodology of the oppressed is built upon the “combined insistence” of U.S. third world feminist activists on “a structured theory and method of consciousness-in-opposition to U.S. social hierarchy that is capable . . . of aligning a variety of oppositional social activists with one another across gender, sex, race, culture, class or national localities.”⁵¹ As Catherine A. MacKinnon explains, “Intersectionality as a method does not simply add variables. It adopts a distinctive stance.”⁵² This stance focuses on people and experiences, eschewing homogenous categories of identity for specificity of experience.⁵³ Systems are no longer viewed as objective, static forms, but understood in relation to the dynamic lived experiences of the people who operate within those systems.⁵⁴ This critical intersectional approach to research requires constant evaluation of the both the systems and the experiences of the people impacted by our research.

Differential Consciousness

As this project is centered upon this evaluation of systems and experiences, it can also be thought of as being founded upon consciousness. It is the conscious recognition of the structures of power and the practitioner's place within these structures that enables the practitioner of the methodology of the oppressed to self-consciously “choos[e] and [adopt] the ideological stand best suited to push through its configurations, a survival skill well known to oppressed peoples.”⁵⁵ This practice of critical reflection is essential for, first, being able to recognize the power structures at work and, second, identifying spaces within these structures to resist and

⁵¹ Chela Sandoval, “Dissident Globalization, Emancipatory Methods, Social Erotics” in *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* ed. Arnaldo Cruz-Malave et al (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 23-24.

⁵² Catherine A. MacKinnon. “Intersectionality as Method: A Note.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38:4 (2013) 1020.

⁵³ MacKinnon, 1020.

⁵⁴ MacKinnon, 1023.

⁵⁵ Sandoval 2000, 60.

redefine. Sandoval terms this “activity of consciousness” the “differential,”⁵⁶ “in so far as it enables movement ‘between and among’ ideological positionings . . . In this sense, the differential mode of consciousness functions like the clutch of an automobile, the mechanism that permits the driver to select, engage, and disengage gears in a system for the transmission of power.”⁵⁷ It is this ability to move within the margins that makes the resistance methods of the oppressed such a powerful resource. In order to freely to utilize the best tools for that particular situation and moment in time, we cannot adopt a limited number of possible methods for change. Rather, the conscious deployment of the method which best fits that moment, as determined by the critically reflexive change agent, is essential.

Similarly, critical feminist museology is constructed around the conscious deployment of the methods which best serve the context. Practitioners of critical feminist museology must first critically reflect upon the social structures and cultural assumptions that are at work in our chosen space of service: museums. Creating solutions without first understanding the systemic nature of the problems inevitably means that any methods museum professionals employ will, in some way, recreate the very problems we intend to address. Grounding our practices in consciousness opens up the space of the differential that Sandoval describes. The museum professional, like the driver of the automobile, becomes aware of the structures at work in the “transmission of power” and can choose to “select, engage or disengage gears” in that system.⁵⁸ Without this consciousness, museum professionals may be engaging the transmission of power without realizing it, and in a way that is contrary to their intentions. With an underlying

⁵⁶ Sandoval 2000, 58.

⁵⁷ Sandoval 2000, 58.

⁵⁸ Sandoval 2000, 58.

commitment to “egalitarian social relations . . . [and] seeking the basis for a shared vision, an oppositional and coalitional politics” using this critically reflexive approach creates a space for museum work that doesn’t simply replicate existing hierarchies of power.⁵⁹

Sandoval’s methodology of the oppressed also creates an effective means of recognizing the experiences that people have of living within identities *and* moving differentially between these identities, allowing coalition across differences. She acknowledges that there are “manifold positions for truth: these positions are ideological stands that are viewed as potential tactics drawn from a never-ending interventionary fund, the contents of which remobilizes power.”⁶⁰ Therefore, the deployment of differential consciousness requires practitioners to “stake out and hold solid identity and political positions in the social world” even as they move between and amongst these identities.⁶¹ This approach allows the range of identities experienced in our worlds—and discussed in museums—to be acknowledged and included. At the same time, this approach acknowledges the socially constructed nature of identities and the hierarchies of power that act through and upon identity. Exceptional in its ability to respect difference and avoid codification, oppositional consciousness creates unique opportunities for coalition building. Successful practice of differential consciousness permits “*affinities inside difference*.”⁶² Sandoval cites Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa to make an even stronger affirmation of coalition across difference. Anzaldúa recognized that marginalized peoples, though they may have different ideologies, need not function in opposition to each other.⁶³ Rather, we can recognize our mutual opposition to hegemonic social norms as a commonality which we share.

⁵⁹ Sandoval 2000, 72.

⁶⁰ Sandoval 2000, 60.

⁶¹ Sandoval 2000, 60.

⁶² Sandoval 2002, 26. Original emphasis.

⁶³ Sandoval 2002, 24.

Within this common experience, our varied identities and experiences of those identities can, according to Lorde, provide the creative spark for generating new ways of being in the world, in which each ideological position is “acknowledged and equal.”⁶⁴

Lorde, Anzaldúa, and Sandoval are highlighting the liberatory possibilities of imagined spaces. Being able to imagine experiences and ideologies outside of oppression opens new possibilities for resistance to that oppression. The emphasis of methodology of the oppressed on consciousness and the movement of psychic energy locates its work in the space of the imagination. The imagination as an initial and essential site of resistance is similarly discussed by José Esteban Muñoz in his 2009 book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. Muñoz asserts that the liberatory possibilities of queerness are only accessible when we look beyond the “prison house” of the “here and now” and reach for the as yet only imagined potentiality of the “then and there,” the possibility for another, better world.⁶⁵ This is the place that Native American theorist Paula Gunn Allen references in her statement that “the place we live now is an idea,” an idea that imagines new forms of “identity, theory, practice and community.”⁶⁶ Emma Pérez does just that, applying Sandoval’s differential consciousness to the imagined space of untold histories, utilizing the imaginary as a theoretical tool of historical liberation.⁶⁷ Pérez recognizes that the past, as dominantly narrated, constructs normative classifications that necessarily privilege one truth over others, excluding the experiences of non-dominant voices.⁶⁸ This truth she names ‘the colonial imaginary.’⁶⁹ In naming the centrality of

⁶⁴ Sandoval 2002, 24.

⁶⁵ Muñoz 2009, Kindle Location 115 to 126.

⁶⁶ Paula Gunn Allen, as cited and described by Sandoval 2000, 60.

⁶⁷ Pérez, Kindle Location 97-103.

⁶⁸ Pérez, Kindle Location 189.

⁶⁹ Pérez, Kindle Location 189.

the colonial imaginary, we can also recognize that which is not centered, nor even narrated—what Pérez calls the decolonial imaginary.⁷⁰ This imaginary space, which often does not exist in textual, artifactual formats, is the opening needed to explore the very real, yet intangible, histories of the marginalized. Similarly, the methods of critical feminist museology draw upon the imagined, often intangible, narratives and possibilities in pursuit of socially-just means of transforming museum practices.

Accessing the imagination as a resource allows individuals and communities alike to “[function] within, yet beyond, the demands of dominant ideology.”⁷¹ These spaces within the consciousness become the source for liberatory practices which acknowledge difference while drawing strength from coalition.

The Researcher in Coalition

While critical feminist museology asks museum professionals to practice differential consciousness, I, as a researcher and theorist, also conceive of my own role as that of the differential activist. Harding asserts that feminist research requires a certain reflexivity from its practitioners, assuring that the researcher does not appear as an “invisible, anonymous, disembodied voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests.”⁷² Therefore, it is important for me as the designer of my research to acknowledge my own positions as a white, middle class, queer female museum professional deeply committed to an egalitarian world. While my PhD work has allowed me to immerse myself in the theories of queer and women of color feminist activists, my foundations in museum practice influence my

⁷⁰ Pérez, Kindle Location 202-209

⁷¹ Sandoval 2000, 63.

⁷² Harding, 32.

perspective as I approach the project of critical feminist museology from a loving and reflexive stance. Indeed, my love of museums may even function as an entry into a differential mode of consciousness around museum work. Sandoval, drawing from the work of Roland Barthes, describes a revolutionary love that permits one to see outside of ideology.⁷³ This is love, not in a “Western narrative sense,” but another kind of love— “a love that punctures through traditional, older narratives of love [and] that ruptures everyday being.”⁷⁴ What both Barthes and Sandoval are asserting is that the very feeling of love is so great as to be able to push one outside of ideology and reveal new visibilities and possibilities for change. In my own life, the experience of queer love allowed me to step outside of the restrictive heteronormative expectations of my communities. Once outside of ideology, new possibilities for the formations of family and community become possible. Similarly, by grounding my work in my love for museums, I will practice the reflective critical consciousness that creates space for recognizing ideologies and imagining new possibilities.

I am aware that my critiques of museum practice may appear to place me in opposition with museum practitioners, but I, like Sandoval, seek coalition across difference. In museums, this difference may be present in a variety of ways. Museum professionals work in museums focused on science, children, culture, and histories, and each type of museum has its own set of practices and challenges. In addition, the individual people who work in museums bring not only their own personal backgrounds and trainings to this range of museums contexts, but also their own identity location. I align myself with museum practitioners who are committed to making museums more accessible, more inclusive, and more responsive to the needs of our communities.

⁷³ Sandoval 2000, 142.

⁷⁴ Sandoval 2000, 142.

Rather than come to practitioners with a prescription for change, my methodology guides them through a choice of methods appropriate to each context. In addition, I approach my research as a member of the larger queer community, and all the identities and communities that may encompass.

A critical feminist approach to research requires that I create space for, and critical consciousness of, all those that may be impacted by or choose to participate in my research. Indeed, the goals of moving museums toward truly inclusive practices cannot be achieved without the mutually respected involvement of museum professionals, community members, and researchers alike. As Shawn Wilson explains in his book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, relationships shape our realities.⁷⁵ Holding ourselves accountable to those we create and maintain relationships with is an essential practice for research that holds inclusion and social justice as its goals.⁷⁶

Research in Practice

Oppositional differential consciousness is both a theory *and* a method,⁷⁷ and thus effective deployment requires conscious reflection *and* application. I have chosen a project that allows both the theorization of new forms of museology as well as the application of those theories to a particular project. This dissertation is grounded in a specific community-museum collaboration formed through an organization that I co-founded, Queering the Museum (QTM). QTM's multi-year collaboration with the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) forms the specific context of the practical applications both theorized and explored in this collection of

⁷⁵ Shawn Wilson. *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Fernwood Publishing, 2008) 7.

⁷⁶ Wilson, 7.

⁷⁷ Sandoval 2000, 71.

essays.

As a participant researcher, the specific methods I deployed—explored in detail in the following chapters—grew from a self-reflective consciousness that responded to the situation, context, and goals of the project in its various phases. For example, digital tools were adopted for their unique abilities to address lost narratives and ownership of representation, but the use of a digital tool alone does not ensure that it suits the methodology. The deployment of the tool must be shaped in such a way that it attends to the goals of equality and liberation, a concept that will be detailed in the following chapters. This flexible approach to the selection of methods, though grounded in the methodology of the oppressed, is also in alignment with Harding’s interpretation of feminist research. She asserts that remaining open to a wide array of possible methods engages the researcher in “the difficult and sometimes painful--if always exciting--processes of learning how to see and create ourselves and the world in the radically new forms demanded by our feminist theories and practices.”⁷⁸

Up to this point, I have proposed a critical feminist museology that draws upon Sandoval’s methodology of the oppressed for its methodological framework. The differential consciousness that Sandoval details in her book creates ideational resources for social change.⁷⁹ As a researcher, I employ differential consciousness in both the selection and use of specific methods for research, maintaining respectful and reflexive relationships through the research process. In addition, I propose critical feminist museology as a theoretical and practical intervention that museum professionals can apply to their work.

Critical Feminist Museology: Relating to Queer

⁷⁸ Harding, 32.

⁷⁹ Sandoval 2000, 130.

As this dissertation specifically addresses queer representation in museums, it is necessary to consider how queerness operates within the proposed critical feminist museology. I approach the concept of queer as both an identity and as an idea. Throughout the course of my research, I frequently encountered those for whom the term ‘queer’ was wholly derogatory, often deployed preceding an act of violence towards those who appeared gender non-conforming in ways that have been coded to mean not heterosexual. Yet many, including myself, have reclaimed ‘queer’ as a broad category that can encompass all those who fall outside of normative ideas of gender and sexuality, while at the same time calling into question those same normative categories. ‘Queer’ also functions as a body of theory that seeks to disrupt static notions of definition around identity, language, and law.⁸⁰

In addressing the lack of representation around queer identities, museologists have turned to queer theory with both hesitation and delight. In “Theorizing the Queer Museum,” Robert Mills reflects that if queer theory refuses meaning, then “a ‘queer museum’ would constitute an impossibility, or at least a paradox.”⁸¹ Yet Mills is unsatisfied with accepting the institutional strategy which “has been to silence, ignore or even eradicate sexual and gender difference.”⁸² Interestingly, Mills finds parallels to this problem of representation between Fred Wilson’s “Mining the Museum,” a response to racial exclusions, and Jo Darbyshire’s installation at the Western Australian Museum in Perth called “The Gay Museum,”⁸³ which was a response to exclusions based on sexuality. While Mills recognizes that these two exhibits respond to similar exclusions in similar ways, the identities based on race are seen as separate from identities based on sexuality. The separation of identities in this way recodifies systemic exclusions and prevents

⁸⁰ Robert Mills, “Theorizing the Queer Museum,” *Museums and Social Issues* 3:1 (Spring 2008): 46.

⁸¹ Mills, 45.

⁸² Mills, 48.

⁸³ Mills, 49.

us from seeing the possibilities for change that comes when the overlapping and intersectional nature of identities is acknowledged.

Even with the application of queer theory, the struggle to resist re-codifying exclusions continues. Paul Gabriel sorts through the challenges of embracing queerness in museums due to its position as visibly non-normative in his article, “Embracing our Erotic Intelligence.”⁸⁴ Gabriel concludes that museum approaches to queerness are shaped by assumptions such as: queer is about *them*, with *them* being a small minority—not us; queer is best explored by institutions devoted to queerness in their mission, not by mainstream institutions; queer is just about personal lifestyle and not really relevant to the population at large; and queerness must be desexualized to be seen.⁸⁵ Gabriel advocates a “necessary re-orienting of how we think, feel, and act publicly as a profession when it comes to sexual orientation, human sexuality, and pleasure-seeking bodies of any kind.”⁸⁶ Gabriel’s approach mirrors that of critical feminist methods; he advocates critically reflecting on the ways that human sexuality has operated when putting together exhibits and archives.⁸⁷ In fact, Gabriel believes that accessing the power of pleasure, the erotic intelligence, can only enhance learning of all kinds in museums.⁸⁸

Many more authors have written about the important work being done all across the country to increase the representation of LGBT and queer narratives in museums. A recent issue of *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*⁸⁹ highlighted many of these examples, and several more can be found in the Routledge Reader on *Gender, Sexuality and Museums*.⁹⁰ While

⁸⁴ Paul Gabriel, “Embracing our Erotic Intelligence,” *Museums and Social Issues* 3:1 (Spring 2008) 53-66.

⁸⁵ Gabriel, 58.

⁸⁶ Gabriel, 62.

⁸⁷ Gabriel, 63.

⁸⁸ Gabriel, 63-65.

⁸⁹ *A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* Vol. 1 No. 2 Summer 2014.

⁹⁰ Amy K. Levin, Editor, *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader* (New York: Routledge Press, 2010).

utilizing queer theories in museum practice is still relatively new, queer theorists have provided significant works that address some of the challenges of representation in museums.

Analyzing Temporality

Many queer theorists have analyzed the dearth of queer representations in popular culture generally, but the specific focus on queering chronological representation is particularly useful to the work of history museums. Multiple queer and feminist theorists have named normative temporality as a system of exclusion that contributes to the erasure of minorities from U.S. history museums. History stands as one of the normalizing structures at work in our worlds, and specifically in museums. Pérez explains that the organization of history is the “way in which people understand themselves through a collective, common past,” creating historical consciousness as a “system of thought that leads to a normative understanding of past events.”⁹¹ Muñoz understands the past as performative; he is critical of producing history that merely “culls selectively from the past while striking a pose of positivist undertaking or empirical knowledge retrieval.”⁹² In effect, both Pérez and Muñoz recognize the self-reinforcing nature of what has been selected for inclusion in historical archives and records.

Looking beyond the construction of historical narratives, J. Halberstam discusses the deceptive nature of time itself, functioning as a largely unquestioned structure that upholds cultural standards of “respectability and notions of the normal.”⁹³ Our conceptions of time are organized around the functions of work and birth which “become the logics of those bourgeois

⁹¹ Pérez, Kindle location 223-224.

⁹² Muñoz, 27.

⁹³ J. Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, (New York: New York University Press, 2005) 4.

and reproductive life narratives that seem to unfold naturally but are actually pushed along by eager families and friends and strategies of accumulation and investment.”⁹⁴ It is these functions that reinforce “straight time” in the form of heterosexual gender pairings, feminized domesticity and the male achievement of capital success. Halberstam discusses queer subjects as those that live outside these models of temporality and embrace “nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time.”⁹⁵ For Halberstam, queer subjects are those living in queer time, rejecting the “temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction, longevity, risk/safety and inheritance.”⁹⁶

Like Halberstam, Elizabeth Freeman identifies the normalizing strategies of time, what she calls “chrononormativity.”⁹⁷ She recognizes state and representational institutions’ ability to construct teleological narratives that connect “properly temporalized bodies” through “strategies for living such as marriage, accumulation of health and wealth for the future, reproduction.”⁹⁸ Freeman builds on Butler’s theory of performativity in *Gender Trouble*. Butler discusses a present day performance that “cites” the past, thereby drawing from the past to create present-day meaning.⁹⁹ Freeman respects Butler’s theory, but critiques the way that Butler reads a citation of the past as a “consolidat[ion of] the authority of a fantasized original.”¹⁰⁰ This presumed codification, Freeman asserts, disregards references to the past that “signal the presence of life lived otherwise than in the present.”¹⁰¹ Freeman highlights the possibility of

⁹⁴ J. Halberstam, “Keeping Time with Lesbians on Ecstasy,” *Women and Music* 11 (2007) 53.

⁹⁵ Halberstam, 2005, 6.

⁹⁶ Halberstam 2005, 6.

⁹⁷ Freeman, 3.

⁹⁸ Freeman, 4.

⁹⁹ Freeman, 63.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

multiple “historically contingent events, social movements or collective pleasures” being present at the same time, even upon the same body.¹⁰²

As an example, Freeman discusses Sharon Hayes’ 2005 performance of *In the Near Future* in which Hayes stands in public locations in New York City with signs that display multi-temporally sited political meanings.¹⁰³ One sign labeled “I *am* a man” referenced the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike,¹⁰⁴ but held in 2005 by Hayes while wearing drab pants, standing with feet wide apart with an androgynous hairstyle¹⁰⁵ connected this strike of the past to “contemporary lesbian and transgender activism.”¹⁰⁶ This “temporal drag”¹⁰⁷ demonstrates the embodiment of multiple temporally situated events on one body, allowing an individual like Hayes to draw from the past in order to disrupt present realities, in the process pointing to a hoped-for future.

Hayes’ performance, cited by Freeman, seems an apt embodiment of both Freeman’s and Muñoz’s theories of how the past and the future can act as resources to illuminate each other and intervene in the present. This non-linear space that is created becomes a resource for resisting present-day codifications of normality and imagining a future where the very systems we use are reshaped. For Muñoz, living in time as it is constructed in this moment—the present—is an “impoverished and toxic” environment for “queers and other people who do not feel the privilege of majoritarian belonging.”¹⁰⁸ He refers to the past as the “no-longer-conscious” and the future as the “not-quite-conscious . . . realm of potentiality.”¹⁰⁹ Living in the here and now codifies the

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Freeman, 59.

¹⁰⁴ Freeman, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Freeman, 61.

¹⁰⁶ Freeman, 60.

¹⁰⁷ Freeman, 61.

¹⁰⁸ Muñoz, 27.

¹⁰⁹ Muñoz, 21.

systems within which we live, systems that privilege and oppress, while foreclosing the possibilities dreamt of in the past (the no-longer-conscious) and hoped for in the future (the not-quite-conscious). Muñoz believes that accepting the here and now naturalizes a version of reality which includes such “cultural logics as capitalism and heteronormativity.”¹¹⁰ This version of reality both Muñoz and Halberstam call “straight time.”¹¹¹

Similarly, Pérez’s focus on the decolonial imaginary specifically points out the racialized and gendered exclusions that occur in normative historical constructions. She asserts that existing historical analyses recreate the colonial and exclude women generally, and women of color specifically--chicanas .¹¹² As an example, Pérez points to the work of writing women into the field of Chicano history; “[w]here women are conceptualized as merely a backdrop to men’s social and political activities, they are in fact intervening interstitially . . . In other words, activities are unseen, unthought, merely a shadow in the background of the colonial mind.”¹¹³ Pérez builds on the differential consciousness discussed by Sandoval¹¹⁴ and proposes exploiting the time lag between the colonial and the post-colonial for re-imagining hegemonic narratives of history.¹¹⁵ She sees possibilities for responding to historical exclusions by exploiting the interstitial spaces of time and history. While Pérez advocates a kind of third space that opens temporal space for creating new imaginaries, Muñoz proposes a new relationship between past, present, and future. Building on this idea of queering time, Muñoz believes that we can draw from a queer futurity to open up the possibilities of the past that we do not see in normative

¹¹⁰ Muñoz, 12.

¹¹¹ Muñoz, 22.

¹¹² Pérez, Kindle Location 187.

¹¹³ Pérez, Kindle location 210-219.

¹¹⁴ Pérez, Kindle location 101.

¹¹⁵ Pérez, Kindle location 200-209.

historical timelines. The hoped-for, imagined utopian future helps us reclaim the dreams of the past. Similarly, rediscovering the “no-longer-conscious” illuminates greater possibilities for the future, despite the toxic nature of the here and now.¹¹⁶ By displacing linear time, Muñoz queers the very nature of temporality and uses this as a resource for facing the structural challenges of the present.

Deconstructing temporality is an intervention into what is possible for those marginalized by dominant society. The ability to imagine and believe in a future that resists hegemonic structures is a critical act of resistance and change. As Halberstam states, “[q]ueer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience.”¹¹⁷ By recognizing systems—like time—as cultural structures, we can step outside of their limits and begin to identify other ways of representing histories. Drawing from queer theorists to enact critical consciousness leads to the analysis of these normalizing structures. Structural analyses open up new possibilities for integrating artifacts, experiences, perspectives, and narratives that have been marginalized in current museum practices. In addition to expanding representation of those left out of museum narratives, critical feminist and queer theories offer methodological tools that help us to re-think the very nature of accepted museum practices.

Critical Feminist Museology: Conclusions

The authors cited here propose and practice dynamic intersectional coalition-building across marginalized and allied identities. They advocate a model of inclusion that does not

¹¹⁶ Muñoz, 27-28.

¹¹⁷ Halberstam, 2005, 2.

function on the simple math of adding missing histories or dividing identities into separate spheres. Truly inclusive change must reconsider our most basic museological calculations and be grounded in critical analysis of the systems that museums use. By deconstructing structural assumptions, we can create spaces for the integration of those that have been excluded. Sandoval advocates for interstitial space for counter-hegemonic readings of the kinds of representations that museums create. These readings are sourced from the margins, the imagined spaces that Pérez and Muñoz discuss. In these non-linear spaces of the possible, we can rupture dominant norms and “experience the meanings that lie in the zero degree of power.”¹¹⁸ Turning to the marginalized spaces for both the vision and the tools of change, we can reimagine museum practices that integrate those we seek to include.

Queer theorists have modeled this for us in their analysis of an often unrecognized system of organization—time. Through their deconstructions, we can see that time itself contains specific cultural assumptions, functioning as a temporal progression towards the achievement of capitalistic and heteronormative life goals. From all of these authors, we gain a new perspective on the challenges of creating inclusive museum spaces as well as new tools for doing so. Drawing from critical feminist theories generally, and intersectional feminism and queer theories specifically, we can engage museological praxis in new ways—through critical feminist museology. By practicing critical reflection of the organizing systems of our institutions, we have the opportunity to find resources and potentials where before we saw only gaps. It is through this kind of critical reflection that museum professionals become aware of existing power dynamics within our daily choices and accepted practices. This act of reflection permits

¹¹⁸ Sandoval 2000, 147.

recognition of the ideologies at work within our chosen systems. By developing the deconstructive skills to decode and re-think those systems, museum professionals can respond intersectionally and effectively to marginalization within museums.¹¹⁹ But how does one actually *do* this in museums?

In the following paragraphs, I will apply critical feminist museology to existing museum practices, reflecting critically on the systems employed in order to invoke consciousness of the values that are embedded in those systems. Reflection on the practices of museum work will begin with systems that recreate exclusions and move to examples of critical consciousness at work in museums. By reviewing existing practices, museum professionals can bring theory into action and explore the praxis of intersectional theory in museum work.

Practicing Critical Feminist Museology in Museums

This section considers how critical feminist practices might function in museum spaces. The application of an intersectional critical analysis relies on recognition of the structures we use in museums —structures that both organize our institutions and regulate social identities such as race, class, and gender. The following reflections make us conscious of these organizing structures and how they operate.

Organizing Structures: Temporality

As discussed above, the way that museums conceive of time, or temporality, is an organizing structure grounded in cultural assumptions about race, gender, and sexuality. Many exhibits rely upon a temporal chronology that begins in the past and moves progressively to the present. By exploring one such presentation at the Experience Music Project (EMP) in Seattle,

¹¹⁹ Sandoval 2000, 55.

we can unravel the ways that narrative chronology upholds exclusions based on race, gender, and sexuality.

The *Northwest Passage* exhibit, which told the story of popular music in the Northwest, was on display at the EMP for over a decade from 2000 to 2011. The narrative device of chronological temporal progression used to organize *Northwest Passage* successfully reinforced several cultural ideas that themselves structure dominant exclusions. As Halberstam reminded us above, temporality is deceptive. “Because we experience time as some form of natural progression, we fail to realize or notice its construction.”¹²⁰ In fact, Halberstam particularly highlights the connections between Western chronological timeline of life and the goals of “capital accumulation and investment.”¹²¹ James Clifford similarly described Western temporality as linking time with concepts of civilization.¹²² This Western temporality constructs time as “progress and modernization,” leaving non-Western cultures in the timeless past.¹²³

Framing the *Northwest Passage* exhibit narrative in Western concepts of chronology similarly grounds it in Western conceits of progress and financial success. The exhibit description outlines this teleological directive, tracing the development of the Northwest music scene “from its beginnings as a small isolated community to its status during the grunge years as the center of the rock universe.”¹²⁴ This narrow chronology focuses on the development of a singular musical expression—“the scene”—that incorporates cultural notions of success, from

¹²⁰ Halberstam 2005, 7.

¹²¹ Halberstam 2007, 53.

¹²² James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 232.

¹²³ Patricia Pierce Erickson. *Voices of a Thousand People: The Makah Cultural and Research Center* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln and London, 2002) 16.

¹²⁴ Experience Music Project website: Exhibitions/Permanent Exhibitions/ Northwest Passage: <http://www.empsfm.org/exhibitions/index.asp?categoryID=19&ccID=52>

“its beginnings as a small” scene to its perceived pinnacle as “the center of the rock universe.” Building the narrative on commercially accomplished musicians recreates the marginalizations that occur within economic power systems, privileging the stories of white men over other Northwest musicians.

Of the 441 non-video images of musicians and fans that I counted in the exhibit, 92% represented men and 8% represented women. Of those 441 images, 75% of them represented white people. The remaining 25% were images of Black musicians and fans. Like the economically-motivated music industry,¹²⁵ *Northwest Passage* renders Native Americans invisible in current music productions, placing them in the “timeless past.”¹²⁶ Black musicians were included exclusively in the music genres of jazz and rap, genres that have become racially naturalized as African-American music scenes despite their containment of multi-racial musical influences.¹²⁷ Also reflective of the commercial music industry, women are included in *Northwest Passage* in very small numbers. The dearth of female musicians is not representative of the facts of local music history generally, or even the grunge scene in particular.¹²⁸ The resulting narrative of the exhibit portrays a musical history of the Northwest which features white, male, commercially successful musicians. The uncritical selection of temporal chronology as the organizing structure of *Northwest Passage* led to the reinforcement of Western cultural values of progress and financial success.

¹²⁵ For an excellent discussion of the racial and gender ideologies at work in commercial music in the U.S. see Maureen Mahon, *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

¹²⁶ Erickson, 16.

¹²⁷ Gilbert B. Rodman. “Race . . . and other Four Letter Words: Eminem and the Cultural Politics of Authenticity” *Popular Communication* 4 (2) 2006, 13.

¹²⁸ Clark Humphrey, *Loser: the Real Seattle Music Story* (Seattle: Misc. Media, 1999) 233.

Through critical reflection on the organizing structure of temporality, we become aware of unconscious exclusionary choices. Aware of the cultural values embedded in temporal progression, we can see how such a deceptively simple structure—in this case, temporality—reproduces specific and exclusionary cultural values in the content of the exhibit.

Organizing Structures: How Do We Define Success?

As seen in *Northwest Passage*, the way we define success or achievement has a huge impact on who or what is included in museum work. Cultural norms around hallmarks of success within our institutions impact the very process of exhibit development. Many museums evaluate the success of exhibit development by the quality of the display that is presented on the opening date. Major museums have opening dates for exhibits scheduled years in advance. The necessity of having completed images, text labels, and displays in the exhibit space drives a focus on creating an end product, leaving little time for critical reflection on the process of exhibit making.

One institution that flips this paradigm is the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (WLMAPAE), an institution where I spent over 18 months volunteering with the Exhibits Development department under Michelle Kumata. The WLMAPAE uses a community advisory board to design the content and visual elements of their exhibits. This process requires a significant release of control by the institution, as the final display depends upon community members showing up to meetings with some regularity and bringing their personal objects or images to the museum for display. At the grand opening of the new museum space in May of 2008, the culmination of significant fundraising and building efforts, the

WLMAPAE opened with an incomplete permanent exhibit and several empty exhibit spaces. These empty exhibit spaces were designated as community galleries intended to rotate displays that focused on different groups within the larger Asian Pacific Islander communities, but for this most significant of days the space was empty.

Success in this museum was not judged by the product on display on opening day, but rather by the process of community engagement that is the priority for the WLMAPAE. This process was developed consciously with the goal of “fostering broad-based participation in the development of exhibitions and programs.”¹²⁹ Aware that the curatorial model of exhibit development—with a focus on exhibit product—did not meet the goal of community engagement, the WLMAPAE intentionally created a new system that focused on exhibit process instead. This choice to be more inclusive in their practices could only be made with recognition, or consciousness, of existing practices that worked against inclusion. Critical awareness like this creates the possibility for systemic changes that prioritize inclusion.

Organizing Structures: Exhibit Labels

Unexamined cultural values are at work in another common museum practice: the application of a text label. Labels frequently identify the artist, the donor, the collections number, and sometimes additional information such as the materials used to make the object. The kinds of information included in the label reflect cultural assumptions about what is valuable. Fred Wilson, conscious of this practice, called the visitor’s attention to the structuring power of the museum exhibit label in his exhibit *Mining the Museum*, shown from 1992-1993 at the Maryland

¹²⁹ Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, “Community Process Model” <http://wingluke.org/process.htm>

Historical Society.¹³⁰ “‘Où est mon visage?’ reads Wilson's label accompanying nineteenth century painter Joshua Johnson's portrait of a white family. An artist of African-American and Carib Indian ancestry, Wilson identified with Johnson, who was Black, and of whom there are no known portraits.”¹³¹ In another section of the exhibit, Wilson created labels that “provided identities for hitherto anonymous black figures. For example, a Benjamin H. Latrobe watercolor previously titled ‘View of Welch Point and the Mouth of Backcreek’ (1806) is here called ‘Jack Alexander in a canoe.’”¹³² This re-naming calls visitor attention to the Black man in the canoe, focusing on the representation of a Black person rather than the representation of a natural scene that happened to have a black person in it. This re-naming and re-centering brings awareness to the rarity of historical representations of Black experiences and simultaneously exposes the power of the exhibit label.

Another way that Wilson called visitor attention to museum labeling practices was by naming a case of arrowheads “Collection of numbers 76.1.25 3-76.1.67.11; white drawing ink, black India ink and lacquer, c.1976.” As Stein says, “in these small details Wilson [kept] reminding [visitors] that the content of the installation is not merely the meaning of objects, but includes how the museum deals with them.”¹³³ This label shows the value placed on the date an object is collected, and how it is tracked within a museum specific numbering system. The seemingly innocuous practice of following collections naming conventions on museum labels in fact holds larger consequences. The names applied indicate assumptions about who is important

¹³⁰ Stein, Judith E. “Sins of Omission: Fred Wilson’s *Mining the Museum*,” *Art in America* 81 (October 1993) 112.

¹³¹ Stein, 112.

¹³² Stein, 114.

¹³³ Stein, 113.

and who is excluded, reflecting larger cultural biases that normalize certain kinds of raced, gendered, and sexualized bodies.

Organizing Structure: Authority and Transparency

The naming practices employed in museum labels reflect the uncriticized assumption of authority that is frequently conferred upon museums. In contrast to the academic conventions that require that I and all other authors provide citations for our source materials, museum exhibit texts rarely indicate where they are getting their information. Even beyond citing source materials, museums rarely provide viewers with context for the exhibit formation process. Understanding who curated the materials and the knowledge system in which these curators are grounded provides valuable information to the viewer. The knowledge systems upon which research and exhibitions are grounded have deeply political and moral implications.¹³⁴ For example, viewing Native American artifacts at a Native American museum is a very different context than viewing those same artifacts in a museum memorializing colonial settlement. As a viewer, understanding the context of the presentation provides valuable information for understanding the content itself. It is for this reason that feminist methodologies have moved away from an “invisible, anonymous, disembodied voice of authority”¹³⁵ and called for a self-reflexive consciousness on the part of the researcher, or in this case, curator.

The lack of authorial transparency can even obfuscate innovations in museum exhibitionary authority. The innovative community exhibit development process employed by the WLMAPAE and discussed above invites community members to participate in a several month process of reflecting upon a community narrative and collaboratively deciding the details

¹³⁴ Harding, 32.

¹³⁵ Harding, 32.

and representations of that narrative. However, a visitor to one of the WLMAPAE's exhibit galleries would not know that its exhibits are community-curated. The exhibits, presented with texts, objects, and images, appear so similar in form to other museum exhibits that this important distinction in authorship is invisible. The context that would be provided by this information, and which is important for understanding the particular narrative presented, is lost to the viewer. As a gallery volunteer during the museum's 2008 re-opening event, I received multiple questions from visitors who sought to understand the particular details included in the exhibit. All of their questions were seeking context for the important narratives presented that day.

This lack of transparency makes it difficult for the museum visitor to contextualize information received in exhibits. Few visitors will launch an investigation into the validity of a museum's claims, leaving most visitors to rely upon the information presented when determining whether to accept the authority of the museum. In laying claim to the authors and organizing systems that we utilize, museums will offer visitors more opportunities to engage museum displays with depth and consciousness.

Consciousness Creates New Possibilities

The following section draws from the examples discussed to consider the practical possibilities of addressing identity-based inclusion in museums. Through critical analysis of just a few organizing structures of museum practice, we can see that cultural assumptions guide many of these systems. Assumptions of racial and gender superiority form the foundation of practices like temporal chronologies, definitions of success, institutional authority, and transparency. Because of these foundational assumptions, utilizing these practices unconsciously reproduces the exclusion of the very same raced, gendered, and sexualized peoples that the museum profession seeks to include. Becoming conscious of these assumptions is an important

first step to making sustainable changes that truly create inclusion. With this awareness, new possibilities become visible.

An example of this re-framing process discussed earlier in the article is Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* exhibit at the Maryland Historical Society—an exhibit which many readers will find familiar. Wilson used a collection that valued the objects and narratives of white men to a double purpose. He not only highlighted this value, exposing the degree to which narratives of African Americans had been excluded, but Wilson also created an exhibit that centered African American experiences. He did this not by adding objects to the collection, but by reframing the objects already there. In one gallery, Wilson arranged portrait busts of Henry Clay, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Andrew Jackson—none of whom had ever lived in Maryland—alongside empty pedestals “that bore only small plaques proclaiming the names of celebrated African Americans who were Marylanders: Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Benjamin Banneker.”¹³⁶ The juxtaposition of the busts of white men who were not part of Maryland history next to the missing busts of African American individuals who were significant parts of that history reveals the biases at work in this collection. This revelation brings a level of consciousness to the museum visitor and creates space to include those that have been excluded while addressing the significant gaps in the museum's collection.

Another example of reframing is found in Chicana artist Yolanda M. Lopez's installation *The Nanny*. *The Nanny* is a physical display that conveys the experience of Chicanas through what is present—the uniform, the cleaning supplies—and what is absent—the person. The experience and frequent representation of Mexican Americans as the invisible domestic help is

¹³⁶ Stein, 113.

portrayed by an empty maid's uniform, hanging on a partition screen above cleaning supplies and a basket of laundry.¹³⁷ The relationship between “Indigenous Latina women and European-identified and Euroamerican women” is further illuminated by two large re-prints of advertisements that portray barely-seen women of color next to European women that are the focus of the advertisement. The European women look happy and excited while wearing clothing that references Latin culture.”¹³⁸ In both cases, “the women of color are vendors, as the domestic worker is of her labor, and are made to represent racialized relations of subservience.”¹³⁹ Lopez drew on media images found in print publications at different time periods to illustrate the historical continuity of the symbol of Chicanas as servants. Using both images and objects to create a physical environment that calls attention to the missing person, Lopez highlighted the invisibility of domestic laborers as people. This juxtaposition creates consciousness in the visitor about a system that values some bodies more than others, based on class and ethnicity. Again, the artist is consciously reframing existing objects, exploiting the gaps to illuminate hidden ideologies.

These artists engaged in a process of critical reflection that allowed them first to be aware of what was missing—in these cases, the inclusion of material that reflected the experiences of Mexican-Americans or African-Americans. They used this awareness of what was missing to re-frame what was not. Museum professionals in all areas can engage in a similar process of critical reflection. What standards of practice are utilized in the daily work of a particular museum area? What cultural assumptions underpin those practices? How might those practices be re-creating

¹³⁷Laura E. Pérez, *Chicana Art: the Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities* (Durham and London: Duke University of Press, 2007) 53.

¹³⁸ Pérez 2007, 54.

¹³⁹ Pérez 2007, 54.

the exclusions that museum professionals seek to change? Responding to these questions based on each museum's goals and practices allows each museum professional to be an active participant in the process of addressing identity-based exclusions. With the awareness of how museum practices create exclusion, museum professionals can apply the same re-framing process as these artists to our existing standards. When we realize how exclusion is created in our daily choices, we can effectively strategize new choices that move our work towards inclusion.

Critical Feminist Museology as Methodology

An intersectional approach to museology is grounded in critical consciousness. Museum professionals must first recognize the structures of power that shape our personal, professional, and institutional lives. This critically-reflective approach to museology can be utilized to re-imagine every level of professional museum work, including the organizational structure of museums, the naming conventions used in collections management, the processes of curation and exhibition, the physical structures of museum spaces, and even the educational preparation of museum professionals.

The examples discussed above model an application of critical feminist museology that is applicable to the range of spaces and processes utilized in museum work. By reflecting critically and intersectionally on the variety of systems museum professionals employ, we develop conscious understanding of the organizing structures that create marginalization and exclusion. Opening these spaces for change allows us to access ideational resources: ideas previously unseen, opportunities within gaps, reframings that expose exclusions, dissonance that highlights ideological formation, and partnerships previously unimagined. Long term systemic changes may not happen immediately or even address all those who are marginalized. Rather, consciousness brings new awareness, allowing museum professionals to acknowledge our roles

within power structures and to acknowledge the repercussions and limitations of our deployments. Based on this understanding, we can re-imagine intersectional and egalitarian approaches to museum work.

As demonstrated above, critical feminist museology is effective as a methodological framework for social justice work in museums. Using these tools, we can begin to identify exclusionary practices and rethink practical approaches to the work of historical preservation and representation in museums. The principles of critical consciousness and relational accountability that drive these analyses also underpin all of the choices made for this dissertation. In the following chapters, I will explore the application of these methods to a community-museum collaboration, considering the potentials and challenges of critical feminist praxis within a particular museum project.

Chapter 2: Critical Feminist Museology: Combining Theory and Method with the Queering the Museum Project

This chapter looks at a specific application of critical feminist museology to a collaboration between the Queering the Museum project (QTM)¹⁴⁰ and the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI)¹⁴¹ in Seattle, Washington. It is important to understand the context and methods that shaped the QTM-MOHAI collaboration more generally. The joint efforts of QTM and MOHAI were driven by a collaborative model of leadership and content development. The principals of critical consciousness were utilized to support relational accountabilities between all of our collaborators. Our project worked to share authority for cultural knowledge, including personal and community organization histories. All of these principals—relational accountability, critical awareness, and shared authority—were integral to the digital storytelling project that was part of the QTM-MOHAI collaboration. The following text introduces the framework of our combined efforts and briefly considers the general impact of our collaboration. This framing provides the necessary background to explore the possibilities and impact of our critical feminist approach to the queer histories that became QTM’s digital storytelling project. The tensions between institutional and community practices, evident in QTM-MOHAI collaborations, provide a rich framework for highlighting the social change work that occurs even when we do not meet all of our goals.

“It’s about love.”¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ For more information on this project, visit our website www.queeringthemuseum.org

¹⁴¹ For more information on MOHAI, visit www.mohai.org

¹⁴² This is a quote from an anonymous museum visitor, overhead in the Revealing Queer exhibit, speaking to the two children with whom the visitor had come. When asked by the children what the queer exhibit was about, the adult visitor responded, “It’s about love.” Overhead in June 2014, *Revealing Queer*, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, WA.

Event: Opening Night of the *Revealing Queer* exhibit.

Date: February 14, 2014.

Location: The Museum of History and Industry in Seattle, Washington.

Cost: \$10.

As you enter, picture a large museum with a big open atrium. *Queering the Museum* is projected up on the big screen hanging at one end of the open space. On the schedule are burlesque performances by the queer women of Lily Divine Productions;¹⁴³ bingo led by Seattle's popular drag queens, The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence;¹⁴⁴ eight queer digital stories play all night in the theater; and upstairs, in the 1,000 square foot community gallery, is the long-awaited exhibit, *Revealing Queer*. What does it mean to have the word queer, a word that has been used to oppress gender non-conformers often in violent ways, plastered all over an institution? As the night progresses, the scores of people who have supported the project in some way come through the doors. Mini-reunions are happening in every corner. Many others are present who simply saw the ads in the local paper or heard about the opening from their friends.

On Valentine's Day 2014, we transformed a museum through the sheer power of queer love. The feeling of celebration and awe was palpable. The museum was packed, with over 700 people in attendance and many more turned away at the door. People were overheard recognizing friends or even themselves in the exhibits' photos. Several attendees had tears in their eyes, sharing that they never believed queer narratives would find acceptance in such a mainstream institution as the Museum of History and Industry. Attendees came from all walks of

¹⁴³ <http://www.lilydivine.com/>

¹⁴⁴ <http://thesisters.org/>

life, representing a range of sexualities, genders, races and ethnicities. What drew us together that night was a celebration of queer love.

In its common usage, queer often identifies those whose love marks us as ‘other’: loving someone of the same gender; loving someone who does not fit social gender norms; self-love when your body or your identity places you outside the norms dictated by heteronormativity. If love is what marked us for exclusion from the history records, love is also what disrupted those same exclusions at the public exhibit opening of *Revealing Queer*. That night our radical act was an act of love—self-love, even in the face of social norms that often mark us as unlovable; love of each other; love for our city and our region; love for our histories.

This love and celebration was notable not just on the opening night, but in the exhibit itself. During its 6-month display, *Revealing Queer* was the subject of local and national attention. Art Critic Jen Graves described the exhibit in Seattle newspaper *The Stranger*, “Through artifacts, photographs, and documents—many never seen in public before—*Revealing Queer* relates the very varied stories of the **lives, loves, and fights for justice** of Northwestern Ls, Gs, Bs, Ts, and straight-up Q¹⁴⁵s, from the emergence of a local underground before the Stonewall Riots of 1969 through the legalization of gay marriage in 2012 (original emphasis).”¹⁴⁶ *The Seattle Lesbian* similarly noted *Revealing Queer* as part of a trajectory of progress that reflected recent national successes of legalizing gay marriage, “*Revealing Queer* is encouraging future progress via a celebration and recognition of the past.”¹⁴⁷ The article led with a quote from

¹⁴⁵ L is an initial for lesbian, G is an initial for gay, B is an initial for bisexual, T is an initial for transgender and Q is an initial for queer.

