

Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance

15–16th June 2022, UCL
Programme and Book of Abstracts

Hybrid Symposium, Online (Zoom: sent to registered participants' email) and In Person at:
The Common Ground, Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), South Wing, Wilkins Building
UCL, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT



Main image credit: Rita Levi-Montalcini: Wellcome Collection

Symposium organisers:

Leah Sidi (UCL) and Verónica Rodríguez (Buckinghamshire New University)

Symposium contact email:

genderhealthperformance@gmail.com



Supporting UCL-based researchers
and graduate students
Faculties of Arts & Humanities
and Social & Historical Sciences
School of Slavonic and
East European Studies

Programme

Symposium

“Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance”, UCL

Day 1

Wednesday 15th June

- 9.30-10.00 Registration of In-person Attendees and Welcome by Symposium Co-organisers Leah Sidi (UCL) and Verónica Rodríguez (Buckinghamshire New University)
- 10.00-11.10 **Keynote 1:**
A Picture of Loneliness: Masculinity and the Art of Lost Connections
anna harpin (University of Warwick)
Chair: Leah Sidi
- 11.10-11.30 Coffee Break
- 11.30-1.00 **Panel 1: Clinical Landscapes**
The Most Beautiful Invention of the Sick: A Long Durational Performance Project Exploring Illness as a Condition of Thinking
Despina Zacharopoulou (Royal College of Art, London)
The Hospital Ward as Theatre: Orchestrating Spaces and Bodies in Nursing and Performance
Alex Mermikides (King's College London)
Mothering at the Margins: Staging Precarious Mothers and Mental Illness
Leah Sidi (UCL)
Chair: anna harpin
- 1.00-2.00 Lunch: Lunch is not provided, but there will be a list of nearby places to get your lunch and stretch your legs!

Programme

Symposium

“Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance”, UCL

Day 1

Wednesday 15th June

2.00-3.30

Panel 2: Transcending Health and Illness

Thinking about Music and the Mind from the Periphery. A Psychosocial Introduction to Fluid Conceptions of Music

Luisa Boada Bayona (UCL)

Dance, Disability and Premodern Medicine

Shireen Hamza (Harvard University), Maggie Bridger (University of Illinois, Chicago) and Sydney Erlikh (University of Illinois, Chicago)

Performance, Books, Breath and Anxiety 2022

Amanda Couch (UCA)

Chair: Alex Feldman

3.30-4.00

Coffee Break

4.00-5.30

Panel 3: Queering/Quarrelling Gynaecology

The Double Life of The Pill: Embodying Ambiguous Experiences with Contraception
Katie Paterson (Guildhall School of Music & Drama)

19th Century Gynaecology and the Construction of Racialized Gender
Laura Smith (UCLA)

Reading from Family Tree (2021)

Mojisola Adebayo (QMUL)

Chair: Verónica Rodríguez

5.30-6.30

Drinks reception at Symposium venue (followed by dinner at a local pub).

You may book self-funded dinner by Monday 13th June at genderhealthperformance@gmail.com

Programme

Symposium

“Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance”, UCL

Day 2

Thursday 16th June

10.00-11.10

Keynote 2:

Embodied Knowledges – Performance-making as a Means of Redressing the Act of Being Vulnerabilised

Katharine Low (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London)

Chair: Verónica Rodríguez

11.10-11.30

Coffee break

11.30-12.30

Panel 4: Performances of Scrutiny

Performing Health and Gender Via Human Rights Scrutiny

Kate Seear, Sean Mulcahy (La Trobe University)

Chair: Luisa Boada Bayona

*This panel will finish sooner than expected due to unforeseen circumstances (panellists cancelling due to health reasons). This panel will finish around 12pm, which will give you an extra 30 minutes, making your lunch break 1 hour and a half long. For those attending in person, take an opportunity to enjoy one of the most charming areas of London, Bloomsbury!

12.30-1.30

Lunch: Lunch is not provided, but there will be a list of nearby places to get your lunch and stretch your legs!