¹⁴⁶ Jen Graves, “Revealing Queer,” *The Stranger*, February 18, 2014.

<http://www.thestranger.com/suggests/18801446/revealing-queer>

¹⁴⁷ Deanna Duff, “Interview with the Cofounder of Revealing Queer at MOHAI,” *The Seattle Lesbian*, May 27, 2014. <http://theseattlelesbian.com/interview-with-the-cofounder-of-revealing-queer-at-mohai/>

Bailey, “One of the main goals is for people to fall back in love with this city because of the LGBTQ¹⁴⁸ communities who’ve lived here over the past 40 years.”¹⁴⁹ The emphasis on love did not go un-noticed. When asked what the queer exhibit was about, one museum visitor was overheard explaining to the two children accompanying her, “It’s about love.”¹⁵⁰

The focus on historical queerness, a relative rarity as a featured museum topic, led to publications lauding *Revealing Queer*’s originality. *Revealing Queer* was described as “a landmark exhibit”¹⁵¹ in tourist-focused media, as “ground-breaking”¹⁵² by *The Seattle Gay News*, and as “a dynamic classroom about people, politics, culture, sexuality, individuality, and art”¹⁵³ in the online arts publication *Plinth*. QTM’s work and the exhibit, then in development, was valued as “an astonishing and brave project”¹⁵⁴ by participants of the British University of Leicester’s doctoral program museum conference, “Museum Metamorphosis” held in England in 2013.

Museum-focused publications declared *Revealing Queer* “a model of how museums can serve as sites of social justice”¹⁵⁵ with particular enthusiasm for the Community Advisory

¹⁴⁸ LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.

¹⁴⁹ Deanna Duff, “Interview with the Cofounder of Revealing Queer at MOHAI,” *The Seattle Lesbian*, May 27, 2014. <http://theseattlelesbian.com/interview-with-the-cofounder-of-revealing-queer-at-mohai/>

¹⁵⁰ This is a quote from an anonymous museum visitor, overheard in the Revealing Queer exhibit, speaking to the two children with whom the visitor had come. When asked by the children what the queer exhibit was about, the adult visitor responded, “It’s about love.” Overhead in June 2014, *Revealing Queer*, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle, WA. The pronoun she is applied based on perceived gender.

¹⁵¹ *Downtown Seattle*, “Downtown Lowdown—Week of February 24-March 2,” February 24, 2014. <http://www.downtownseattle.com/blog/2014/02/24/downtown-lowdown-week-of-february-24-march-2/>

¹⁵² Tim Moffett, “Revealing Queer-MOHAI’s groundbreaking LGBTQ history exhibit opens February 2014,” *Seattle Gay News*, January, 10, 2014. http://www.sgn.org/sgnnews42_02/page3.cfm

¹⁵³ Nalini Jasmine Elias, “Queering the Museum at the Museum of History and Industry,” *Plinth*, April 13, 2014. <http://www.plinth.co/april-museum-history-industry/>

¹⁵⁴ University of Leicester’s Museum Studies Doctoral Program, “Transmutation #20-Revealing Queer: an exhibition and symposium at the Museum of History and Industry,” *Museum Metamorphosis* 2013, November 6, 2013. <http://msphdconf.blogspot.com/2013/11/transmutation-20-revealing-queer.html>

¹⁵⁵ Nalini Jasmine Elias, “Queering the Museum at the Museum of History and Industry,” *Plinth*, April 13, 2014. <http://www.plinth.co/april-museum-history-industry/>

Committee structure, which gave oversight to a group of stakeholders. The collaborative model is likewise celebrated in *The Inluseum's* two-part post about *Revealing Queer*: “*The Inluseum* is particularly excited about the way the Community Advisory Committee structure was applied for the first time at MOHAI through this exhibit.”¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, despite the excitement for collaboration, Bailey is the only one interviewed here and in other exhibit-focused publications.

Erin’s commitment to the CAC model and her desire to share leadership and agency over the exhibit with LGBTQ identifying community members invested in issues, work and advocacy for LGBTQ communities in Seattle is one of the defining aspects of the exhibit. As Erin has stated, when there is so much diversity within the grouped identities of LGBTQ identifying individuals, it is so important that at least some of that diversity can be represented at the table to add accountability to the exhibit process.¹⁵⁷

Bailey and I acknowledge the diverse communities that may claim belonging as LGBTQ, and the fact that we cannot represent them all ourselves. It is with love for our diverse communities that we set out to increase representation of all that is queer in mainstream museums. Similarly, it is with a strong love of museums, grounded in our practical experiences of museum work and held up by a vision of the power that museums have to impact communities, that QTM embarked on our collaborations with MOHAI.

QTM-MOHAI Collaboration

As described earlier, QTM started as a collaboration between myself and museum colleague Erin Bailey. At one of our meetings, often held in the Café of the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, we sat surrounded by the dark wood paneling on the walls and the ambient buzz of conversation. We dreamt of bringing queer cultures and histories into the

¹⁵⁶ Jana Greenslit, “The Road to Revealing Queer” Part II *The Inluseum* March 14, 2014. <https://inluseum.com/2014/03/14/the-road-to-revealing-queer-an-interview-with-curator-erin-bailey-part-ii/>

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

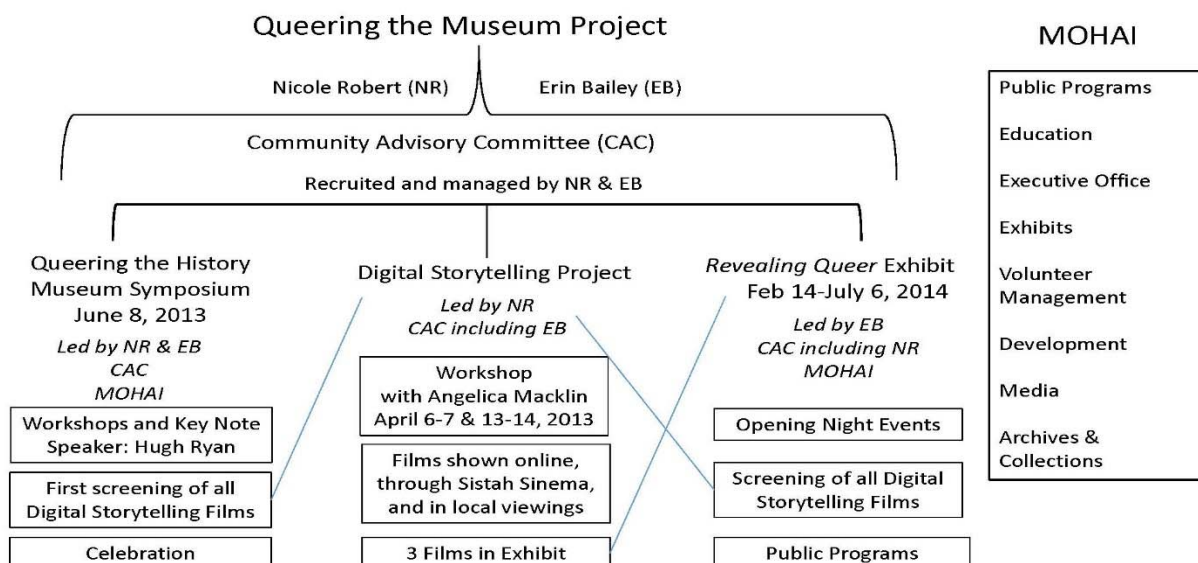
hallowed halls of mainstream museums, where queer cultures and issues could be featured and accessible to large audiences, and at the same museum professionals could see the work of inclusion being modelled. Wrapping up a project with local art museums,¹⁵⁸ we turned our attention to history museums. What if we could work with the largest local history museum, the Museum of History and Industry? What would the impact be? This seemed like an audacious but important possibility.

Together, we sought multiple means of intervening in LGBT and queer representations in museum spaces. Bailey and I drafted a proposal for a multi-year collaboration¹⁵⁹ between QTM and MOHAI that included a digital storytelling project, a queer history symposium and a temporary exhibit featuring local queer histories. When we began this collaboration, we were both students at the University of Washington. Though QTM was primarily a project motivated by our passions, we wove aspects of our QTM work into our respective academic endeavors. We divided the responsibilities to align with our academic projects: Bailey and I shared recruitment and management of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) as well as the Queer History Symposium, Bailey led curation of the exhibit and I led the digital storytelling project. For Bailey, curation of a queer-themed history exhibit formed the body of her M.A. thesis. I saw this project as an opportunity to apply the principals of critical consciousness and relational accountability outlined in the previous chapter. While I attempted to do this within our larger project, I found the most freedom to utilize these principles within the digital storytelling project. Below, a graph visualizes how these labors were divided in the various aspects of QTM-MOHAI

¹⁵⁸ Bailey led the development of a symposium called Queering the Art Museum, grounded in the exhibition of *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* that was on display at the Tacoma art Museum. The symposium collaborated with the Henry Art Gallery and included exhibit tours, speaker panels and a local art show. Bailey's work on this project led to our introduction. As such, we began to collaborate as a team, forming the ongoing project Queering the Museum.

¹⁵⁹ The collaboration, outlined in a 2011 Memorandum of Understanding, ran from 2012 to 2014.

project:



QTM's vision of community collaboration and shared authority was to engage an advisory committee populated by representatives of local LGBTQ organizations. These advisors were invited to meet monthly throughout the MOHAI-QTM collaboration and shape the content and format of our programs. We came to an agreement with MOHAI that Bailey and I would provide our services free-of-charge, coordinate with the advisory committee which we would recruit and manage, and work with MOHAI to produce the digital storytelling workshop, the queer history symposium and a queer-themed history exhibit on display for 6 months, ultimately titled *Revealing Queer*.

Both Bailey and I draw from our experiences as white, queer, cisgender women in our activist and professional work. We are also committed to including multiple queer perspectives beyond our experiences. In order to share authority and promote collaboration, we formed a CAC made up of representatives from a variety of LGBTQ community organizations. Our goal

was to act as intermediaries between the institution of the museum and the CAC, facilitating a community-led development process.¹⁶⁰ Our hope was that the CAC members would represent a broad range of identities and experiences, increasing inclusion of non-white, transgender, non-binary, female and rural narratives within the MOHAI archives and expand MOHAI's connections to queer communities. In order to support this goal and reach as wide a circle as possible, we invited local LGBTQ organizations to join our CAC. The organizations agreed to send one person to our meetings who would share information back and forth between QTM and their own organizational constituents. In theory, this CAC model takes the pressure of the long-term commitment off of an individual, and allows shared responsibility and multiple perspectives to contribute to the process. In practice, most organizations were consistently represented by the same one to three individuals. We also found that the membership of the CAC evolved over time, with some participants leaving and others joining throughout the years.¹⁶¹

As trained museum professionals and queer community members we occupied a liminal space between the institution of MOHAI and our communities, including the community that advised us. MOHAI does not have a history of working with community advisory groups, and is structured in a more hierarchical organizational model, common amongst mainstream museums in the U.S. Responsibilities for tasks such as fundraising, exhibit production and program planning are assigned to professional work groups that report up to the Museum Director, who himself reports to the non-profit board which oversees MOHAI. Throughout our collaboration, Bailey and I were the bridge or link that attempted to insert a community-led model onto a

¹⁶⁰ Our use of the Community Advisory Committee model was greatly influenced by our respective experiences with the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience who pioneered a unique process of exhibit development led by community members. Read more about this process here:

<http://www.wingluke.org/community-process/>

¹⁶¹ For a list of CAC members, visit <https://queeringthemuseum.org/previous-projects/community-advisory-committee/> or check the appendix.

hierarchical institution. We brought community connections, experience, passion and knowledge to the project. We assisted MOHAI in obtaining funding for all elements of the project, raising funds from Humanities Washington for the symposium, from the Pride Foundation for the exhibit and from Lily Divine for the digital storytelling workshop. MOHAI took several institutional risks in working with us. We were students at the time and did not bring a large funding package. In addition, we utilized a model of community collaboration that was new to MOHAI and thus brought the risk of working outside of their usual frameworks. Finally, MOHAI took the risk of embracing a topic that many still see as controversial: the stories of those who operate outside of heteronormativity.

The QTM-MOHAI collaboration centered QTM's activity around a large, well-known institution in the Seattle area. As such, all of our decisions were made in relationship to the existing parameters already established in MOHAI. This approach, unlike the more grass-roots approach of organizations like the Queer Pop Up Museum of New York¹⁶², sought to introduce community-driven feminist principles into the hierarchies and structures of an institution that brought its own long history with it. Bailey and I functioned as the connecting point between the institution of MOHAI and the collaborations of the CAC. In this role, we presented the CAC with opportunities to influence processes and content. At the same time, we presented MOHAI with specific feedback, decisions and content provided by CAC members. In between, we translated institutional requirements for CAC members and advocated for important community decisions with the institution. Our role included relational-tending, collaborative content

¹⁶² Hugh Ryan, "Notes on the Pop Up Museum of Queer History," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1:2 (2014), 79-82.

development, and facilitating critical reflection on the choices being made. In this way, the entire project was an experiment of feminist collaborations operating within institutional hierarchies.

The feminist methods introduced in Chapter One were foundational to the choices that QTM made throughout the project. Primarily, we built our project around principles of collaboration and shared authority, with critical awareness of the oppressive histories of museums generally, and MOHAI specifically. The efficacy of such an application of critical feminist museology is contingent upon consciousness of the structures in which we operate, structures designed to promote heteronormative ideals. As such, I begin my investigation with reflections about the history of the dominant institution that shaped this project—the Museum of History and Industry.

The Institutional Framework of MOHAI

Establishing critical consciousness of existing systems—the core of critical feminist museology—requires that we understand the historical structure and values of the institutions within which we work. To that end, it is important to include MOHAI’s history which establishes the context of our work. MOHAI began as the Seattle Historical Society in 1914 with membership limited to white settlers and their descendants.¹⁶³ Over time, the museum evolved “from a private club to a more broadly-based civic organization”¹⁶⁴ but its collections are still predominantly artifacts of white colonialists. MOHAI became a publicly accessible museum in the Montlake neighborhood of Seattle in 1952.¹⁶⁵ The early exhibits continued a focus on the

¹⁶³ Alan J. Stein, “Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) Historylink.org essay 3682,” Historylink.org The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History.

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3682 Accessed 1/28/15. The link to this history is provided by MOHAI at their own site, on the “About” page: <http://www.mohai.org/about>

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

white colonizers of the region, including the Alki landing and the founding and growth of the city of Seattle.¹⁶⁶ This focus on white colonizer society effectively centered the heteronormative values of Euro-American culture. Normative conceptions of gender and sexuality were so dominant in the MOHAI culture that the museum's first Directors were selected or even fired based on their conformity (or lack thereof) to these norms. Jerome Irving Smith, who had spent 18 years at the Museum of the City of New York was recruited to be MOHAI's first Director, but shortly let go when it was discovered that he had sex with men.¹⁶⁷ Elizabeth Gustison was ultimately chosen to replace him, championed by a member of the Board of Directors, Horace W. McCurdy. McCurdy claimed to have chosen Gustison because she was "a woman who looked like a woman,"¹⁶⁸ establishing her gender conformity as one of her primary qualifications. These foundational years of MOHAI's development began from and perpetuated the centrality of white, heterosexual, gender-conformity in content and staffing. MOHAI's stated mission is to "collect and preserve the diverse history of Seattle, the Puget Sound region and beyond."¹⁶⁹ However, these historical roots grounded the museum's norms around a heteronormative ideal.

This past continues to present challenges to MOHAI's more recent efforts at increasing inclusive representations of the diverse identities that have, and do, occupy the Puget Sound region. It wasn't until the 1970's that MOHAI began to collect contemporary artifacts, creating opportunities to expand its archive and include materials that more accurately represent the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Museum of History and Industry Staff, "About" section of the website <http://www.mohai.org/about>.

diversity of identities and experiences in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁷⁰ This focus on collecting artifacts that related to under-represented groups, however, is not named in the current board-approved collections policy.¹⁷¹ This leaves the acquisition of artifacts largely up to the individual Collections Managers, Curators or Historians involved in object acquisition at MOHAI over the years. This informal approach to collecting has succeeded in adding some under-represented narratives to the archive. Indeed, MOHAI is unique in the region in utilizing a specific code, “LGBT,” in their archive database to track LGBT materials.¹⁷² This ad-hoc approach *has* expanded inclusion of under-represented artifacts, but it has failed to create the kind of critical consciousness that is necessary for the large-scale and enduring changes needed in order to effectively address identity-based exclusion.

Despite the lack of an institutional mandate supporting systemic changes in the service of inclusion, many individuals at MOHAI are committed to a more inclusive museum, as demonstrated by the efforts of individuals to broaden collections. Significantly, MOHAI has adopted a museum overview and mission which includes the preservation of the diverse histories of Seattle.¹⁷³ In 2012, MOHAI took advantage of a major move to create a new gallery space specifically designed to include community-focused exhibits,¹⁷⁴ collaborating with community organizations and expanding under-represented collections. Bailey¹⁷⁵ and I both believe that this

¹⁷⁰ Nicole Robert, “Invisible Artifacts: LGBT Inclusion in Seattle History Museums” M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 2009, 26. References to conversations with MOHAI Registrar and Librarian as well as 2015 email communication regarding the current collecting policy.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ MOHAI’s mission statement is: “By collecting and preserving artifacts and stories of our diverse history, MOHAI highlights our regional tradition of innovation and imagination. Through compelling exhibits, scholarship, education, public programs, and community engagement, MOHAI bridges the past, present, and future.” <http://www.mohai.org/about#sthash.uK18SYwP.dpuf>

¹⁷⁴ Chris Sullivan, “Seattle’s MOHAI Reopens in Prime South Lake Union location” on MyNorthwest.com 12/28/2012 <http://mynorthwest.com/11/2162772/Seattles-MOHAI-reopens-in-prime-South-Lake-Union-location>

¹⁷⁵ Personal communication with Erin Bailey May 2015.

move enabled MOHAI to embrace the opportunity of our collaboration, and gave a specific site for the exhibit that would develop out of our participation.¹⁷⁶

Museum exhibits are the most visible product of the varieties of labor that go on behind the scenes. As discussed in Chapter One, in a product-focused system, like that at MOHAI and most major museums, the appearance and content of the exhibit as well as its timely completion are of paramount importance. Consistent with this focus, the development of the *Revealing Queer* exhibit became a driving focus for QTM. The preparations for this exhibit gave some institutional legitimacy to the community collaborations that we embarked upon in the time leading up to its opening on February 14, 2014. This legitimacy was important for developing relationships and obtaining access to funds and other resources. While a large part of QTM's intervention was process-based, the focus on the end-product of the exhibit was a priority for the institution itself.¹⁷⁷ Ultimately, the work developing the exhibit over-shadowed the other aspects of our project and now, years after its closing, the exhibit is the artifact most discussed by museum professionals and most visible to museum community members.

The collaborative exhibit development model that QTM adapted was pioneered and promoted at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (WLMAPAE) where the entire system is constructed to support this process. As discussed in Chapter One, for example, their exhibit process does not utilize curators and all members of the community advisory committee are named on exhibit labels. In contrast, QTM interjected a collaborative model into a system designed around presenting a completed product on a predictable timeline—

¹⁷⁶ "MOHAI Explores LGBTQ History in Locally-Developed Exhibit, Revealing Queer" MOHAI Press Releases <http://www.mohai.org/press-media/press-releases/item/2636-mohai-explores-lgbtq-history-in-locally-developed-exhibit-revealing-queer>

¹⁷⁷ Personal communication with Erin Bailey May 2015.

in short, a place where product is prioritized. Interjection is very different than building a process into the entire system; in a temporary and additive move, we interjected a collaborative system within the confines of a traditional hierarchical system. The larger hierarchy did not change, and was not necessarily involved in the collaborative work that we produced. In addition, the existing hierarchical systems were not part of QTM's critical reflections and process conversations.

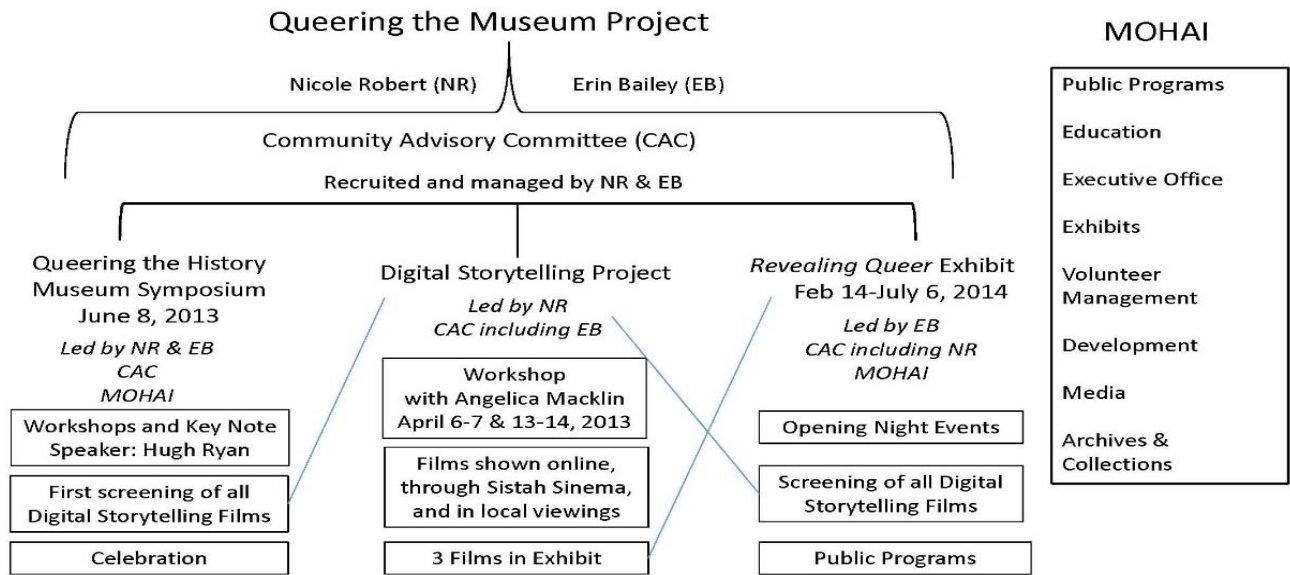
In practice, a system that functions hierarchically and emphasizes product over process meant that Bailey's role as exhibit content curator took priority in interactions with museum staff who saw her as the primary content developer, rather than the CAC. In MOHAI's organizational system—and in most mainstream museums—the curator is the subject-matter expert who develops the content and the exhibits team on staff designs the shape and appearance of the exhibit as well as over-seeing the installation.¹⁷⁸ In our model, Bailey performed archival research, tracked down artifacts outside of the archives, selected the initial themes and framing, collected historical research when needed and functioned as the intermediary between the CAC and MOHAI staff on exhibit-related materials. MOHAI staff handled installation, construction and production of exhibit labels. The CAC brought in our own experiences and expertise, personal artifacts and knowledge of local histories. CAC members helped decide what would be talked about in the exhibit, what would be on display, the content and format of exhibit labels and the events surrounding the exhibit. As Bailey describes, our community model of exhibit development was different than traditional curation models as it allowed community members to “develop the content, write the text, ensure that the narrative reflects the experiences that they

¹⁷⁸ Personal communication with Erin Bailey May 2015.

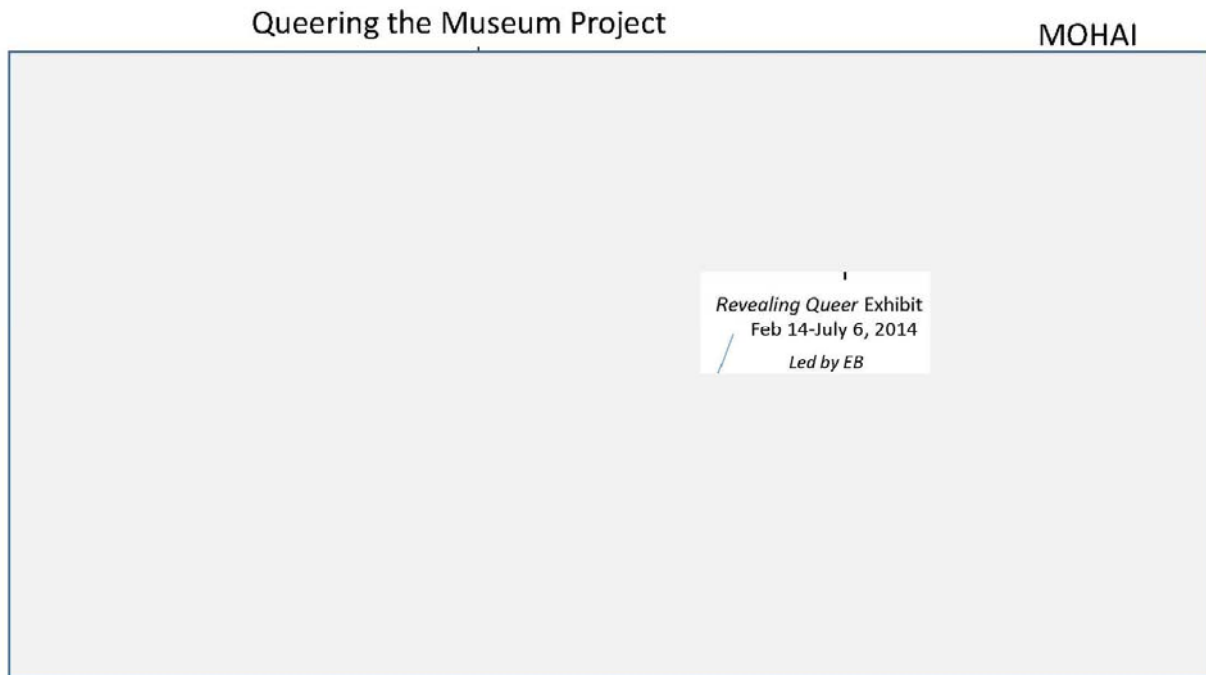
experienced, as well as the experiences of those that they love and know, as well as connecting us with objects that are not in archives or housed by institutions like MOHAI.”¹⁷⁹

Yet, in the final display of *Revealing Queer*, Bailey’s name is the only one on the label, with a nod to the un-named members of the advisory committee who are simply listed as “Community Advisory Committee.” Despite QTM’s embrace of a collaborative model, focus on shared authority and efforts to engage critically with existing structures, the normative hierarchies of curator-led content development often prevailed. In this example, collaboration is erased and individual authority is centered; processes are hidden behind the end-product of the exhibit. Comparing the two graphs below of the processes and people involved in the QTM-MOHAI collaboration, it is apparent that focusing on the exhibit as the most important aspect of museum work erases many people and processes that shape the work of museums. In this case, the work of myself, the CAC and of MOHAI staff is erased when the ultimate product of the QTM-MOHAI collaboration is seen only as the *Revealing Queer* exhibit, curated individually by one person. It is important to note the emphasis on product over process, as invisibilizing the process means we lose access to the primary areas in which we can make productive changes to museum work. The process must be the focus of our interventions, as the process is what shapes production.

¹⁷⁹ Erin Bailey, “History Café: Seattle’s LGBTQ Community,” video, KCTS 9, February 20, 2014. <http://kcts9.org/education/history-cafe/seattle-LGBTQ-community>



The graph above represents the multiple collaborations present in the QTM-MOHAI projects.



The graph above shows how much is erased when we focus exclusively on the product of the exhibit. The multiple collaborations that functioned with the exhibit, from MOHAI staff, CAC members and other QTM partners, are all erased.

Institutional Influences

This level of institutional engagement in the exhibit, and relative dis-engagement in the digital storytelling workshop, impacted the process, participants and end-product. While QTM benefited in many ways from our institutional alliance with MOHAI, the heteronormative history of this institution was an obstacle for establishing trust and effective partnerships with the most under-represented LGBTQ communities in the Seattle area. To form the CAC, Bailey and I spent over 6 months showing up at local LGBTQ events, contacting organizations and inviting individuals to coffee to discuss our project and our invitation. Few people had heard of QTM, so the institution that was recognizable was MOHAI. While having MOHAI's support lent us some credibility, it also lent us their institutional history. MOHAI does not have a strong history of including the materials of local communities of color, gender non-conformers or gays and lesbians. This history alone was cause for some suspicion about the trust-worthiness and relational responsibilities that our project could produce. In addition, neither Bailey nor I have long histories working with local organizations that support LGBTQ communities of color or transgender communities. We found that those who were most responsive to our invitations were individuals and organizations that had expressed interest in local LGBTQ histories or who had some personal relationship to people involved in our project. For example, both the Northwest Gay and Lesbian History Museum Project (NWGLHMP)¹⁸⁰ and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC)¹⁸¹ are organizations focused on lesbian and gay history that signed on to the QTM-MOHAI CAC early and consistently participated on the CAC throughout the entire multi-year project. NWGLHMP had a prior relationship with MOHAI, established when MOHAI agreed to take objects NWGLHMP had acquired related to

¹⁸⁰ NWGLMP is a grass-roots primarily gay and lesbian collective of individuals committed to preserving local LGBT histories. For more information, visit <http://home.earthlink.net/~ruthpett/lgbthistorynw/>

¹⁸¹ Find out more about the national organization of OLOC here: <http://www.oloc.org/index.php>

LGBT histories into the MOHAI archives in the mid 1990's. Similarly, OLOC's representative on the CAC was a former museum director who was deeply committed to both museum practice and the preservation of local lesbian histories. Bailey's connection to the leadership at Lily Divine Productions¹⁸² helped us establish a relationship with them early in the project, as well as gain the support of Imani Sims,¹⁸³ a poet who developed some local gay history performances. As QTM became more known through our history symposium and the digital storytelling workshop, Ingersoll's Marsha Botzer contacted us and provided extensive support for the development of the *Revealing Queer* exhibit. Similarly, Entre Hermanos¹⁸⁴ provided virtual participation in the CAC early on, but did not have a representative attend the monthly meetings until a new staff member had a personal interest in the project. As these examples demonstrate, our most successful CAC relationships developed due to either personal connections or the institutional credibility of MOHAI, and largely depended on the organization or individual representative having a commitment to preserving local histories. In this way, our CAC looked very similar to the Wing Luke model that we had adapted. The people who attended meetings were consistently the same people who developed a stake in the project. Despite our idea of bringing in organizations rather than individuals, what we found was that organizations participated because the same one or two individuals were invested.

While our goal was to ensure that our CAC did not re-create the primarily white and cis-gender representations of lesbian and gay histories that dominate existing archives, our strategies for including non-dominant voices on the CAC were limited in their success. There are several reasons I believe this occurred: lack of existing relational networks, MOHAI's history of

¹⁸² For more information, visit <http://www.lilydivine.com/>

¹⁸³ More information about Imani Sims can be found here <http://imani.splitsix.com/>

¹⁸⁴ Find out more here: <http://entrehermanos.org/>

exclusions and the fact that historical preservation is not a priority for communities focusing on survival strategies. Our personal networks did not give us deep credibility with local communities of color or transgender communities. This was compounded by MOHAI's lack of historical support for LGBTQ communities in general, and communities of color and gender non-conformers more specifically. In addition, many individuals who are multiply marginalized have reasons to invest their resources into organizations that are addressing other elements of structural inequality, such as employment, housing, incarceration and freedom from discrimination. When issues of survival are paramount, investing precious resources into historical preservation is less of a priority. Similarly, LGBTQ organizations that focused on history preservation were predominantly populated by white gender-conforming individuals. Through a combination of organizational and personal networks, as well as the existing structural barriers in our society, we constructed a community advisory committee that re-created many of the representational exclusions that we sought to address.

Despite these issues, we did have some degree of CAC participation from a variety of LGBTQ identities. It was important to us to include perspectives from the entire region, not just urban Seattle. The Rainbow Center of Tacoma¹⁸⁵ signed on early and participated frequently. Oasis Youth Center of Pierce County¹⁸⁶ also supported our project from early stages. OLOC¹⁸⁷ participants were from Kitsap and Island counties. We sought perspectives from younger LGBTQ individuals through the engagement of Oasis Youth Center as well as Seattle's Queer

¹⁸⁵ For more information, see <http://www.rainbowcntr.org/>

¹⁸⁶ For more information, see <http://www.oasisyouthcenter.org/>

¹⁸⁷ For more information, see <http://psoloc.org/>

Youth Space¹⁸⁸ and #1 Must Have.¹⁸⁹ In practice, our young CAC members participated primarily through email and weighed in inconsistently. Lily Divine Productions¹⁹⁰ and Queer Social Club,¹⁹¹ both LGBTQ performance producers, participated heavily in early stages, while moving to more virtual support as the project progressed. API Chaya represented perspectives of Asian Pacific Islanders and Entre Hermanos¹⁹² represented LGBTQ Latin@ narratives in our process. Gender Alliance of the South Sound¹⁹³ signed on early, while Ingersoll Gender Center¹⁹⁴ joined us for the exhibit content phase of the project. Despite our emphasis on organizations participating in the CAC, we discovered that consistent meeting attendance and email responses depended largely on the interest-level of the individuals tasked with supporting our work. In this way, the CAC did function much like the traditional CAC model made up of interested individuals, rather than representatives of organizations.

Results of the Collaboration

All of the QTM-MOHAI collaborations did yield results that we are proud of. On the day of the exhibit opening, February 14, 2014, King County Executive Dow Constantine declared February 14th King County's Official LGBTQ History Day. The opening night was extremely popular with over 700 people in attendance and many more turned away for lack of room.¹⁹⁵ The simple presence of the exhibit, tucked in between floors of Seattle history, provoked a range of

¹⁸⁸ For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/qysseattle/> and <http://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2014/01/queer-youth-space-closing-doors-on-e-pike/>

¹⁸⁹ For more information, see <http://number1musthave.com/>

¹⁹⁰ For more information, see <http://www.lilydivine.com/>

¹⁹¹ For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/qscseattle/>

¹⁹² For more information, see <http://entrehermanos.org/>

¹⁹³ For more information, see <http://www.southsoundgender.com/>

¹⁹⁴ For more information, see <http://ingersollgendercenter.org/>

¹⁹⁵ Numbers reported by MOHAI staff through personal electronic communication. Credit to Erin Bailey for collecting these together for the Dec. 29, 2014 post "2014 Has Come and Gone, now what?" on queeringthemuseum.org <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2014/12/29/2014-has-come-and-gone-now-what/>

responses all of which created opportunities to discuss non-dominant gender and sexual identities.

These conversations continued outside of the museum, as evidenced in MOHAI's digital communication channels which saw a 17% growth during *Revealing Queer*'s six month run, including 2,405 new followers between Facebook and Twitter.¹⁹⁶ On MOHAI's Instagram there was an increase of 384 followers or 139%, including 48 posts using #RevealingQueer.¹⁹⁷

To support a more long-term engagement with LGBTQ content, MOHAI launched a collections initiative alongside *Revealing Queer*, focused on adding LGBTQ materials to their permanent collection. This specific collecting focus yielded an increase of LGBTQ-identified three-dimensional objects from 284 to 345 objects. All of the exhibition information went into the object records to record the research of Northwest LGBTQ histories. As a result of the MOHAI-QTM collaboration, MOHAI continues to look for LGBTQ related objects as they grow their collection.

During the exhibit, public programs that included LGBTQ topics were incorporated into MOHAI's educational offerings, serving over 1,000 people.¹⁹⁸ These included Member Preview and Opening Night Celebrations, an LGBTQ History Café, a free Safe Spaces Training for educators, a workshop held for the American Alliance of Museums: "An Insider's Look at the Queering the Museum Project," *Revealing Queer* Walking Tours of Seattle neighborhoods that have rich LGBTQ histories and Pride Family Day. LGBTQ topics continue to be one of the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

topics on MOHAI's menu of public offerings, as evidenced by Queer-themed History Café programs and occasional LGBTQ walking tours.

MOHAI took a risk and made a major investment in working with QTM. Likewise, Bailey and I, as QTM, donated extensive hours, expertise and connections to MOHAI through our collaboration. While QTM's collaboration with MOHAI did not induce any significant visible structural changes, the first steps of critical consciousness have been initiated through the kinds of conversations that our presence there created. Volunteers and several staff members have been trained to address basic conversations about gender and sexuality in spaces such as volunteer trainings, exhibit tours and public programs, collections staff have created new contacts for acquiring LGBTQ artifacts, and wider consciousness of the gaps that exist in representations of queer communities of color and trans narratives is evident in the responses of audience members to the *Revealing Queer* content.

Digital Storytelling Project

While still part of the QTM-MOHAI collaboration, the digital storytelling project (DSP) operated largely without MOHAI institutional intervention, allowing its own unique application of critical feminist methods. The DSP handed authorship to community members, utilizing collaboration, critical reflection and relationship-building as foundational elements of content-production. The films created there were not considered as part of the content requiring MOHAI review. Freed from many institutional constraints, the workshop and films were able to deepen our incorporation of critical feminist methods.

The following section focuses on the DSP as a feminist intervention into LGBTQ representations, and as a model for changing how the problems of representational inclusion are

addressed. Critical feminist museology points us to two main pathways of development for our intervention: 1) critical consciousness that attends to the impact of structural and institutional inequalities and 2) the utilization of this awareness to facilitate modes of resistance that move in-between these codified systems. Our DSP model draws on the core tenets of critical reflection, relational responsibility and community collaboration that spring from this critical feminist framework. The QTM team, including our CAC members, approached the DSP as an opportunity to include the stories of individuals whose lives are not well-represented within existing archives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer materials, due to race, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Digital storytelling invites individuals to participate in multi-day workshops which teach them the necessary steps for constructing a short video about themselves. Participants actively create the script, imagery and audio and assemble all the elements in the workshop itself. Through the DSP, I saw an opportunity to not only add more queer stories to the historical record but also to explore a method of expanding inclusion that was community-led and attentive to the hierarchies of exclusion that exist in all of our worlds. I embraced the potential of the videos created in the DSP to address several representational issues. While we wanted to add to the existing LGBTQ archives, we also wanted to make sure that individuals could keep control over how their stories were represented. Oral histories contain a lot of valuable information in a format that is not suitable for exhibition, unless the history is edited. This leaves decisions about how an individual gets represented up to a curator or video editor. In contrast, a digital story is a short narrative video that is designed for exhibition and functions as a complete audio-visual representation created by the subject of the video. By choosing this method, we handed representational control to the storytellers.

The digital form of these representations also allows our storytellers to create complex narratives, that avoid narrowing their lives to a single-identity focus. The complexity of content and the audio-visual nature of the artifact creates space for storytellers to consider the hierarchies of their lives with their own critical lens. The dynamic nature of the digital artifact also presents opportunities to avoid codification. Storytellers can make claims about themselves and disrupt simplistic narratives around those claims all in the same digital artifact.

This foundation informed the goal of creating a replicable model for expanding representations of queer which acknowledge intersectional oppressions, are self-reflective and attend to the institutionalized natures of privilege and power. I found guidance towards these goals in Chandra Mohanty's call for feminist work that can "reveal how the particular is often universally significant—without using the universal to erase the particular or positing an unbridgeable gulf between the two terms."¹⁹⁹ Mohanty's framework attends to both the individual, micropolitics, and the structural, macropolitics, illuminating the connections between the two. I recognized the possibility of individual personal stories—the context of lived experience—to create opportunities for audiences to make this micro-macro connection. With relatable stories the potential for connection across perceived difference exists. And the possibility for people to see how these individual lives are impacted by larger social structures—like family laws, gender norms, religious institutions and more—creates a space for critical reflection on the very institutions that regulate our lives in so many unmarked ways. The digital films present viewers with opportunities for affective connection, building relationships between audience and artifact that highlight and disrupt cultural norms.

¹⁹⁹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 501.

I selected the participatory model of the digital storytelling workshop as a pathway to these possibilities for digital artifacts capable of filling historical gaps while disrupting heteronormative histories. This model also allowed us to be conscious of the perils and possibilities inherent in representations. Particularly when engaging people whose identities have been both mis- and under-represented, it is critical to be thoughtful about the impact of each representational decision that we make. The digital storytelling model creates a unique opportunity for each person *being* represented to *create* that representation. While oral histories have the advantage of collecting a great deal of cohesive historical information about an individual, the resulting narratives have to go through significant editing before reaching a length and format appropriate for audience viewing, either in an exhibit or online. Ultimately, the person featured does not determine how their story is represented to the public. The digital storytelling model, in contrast, allows participants to literally narrate their own representation. It is with all of this in mind that I sought to create a workshop model where each moment reflected the values of egalitarian, supportive and thoughtful engagement in the creation of a uniquely individual queer representation.

While I held this specific vision for the DSP, I was fortunate to collaborate with Angelica Macklin in the development and production of the workshop. Macklin is a local media-producer and fellow doctoral student in the Gender, Women, Sexuality Studies program at the University of Washington. Our common feminist training coupled with our mutual commitment to social justice and shared authority helped Macklin and I to develop specific practices that guided our DSP. In the following paragraphs, I will detail some of the more significant choices that we made. Each choice supported the values named earlier of collaboration, critical consciousness and relational responsibility.

Collaboration

The DSP was designed to create a collaborative community space. Not only did the individual storytellers collaborate with the larger project of historical narrative production, they worked together with each other throughout the workshop. They supported and facilitated each other's narrative development, which impacted the final product. Following are choices Macklin and I made to support the collaborative space.

Let Go of Outcome

When leading a collaborative process, we bring in our commitments and hopes for the outcome of the process. However, investing in collaboration requires freedom for the product to be impacted by all those present. To support this, we must be willing to release our personal vision of the outcome. Despite all of our ideas about what these videos could be and do, once we were in the room with our workshop participants we handed the outcome over whole-heartedly to them. This means that if the participant created a video that they ultimately decided was too personal and no one should ever see it, we supported that. If the participant felt it was really important to make a video about their favorite meatloaf recipe—a topic which does not appear to relate to LGBT or queer identities—we supported that. We communicated this repeatedly throughout the workshop. This, on first hearing, seems unlikely to be true. Why would a group invest all this time and resources into making a workshop happen and then not expect a particular product at the end? As the workshop progressed, and participants were reminded of this truth, they began to believe it more. Of course, we had to support this statement with our actions, not just our words, which meant it was essential to be transparent about our goals.

Participant-Led Adaptations

A truly collaborative model makes room for the contributions of all those participating. While a lot of work must be accomplished during these four days, we did build in time for incorporating participant suggestions. Several of these suggestions came up during our discussion of guidelines. Some of these were simple additions to our agreements while working together, and some of these were suggestions of different activities to get to know each other. Having the ability to act responsively to suggestions modeled a collaborative working space and demonstrated our commitment to the values that we had discussed.

Embrace challenges

Collaboration requires a flexible support of the challenges each individual may bring. Not everything went smoothly during the 4 days we spent together. Adapting to the challenges presented was important for gaining the support and trust of our participants. While it is common to face challenges when enacting a project, I call attention to this principle as a way of recognizing the context or lived experiences of the participants. Demonstrating flexibility to adaptively respond to the individual challenges faced by our participants was an important way to model our awareness of the connections between the systems that structure our lives and the individual impacts. For example, despite the fact that all participants committed to attend all four days of the workshop, one participant had to miss the third day of the workshop due to personal challenges that were unforeseen. Rather than excluding this individual, we worked with them over the phone and email to ensure that they could complete the process. Another individual was struggling to use the software that we selected, which required a PC, when she was used to using a Macintosh. After some attempts to assist, Macklin quickly taught her to use a similar program

available on her personal Macintosh computer. This flexibility increased the participant's comfort level with the project and helped bring them closer to completion.

Relational Responsibility

Effective collaboration can only occur when the people involved trust and respect each other. Therefore, building relationships that are accountable to each other is an essential step in supporting true collaboration. The following are choices that Macklin and I made in the workshop to support these relationships.

Transparency

Trust and accountability in relationship-based productions requires that all involved understand the commitments of the participants and particularly of the leaders—that there is transparency. Macklin and I both introduced ourselves along with our personal and professional investments in the workshop. I also spoke about the goals of QTM and how this DSP fit with that larger project. We laid out the possible outcomes for their completed videos, which ranged from inclusion in a queer history exhibit, online access, showings at live screenings, inclusion in an historical archive, to locking away for their own private viewings. We explained *why* we cared about queer histories and what we hoped to change about historical representations. We explained our beliefs about the importance of telling queer stories and why we chose the digital storytelling format. And at the end of all that, we affirmed again that we are also committed to their individual process, wherever that led them. This foundation was essential for establishing trust and open communication with the participants. We also explicitly communicated our intent that the workshop itself be easily replicable, and how this influenced all of the choices we made including the technological tools they would use. Communicating our investments and goals

established the foundation for being able to truly release the outcome of the workshop to the participants in an authentic and effective manner.

Ownership

Honoring our commitments to collaboration, Macklin and I determined that the best way to give full control and accountability to our storytellers was to give them complete ownership over the final product. We designed the workshop to ensure that the full ownership of the completed films belonged to the video creators, a highly unusual step in museum narrative production. We helped storytellers to determine what kind of licensing they wanted to apply to their videos and advised them that they retained all rights and decision making control over their finished products. At the end of the workshop, we asked participants to allow QTM to use the videos for our work with MOHAI. All of them agreed to share their completed products at that point. We also provided information about local historical archives, including MOHAI's, to whom storytellers may choose to donate a copy of their video. We invited all film makers to participate in a special screening at the Queering the History Museum Symposium, where the videos were received with great emotion and admiration. While we are excited that all the film makers chose to share their videos with QTM, we accepted that this decision was fully theirs. Giving film makers full ownership rights to their videos is important for honoring our commitment to the storytellers' representational control.

Establish Guidelines

Our transparency and release of control were first steps in establishing the kind of working space we wished to create at the workshop. Equally important was taking time to establish clear guidelines for the kinds of interactions that would occur. Though all participants

identified as LGBT or queer, they had very few apparent commonalities beyond this. We spent some time talking about guidelines for a safer space,²⁰⁰ and opened that conversation to the participants to add or adapt the proposed guidelines we brought. This was very helpful and gave us time to discuss the range of personal identities present in the room and do some educating about gender pronouns. We also discussed the fact that we would make mistakes in language and approach during our time together, and how we might deal with those mistakes. It was absolutely essential to invest this time early in the workshop, in order to create the kind of space in which participants felt supported in revealing intimate details of their lives.

In addition to discussing how we may impact each other during our time together, we also discussed how the film makers may impact people in their representational choices. To truly model our commitments to representational integrity and intersectional equality, Macklin and I agreed to uphold higher ethical standards than are legally required. As we encouraged storytellers to select images for their video, we also encouraged them to consider the implications of their choices. Did they have permission to include that image? How would the individual included in the image be impacted by inclusion in this video? Who created the graphic that they liked online? Would the selected images perpetuate any larger cultural stereotypes? The ethical questions we posed were just as important as the legal standards we adhered to in helping storytellers determine what to include in their videos. This sparked some great

²⁰⁰ We used the concept of safer space here in acknowledgement that what feels safe for one person may not feel safe for another. Rather, we strive to create a safer space and to acknowledge the discomforts and failures that will likely occur any time a group is convened. Thanks to the Coalition for Safer Spaces and the Trans and Womyn's Action Camp for sharing their Safer Space materials which inspired ours.

discussions amongst the participants, several of whom shared that they had never considered the impact of these choices in this way.

We also considered the significance of access to the digital tools utilized when designing the workshop, a design guideline that shaped the outcome. Transparency and ownership of the final product extends beyond the workshop itself. Rather than holding exclusive the significant intellectual labor of designing the workshop, we explicitly invited our storytellers to use what they learned that weekend in their own lives. Given our commitment to creating a replicable workshop, we chose software that would be easily accessible to a wide public. In this case, we chose to use the free PC software, Photo Story and Audacity. PhotoStory is a relatively simple program that participants could download onto their home computers and easily use with some basic training. Audacity is also free and easily allows people to edit audio recordings. Selecting PhotoStory meant that we were limited to still images in the videos, but this limitation did not stymie the creativity of the storytellers.

Critical Consciousness

Grounding the workshop design in our own practices of critical consciousness building, Macklin and I committed to ongoing, deliberate self-reflection.

Build in Reflection

Creating time for reflection is essential for several reasons. Given our goal of helping individuals connect their lived experiences to larger social structures, we looked for ways to facilitate that process during the workshop itself. For example, on the morning of the second day we asked participants to share a short summary of the narrative that they were developing, based on the work of the first day. One person began the exercise at the center of our collective circle.

After they completed their sharing, someone else in the group named one thing in the story that resonated with their own. They then placed themselves next to the first storyteller and repeated the process. At the end of the sharing, storytellers had created a human chain of connections between them. Many of them were visibly crying as they responded profoundly to the wounds that they shared in common, and the successes that they had carved out of mutual challenges. While participants initially believed they had little in common, this process illuminated shared experiences and struggles. Not only did this exercise illustrate these connections, it also was identified by the participants as a cathartic and compelling experience of group bonding.

Creating times for reflection is also essential to the process of individual story development for the participants. We asked them to reflect upon their most significant life moments, including great challenges. Working together to draw out the specific narrative that they wanted to share in their videos was laborious and emotional work. All were surprised by the degree of emotional involvement they experienced that weekend. This kind of work can be overwhelming and stagnating if individuals are not supported through this process. Giving participants time to process these experiences both individually and collectively was essential to this process. In addition, giving participants time to reflect validated the significance of the work that they were accomplishing. In workshop feedback, this practice was recognized repeatedly as important to helping the participants feel supported and move through the process.

Narrative Structure

Self-reflection is an important practice for building critical awareness. Audiences have been trained to receive narrative structure in standard ways, often in linear progress narratives that feature a standard array of common characters. For narrative producers, critical awareness of these standard expectations can help producers determine the audience-impact of their tale. As

part of our commitment to representational integrity, we offered participants multiple examples of how to construct a cohesive narrative for their videos. We took this opportunity to explain the typical narrative arc, including its specific linear elements and characters, commonly found in media in the U.S. This simple act of education exposed one of the very structures that organizes our cultural norms about how events unfold. While presenting participants with this information, we offered them choices for constructing a narrative arc in their story that felt most true to them. This included tools, such as collage, photo montages, an organizing theme—for example, an object or a color—and abstracted images. This significant moment in the workshop opened storytellers to a variety of approaches for constructing their videos resulted in some very creative works.

DSP Workshop Results

The workshop was held over two intense weekends in April 2013. While the CAC required a significant long-term commitment, participation in the digital storytelling workshop format required a two-week investment and promised each participant that they would gain a personal video out of that investment. This lower threshold of involvement contributed to more success in meeting our goals of prioritizing the inclusion of those marginalized within existing LGBT collections due to gender, race and ethnicity.²⁰¹ Thanks in part to relationships established during my past work with the local Women Who Rock project, the invitation to apply for participation in the DSP reached more networks that included queer communities of color. Thus we received many applications from individuals who identified as a racial or ethnic minority. As

²⁰¹ For details on the participant selection process for the DSP, see Chapter Four.

a result, the films produced provided greater representation of queer communities of color than we were able to achieve in the object display in *Revealing Queer*.



Pictured are our Digital Storytellers: Isis Asare, Mian Carvin, Margaret Elisabeth, Jacque Larrainzar, Fia Gibbs, Petra Davis, Caleb Hernandez and Jourdan Keith. Photo by Macklin Macklin.

Our eight participants each used their own language to self-identify, so the specific terminology selected varies from person to person, but we can still utilize this information to construct a demographic composite of the film makers. All the QTM storytellers described their race and ethnicity in different terminology, with three identifying as mixed-race, two identifying as black, three as white, and two including Mexican heritage in their identities. One of our participants identifies as Trans/Queer and another as Genderqueer. Two of our participants identify as bisexual; three as lesbian; three as queer and one as gay. One participant identifies as disabled. Three storytellers were geographically located outside of Seattle. The one unifying factor is that all participants identified as queer in some way. While the shorter time-commitment may have made this opportunity more accessible, there were some obstacles to participation. Some of the applicants selected were unable to attend due to work conflicts on the designated days, health concerns, or transportation challenges getting to Bothell.

The DSP produced eight videos which are designed to be viewed individually, but are also available as a 35 -minute composite film. As individual narratives, several of the short films have been included in regional film festivals and events around the United States. Three of the individual films were selected for inclusion in *Revealing Queer*, based on how their content fit the exhibit narrative constructed by the CAC. Ultimately, Macklin and I were impressed with the intimacy and creativity of the videos that developed in the DSP. Many of the filmmakers did not have access to historical photos of themselves and responded to that challenge in inspiring ways. Viewers have found the films relatable and impactful, even as the films play with the ways in which we think about gender and sexuality. However, the narrative structure can make it difficult to understand the larger context of the stories that were shared. The ways in which the storytellers have impacted local history is not always apparent from the videos, so their use for historical research is more inspirational than factual—inspiring people to find out more. Macklin and I emphasized the process of making these films, over the product, and several of the filmmakers have repeatedly commented on the transformative nature of that process.²⁰² The workshop participants reported finding community, feeling strength in the collective as well as viewing the significance of their own lives in new and positive ways.²⁰³

Digital tools, like the digital storytelling workshop model, offer museums and communities new ways to archive and represent histories, with the opportunity to bridge geographical, physical and knowledge boundaries. As pointed out by multiple authors, digital modalities offer to destabilize that which is familiar²⁰⁴ and inspire “liberatory fantasies” that

²⁰² Angelica Macklin, Personal Communication, April 2013.

²⁰³ Participant feedback forms completed April 2013.

²⁰⁴ Tara McPherson, “Introduction: Media Studies and the Digital Humanities,” *Cinema Journal* 48:2 (Winter 2009) 123.

offer a “powerful and persuasive means of social agency.”²⁰⁵ Yet, as Tara McPherson reminds us, we must apply the same critical consciousness to digital resources as we do to other fields and tools.²⁰⁶ Not only is access to digital spaces regulated by many social structures (internet service; device capabilities; search vocabularies; program norms) but digital platforms can inherently codify the very static notions of identity and exclusion that critical feminist work seeks to address. Thus it is imperative that even digital interventions are subject to critical interrogations and reflective construction of practices that support integrity, collaboration and equality.

Engaging digital tools with critical consciousness, a commitment to relational accountability and an embrace of collaboration, opens up new opportunities to share historical authority, add to the existing archive and disrupt heteronormative histories. The films produced in the DSP continue to travel, after the physical museum exhibit at MOHAI has closed; they are still being screened in classrooms, online and at film showings. The space for creative representation that the digital films manifested was essential for participants who no longer have access to the material memorabilia which would typically populate a museum display. Through collage and creative photography, filmmakers constructed a personal history where no historical representation existed. The online accessibility of the films as individual and collective artifacts continues to create opportunities to explore additional worthy research questions of access, key word tagging and online representational management.

²⁰⁵ Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre, “Chicana/o Artivism: Judy Baca’s Digital Work with Youth of Color” in *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, edited by Anna Everett, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008) 81–82. Also, Tara McPherson, “Why are the Digital Humanities so White? Or thinking the histories of race and computation” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities* edited by Matthew K. Gold (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

²⁰⁶ Tara McPherson, “Designing for Difference,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 25:1 (2014) 181.

Conclusions

Applying critical feminist methods to the QTM-MOHAI collaboration centered in critical consciousness. Awareness of the exclusionary roots of our institutional partner deepened QTM's commitments to shared authority and community collaborations. While our collaboration resulted in many successes, QTM's interventions into the museum processes utilized by MOHAI were shaped and limited by the existing institutional structures. In contrast, the DSP had more freedom to operate outside of MOHAI's structures. The resulting workshop model centered relational accountability, ongoing critical reflection and representational awareness. The properties of digital artifacts created unique opportunities to embrace complexity, highlight structural norms and build affective connections between the subject and the viewer.

Chapter 3: Digital Disruptions

Over the course of two weekends, with homework during the intervening week, eight queer participants learned how to use digital tools to capture their personal stories. These stories became representations of the histories of individual queers, and also stood in for the dearth of queer narratives currently present in museum archives. These digital tools combined with the creative vulnerability of the participants produced artifacts that address many of the challenges museums struggle with when responding to calls for more diverse representations in our archives and exhibits. The films were made despite a lack of material artifacts that could supplement the stories told. The films tackled complex topics of identity, presenting shifting identity labels, complicating binary notions of gender and calling into question normative ideas of family, sexuality and belonging. While each film speaks to issues of queer experience generally, it is clear that the individual narrative is not speaking for an essentialist notion of what it means to be queer. With little money but a lot of support, these filmmakers created digital artifacts that challenge the perceived limits of historical representation in museums.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, heteronormativity in museums is perpetuated through linear, dominant progress narratives, static and simplistic representations that are both binary and hierarchical. A commitment to disrupting the present state of identity-based exclusion in museums must, then, consider narrative production that has the potential to contain complexity, move in non-standard chronologies of time, exceed binaries and resist hierarchical commitments—in short, we need tools that have the potential for dynamic, intersectional representations. Digital tools have the potential to functionally meet these goals. When deployed in a framework of critical conscious and relationally-responsible collaboration, digital tools can help us disrupt heteronormative histories.

Grounded in the tools of critical feminist museology, the digital storytelling workshop was designed as an interventionary process in the hopes of creating historical artifacts that could both add to and unsettle museum representations of queer. In this chapter, I analyze the results of that workshop: the individual narrative films created by our digital storytellers. Building off the critical feminist foundations of the workshop and tools, I consider the films produced in the workshop as both products of our intervention and as tools for queering museology generally, and history museums specifically. These films are artifacts that bring together theory and application. They are visual representations of both the critical feminist *process* of narrative production and the *product*: a short personal story documenting the experiences of a queer individual. These films, I argue, exceed the limits of traditional historical artifacts in their ability to build affective resonance with viewers. This resonance creates unique opportunities to inspire recognition and critical questions in audiences. The digital stories, occupying a functional space between traditional artifact and performative repertoire,²⁰⁷ function as evocative objects that transgress traditional boundaries of historical representation.

The Workshop

Imagine eight strangers gathered into a small room for four intense days, two consecutive weekends. The only thing that we know we have in common is that all storytellers, and one facilitator, identity as queer in some way. But what does a queer identity really designate? All we truly know is that we see ourselves as outside of normative boundaries of gender and sexuality, in some way, in any way. Having read all the applications that brought them to the workshop that day, I also knew that their own self descriptions of identity were unique and distinct from each

²⁰⁷Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

other. Would we be able to build a trusted space of community and collaboration? Macklin and I agreed on the significance of facilitating a gathering in which each participant felt supported, felt understood and, as much as possible, felt safe.²⁰⁸ These are foundational for the relational responsibility that we held as a core feminist commitment. For this reason, we invested several hours into the tasks of getting to know each other and establishing community norms.

We opened the session with as much transparency as possible about our personal and institutional stakes in the workshop, what the participants could expect from their time with us and the variety of possible outcomes that our work together might result in. This action supported our commitments to accountability—a central tenet in building trusting, collaborative relationships. As the workshop was sponsored as part of the larger QTM project, storytellers knew that there was a possibility of some of the completed videos being selected for inclusion in the exhibit, *Revealing Queer*, which was under development at the time of the workshop. We also let them know that all participants would have a chance to screen their film at the Queering the History Museum Symposium which was held at MOHAI two months after the workshop. We used this screening as a deadline allowing filmmakers the intervening months to make sure that they were happy with their completed films, and to make adjustments if they so desired. This deadline also gave filmmakers the opportunity to reflect on their final product and decide if this was something that they wished to share publicly, or hold for personal viewing.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Our approach acknowledges that one space very rarely can feel safe for all of the people in it at the same time, due to the varied and intersectional identities and experiences that we all bring to that space. Our goal was to support safety as much as possible.

²⁰⁹ Kimberly Christen-Withey reminds us that the choice to hide cultural and personal artifacts is as important as the practice of collecting in general. The mandate to make all materials accessible to the public is a Western cultural tradition that requires critical examination. “Digital Dialogue: On Not Looking: Ethics and Access in the Digital Humanities” presentation at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, March 25, 2014. <http://mith.umd.edu/dialogues/dd-spring-2014-kimberly-withey-christen/>. Christen-Withey’s work echoes the work of indigenous scholars and activists who have long advocated for the privacy of indigenous artifacts and human

Throughout the workshop, storytellers worked both individually and collaboratively. They helped each other reflect on story ideas and story structures. They gave each other visual ideas and suggested details to enhance the final videos. There were challenging moments of interaction, particularly around pronoun use and racial differences,²¹⁰ and it was clear that the range of identities present at the workshop presented a relational challenge to connection. What we all discovered during those intense hours together was how much queerness had marked each person, bridging some of these gaps through shared experiences of structural violence. These connections were most vivid during an exercise that Macklin led, as we returned to our workshop on that first Sunday. Each participant shared a general story idea that they hoped to develop that day. As we stood in a circle, listening to the individual storyteller share a small, important life moment, another storyteller would step forward when they recognized an aspect of the story that connected to their own personal experiences, physically joining the speaker and building a web of human connections, as each participant shared the connecting point, and then told their own narration. Tears of empathy and awe sprang forth throughout this exercise. Issues of visibility, of the loss of home and family of origin, and questions of belonging were central themes that arose again and again in this early stage of story development. This moment physically mapped a path of cohesion that helped each storyteller deepen their risk-taking and supported their vulnerabilities. In this moment, and in other collaborative moments built into the workshop, participants helped each other to access and narrate a personal story that went beyond the basic

remains held in museum collections. The 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which requires museums to return funerary objects and human remains to tribes, is evidence of this advocacy.

²¹⁰ One moment that I observed due to racial differences involved a white participant reaching out to touch the hair of a participant of color. This invasion of personal space disrespects the body of the participant of color at the same time casting this individual's hair as a novelty, an "other," unimaginable and fascinating within dominant norms of appearance that feature the qualities associated with whiteness. In workshop feedback, one participant who identifies outside of the cis-normative gender binary stated that the most challenging parts of the workshop for zir were other participant's inability to use correct pronouns when speaking to and about zir.

telling of life events. These mutual supports of collective development facilitated stories that are rich with emotion, complexity and vulnerability. The power of the collective greatly impacted what was produced in that moment.

This focus on the collective was also ethically tied to the consciousness of power that Macklin and I brought to the workshop. As facilitators who both occupy spaces within the University, we held a position of authority and control over the space and the experiences of the filmmakers. Drawing from our feminist training, we sought both transparency around our positions as well as collaboration with the filmmakers in the workshop. Collaboration is a means of sharing authority and power, in the final product as well as in the process of product-development. Documentary filmmaker Calvin Pryluck discusses the challenge of considering all of the possible ways in which participation in a public film may impact those who are featured in it, acknowledging that we put people at risk when we use them in films and it is impossible to account for every possible outcome.²¹¹ Pryluck advocates for collaboration between filmmakers and subjects as a move towards more ethical filmmaking, including the recognition that all people involved in the process of filmmaking are impacting each other.²¹² While Pryluck is addressing a more traditional model of film production in which the subject and producer function separately in the filmmaking process, his call for collaboration is a relevant intervention in the kinds of documentary representations that our digital storytelling workshop sought to produce.

²¹¹ Calvin Pryluck, "Ultimately We Are All Outsiders: The Ethics of Documentary Filming," *New Challenges for Documentary* edited by Alan Rosenthal and John Corner (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005) 197.

²¹² Pryluck, 206-207.

In some ways, the very model of digital storytelling is attending to subject participation, as the subject of the film is also the designer of the film. Yet, Macklin and I maintained awareness of the ways in which our actions would inevitably impact the final product. Thoughtful attention to the ways that we impact each other in the production process is an issue also raised by feminist oral historian Katherine Borland. She recognizes that the person collecting, or in our case facilitating, the story production is in fact the first audience for the narrative.²¹³ Our very presence as viewers of these films-in-development shaped the content that was created during the workshop. With this awareness, Macklin and I supported collaboration, of the participants with each other, as well as between the participants and ourselves as leaders. This showed up in several ways. We designed aspects of the workshop to be responsive to participant suggestions, and adapted group activities to accommodate concerns about getting to know each other, use of technology, creativity and processing the feelings that were invoked by the process itself. Critical reflection, built into workshop activities, functioned as an essential support for collaboration, transparency and shared authority.

Digital Tools

Approaching narrative production from a critical feminist framework requires tools of production that are highly flexible. The tools selected for creation will absolutely impact the form and meaning of the final product. We sought tools that would facilitate narrative of many forms: linear, non-linear, abstract, complex, simplistic, evocative, visual. In short, we needed tools that were malleable enough to respond to the visions and needs of the storytellers. Digital tools have the flexibility to encompass the varied requirements of the filmmakers. By selecting

²¹³ Katharine Borland, “‘That’s Not What I Said’: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research” in *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge Press, 1991) 63.

digital media, we freed our storytellers from the limitations imposed by textual or three-dimensional artifacts. In selecting digital tools, we embraced the potential that digital media offers in multiple ways. Specifically, digital tools of narrative production transcend geographical and physical boundaries. This format creates space for creative re-tellings that do not fit neatly into chronological productions of time. Because of the accessibility of these tools, the digital medium is freed from institutional requirements for production and transmission. The digital medium captures the results of collaboration while inviting viewers into a new, affective collaboration. This format creates space for complexities of narrative and self-identification. The digital format facilitates representations that move beyond binary and hierarchical conventions.

While I am advocating for the use of digital tools to re-think the collection and representation of the historical archive, I do not find their power to be in their essential digital nature. Rather, I agree with other digital scholars that we must apply our critical lens to tools we use, considering the unconscious biases that can be literally encoded into operating systems that guide and shape our digital tools. Tara McPherson calls attention to the ways that modular thinking shapes information systems, decreasing complexity and removing context in ways that are similar to the management of information in museum archives and exhibits.²¹⁴ In fact, queer and feminist information studies scholars have, like McPherson, analyzed the inherently binary, modular thinking present in the databases and information tagging systems that libraries, archives and museums use to organize and access historical materials.²¹⁵ Binary logics do not allow complexity and force hierarchy within over-lapping identities. Within a binary system, a person cannot identify as both male and female in any way. Within a hierarchical system, a

²¹⁴ McPherson 2014, 181.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

person must identify first with, for example, a gender identity and only within that larger category of gender will additional identities be included, for instance race and sexuality.²¹⁶ This hierarchical binary thinking is inherent in heteronormativity. Processes of organization like this perpetuate the hierarchical, single-identity focus that intersectional feminists advocate against. These systems of logic, rife with unconscious bias, underpin the digital tools that we may choose to use. Therefore, digital tools must be subject to the same processes of critical reflection that I advocate for in critical feminist museology as a whole.

Rather than adding critical discourse of identities onto an existing system, “as things that can simply be added to our analyses (or to our metadata),” McPherson argues that “[g]ender, race, sexuality, class and disability might then be understood . . . as operating principles of a different order, always already coursing through discourse and matter.”²¹⁷ We cannot separate the identity-based structures that operate in our social worlds from any aspect of the work that we produce, despite our desire to do so. Critical consciousness urges us to acknowledge the social structures that shape our work, including our museum exhibits and artifacts. At the same time, McPherson acknowledges the challenge of studying “all discourse and all matter at once,” a challenge that museum professionals have struggled with as much as those in information systems.²¹⁸ Our response to the vast amount of information that we collect, manage and represent is to categorize.

McPherson calls attention to the power in information management. Drawing from a theory introduced by Karen Barad, McPherson connects power to what museum professionals

²¹⁶ Hope A. Olsen, “How we Construct Subjects: A Feminist Analysis,” *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* edited by Rebecca Dean and Patrick Keilty (California: Litwin Books, 2013).

²¹⁷ McPherson 2014, 181.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

may call the curatorial perspective, but which Barad calls the “agential cut.”²¹⁹ The agential cut is an acknowledgement that the choices we make in collection, curation and presentation shape the meaning of materials which we utilize. The agency of the curator is inherent in the very name “agential cut,” calling attention to the power inherent in selection. The cut creates difference and meaning by what is selected for focus. The arrangement of materials in proximity to one another, the process of determining what is included and what is not may simply be intended to reflect cultural narratives, but in fact this process also helps construct those same narratives.²²⁰ The collection of artifacts becomes representative of meaning, even as it makes meaning, an idea that is also found in the writings of Stuart Hall and Sandoval.²²¹ While this concept of representational authority is not new, McPherson reminds us that the agential cut operates at multiple levels, including in the digital tools that we use, and in the materials that are organized by or even created by those tools. For those designing digital tools McPherson advocates working in a “mode that explicitly engages power and difference from the get-go, laying bare our theoretical allegiances and exploring the intra-actions of culture and matter.”²²² To this I would add, those utilizing digital tools have a responsibility to make the same commitments. Without the technical expertise to create new tools, how can we consciously utilize the tools available to us?

These commitments were explicitly engaged in the selection of digital tools and the design of the digital storytelling workshop, as outlined in Chapter Two. In the videos that were produced, we can see the results of that commitment to a critically conscious process. In the

²¹⁹ McPherson 2014, 179-181 referencing Karen Barad, “Posthuman Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, 3 (2003) 801-831.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Stuart Hall, “Encoding/decoding,” *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1972-79* (New York: Routledge Press, 2003) 129-130. Sandoval (2000), Kindle Location 1127-1157.

²²² McPherson 2014, 182.

resulting digital stories, we are given an opportunity to see what happens when the power to differentiate—to make the agential cut—is given to the subject.

Digital Artifacts as Evocative Objects

The heteronormative society in which we live does not support those that deviate from expected gender roles, either in gender presentation or in romantic partner selection. This can have significant consequences for people who identify as LGBTQ. Of our digital storytellers, many had experienced exclusions in their lives, from family members, homes or nations, leaving them little access to the photos or memorabilia that might help tell their stories. Muñoz discusses this fact of queer life, recognizing that queerness often travels covertly which has “everything to do with the fact that leaving too much of a trace has often meant that the queer subject has left herself open to attack.”²²³ This leads Muñoz to the ephemeral evidence that is necessary to assemble when documenting queerness. He defines queerness as “a possibility, a sense of self-knowing, a mode of sociality and relationality.”²²⁴ Queer as identity, queer as way-of-being, queer as a marker as other—how do you capture the multi-valiant and the ephemeral that is queer in an artifact?

Digital Disruptions: Escaping Institutionalization, Embracing Complexity

The format of the digital story allowed QTM storytellers freedom to eschew traditional institutional frameworks for the creation and transmission of a narrative. Without access to childhood artifacts, visualizing a personal story requires creativity; this requirement is welcomed in the digital tools that were utilized. Because the artifact being produced stood on its own

²²³ Jose Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8:2 (1996) 6.

²²⁴ Muñoz 1996, 5.

outside of any exhibit context, the narrative was also free from adopting traditional exhibition requirements. This freedom from dominant institutional frameworks releases the storyteller to narrate complexity, feature the ephemeral and creatively utilize a variety of manufactured or symbolic imagery to communicate their personal stories. Filmmaker Jacque Larrainzar created compelling abstract images around geographical landmarks that were customized with refracted light; these images effectively connected the storytellers' childhood in Mexico with the storyteller's current life in Washington State, despite the fact that there were no images of Larrainzar's childhood.²²⁵

The freedom to be creative about visual imagery opened up the possibility of telling difficult stories—experiences of trauma or interpersonal relationships that may not be captured in a photograph or artifact. Storyteller Petra Davis included the experiences of sexual assault and suicide with a visual of red paint splattered blood-like on a plain background.²²⁶ Similarly, Davis used a clay figure squeezing into a too-small box to visualize the traumatic impacts of confining oneself within the limits of heteronormativity. Visual freedom also created space to represent difficult family relationships, without having to make public the identity of these family members. For example, storyteller Jourdan Imani Keith utilized a photo of a raven that became the visual focus when she was describing her difficult relationship with her mother.²²⁷ This not only symbolized a challenging relationship, but allowed Keith to give her mother representational respect; by not using her image, Keith avoided associating the visual of her mother with harmful interpersonal moments in their relationship. Rather than constructing a

²²⁵ Jacque Larrainzar's film is called *Omecihuatl* and is currently available to view online at <https://queeringthemuseum.org/previous-projects/narrating-our-own-stories-a-queer-digital-storytelling-project/>

²²⁶ Petra Davis's film is called *Love Petra* and is currently available to view online at <https://queeringthemuseum.org/previous-projects/narrating-our-own-stories-a-queer-digital-storytelling-project/>

²²⁷ Jourdan Imani Keith's film is called *Every Woman, Ever More* and is available to view online at <https://queeringthemuseum.org/previous-projects/narrating-our-own-stories-a-queer-digital-storytelling-project/>

narrative based solely on available objects, the digital storytelling process allows individuals to creatively construct visual imagery which supports their personal narrative. This freedom allowed personal stories to be told despite unequal representation in museum archives, even when individuals lost access to their own memorabilia because their identities forced family and geographic disconnections.

The freedom to operate outside of dominant modes of display creates create opportunities for digital stories to represent identities in dynamic and complex ways. The digital stories create a unique representational space that embraces complexities, allowing for inclusion and disruption at the same time. Effectively representing intersectional identities requires an embrace of complexity and ambiguity. Karen Mary Davalos, in her call for museums to reject a single-identity focus, encourages museums to embrace the complexities that result from overlapping forms of social oppression.²²⁸ Producing a representation of complexity creates opportunities to recognize socially-constructed categories of identity, while also resisting simplistic categorizations—the very attributes advocated by intersectional feminists and queer theorists. Yet, museum exhibits frequently represent identities as static—literally unchanging and often unquestioned within exhibit spaces. Storyteller Elisabeth Margaret constructed a gender journey that included movement from he/him pronouns, to she/her to ze/zir²²⁹ pronouns.²³⁰ This storyteller literally presented zir body for analysis, even as ze narrated zir own unfolding understanding of gender and the possibilities for zir personal gender identity and life. This

²²⁸ Karen Mary Davalos, *Exhibiting Mestizaje: Mexican (American) Museums in the Diaspora* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001) 160.

²²⁹ Ze and Zir are gender neutral pronouns utilized by many non-binary individuals. Throughout this writing, I utilize the pronouns requested by each individual, as indicated through personal conversation and their workshop applications.

²³⁰ Margaret Elisabeth's film is called *A Story of Margaret: Continually Coming Out*.

complex tale reflected critically on the normative institution of gender identity, claiming a unique gender identity at the same time that gender itself is disrupted.

Keith's narrative wove individual identity-struggles with national activism, focusing on a transformative experience of community and visibility at the April 25, 1993 March on Washington D.C. Identities of race, gender, sexuality and religion were woven together through her narration, communicating one moment of the unique and intersectional experiences of her life. That one multi-layered moment effectively communicates the multiplicity of lived experience. The digital story as a representational tool has the capacity to communicate complexity effectively, through visual, voice and movement—a feat that the static imagery of the exhibit struggles to accomplish. In a totally different time and geographical location, Caleb Hernandez narrated his own unique experience that weaves and un-weaves layers of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion. His story centers on his tattoo—pink and purple triangles—and the meaning of the symbols on his chest in order to narrate his expulsion from a religious family upon the revelation of his gay identity.²³¹ Hernandez's story unsettles common conceptions of religious families, even as he processes his own questioning of religion, gender and sexuality.

Digital Disruptions: Resisting Hegemony

This complexity within digital stories ensures that each individual narrative does not easily disappear into the dominant, hegemonic voice—of society, or even of the larger exhibition. Representations of LGBTQ experiences are so rare in museums, that when displays do occur they are often tasked with representing the idea of LGBTQ identities in a monolithic form, rather than representing the particular lives and identities of those who participated. There

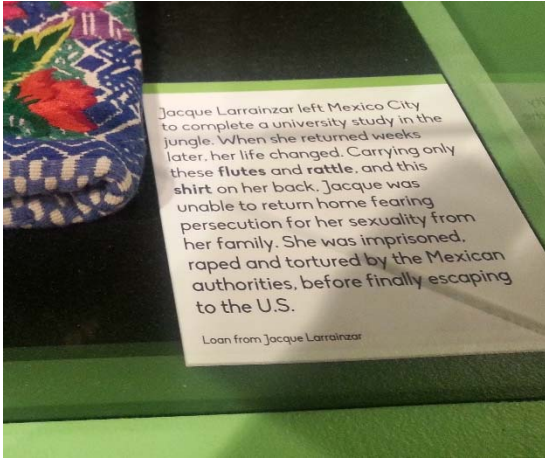
²³¹ Caleb Hernandez's film is called *Identity* and is available to view online at <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2016/04/16/queer-digital-stories-identity/>



is, of course, no monolithic experience of being LGBTQ. People who identify as LGBTQ are present across all strata of society. But it is the very rarity of representation that creates a pressure for a single display to speak to the entire range of diverse experiences and identities of those who are LGBTQ. No single, or even series of displays, can accomplish

this. In consequence, the display that is given prime museum space must choose which narratives are told, and which are left for a different day. This narrative format tends to shape a hegemonic representation—a grand narrative—through which even text and imagery designed to challenge the dominant narrative is subsumed. For example, despite explicit exhibit labels acknowledging both the limitations of the representations in *Revealing Queer* and the diversity of experiences that make up LGBTQ lives,²³² multiple audience members expressed their disappointment at not seeing their own narratives included within the exhibit. In addition, the preponderance of imagery featured white men and women, which seemed to swallow the smaller numbers of images and artifacts from men and women of color in the exhibit. This experience was articulated by members of the museum audience through comment cards, visitor’s log comments and in conversations with the *Revealing Queer* team. It was relatively easy to overlook, for example, Larrainzar’s shirt, rattles and flute displayed in a case with a short narrative label, as visitors walked toward a wall constructing a display corner featuring “Lived Experiences.”

²³² The label reads as follows: “Curator’s Note: *Revealing Queer* is not an all-encompassing narrative of the last 40 years of queer history in the Puget Sound region; it only scratches the surface of the rich and diverse stories here. A community advisory committee comprised of LGBTQ organizations, activists and scholars, shaped and refined the content in this exhibition to include as many voices as possible. The community’s goal is to create an exhibit that inspires more research, exhibitions and collecting around LGBTQ histories. Erin Bailey and the Community Advisory Committee.”



Pictured: Jacque Larrainzar's shirt and rattles in display case along with Revealing Queer exhibit label. Photos by Nicole Robert.

In contrast, once a visitor sat down to watch

Larrainzar's short video, even if they left half way

through the video, viewers were given a sense of

the complexity of Larrainzar's life. The video

does not directly address the experience of being

forced out of Mexico because of Larrainzar's²³³ sexuality—a narrative which is displayed in the exhibit—but rather conveys the transnational influences on Larrainzar's personal identity,



making it clear that both Larrainzar's childhood

experiences in Mexico and Larrainzar's present reality in

Seattle combine to create a unique identity. This reality is

not easily subsumed into a larger narrative of whiteness or

gender non/conformity.

Pictured: Two museum visitors sitting in the video nook with headphones one, watching one of the digital stories. Photo by Nicole Robert.

Another narrative that resisted folding into the

dominant cultural scripts was Davis's film, exploring

complexities of sexual identity that don't fit easily into hegemonic norms. Occupying a queer

bisexual identity, Davis reveals her experience of feeling like both an insider and an outsider of

queer cultures. The explicit experience of bisexuality was easy to overlook within the exhibit, as

the dominant representations focused on gay and lesbian experiences, but Davis's video engaged

²³³ Larrainzar does not use pronouns. Rather, all references to Larrainzar use Larrainzar's name.

the life experiences of someone moving between heteronormative and hetero-resistant worlds. The explicit identity of bisexuality is addressed through reference to biphobia, and the complexities of life as a bi-sexual are woven into the narrative presented, such that if a viewer came away understanding the narrative of Davis's digital story, the viewer would inherently have a deeper understanding of the experiences of bisexuality.

Just as these videos resisted melting into the dominant narrative of the exhibit, the representational style of digital stories supports resistance to the hegemonic social scripts of heteronormativity. All information, including digital and artifactual representations, are created and received within structures designed to reproduce normativity and codification—museum institution, social institutions of gender, sexuality, family and law, to name just a few. Judith Butler reminds us that the knowledge we use to decode and understand social representations is knowledge already bound within the norms of our society.²³⁴ Whatever signs we use, we interpret those signs with pre-existing cultural knowledge that is laden with specific values.²³⁵ This cultural knowledge leads to tendencies to essentialize identity—to assume that once we know one thing about a person—say, their gender identity—then we know many other things that are believed to correlate with that identity. With the complex and personal narratives presented in the digital stories, it becomes much more challenging to map common understandings of identity onto the people who are represented. Just when a viewer is getting comfortable with the gender portrayed visually in Larrainzar's film, the audio interjects, "Gender had been put upon me when I was born a girl; I dreamed myself a boy; I dreamed myself a girl; like Omecihautl I was both."²³⁶ Similarly, Mian Carvin's film disrupts normative ideas of

²³⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990) Kindle Location 2447.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Audio from Larrainzar's film *Omecihuatl*.

familial relations. Carvin explains that she did not give birth to her child, Lily, but claims the act of creation all the same: “You did not come from me, yet you are my child. All those years I dreamed you, until that Sunday morning in August, when the universe came together.”²³⁷ Part of the challenge viewers have had in interpreting Carvin’s story is that her narrative of birth and loss does not fit into pre-existing paradigms of motherhood and family structures. While touching on ideas and experiences that are familiar to viewers, the digital stories have the power to disrupt and complicate the very symbols that they invoke. The complexity and creativity permissible outside institutional norms and within the digital space engenders a narrative form that resists folding into hegemonic narratives.

Digital Disruptions: Diffusing Historical Chronology

In conversations with filmmakers after the workshop, several indicated an awareness of the significance of this digital storytelling workshop as necessary context for the finished film. This awareness presented in a few filmmakers as anxiety over the dissemination of an individual film without the context provided by the other workshop participants films, nor the context of the process we followed. Could the film stand on its own? Would the testimony be understood? This is a fair question for filmmakers to grapple with, as the films they produced are not easily categorized by the casual viewer. Without context, the viewer must pay close attention to follow non-traditional narrative structures that jump through time and topic. Several filmmakers incorporate significant historical events that impacted them, without explaining those events. They rely upon the viewers to educate themselves, filling in any narrative gaps. As such, the value of the individual films as historical artifacts must be considered.

²³⁷ Mian Carvin’s film is called *De Facto* and is currently available to view online <https://queeringthemuseum.org/previous-projects/narrating-our-own-stories-a-queer-digital-storytelling-project/>

If we expect an historical artifact to provide linear facts about historical events, then these films will fail to meet those expectations. Diana Taylor reminds us that the archive is a powerful repository of writing and the verbal, a written form that is privileged in Western culture as a legitimate source of historical knowledge.²³⁸ The existence of these films—which rely heavily on the intelligence of experience—as archival artifacts pushes on these boundaries of legitimate knowledge. Viewers are tasked with connecting the personal stories delivered to larger historical events themselves. For example, Larrainzar’s film, narrates the storyteller’s experiences of living in and between Mexican and U.S. cultures, as well as binary gender categories. Asking, “How do you tell history when you have no history?” The narrative alludes to the forced immigration experienced because Larrainzar identified as a lesbian. But viewers of the film would not know that Larrainzar was the first lesbian in the state of Washington granted immigration asylum because of Larrainzar’s sexual identity. Similarly, Carvin’s film introduces the viewer to a birth, a blurry image of a child, and the visual metaphor of rock cliffs documenting the fact that Carvin’s child, Lily, was, like the rocks, “cleaved” from her foundational parent, Carvin, and “made to believe [Carvin] was no more than a babysitter.”²³⁹ The narrative is compelling but the reference to a public historical event is fleeting. Audience members often ask who the child was and why she was taken from Carvin when I share this film in research presentations and classes. At the end of the film, a text image communicates some of the significant facts: “As a result of the legal battle to assert myself as my daughter’s parent, a law was created in Washington State to benefit and protect relationships between non-biological parents and their children. It is called the de facto parenting law.”²⁴⁰ While this helps connect the personal narrative to historical

²³⁸ Taylor, Kindle Location 440.

²³⁹ Narration from Carvin’s film, *De Facto*.

²⁴⁰ Text from Mian Carvin’s film *De Facto*

events, it leaves much of the factual research to the viewer to complete or to guess. In fact, as the non-biological parent of Lily, Carvin had her parental rights severed when she and her partner split. She spent years in court fighting to keep those rights and ultimately failed within the existing legal framework at that time. Based on her experiences of loss, Carvin succeeded in working to pass the De Facto parenting law in Washington State which recognizes the parental rights of non-biological parents. Traditional notions of historical fact, authority and truth become diffuse in these digital realm narratives, disrupting expected practices that center historical accuracy and expertise over personal experience and affect. Maintaining oblique or vague connections to fact-based historical narratives, these digital artifacts function to disrupt the static and simplistic view of history that is maintained by many textual artifacts. Hegemonic notions of authenticity and accuracy become diffuse, when the focus in on the individual experience of events rather than the chronology of events. The films, which offer a flexible medium, are able to represent these complexities in ways that the physical exhibit which accompanied the films could not. In this way, while conforming to the archive, these films convey more than the archive can contain—they reference the repertoire of human experience.²⁴¹

The films succeed in referencing more than the expected facts of historical narrative because they include the emotions and personal challenges of the filmmakers. In many cases, the films speak to traumatic personal experiences that are unique to those whose gender and sexual identities fall outside of the binary possibilities which are held to be the *only* possibilities in heteronormative society. Elisabeth recounts the multiple times that ze considered suicide in zir own journey to understand zir personal gender as fitting outside of the male/female binary, now

²⁴¹ This is a reference to Diana Taylor's ideas of the archive and the repertoire, Kindle Location 388.

identifying zirsself as the androgene.²⁴² Elisabeth was not accepted by others or settled within zirsself until ze accepted a non-binary gender identity. The theme of being rejected by family or the societies of youth ran through many of the films. Larrainzar was rejected by both the family and nation of Larrainzar's birth because of what was perceived to be deviant sexuality, a theme Larrainzar's film works through referentially.²⁴³ Hernandez recounts a story of rejection from his family of origin, influenced by their strong religious beliefs, when he accepted his personal identity as a gay man.²⁴⁴ Keith's story grapples with a self-acceptance that was challenged by a religious mother who taught Keith that gays and lesbians were to be avoided.²⁴⁵ Davis recounts social traumas of violence and rejection in her film.²⁴⁶ Story after story is influenced by, and thus carries the weight of, the trauma of social non-normativity.

In her book, *An Archive of Feelings*, Ann Cvetkovich connects the history of trauma with emotional memory, a concept Cvetkovich borrows from Toni Morrison.²⁴⁷ The emotion of trauma becomes embedded in memory in "affective, sensory, often highly specific, and personal" ways, producing "an unusual archive, one that frequently resists the coherence of narrative."²⁴⁸ This comes through clearly in the form and shape of the films that were produced. Rather than a linear, coherent time-line, many of the filmmakers produced narratives that played with tools like coherence, narrative arc, and temporality. The narratives jump from past to present to a temporally-divorced state of self-reflection. Larrainzar moves through time and

²⁴² Elisabeth, *Continually Coming Out: A Story of Margaret*.

²⁴³ Larrainzar, *Omecihuatl*.

²⁴⁴ Hernandez, *Identity*.

²⁴⁵ Keith, *Every Woman, Ever More*.

²⁴⁶ Davis, *Love Petra*.

²⁴⁷ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003) 241-242.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

space to visit childhood moments in Mexico, leading to the story of Omecihautl, to the present adult moment here and now, to Larrainzar's own gender story and personal connection to a two-spirit identity.²⁴⁹ Davis eschewed time-line even more by adopting a poetic progression through her experiences of teaching critical race and gender to college students. Instead, Davis focused on the uniting experiences of structural heteronormativity that bind many humans together, whether they sit in a classroom or stand in front of that class.²⁵⁰ Keith's film hearkens back to a pivotal moment of her life that intersects with the 1993 March on Washington. Featuring this nationally historical moment in gay and lesbian history, Keith narrates the personal pleasures of belonging by calling upon the sensory experiences of "warehouse beats," "lipstick-on-lipstick" and holding hands in public.²⁵¹ Invoking these feelings as she stands up to her mother, Keith weaves a nationally significant historical event with her own personally significant history, attributing the "strength to rally for [her] own life" to the organizers of the April 25, 1993 March on Washington.²⁵² In this film, Keith produces an artifact that is "affective, sensory and highly personal,"²⁵³ evoking the feminist idea that the personal is political in ways that go beyond any button, t-shirt or poster. All of the filmmakers "emotional memories" transgress the limits of the traditional archive, that source of historical facts from which historians construct legitimate narratives of what we have been, and thus, who we are.²⁵⁴

Digital Disruptions: Contentious Authority

²⁴⁹ Larrainzar, *Omecihuatl*.