1.30-3.00

Panel 5: Bodies of Excess

Baking Cake Daddy: Whipping Fat-phobia into Fat-positivity with a Sprinkling of Queer Subversive Fun
Ross Anderson-Doherty (actor, singer and theatre-maker based in Belfast), Jonathan Graffam (Melbourne-based dramaturg and performer) and Alyson Campbell (University of Melbourne)

The Ante-Partum and Post-Partum Vulnerability of an Enceinte Being: Articulating Chaos, Quest and Identity Dissonance through Narrativization

Monisa Rajkumar and V. David Arputha (both Bharathiar University, Coimbatore)

Framing Agnes: Reperforming Trans Medical History Records through Film
Amy Siegel (York University)

Chair: Katharine Low

3.00-3.10

Short break

Programme

Symposium

“Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance”, UCL

Day 2

Thursday 16th June

3.10-4.30

Panel 6: Visions of the Self

Theatre of the Selfie: Staging Ill Health in Visual Autopathographies

Claire Hampton (University of Wolverhampton)

Focusing Screen

Sarah Sudhoff (Cuban-American interdisciplinary artist based in Houston)

Chair: Alex Mermikides

4.30-5.00

Coffee Break

5.00-6.30

Panel 7: Bloody Embodiments

Dangerous Desire and the Performance of Blood in Julia DuCournau’s “Raw” and “Titane”

Camille Intson (University of Toronto, St George)

28 Days Greater: Embodying Acts of Unhiding

Carolyn Defrin (Artist and researcher based in the UK)

Performing Endometriosis, a Rehearsed Reading Directed by Magdalena Mosteanu

Verónica Rodríguez (Buckinghamshire New University)

Chair: Leah Sidi

Book of Abstracts

Symposium “Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance”, UCL

Day 1

Wednesday 15th June

Keynote 1

10.00-11.10

A Picture of Loneliness: Masculinity and the Art of Lost Connections **anna harpin (University of Warwick)**

In Charlie Kaufman’s 2020 *I’m thinking of ending things*, the ‘Father’ character is shown a landscape painting that portrays sadness. He asks: ‘How can a picture of a field be sad without a sad person looking sad in the field?’ In 2009, the Soho Theatre received a letter of complaint from a trainee psychiatrist in response to a show called *Kim Noble Will Die*. He wrote: ‘My job is to spend all day helping people who are mentally unwell, so I therefore did not appreciate having to pay for the privilege of spending more time in the company of a disturbed individual. This show wasn’t funny, it wasn’t art, and it was deeply disturbing and irresponsible.’ Three things strike me here. Firstly, in both cases distress is presumed legible and decipherable by the viewer. Secondly, feeling belongs to an individual; it is located *within* them. Thirdly, there is a proper place for these difficult feelings to *be*. Sadness shouldn’t seep into a landscape. Disturbance ought to be contained. This paper will consider if any of these three things are useful. It will trouble the legibility and decipherability of feeling. It will question the value of conceiving of mental distress as an individuated, private phenomenon. It will ask if a dislocated, atmospheric understanding of difficult feelings might be a more hospitable and generative way of attending to them. In moving outside dualistic frames of thinking (happy/sad, disturbed/sane, here/there, man/woman and so on), the paper will explore the ways in which diagnostic frameworks sustain ideologies such as gender and property. In this regard I will propose that, via their critiques of hyper-individuated personhood, distress, and social value, both of these art works ask us to contemplate the abolition of the operative terms of subjectivity. In short, I will answer Kaufman’s ‘Father’ with two questions: what is sadness? and what is a person?

anna harpin works at the University of Warwick. Recent publications include her monograph, *Madness, Art, and Society: Beyond Illness*, an article on Katie Mitchell (*CTR*) and a chapter on Shane Meadows’ cinema (*The Routledge Companion to Literature and Disability*). She is currently writing a new book about care and the politics of tenderness. She is also a theatre maker with her company, Idiot Child.

Panel 1:
Clinical Landscapes

11.30-1.00

**The Most Beautiful Invention of the Sick: A Long Durational Performance Project Exploring Illness as a Condition of Thinking
Despina Zacharopoulou (Royal College of Art, London)**

“The most beautiful invention of the sick,” is a phrase borrowed by Klossowski, as mentioned in his book *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (1969), to characterize Nietzsche’s philosophy as a consequence of his psychosomatic condition and the care rituals he invented in the course of his self-treatment.

The present paper uses as its main case study my suggested ongoing long durational performance project called: *The Most Beautiful Invention of the Sick*. It is about the idea of creating long durational performance events at psychiatric hospitals, to raise questions on the performance-philosophy entanglement within institutional environments of mental illness. How might embodied practices - such as performance art - inhabit, or actually, be philosophy? How might philosophy be reconstituted as an embodied practice and method (Hadot, 2001)? How might illness affect or even constitute an embodied mode of thinking?

The two main axes of the project’s hypothesis reside upon: (a) the notion of *parthēsia*, as a form of courageous truth-telling (Foucault, 2011), and (b) the role of illness towards a “physiology of impulses” within the engendering of thought (Klossowski, 1997). The methodology followed at *The Most Beautiful Invention of the Sick* long durational performance project, follows the performance protocols established in my existing performance research methods, and suggests an investigation of the research questions raised, via the placement of a performer-philosopher inside a psychiatric hospital’s room. The artist will live, eat and sleep inside the hospital for a period of at least three weeks, during which they will invite the audience to enter into a one-to-one encounter with them, for 8 hours per day (minimum 144 hours in total).