²⁵⁰ Davis, *Love, Petra*.

²⁵¹ Keith, *Every Woman, Every More*.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Cvetkovich, 241.

²⁵⁴ My notion of an archive is influenced by Harriet Bradley's nuanced explorations in "The Seductions of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found" *History of the Human Sciences* 12:2 (1999) 107-122.

The truth of personal experience—like that truth which is narrated in both oral histories and digital stories—offers a powerful transgressive tool. Feminist oral historians have long used this tool to address historical gaps in representation, adapting traditional oral history techniques to include the “notion that the personal is political and the conviction that women’s experiences [are] inherently valuable and needed to be recorded.”²⁵⁵ Similarly, many oppressed groups have utilized oral history techniques to construct historical archives which address identity-based exclusions found in institutional archives. These personal narratives are adding to the collective archival memories that constitute the foundations of historical research and the foundations of history museums.

But that same personal truth is highly contestable. As Cvetkovich reminds us, emotional memory is often viewed as “fragmented and ostensibly arbitrary.”²⁵⁶ Similarly, Sean Curran asserts that “[e]ven the staunchest supporters will agree that oral histories may often be less about truth and fact, and more about memory, the unconscious and fantasy.”²⁵⁷ This fragmentation and even factual malleability has been the basis of dismissing personal memories out of historical archives which dismisses the histories of those who are already most missing from our archives. In fact, oral narratives are a first-person account not unlike other archival texts, such as letters, newspaper accounts and memoirs. All of these are based in memories. Only some memories have been imagined as reality, and that limited version of reality has become naturalized in museums.²⁵⁸ Approaching the construction of artifacts and archives from a critical

²⁵⁵ Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, editors, *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge Press, 1991) 1.

²⁵⁶ Cvetkovich, 241-242.

²⁵⁷ Sean Curran, “Let’s Talk About Sexuality: Exhibiting LGBTQ Voices,” *On Sexuality: Collecting Everybody’s Experience, A Collection of Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Museums, Etc, 2015), 13.

²⁵⁸ Susan A. Crane, “Curious Cabinets and Imaginary Museums,” *Museums and Memory*, edited by Susan A. Crane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) 80.

feminist view requires that we begin with awareness of our human tendencies to construct and naturalize realities. With a critical feminist perspective, oral narratives are recognized for their dynamic potential to enhance historical archives. The very qualities of memory that—at least in oral form—make personal narrative suspect for historical use are the qualities that, with feminist consciousness, make oral stories capable of dynamic, transgressive interventions in the archive. These oral memories, even unconscious reminiscences, “can reveal new layers of ‘truth’ to a narrative normally shaped around legal and political landmarks.”²⁵⁹ The dynamic affective nature of personal narratives is what creates the potential to name, disrupt and reveal cultural norms.

A critically conscious approach to personal narratives, however, considers the role of power in production. Existing normative hierarchies can shape the narratives produced. Feminist oral historians have called attention to practices of shared authority and interpretation as important issues of power in personal narratives. An oral history, even when approved in its entirety by the subject, holds many areas open to curatorial interpretation. For example, historians may infer meaning into the chosen words or silences of the subject which are at odds with the subject’s own interpretation.²⁶⁰ In museums, oral histories are usually far too long to be used in exhibits or displays. The curator selects particular sections or phrases that conform to the larger curatorial narrative—the agential cut²⁶¹ of the exhibit. This is one of the representational challenges that I sought to address by choosing the digital storytelling model, rather than oral histories. While the final video is still open to interpretation, the filmmakers had total control over the narrative structure and invested heavily in refining the visual and audio presentation of

²⁵⁹ Curran, 13.

²⁶⁰ Borland, 63.

²⁶¹ McPherson 2014, 179-181

their narrative. The films produced are short-enough to display in an exhibit and are designed in a coherent sequence, such that there is little incentive to splice the narrative into shorter pieces. However, the ultimate interpretation of the personal memories presented is up to the viewer.

With so many people involved in making meaning out of these personal narratives, there is a continuous act of interpretation. For many of the storytellers, the chosen narratives address a history of trauma, making meaning out of struggle for those who experienced it and those who did not.²⁶² In addition, the storyteller is creating particular meanings in the time and space of telling that may not resonate with that same storyteller in a different time and place. Memory and narrative change meaning over time, and in this case the storyteller is constructing meaning both for oneself and for the present and perceived future audiences.²⁶³ In this way, the narrative constructed in the story is a constitution of how the storyteller sees oneself—at this moment in time—and how the storyteller hopes to be seen, accounting for the possible perceptions of current and future audiences. This is an awareness of narrative fluctuation that both Macklin and I built into the QTM Storytelling Workshop. We constructed the workshop activities so that each participant received regular feedback from both the group and individuals in the group, as they developed their film scripts and story boards. In support of this, we repeatedly invited the participants to be aware of this cross-influence on each other. In addition, we consistently acknowledged the fleeting moment of “truth” that their video would represent; we encouraged each filmmaker to speak to what they felt was important in that moment, and to let the film be a testament to that moment in time, rather than a film tasked with representing the essence of the filmmaker for all time. In this way and others, Macklin and I, along with all the other

²⁶² Cvetkovich, 241-242.

²⁶³ Borland, 63.

filmmakers, influenced the shape of each film made in those two weekends. In addition, the filmmakers each had some audience in mind when they made their films. Some chose to speak to a younger version of themselves. Some explicitly addressed a target audience in the film: Larrainzar ended the film with the text “To all undocuqueer dreamers” followed by “Make it real!”²⁶⁴ Elisabeth ended her film speaking to an audience imagined to be like herself, “the path we walk is lonely. I want you to know you are not alone.”²⁶⁵ The films freeze this moment in time, these influences and these imagined audiences. At the same time, they maintain a field of interpretation open to each viewer.

Audience members bring their personal histories, their feelings of that moment and the influences of context to their interpretations. Viewing the films back-to-back in a 30-minute reel during the official premiere at the Queering the History Museum Symposium in 2013 brought a standing-room-only audience to breathless silence, which erupted into emotional applause. The same 30-minute reel shown in a museum theater as a supplement to performances, food and festivities when *Revealing Queer* opened at MOHAI in 2014 brought tepid responses from sparse audience-members. A selected trio of films, shown during a Gender and Sexuality Studies class alongside a film that introduces the Women Who Rock Oral History Archive²⁶⁶ brought mixed reactions from the students in attendance. While many appreciated the emotion conveyed in the digital stories, they noticed that the films did not seem as polished or conversational as the oral history clips presented. Context effects audience interpretation and likewise, the storytellers themselves would surely present a slightly different narrative if tasked with telling their story

²⁶⁴ Larrainzar, *Omecihuatl*.

²⁶⁵ Elisabeth, *Continually Coming Out: A Story of Margaret*.

²⁶⁶ For more information about the Women Who Rock Oral History Project, see <https://womenwhorockcommunity.org/digital-oral-history-project/>

anew in each of these places and times. “As performance contexts change, as we discover new audiences, and as we renegotiate our sense of self, our narratives also will change.”²⁶⁷ Each film represents an agential cut of a personal history, crystalized in that time and place, relating to one queer’s experience of social histories. They are an agential cut of personal history, cut out of larger social histories. Each story, concocted in a subject-led collaboration, invites a continuous interpretation of the identities, ideas and facts presented. In this way, the meaning of each film is an on-going collaboration between viewer and subject. Each viewer is invited to make their own connections— affective, dissonant, and interpretive. While the filmmakers’ moment of interpretation is static, the films invite dynamic audience participation, an archival artifact that continuously references the repertoire.

Digital Disruptions: Tensions in the Archive

When I conceived of the digital storytelling workshop, one of my personal goals was to create new material artifacts that would be added to existing museum archives. While the films that were produced are an actual artifact, they hold a place of tension in the historical archive. With spoken narratives, musical sound tracks and texts over-laying images, the films contain many elements of embodied performance. Indeed, as discussed above, the narrative structures of the films themselves are virtual embodiments of the filmmakers’ experiences, reflections and self-constructed identities. While I do not think that these digital artifacts stand in for the body itself, they do capture many of the dynamic elements of embodied performance. Taylor engages this point of tension between the artifact and what it represents in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*.²⁶⁸ Reminiscent of the agential cut

²⁶⁷ Borland, 63.

²⁶⁸ Taylor.

discussed earlier, Taylor highlights the process of selection, classification and presentation of materials as the actions that produce an archival object.²⁶⁹ Taylor specifically identifies the cultural belief that some kinds of objects are enduring “(i.e. texts, documents, buildings, bones)” while some kinds of objects are seen as ephemeral and thus not available for inclusion in the archive “(i.e. spoken language, dance, sports, ritual).”²⁷⁰ These ephemeral objects require “presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being a part of the transmission.” In this way, ephemeral objects are dynamic and responsive. Taylor explains, “As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning.”²⁷¹ The videos produced in the QTM workshop operate in between the archive and the repertoire, as defined by Taylor. Ephemeral actions—dynamic, collaborative and responsive—are recorded in the digital stories. The filmmakers collaboratively participated in the dynamic and ephemeral process of narrative production, much of which is captured in the digital artifact. Filmmakers incorporated changes at the suggestion or inspiration of their colleagues in the workshop, as well as their friends and families who, for many of the filmmakers, assisted with aspects of the film during the week in-between our two weekend workshop sessions. Thus, the resulting films recorded the dynamic process of collaborative knowledge production and the films attest to these ephemeral processes. Likewise, the efficacy of the films requires the presence of the audience, relying on viewers to participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge²⁷²—a characteristic of the repertoire. The engagement of the audience is a critical element of the power of the story, in the moments of affective resonance that are created between

²⁶⁹ Taylor, Kindle Location 380.

²⁷⁰ Taylor, Kindle Location 372.

²⁷¹ Taylor, Kindle Location 380.

²⁷² Taylor, Kindle Location 372.

storyteller and story viewer. Yet, the resulting final product is in-fact a one-way transmission, no longer able to adapt to or incorporate change. The final video becomes part of the archive—transcribe-able, viewable, store-able.²⁷³ The completed videos come to represent the filmmaker, at that time and place and social moment. And while the video attests to these ephemeral processes of collaboration and production, the film itself cannot, as Taylor points out, record these processes for future study. The collaborative, disruptive processes that ground the interventions incorporated into the process of filmmaking, are part of the live, embodied processes that “excee[d] the archive’s ability to capture it.”²⁷⁴ While the films have become archiveable artifacts which record the presence of collaboration, the processes that formed the heart of our intervention are not archiveable, not recorded and leave the videos produced to stand on their own testimony, inviting future collaborations with the audience. Thus these films are neither simply artifact or repertoire. They function as, what I call, *evocative objects*. These are objects that evoke both resonance and dissonance which exceeds the limits of a traditional artifact, creating potential for critical inquiry.

In many of these films, the affective nature of the narrative, along with the transgressive modes of self-representation, create opportunities for the viewer to experience instructional dissonance. This is the dissonance that I referenced in my earlier discussions of critical feminist museology—the moment of recognition that is created when the world is not the way we expected it to be, when our social rules for interpreting representations fail us because the object we are viewing does not match those social rules. The dissonance becomes an opportunity for instruction in that moment of revelation when invisible social rules become known. Butler

²⁷³ Taylor, Kindle Location 388.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

outlines this instructional dissonance in *Gender Trouble*.²⁷⁵ Here Butler discusses the ways that our very bodies function as representations of meaning, meanings that we have learned to recognize as the naturalized categories of sex and gender, as well as race. With a lifetime of social training to make identities like sex and gender seem “factic,” as Butler puts it, how do we recognize the illusion that is maintained in our daily performances of gender? While Butler here is specifically speaking to gender and sex, the same questions can be posed about other social identities that are read on our bodies, like race, disability and class. Butler poses the question, “What, then, enables the exposure of the rift between the phantasmatic and the real whereby the real admits itself as phantasmatic?”²⁷⁶ Butler asserts that the very site of real-ness—the body—can become the site of resistance by taking up the tools of identity expression and using them in unexpected ways; specifically, Butler explores performances of gender whose *dissonance* serves to reveal the socially constructed practices that collaborate to make gender appear natural.²⁷⁷ Identifying practices of parody, Butler analyzes the use of familiar tools in unexpected ways.²⁷⁸ The unexpected use of expected signifiers creates opportunities for dissonance in the viewer, a process which operates for all identities that are socially projected upon our bodies.

Dissonance calls into question the accepted norms of culture, and the codified structures that are often maintained in our archives and displays. Playing with signifiers of race, gender and sexuality, as well as with narrative development and temporality, the QTM filmmakers deployed recognizable tools in new, often dissonant ways. No two story-tellers presented the same labels of identity in their films. Each took up identity labels and explored them, or eschewed specific labels and instead explored their personal journey of self-discovery. Along the way, they created

²⁷⁵ Butler 1990, Kindle Location 2447.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Butler 1990, Kindle Location 2415-2447.

²⁷⁸ Butler 1990, Kindle Location 2415-2447.

opportunities for affective resonance with their viewers. Sean Curran describes this resonance in his analysis of LGBTQ oral histories: “Like all narratives about marginalized communities, ultimately these stories are about people and their victories and losses; these are stories of human interests and part of *our* history, regardless of sexuality, gender identity, religion or race” (original emphasis).²⁷⁹ Each time I share these films in class rooms and presentations, as well as at the official screenings I have attended, audience members mention the emotional relatability of the films. They often follow that statement of emotional affinity with a question about the story that was presented. The power of emotional relatability provides a strong motivation for seeking understanding. The combined experiences of both affective resonance and dissonance have the power to pull viewers towards critical questioning, inviting audiences to leave with open questions or unsettled responses.

In exposing that which is naturalized as naturalized, instructional dissonance has the potential to highlight the normalizing structures and socially constructed identities that each of these filmmakers resists. Curran highlights LGBTQ stories in particular as critical investigations of identity. “All identities are constructed, but LGBTQ identities are necessarily done so more consciously, due to the constraints that many . . . LGBTQ people, have had to negotiate.”²⁸⁰ The very fact of queerness creates a literal body of knowledge from which socially-constructed identities are both exposed and contested. The power of these shared experiences of queerness, presented in the digital stories as relatable narratives of life experience, traverse race, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, religion and family formation. The breadth and scope of common human experiences within these stories creates opportunities for productive dissonance.

²⁷⁹ Curran, 23.

²⁸⁰ Curran, 26.

This opening is the interstitial space of oppositional consciousness, which Sandoval recognizes as a tool of resistance.²⁸¹

The power of the digital story as dynamic, affective and potentially dissonant is the power of an artifact to exceed the limits of the archive and to move closer to the queer archive described by Halberstam, “[T]he notion of an archive has to extend beyond the image of a place to collect material or hold documents and it has to become a floating signifier for the kinds of lives implied by the paper remnants of shows, clubs, events and meetings. The archive is not simply a repository; it is also a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory and a complex record of queer activity.”²⁸² Digital stories functioning as evocative objects respond to this call: exceeding the affective limits of a traditional artifact, playing with time and space, at once speaking to individual and collective experiences, recording the ephemera of queer existences.

Conclusions

The digital stories function in ways beyond that of a traditional archival artifact. Responding to the challenges of missing artifacts, in both museum and personal collections, the digital stories recoup historical events through personal narrative and creative visualizations. While digital stories also add to the archive, they have a reach far beyond that of a traditional material artifact. Evocative objects, in their reference to human experience, open a space of potential engagement. The film creates a platform for the malleability of time and of identity. Filmmakers have opportunities to evoke normative understandings of history, of identity

²⁸¹ Sandoval 2000, 55.

²⁸² J. Halberstam, “What’s that Smell: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6: 3 (2003) 326.

categories like gender and race, of familial structures and social bonds and even of narrative structures. Yet, in that evocation, filmmakers are not bound to normative interpretations. Playing with what is expected, digital stories have the potential to both draw-in and provoke audiences. That provocation may be temporary, may be uncomfortable, and may lead to the dissonance that reveals the invisible normalizing structures which shape our worlds. Combining subject-led representation with the power of collaboration, digital stories are a powerful tool of historical reparation.

The power of these evocative objects can work in collaboration with the material artifacts that populate typical museum archives and exhibits. Queer theorists writing about the queer archive, recognize the significance of preserving relics of queer life, such as zines, posters, bar signs or photographs of meetings or protests.²⁸³ The very presence of material objects on display has an immense power of communication. Visitors at the opening night celebration of *Revealing Queer* echoed this power of the object; several individuals expressed their tearful joy at seeing artifacts representing their lives present in a mainstream history museum in personal conversations with Bailey and me. Visitors gazed at photos from past Pride Parades in the Seattle area, recognizing friends or recalling related memories. Later exhibit attendees shared the power of exhibition in responses in the visitor log. For example, on June first, 2014, someone calling themselves A.B.M. responded to the artifacts stating: “I exist, I exist, I EXIST. No more silence” (original emphasis, punctuation added).²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Halberstam names some of these specific kinds of material culture in “What’s that Smell: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives, 326. Muñoz narrates theories of queer temporality drawing upon the photographs of queer space—artifacts that reference queer events—in *Cruising Utopia*. Freeman likewise draws on archives of art to construct her exploration of queer time in *Time Binds*.

²⁸⁴ *Revealing Queer* Visitor Log at the Museum of History and Industry. Undated.

When digital stories accompany these artifacts they can deepen and amplify the impact of inclusion, of recognition and of belonging. Evoking relatable human experiences through personal narratives that both engage and contest social structures, digital stories reach beyond the static display of an object. The films “bring static material to life and deepen understanding” of the artifacts on display.²⁸⁵ For example, an updated version of the *Lifetimes* exhibit mounted by the Croyden Museum and Heritage Service in England, intentionally displayed objects that were not easily identifiable as LGBTQ.²⁸⁶ This was done in an effort to represent LGBTQ lives as more complex than a focus on sexuality alone would communicate.²⁸⁷ Looking at a lesbian electrician’s electric drill, however, communicates very little about the subject until the viewer hears her story about breaking gender barriers through an electrician’s apprenticeship, accessible on touch screens in front of the display.²⁸⁸ The digital story fills in the gap between object and interpretation, creating opportunities for affective resonance and dissonance along the way.

Collections, like those on display in *Revealing Queer*, of photographs, newspapers, clothing and other artifacts can have a compelling impact, both in the archive and on exhibit. While LGBTQ artifacts have been collected, there are many challenges in finding and presenting these. Historical oppressions result in failure to institutionally claim an LGBTQ identity and likewise a failure of archives to label LGBTQ identities in their collections. Material explicitly associated with LGBTQ histories “often documents persecution, victimization, visibility, sex and partying, without any physical record of the more domestic and everyday aspects of LGBTQ

²⁸⁵ Curran, 20.

²⁸⁶ Angela Vanegas, “Representing Lesbians and Gay Men in British Social History Museums,” *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader* edited by Amy K. Levin (New York: Routledge Press, 2010) 164-165.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Vanegas, 168.

life.”²⁸⁹ This is compounded by the fact that collecting in museums often occurs from “the top down” featuring “the loudest voices,”²⁹⁰ which tends to reproduce the centrality of white heteronormativity. *Revealing Queer’s* Curator, Bailey, searched archives all over the region to assemble many of the pieces of the exhibit, but many more artifacts were provided by individuals who held the materials in their personal collections, and loaned them for the exhibit. Many more desired artifacts were simply unavailable, even after reaching out to a range of possible sources.

Digital stories offer a compelling intervention into what is missing in our historical archives. At the same time, digital stories are a medium of artifact that maintains dynamic possibilities for exploring dominant notions of identity, as well as the people and histories that contest heteronormativity in all its forms. GLBT History Museum Curator Don Romesburg, quoted by fellow Curator Gerard Koskovich, succinctly articulates the power of display that museums hold, connecting objects to “symbolic meanings in ways that constitute and amplify normative social structures while mystifying the Museum’s own role in reinforcing systems of inclusion and exclusion.”²⁹¹ Digital stories, functioning as evocative objects, have the potential to make visible these mystifying processes of normalization, in the museum and in our social worlds.

²⁸⁹ Curran, 10.

²⁹⁰ Curran, 15.

²⁹¹ Gerard Koskovich, “Displaying the Queer Past: Purposes Publics and Possibilities at the GLBT History Museum” *QED A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1: 2 (Summer 2014) 69-70. Don Romesburg writes of his own experiences in “Presenting the Queer Past: A Case for the GLBT History Museum” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014) 131-144.

Chapter 4: Queering MOHAI: Codifications and Resistance in Practice

While I argue that the digital storytelling model presents particularly effective tools for disrupting the heteronormative histories typically represented in U.S. history museums, the larger goal of queering a museum remains to be addressed. How, in fact, does one queer a museum, given that the very impetus of queer defies many of the logics of museum practice? In this chapter, I consider the potency and challenges of putting queer into practice in museum spaces, specifically analyzing the intention and the actual impact of the QTM-MOHAI collaboration. This chapter draws from the practical applications explored in Chapters Two and Three, using praxis as the foundation for theoretical engagements. Drawing out, applying, reflecting and responding—this analysis develops the conversation between theory and practice which is so critical for effective museum change. The principles of critical feminist museology, which guide us to engage the un-named assumptions of the systems and institutions we employ, and use this knowledge to explore modes of resistance that exist in-between the norms, operate effectively within the rubric of queering a museum space.

Queer practices, I argue, must be combined with critical consciousness to effectively serve the goals of diversifying museum processes and increasing identity-based inclusion in museums that is intersectional. Existing hierarchies of exclusion often re-assert dominance, even when deployed with intentions of inclusion. As I will discuss here, hegemonic norms of identity dominated many of the processes and visual representations throughout the QTM-MOHAI collaboration, perpetuating under-representations of transgender histories and communities of color. The possibilities that queerness points us to, however, are found within those failures to diversify—as moments that expose historical and institutional exclusion, as gaps or ruptures within dominant narratives, and as affective resonances across difference.

Can One Actually Queer a Museum?

What does it mean to queer a museum space? Museologist Robert Mills dismisses the idea of simply delineating hetero and homo sexualities, as this approach cannot help but reproduce a false hetero-homo binary which continues to center heterosexuality.²⁹² Both queer and women of color feminist works disrupt this kind of binary logic so commonly found in historical representations: male/female; white/person of color; us/them; domestic achievement/public achievement; like me/not like me. Mills argues that we must consider the potential of queer theory to critically engage normalizing concepts, such as law, government, time, identity.²⁹³ Butler asserts that it is this refusal to become codified—in binaries or other systems—that gives the project of ‘queer’ its power as a “site of collective contestation.”²⁹⁴ This combination of both recognizing socially constructed categories of identity *and* resisting the static and codified nature of these categories gives intersectional and queer theories their immense power for enacting change. This is the theoretical foundation of critical feminist museology, which we see in operation in this queer activist space of the museum.

But applying queer theory to museum spaces seems to create an impossible paradox, if “queer entails a *refusal* of meaning,” how do museums embrace queer while directly attempting to create meaning for museum visitors?²⁹⁵ Drawing out specific cultural ideas can help guide efforts to queer the museum. As discussed in earlier chapters, queer theorists such as Butler and Cohen encourage an application of queer theory that explicitly rejects monolithic categories

²⁹² Mills, 45.

²⁹³ Mills, 45-46.

²⁹⁴ Butler 1993, 227-228.

²⁹⁵ Mills, 46, original emphasis.

which have clear boundaries and containments, categories that enforce single-identity focus.²⁹⁶ In this sense, queer demands that we consider dynamic, overlapping identities in our museum work. The embrace of queer also resists structural containment, refusing codification in the act of contesting accepted cultural meanings.²⁹⁷ As Eve Sedgwick points out in “Queer and Now,” through this process of unsettling what has become codified, queering can function to make tacit things explicit.²⁹⁸

This exposure of norms inherent in queering also has the potential to highlight the role that museums as an institution play in constructing cultural norms through traditional museum displays. Jennifer Tyburczy responds to the normalization of identities in her mode of “queer curation.” Queer curation, as Tyburczy posits, explores the relationships between object presentation and visitors, exposing the normative sexual relationships created through museum “citation and repetition of familiar arrangements.”²⁹⁹ By utilizing juxtaposition and playful spacial arrangement, Tyburczy asserts that a queer view of sexuality can be presented which includes both the “pleasures and discomforts” of viewing “nonnormative sexualities.”³⁰⁰ Tyburczy specifically investigates the power to address the racist history of slavery in the U.S. at the same time that normative notions of sexuality are explored. Working at the Leather Archives and Museum in Chicago,³⁰¹ Tyburczy investigates displays of sexuality that include bondage, torture

²⁹⁶ Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, And Welfare Queens,” *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* edited by Donald E. Hall and Annmarie Jagose, with Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter (London and New York: Routledge Press, 2013) 74-95; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge Press, 1993) 227.

²⁹⁷ Butler 1993, 227-228

²⁹⁸ Eve Sedgwick “Queer and Now,” *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* edited by Donald E. Hall and Annmarie Jagose, with Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter (London and New York: Routledge Press, 2013) 5.

²⁹⁹ Jennifer Tyburczy, *Sex Museums: The Politics and Performance of Display* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016) 178 & 198.

³⁰⁰ Tyburczy, 178.

³⁰¹ For more information about the Leather Archives and Museum, see <http://www.leatherarchives.org/>

and power as part of the pleasurable, sexual act. One example she explores is a display called *The History of Black BDSM*, composed by Dark Connections, a nonprofit collective dedicated to providing BDSM³⁰² resources to people of color. The display was part of an exhibit curated by Tyburczy called *Debates in Leather*.³⁰³ This display included images of interracial leather sex scenes and floggers alongside “a photo of the freed slave, author and minister Thomas Johnson holding shackles in his hands.”³⁰⁴ Different perspectives and arguments were included in labels and texts, and objects were interspersed from different historical time periods “in order to recognize the original use of the object as a tool of discipline, empire, and nonconsensual torture and the later adaptation of the object as an instrument for enacting an erotics of pleasure and pain.”³⁰⁵ Visitor comments showed responses ranging from “discomfort,” to requesting future exhibits (more people of color focus; transsexual leather history) to “cautionary remarks,” to “kudos.”³⁰⁶ Many of the written responses explored the relationships between historical slavery, racism and consensual and nonconsensual torture.³⁰⁷ The juxtaposition of materials in this display deepened the conversation, bringing together histories of racism and cultural norms of sexuality that provoked many responses. Here displays of floggers and whips as sexual toys played with normative expectations of sexuality. Given its location in a museum dedicated to “leather, kink and fetish lifestyles”—which function outside cultural norms of sexuality—people who chose to view this exhibit likely had some familiarity or expectation of nonnormative sexualities being presented. But these expectations were also played with, as the floggers and whips of pleasure were displayed as floggers and whips with a devastating racialized history.

³⁰² BDSM stands for bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism

³⁰³ Tyburczy, 185.

³⁰⁴ Tyburczy, 186.

³⁰⁵ Tyburczy, 186.

³⁰⁶ Tyburczy, 189.

³⁰⁷ Tyburczy, 189.

Queerness as representation is a paradox of both disrupting the expected codes while refusing to offer new codes. A queer representation—which by its very nature is nonnormative—invites audience engagement and offers to be provocative, potentially subversive, and affective. In many ways the QTM-MOHAI collaboration failed the queer project of resistance and instead reinforced existing institutional failures: codifying queerness, re-centering the dominant and invoking existing cultural norms of the hegemonic human body. Yet, within these failures, we find moments of queer subversion that exploit spaces in-between our socially codified binaries: highlighting the exclusive nature of existing museum representations; calling in excluded community members who called out QTM and MOHAI for our failures; and drawing on affective dissonance to build connections across difference. The critically conscious approach to queering that critical feminist museology calls for guides us to celebrations and resistances that exploit the very failures of our collaboration.

Institutional Failures: Codifying Queer

When QTM developed our collaboration with MOHAI, we attempted to apply the ideas of queer to our work with several specific goals. We wanted to address the lack of representation of LGBTQ materials in museum archives and displays, while also complicating static notions of identity. In the process, we hoped to consciously attend to the additional exclusions of LGBTQ people who are multiply marginalized in museums based on race, class, gender and disability. While I reviewed the details of QTM's methods and accomplishments in Chapter Two, this section explores the impact of our application of queer theory *as* a queer endeavor.

Given that one of the goals of queerness is to resist definition, in some ways QTM's exhibit, *Revealing Queer*, failed. The result of intense collaborations between Bailey as the Lead Curator, the entire Community Advisory Committee (which included me), and the staff at

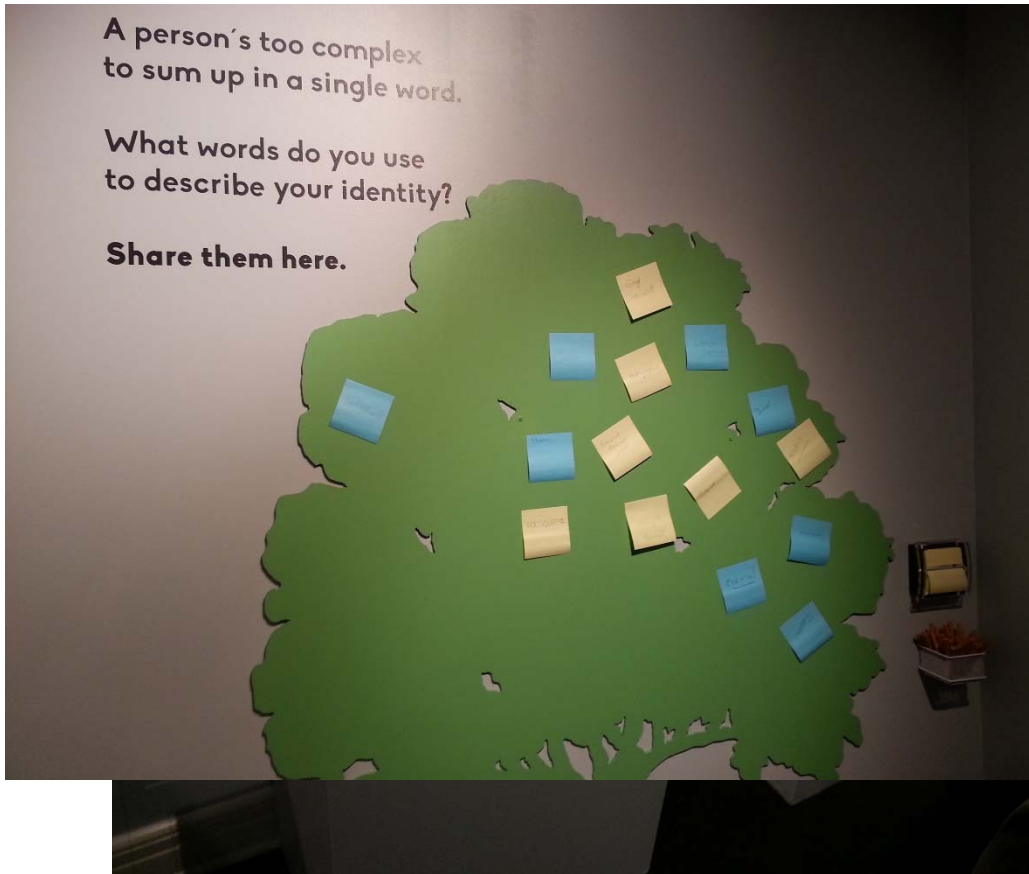
MOHAI, the contents of *Revealing Queer* defined for many viewers what queer and LGBT mean in apparently concrete terms. The relative dominance of white representation asserted queer as a mostly white identity. Because a majority of the exhibit artifacts discussed the experiences of gays and lesbians, the limited trans, non-binary and bisexual representations in the exhibit failed to shift the dominant narrative of queer as equivalent to gay and lesbian. And while the QTM process was a collaborative community model, this process functioned as an add-on to existing MOHAI processes. In this way, no matter how revolutionary our goals or procedures, the QTM-MOHAI collaboration did not require that the museum make any significant ongoing changes from the status quo.

Revealing Queer created a static representation of identity that, even with its roots in queerness, codified identity categories in several ways. Despite a “Curator’s Note” that reminded visitors that “*Revealing Queer* is not an all-encompassing narrative,”³⁰⁸ the exhibit opened with an identity section that literally defined terms, including lesbian, gay, sex, gender, sexuality, bisexuality and queer.³⁰⁹ The section opened and closed with statements that attempted to complicate identity,³¹⁰ but the center piece of that opening section provided short, simple definitions of these identity categories.

³⁰⁸ Quote from “Curator’s Note” exhibit label in *Revealing Queer* on display in 2014 at the Museum of History and Industry, Seattle WA.

³⁰⁹ These panels were part of the “What does it mean” label section which began with the statement “In LGBTQ communities, we use a variety of terms to communicate people’s complex and ever-changing experiences and identities.” On display in *Revealing Queer*.

³¹⁰ See above for the opening label quote. The other end of the identity section invited audience participation with the statement and question, “A person’s too complex to sum up in a single word. What words do you use to describe your identity? Share them here.” Audience members could choose to share their own identity vocabulary on sticky notes.



Pictured top: A low-technology interactive that invited visitors to think about the complexity of their own identities.

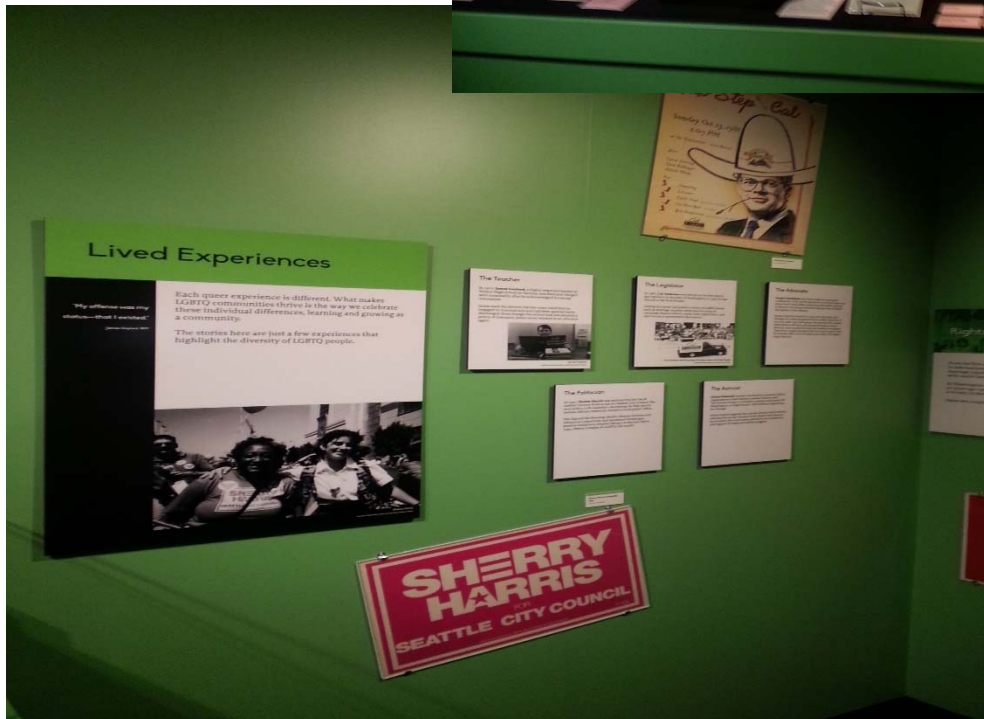
Pictured bottom: An interactive kiosk where visitors could open a cover to reveal a definition of a specific identity-based word. Words included sex, sexuality, gender, lesbian, queer, gay, female-to-male (FTM), male-to-female (MTF), bisexual or bi, transgender, straight (heterosexual), they/them, he/she, faggot, dyke.

Photos by Nicole Robert

The exhibit was housed in a gallery of approximately 1,000 square feet; in such a small space, it is impossible to effectively represent all LGBTQ people from the Seattle area. Yet, as the only exhibit MOHAI has hosted that explicitly features LGBTQ histories, this small gallery bore the burden of speaking for the entire, heterogeneous group that is encompassed within LGBTQ. In an effort to explicitly avoid addressing all histories of local LGBTQ communities, the over-arching exhibit narrative took a topical rather than a chronological approach. Each sectional topic featured local cases that developed that topic in some detail, with specific representations selected by the Advisory Committee. For example, a section on gay bars introduced the importance of bars as gathering places for people to find LGBTQ community.

Several bars were discussed, including the iconic Seattle bar, Shelly's Leg,³¹¹ Seattle's only Lesbian bar, The Wild Rose and the Golden Horse Shoe. The neon sign from the Six Eleven Tavern was featured prominently in a case at the center of the exhibit.

Pictured top: The neon sign from the Six Eleven Tavern in a case with textual ephemera from the time period in which the bar was popularly attended by LGBT locals. Photo by Nicole Robert. Pictured: The entry to the Lived Experience section featuring an election poster for Sherry Harris. Photo by Nicole Robert.



Another section, titled *Lived Experiences*, featured the personal stories of several significant LGBTQ individuals, including Jacque Larrainzar, Sherry Harris, James Gaylord

and Cal Anderson. Near the back of the exhibit, a section titled *Celebrate!* explained

³¹¹ For more information about the history and significance of gay bars in Seattle, including Shelly's Leg, see Gary Atkins *Gay Seattle: Stories of Exile and Belonging* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

“Celebrating yourself, your sexuality, or your differences is something that is revered within LGBTQ communities and sustains the fight for equality.”³¹² This section featured pride festivals, queer proms and AIDs activism. Collectively, these, and the other stories in the exhibit, avoided creating a linear chronology, but they could not avoid the pressure of being called upon to represent a deep, broad and diverse history.

No matter the effort extended to avoid speaking for an entire LGBTQ history, the exhibit’s singularity—in MOHAI, in Seattle, in history museums more generally—forced it to represent far more than could be contained in the scope of the project. *Revealing Queer* became *the* representation of LGBTQ, no matter how incomplete or static, and despite the objectives of the CAC or QTM. The materials making up the exhibit were limited, and ultimately represented more of the L and G than the BTQ, and more white narratives than those of communities of color.

Indeed, our selection of the very word queer to describe our project likely contributed to the construction of a white-centered space. Bailey and I adopted the word queer early in our collaborations for several reasons. Not only do we both personally identify as queer, I believed that the disruptive nature of the *idea* of queer was central to our project. In each of our interventions I hoped that QTM would create spaces that defied easy categorization and resisted re-codifying a new norm. Queerness leaves room for a range of self-identities within its expansive umbrella, as well as room for shifting personal identities of sexuality and gender. I view the potential of queerness as that interstitial space of resistance that Chela Sandoval, José Esteban Muñoz and Emma Pérez reference.

³¹² Text from the “Celebrate!” panel in the *Revealing Queer* exhibit.

But the reality of queerness is a reality that is marked by the intersecting structures of oppression that shape all of our social worlds, including queer ones. As E. Patrick Johnson explores in his essay on “‘Quare’ Studies,” queer is marked by whiteness and “not necessarily embraced by gays, bisexuals, lesbians, and [transgender] people of color.”³¹³ Similarly, Cohen illuminates one of the “great failings” of queer theory and queer politics in “their inability to incorporate into analysis of the world and strategies for political mobilization the roles that race, class and gender play in defining people’s differing relations to dominant and normalizing power.”³¹⁴ The failure of queer theory and activism has been a failure to approach structural power dynamics from an intersectional framework. Johnson names this failure, recognizing queer theory’s lack of foundation in “the material realities of gays and lesbians of color.”³¹⁵ This concern is echoed in Priyank Jadal’s essay “Sites of Resistance or Sites of Racism.” Jadal asserts that “radical queer spaces” that fail to address issues such as race, class and gender—issues which may not at first seem to be “specifically queer” —function as further “legitimization of [the] white identity that exists in gay mainstream culture.”³¹⁶ These failures of queer activism to move beyond a framework of white non-heterosexuality have been evident and concerning to communities of color for quite some time. Given this history, as well as QTM’s association with two historically exclusive institutions—both the university and the museum—the term queer

³¹³ E. Patrick Johnson, “‘Quare’ Studies, or ‘(Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother’” in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* edited by Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose, with Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter (London and New York: Routledge Press, 2013) 99.

³¹⁴ Cohen, 89.

³¹⁵ Johnson, 100.

³¹⁶ Priyank Jadal, “Sites of Resistance or Sites of Racism” in *That’s Revolting: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* edited by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2004, 2008) 42.

likely did not indicate the radical change-movement we imagined, but instead a project attached to liberal concepts of inclusion that fail to produce significant changes.³¹⁷

Coming from spaces that have privileged whiteness, and given the history of white-centered activism in gay and lesbian work,³¹⁸ when QTM invited participation from queers of all races and ethnicities, we needed to show a deep commitment to struggles that are “not specifically queer.”³¹⁹ Neither Bailey nor I had the relationships or histories of collaboration with queer communities of color that would have made us more trustworthy white collaborators, and the outreach we did to build these relationships was time-limited and targeted around the existing QTM-MOHAI collaboration. The marker of ‘queer’ does not in and of itself sufficiently account for an intersectional approach to change-work. In a 2016 interview, Butler spoke about this need to update ‘queer’ to be “less exclusionary to trans people and people of color.”³²⁰ Activism from transgender communities have pointed out the problems with queer as a broadly inclusive umbrella term. Butler summarizes, “If queer means that we are generally people whose gender and sexuality is ‘unfixed’ then what room is there in a queer movement for those who understand themselves as requiring—and wanting—a clear gender category within a binary frame?”³²¹ Some people are struggling to be recognized on the basis of a clear name and gender,³²² and queer as an unfixed category erases that activist work. These critiques from transgender communities and

³¹⁷ Kyra, “How to Uphold White Supremacy by Focusing on Diversity and Inclusion: Liberalism’s Inherent Racism” in *Model View Culture: Technology, Culture and Diversity Media*, 12/10/14.

<https://modelviewculture.com/pieces/how-to-uphold-white-supremacy-by-focusing-on-diversity-and-inclusion>

³¹⁸ Dean Spade, “Fighting to Win” in *That’s Revolting: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* edited by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2004, 2008) 48.

³¹⁹ Jadal, 42.

³²⁰ Sara Ahmed, “Interview with Judith Butler,” *Sexualities* 0 (0) 1-11 2016, 9.

³²¹ Ahmed, 9.

³²² Ahmed, 9.

queer communities of color are important and powerful arguments that “expose and oppose [queer’s] exclusionary limits in the context of a broadening struggle.”³²³

The institutional frameworks in which QTM operated did not leave much room for critical reflection on the normalizing processes within queer that frequently reproduce white heteronormativity, even as queer resists it. Those who felt most welcome and most invested in our project were those who have been historically more welcomed into both universities and colonial museums. The queer people who most consistently showed up at our table were the same people who had advocated for gay and lesbian rights, and were interested in gay and lesbian histories. The communities they were a part of the CAC were largely white and cisgender, and this contributed to a re-centering of both whiteness and cisgender representations in our exhibit. As the exhibit content was being finalized, the CAC meetings began to be dominated by the voices of white cisgender gay men. While we attempted to disrupt that dominance in our meeting facilitation, their actions discouraged the full participation of other CAC members with different narratives to contribute.

Adding queer into a museum space that has not explicitly addressed racism, homophobia or cis-normativity is consistent with an additive approach, with few apparent reasons to inspire trust for ongoing commitments to sustainable, systemic change. And, as Curran has pointed out, within historically oppressed communities, trust “can often be one of the largest hurdles to overcome.”³²⁴ By adopting queer as our project guide without explicit indications of intersectional commitments, we signaled a normative white-centered focus to the QTM-MOHAI collaboration. The prevalence of white representation in the exhibit reflected this.

³²³ Ahmed, 9.

³²⁴ Sean Curran, 29.

This re-centering of whiteness and cisnormativity in *Revealing Queer* was further influenced by the structures of the systems in which we participated. For example, the exhibit drew many objects from local archives which are largely populated with artifacts that narrate white, cisgender, gay and lesbian stories. Efforts to include other stories meant reaching beyond what was in existing archives. For example, the feature on Sherry Harris, the first black lesbian elected to any public office in the United States, almost got cut from the exhibit because it was so hard to find a photo that could be used.³²⁵ Thanks to extensive archival research by Bailey, Harris did stay in the exhibit. This challenge to locate materials, however, influenced the placement and length of the final display which did include a brief mention of Harris in the *Lived Experiences* section. The normative nature of the majority of the objects influenced the content and the meaning of the exhibit.

Beyond available artifacts, social norms impact the meanings attributed to the artifacts on display. The information conveyed by artifacts utilized, from archives or elsewhere, is mediated by the social and cultural systems in which we all operate. The words and imagery on display in all museum exhibits must refer to cultural knowledge in order to communicate. Exhibits and screenings must pack a lot of information into a small space or short time frame, which further emphasizes the need to create meaning in quick, impactful displays that rely upon existing cultural symbols in order to communicate.

Institutional Failures: Re-Asserting Norms

³²⁵ Erin Bailey, Personal Communication. May 2015. For more information about Sherry Harris who served on Seattle's City Council from 1992-1995, see Eric Marcus, *Out in All Directions: A Treasury of Gay and Lesbian America* (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1995) as well as George Howland Jr., "Power Lesbians: Queer Women on Top in the Emerald City" Seattle Weekly News 10/9/2006 <http://www.seattleweekly.com/2001-07-11/news/power-lesbians/>

Judith Butler highlights the process of social and cultural mediation of meaning in her discussions of gender. Attempts to reshape, contest and dismantle meaning, Butler asserts, are shaped by the pre-existing cultural scripts always already associated with the signifier of meaning.³²⁶ The historical discourse attached to signifiers of meaning—in this case the text, visuals and artifacts—“effectively decenters” the intentions of the display.³²⁷ The historical ideologies that are invoked in the museum display are central to the meaningful symbolic conversation. So, an exhibit or film displaying queerness will always be associated with existing cultural scripts of queer. Queer as a term of shame and denigration.³²⁸ Queer as a space of white gay and lesbian politics.³²⁹ Queer as a space of radical destabilization and politicization that recognizes the “multiplicity and interconnectedness of our identities.”³³⁰ Attempts to self-define our queerness, to write our own collaborative, contested narratives will remain “never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage.”³³¹ The very institutions which are resisted in the word queer, and in the QTM-MOHAI project, are the same institutions that give queer its meaning, and that continue to shape the ways in which queer exhibits and films are understood. Homophobia, racism and misogyny are products of social institutions that regulate our bodies; and homophobia, racism and misogyny are cultural norms which give meaning to the displays created in the QTM project. Indeed, it is fear of gender and sexual non-normativity that initially gave the word queer its discursive power as a shameful marker of those that do not fit the norm. In the reclamation process of queer, and in the radical

³²⁶ Judith Butler, “Critically Queer” in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* edited by Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose, with Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter (London and New York: Routledge Press, 2013) 20.

³²⁷ Butler 2013, 20.

³²⁸ Butler 2013, 19.

³²⁹ Johnson, 99-100.

³³⁰ Cohen, 90 and 91.

³³¹ Butler 2013, 21.

exploration of what queer can be, these histories necessarily shape and give meaning to the impact of queer interventions.

Heteronormativity, as Cohen reminds us, relies upon past and present normalizing processes and institutions “which legitimize and privilege heterosexuality”.³³² Museums, of course, have been one of those institutions and in many ways continues to be so. Much has been written about the role of museums as “a civilizing instrument,”³³³ designed to socialize visitors³³⁴ to the norms of cultural life and encourage the “self-regulating subject”³³⁵ of the nation-state. Museums have managed the display of sexuality—even when sexuality is not mentioned—to uphold heteronormative ideals³³⁶ of what bodies should look like, how those bodies should function and how those bodies should interact. These historical and ongoing emphases that privilege whiteness, heterosexuality and cisgender masculinities function institutionally to maintain those privileges. One of the Curators at the GLBT museum, Don Romesburg, acknowledges the tendency toward reproducing structural privilege, even in museum work focused entirely on non-heterosexual representations: “Without constant and specific diligence . . . [museum] holdings will always veer toward those most likely to have the space, time, and sense of entitlement to claim a place in history — often well-connected white, gay men.”³³⁷

It is precisely through association with recognizable institutions that those who function on the margins are brought into the heteronormative framework, made legible and subject to the

³³² Cohen, 77.

³³³ Lara Kriegel, “After the Exhibitionary Complex: Museum Histories and the Future of the Victorian Past” *Victorian Studies* 48 (Summer 2006) 683.

³³⁴ Tyburczy, 178.

³³⁵ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge Press, 1995) 68.

³³⁶ Stuart Frost, “Secret Museums: Hidden Histories of Sex and Sexuality” *Museums and Social Issues* 3:1 (Spring 2008) 29-32; Tyburczy, 1-2;

³³⁷ Don Romesburg, “Presenting the Queer Past: A Case for the GLBT History Museum” *Radical History Review* 120 (Fall 2014) 135

regulating structures of society.³³⁸ There is no way to introduce all that is queer into the structure of the museum without also making that very queerness subject to the normalizing structures of the museum itself. It is upon this concept that Halberstam advocates for us to “suspect memorialization” for its’ “tendency to tidy up disorderly histories.”³³⁹ The very act of constructing a memory makes the subjects of memorialization condition to the disciplining of heteronormativity. This is where messy narratives become cleaned-up, complex ideas become simplified and historical trajectories are mapped out in linear, progressive chronologies.

Institutional Failures: Limits of Collaboration

Operating a queer collaboration within the structures of the museum, as well as the existing social hierarchies of heteronormativity, limits the radical potential of collaborative processes. Bailey and I chose a model of collaboration as foundational to the QTM mission generally, and the QTM-MOHAI collaboration specifically, in order to reshape the processes of narrative production in ways that promote diversity, critical reflection and engagement. Feminist Scholars Amanda Swarr and Richa Nagar “suggest that interweaving theories and practices of knowledge production through collaborative dialogues provides a way to radically rethink existing approaches to subalternity, voice, authorship, and representation.”³⁴⁰ Trained in the collaborative model of exhibit development that the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience³⁴¹ is famous for, Bailey and I applied this framework to the facilitation of the entire QTM-MOHAI collaboration. Through the collaborative efforts of many, QTM sought

³³⁸ J. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011) 10.

³³⁹ Halberstam 2011, 15.

³⁴⁰ Richa Nagar and Amanda Lock Swarr, “Introduction: Theorizing Transnational Feminist Praxis,” *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* edited by Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010) Kindle Location 121.

³⁴¹ For more information about the Community-Based Exhibition Model utilized by the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, see <http://www.wingluke.org/community-process/>

to radically intervene in representations of queer histories while exploring ethical modes of representation. This foundation in collaboration is a practical intervention in heteronormative structures. But collaboration does have its limits.

Collaborative decision-making necessitates compromise, as the visions, hopes and knowledge of many are pared down to what is agreeable to most; and, in this case, what the CAC determined had also to be agreeable to the institution of the museum. Exhibit installation and final decisions were all handled by MOHAI staff. In fact, our QTM-MOHAI Memorandum of Understanding maintained MOHAI's right of final approval for all materials relating to the exhibit. While MOHAI stretched to accommodate our collaborative process of content development, the need to gain input on exhibit narratives was a complex chain: from the CAC, to Bailey as Lead Curator, to the MOHAI exhibit team, back to the CAC and back to MOHAI. This was a time-expanding demand that MOHAI's staff was not accustomed to managing. The need to bring edits back to the CAC was a necessary step for QTM's vision. As Bailey pointed out, an edit made by an exhibit developer without subject matter expertise could end up cutting the entire representation of a particular group from the exhibit.³⁴² The brevity of text required by a small exhibit makes it challenging to address diverse groups in full complexity. And with representation of all queer lives so lacking, the pressure to represent the range of queer experiences in the *Revealing Queer* exhibit was high. So, our collective carefully debated such exhibit details as punctuation, phrasing, thematic foci and definitions of language.

When a collective is making a decision collaboratively, it is rare that any one member of the collective is fully satisfied with the result. Rather, all members are making compromises in

³⁴² Bailey, May 2015.

service of the larger whole. And in this case, those compromises were necessarily shaped by the institutional norms of MOHAI and the professional norms of the museum field. These norms are maintained through museum graduate programs, the American Alliance of Museums³⁴³ and standards passed down through centuries of museum management. Standards influence all areas of museum management, including exhibition planning time-lines, duration of display, material and type of museum signage, spacial arrangement of the exhibit displays, events that accompany the exhibits and more.

In addition to the influence of existing standards established by the larger field of museums and the practices inherent to MOHAI, choices were shaped by the personal experiences and identities that each individual brought to the collective. For example, to the white, cisgender gay men for whom AIDs was a central experience of gayness, the topic of the AIDs epidemic was often brought up at our meetings as needing more attention. For those who had studied local gay history professionally, specific narratives of important gay places had already been established in their minds. When people were affiliated with a particular organization, as most of the CAC members were, issues impacting that organization were paramount in their contributions. All of these factors mixed together to establish what specific organizations and people would be featured in the exhibit.

This model of collaboration is one way of attempting “to account for and represent difference.”³⁴⁴ But, as Swarr and Nagar point out, this method of repairing exclusions is

³⁴³ The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) maintains a summary of best practices on their website. In addition, AAM published a 2008 book addressing national standards for museums to consider when seeking AAM Accreditation: Elizabeth E. Merritt, *National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums* (Washington D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2008). Note that the professional association recently changed its’ name, though not its’ initials, from American Association of Museums to the American Alliance of Museums.

³⁴⁴ Nagar and Swarr, Kindle Location 1073

predicated on the unquestioned foundation of naturalized differences. “This approach to difference is problematic precisely because it presumes there is proper meaning to difference, one that exists prior to and outside of representation, that collaboration can work to uncover”.³⁴⁵ While Bailey and I conceived of collaboration as a way to expand inclusion—both representational and participatory inclusion—the process of collaboration maintained identity-based differences. Those invited to participate were not already influencers within MOHAI’s existing structures. Though the intent was to expand and include, the very act of inclusion re-centers those who already inhabit the center. Only those who do not occupy places of privilege need to be added into that which already exists.³⁴⁶ In this way, our efforts at collaboration failed to disrupt existing structures and effectively supported the operation of the structures that created exclusion in the first place. Roderick A. Ferguson addresses this problem with inclusion, naming it as a model that reinforces difference, even as it incorporates difference. Drawing from the work of Stuart Hall and Chandra Mohanty, Ferguson explains that institutional transformations which “render race and gender as individualized matters rather than as structural or institutional ones” have the impact of neutralizing radical changes, even as they appear to address exclusion.³⁴⁷ In fact, collaborating with a previously excluded group of people can make the institution appear to be changing, all the while obfuscating the fact that no significant processes or systems are under-going long-term change. In this case, the collaboration with the CAC, the collaboration between MOHAI and QTM, and even the collaboration between the digital stories and the artifacts in the exhibit, were all temporary aberrations in an institution that continues to operate in largely the same way that it did prior to our collaborations. We did bring in institutional

³⁴⁵ Nagar and Swarr, Kindle Location 1073

³⁴⁶ Nagar and Swarr, Kindle Location 1055-1073.

³⁴⁷ Roderick A. Ferguson, “Administering Sexuality or The Will to Institutionality,” *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008) 162.

outsiders to the work, and we did broaden the identities of those who get to influence museum exhibition. MOHAI gained some credibility as an institution that works with queer narratives. And, while some small revelations occurred in this process, the institution itself remains largely unchanged. The collaborations were short-lived and took the shape of additional and temporary changes.

Further, the identity-based differences that brought our CAC together upheld the very differences that propelled exclusion. Our reparation efforts specifically sought members representing a range of identities based on gender, sexuality, race and geographic location. CAC members were selected because of their affiliations with organizations that represented LGBTQ communities. While participation shifted over the course of the two-year project, the CAC included representatives from such organizations as the Northwest Gay and Lesbian History Museum Project, the Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, Ingersoll Gender Center, the Gender Alliance of the South Sound, the Queer Social Club, Seattle Gay News and Entre Hermanos³⁴⁸. The identity categories that we sought were present largely as individual experiences of difference. This fact alone made any conversation about the ways in which identity categories are created by institutions, like MOHAI, inaccessible. Conversations about difference focused on lived experiences of difference and the narratives which these might produce. While this is an important step in reparation, it also precludes emphasis on the larger structural and institutional conditions that create these identity categories, and that uphold exclusions based on them. These categories of difference are the same ones upon which exclusion from museums has been predicated.

³⁴⁸ For a complete list of CAC members see <http://queeringthemuseum.org/previous-projects/community-advisory-committee/>

A similar focus on individual identity was present in our selection of participants for the DSW. Applications for the DSW were solicited through the social and professional networks of entire CAC. Applicants were asked to self-identify in an open text box, and to share some personal information about themselves. A sub-committee of the CAC which included myself, advised CAC members to look for applicants that seemed capable of telling a story and whose stories are under-represented in existing LGBT archives. In addition, CAC members knew that the videos made in the DSW might turn out to be suitable for inclusion in the exhibit. This necessarily guided CAC members to consider what kinds of stories they wanted in the exhibit. At this early planning stage, because the exhibit was largely un-defined, CAC members drew on their personal desires rather than an existing exhibit map.

At the selection meeting, I asked CAC members to rank the anonymous applications on a scale of 1 to 5, with a 5 indicating that this applicant was a top choice for the workshop. After the anonymous voting process, all applicant numbers were tallied, creating a list of those with top scores. These were considered Finalists and were contacted over the phone by a CAC member to confirm their ability to participate. While the goal was to have ten participants, eight of the Finalists ultimately were able to be present at the workshops. The ability to have two weekends free, as well as transportation to the UW campus in Bothell, impacted final participation. Bothell is a 45-minute drive north of Seattle, and an even longer bus ride. Most bus commutes from Seattle to Bothell would involve multiple transfers. While many life factors played a role in selection—access to the online application, availability to attend the workshop, transportation—the collaborative selection process of the CAC was central in determining who was present. And this selection process was absolutely shaped by its affiliation with the museum

exhibit, and the perceived or desired requirements that each CAC member imagined for that exhibit.

Part of this selection process for the DSW and for the general content of the exhibit was based in each individual's ideas of what constituted an accurate queer history of the Seattle area. The exhibit, in particular, housed within the authoritative institution of an iconic Seattle museum, was obligated to present an accurate historical representation. Assessment of its accuracy was often included in audience responses to the exhibit, as they felt that a particular narrative was overly-emphasized or that their own identities and experiences had not been included.³⁴⁹ Accurate representation brings a pressure to conform to pre-existing notions of chronology, identity and even narrative organization. This pressure influences selection, even collaborative selection, to uphold, rather than contest, existing ideologies of identity.

Digital stories, as evocative objects, bring a great deal of potential to enhance and complicate the identity-based representations of queer history in an exhibit. However, the institutional frameworks within which we operated limited what the films could accomplish. Despite producing eight films, only three were on display in the exhibit. Those three were tucked in a corner of the exhibit space that visitors could easily pass by. Two of the films selected by the CAC were intended to accompany the personal stories featured in the exhibit, but in the process of installation those films were shifted by the exhibit staff. The three digital stories shared one viewing screen, where visitors could select one of the three films by pushing a button in the display. This placement was ultimately out of the control of the QTM team, instead conforming to the installation requirements of the museum exhibit. In fact, the films as individual artifacts

³⁴⁹ Based on audience comments in the log book, personally communicated feedback and feedback received on MOHAI's social media channels.

outside of the museum have received more air-play and broader access than the exhibit itself could provide. The films have been screened separately online, in film festivals across the United States, in classrooms and conferences and in private showings.

Taken all together, these results failed to subvert heteronormative dominance. In fact, an argument could be made that our efforts to change the museum, grounded in queer theories, failed to realize the paradoxical possibilities of queerness. Rather than disrupting codifications, some of our efforts codified normative conceptions of identity, upheld normative identity categories and re-centered heteronormative ideals. When dominance is re-asserted, what interventions remain?

Queer Failure as Resistance

Despite these institutional failures, the theoretical foundations of this dissertation guide us to another possible interpretation of the QTM-MOHAI collaboration. These failures and normative codifications create a dissonance within which we can find new possibilities. Each moment of failure, each lapse, creates opportunities to see the interstitial space of possibilities. This is the third space of new imaginaries that Emma Pérez effectively exploits in her efforts to decolonize historical narratives.³⁵⁰ This is also the imagined space of possibilities that Muñoz conceived of as queer futurity.³⁵¹ This dissonance is the tool of rupture that Sandoval discusses in her *Methodology of the Oppressed*.³⁵² The gaps, the missing representations, the points of

³⁵⁰ Pérez.

³⁵¹ Muñoz 2009.

³⁵² Sandoval 2000.

contention, all become potential spaces for disruptions and resistance. The failures present the opportunity Sedgwick identified, of making the tacit explicit. These are the in-between spaces of resistance upon which critical feminist museology is based.

Indeed, in *The Queer Art of Failure*, Halberstam explores the ways that failure itself can function oppositionally; failed efforts become acts of queer resistance in and of themselves.³⁵³ I use the concept of queer failure not as a disavowal of the pain, hostility and impossible choices that characterize many of the experiences of those who are structurally oppressed.³⁵⁴ Rather, in my application of queer failure, it is a recognition of the agency of the oppressed to deploy the very cruelties of exclusions in ways that may also produce connection, joys and even—at times—institutional change.

Each failed effort to queer MOHAI created oppositional dissonance and opportunities for resistance. These queer failures exploited the spaces of the in-between, exposing historical and institutional exclusions, exceeding the limits of progressive chronologies and expanding beyond that which could be seen in the exhibit itself. The digital stories, operating on the edges of institutionality, stretched the possibilities for accurate, complex and non-linear historical representations. In all of the digital stories, linear chronologies were displaced, creating dissonant moments that rupture and re-think temporality itself. Drawing upon critical feminist museology, in the following section I will explore these dissonant ruptures—gaps that can be queered—that exist within our institutional failures.

Queer Failures: Queering Temporality

³⁵³ Halberstam 2011.

³⁵⁴ This concept of queer failure has been modified by Merri Lisa Johnson's critiques of Halberstam's argument in "Bad Romance: A Crip Feminist Critique of Queer Failure," *Hypatia* 30:1 (Winter 2015) 264.

Halberstam explores multiple means of failure—failures of conformity, failures in teaching and learning—that he³⁵⁵ believes open up space for oppositional, ephemeral and even delegitimate knowledges.³⁵⁶ Similarly, Romesburg advocates for a queering of the museum that specifically targets the very production of knowledge, “highlighting and destabilizing frames of perception through which we come to, or lose, embodiment, subjectivity, space, rights, and affect.”³⁵⁷ This destabilization is the dissonance of critical feminist museology, a dissonance that James Sanders also advocates for in his call for “perceptual deconstructions as well as intersectionalities.”³⁵⁸

The potential of queering, then, is the potential to exceed the limits of structural, institutional, even citational, normativity in its ability to invoke institutional disruption and failure. Each person who reads the exhibit text or gazes at the artifacts and images, brings their own messy history to bear upon their personal interpretation of the display. While the imagery is invoking cultural ideologies and citing social symbols, the ultimate interpretation of the display’s meanings will include all that is present in those who do the interpreting; even in the same person, with the same set of social and personal experiences, the interpretation of the exhibit will vary depending on who else is present in the exhibit, who accompanies the viewer, the emotions and physical state of the viewer, the ideas that are popular in broader cultural media at that moment, and more. As Butler explains, the reach of what is displayed cannot be controlled and

³⁵⁵ I use the pronoun he here to refer to Halberstam, who publishes under Judith and also goes by Jack. According to Halberstam’s online publication dated September 3, 2012, Halberstam will utilize either he or she for pronouns, as well as both the names Judith and Jack, though Halberstam expresses a recent preference for Jack. For the simplicity of the reader, I picked the pronoun he and utilize that one throughout, where necessary. Please note that Halberstam’s gender identity intentionally floats between the realms of he and she. Jack Halberstam, “On Pronouns,” September 3, 2012. <http://www.jackhalberstam.com/on-pronouns/>

³⁵⁶ Halberstam 2011, 9-15.

³⁵⁷ Romesburg, 135.

³⁵⁸ James Sanders, “The Museum’s Silent Sexual Performance,” *Museums and Social Issues* 3:1 (2008): 20-21.

ownership is in fact yielded to those who interpret, take-up, reform or deform the performance.³⁵⁹ This awareness already moves the display beyond traditional museum structures of ownership and collaboration. And while all exhibits participate in this audience collaboration, the queered exhibit that employs critical feminist principles—what may be considered “critically queer”³⁶⁰—utilizes social signifiers to disrupt, to fragment and even to complicate that which is expected and commonly understood. This complication and disruption is seen in the queer failures to fit neatly into the “reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality.”³⁶¹ Queer life, which has failed at fitting norms of gender, sexuality, race and more,³⁶² resists the limits of the linear, progressive trajectories promised by heteronormativity.

Freeman and Muñoz identify one path of queer resistance as the exploitation of non-normative time. They both recognize that individuals and groups may be present in one moment, actively recalling or referencing past moments, while at the same time imagining future possibilities that resist the limits of social, institutional and temporal norms. Freeman discusses the ways that past events—and their embedded meanings—become resources for interventions in present experiences; recognition of the connections between past, present and future creates a temporal drag that disrupts the present and exceeds the limits of the structured narratives presented in a simple display.³⁶³ With this in mind, Freeman pushes the limits of Butler’s concept of citations of the past, asserting that the “past” and even the “present” cannot be understood simplistically, but must account for the presence of life lived otherwise than in the

³⁵⁹ Butler 2013, 28-29.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

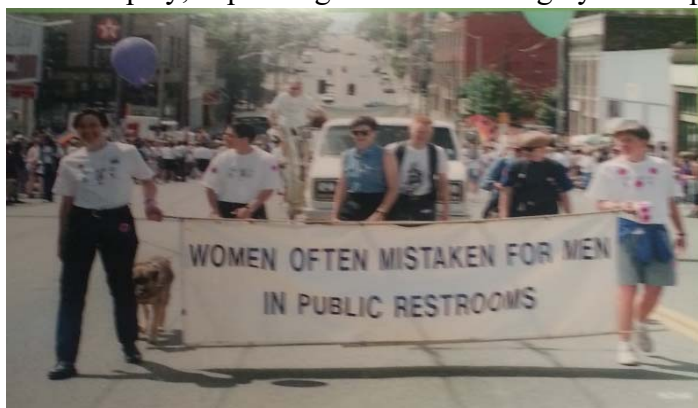
³⁶¹ Muñoz 2009, 22.

³⁶² Here I draw from Halberstam’s discussion of queer failures in *The Queer Art of Failure*.

³⁶³ Freeman, 59-61.

present.”³⁶⁴ Muñoz makes a similar assertion that the “present must be known in relation to the alternative temporal and spatial maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds.”³⁶⁵ In this way, conscious disruption of simplistic cultural codes is possible through the resource of interstitial time. The temporal drag can be a tool of complexity and subversion, even if not visible, even if covert.

Queerness itself is often transmitted covertly, in ways that escape normative discursive meanings. “Instead of being clearly available as visible evidence, queerness has instead existed as innuendo, gossip, fleeting moments, and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere—while evaporating at the touch of those who would eliminate queer possibility.”³⁶⁶ These affective, fleeting transits exceed time, Freeman and Muñoz argue, and are utilized by queer people for whom the present is an “impoverished and toxic” environment.³⁶⁷ We can see these temporal deconstructions quite clearly in the self-representations of several of the digital storytellers, as detailed in Chapter Three. But it is possible for these affective disruptions to make themselves known in a more static museum display, depending on how the imagery is interpreted by the viewer. Each time the information



presented doesn't quite fit the norm that is evoked, the edges of that norm become permeable. So that a normative understanding of gender expression, disrupted in many of the images on display in *Revealing Queer*, exposes

the limits of that norm. For example, a panel featuring Marsha Botzer, a founder and leader of

³⁶⁴ Freeman, 63.

³⁶⁵ Muñoz 2009, 27

³⁶⁶ Muñoz 1996, 96.

³⁶⁷ Muñoz 2009, 27.

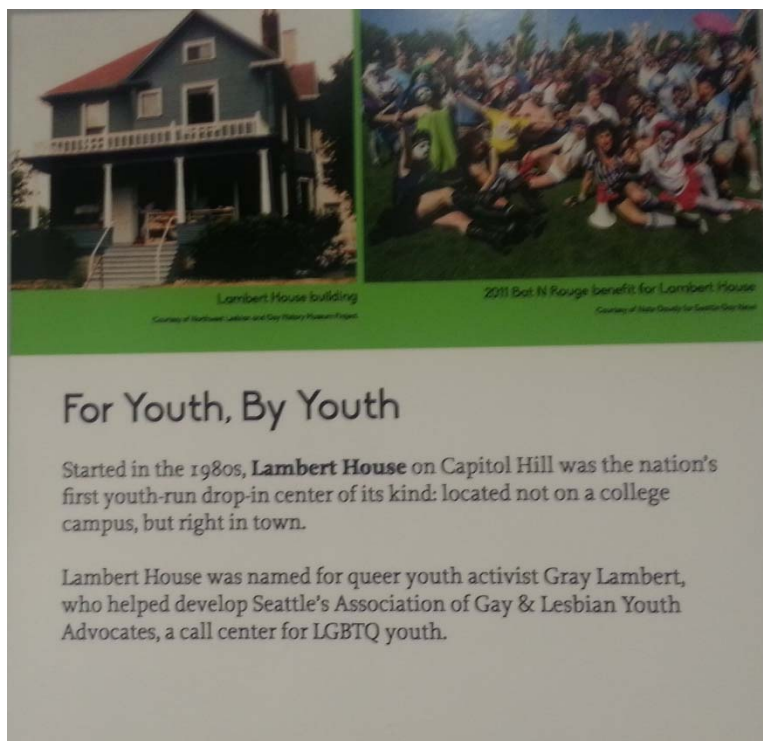


Ingersoll Gender Center declared “The time to be happy is now.” The text went on to encourage the audience to “embrace transgender communities and welcome new ways of thinking about inclusion and diversity.” This included several photos of Ingersoll staff and volunteers smiling warmly while welcoming people to their information booth at a festival. In this panel, transgender people are welcomed and celebrated, despite living in a

heteronormative society that limits gender possibilities to strict performances of the hegemonic masculine and feminine binary. In another section, a photo of women with short hair are proudly carrying a sign in a parade that describes them as “Women Often Mistaken for Men in Public Restrooms.” Here we see women performing their female gender identity in ways that exceed the limits of the male/female binary.

Similarly, narratives of compulsory heterosexuality are disrupted by the images of self-described lesbians and gays who greet the camera with happiness and joy. In addition to photographs of people celebrating at pride parades and standing in front of organizations that they founded—such as the Lambert House—the exhibit included posters extolling power and pride, such as a 1987 pride poster with the slogan “Unity in Pride, Power, Life and Justice: Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade March and Freedom Rally.” These representations hold up

experiences of life—pride, happiness, power and self-confidence—that heteronormativity dictates are not possible for those who fall outside its boundaries.



These failures to fit “chronormativity,”³⁶⁸—a term coined by Freeman to reference the normalizing structures of time itself—allow queer communications that exceed the limits of normalized signification, travelling through affect, overt and covert transmissions. Layered representations may signify

normative social meanings *and also* the resistant, deviant, non-normative constructions of reality that queers of all racial, ethnic, class, disability and gender identities have created, shared and relied upon—sometimes as a means of survival. Muñoz envisions intersectional differences as central to these cross-temporal queer possibilities, describing a queer utopian imaginary “in which multiple forms of belonging in difference adhere to a belonging in collectivity.”³⁶⁹ This act of drawing upon collective experiences, reactions and resistances to construct an imaginary queer utopia is a failure to adhere to normative notions of rationality.³⁷⁰ This is a rationality that would keep us grounded in the present moment, aware of the limits of our own individual knowledge, experience and capacity. This rationality operates as the reasoned logic of

³⁶⁸ Freeman, 3.

³⁶⁹ Muñoz 2009, 20.

³⁷⁰ Muñoz 2009, 31.

heteronormativity, understanding that the moments of the past that we have chosen to memorialize provide a solid, linear foundation for the present and that propels the normative future which this chronology demands. Resisting this rational construction of progress instead privileges the “naïve or nonsensical”³⁷¹ —that which does not seem possible in the toxicity experienced by those “who do not feel the privilege of majoritarian belonging.”³⁷² Failure to fit the norms exposes those norms for what they are—socially constructed means of regulation—and opens up the possibilities of oppositional consciousness and resistance.

Queer Failures: Highlighting Institutional Norms

As critical feminist museology shows us, consciousness of institutional norms is a potent pathway of resistance. The failures I have named in the *Revealing Queer* exhibit mirrored failures present in the larger museum space of MOHAI. The attention given to *Revealing Queer's* failures brought similar attention to structural exclusions on a larger scale. QTM's failure to fit institutional procedures presented provocative moments for intervention. By emphasizing process and collaboration, QTM exposed normalizing processes in existing MOHAI procedures and invited larger community conversations about representation and inclusion.

QTM's community-led exhibit development process involved decision-making by consensus for decisions ranging from exhibit text punctuation to the inclusion of specific artifacts and narratives. This is an inherently time-consuming and messy procedure that prioritizes process over the potentially competing needs to produce an exhibit that is efficient with a clear cohesive narrative. This was a significant risk for MOHAI to hand over so much of

³⁷¹ Halberstam 2011, 22.

³⁷² Muñoz 2009, 27.

the exhibit control—though they did retain final approval—and it was a risk that resulted in many institutional ruptures, including increased engagement with MOHAI’s local community members. QTM’s demonstrated focus on the process helped MOHAI staff to both see the benefit of these kinds of collaborations, as well as to identify institutional procedures that could be modified to provide more support of these kinds of community processes.³⁷³ For example, the training of volunteer docents was modified to ensure that volunteers had knowledge about LGBTQ terminologies, as well as the unique exhibit development process utilized for *Revealing Queer*.

One of the results of our exhibit development process was the increased opportunities for subversive dissonance in exhibit audiences. As discussed earlier, the exhibit included a few stories of LGBTQ people of color, but these were vastly out-numbered by the images and stories of LGBTQ white individuals and groups. This imbalance was hard to miss. And many visitors shared their concern about the lack of people of color through comments made in the interactive exhibit kiosks, the visitor log, and through social media outlets related to both MOHAI and QTM. These valid concerns could have easily been cast against any other exhibit at MOHAI, but the nature of *Revealing Queer*’s community processes were the catalyst that brought these concerns to the attention of MOHAI’s staff. In fact, the close connection to LGBTQ communities invited commentary on many of *Revealing Queer*’s failures, including concern about the aesthetic choices, the focus on community organizations, the many stories that were left out, the lack of depth of some of the stories that were included and the small amount of materials featuring trans stories. All of these concerns engaged regional community members in

³⁷³ Personal conversations with MOHAI staff. Some areas discussed include communication flow, point of contact staff people and volunteer trainings.

conversations about representation, inclusion, identity and the responsibilities of the museum. MOHAI was exposed to these very real concerns, engaging in some conversations with community members who had been largely absent to that point. This institutional failure became the basis for increased engagement on important conversations—a queering that exploited the lack to create a foot hold.

Throughout the run of *Revealing Queer*, LGBTQ stories were predominantly, though not exclusively, represented in the contained space of this LGBTQ-focused exhibit. While this placement forced *Revealing Queer* to function as a definitive singular narrative for a diverse and complex group of people, this same placement also served to highlight the fact that most of the museum did not mention LGBTQ stories. Our failure to radically change the whole of MOHAI's exhibit spaces effectively highlighted the relative absence of LGBTQ artifacts in the rest of the institution.

Queer Failures: Collaboration that Exceeds the Institution

One of the biggest process-oriented interventions QTM made was centering collaboration in the oversight and content-development of our entire project with MOHAI. Bailey, Macklin and I all conceptualized collaboration as an intellectual and political tool to bridge structural gaps, with possibilities that exceed its potential as a methodological intervention. The collaborations that created QTM, that formed the QTM-MOHAI collaboration, that functioned in the CAC selection of DSW participants, the collaboration between Macklin and I, and the

collaborative creation of individual narratives in the DSW, were all essential to what was produced.

Collaboration resists institutional structures because it exceeds those structures. Consider the hierarchy of an organization chart for most large museums in the U.S. There are, by design, specialized areas of knowing and doing, dividing the labor into discrete sections in order to manage the scale of large projects. Topical areas divide and contain knowledge gathering and production into categories such as, volunteer management, education programs, exhibit installation, public programs, marketing, fundraising and overall management. While these divides serve a practical purpose, developing a project that is truly collaborative in design and production requires individuals to traverse organizational boundaries and protocols. Crossing these boundaries can be both difficult and disruptive to organizational norms.

When we structure work to function separately, we are losing opportunities to critically engage the unconscious assumptions that shape our tasks and choices. Those who approach work differently than we do can often recognize what have become our unquestioned norms, so naturalized to our work flow that we rarely see them. The different knowledge sets each person and functional area brings to the project can add value to all the other areas, and synergistically enhance the project as a whole. Imagine creating an exhibit plan that builds on educational opportunities, is designed around public programs and incorporates relationship-building that can enhance community support of the museum, resulting in such tangible impacts as long-term relationships, financial and artifact donations. This kind of holistic impact is possible when work happens across difference—functional, organizational, experiential and identity-based difference.

The QTM CAC incorporated more differences than a typical work committee might, including differences of identity, education, expertise and political commitments. However, the

QTM-MOHAI collaboration functioned alongside existing MOHAI organizational divisions and was, therefore, shaped by the institutional norms of MOHAI. Our CAC intervention was additive, failing to perform the intersectional critical reflections that critical feminist museology is grounded in. Inserting a collaborative project temporarily into an existing system fails to produce the radical possibilities of collaborative work. As such, the QTM-MOHAI collaboration missed opportunities to create the kind of holistic impact that we had, at first, envisioned. This institutional failure limited the impact that our CAC could have on MOHAI broadly and on the results of our project more specifically.

Paradoxically, the DSW had the least success in mapping onto MOHAI's institutional norms and therefore the greatest success in queering both the process and the product of our labors. Where we experienced the greatest collaborative freedom was in the area with the least institutional oversight. The failure of the digital storytelling workshop to map onto institutional norms contributed to its ability to expand beyond the normalizing influences of "straight time"³⁷⁴ and institutionally-codified heteronormativity. Our institutional failure created space for queering to flourish.

Unlike the *Revealing Queer* exhibit, and even the Community Advisory Committee meetings, the digital storytelling process, planning and implementation all happened without MOHAI's input, influence or contributions. While the digital stories were part of the initial proposal to partner with MOHAI, the museum did not become involved in the digital storytelling process until the films were completed. The workshop was funded entirely by grants, scholarships and in-kind donations. Originally inspired by the work of the Center for Digital

³⁷⁴ Muñoz, 22

Storytelling³⁷⁵ (CDS), I investigated inviting CDS to lead the workshop for the QTM project. However, the \$10,000 starting price tag set a fund-raising bar too high for me to reach within the given time-frame. Encouraged by my advisors, I determined to use this funding failure as an opportunity to create a workshop truly grounded in the queer and feminist principles that guide my work. Rather than add-in awareness of queer experiences to a pre-existing format, I was able to work with a skilled feminist colleague, Macklin, to collaboratively design an experience true to our values. I brought experience teaching writing workshops and narrative development, and Macklin brought the technical expertise required to produce the films. We both brought experiences in critical feminist organizing, and a shared background in the collaborative community intervention The Women Who Rock project.³⁷⁶

Drawing from these common foundations, Macklin and I designed the entire workshop together. We received supportive guidance from academic advisors, who also helped us to access a computer lab on the university campus in which to hold the workshops. The CAC provided oversight of the selection process for participants but left the workshop itself to Macklin and me. From the beginning, Macklin and I committed to an ethos of access and reproducibility. No matter what skills participants brought to the workshop, we wanted each participant to leave with a quality video, the skills and tools to create more videos, and resources to share their knowledge with others. In this way, both products of the workshop and the processes used in the workshop reach far beyond those two weekends together. While at the workshop, we all looked back into our individual and collective pasts, drawing threads of connection, exploration and inspiration. We pulled those threads into that creative moment, producing films that reflected a personal,

³⁷⁵ The Center for Digital Storytelling recently rebranded as The Story Center <http://www.storycenter.org/>

³⁷⁶ For more information on the Women Who Rock project, visit <http://womenwhorockcommunity.org/>

significant historical moment. Those creations and that experience, continue to weave new paths and new opportunities. Larrainzar has incorporated digital storytelling into Seattle-based work with undocumented queer immigrants and the Seattle Counseling Services.³⁷⁷ Keith incorporated a version of our DSW into her summer work with Seattle's youth, utilizing the same free tools.³⁷⁸ Hernandez drew from his experience at the DSW to deepen his personal connections to his family and utilized imagery from his films as a foundation for his college senior art project. Isis Asare invited two of the digital storytellers to share their films at screenings sponsored by Sistah Sinema. By design, the videos and the knowledge created at the workshops travels far beyond our control.

The impact of collaboration is viscerally visible in the compounded impact of the meanings communicated when the films are viewed collectively. Each filmmaker's identity, viewed in one discrete film, both conformed and resisted normative identity categories of race, gender and sexuality to some degree. But collectively—collaboratively—the films disrupt static notions of race, gender and sexuality. Individually, the films show the results of the collective explorations that happened in the workshop. Each individual representation functions as an expansion of individual identity. But as a group, the films resist codification and expose the many layered limits of heteronormativity. This power in collaboration may be why several of the filmmakers expressed hesitation at the idea of their individual film being screened all alone; for those individuals, even their personal narrative held greater potency and great context when presented as part of the workshop's collective production.³⁷⁹ The ethos of collaboration carried over beyond the workshop itself, influencing the presentation of the films. The bonds established

³⁷⁷ <http://www.seattlecounseling.org/iruo/>

³⁷⁸ Personal communication with Angelica Macklin, Summer 2013

³⁷⁹ Personal communication, June 2013.

between the participants were palpable during the initial film screening at the Queering the History Museum Symposium in June 2013. All the filmmakers were present and responded collaboratively to the audience questions and comments.

The collaborative foundations—in many ways made possible because of the DSW’s tangential relationship to the museum—functioned as both method and pedagogy. Collaborating together strengthened the quality of the individual films produced, influenced the impact of the films when shown collectively, and enhanced the ability of these queer representations to resist static notions of identity. By failing to map onto existing institutional norms, the DSW found more freedom to subvert the limits of those norms—more freedom to be queer.

Even the limits of accuracy were contested in the films that were produced. Playing with identity requires expanding notions of historical accuracy, as these films did. Operating on the edges of the institution, the digital stories had more opportunity to fail to be accurate than the exhibit could. As the digital stories were explicitly personal narratives, the accuracy of their content was difficult to contest. The DSW was released from the mandate for historical accuracy and freed to speak to the personal. The storytellers created representations that were both packed with sameness—relatable human moments, as well as evocative of difference—largely the differences that each storyteller perceived about themselves that had marked their journey through the social institutions of family, education, citizenship and government. In this way, the films were able to complicate historical narratives and were not subject to the collaborative editing and re-editing process that the rest of the exhibit content under-went. The films queered evidentiary requirements, accepting “the performative, the affective and the ephemeral”³⁸⁰ as

³⁸⁰ Vu Tuan Nguyen, “Towards a Queer Intersectional Museology” (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2013) Dissertation toward a Master of Museum Studies, 35.

legitimate ways of understanding queer histories. Within this institutional framework, operating literally and figuratively on the edges of the exhibit, the digital stories blurred the boundaries of accuracy and collaboration. The storytellers were both the subjects of knowledge and the producers of knowledge, inviting the audience into a queer collaboration of knowledge production.

This product—workshop and videos—is a collaborative application of queer temporality. Collectively, all the workshop participants and leaders created a queer temporal space that echoes back to the past, reverberates out to and through the participants and emanates into a future with no clear end point. The products, both visible and invisible, spread out from the workshop itself geographically and temporally—stretching time. In these actions, the static codification of identities is actively resisted by the collective impact on the films and the filmmakers.

Queering a Museum

Queer in theory, queer in application? Queerness as a framework does not prevent institutional norms from operating, or hegemonic structures from asserting heteronormativity. Critical feminist museology demonstrates that no matter the tools or approach, we must engage with critical consciousness of the ways that hegemony is maintained through institutional frameworks, like museums. Queer theory, in collaboration with critical feminist theories, does offer a framework for subverting and resisting—even within the institutional failures. Operating in the interstitial moments that exist between dominance, we can queer institutional failures. In QTM's collaboration with MOHAI, those queer opportunities were present—exposing historical and institutional exclusion, as gaps or ruptures within dominant narratives, and as affective, collaborative resonances that complicated notions of identity and authenticity.

Conclusions

This dissertation, like the change work advocated for here, addresses multiple audiences. Museum professionals, museum students and museum visitors all have a stake in the ongoing contributions that museums make to our communities. Potential audiences, and all those whom museums claim to serve in their local and larger communities, are impacted by the choices museums make. Feminist and queer scholars who have long advocated for recognizing the power and impact of representation have a stake in efforts of museums to address identity-based exclusions. Those who advocate for scholarship that engages publics beyond the academy are impacted by the ways that museums utilize scholarship and educate informal audiences. Among these groups, many have turned to digital tools as possible solutions for the geographic and economic barriers of access that have shaped oppressed communities' engagements with historical representations in museums. Any of these individuals concerned with the potential of digital tools to offer new solutions to old problems may find relevance in the arguments I present here.

Speaking to this range of potential stake holders, the conclusions I construct here similarly address a range of responses to my research. In addition to considering the significance of the work presented in the preceding paragraphs, I conclude with specific practices that museum professionals, public scholars and those employing digital tools may utilize in their commitments to changing identity-based exclusions. Ultimately, I advocate for the reconsideration of inclusion as a goal. Rather, I suggest a critically reflective approach to redressing the long-standing exclusions enforced by heteronormative ideals. Collaboration that shares authority with the subjects of the narrative must be grounded in critical consciousness in order to uphold an ethic of relational responsibility. This attention to the ethics of our

relationships strengthens museum professionals' access to under-represented stories, as well as the ability to portray these stories thoughtfully. But we cannot approach relationships across difference without reflecting critically on the oppressive structures in which we and our institutions participate.

Critical feminist museology offers a theory and a method of long-term change, that is flexible and responsive to the practical limitations each museum faces. Drawing consciously upon the affective opportunities presented by digital media, historical exclusions become opportunities for consciously engaging audiences in the messy, painful and complex histories of our social worlds. Moving beyond the master narratives of heteronormativity, digital stories address the lack of material artifacts and highlight the potential of affect, imagination and collaboration as tools of change. Instead of being limited by existing social codes—with which museum audiences are familiar—these codes create opportunities for affective, instructive dissonance that can serve to highlight the very existence of these codes, as well as the impact of their existence on the people of our communities. Digital narratives, produced in critically conscious collaboration, function as evocative objects; historical artifacts that add to the archive even as they have the potential to reach beyond the archive, presenting relatable human experiences that fail to fit cultural norms. Through connection and dissonance, these stories resonate with audiences and deepen the complexity of the historical narratives we tell.

Loving Resistance

Love creates an opportunity for rupturing that which we know for sure; of crossing the boundaries that have been so firmly implanted in our experiences, our institutions, our lives.

This is not the heteronormative romantic love, but the love described by Sandoval as capable of pulling us outside of ideologies and revealing new possibilities for change. This is a love that is reassuring, warming and pleasurable, like the pleasurable embrace that Gabriel invites museums to utilize in support of expanding queer inclusion.³⁸¹ This love can be the ground for affective dissonance. It is this “social-erotics,” as Sandoval calls it, practiced by skilled and critically-conscious activists, that creates opportunities for alliance across our differences and thus for radical, emancipatory change.³⁸² The differential that is created in the third space—the potential in-between the binaries of a heteronormative world—is a potent site of political contestation. Compelled by love and even desire,³⁸³ movement towards critical consciousness progresses beyond what seems possible. It is love and desire that draw our diverse LGBTQ communities together, and that can draw together coalitions across all kinds of difference, towards the imagined possibilities of the queer utopia.³⁸⁴ As one visitor to *Revealing Queer* summarized, “I am so much more like you than I’m not.”³⁸⁵

Queering is powerfully effective when it is affective; it is the relatable resonances which exceed the confines of hegemonic norms that will lead to change. This is the change possible when audiences connect to critically-constructed narratives, recognizing themselves in the stories even as they recognize stark differences. The resonance of the narratives creates space for disruption when the familiar becomes complex and the resonance shifts to dissonance.

³⁸¹ Gabriel, 63.

³⁸² Sandoval 2002, 27.