The suggested methodology will be further explained through examples from my existing practice on long durational performance, my embodied research on repetition as Eternal Return (Nietzsche, 2003) to trauma, and trauma as *corporeal trace* (Spinoza, 1996).

Bibliographical References:

1. Foucault, Michel. *The Courage of Truth - The Government of Self and Others II: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983-1984*. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011 [Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2009].
2. Hadot, Pierre. *La Philosophie comme maniere de vivre*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2001.
3. Klossowski, Pierre. *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*. Translated by Daniel W. Smith. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997 [Paris: Mercure de France, 1969].
4. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin, 1961, 2003 [Chemnitz: Ernst Schmeitzner, 1883].
5. Spinoza, Benedict de (Baruch). *Ethics*. Translated by Edwin Curley. London & New York: Penguin, 1996 [1677].

Dr Despina Zacharopoulou is a performance artist and academic, born in Arcadia, Greece, currently working between London and Athens. Despina recently completed her practice-led Ph.D. in Philosophy & Fine Art (Performance) at the RCA (Onassis Foundation scholar). Her practice investigates performance art as *surface*, and philosophy as embodied practice and method towards a life which is radically other. Her work has been presented at events of global impact, e.g.: AS ONE by NEON & the Marina Abramović Institute (Athens, 2016); London Frieze (2016, 2017); A Possible Island? By the Marina Abramović Institute & the 1st Bangkok Art Biennale (Bangkok, 2018-19), etc. Press/Publications include articles in: The NY Times, The Nation Thailand, Liberal newspaper Greece, The Art Newspaper, etc. Dr Zacharopoulou is a Niarchos Foundation ARTWORKS Fellow (2021) and holds the position of the Short Course Leader of the Contemporary Art Summer School at the Royal College of Art, London. www.despinazacharopoulou.com

The Hospital Ward as Theatre: Orchestrating Spaces and Bodies in Nursing and Performance
Alex Mermikides (King's College London)

The hospital is sometimes imagined as a sort of theatre[1] but what happens when this theatrical metaphor is made literal? This paper introduces a dance-theatre performance, *Careful*, created and performed in a simulated 6-bay hospital ward at Kingston University. In directing *Careful* I became starkly aware of how the ward orchestrates nurses and patients' gazes and how these gazes objectify and aestheticize their interactions. In the performance, we put the audience (some of them nurses) in the patients' beds. The performers, playing nurses, addressed them as though they were patients, breaching the fourth wall that usually divides spectator and performer [2]. In this paper, I analyse theatrical devices such as these from a feminist post-human perspective [3]. This analysis reveals how medical spaces, simulated or otherwise, determine the orchestration of bodies, behaviour and being in ways that are gendered. Through this I evidence the contribution that feminist performance practice can make to the medical humanities' critical reconceptualising medical spaces and their occupants [4]. The paper contains video clips from the performance.

Notes:

[1] See for example, Sinclair, S. (1997), *Making Doctors: An Institutional Apprenticeship*, Oxford and New York: Berg Press. [2] For an audience-eye description, see Partos, H. (2016), 'Play The Part: Theatre Show Teaches Student Nurses Compassion', *The Guardian*, 14 December. Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/healthcare-network/2016/dec/14/theatre-show-teaching-student-nurses-compassion> (accessed 6 April 2019). [3] Drawing in particular on Braidotti, R. (2013), *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press.[4] Whitehead, A. and Woods, A. *The Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Dr Alex Mermikides is the D'Oyly Carte Senior Lecturer in Arts and Health in the medical school at King's College London. She is a theatre scholar and maker researching the interface between medicine and performance. Outputs include *Performance, Medicine and the Human* (2020), *Performance and the Medical Body* (2016, both Methuen Bloomsbury) and *bloodlines* (2012-2016) an auto-biological performance-lecture about cancer and transplantation.

Mothering at the Margins: Staging Precarious Mothers and Mental Illness **Leah Sidi (UCL)**

Separated by a gap of 27 years, *Jordan* (1992) and *Iphigenia in Splott* (2015) offer, on the surface, dramaturgically similar critiques of poverty and motherhood in contemporary UK. Both plays are one-woman monologues, which describe the loss of motherhood under the conditions of marginalisation and poverty. *Jordan* was co-written by Anna Reynolds and Moira Buffini and draws on Reynold's experience of incarceration to stage the true story of 'Jordan's' experience of post-partum psychosis, infanticide and incarceration. Gary Owen's *Iphigenia in Splott* re-imagines the Iphigenia myth in the context of post-austerity England. The protagonist Effie recounts her story of pregnancy loss, neglect and lack of compensation at the hands of state healthcare. She becomes the *pharmakos* who is sacrificed for the smooth running of the state. In both plays marginalisation and deprivation render motherhood an impossibility.