³⁸³ Sandoval 2002 draws from Foucault’s discussion of “a desire capable of driving the body and the will beyond their limits,” towards “an anti-postmodern, anti-fascist, and anti-colonial oppositional consciousness and praxis” Kindle Location 2062.

³⁸⁴ Queer utopia is a direct reference to the imagined futures discussed by Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*.

³⁸⁵ This is a quote from the *Revealing Queer* museum visitor log, which is un-dated.

Recognizing common experiences of affection is a strong ground upon which to stand while stretching our consciousness beyond our own experiences. Hernandez reflected back on the experience of participating in the collaborative workshop noting, “The process we underwent asked that we not only share our story, but to also listen and understand the experiences of the other participants. Our stories were all very unique and it was clear that there was no one Queer experience that could represent us all. This, I thought, was wonderful.”³⁸⁶ Similarly, feedback provided anonymously immediately after the workshop suggested that the most positive part of the experience was “seeing everyone’s end products; not feeling isolated; feeling freedom.” The connections formed across differences at the workshop itself were carried through in viewer experiences of the completed films. Love and other forms of affection guide connection across perceived barriers. And this connection helps us all to “‘queer’ our assumptions, adopt different perspectives and step outside of the confines of what is—and is not—considered ‘normal.’”³⁸⁷ Museologist Susan Ferentinos reminds us, “These are questions with implications for many, many aspects of our lives, but they also have particular relevance for the museum field.”³⁸⁸

Diversifying Museums

As Ferentinos notes, there is continued focus from museum professionals on finding ways to engage with under-represented communities in museums. The American Alliance of Museums updated their Diversity and Inclusion Policy in 2014.³⁸⁹ The policy concludes that “in

³⁸⁶ Caleb Hernandez, “Queer Digital Stories: Identity,” Queering the Museum Project 4/16/2016 <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2016/04/16/queer-digital-stories-identity/>

³⁸⁷ Susan Ferentinos, “The Expanding Conversation,” Queering the Museum Project 4/16/2015 <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2015/04/16/the-expanding-conversation/>

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ American Alliance of Museums, “Diversity and Inclusion Policy,” 2/26/2014. <http://www.aam-us.org/about-us/who-we-are/strategic-plan/diversity-and-inclusion-policy>

order to leverage diversity, an environment must be created where people feel supported, listened to and able to do their personal best.” This statement affirms the significance of collaboration and relational responsibility in responding to identity-based exclusions. They go on to advise that while “[d]iversity always exists in social systems,” inclusion “must be created.”³⁹⁰ The worlds in which we operate are already diverse. But we must take thoughtful action in order to help museums reflect this diversity. That action must include educating all future museum professionals, not just those who are under-represented, on the need for inclusion in museums, according to Gretchen Sorin, Director of the Cooperstown Graduate Program in History Museum Studies.³⁹¹ Sorin advises that this education is best delivered with specific strategies to accomplish these goals, and is reaching out to the broader museum community to support these practices,³⁹² which include considering all areas of museum work in our change efforts. Johnetta B. Cole, president of the Association of Museum Directors, recently expressed specific concern over the homogeneity of museum boards³⁹³—the decision-making body that has significant oversight of all non-profit museum policies. Actions to address this range from identity-specific recruitment to tracking board diversity on a spreadsheet.³⁹⁴ Online communities are having extensive conversations about diversity in museums, as well as specific practices to address the challenges of change. Topics range from gender disparities in art museum management³⁹⁵ to

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Gretchen Sorin, “Museum Studies Programs and Tools for Creating More Inclusive Curricula,” Center for the Future of Museums, 3/29/16. <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2016/03/museum-studies-programs-tools-for.html?m=1>

³⁹² Sorin

³⁹³ Ted Loos, “Speed Museum Turns to a Spreadsheet to Increase Diversity,” *The New York Times*, 3/15/2016. http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/03/17/arts/design/speed-museum-turns-to-a-spreadsheet-to-increase-diversity.html?emc=edit_tnt_20160316&nid=23074679&tntemail0=y&r=2&referer

³⁹⁴ Loos.

³⁹⁵ Anne Marie Gan et al, “The Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships,” *The Association of Art Museum Directors*, 3/7/2014.

https://aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/The%20Gender%20Gap%20in%20Art%20Museum%20Directorships_0.pdf

racial inequalities in staffing and representation.³⁹⁶ Clearly, there is extensive professional interest and commitment to expand identity-based inclusion in U.S. museums.

However, “many cultural organizations still rely on the tacit assumption that visitors are heterosexual, monogamous, and live within a traditional nuclear family model.”³⁹⁷ Ferentinos explains: “Artifacts and interpretation reinforce the idea that these conditions are the societal norm, which implicitly suggests that alternative ways of relating are *not* normal, are somehow inferior. We see this when museums describe the (heterosexual) marriage and procreation of one historic figure, but opt to ignore another’s same-sex attachments, deeming such information irrelevant, libelous, or confrontational.”³⁹⁸ The intersectional framework offered by critical feminist museology offers tools applicable to *all* areas of concern which museums are grappling with in the quest to diversify, and responds to problems with the concept of inclusion. The model of inclusion, while an important starting ground, sets up both a center and a set of outsiders. Who do you invite into the center? Who gets to extend the invitation? What ideas about their very outsider-ship must they bring to be included? And when have we included enough? If we approach diversity as an additive, we will always be wondering if the limited resources of museums and archives can stretch far enough to include them all. Or if we include women, is that enough? What if we include Native Americans? Must we also include gays and lesbians? Does that include transgender histories? Where do gender-non-conformers fit? This model assumes that people will fit into one category, not many. And this model frames diversity as a game of competition for limited resources.

³⁹⁶ The Inluseum, a blog investigating inclusion in museums, has hosted a variety of these conversations as well as shared information about conversations on race in museums held at the American Alliance of Museums national conferences. <https://inluseum.com/?s=race&submit=Search>

³⁹⁷ Ferentinos.

³⁹⁸ Ferentinos.

Intersectional feminists and queer theorists point us to a different approach. Critical feminist museology begins with creating consciousness about the resources and processes that are already in place. What choices have we made that have unwittingly shaped our audiences? What processes do we employ that unconsciously re-center heteronormativity? By the time we invite collaborators to a project, we have often already decided many of the factors that will determine who can and will participate: the time and place of meetings, the cost of participation, the transportation methods available to get to the meetings—all of these institutional and structural options impacts collaboration. Collaborators are also frequently invited after the framework of a project has already been approved; this limits the impact that collaborators could possibly have and may preclude the project from access to new conceptual models or procedures. Developing critical consciousness requires that we seek ideas and information outside of our usual pathways. The theories of both intersectional feminists and queer theorists guide us to two important concepts for initiating change work: 1) reflect critically on the institutions, systems and procedures that structure our pathways and our choices and 2) draw from this conscious perspective to identify pathways in-between the simplistic, binary trajectories of normalcy.

Based on these two steps, the QTM-MOHAI projects focused on collaboration, relational responsibility and critical reflection as the values that guided our work. Within the digital storytelling project, these values facilitated the creation of complex, affective narratives. The complexity afforded by digital technologies supported the filmmakers' production of historical artifacts which both defined and disrupted identity categories of gender, sexuality and race. The unique quality inherent in these evocative objects is their ability to capture the particulars of individual experience while at the same time highlighting the structural norms and institutions

that shaped their experiences.³⁹⁹ This quality is not innate to digital tools, but is the result of digital production through a critically reflective, collaborative process of media-making.

For Museum Professionals

Museum professionals are tasked with performing the necessary practical labors that will bring about change, upholding professional standards while disrupting the normative representations of history that currently dominate our museums and archives. Intersectional feminist and queer theorists present flexible and important concepts for changing how we do our work. Yet, the question I often hear is, “How do I actually do that?” Embracing the values of critical consciousness, collaboration and relational responsibility, we can identify several, practical steps to implementation.

Critical Consciousness

This is the essential first step to making productive changes. You have to understand where you have been, before you can decide what needs to change, and how to improve it. Critical consciousness is also a necessary ongoing practice. Checking in on relationships, policies and procedures consistently will ensure an enduring commitment to improvements, rather than a one-time change. The following are some places to begin this critical consciousness-raising.

Unpack your history

³⁹⁹The emphasis on micro and macro here is influenced by Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s question, “I ask what would it mean to be attentive to the micropolitics of everyday life as well as to the larger processes that recolonize the culture and identities of people across the globe.” from “Under Western Eyes’ Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 28 No 2 (2002) 508-509.

What are the historical roots of your museum? We always want to celebrate where we come from, but we also need to understand the oppressions that may have been part of our formation, in order to understand how that history is shaping exclusions today. Many museums and archives were formed as part of a white colonial project, preserving stories of white male accomplishment. Other museums collected indigenous artifacts, preserving a “dying nation” without critical awareness of the ways in which these preservation acts also contributed towards the decimation of many indigenous practices. Just as we have to know we have a past in order to imagine a future, we have to know what structural privileges shaped that past, in order to comprehend the ways in which our present practices uphold structural exclusions.

Be sure to include work processes in this critical consciousness raising. Identity specific procedures and pull some focus away from the end product. What processes have you inherited from prior work groups? What procedures are embedded in the institutional history? Or graduate school training? What small changes to the process might offer new opportunities for complexity, engagement or partnerships?

Contextualize your mission

What is driving you to consider inclusion? What is the institutional motivation for addressing diversity and identity-based representation? Review the mission of your institution. Think about how this mission both embraces and rejects diverse narratives.

For example, do you have a mandate to represent a particular geographic region? Who has populated this area?

Is your focus on a particular discipline (science? art?) What structures of that discipline have historically centered the work of white men? How is that history impacting your collection?

Are you focused on the contributions of a particular founding family? Regional artist? What are the diverse narratives that intertwine with those central stories? How could you expand to include those?

All of these missions encompass opportunities to tell complex, inclusive stories but the particular focus of your museum will drive the approach you take to that inclusion. This practice of reflection will also help you to understand how your mission has shaped the current content that your institutions collects and displays.

Surface your Assumptions

Department by department, topic by topic, invest the time to reflect critically on your processes and procedures. For example, what assumptions are embedded in your archive naming conventions? What information is being recorded and what is being left out? What connections between artifacts are being preserved? What narratives do these connections support?

Or, you might consider what values are expressed in the language on your museum membership forms? Or in your audience surveys? Do you assume that all museum audience members will fit neatly into male/female gender-binary categories? Do you leave space for mixed-race identities? Consider what information you really need to know and avoid asking for data simply to ask. Be able to make a clear argument for the relevance of any data you are asking people to contribute.

Consider also the structure of the museum space. What assumptions are communicated in the placement of your entrances, exits and bathrooms? Does wheel chair access require using a side or back entrance? Do bathrooms assume that only women need a changing table? Do you offer gender-neutral bathroom spaces?

There is a lot of information about who and what our institutions value, and what our museum culture considers normal in the details of our work policies, practices and decisions.

Collaboration

Expanding our awareness requires that we collaborate with a variety of people, who each bring their own histories, expertise and life experiences. Respectful collaboration is an essential tool for surfacing our assumptions, expanding our access to artifacts and finding new ways of doing museum work; ways that disrupt the reification of heteronormativity. Following are some ideas about how to approach collaboration.

Shake Up your Structure

Collaboration is often a shift that needs to occur inside of our institutions, not just with people outside of the institution. Look for ways to build institutional alliances across departmental boundaries. Consider including people who are at the bottom of the management hierarchy; we often overlook the incredible knowledge that staff greeting our visitors has acquired about museum audiences. This kind of change sounds scary to many, but it can be simpler than it sounds. You don't have to fully embrace non-hierarchical consensus-based decision-making in order to shift perspectives. Consider bringing in all departments at the very beginning of a new project. Ask representatives with a different institutional expertise to shadow your work group and reflect on the processes you use. Where are there overlaps? Or connection points? What assumptions' that have become naturalized to you are apparent to your colleague? Intra-institutional collaboration can create multiple opportunities for new synergies and solutions.

Respectful, Reciprocal Relationships

A truly inclusive community space invests in enduring relationships with community members from a variety of social backgrounds and identities. Developing trust takes time, particularly when an institution has done little to inspire trust in the past. It may feel uncomfortable, it may be messy, but investing time into individuals and community groups is a worthwhile endeavor and a critical step for the creation of an inclusive space. Send museum staff to local community events so that you and your institution are recognized as active, engaged community members. Talk to people and demonstrate interest in knowing what issues are important to them. Spend a lot of time listening. Be open to opportunities that community members bring you—even if you can't do what they propose, consider what you *can* do. Those of us with access to the inner-workings of a museum may be brutally aware that many museums operate with strict budgets and limited financial resources. Despite this, museums are sites of community riches and resources. Community members may expect the museum to contribute in some way, and will be conscious of the institutional resources that are inherent in the position that a museum holds. Responding respectfully, and honestly, to proposals invites authentic opportunities for collaboration.

Relational Responsibility

Effective and consistent collaboration is built on strong relationships. People want to work with people and institutions that can be trusted. Trust is formed when we are open about commitments and hold each other accountable in moments of failure. Following are some initial suggestions towards ongoing relational responsibility.

Encourage Failures and Incentivize Risk

Institutional change and social change require risks. If we function in an environment that criticize and deprecate failures, we will become averse to risk. Find structured ways to create opportunities for risk, and build the trust of your team when they encounter failures. Celebrate failures in consistent and predictable ways. Team meetings may include time to propose new risky endeavors. Help your team to focus on what in the process can change and give them time to try out the change. Consider including a portfolio of failures in your individual and team reflections that recognizes risk, change, success and failure.⁴⁰⁰ You will still be producing many traditional and admirable products; your team will still utilize many long-standing processes, but this shift towards process will create room for new ideas, for risk and for change.

Claim your Social Knowledge

It is important to understand the ways in which your individual socially-regulated identities affect what you see and what norms you have become accustomed to. Privileges accorded to those who fit social norms based on race, class, disability, gender and sexuality often function as blinders, erasing the social processes which create these systems of privilege. For this reason, it is often the ways that we fall outside of privilege that are the most visible to us, and we must make extra effort to educate ourselves about the privileges we hold. Use your social knowledge—the ways that you see privilege operating—to analyze the structures and choices of your institution. You may know immediately that the assumptions made about family structures in the membership materials are excluding any families that do not fit the model of mom/dad/child, but others will not notice. Alternatively, respect others when they bring social knowledge that you do not have. When a volunteer communicates that a specific practice is

⁴⁰⁰ Thanks to Beck Tench for introducing the concept of a Portfolio of Failure at a presentation given to the University of Washington Museology program in 2011. For more information about Tench, see <http://www.becktench.com/#first>

racist, listen. Ask questions. Move away from defense and towards understanding. Claiming our social knowledge means using the information we have access and respecting the lived experiences of those who are different from us. Approaching lived, social knowledge as valuable and respected will deepen the respect built into our collaborative relationships.

Build in Critical Reflection

Effective change work means always being curious about what could change. Don't stop your critical reflections after an initial evaluation of mission and procedures. Build a consistent practice of inquiry into your processes and routines. Invite your colleagues, content-contributors, volunteers, customers and board members to participate in inquiry. Even a few minutes of reflection built into a routine meeting can result in new perspectives and surprising discoveries. Effectively addressing structures of oppression is an ongoing process and a commitment. Committing to the small steps that you can take now, and standing by a process of consistent improvement through reflection, will ensure that those small steps become significant over time. If you don't see immediate results from these small moments of inquiry, don't give up. New ways of approaching work take time to adopt. Your collaborators will need time to build trust in the authenticity of these structured reflections. Inquiry into one's own cultural systems is not easy. It may be uncomfortable at times. And it will definitely feel like 5 minutes that you need in order to meet that product-oriented deadline. But that 5-minute investment can bring significant rewards.

Making big changes, begin with small details. Terminology. Location. Access. Parking. Bus lines. These are the only some of the details that will surface as museum professionals apply the techniques of collaboration, relational responsibility and critical consciousness. These are techniques that can and should be incorporated into museum professional training, both in

graduate school and throughout our careers. Museum professionals cannot contribute towards more diverse museums and archives until we recognize the role that museums play in codifying a heteronormative ideal.

Critical Feminist Museology's Impact

Critical feminist museology begins with theoretical analysis: of the problems of identity-based exclusions in museums, of the intersectional feminist responses to exclusion and of the queer theorists engaging representation. Drawing from all of these fields, critical feminist museology proposes a dynamic intersectional approach to identity work; an approach that is grounded in critical consciousness of the normalizing structures of our worlds.

Heteronormativity has shaped U.S. archives and museums, centering hegemonic norms of white masculinity. QTM responded to this dominance by deploying collaboration, relational responsibility and critical consciousness as tools of change. Heteronormative representations of history have presented linear, simplistic progress narratives that rely on existing archives populated with the artifacts of society's great white men. Using digital tools, the digital storytelling project facilitated self-reflective collaborations that produced short, complex, dynamic narratives of local queer lives. These films fill archival gaps while stretching and expanding that gap; standing in for what is missing and highlighting the structures that created these gaps in the first place.

In some ways, the QTM workshop and the videos produced there are also products of queer temporalities. We created a temporary space that echoed back to pasts, invisible and tangible, spoke out through the storytellers and emanated into the future, with no clear end point. The films, now released for several years, cross geographical and temporal boundaries. In each

moment of viewing, these experiences are reflected and rejoined. Time is pulled apart in those moments.

The films both crystallize and contest our own cultural performances of identities, bringing into question and codifying performances of race, gender and sexuality. This research and the methods I propose, tease out conceptions of gender and sexuality as historically and currently constructed, while at the same time illuminating hidden histories of non-conforming race, gender and sexualities. Speaking to both the particular and the structural, the narratives produced here evoke affective resonance and highlight shared human experience. They build relatability across difference, preserving that difference while building connection. And this connection serves as fertile ground for highlighting the structures and institutions that have oppressed people who fall outside of norms.

These evocative objects expand both the materiality and the possibilities of artifact-based histories. They are both product of and testament to critical collaborations that reframe historical accuracy through shared authorship. The methods and the evocative objects hold rich possibilities for reframing the work of museums broadly, and the collection of under-represented histories specifically.

We have already witnessed positive impacts of this work. Carvin describes the QTM project as “validating, uplifting . . . Personally, the exhibit created an opportunity for my struggle to be understood and for me to be recognized and honored as someone who has positively impacted the Queer community in Washington State.”⁴⁰¹ Similarly, Hernandez notes the positive impact on his family relationships and personal life since telling his story. Learning more about

⁴⁰¹ Mian Carvin, “De Facto,” Queering the Museum Project 3/16/2016
<https://queeringthemuseum.org/2016/03/16/de-facto/>

his father's struggle with AIDS and supporting his little sister with her own process of coming out to the family with her girlfriend: "These are now part of my new story. A story I wouldn't have been able to create without the guidance and reminders that the Queering the Museum project has afforded me. A story is worth telling and a story is worth listening to."⁴⁰² The project of Queering the Museum challenged heteronormativity and continues to contribute to the larger professional efforts to ask, "what happens when we readjust the lens? What can we learn by interrogating societal assumptions of normality? What can cultural outsiders teach us about struggle, privilege, and belonging?"⁴⁰³ These challenges are part of widespread efforts to disrupt heteronormativity, inside and outside of museums. And these efforts make a significant contribution to the hope that is at the core of Muñoz imagined queer utopia. Larrainzar summarizes this hopeful vision, "This little film [*Omecihuatl*] is a small seed that I hope will bloom into a thousand flowers."⁴⁰⁴

The failures of this work also open up areas for further research. This essay fails several areas of intersectional analysis in museum representations, specifically the complexities of disability and class along with race, gender and sexuality. In addition, a greater understanding of the tension between a sexualized hyper-visibility of LGBTQ bodies and the corresponding erasure of LGBTQ narratives would deepen and strengthen research into the representations of queer narratives. A more nuanced understanding of the particular challenges of transgender representation would improve this work. As love and feeling play such a significant role in the results of this research, there is room to expand engagement with affect theory.

⁴⁰² Caleb Hernandez, "Queer Digital Stories: 'Identity'" Queering the Museum Project 4/16/2016 <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2016/04/16/queer-digital-stories-identity/>

⁴⁰³ Ferentinos.

⁴⁰⁴ Jacque Larrainzar, "Reclaiming Gender through Undocumented Stories," Queering the Museum Project, 11/2/2015 <https://queeringthemuseum.org/2015/11/02/omecihuatl-reclaiming-gender-through-undocumented-stories/>

The digital storytelling project succeeded in creating new artifacts, but missed opportunities to explore the life of those artifacts outside of the museum. Online spaces hold rich possibilities for engaging collaborative history production including: naming conventions, classification, meta data, artifact collection, artifact production, and historical research that are worthy of greater attention.

“If you don’t know you have a past, how can you believe you have a future?”⁴⁰⁵

The past is a critical resource, for hope, for survival, for happiness. Failure to represent the stories of those who fall outside heteronormativity must end. Those in positions of structural and institutional power must commit to critical reflection that leads toward recognition of the processes and policies that uphold exclusions. We must recognize the experiences of those unlike ourselves. We must recognize the ways in which we are alike in order to cross the gaps of difference.

Queering as a path of resistance and reclamation must be joined with the challenging work of critical consciousness-raising. As Macklin has pointed out, form alone does not necessarily produce the path to change.⁴⁰⁶ Collaboration and digital stories are not all-purpose solutions, but are tools that—applied with critical consciousness within frameworks that inspire trust and center process—can offer tools for dissonant, productive ruptures of heteronormativity. Digital storytelling is a tool that can add affective, complex interpretations to static artifacts and represent missing artifacts. With consciousness, the complex personal narratives that digital storytelling communicates can flex beyond institutional limits. One of the filmmakers, Carvin,

⁴⁰⁵ Hugh Ryan, “Notes on the Pop Up Museum of Queer History” QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking Vol 1 No 2 (Summer 2014) 83.

⁴⁰⁶ Angelica Macklin, personal communication and “Imaginary in the Queering the Museum Digital Storytelling Project,” University of Washington COM 519, Prof. LeiLani Nishime, Fall 2014.

shared a reflection after the workshop that included this encouragement to action, “There is a lot of healing to be done. We need to know who we are as a people, as a culture. We deserve to know and so does the world.”⁴⁰⁷

Queer histories are histories of all of our communities—LGBTQ people exist across all racial, ethnic, disability, class, religious and national identities. Our stories need to be included in the larger historical narratives of our nation’s museums. We cannot wait for there to be enough material in the archives, or even for a group like QTM to propose a collaboration. Museum professionals and all those invested in inclusive histories need to engage in a process of critical reflection that includes the processes, policies and assumptions which contribute to museums “as producers of power and of normative meaning.”⁴⁰⁸ We must make explicit commitments to working across identity-based differences and embrace intersectional realities, “inclusive of all those who stand on the outside of the dominant constructed norm of state-sanctioned white middle- and upper-class heterosexuality.”⁴⁰⁹

Queering a museum must allow space for the complex, the naïve and the messy. We must make room for failures. Drawing on affective, personal, collaborative resources, museums can become *critically* queer and recognize the opportunities for disruptive change, even within failures. As Sandoval and Gabriel encourage, love is one form of affective resonance that has the power to draw us beyond the limits of comfort; into what could become a critically queer embrace of identities that have operated upon the margins of heteronormative societies, and the museums that tell their histories.

⁴⁰⁷ Mian Carvin, a post shared on facebook 4/10/13.

⁴⁰⁸ Patrik Steorn, "Curating Queer Heritage: Queer Knowledge and Museum Practice," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 55:3 (2012): 364.

⁴⁰⁹ Cohen, 77.

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Appendix

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| Artifacts available in the following order |
| <i>Museum of History and Industry</i> |
| Museum of History and Industry and Queering the Museum Project Memorandum of Understanding |
| MOHAI Explores LGBTQ History in Locally-Developed Exhibit, Revealing Queer |
| Revealing Queer Opening |
| |
| <i>Community Advisory Committee</i> |
| Blank Memorandum of Understanding between community organization and Queering the Museum Project |
| List of Community Advisory Committee Participants |
| |
| <i>Revealing Queer Media Coverage</i> |
| History Café: Seattle's LGBTQ Community |
| The Seattle Lesbian |
| Museum Metamorphosis 2013 |
| Seattle Spoken Wheel |
| Museum Politics and Power |
| Plinth |
| The Stranger |
| crg@cgp |
| Point Foundation |
| Seattle Gay News |
| The Inluseum |
| Real Change News |
| Pride Foundation |
| |
| <i>Queering the History Museum Symposium</i> |
| City Arts Magazine |
| Call for participation |
| Symposium Program |
| Humanities Washington |
| The Inluseum |
| |
| <i>Digital Storytelling Project (DSP)</i> |
| Blank participant application |
| The Inluseum article about the DSP |
| Signed video release forms from the DSP participants with addresses removed |
| Signed image release forms from the DSP participants with addresses removed |

Museum of History and Industry

Memorandum of Understanding *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium & Exhibit*

The Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) and the Queering the Museum (QTM) project, under the direction and management of Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, will work together to create a museum exhibit and associated public program(s) with the primary goal of exploring and sharing the history of the LGBTQ community in Seattle.

Schedule and Deadlines:

- November 2012: Community Advisory Committee convened and member participation confirmed
- February 2013: Exhibit title and opening dates confirmed with MOHAI
- March 2013: QTM finalizes and confirms *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* program and speakers; symposium is added to MOHAI's web event calendar, e-news and local calendar listings
- April 2013: MOHAI opens ticket sales/registration for *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium*
- May 2013: Final exhibit outline due, including confirmed exhibit themes, preliminary list of artifacts, outline of text panels
- June 8, 2013: *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* hosted at MOHAI
- September 2013: Final exhibit design due; planning for complimentary QTM exhibit programs begins
- October-December 2013: Exhibit fabrication and promotion; installation
- January 2014: Exhibit opens
- January 2013- June 2014: Ongoing exhibit-relevant programs, promotion, and evaluation.
- June 2014: Exhibit closes

Under the direction and management of Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, the Queering the Museum Project (QTM) will provide MOHAI the following services and material's to support the creation, execution and management of the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* and exhibit:

- Creation and management of a Community Advisory Board (Fall 2012-Spring 2014), comprised of representatives from local organizations, businesses, and community groups identified as potential stakeholders in the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* and *Queering the (History) Museum* exhibit
- In collaboration with MOHAI's Public Programs and Community Engagement Department, coordinate and manage the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* (scheduled for June

8, 2013 at MOHAI's new location in Lake Union Park). Coordination and Management duties include:

- o Development of symposium program's messaging and content*
- o Acquisition and confirmation of speakers, presenters and special guests*
- o Construction and confirmation of day-of schedule
- o Coordination with MOHAI Advancement Department to acquire program funding, as needed, to cover costs of speakers and presenters; hospitality (catering, event permits, food/drink); event supplies*
- o Coordination with MOHAI Events Department for all hospitality needs (such as catering, event permits, food/drink). All catering must be provided by a MOHAI approved caterer.
- o Timely access to information necessary to successfully promote the program, including: program dates, content, and copy; access to Advisory Board's networks
- o Day-of event management

*to be confirmed no later than two months prior to event date

-In collaboration with MOHAI staff, develop, produce, and market the *Queering the (History) Museum* exhibit (working title), scheduled for exhibition at MOHAI for January 2014 – June 2014. QTM's responsibilities include:

- o Research, curate, and finalize exhibit content
- o Develop exhibit's narrative and label text, to be reviewed and approved by MOHAI staff
- o In collaboration with MOHAI's Collection Managers, identify artifacts and ephemera from the MOHAI collection that will be displayed as part of the exhibit
- o In collaboration with MOHAI's Registrar, arrange the legal acquisition and/or use of any loaned or donated materials selected for inclusion in the exhibit
- o Acquire all necessary rights to display or use exhibit content/materials/media
- o Collaborate with MOHAI staff for exhibit's design, fabrication, and install
- o With guidance from MOHAI's Advancement Department, support the acquisition of funding required to produce and promote the exhibit
 - Provide necessary information and materials required for funding via grants and donations solicited by MOHAI
 - Cultivate possible donors and supporters of the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* and exhibit.
 - Inform MOHAI of potential funding opportunities or existing funding directly related the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* and/or exhibit.
- o In collaboration with MOHAI's Marketing Department, assist in promoting and messaging the exhibit.
- o In collaboration with MOHAI's Public Programs and Education Departments, development subject-appropriate public programs and events to compliment exhibit's content and themes.

In order to support the creation, execution and Management of the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium* and exhibit, the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) will provide the following:

- One MOHAI staff member to serve on the Community Advisory Board (Fall 2012-Spring 2014)

- Provide support to QTM in the development, production, and marketing of the *Queering the (History) Museum Symposium*, via the following contributions and donations:

- o Use of MOHAI facility, without charge
- o Use of MOHAI's tech-support staff time and expertise, as needed
- o Use of MOHAI AV equipment
- o Guidance from MOHAI's Programs Department in creating the symposium's content
- o Fundraising support required to produce and market the program, including grant writing
- o Marketing support, such as:
 - Inclusion on MOHAI's event web calendar
 - Inclusion in MOHAI's monthly e-newsletter
 - Notification of local calendar listings
- o Registration and ticketing administration

-Support to QTM in developing, producing, and marketing the *Queering the (History) Museum* exhibit. Support includes:

- o Editorial oversight of exhibit narrative and label text
- o Access to MOHAI's library and collections, by appointment
- o Guidance from Exhibits Department and Registrar in acquiring the appropriate legal rights and documentation for use of materials/media in the exhibit
- o Exhibition design, fabrication and installation of the exhibit
- o Creation and execution of a PR and marketing plan for exhibit and accompanying programming. PR may include:
 - Posters/postcards/e-postcards
 - Press release and submission to local calendar listings
 - Presence on MOHAI website and social media outlets, mention in MOHAI e-news
 - Creation of exhibit's graphic identity, aligned with MOHAI's overall graphic identity, to be used on all associated marketing materials
- o Fundraising support required to produce and market the exhibit, including grant writing
- o Contribution of staff time and resources to develop and produce a set of complimentary public programs

By signing below, representatives of QTM and MOHAI agree to adhere to the terms of this MOU as described above. Should circumstances arise that prevent one or both parties from meeting the responsibilities detailed in this document, a solution will be reached that is mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Leonard Garfield 11/21/12
Leonard Garfield date
Executive Director, MOHAI

Nicole Robert 11/27/12
Nicole Robert date
Erin Bailey 11/21/12
Erin Bailey date

You are here: [Home](#) > [Press & Media](#) > [Press Releases](#) > [MOHAI Explores LGBTQ History in Locally-Developed Exhibit, Revealing Queer](#)

MOHAI Explores LGBTQ History in Locally-Developed Exhibit, Revealing Queer

Seattle – The Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) proudly begins its second year in its new home at Lake Union Park by presenting *Revealing Queer*, a landmark exhibit on the history of the LGBTQ community in the Puget Sound region. This exhibit is one of the very first of its kind in a history museum, and will be on display from Friday, February 14 through Sunday, July 6, 2014.

MOHAI invites the community to join in celebrating the opening of this breakthrough exhibit at the *Revealing Queer* Opening Night Celebration on Friday, February 14, 2014, from 7:00—11:00 pm at MOHAI. The evening will feature drink, dessert, activities and performances from LGBTQ groups across Seattle. Tickets are \$12 for the general public and \$10 for MOHAI members, and are available online at www.mohai.org. MOHAI members will get to preview *Revealing Queer* on Wednesday, February 12 from 6:00 – 8:30 pm. For more information on the opening night event and MOHAI membership, please visit mohai.org.

Revealing Queer explores how the Puget Sound LGBTQ community has grown, changed, become more visible, and worked towards equality. Informed throughout by the lived experiences of this incredibly diverse population, the exhibit traces its history from an emerging underground group in the years before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, to the large and politically active community that helped make marriage equality law in Washington State in 2012. Visitors will be able to discover this complex history through a variety of themes, including language, significant cultural spaces, queer celebrations, regional law, and more. The artifacts, photographs, and documents that fill the exhibit have come both from MOHAI's collection and from donors across the country—many have not been seen before by the public.

This exhibit is the result of collaboration between many individuals and organizations, led by Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, co-founders of Queering the Museum—an ongoing project to uncover and share LGBTQ stories in institutions across the country. Bailey and Robert worked closely with a Community Advisory Committee composed of representatives from local LGBTQ organizations to create *Revealing Queer*. “We started this project seeking to explore ways to engage LGBTQ communities in museums,” says Bailey, stating, “This exhibition has recovered history that would have otherwise been lost, and is preserving the history that’s happening now. We’re trying to ensure that the Queer narrative is archived.”

Revealing Queer will be featured in MOHAI's Linda and Ted Johnson Family Community Gallery, an intimate space designed to promote community ownership of MOHAI through exhibits curated in collaboration with local partners. Its rotating exhibits offer an opportunity to hear diverse voices and stories from the contemporary Puget Sound region. Past exhibitions in the Community Gallery have included *Punctum/Poetry*, presented with ArtsCorps, and *Still Afloat: A Contemporary History of Seattle's Floating Homes*, presented with the Floating Homes Association. MOHAI thanks the Pride Foundation, Microsoft, 4Culture, and the Seattle Foundation for their generous support of *Revealing Queer*.

About MOHAI

MOHAI is dedicated to enriching lives through preserving, sharing, and teaching the diverse history of Seattle, the Puget Sound region, and the nation. As the largest private heritage organization in the State of Washington; the museum engages communities through interactive exhibits, online resources, and award-winning public and youth education programs. For more information about MOHAI, please visit www.mohai.org or call (206) 324-1126.

###

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Revealing Queer Opening Night Celebration



OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATION
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 7:00-11:00 PM

THIS EVENT IS SOLD OUT

Celebrate love with MOHAI! This Valentine's Day, enjoy food and drink, and learn all about how the Puget Sound LGBTQ community has grown, changed, and made history at the opening of this landmark new exhibit.

Happenings throughout the evening include:

- 8 pm Gay Bingo hosted by [Mama Tits](#)

BECOME A MEMBER

Sign-up for a membership

Admission to MOHAI is FREE with a membership! We offer four levels of membership to meet your needs and your budget. Your membership dollars also support and sustain MOHAI for future generations. Click here to start or renew your membership today!

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SUBMIT

- 9 pm Queer Burlesque with [Lily Divine](#) and [Pidgeon Von Tramp](#)
- 9:45 pm DJ SassyBlack (Cat of [THEESatisfaction](#))
- 7:30, 8:30 and 9:30 pm Gallery talks with Community Advisory Committee members
- [Queering the Museum project](#) Digital Storytelling playing in the Theater all night long
- All galleries open!

THIS EVENT IS SOLD OUT



Performance by DJ Sassyblack
(aka Cat of [THEESatisfaction](#))



Queer burlesque with [Lily Divine](#)
and [Pidegon Von Tramp](#)



Gay bingo with [Mama Tits](#) and the
[Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence](#)

This event is recommended for ages 16 and older. All ticket sales are final. For information on reaching MOHAI and parking in the area, please [click here](#). Please plan ahead: the bar will be cash-only. If you forget to bring cash, there are a number of bank and credit union ATMs along Westlake Ave N and Terry Ave N in the South Lake Union neighborhood.

About *Revealing Queer*:

MOHAI proudly presents this landmark exhibit exploring the history of the Puget Sound LGBTQ community. Informed throughout by the lived experiences of this incredibly diverse population, the exhibit traces its history from an emerging underground group in the years before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, to the large and politically active community that helped make marriage equality law in Washington State in 2012. Visitors will discover this complex history through a variety of themes, including language, significant cultural spaces, queer celebrations, regional law, and more. The artifacts, photographs, and documents that fill the exhibit have come both from MOHAI's collection and from donors across the country—many have not been seen before by the public.

This exhibit is the result of collaboration between many individuals and organizations, led by Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, co-founders of Queering the Museum—an ongoing project to uncover and share LGBTQ stories in institutions across the country. Bailey and Robert

worked closely with a Community Advisory Committee composed of representatives from local LGBTQ organizations to create *Revealing Queer*. For more information on the Queering the Museum Project, please [click here](#).

Revealing Queer will be featured in MOHAI's Linda and Ted Johnson Family Community Gallery, an intimate space designed to promote community ownership of MOHAI through exhibits curated in collaboration with local partners. Its rotating exhibits offer an opportunity to hear diverse voices and stories from the contemporary Puget Sound region.

MOHAI thanks these generous sponsors for their support of *Revealing Queer*:



MOHAI thanks these donors for their generous annual operating support.

Community Advisory Committee



Queering the Museum Project
Erin Bailey, M.A Candidate
Nicole Robert, PhD. Candidate
2012-2013

Queering the (History) Museum Project Community Partner Organization Agreement

Community Partner Organizations will support the Queering the Museum events throughout the partnership with the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), which extends from the present day through the Spring of 2014. In return, partner organizations will be recognized as community sponsors by both MOHAI and QTM.

Partner Organizations will:

- Identify an individual or individuals to participate on the Community Advisory Committee, as outlined below.
- Promote QTM events to your own community members
- Identify MOHAI and QTM as community partners on appropriate promotional materials

Partner Organizations will be recognized by both MOHAI and QTM in the following ways:

- Listed as community partners on QTM event promotional materials
- Identified as community partners on QTM's website and social media activities
- Identified as community partners on MOHAI's website where QTM events are posted
- Recognized at appropriate QTM and MOHAI events

In addition, partner organizations will receive complimentary invitations to attend all QTM events.

Queering the Museum Community Advisory Committee

The community advisory committee (CAC) is formed of community members representing a variety of perspectives from and on local Queer communities. Local Queer organizations that have committed to community partnership agreements with the Queering the Museum (QTM) for the history project may identify an individual from their organization to participate in the CAC meetings. In addition, individuals who have demonstrated knowledge and commitment to preserving local Queer histories may be invited to participate.

We seek CAC members that will help us to include a diversity of experiences and perspectives in the QTM project. This includes diversity of age, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.

CAC Individual Participants

Individual Community Advisory Committee members will attend regularly scheduled meetings, occurring monthly. One individual will attend from each partner organization; it need not be the same individual each month.

- Members will provide input on the development of the schedule for the Queering the History Museum Symposium.
- Members will promote all QTM events within Queer organizations with which they are connected.
- Members will participate in developing the collecting policy for the Queering the History Museum Digital Storytelling Project (DSP) and will assist in inviting individuals to apply for participation.
- Members will review the DSP applications and collaboratively make the final selection of the 10 participants, with a commitment to including a range of local Queer experiences.
- CAC members will provide ongoing support of QTM activities, including the DSP, the Symposium and the Exhibit. This may include promoting events, inviting individuals and groups to attend events, attending events personally, recruiting volunteers, personally volunteering, advertising QTM events, and providing two-way communication between QTM and the Queer organization(s) with which you are personally affiliated.
- In addition, individuals will be asked to assist in responding to questions and concerns raised by participants or the larger area community for the duration of the QTHM project with MOHAI.
- Individuals may be asked to assist with fundraising opportunities by writing letter of support or other appropriate documents, connecting QTM with any interested donors or letting QTM know about other fundraising opportunities.

Community Partner Organization: _____

Representative: _____

Preferred Contact Info: _____

QTM Representative: _____

Today's Date: _____

Private: Community Advisory Committee

Thank you to all of our Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members. CAC organizations have provided invaluable guidance and support to the work of Queering the Museum, both past and present:

API-Chaya
Entre Hermanos
Gay City Health Project
Gender Alliance of the South Sound
Ingersoll Gender Center
Lily Divine Productions
Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project
Oasis Youth Center
Puget Sound-Old Lesbians Organizing for Change
Queer Social Club
Queer Youth Space
Rainbow Center
Tim Burak
Aleska Manilla
Seattle Gay News
University of Washington: Bothell, Seattle, Tacoma Campuses

Pingback: [Digital Storytelling Success! | Queering the Museum](#)[Edit](#)

Pingback: [Re-thinking Narrative Production in Museums through Digital Storytelling Workshops | the inluseum](#)[Edit](#)

Pingback: [Scholar Nicole Robert Collaboratively Queers the Museum of History and Industry with the opening of the "Revealing Queer" History Exhibit | ViewPOINT](#)[Edit](#)

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Revealing Queer Media Coverage

History Cafe: Seattle's LGBTQ Community

MENU

LGBT | History Cafe



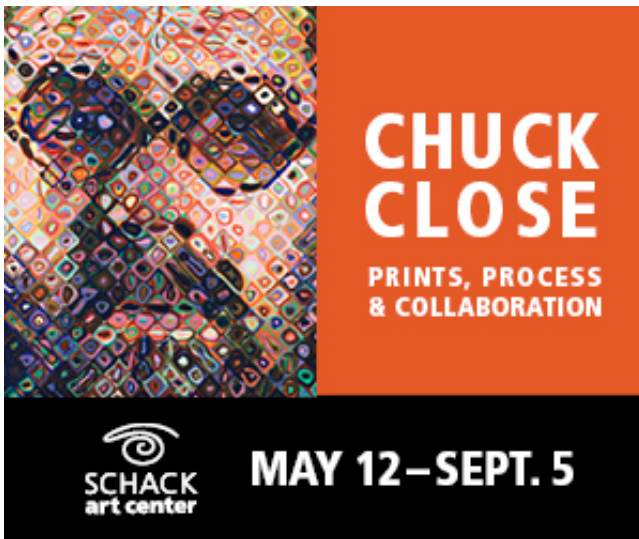
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Thursday, February 20, 2014

History Cafe: Seattle's LGBTQ Community

Erin Bailey, curator of MOHAI's upcoming exhibit *Revealing Queer*, will moderate a panel of community members, artists, and historians to explore the history of Seattle's LGBTQ community.

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Home / Top News / Local / Interview with the Cofounder of Revealing Queer at MOHAI

By [Name] - May 27, 2014 - In Local, Top News 351 0



Museum of History and Industry

Awareness and support for the Puget Sound's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community has surged in recent years. Marriage equality and Seattle electing its first openly gay mayor demonstrate the forward momentum. The Museum of History and Industry's (MOHAI) current exhibit, *Revealing Queer*, is encouraging future progress via a celebration and recognition of the past.

"One of the main goals is for people to fall back in love with this city because of the LGBTQ communities who've lived here over the past 40 years," said Erin Bailey, curator of *Revealing Queer*. "There are still fights to be fought, but there are resources here to do it. That is what's important to remember and what people will get from the exhibition."



Erin Bailey, curator of Revealing Queer exhibit

Revealing Queer is unique nationally. Few mainstream museums have chosen to host LGBTQ-focused history exhibits. According to Bailey, MOHAI is the first Washington history museum. With colleague Nicole Robert, Bailey cofounded *Queering the Museum Project* to advocate for museums to incorporate and feature LGBTQ history. A positive reaction to MOHAI's exhibit will hopefully encourage other institutions.

Bailey, a University of Washington graduate, spoke with *The Seattle Lesbian* about what makes *Revealing Queer* a must-see and why everyone benefits from learning about this aspect of local history.

I grew up in the middle of nowhere in Michigan. It wasn't the most diverse place I've ever seen and it didn't have a ton of access to culture. Going to museums was an awakening. It introduced me to the world as a whole and the idea that more was happening than just what I saw at my house or high school. There is a whole global community.

When I began assessing museums with a mature approach, I realized that (as part of the LGBTQ community) my history wasn't represented and I couldn't grow from learning about it. I wanted to contribute to a conversation about why that wasn't happening and how we could address it in an equitable way.

There are lots of different ways to think about queer. It's an identity, a theory and a political mentality. In regards to theory, it opens up a conversation about anyone who deviates from any kind of norm whether it's sexual, gender or ideological. People don't fit into easy categories. As an identity, it's talking about sexuality beyond gender definitions. Politically, it's radical but not radical. It's not a big F-you statement to *The Man*. It's a very specific, "No, thank you" to *The Man*.



Visitors engage with the MOHAI's Revealing Queer exhibit

It covers about 1973 – which arguably marks the area's first, unofficial pride protests – to present day with Ed Murray being Seattle's first openly gay mayor. We broke it into five broad themes. First, we engage with *Language* so people can understand what we're talking about. We knew using the word "queer" was going raise some eyebrows. What does it mean to be queer? *Spaces and Places* covers community resources, gay bars as political and communal spaces, places of activism and more. *Celebrations* talks about pride, but also the other popular events that happen throughout the region that people might not know about. *Lived Experience*

discusses the iconic people who were game-changers in this region. They set the pace for what we're doing, how our politics work and even how immigration considers these issues. Finally, *Regional Law and Policy* has a lot of content because it covers so much that has happened in the last 40 years.

We used a Community Advisory Committee model. There were 12 groups such as the Ingersoll Gender Center, the Gay City Health Project, Queer Youth Space and more. The committee developed the narrative and what they felt should or didn't need to be included. There were some great discussions.

We designed it so it really is for everybody. The goal is to make connections for everyone. Anybody can be a mother regardless of who you love or how you identify. Anybody can be a political activist. Anybody can emigrate from a different country. All those themes are in the exhibit and are relatable and help bridge everyone's experiences



Visitors engage with the MOHAI's Revealing Queer exhibit

The queer identity is about more than sexuality. I didn't want to have a "Mature Audience" disclaimer – and there isn't. Yes, there is the sexual aspect [of being LGBTQ], but that's just one part of who we are. We also have all these other gifts and skills to offer like anyone else does. I

want to encourage people to find the part of queer identities that intersects with their own.

So much has happened in last 40 years and it's really impressive. People in this region made initiatives and started things that had an amazing impact. I think the exhibition helps people understand Seattle's role in the national context and how progressive we've always been as a city. We had the first mental health clinic in the country for LGBTQ people. We had first drop-in youth center that wasn't associated with a university. The Ingersoll Gender Center was one of the nation's first transgender centers and has been functioning for over 30 years. Seattle was dealing with AIDS before it was identified as AIDS. This city has been in the trenches of the gay rights movement for the past 40 years.

—
Revealing Queer runs through July 6, 2014. For Family Pride Day, MOHAI will offer all-ages activities Saturday, June 28, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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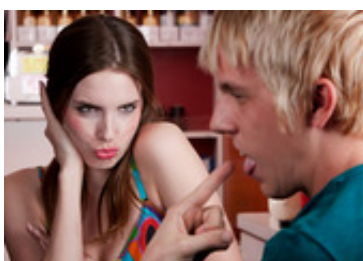
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An advertisement for Shane Co. featuring a large, ornate diamond ring with a central cushion-cut diamond and a pavé band. The text "MAKE 'EM ENVIIOUS" is positioned to the left of the ring. Below the ring, the "Shane Co.®" logo is displayed in a white script font. To the right of the logo is a white button with the text "SHOP NOW" and a right-pointing arrow.

WATCH ME
~~WORK~~
DOMINATE

A photograph of a female basketball player in a green and yellow uniform, crouching and holding a basketball. The text "WATCH ME" is in large yellow letters at the top left. Below it, the word "WORK" is written in large yellow letters but is crossed out with a white 'X'. At the bottom, the word "DOMINATE" is written in large white letters.



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Museum Metamorphosis 2013

The permanent and official blog of the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies PhD student conferences and special events.

MUSEUM METAMORPHOSOS

The PhD community will be hosting a conference, November 5-6 2013. The

6 NOVEMBER 2013

Transmutation #20 - Revealing Queer: an exhibition and symposium at the Museum of History and Industry

theme is Museum Metamorphosis. More details to come!

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER 2011

Curiouser and Curiouser was a conference that took place in March 2011 by the PhD students at the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies. It set out to deconstruct the ideas of normality and eccentricity in museums and heritage institutions. What exactly is normal and what is idiosyncratic or eccentric? The conference questioned whether there is a true distinction between these terms, explore new possibilities of definition and shed new light on the standard notion of collections, collecting and interpretation. We wished to take an unusual approach to the 'unusual' and ask what is appropriate or permissible, what creates the eccentric and why we are fascinated by it. The conference

Erin Bailey is the founder of Queering the Museum, a project in Seattle, USA. Her work applies a lot of museological thought, queer theory and gender studies as a platform for the way in which we think about representation in museums.

Queer studies are controversial, and so so often eliminated from the national narrative - alongside other things such as death, asylum seekers, racism, indigenous issues, and more. The list of controversial topics in the US is, for me, quite disturbing, reflecting uneasy tensions between individual rights, the loyalty to the state and church, and the relationship between America and the wider world. For LGBT people, their already controversial situation is complicated by their multiplicity of other, sometimes conflicting, identities.

Changes in societal ideology, such as legalisation of same-sex marriage, allow museums to adapt to the times and tackle difficult subjects. Museums play an important role in creating national identity, and it is important that the government have a role in stating that.

Bailey's work applies Elee Wood's 7 Rules for Revolution, which use the power of museums to create transformative educational spaces whilst rewriting the national narrative. But museums must find ways of interpreting objects which do not give queer identities as given and monumental through all places and times.

Queering the Museum is a joint effort between two scholars, including Baily, with the purpose of researching topics including

proceedings are archived with the tag 'curiouser'.

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inclusion, representation, engagement and collecting/preserving history of relevance to the LGBTQ communities.

They made a proposal to the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle, which accepted it. This allowed them to host a symposium and a digital workshop, and an exhibition is being planned. MOHAI is a significant institution - the largest history collection in the area. At the time, they were themselves undergoing a significant process of change; in 2012, they moved to a larger and more prominent building.

The exhibition will be the first to address LGBTQ history over the last 40 years. They plan to work with a community advisory committee within the Puget Sound region. Unlike many such committees, the QtM group get to take part in every aspect of the development and marketing of the exhibition. The exhibition is designed for a general audience; MOHAI's audience is believed to be predominantly middle aged and right wing. But Seattle has one of the largest LGBTQ populations in the US, and has historically been at the forefront of LGBTQ rights. They had their first Gay Pride festival in 1973, and were treating AIDS before the epidemic broke.

The committee is made up not just of individual members, but of members representing organisations. They have monthly meetings, and three subgroups worked on the exhibition, the digital storytelling project and the symposia (these groups are now merged and collaborate on the exhibition). Members were recruited through public events, coffee shop meetings, word of

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mouth.

What does such a process take; trust, which is made up of time, emotional investment, listening, patience, and, perhaps most importantly, committed follow through. LGBTQ communities in Seattle have historical reasons for not trusting institutions; so trust, talking and listening is absolutely crucial.

The Queering the History Museum symposia brought ideas and speakers to the museum, but institutional change didn't occur. There was, perhaps, a lack of trust here. I wonder how the project is supposed to have a future when 'the Man' isn't there? I hope that this changes soon.

So how, after the exhibition, are the project and the History Museum supposed to build relationships sustainably into the future? This is something I don't have an answer to. I can say, however, that this is an astonishing and brave project, and I hope the trust is built, and sustained, to allow it to continue.

Posted by msphdconf at [04:18](#)

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Seattle Spoken Wheel



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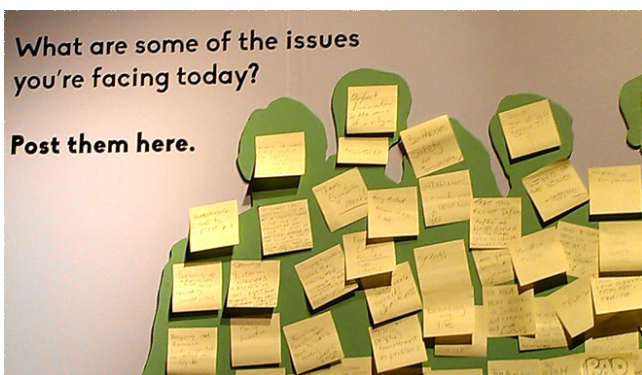
Seattle's Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) is a tribute to the creative energy and enterprise of the Pacific Northwest. As are most museums these days, it is also an information-gathering site, inviting viewers to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences as they move

through the space, listening to others who have left their marks on our region.



My favorite spaces in the museum are touch screens where you can animate a person's image and hear what she has to say about innovation. Although some of the people on these screens are predictable—well-known regional entrepreneurs and MacArthur Award winners, for example—there are others who are unexpected, such as people talking about the role of creativity in skateboarding, early education, and DNA discoveries. Museum goers are invited to contribute their own talking screen, as if to say creativity can come from anywhere where knowledge, passion, and vision reside together.

There is much to see at MOHAI about the history of our place, and much to do, too, including lifting the hill off Denny Hill. A reason to get there before July 6th is so you can see the exhibit entitled *Revealing Queer*, which tracks growth and change in Puget Sound's LGBTQ community between 1969 and 2012, the year when marriage equality came to Washington State. The exhibit is fascinating but perhaps more interesting and moving are the notes that people visiting the exhibit have posted about their lives today. I hope the museum has a staff researcher who is doing something with those notes!



In addition, there are "toe" trucks and movies, planes and cars, fashion and ship figureheads that remind you once again how creepy-looking figureheads are. Why is that?? All of these great sights are easily accessed in a wheelchair.



Furthermore, if you come to MOHAI with someone who is not in a wheelchair but who has trouble walking, wheelchairs are available for your use.

MOHAI also houses a great little café and a tiny gift store crammed with wonders. One of the wonders in that gift store was the young woman who was staffing it on the day when we were there. When asked about a book available in the store, she said, “I’m not sure about that one. I haven’t had time to read all of it yet.” I asked her if she read every book in the bookstore, and she said, “I try to read them all so I can talk with visitors who are interested in them.” That young woman, whose name I’m sorry to say I did not get, should get a raise!

Parking: ADA parking is right up next to the building. Head down the drive off Valley Street toward the museum and stop at the speaker and gate. Push the button and tell the responder that you need ADA parking. The gate will open and you’ll follow the road down to the museum. It couldn’t be easier.

Entrances: There are no stairs at the front entrance and two sets of doors, both automatic. The inside doors present a little problem because the automatic door-opening button is on the wall right next to the doors, which open outward. You’ll need to push the button and immediately move back out of the way of the door. Once inside you’ll be at the ticketing and information counter.



Inside space: Inside the museum, passageways are spacious. You can see everything your

walking friends can see, and there are places for pushers to take a break along the way. A glass elevator takes you to the second and third floor exhibits, and exhibits are easy to move in and out of. The café space easily accommodates wheelchairs, with moveable chairs around tables and ample space between tables.

Restrooms: Restrooms provide great wheelchair access and grab bars around the toilets. There's one near the café and one on the second floor, and both are perfect for wheelchair use.

Photos of interior space online: Some

Photos of entrances online: No

Reservations taken: Not necessary. When you visit, tell them Spoken Wheel highly recommended them!

What the wheelchair pusher has to say: Wonderful ADA parking, right up next to the door. Flat pushing inside and out. Elevator access was good. The layout was great.

Overall: Five wheels for great access!

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Revealing Queer, Revealing Our Work

TRANSLATE



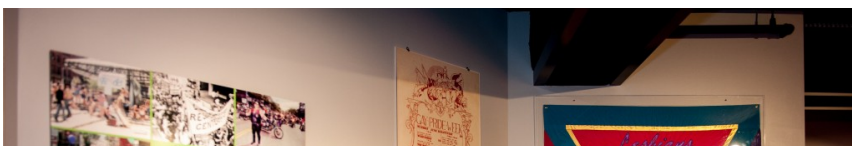
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Please note: the original versions of the posts should be available when clicking back to English (default blog language).

Conference Coverage

Click here for an overview of all posts covering the Museum & Politics conference, 9–14 September 2014, Russia.

(<http://museumspoliticsandpower.org/conference-coverage/>)





<http://museumpoliticsandpower.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Installation-image-of-Reveling-Queer-Feb-2014.-Photo-credit-Barbie-Hull-2.jpg> How do museums talk about history that has been socially oppressed for decades?

That was the question that drove me to graduate school. I wanted to know how museums have historically engaged socially oppressed communities within their exhibitions, collections, and educational initiatives so we can better understand how to continue this work into the future. The power dynamics and politicking that are associated with community or socially engaged work in museums, specifically the power dynamics between communities and curators, fear of critique when engaging contemporary politics, and the saddening reality that archives don't reflect socially oppressed communities, are some of the barriers museums face when working with communities that are not socially accepted.

To better understand how history museums can use exhibitions to write these communities into the archive, [Queering the Museum project](http://queeringthemuseum.org/) (<http://queeringthemuseum.org/>) (QTM) partnered with the [Museum of History & Industry](http://www.mohai.org/exhibits/item/2620-revealing-queer) (<http://www.mohai.org/exhibits/item/2620-revealing-queer>) (MOHAI) to explore Queer representation and collecting practices in their institution. MOHAI is the largest private heritage organization in the State of Washington with a collection of over 4 million objects, documents, and photographs from the Puget Sound region's past. Their mission is to "collect and preserve the diverse history of Seattle, the Puget Sound region and beyond. Highlighting innovation and education, MOHAI enriches lives by sharing the individual and collective stories of our communities." MOHAI is a growing institution that moved into a large state of the art building in 2012 and as a result has the space and resources to engage with diverse communities. With every new initiative institutions have to navigate processes in their practices. Most

notably during our partnership we opened [Revealing Queer](http://www.mohai.org/exhibits/item/2620-revealing-queer) (<http://www.mohai.org/exhibits/item/2620-revealing-queer>), an exhibition that highlights the last 40 years of LGBTQ history in the Puget Sound region of Washington State, USA as told by the communities who lived these experiences. When thinking about how to open an exhibition that equitably tells the stories of a diverse subgroup of peoples we knew that Revealing Queer would benefit from using the community advisory committee model coined by the [Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience](http://www.wingluke.org/) (<http://www.wingluke.org/>). This model allowed us

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authentically tell these stories to visitors and to help build the archive of regional LGBTQ history. This committee shaped the content of the exhibition, identified objects held in community collections, and ensured that the vast corners of Queer communities knew about our work at MOHAI. This process literally questioned the power of museums in telling stories of marginalized communities and continues to explore how museums mediate an exhibition that engages contemporary politics.



<http://museumspoliticsandpower.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Members-of-the-Community-Advisory-Committee-at-the-opening-of-Reveling-Queer-Feb-2014.-Photo-credit-Barbie-Hull.jpg>Revealing Queer opened on February 14, 2014 to a sold out opening party, quantitatively showing that engaging with marginalized communities will build new bridges between the museum and the communities they serve or in this case want to serve. Over the course of the exhibition we have seen a diversity of people in the exhibition space, including families, youth, aging communities and school groups. As visitors continue to trickle into the exhibition the comment book shines a light on the value of this exhibition at MOHAI. One visitor left this note in the comment book, “wonderful exhibit – strikes a chord with this young (25 year old) heart of mine. I love this city and I love its history. Having a very smooth life since coming out in 2005, this exhibit gives me new energy to help others.” This comment

embodies the goals of the exhibition, to teach about LGBTQ history in the Puget Sound, show the diversity of experiences within LGBTQ communities, and use the museum as a space to inspire visitors to continue fighting inequality in their lives and communities. We live in a time when where human rights are advancing and society is rapidly incorporating social values that reflect a diversity of identities, as embodied in the current fight for and in some states passing of marriage equality. While these changes are among us it does not mean that society has achieved equality. It has been argued that society will never be truly equal given that accepting one community or idea is often at the expense of another. Much the same within the curation of an exhibition, when one element of an identity is represented it is physically taking up the space where another element could be represented. While the politics

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around equality are being explored and understood, we do know that within LGBTQ experiences oppression still exists. Since 2010 we have seen a surge in youth bullying and suicide, as well as an even longer problem of the continued oppression of Trans identified peoples in schools, gyms, hospitals, prisons, and the workforce – society is simply not equal. Revealing Queer and the work of Queering the Museum Project questions the power of museums and the power of politics in the media to influence society, using the museum as a safe space to have dialogue about oppression and inequality. The ability of the museum to act as a facilitator of dialogue exposes the power of museums to change society.



<http://museumspoliticsandpower.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Installation-image-of-Revealing-Queer-Feb-2014.-Photo-credit-Barbie-Hull.jpg> Working with MOHAI to open this exhibition was a rare opportunity for recent grad and I am well aware of how fortunate I was to be in that position. However, I also learned so much about community work in museums, institutional vs. community expectations, and how to do professional work so personal to my life. Navigating these paths was an exercise of faith, faith that I work ethically

within the context and ensuring that I am listening to the community as they share the darkest parts of their identities. At the end of months of meetings and discussions, we put ourselves on the walls of the museums for the general public to view. Open for criticism and hopefully celebrations. One visitor to the exhibition shared these thoughts of Facebook,

“

As a gay man, I was truly embarrassed by this exhibit. There is little substance to it. It has the appearance, and effect, of something created as a homework assignment by a less than average high school class. It's just bad! It basically consists of a disjointed collection of posters and poorly produced storyboards that are meaningless in conveying the depth of gay "history." Significant chapters are ignored and insignificant "stories" are included. Worse, there is one shameful advertisement after another from

blogstoekchen/#comment-1230)

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local gay organizations that must have contributed to this disaster in some way or another. There is nothing moving or powerful about it. Moreover, shame on my gay brethren; the aesthetics of the presentation were amateur, sophomoric.

This particular critique was not just on the topic of the exhibition, but on the quality of the design and depth of the content. While this feedback is a sharp stab to the heart of any institution trying to do good work, it also speaks to expectations. We live in a society where LGBTQ identities are becoming more visible and with visibility come the assumption that queer history is as rich as any other communities' history, and I completely agree. What is missing from this critique is an understanding that in museums we tell stories, stories of people, places, and thing. These stories give the museum power and are usually object driven. At the end of the day an exhibition is only as good as the archive is comes from and the queer archive is seriously lacking in depth. The lack of deep and rich queer objects forced us to take an experimental path for interpretation, such as using digital stories created by community members that allow them to tell their stories in their own voices, while developing the technical skills to create these videos. Moreover, we worked exceptionally hard to move away from the gay, white, cis-gendered narrative that populates media. There are more narratives that should be included in this exhibition; however, we only had 1,000 square feet of space to make magic happen. His message was really hard for me to read; however, the ten positive comments to the 1 negative must mean were doing something right. Success is not written on social media nor is it left in a comment book it comes from the experiences of people in the galleries. Seeing people crying because their history is validated or seeing teaching moments between adults and children in the galleries, to tweets such as this one, "At the Revealing Queer exhibition @MOHAI & honestly having a hard time not bursting into tears. Amazing work" "Wishing a project like this existed in my home city/every city," make you forget naysayers and fosters inspiration to keep on trying.

As we come closer to the closing of Revealing Queer on July 6, 2014, we are still navigating how to maintain relationships between MOHAI and LGBTQ communities. This power dynamic will continue to play out over time; however, MOHAI is dedicated to telling these stories in their collections, exhibitions and programs. This exhibition moves MOHAI away from the stereotypes of traditional history museum and into a dialogue of power, politics and oppression.

Erin Bailey is the curator of Revealing Queer and co-founder of Queering the Museum project. A recent graduate from the Museology Graduate Program at the University of Washington her career is dedicated to finding new access points for museums to engage with contemporary politics and culture.

Images, top to bottom: Installation image of Revealing Queer, Feb 2014; Members of the Community Advisory Committee at the opening of Revealing Queer, Feb 2014; Installation image of Revealing Queer, Feb

November 2013

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Revealing Queer, Feb 2014, Installation image of Revealing Queer, Feb 2014. All photos by Barbie Hull.

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Queering the Museum at the Museum of History & Industry

April 13, 2014 by [Nalini Jasmine Elias](#) [0 Comments](#)



Exterior south view – Spike Mafford

For museums, access involves acknowledging the diverse histories and cultures of the communities they serve. Access in museums also serves as a pathway to social justice, as museums acknowledge that there are differences that could either unite us or separate us and participate in the ever-changing dialogues of social justice and equity. Given their roles in their communities, museums have a particular responsibility to recognize a diversity of stories and use these stories to initiate change. The [Museum of History & Industry \(MOHAI\)](#) is not only recognizing the last 40 years of LGBTQ histories in Seattle's Puget Sound region, it is celebrating them with its landmark exhibition *Revealing Queer*. LGBTQ is a term that points to different identities that are outside of heteronormity, and the five letters that compose the term are simultaneously liberating and oppressive as each comes with a set of societal expectations. MOHAI's *Revealing Queer* illustrates how the Puget Sound LGBTQ community has gained visibility, and it encourages the community to continue to work towards equality through legal reform and activism.

The blossoming of Puget Sound’s LGBTQ community, from before the Stonewall Riots of 1969 to the politically active community that supported marriage equality law in Washington State in 2012, is remarkably portrayed in *Revealing Queer*. This exhibit was led by curator Erin Bailey, co-founder of [Queering the Museum](#), along with the collaboration of a Community Advisory Committee composed of a range of LGBTQ groups remarkable in scope: API Chaya, Entre Hermanos, Gay City Health Project, Ingersoll Gender Center, Gender Alliance of the South Sound, Lily Divine Productions, Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project, Oasis Youth Center, Puget Sound – Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, Queer Youth Space, Rainbow Center, Seattle Gay News and the University of Washington. The Community Advisory Committee’s role was vital in the creation of the exhibition, as the group helped shape and direct the content in the exhibition based off of the experiences they lived as members of the Seattle LGBTQ community. Bailey believes that working alongside a Community Advisory Committee was beneficial, as “the authority of the museum is put into the hands of those who live the experiences represented in the exhibition. It moves us away from an expert approach to a community driven approach. LGBTQ histories are often times left out of the archive and by using the community advisory committee model [we] were able to supplement the lack of archive while developing exhibitions related to LGBTQ people.”



Historic photograph – via MOHAI

Revealing Queer is also a project of Queering the Museum (QTM), an evolving project concerned with representations of LGBT/Q people in museums across the country. The LGBT/Q acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender identified individuals. The letter Q, referencing Queer and Questioning, represents those who reject a specific or static sexual and/or gender identity and embrace queer as a broad identifier. The goal of QTM is “to facilitate critical dialogues between community members and museum practitioners [to address] the role that museums play in forming social norms around gender and sexuality.” QTM especially collaborates with museums to educate and help construct normalized ideas of race, gender, and sexuality, and to connect community members with museum professionals in their communities through a variety of activities. MOHAI’s mission to highlight innovation and education and to enrich lives by sharing the individual and collective stories of our communities has become an ideal platform for QTM’s projects.

MOHAI’s vision of innovation through historical exploration and inspiring people to create a better future for themselves and their communities is clearly reflected in *Revealing Queer*’s documentation of LGBTQ’s changing communities, cultures, and art. A predominant feature in this exhibition, as Bailey notes, is the theme of language. In the exhibition, there is a compilation of “commonly used terms within the LGBTQ community as a way to provide visitors with an understanding of these letters, [as well as] pejorative words, words that [she thinks] should no longer be used to create an opportunity for people to

reflect on the language that they use to describe the LGBTQ community.” Bailey understands that most people do not know what the acronym means and wanted to clearly define it in the exhibition to avoid biases or confusion.

So far *Revealing Queer* has been well received in the community. It is important that museums and scholars continue to not only document the history of LGBTQ communities, but to also celebrate those stories. Bailey highlights the need to build a concise archive about the LGBTQ experience so that museums can dig deeper into this community. *Revealing Queer* serves as a model of how museums can serve as sites of social justice. MOHAI and Queering the Museum understand that social justice takes more than a few groups of individuals to question conditions and seek justice, or even to recognize the collective impact of differences. It is up to us as professionals and human beings to question or reject injustices and find ways to promote equality. MOHAI is finally queering the museum by identifying LGBTQ as a relevant and valuable topic through a thought-provoking exhibition that challenges, educates, and spreads awareness. As a result, *Revealing Queer* has become a dynamic classroom about people, politics, culture, sexuality, individuality, and art.

Revealing Queer will run through July 6th, 2014.

Filed Under: [Culture](#), [History](#) Tagged With: [LGBTQ](#), [museum of history and industry](#), [seattle](#), [washington](#)

About Nalini Jasmine Elias

Nalini Elias is a regular Plinth contributor and currently resides in San Francisco.

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'Revealing Queer'

by [Jen Graves](#)

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Go to MOHAI and you'll see Boeing, the Great Fire, Rainier beer, the *Kalakala*, the Space Needle, Arthur Denny, Princess Angeline, Microsoft, and Amazon—but until now, the museum has never focused an exhibition on the **Northwest's big, influential queer community**. Through artifacts, photographs, and documents—many never seen in public before—*Revealing Queer* relates the very varied stories of the **lives, loves, and fights for justice** of Northwestern Ls, Gs, Bs, Ts, and straight-up Qs, from the emergence of a local underground before the Stonewall Riots of 1969 through the legalization of gay marriage in 2012. The curators created this exhibition under the aegis of a project

they call **Queering the Museum**, in the hopes that the opposite wouldn't happen—the institutionalization of queers upon entering a museum. (*Museum of History & Industry, 860 Terry Ave N, mohai.org, 10 am–5 pm, \$14, Feb 14–July 6*)

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Revealing Queer: A Model for Inclusion in Museums

Posted on [April 21, 2015](#) by [torilee0310](#)

[Revealing Queer \(http://www.mohai.org/press-media/press-releases/item/2636-mohai-explores-lgbtq-history-in-locally-developed-exhibit-revealing-queer\)](http://www.mohai.org/press-media/press-releases/item/2636-mohai-explores-lgbtq-history-in-locally-developed-exhibit-revealing-queer), a landmark exhibition produced by [Seattle's Museum of History and Industry \(MOHAI\)](http://www.mohai.org/) and curated by [Queering the Museum \(http://queeringthemuseum.org/\)](http://queeringthemuseum.org/), explored the last 40 years of LGBTQ history in the Puget Sound region. The exhibition, which opened in February 2014 and ended in July of the same year, was the brainchild of Queering

the Museum (QTM), a project founded by museum professionals Erin Bailey and Nicole Roberts in 2011 to explore issues of representation of marginalized groups, particularly LGBTQ communities, in museums. The goal of QTM is, "...to facilitate critical dialogues between community members and museum practitioners, addressing the role that museums play in forming social norms around gender and sexuality." [1] QTM investigates these issues by doing actual projects in museums including exhibitions, workshops, or symposiums. The two founders proposed *Revealing Queer* to MOHAI because they wanted a more regional history based exhibition that could fully connect with the community as well as engage with LGBTQ history in a way that was different than an art museum.

The exhibition itself explores how the Greater Puget Sound LGBTQ community has changed and grown overtime, from its underground origins before the Stonewall Riots in 1969 to the 2012 legalization of gay marriage in Washington

State. The exhibit's narrative uses the history of legal reform, activism, community organizations, and individual stories as the basis of its content. [2] Since the museum itself did not have extensive collections that told this history, the museum and QTM underwent a massive community search to seek out objects,



<https://classracegender.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/erin-bailey-and-nicole-robert.jpg>

Queering the Museum
founders Erin Bailey and
Nicole Robert



<https://classracegender.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/revealing-queer-part-ii.jpg>

Entrance to the exhibition Revealing Queer

(CAC) model. Based off of the **Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience's model** (<http://www.wingluke.org/community-advisory-committees>), the exhibition team formed a Community Advisory Committee that involved members of a variety of local LGBTQ organizations including API Chaya, Entre Hermanos, Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project, and many more. Members of these organizations were invited to weekly exhibit meetings to help drive and develop the

content, edit text, locate objects, and also engage the local community with the exhibit. This model is so compelling because museums have long grappled with how to represent cultures and communities, especially those who have been historically marginalized. Representation and inclusion in cultural institutions such as museum is extremely important because it validates a community's history, struggles, and accomplishments, but can be problematic when members of a community are not asked to represent themselves. Although "inclusion" is a word that gets brought up a lot in the museum world, what does it really mean? As curator Erin Bailey points out, "Words like inclusion, are really becoming buzzwords. Like "innovative", "progressive", "diversity", and "multiculturalism". These words are used a lot, and they can become meaningless. They have power, and they have meaning, but then after being used so much and so irreverently they lose that meaning. Using community curators allows us to take inclusion and make it mean something to people..." [4] The CAC model is a great way to gain a multitude of experiences, opinions, and perspectives. However, what are the drawbacks to using this type of model?

documents, and photographs to tell the story. According to curator Erin Bailey, the overall goals of the exhibition other than educating visitors about the history of this community were to, "...develop relationships between community organizations and MOHAI, between staff members and community members. We wanted people to learn about how to talk about LGBTQ people, how to understand the experiences that they lived, and to make connections between queer experiences and non-queer experiences." [3]

What stood out to me about this exhibition that differed from other museums that have sought to tell of the history of a particular LGBTQ community is their use of the Community Advisory Committee



<https://classracegender.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/community-advisory-committee.jpg>

Community Advisory Committee members

Although public response to the exhibition seemed mostly positive as evidence from **the sold out opening, to the increase in social media activity, to the use of new LGBTQ themed public programing** (<http://queeringthemuseum.org/2014/12/29/2014-has-come-and-gone-now-what/>), there were a few criticisms. One of these criticisms struck at the very heart of what *Revealing Queer* tried to represent. Some claimed that the gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual stories were represented, but the transgender story was not. Another major criticism was that the narrative, “basically consists of a disjointed collection of posters and poorly produced storyboards that are meaningless in conveying the depth of gay “history.” [5] Though the CAC has so many great elements, there is a danger of too many voices within an exhibition. Although curator voice can be problematic, there is something to be said about a coherent and narratively strong exhibition. Some major questions that I came out of this thinking about are, “How can museums balance narrative and representative voices?” and “Can museums be *too* inclusive?”

[1] “About QTM,” *Queering the Museum* (blog). <http://queeringthemuseum.org/about/>

[2] “Revealing Queer opens February 14!” *Queering the Museum*, January 16th, 2014. <http://queeringthemuseum.org/2014/01/16/revealing-queer-opens-february-14th/> (<http://queeringthemuseum.org/2014/01/16/revealing-queer-opens-february-14th/>)

[3] “The Road to Revealing Queer: An Interview with Curator Erin Bailey Part II,” *The Inluseum*, March 14th, 2014. <http://incluseum.com/2014/03/14/the-road-to-revealing-queer-an-interview-with-curator-erin-bailey-part-ii/>

[4] “The Road to Revealing Queer: An Interview with Curator Erin Bailey Part I,” *The Inluseum*, March 5th, 2014. <http://incluseum.com/2014/03/05/the-road-to-revealing-queer-an-interview-with-curator-erin-bailey-part-i/>

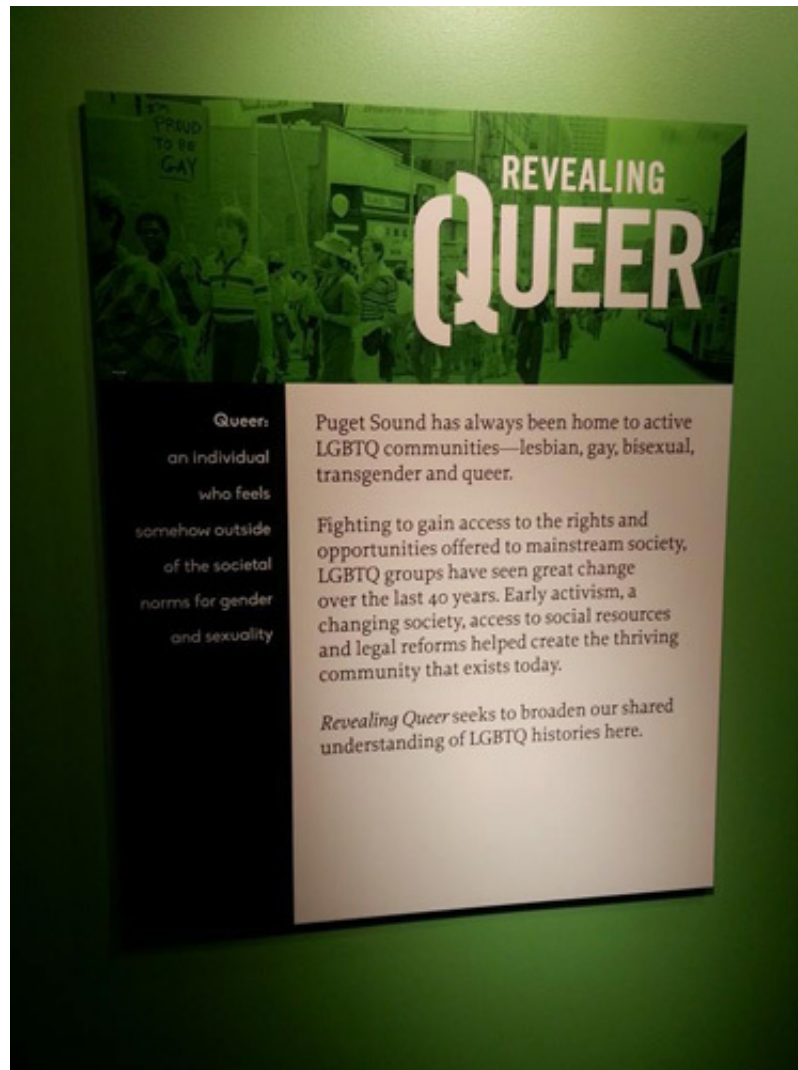
[5] Linda Norris, “Revealing Queer, Revealing Our Work,” *Museums, Politics, and Power*, May 9th, 2014. <http://museumpoliticsandpower.org/2014/05/09/revealing-queer-revealing-our-work/>

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Scholar Nicole Robert Collaboratively Queers the Museum of History and Industry with the opening of the “Revealing Queer” History Exhibit

March 24, 2014



Opening panel of the Revealing Queer exhibit. Photo by Nicole Robert.

A little over two years ago, Erin Bailey and I were sitting in the café of a local Seattle museum dreaming about the ways that queer ideas and cultures could engage mainstream museums. One of those dreams was a queer-themed history exhibit that would bring the rarely-seen stories of local lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) communities into a mainstream museum. We picked the largest history organization in the state of Washington, the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) and were surprised and thrilled when they accepted our proposal.



Erin and Nicole pictured with some of the Community Advisory Committee Members. Photo property of Museum of History and Industry, credit Barbie Hull.

On Feb. 14th, we celebrated the culmination of our MOHAI collaboration at the opening of the *Revealing Queer* exhibit, which explores the last 40 years of regional LGBTQ histories. Erin and I co-founded Queering the Museum—an ongoing project to uncover and share LGBTQ stories in institutions across the country. Working with our Community Advisory Committee, we produced a digital storytelling project, a Queer History Museum Symposium and this exhibit. Erin ably led the curation of the exhibit while I developed the digital storytelling videos, several of which are featured in the exhibit.



Exhibit stand featuring the Six Eleven Tavern sign. Photo by Nicole Robert.

Revealing Queer is an exhibit exploring how the Puget Sound LGBTQ community has grown, changed, become more visible, and worked towards equality. Informed throughout by the lived experiences of this incredibly diverse population, the exhibit traces its history from an emerging underground group in the years before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, to the large and

politically active community that helped make marriage equality law in Washington State in 2012. We hope that QTM's partnership with MOHAI is the start of an ongoing conversation that builds lasting relationships between MOHAI and local queer communities.



MOHAI lobby is full of people celebrating! Photo property of MOHAI, credit Barbie Hull.

With almost 700 people joining us for the Feb. 14th opening, we are thrilled by the community response. It was great to see people recognizing themselves or friends in some of the photos and to hear people reflect about the histories they helped create. Many people commented on the significance of seeing stories like theirs in a mainstream museum. The exhibit will be open six months and will be featured at the American Alliance of Museums national conference in May. Erin and I are immensely thankful to everyone who helped make this exhibit a reality. Through loaning objects, time and knowledge, *Revealing Queer* is truly a collective effort.



*Scholar Derek Blechinger (left) and Alum *bex(right) supporting Scholar Nicole Robert (center) on opening night.*

This post was written by Walter M. Decker Point Scholar Nicole Robert

Nicole, the proud mother of two young children, came out later in life and grappled with her own shifting



identity. She found herself having to confront the limited representations of gender and sexuality that exist in the world at large and in museums specifically. Responding to these gaps, Nicole earned an M.A. in Museology from the University of Washington and is now pursuing a PhD in Feminist Studies. Her research focuses on the intersections of race, gender and sexuality in U.S. history museums. Learn more about Nicole.

Nicole was one of the Point Scholars and Alumni in attendance at the recent Seattle Cornerstone event.

Category : Community Service Project, Point Scholar

Tags : art, exhibit, History, lgbt, MOHAI, Museum of History and Industry, Revealing Queer, seattle

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Revealing Queer - MOHAI's groundbreaking LGBTQ history exhibit opens February 2014

Tim Moffett - SGN Staff Writer

The Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) will begin its second year at its new Lake Union location by presenting 'Revealing Queer,' a landmark exhibit on the history of the Puget Sound's LGBTQ community.

The exhibit is one of the first of its kind in a mainstream history museum, and will be on display from February 14 through July 6.

'Revealing Queer' explores how the Puget Sound LGBTQ community has grown, changed, become increasingly visible, and worked toward equality.

Informed throughout by the lived experiences of the Puget Sound region's very diverse population, 'Revealing Queer' traces LGBTQ history from an emerging underground community in the years before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, to the large and politically active community that helped make marriage equality law in Washington state in 2012.

Visitors will discover this complex history through a variety of themes, including language, significant cultural spaces, Queer celebrations, regional law, and more.

'Revealing Queer' is the result of a collaborative effort between many individuals and organizations, led by Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, co-founders of Queering the Museum - an ongoing project to uncover and share LGBTQ history in institutions across the country. 'Projects like 'Revealing Queer' are important,' said Bailey, 'because once you're in the museum, no one can contest your history.'

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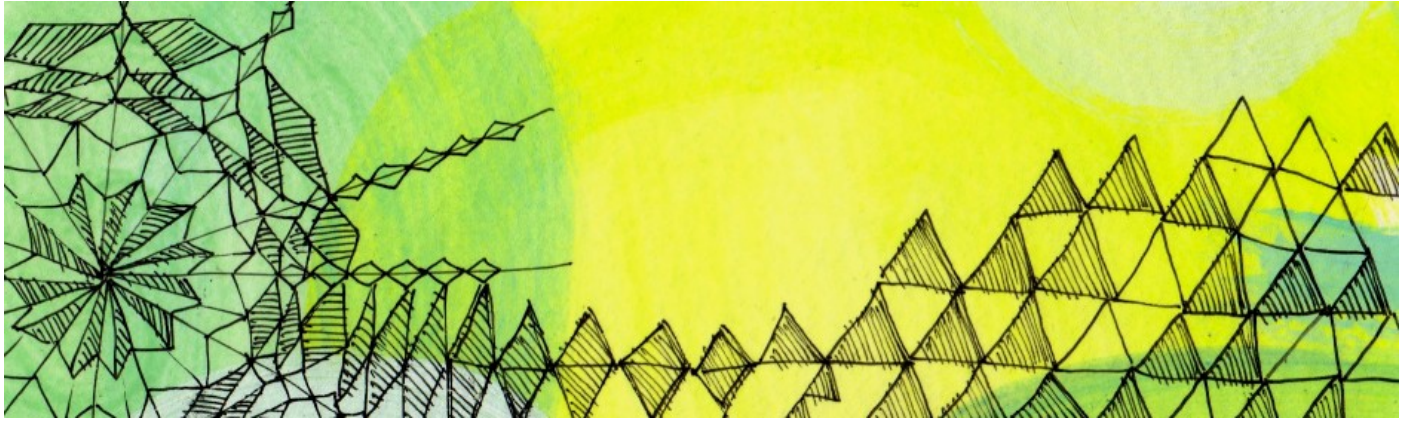
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THE ROAD TO REVEALING QUEER: AN INTERVIEW WITH CURATOR ERIN BAILEY, PART I

March 5, 2014 · *by the includeum* · *in Best Practices, Culture, Heritage, & Identity* · *3 Comments*

Recently, Jana Greenslit, Includeum contributor and intern (read more about Jana on our [About](#) page) sat down with Erin Bailey to discuss the [Revealing Queer](#) exhibit at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) and the project the exhibit emerged out of, [Queering the Museum](#). Because [Revealing Queer](#) has recently opened and is on view to the

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public we hope that this interview:

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2. makes those who have not yet experienced it want to get over to MOHAI right away!

The Inluseum is particularly excited about the way the Community Advisory Committee structure was applied for the first time at MOHAI through this exhibit. Erin's commitment to the CAC model and her desire to share leadership and agency over the exhibit with LGBTQ identifying community members invested in issues, work and advocacy for LGBTQ communities in Seattle is one of the defining aspects of the exhibit. When you attend Revealing Queer you know that the narrative is not the product of a sole, disembodied curatorial voice. Rather, what you experience is a narrative crafted from the exchange and discourse amongst directly involved stakeholders. As Erin has stated, it is important that the breadth and diversity of the lived experiences of LGBTQ identifying individuals were self-represented to add accountability and community ownership to the exhibit process. We will be sharing this interview in two installments.

* * * *

J: Can you describe your role in the Revealing Queer exhibition at MOHAI?

E: I am the curator of the Revealing Queer exhibition, and the

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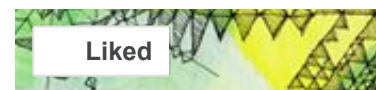
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co-founder of the [Queering the Museum](#) (QTM) project with Nicole Robert. We started that project in 2011 to explore a practice-based methodology for how museums engage with marginalized communities, specifically LGBTQ communities, from the perspective of representation, inclusion, exhibitions, collections, and educational programming. People talk about inclusion a lot, it's become a buzz word kind of like diversity or multiculturalism. We started really thinking critically about how museums are carrying out inclusive work through our own practical application, which is something we felt was lacking in the academy, if you will.



Entry to Revealing Queer Exhibit. Courtesy of Barbie Hull Photography.

J: Could you go a little bit more in-depth about what events led to this exhibit now? Why are you doing it here, now, in Seattle?

E: Before QTM, was QTM, I was working on a symposium called [Queering the Art Museum](#) which was in conjunction with the [Hide/Seek exhibition](#) at the Tacoma Art Museum. At that time, I met Nicole and we founded QTM as a result of

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that symposium. Building off that, I also curated a juried art show in Tacoma that was a local response to Hide/Seek, which was looking at themes of same sex desire in American portraiture. I invited artists to submit works that were looking at same sex desire in local regional portraiture to contrast what the pillars of the art world were saying [Hide/Seek] versus the people who were living these experiences on a daily-basis. This project aimed to be community focused. During that whole process Nicole and I drafted a proposal to MOHAI, which included the [Queering the History Museum symposium](#) and a curated exhibition that would address the last 40 years of LGBTQ regional history. After we submitted that proposal, we did a lot of networking, thinking, and risk taking, because the museums could have easily been like, “Yeah right, please child, go away,” and they didn’t!

J: Why did you and Nicole choose MOHAI? Did you consider sending proposals to more than one institution?

E: No, we didn’t. We picked MOHAI because I have a background in history. We especially wanted it to be a history museum because of the unique way in which sexuality could be addressed in this space over an art museums. MOHAI is the only regional history museum in Seattle and we thought it would have the biggest impact for the community, versus having it out in Tacoma, for example. I also knew people who worked here at MOHAI so I was able to pilot test the idea around the museum, saw how staff reacted to it, and got a better understanding of their vision for their new community gallery.



Erin and Nicole. Courtesy of Barbie Hull Photography.

J: Have you seen any reactions from the community so far? What do you think the general response is to this exhibit?

E: We used the Community Advisory Committee model, or CAC, that the Wing Luke Museum coined and developed. We adapted it to meet the needs of both MOHAI and QTM. This means we took the public to be more of a creator versus a collaborator, which had a direct impact on, for example, securing objects. First, we specifically reached out

to LGBTQ organizations and allowed anybody from those organizations to come as representatives at monthly meetings to allow for a broader depth of experiences and perspectives. Thanks to these meetings, we had built quite a bit of community support for the exhibition before it even opened! This allowed us to collect objects and craft a more diverse narrative that better reflects the communities we wanted to represent. So because of all this work, I think a lot of excitement had been building around the exhibition. I was told people were crying at the member's preview...it's really impactful! When people walk through the exhibition there seems to be feelings of: "Oh my gosh, I know the guy in the red dress in that photograph, and that was me chasing that guy off the parkway, or this is my best friend, and I slept with this guy and that guy." This exhibition is a lot like a reunion of memories, which is very important for validating and authenticating people's lived experiences...and the fact that this is all happening in a museum makes it a part of the greater narrative.

J: In what ways do you see this exhibition as achieving greater inclusion for the LGBTQ community?

E: This exhibition is helping build bridges between MOHAI and the LGBTQ community. A bridge is sometimes a bad metaphor because it's just two way...we're building a web of connections. MOHAI staff has reached out to the community and the Community Advisory Committee in a variety of ways, from community meetings to collections. Words like inclusion, are really becoming buzzwords. Like "innovative", "progressive", "diversity", and "multiculturalism". These words are used a lot, and they can become meaningless.