This paper examines the historical relationship between these plays and offers a situated reading of the representation of outsider motherhood in both works in the context of post-COVID19 writing on care and loneliness (Care 2021, Sern et al., 2022). Understanding Owen's play as an example of feminist restaging (Aston 2020), I suggest that by drawing on the feminist monologue/one-woman show form Owen posits a dramaturgical through-line between post-2008 austerity policies and the socio-political conditions of late second wave feminism. *Iphigenia in Splott* not only highlights the post-2008 crisis of care, it demonstrates its continuity with forms of social marginalisation, housing precarity and "hollowing out" introduced under Thatcher and thematised in Reynold/Buffini's *Jordan* (Brown 2015). Read in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, both plays offer embodied analysis of marginalisation through confinement in domestic spaces. Adapting Tronto's notion that domestic space is antithetical to the zone of neoliberal citizenship, I suggest that these plays politicise domestic place by demonstrating that it too has been hollowed out by neoliberal austerity (Tronto 2013). Through the monologue's overlaying of domestic and state-owned spaces, both plays offer a radical centring of the domestic as the location of an unspoken political crisis.

References:

Aston, E. 2020. *Restaging Feminisms*. London: Palgrave. / Brown, W. 2015. *Undoing the Demos*. New York: Zone Books. / Care Collective. 2020. *The Care Manifesto*. London: Verso. / Stern, J., Sink, C.A., Wałejko, M., & Ping Ho, W. (Eds.). 2022. *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Solitude, Silence and Loneliness*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. / Tronto, J. 2013. *Caring Democracy*. New York: New York University Press.

Dr Leah Sidi is a Lecturer in Health Humanities at UCL. Her research focus is on contemporary theatre and mental health, with a special emphasis on feminist theatre and psychoanalysis. She is currently recipient of an ISSF Wellcome Trust Award, researching feminist conceptions of community care. Leah has recently published in *Performance Research* and *Medical Humanities* and is a regular contributor to the Institute for Medical Humanities' *The Polyphony*. She is currently working on a monograph called *Sarah Kane's Theatre of Psychic Life: Theatre, Thought and Mental Suffering*.

Panel 2:

Transcending Health and Illness

2.00-3.30

Thinking about Music and the Mind from the Periphery. A Psychosocial Introduction to Fluid Conceptions of Music Luisa Boada Bayona (UCL)

Music is generally understood as a cultural product, defined in most Western musicological and philosophical approaches as a universal, abstract, and often crystallised concept that includes or excludes certain types of sonic phenomena depending on whether they meet or not inclusion criteria for being part of the definition of music or not. As a constantly changing phenomenon, music contradicts these universal definitions and surpasses the idea that music can be abstracted from its context and practice. I suggest that music does not have only one definition but many, depending on the context, situation and actions involved. Moreover, music can be thought of first as an embodied experience – a phenomenological situation that involves the complexities of human existence in the interactions of biological rhythmicity, emotional exchanges with harmonies of being, and vocal exchanges that map out melodic trajectories. When music is understood, as indigenous sociologist Silvia Rivera suggests, as a ‘talisman’ concept, paradoxical tensions of musical experience are possible, and music can be expanded beyond its cultural significance to make it part of the repertoire of human experience. The work of musicologist Christopher Small is relevant in this migration from crystallised definitions and suggests that music is something we do. ‘Musicking’, as Small suggests, is a verb, i.e. an action that involves people, contexts and collective experiences. Considering music as an action, not a noun, is related to feminist and queer musicology (particularly the work of Susan McClary and Elizabeth Wood), who question the lack of female representation in music performance and research and question the traditional canons on which music is defined academically. Queer Musicology takes a critical turn toward social, personal, and embodied dimensions of music motivated by the need for questioning heteronormative practices in the discipline.

These ideas that question traditional canons in the definitions of music (from indigenous-decolonial sociology, new and critical musicology, feminist and queer musicology) are relevant threads to my central hypothesis, which claims that there is something musical about being humans and that musical aspect of humanity affects the way we develop psychologically and emotionally. If music is not understood as a complex, fluid concept, then this musical hypothesis of emotional development would not be possible. I take two particular aspects of development as directly affected by musical aspects: 1 the notion of oneself – phenomenology of being, and 2 the recognition of someone else’s emotional experience. The musical developmental trajectory touches on core aspects of being and represents relevant insights for thinking musically about humans. I aim to explore the overlaps between music definitions and practice with psychological development by presenting a theoretical idea that thinks critically about the established notions of music.