They have power, and they have meaning, but then after being used so much and so irreverently they lose that meaning. Using community curators allows us to take inclusion and make it mean something to people. My role as a museum professional helped validate CAC participants' stories and make them valuable for the greater narrative of queer communities. In the gallery, people deeply connected to the objects on view. The director of MOHAI even put his domestic partnership license in the exhibition. He was so excited when he brought it to the exhibition team! So the excitement of getting your story into the exhibition was top, down, left, right, incredibly inspiring for these people and allowed the museum to authenticate other ways of living, specifically authenticate non-normalized sexual lives and how they intersect with the rest of the history that's told. I think this is an important way to help inclusion become more than just a buzzword.



Members of the Community Advisory Committee, Marsha Botzen, Aleksa Manilla, and Laura Brewer. Courtesy of Barbie Hull Photography.

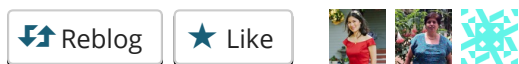
J: How do you think this exhibit impacts people beyond the

Seattle area?

E: I think it's great. I think it shines a really nice light on Seattle because we have so many firsts. For example, the first mental health counseling services for LGBTQ people in the country, arguably the world as far as we know, was here in Seattle. We have the first youth drop-in center for LGBTQ youth not associated with a college campus, which is a big deal because of class issues and accessibility for people who do not attend university. We were fighting AIDS before AIDS was even identified as AIDS. We were fighting for several big issues before the national LGBTQ movement happened. It's these things that Seattle was already doing that suddenly became progressive and interesting and innovative. All this contributes to making Seattle what it is today, and I think that's something people will take away from this exhibition.

...Stay tuned for the second part of this interview which will be posted next week.

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March 14, 2014 · *by the includeum* · *in Best Practices, Culture, Heritage, & Identity* · *2 Comments*

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* * * *

J: When you were setting out to develop the Revealing Queer exhibit, did you have any specific outcomes or goals in mind?

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E: I wrote impact statements, yes. I'm going to paraphrase, as I wrote them at the very beginning and referenced them a lot but I haven't looked at them in months. First, it was to develop a deeper understanding of LGBTQ communities in Seattle. It was to make Seattle fall back in love with itself because of the LGBTQ community. Also, it was getting these stories into the narrative and the archive of the museum. Now learning outcomes were a little bit different because we wanted people to be able to understand queer history. Just generally speaking, even people who identify as LGBTQ don't know their own history, which is problematic. We also wanted it to be a de facto community space. We wanted queer communities to come in and feel that this was theirs and claimed and comfortable, and that MOHAI as an affiliate proxy was also a queer space that they could claim and use as they needed to. We wanted to develop relationships between community organizations and MOHAI, between staff members and community members. We wanted people to learn about how to talk about LGBTQ people, how to understand the experiences that they lived, and to make connections between queer experiences and non-queer experiences. Because there's a lot of really similar experiences between the two. I may have this non-normalized sexual life, but I'm also a pastor. Or I'm also a teacher. Or I'm also a researcher or a scholar or a mother or a father...the list goes on, literally an infinite list of other identifies that queer people carry with them.

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Erin speaks at the Opening of Revealing Queer. Photo Courtesy of Barbie Hull Photography.

J: What would need to happen with this exhibit for you to consider it a success? What do you hope to happen from this point on from the opening of the exhibit? How are you going to measure that success?

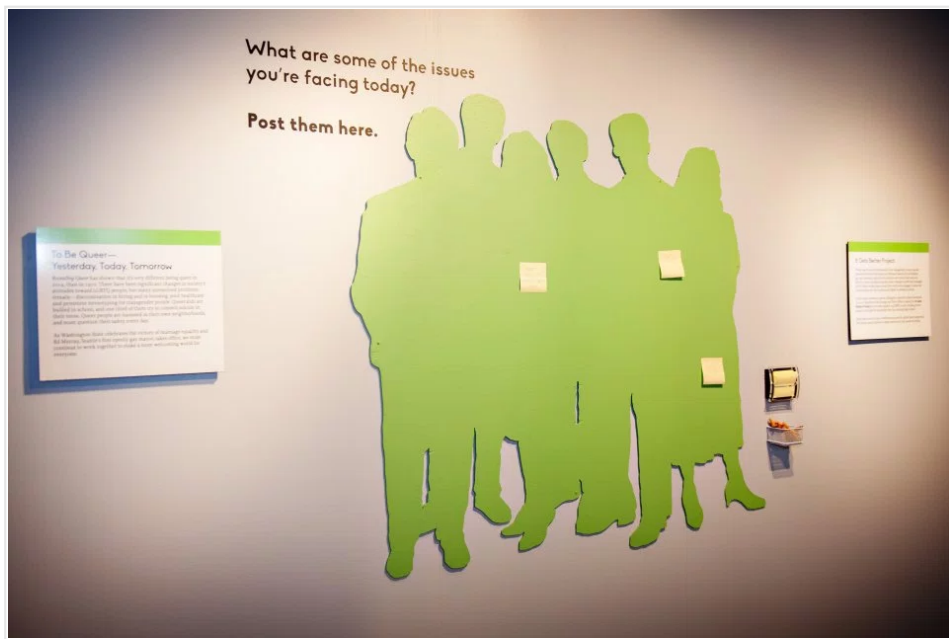
E: I think that success evolves. I don't think that success can ever be fully predicted, and if you think you can, then I don't think you're thinking critically about what you're doing. You can measure success in attendance. You can sell 500 pre-

sold tickets to the opening. That can be considered successful. People have cried in the exhibition already. That can be considered successful. The director came to me and said, "Erin, I think you've really done something special here." That's definitely something I would consider successful. But I wonder if we can measure non-quantitative success before it happens. I have no idea how the community's going to respond to this. I have no idea the impact it's going to have ten years from now. I have no idea the percentage of MOHAI's collections that are going to increase because of the acquisition of queer objects. All those things could be considered successes. But the fact that MOHAI is doing it, and has learned about queer and the philosophies and theories behind it, and has adopted that into the mentality working through the rest of their departments...I think that is success. So it's a hard question to answer but with a lot of possibilities. The fact that MOHAI developed this gallery as a new model and used the Community Advisory Committee in the gallery space might also be considered a success. Is it a big success for me? I don't know. Is it for MOHAI? Maybe. It's just that every individual person has a different definition of success, and so on that account we should ask everybody or have a focus group on what success looks like based on this exhibition.

J: Is this the first time MOHAI has used the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) model for an exhibition?

E: Yes, this is the first time. They have worked with community groups before, and I have no idea how they developed their exhibitions, but my understanding of it so far is that the community groups would come to MOHAI and

say “I wanna tell a story about houseboats,” and then they would develop this exhibition and MOHAI would install it. There’s never been a long-standing community driven narrative working through MOHAI’s design team in that capacity, as far as I know. Half of the reason MOHAI wanted to do it was to see how it could work in a history museum setting, in a new space...in addition to the value of community narrative.



A Wall With Space to Participate – Soon it was Filled! Photo courtesy of Barbie Hull Photography.

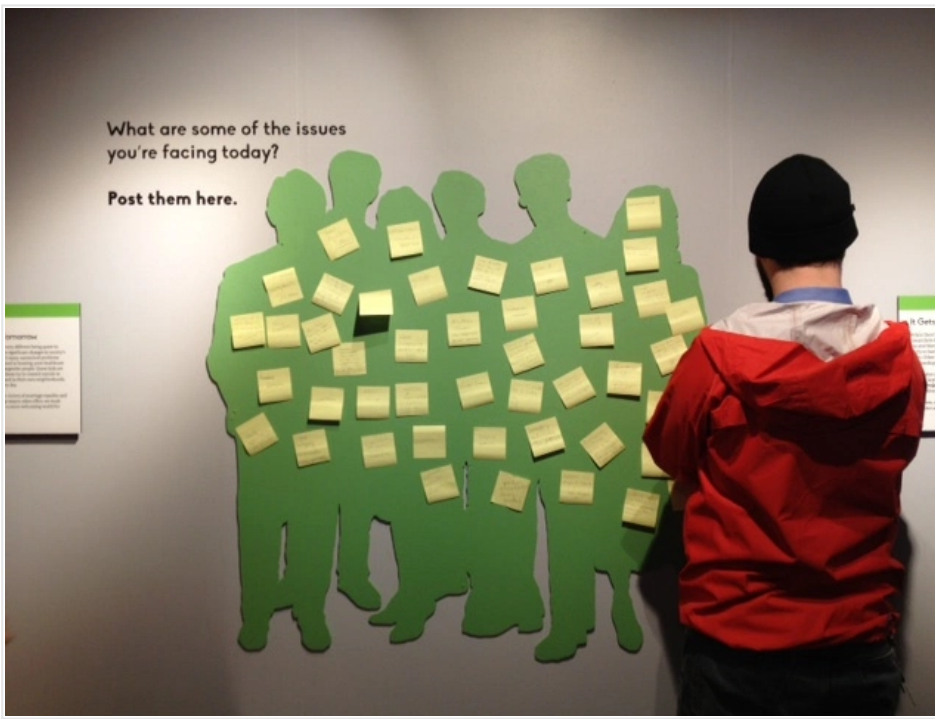


Photo Courtesy: Rose Paquet Kinsley

J: Was this the first time you've personally worked with this model?

E: Yeah. I learned when I interned at the Wing Luke Museum, or at least got to see the working of it. I only interned there for a summer so I barely had any background knowledge with the Southeast Asia exhibition that I worked on. My role in that was very small.

J: Now that you've gone through the whole process, do you have anything to say about this particular model? Pros or cons?

E: I think it's a really great model because it's so flexible. I think that if someone were to open up The Wing Luke Museum's book on Community Advisory Committee models and followed it to a tee, they'd be doing themselves a disservice. I really think you need to adapt it and make it

whatever you need it to be for your context. Make that happen. If you already have strong ties with whatever community, and you don't necessarily need the CAC to keep building those ties, but you need them to still reach out to certain members of the community, than a secondary level of outreach. If you have an in-house expert in something, they could be a part of the process. It's more about using the resources you have internally and then pulling the resources that are critical from the community that you don't have and merging it together.

The Wing Luke Museum has noted some of the limitations with the model, for example it's super labor intensive. I literally had to bring every single part of myself to the table every single time I walked into a CAC meeting. I had to be completely transparent about who I am as a human, people in my life, and the experiences that I've had. I had to come out 14,000 times in the process, which is fine with me. I have no problems coming out, but continually putting those emotions and not only the best emotions out, and being able to manage that in a really positive way is something that takes time to refine. To consistently do it over and over and over again takes a little bit of a toll on you. But the rewards from it are very important, like getting to sit around a table with 12 people who are the pioneers of queer communities, activism, and community organizing. Not only are they affirming your history, but you're learning from them, and they're learning from you. You realize that you have the 12 best parents sitting around a table telling you, "you done good kid," or saying, "This is so different from my experience. I find that so fascinating. Let's talk about it some more." Having that kind of relationship where you have all these

queer icons I didn't have growing up was so important for me. There were times the emotions were really high in that capacity so it became a binding agent that allowed the CAC and myself to function successfully. I think that's something people don't always note about it.

J: Do you have anything you'd like to add?

E: Yeah, the exhibition is open until **July 6, 2014**. We'll have a history café on February 20th where we're talking about the role of community history projects in regards to the archiving of community history. We're looking at how artists, scholars, and community workers work together in different capacities to create these types of projects. We're also doing a collections initiative with MOHAI, so they'll be building their collection as a result of this exhibition. We'll be having a family day in June during Pride Weekend, which is going to be fun. I really do hope that everyone comes to see the exhibition and I would love if they shared their thoughts with me because I think that's really valuable. I'm totally open to the world having my e-mail address which is problematic but whatever. I opened up that can of worms like a year ago, so what's a few more? I really do want to talk to people about it and I really do want to hear what they have to say. I'm looking forward to hearing from folks from around the Seattle area and their perspective on things. Good or bad. We're open to it.

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The 1974 poster of the first pride festival in Seattle, yellowing issues of Seattle Gay News and the neon sign of the legendary 611 gay bar: These are some of the objects that are displayed in MOHAI's "Revealing Queer" exhibition, which focuses on the history of the Puget Sound LGBTQ community over the past 40 years.

"It's a sad story in many ways but also a celebration of the people who have struggled, not just for themselves, but for everyone," said Fia Gibbs, who attended the exhibit's opening night.

"Revealing Queer" is a product of the Queering the Museum project, which was founded in 2011 by Erin Bailey, a recent graduate of the University of Washington (UW) Museology program, and Nicole Robert, a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Washington department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies.

"We thought the museums didn't do LGBTQ people justice," said Bailey, who presented the idea of "Revealing Queer" to MOHAI and was hired as a contractor curator for the exhibition.

"MOHAI took a huge risk, but they trusted the project. This is the first time a regional museum in the area does an exhibition with this theme," she said.

To create the exhibition, Bailey worked with a community advisory committee, consisting of people from 12 organizations within the LGBTQ community, a model that has previously been used by the Wing Luke Museum. The idea is to invite people with relevant life experiences to tell their stories. The committee met about once a month for more than a year.

Some of the objects in the exhibition were donated or lent out by individuals or organizations, while others come from MOHAI's archives, the archives of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the UW libraries. The result is an exhibition covering themes like meeting spaces, celebrations, public policy changes and stories about individuals in the LGBTQ community.

One of the experiences represented is that of James Gaylord, a teacher at Wilson High School in Tacoma, who in 1972 was fired and faced charges of immorality because of his sexual orientation. Another is that of transgender activist Marsha Botzer, who, among many other accomplishments, helped found Equal Rights Washington and the Seattle LGBTQ Community Center.

"We want to show the breadth and diversity of queer people. We are parents, teachers, politicians and sometimes curators," Bailey said.

The exhibit also touched on homelessness and economic vulnerability, featuring the story of Mexico-born civil rights advocate Jacque Larrainzar, who was kicked out of her home when she came out, as well as on the history of public policy concerning employment and housing discrimination.

By hosting "Revealing Queer," MOHAI hopes to start conversations. As MOHAI marketing officer Lauren Semet put it, "We need LGBTQ people to be a part of the narrative when we talk about history."

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Revealing Queer: The Exhibit (Seattle, WA)

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Revealing Queer (2.14.2014 – 7.6.2014)




Museum of History and Industry, 860 Terry Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109

MOHAI proudly presents this landmark exhibit exploring the history of the Puget Sound LGBTQ community. Informed throughout by the lived experiences of this incredibly diverse population, the exhibit traces its history from an emerging underground group in the years before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, to the large and politically active community that helped make marriage equality law in Washington State in 2012. Visitors will discover this complex history through a variety of themes, including language, significant cultural spaces, queer celebrations, regional law, and more. The artifacts, photographs, and documents that fill the exhibit have come both from MOHAI's collection and from donors across the country—many have not been seen before by the public.

This exhibit is the result of collaboration between many individuals and organizations, led by Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, co-founders of Queering the Museum—an ongoing project to uncover and share LGBTQ stories in institutions across the country. Bailey and Robert worked closely with a Community Advisory Committee composed of representatives from local LGBTQ organizations to create *Revealing Queer*. For more information on the Queering the Museum Project, please click here (<http://queeringthemuseum.org/>).

Revealing Queer will be featured in MOHAI's Linda and Ted Johnson Family Community Gallery, an intimate space designed to promote community ownership of MOHAI through exhibits curated in collaboration with local partners. Its rotating exhibits offer an opportunity to hear diverse voices and stories from the contemporary Puget Sound region.

For more information, please visit MOHAI's website (<http://www.mohai.org/exhibits/item/2620-revealing-queer>).

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Queering the History Museum Symposium

PREVIEW

Queering the MOHAI

Thursday, June 6, 2013 | by ERIN KING



Queering the Museum is an ongoing project that fills venerable institutions with overlooked LGBT art and artifacts. Last year, QTM founders Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert worked with Tacoma Art Museum and the Henry Art Gallery to ensure their collections and programming are more inclusive of queer work. The pair takes on the Museum of History and Industry next; turns out the institution known for ships and airplanes also houses an archive of pride paraphernalia and LGBT treasures. The exhibition doesn't open until winter 2014, but Bailey and Robert are conducting a symposium on June 8 that will do something quite unusual in the white-walled world of museums: ask the public what it wants to see.

Participants can review and provide feedback on the exhibition plan, then drop into presentations by the New York-based Pop-Up Museum of Queer History, the Puget Sound chapter of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change and curators from the GLBT History Museum in San Francisco. The night will wrap up with a performance by Capitan Smartyants of the Seattle Men's Chorus aboard the historic steamship *Virginia V*.

"There's been a lot of conversation about inclusion in museums for decades, but we found that queer inclusion wasn't coming up much," Bailey says. "When it was, it was a very specific, one-dimensional idea of what it means to be queer. We found that there was an opportunity to broaden that conversation, especially considering the role that museums have in the national narrative and how the community is seen globally."

That conversation took on an increased urgency when the Smithsonian caved to the demands of homophobic congressmen and removed David Wojnarowicz's video *A Fire in my Belly* from a 2010 exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. Dozens of institutions worldwide screened the video or displayed LGBT works of art in protest. QTM has built on that momentum, hoping to reach museums across the country and

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increase the visibility of queer art and history.

Robert has pioneered a new take on oral history, producing eight short films which will screen at the June 8 symposium. She organized a four-day workshop that helped non-filmmaker members of the local LGBT community create their own vignettes that highlight stories they would like to preserve for posterity. "We taught all the participants to do this on their own so that they can go and do this as many times as they want and teach other people—they got the opportunity to share a story that is appropriate for inclusion in an archive or to be shown in a museum," says Robert. "We're hoping to repeat the workshops as often as we can get the money to do it."

QTM has its roots in projects like *Mining the Museum*, Fred Wilson's groundbreaking 1992 intervention which unearthed horrifying artifacts lurking in the Maryland Historical Society's collection—Klan hoods, slave shackles—and displayed them alongside typical history-museum stuff like silver tea services to highlight the effects of racism on the way museums collect and show objects. The exhibition fueled a shift from the parochial, white-male curatorial style that dominated the 20th century and continues to affect our nation's cultural repositories. QTM pushes museums to look critically at their practices and mine their collections.

Bailey's archival diving has turned up some interesting finds. "The beautiful thing about this project is that you see all fresh things that people haven't seen before," she says. "There's a ton of things that come out of the woodwork. I had a community member tell me that they had a pride flag that was used early on that was made by a fiber artist here in Seattle. It was used for several years, taken down to Burning Man and back. It made the rounds around the country and he still has it."

What will be in the final exhibition? You'll have to wait and see. And come out on June 8—Bailey and Robert won't make any decisions until after the public has a say.

Get tickets and the full schedule at <http://queeringthemuseum.org/2013/05/14/symposium-program/>

Archival photo courtesy MOHAI

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Queering the Museum Project – Request for Proposals

By Erin Bailey



Please help spread the word about the upcoming Queering the History Museum Symposium on June 8, 2013 at the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle, Washington.

On June 8th Queering The Museum Project (QTM) and the [Museum of History & Industry](http://www.mohai.org/) are joining forces for the Queering the History Museum Symposium. This symposium will feature the [Pop-Up Museum of Queer History](http://www.queermuseum.com/) based out of New York, and include a variety of breakout sessions to discuss issues of representation, inclusion and the role of museums in forming social norms around gender, race and sexuality. After the symposium we will host a reception on board the historic [Virginia](http://www.virginiav.org/) steamship!

QTM is designed to be a community-based project that works to engage individuals in the administrative, historic, and creative components of museums, and this symposium is no different. We are requesting proposals from historians, artists, activists and community organizations to lead sessions during the symposium. Each session will be between 60-90 minutes in length. We welcome non-traditional session proposals that feature creative, interactive or performance-based activities.

We welcome a diverse array of presenters, including those:

- Of both Queer and non-Queer communities
- Of different levels of experience
- Both professionals and non professionals
- From community groups or individuals

In particular, the Community Advisory Committee is interested in proposals that accomplish one or more of the following:

- Feature diverse practices in historical, archive and museum work
- Incorporate performance based sessions
- Are relevant to our region and beyond
- Draw upon exhibits at MOHAI or other local museums
- Are based or supported by current research
- Stimulate and foster creative thinking
- Highlight links between the local and the global

The symposium will address themes, such as Presentation of Museums, Where's the Queer, Future of Queer, and Community Engagement in museums.

Session proposals should include the following information:

- A 100 word description of the proposed session activities
- A 100 word explanation of why you think this session is a good fit for the symposium
- A brief biography of the session leaders
- Required equipment needs

Please submit proposals to queeringthemuseum@gmail.com by 5:00 pm on May 1, 2013.

For more information please visit our website,
www.queeringthemuseum.org(<http://www.queeringthemuseum.org>).

Interested in attending? Tickets are on sale, please visit [MOHAI's website](http://www.mohai.org/visit-us/mohai-calendar/eventdetail/444/-/queering-the-history-museum-symposium)(<http://www.mohai.org/visit-us/mohai-calendar/eventdetail/444/-/queering-the-history-museum-symposium>) to purchase your ticket today.



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Comments

Submitted by Gudrun (not verified)(<http://www.nuzavo.com>) on Fri, 2013-04-26 11:07

Thanks for finally talking about >Queering the Museum Project â Request for Proposals « WestMuse Blog <Liked it!

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Queering the History Museum symposium at the Museum of History & Industry

Submitted by Arts & Sciences Web Team on April 15, 2013 - 1:00pm

Currently we are asking community members, history enthusiasts, activists, artists, academics and professionals who are interested in sharing their knowledge and passion about representation, museums, history or any combination of these topics to lead sessions at the symposium on June 8, 2013. All the details about the proposals are included in the attached Request for Proposals. Please share this opportunity with any interested peoples and help us spread the word far and wide. The last day to submit a proposal is May 1, 2013.

We are also looking for interested community groups to table at our symposium. Information regarding the community tables is included in the RFP.

Tickets for the symposium and reception on board the Virginia V are available **now**. Don't hesitate to get them early, they are going fast!

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us at queeringthemuseum@gmail.com.

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Symposium Program

We are excited to announce the program for the upcoming Queering the History Museum Symposium. Please join us on June 8th, from 10 am to 5 pm, at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle for the following presentations. Registration opens at 9:45 am.

10:15 am to 10:30 am Opening Remarks

Leonard Garfield, Executive Director, Museum of History and Industry

10:30 am to 11:30 am Concurrent Sessions

Session 1: *A Witness to History: Recording the Modern LGBT Movement from the Inside* OUT Social Outreach Seattle

Presenters: Shaun Knittel, Founder and President, Social Outreach Seattle (SOSea) and Associate Editor, Seattle Gay News; Dru Dinero, SOSea Video Production Director, Founder and President, Visual Affairs

Session 2: *Imperial Theme Park or Site of Resistance? The Case of The GLBT History Museum* – GLBT History Museum San Francisco

Presenters: Gerard Koskovich, Curator and Independent Scholar; Don Romesburg, Curator and Assoc. Professor at Sonoma State University; Amy Sueyoshi, Curator and Assoc. Dean at San Francisco State University

11:45 am to 12:45 pm Concurrent Sessions

Session 1: *Narrating Our Own Tales: A Queer Digital Storytelling Project* QTM Digital Storytelling Workshop Films and Filmmakers Panel

Presenters: Filmmakers– Isis Asare, Mian Carvin, Petra Davis, Margaret Elisabeth, Fia Gibbs, Caleb Hernandez, Jourdan Keith, Jacque Larrainzar; Project Coordinator–Nicole Robert

Session 2: *Supporting Our History: A Foundation's Role in Preserving Individual and Collective LGBTQ Histories* Pride Foundation

Presenter: Gunner Scott, Director of Programs for the Pride Foundation

12:45 pm to 1:45 pm Lunch Break

Drop in *Revealing Queer* Exhibition Plan Review

1:45 pm to 2:45 pm Concurrent Sessions

Session 1: *Snapshots and Snippets: Words of Wisdom Snatched from Oral Herstories of our Lesbian Foremothers* Puget Sound-Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (PS-OLOC)

Presenters: Members of the Queer Crone Coordinating Council of PS-OLOC–Deirdre Knowles, Lin Simpson, Kathleen Prezbindowski, Suzanne Weinheimer, Gloria Stancich, Aganita Varkentine, Casey Hannan, Jolly Sue Baker

Session 2: *Queer Histories in MOHAI's Exhibits*

Presenter: Curt Fischer, Community historian

3:00 pm to 4:30 pm Keynote Presentation

Doing It For Ourselves: Queer Museology Outside the Museum – Pop Up Museum of Queer History

Presenter: Hugh Ryan, Founding Director – The Pop-Up Museum of Queer History

4:30 pm to 4:50 pm Closing Remarks

5:00 pm to 6:30 pm Reception

We will conclude the evening with a celebratory reception from 5 pm to 6:30 pm on the historic steam ship Virginia V with a performance by Captain Smartypants from the Seattle Men's Chorus. Food and drinks will be available.

Tickets are available now on the MOHAI website. Hope to see you there!

*Please note: Program schedule is subject to change.

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Queering the History Museum Symposium

Queering the History Museum Symposium

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| When | Jun 08, 2013 from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM |
| Where | The Museum of History and Industry 860 Terry Ave N Seattle |
| Region | Central Puget Sound |
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MOHAI hosts the second annual Queering the Museum Symposium, a community event exploring themes and concepts about the representation of LGBT/Q people in museums. This year's symposium focuses on history museums and includes the opportunity to give input on an LGBT/Q history exhibition MOHAI will host in its Community Gallery in 2014.

This program is supported by a Humanities Washington Opportunity Grant.



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QUEER IS HERE AND IN OUR MUSEUMS!

September 20, 2012 · *by the inluseum* · *in*
Uncategorized · *6 Comments*

Meet *Queering the Museum* project, an intervention into representations of LGBTQ people in museums, founded by Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert. We believe their view that “museums have a responsibility to account for the role played in constructing normalized ideas of race, gender and sexuality” is integral to a more socially inclusive museum. We look forward to following their work in the months to come!

WHO WE ARE

The Inluseum is a project based in Seattle, Washington that advances new ways of being a museum through critical discourse, community building and collaborative practice related to inclusion in museums. The

Can you imagine hearing Bikini Kill at maximum volume inside the white walls of a museum? What would Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* look like inside a history museum? How do museums combine diverse communities, Queer culture, the gender revolution, and today's youth? Is it possible for museums to counteract the inequality in historical records? These are some difficult questions... [Queering the Museum](#) project (QTM) has asked these hard questions, gained the trust of several museums, and created a long-term mutually beneficial project that focuses on representations of LGBTQ communities in museums. Now all we need to do is find a way to play Bikini Kill inside the pristine walls of a museum....

QTM has helped



museums

address their

diverse

communities by creating outlets for discourse, exhibitions to display the art and history of Queer individuals, and resources for those looking to examine the diverse history of Seattle. Succinctly put, QTM is a coordinated intervention into representations of LGBTQ people in museums, facilitating critical dialogue between community members and museum practitioners addressing the role that museums play in forming social norms around gender and sexuality.

QTM co-founders Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert with Jonathan Katz

[QTM](#) was founded on the dreams of Erin Bailey and Nicole Robert, two queer individuals seeking to create a seamless balance of social justice, scholarship and community influence in one project. With QTM we have achieved our vision. Our inaugural events in 2012 included a [Queering the](#)

Incluseum is facilitated and coordinated by Aletheia Wittman and Rose Paquet Kinsley. Contact us for consulting, collaboration or guest blogging at incluseum@gmail.com.

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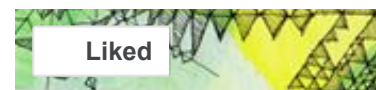
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Scene from Queering the Art Museum exhibition: Hide//Seek//Difference//Desire//Northwest at the Space Tacoma

Art Museum
symposium
supporting
the
*Hide/Seek:
Difference
and Desire in
American*

Portraiture exhibition at the [Tacoma Art Museum](#) in Washington. The symposium featured the co-curator of *Hide/Seek*, Jonathan Katz, and several community members. This two-day symposium led up to the opening of a local art exhibition titled *Hide//Seek//Difference//Desire//Northwest*, which featured over 19 artists from the Pacific Northwest.

This event was a buffet of Queer: Queer artists, Queer performers and Queer organizers. The Queering the Art Museum symposium was only the appetizer to what has become the QTM dinner party. The second course features our latest partnership with the [new Museum of History and Industry](#) (MOHAI) in Seattle, Washington. Yes, the newly revamped and soon to be re-opened MOHAI is working with QTM to create a trifecta of Queer culture within the shiny white walls of their new South Lake Union building. The QTM trifecta begins in February 2013 with a digital storytelling project that speaks for 10 individuals who will record a key element of their life as they see it in a high-quality digital format. Tossing the traditional oral history model, we are not employing leading questions designed with the best intentions but are nevertheless guiding the interviewees

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down a curated path for sharing their stories. This digital storytelling model will give the interviewees a chance to tell us what is important to *them*. The second component of this trifecta is a full day of discourse on all things associated with Queer history, which will take place in May 2013. Drawing on the expertise of local Queer historians, scholars, museum professionals, and community groups, this symposium will offer museum professionals the needed tools and resources to prepare their museums to address LGBTQ content. Not only will discourse be the main component of QTM's second course, we will also screen the digital stories for the community, leading to conversations about authority and how to collect history. The final component of QTM's main course is a Queer history exhibition in MOHAI's newly-established community gallery. This exhibition will open in October 2013 and will be the first examination of Seattle's Queer history in nearly 20 years, not to mention the first time for MOHAI to show a Queer history exhibition. This exhibit will address the last 40 years of Queer history in Seattle, focusing on important icons that have helped shape and define contemporary Queer culture in Seattle. The best part of the QTM dinner party is that dessert is yet to come. QTM will continue into 2014 with new partnerships and projects.

Stay tuned to the Inluseum's blog for the next phase of [Queering the Museum](#) projects to promote LGBTQ inclusion in Seattle based museums!

Erin Bailey is a Museology Masters of Arts Candidate in the Museology program at the University of Washington. As a current student she co-founded Queering the Museum project to align her practical experience with her academic

focus. Her research addresses inclusion, methods for elevating Queer culture in museums while connecting the museum to diverse communities. If you would like more info regarding her research or have any questions please comment here or email us at incluseum@gmail.com.

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Queer is here and in our Museums! « [queermuseum](#) · September 20, 2012 - 9:23 am · [Reply](#)→

[...] out the lastest blog post on The Incuseum blog.

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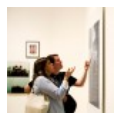
Queer is here and in our Museums! | Queering the Museum · September 20, 2012 - 9:25 am · *Reply*→

[...] this blog post from The Inluseum. It lays out the next year of QTM projects! Queer is here and in our [...]



Anna · September 24, 2012 - 8:31 am · *Reply*→

Very very interesting project. I noticed during my research about LGBT communities in the Museum of London that oral history and testimonies play an important role in the representation of marginalised groups. And the QTM uses an oral history model as well. Thanks, Anna



Erin E. Bailey · September 24, 2012 - 8:59 am · *Reply*→

Hi Anna! We do indeed, a modified oral history approach. Do share more about your work in London.

Lessons Learned 1 | the inluseum · October 5, 2012 - 2:27 pm · *Reply*→

[...] some cases, social inclusion requires museums to become advocates on behalf of specific community groups and individuals, fighting for their fair representation and access to museum [...]

I | [the includeum](#) · March 5, 2014 - 7:04 am · [Reply](#)→

[...] Before QTM, was QTM, I was working on a symposium called Queering the Art Museum which was in conjunction with the Hide/Seek exhibition at the Tacoma Art Museum. At that time, I met [...]

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Digital Storytelling Project



Digital Storytelling Workshop Application Queering the Museum Project

www.queeringthemuseum.org

queeringthemuseum@gmail.com

Thank you for applying to participate in this project! You may complete this application for yourself or use it to nominate someone for participation in the 4-day Digital Storytelling Workshop. We are particularly interested in individuals whose stories usually get left out of historical records due to race, ethnicity, class, ability or gender.

We seek individuals who:

- 18 years or older who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or somewhere in this spectrum.
- Who either live in or are from the greater Puget Sound area.

Due to liability issues, we regret that we are unable to include individuals under the age of 18 at this time.

Workshop Overview

The workshop takes place on April 6-7 and April 13-14 at the University of Washington Bothell campus in Bothell, WA. Saturdays are from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sundays from Noon to 5:00 p.m. Participants must be available all dates and times.

Participants will be guided through the process of creating a 3 minute video narrating a significant story in their lives. Each completed video will be screened on Saturday June 8, 2013 at the Queering the History Museum Symposium at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle, with permission. The videos will become part of local archives and museums.

The QTM Community Advisory Committee will screen all applications, select the finalists and all applicants will be notified of final decisions by the end of April 2013. Finalists may be asked to participate in a telephone interview.

Applications must be received by Friday March 8, 2013 by 5:00 p.m.

All information collected in this application will be kept confidential and will only be used for purposes of the selection process.

Personal Information

In this section, complete information for the person who is applying to participate in the storytelling workshop.

Are you available on April 6/7 and April 13/14 to be in Bothell for this workshop?
You must be available on these dates in order to participate.

Yes

Preferred Name

Preferred Gender Pronoun

Street Address

City, State, and Zip code

Phone Number

Email Address

General Age Range:

Due to liability issues, all participants must be 18 or over at this time.

How do you identify in terms of gender and/or sexuality?

How do you identify in terms of race and/or ethnicity?

What is your preferred language for speaking?

Nominations

If you are completing this form for yourself, you may skip this section. If you are nominating someone, please include your information below.

Name of the Person Completing this Form

Email Address of the Person Completing this Form

Applicant Questions

In this section, we seek information to find out more about you and your interest in sharing your personal story.

Why do you want to tell your story? Or, if you are nominating someone else, why do you think the person you are nominating should tell their story?

In 50 words or less, how would you describe yourself to someone who has never met you before? Nominators, describe your nominee.

You may consider including places you have lived, jobs, community experiences, family, identity categories or any experiences that contribute to your understanding of yourself.

In 2 to 3 paragraphs, tell us about an important personal experience that you have had and why it is important. If you are nominating someone, select a specific significant experience or project of the nominee and tell us about it.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this application. You may mail your application to:

Nicole Robert

UW GWSS

Box 345345

Seattle, WA 98195-4345

Application must be *received* in the mail by Friday March 8, 2013. Online applications must be received by 5:00 pm. All application information will be kept confidential.

Contact queeringthemuseum@gmail.com with any questions.



THE INCLUSE UM

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Inclusion | Museums

RE-THINKING NARRATIVE PRODUCTION IN MUSEUMS THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS

March 19, 2014 · *by the incluseum* · *in Best Practices, Culture, Heritage, & Identity, Information & Technology* · *2 Comments*

The last couple blogpost we published focused on [Revealing Queer](#), an exhibition currently on view at the Museum of Industry and History in Seattle, WA that was spearheaded by [Queering the Museum](#) (QTM) and relied on a community-

WHO WE ARE

The Incluseum is a project based in Seattle, Washington that advances new ways of being a museum through critical discourse, community building and collaborative practice related to inclusion in museums. The

based approach to curation (read: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)). Today, we host Nicole Robert, Doctoral Candidate in Feminist Studies and Co-Founder of QTM. She discusses the need to think more broadly about narrative production and collection in museum, proposing digital story telling workshops as a more sensitive and respectful way to include the stories of people who tend to not be well-represented in our institutions.

* * * *

As a founding member of the Queering the Museum (QTM) project, it has been wonderful to see the coverage of the recent exhibit opening: Revealing Queer at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI). The exhibit is the visible product of several years of community collaborations. Central to our mission at QTM is to think critically about the processes that go into the creation of museum products. In this post, I will share the processes behind our digital storytelling workshop and the resulting videos.

As you know from reading the last two blog posts, QTM collaborated with an extensive [Community Advisory Committee](#) (CAC) in the production of three elements that impacted our partnership with MOHAI: a [digital storytelling workshop](#) (DSW), a [symposium](#) and the [Revealing Queer exhibit](#). With Erin taking the lead as Curator of Revealing Queer, I took the lead with the DSW.

Collectively, the QTM team approached the DSW as an opportunity to include the stories of individuals whose lives are not well-represented within existing archives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer (LGBTQ) materials, due to

Incluseum is facilitated and coordinated by Aletheia Wittman and Rose Paquet Kinsley. Contact us for consulting, collaboration or guest blogging at incluseum@gmail.com.

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race, ethnicity, gender and disability. In order to do this respectfully, I drew upon my feminist training to think about the power dynamics at work in this situation. I am a white cisgendered queer woman working with an existing institution (MOHAI) and a student of another large institution (University of Washington). As such, I have access to resources and opportunities that others do not. In addition, established institutions don't generally have a positive history of working with marginalized populations. In speaking with LGBTQ individuals in the course of my research, I heard many individuals express institutional mistrust and fear leading them to approach individuals with institutional privileges with caution.

This awareness is part of what led to the decision to use a digital storytelling workshop rather than an oral history project. While we wanted to add to the existing LGBTQ archives, we also wanted to make sure that individuals could keep control over how their stories were represented. Oral histories contain a lot of valuable information in a format that is not suitable for exhibition, unless the history is edited. This leaves decisions about how an individual gets represented up to a curator or video editor. In contrast, a digital story is a short narrative video that is designed for exhibition and functions as a complete audio-visual representation created by the subject of the video. By choosing this method, we handed representational control to the storytellers.

- #MuseumsandRace
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CATEGORIES



Pictured are our Digital Storytellers: Isis Asare, Mian Carvin, Margaret Elisabeth, Jacque Larrainzar, Fia Gibbs, Petra Davis, Caleb Hernandez and Jourdan Keith. Photo by Angelica Macklin.

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While I held this specific vision for the DSW, I was fortunate enough to collaborate with Angelica Macklin in the development and production of the workshop. Angelica is a local media-producer and fellow doctoral student in the Gender, Women, Sexuality Studies program at the University of Washington. Our common feminist training coupled with our mutual commitment to social justice and shared authority helped Angelica and I to develop specific practices that guided our DSW. In the following paragraphs, I will detail some of the more significant choices that we made.

The workshop itself was a 4 day event in which we facilitated a story-writing and film production process.

- Angelica and I agreed that the content of the workshop as well as the tools we used in the workshop should be as inexpensive and available as possible.

- Through QTM, we raised funds to ensure that all participants could attend for free.
- We chose software that is free and easily available.
- We advised participants that they are welcome to use any part of the workshop materials in their own life and work; we did not exert copyright over the design of the workshop.
- We taught participants about the impact of representational choices and the ethics of including people, places, names or existing work. Each participant designed their own copyright agreement—many using Creative Commons—and each participant retains ownership and control over their final video product. Fortunately, participants agreed to let QTM and MOHAI use the videos for the duration of our partnership with MOHAI. Participants have also begun to share their videos in other ways, including film screenings locally and nationally.
- One of the riskiest decisions that Angelica and I made was to release participants from producing stories with a particular narrative. Once they were in the Workshop, we invited them to reflect on what was most important for them to talk about at that moment in their lives. We were honest about the fact that we hoped to use some of the videos in the Revealing Queer exhibit, but that was not the ultimate goal. We

really wanted them to have the experience of creating their own narrative, whatever shape that took. In support of that decision, we allowed participants several months after the workshop itself in which they could decide not to share their video at all. Because the participants engaged with such intimate and revealing topics, this commitment was crucial. In addition, Angelica helped a few individuals re-edit their videos as their ideas of what they felt comfortable sharing publicly changed over the course of time.

We now have 8 completed videos in a 35 minute reel that we have screened at a few special events. In addition, each video operates as its own short narrative. 3 of the films were selected for inclusion in *Revealing Queer*, based on how their content fit the exhibit narrative. All of the films are being shared in their own ways by the individual filmmakers.

Ultimately, I am impressed with the intimacy and creativity of the videos that were created. Many filmmakers did not have access to historical photos of themselves and responded to that challenge in inspiring ways. Viewers have found the films relatable and impactful, even as the films play with the ways in which we think about gender and sexuality. At the same time, the narrative structure can make it difficult to understand the larger context of the stories that were shared. The ways in which the storytellers have impacted local history is not always apparent from the videos, so their use for historical research may be limited.

Angelica and I put a lot of emphasis on the process of making these films, and I believe that this process was transformative on its own. The workshop participants reported finding community, feeling strength in the collective as well as viewing the significance of their own lives in new and positive ways. As we envision future possibilities for this work, we are conscious of the challenges of archiving, viewing, labeling and sharing digital stories in ways that continue to center the rights of the storytellers. Despite these challenges, the rewards for both the filmmakers and the film-viewers are worthwhile.

Nicole Robert's interdisciplinary interests converge around her commitment to anti-oppression education in both formal and informal environments. Nicole holds an M.A. in Museology and is currently a Doctoral Candidate in Feminist Studies at the University of Washington. Drawing on years of practical experience in museums, her dissertation research focuses on representations of race, gender and sexuality in U.S. history museums. Co-Founder of the Queering the Museum project, Nicole is grateful to collaborate with so many amazing individuals in order to engage museums with queer cultures. Nicole is honored to be a Point Foundation Scholar, a Huckabay Fellow and a recipient of the Doman Teaching Award for excellence in feminist teaching.

* * * *

Resources for Digital Storytelling:

-Creative Commons

Licensing: <http://us.creativecommons.org/>

-Coalition for Safer

Spaces: <http://saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com/>

-Photo Story software free download with tutorial (for PC only): <http://www.jakesonline.org/photostory.htm>

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The Road to Revealing Queer | Queering the Museum · April 15, 2014 – 11:11 am · *Reply*→

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|------------------|-------------|
| Contact Name | MIAN CARVIN |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Title of Digital Story | de facto |
| Date Completed | 14 April 2013 |
| Created by | Mian Carvin |

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Legal Name Printed

MIAN CARVIN

Legal Name Signature



Date

14 April 2013

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| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Contact Name | Petra Davis |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Title of Digital Story | Love, Petra. |
| Date Completed | 4/14/13 |
| Created by | Petra Davis |

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Legal Name Printed Petra Davis

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Date 4/14/13

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|------------------|--------------------|
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| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Title of Digital Story | Continual Coming Out: The story of Margaret |
| Date Completed | 14 Apr 2013 |
| Created by | Margaret J. Elisabeth |

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| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Title of Digital Story | "IDENTITY" |
| Date Completed | April 14, 2013 |
| Created by | CALEB B. HERNANDEZ |

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| Contact Name | JOURDAN KEITH |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Title of Digital Story | To Be Titled |
| Date Completed | 4/14/13 |
| Created by | Jourdan I Keith |

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Legal Name Printed Jourdan Keith

Legal Name Signature

Jourdan I Keith

Date

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| Contact Name | JACQUE LARZAINZAR |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

Title of Digital Story

OMECIHUATL

Date Completed

4.14.2013

Created by

JACQUE LARZAINZAR WITH SUPPORT OF QUEERING THE MUSEUM PROJECT.

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Legal Name Printed JACQUE LARZAINZAR

Legal Name Signature 

Date 4.14.2013

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| Contact Name | JENNIFER YADOR KIS ASARE |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Title of Digital Story | the beautiful struggle |
| Date Completed | 04/14/2013 |
| Created by | KIS ASARE |

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Legal Name Signature 

Date 04/14/2013

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| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Legal Name Printed

Legal Name Signature

Mian Carrin


Date

13 April 2013

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|--------------|-------------|
| Contact Name | Petra Davis |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Legal Name Printed Petra Davis

Legal Name Signature



Date 4/13/13

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|------------------|--------------------|
| Contact Name | Margaret Elisabeth |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Legal Name Printed MARGARET J. Elisabeth

Legal Name Signature

Margaret Elisabeth

Date

4/12/13

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OK
PGB

| | |
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| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Legal Name Printed P Sofia Gibbs
Legal Name Signature *Sofia Gibbs*

Date 4/14/13

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| Contact Name | CALEB B. HERNANDEZ |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Legal Name Printed CALEB B. HERNANDEZ

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Date APRIL 13, 2013

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|------------------|---------------|
| Contact Name | JOURDAN KEITH |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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JOURDAN KEITH

Legal Name Signature

Jordan Keith

Date 4/13/13

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|------------------|-------------------|
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| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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JACQUE LARRAINZAR

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Date 4.13.15

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|------------------|-----------------|
| Contact Name | Rebecca Simmons |
| Address | [REDACTED] |
| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Rebecca Simmons

Legal Name Signature

Rebecca Simmons

Date

4/13/13

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| | |
|------------------|----------------|
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| City, State, Zip | [REDACTED] |
| Phone | [REDACTED] |
| Email | [REDACTED] |

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Legal Name Printed

Jennifer Yador

Legal Name Signature



Date

04/14/2013