Luisa Boada Bayona is a London-based Colombian Psychologist, currently doing a PhD in Health Humanities at University College London. Her project is mainly focused on designing a theoretical framework that studies the psychobiological and emotional sources of music and how these have an impact on emotional and socio-cultural interactions, including creativity, music-making and music appreciation, but more importantly, as a vehicle for understanding and mapping possibilities for mental health and social restoration through creativity and emotional engagement with individuals and communities. Luisa trained as a clinical psychologist and has experience working with severe mental health conditions in psychiatric hospitals, particularly with victims of the Colombian armed conflict. Although her training is in psychology, she has studied music and fundamentals of music therapy. As a Health Humanities researcher, she has been seeking novel ways of understanding health and illness in society and how methods from the arts and humanities may bring insights to psychological practices and theories.

Dance, Disability and Premodern Medicine

Shireen Hamza (Harvard University), Maggie Bridger (University of Illinois, Chicago) and Sydney Erlikh (University of Illinois, Chicago)

How can premodern medicine enable dancers to harness, reflect on, and subvert their own experiences as patients? Historian and artist Shireen Hamza seeks to explore this question through the composition of a series of text-scores, based on her research in the history of medicine in the medieval Islamic world. Each “text-score,” a score for performers written in plain language rather than notation, is inspired by a different experience of illness or therapeutic modality from this historical research.

The study of premodern medicine enables historians to view interactions between patients and medical practitioners beyond present-day configurations, especially those structured by biomedical institutions and norms. We propose to discuss how performing these scores can expose and subvert the choreographies of medicine and surgery, as well as the relationships between normative texts and sick bodies. The scores are meant to be performed live, in an intimate and accessible environment, rather than being recorded and screened, and as such we propose to discuss the project at the Material Selves conference rather than share a performance virtually.

We propose to show a series of still images of two performances of the text-scores while discussing the project from three different perspectives, for 5-6 minutes each. Shireen will speak about her vision for the project as a whole, and the embodied and historical research informing her composition. Maggie Bridger and Sydney Erlikh, two disability studies scholars, educators, and performers, will speak about the project in relation to their broader work, touching on their roles as dancers who performed one or more of these text-scores alone and together. As chronically ill scholars, we bring the wisdom of pain and our experiences as patients to our performances. Our comments will thus explore the intersection of dance, disability, and medicine through the lenses of temporal displacement and crip performance.

Shireen Hamza is a PhD candidate in the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University, with a secondary field in Critical Media Practice. She is completing a dissertation on Islam and medicine in the medieval Indian Ocean world and has also published on the history of sexuality. She is also a managing editor of the Ottoman History Podcast: shireenhamza.com

Maggie Bridger (she/her) is a sick and disabled dance artist and doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois, Chicago in the Department of Disability and Human Development. Her artistic and scholarly interests center around disabled bodyminds in dance, with a focus on reimagining pain through the creative process...In 2021, her work was commissioned by MOMENTA Dance Company. She is a cofounder of the Inclusive Dance Workshop Series at Access Living, was recently published in the Canadian Journal of Disability Studies and currently serves as Administrative Fellow, Membership with the Dance Studies Association. Most recently, Maggie was selected as one of High Concept Labs' 2022 Artists in Residence. maggiebridger.com

Sydney Erlikh (MSEd) PhD candidate in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois Chicago. She was recently selected by the American Scandinavian Foundation Fellow 23-22 for her dance and disability to create a multi-sited ethnography on dancers with intellectual disabilities. She was selected for the SeeChicagoDance Critical Writing Fellow and the Harvard Mellon School of Theater and Performance Studies Research.

Performance, Books, Breath and Anxiety 2022
Amanda Couch (University for the Creative Arts Farnham)

I have suffered with anxiety for as long as I can remember. I worried incessantly as a child and was particularly fearful of poisons, chemicals and germs. I speak openly about anxiety in my teaching, however, until now my art/research practice has not explored this aspect of health. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic my mental health suffered acutely, and my work began to reflect this inner landscape. Using autobiographic methods, I will chart the personal with the theoretical through three of my projects where performance intersects with anxiety.

Firstly, my artist book/performance prompt, *Huwawa in the Everyday: An Almanac* which mimics the function of a medieval folding almanac bidding us to attend to our interconnected relationship with the world. *Huwawa...* initiates a feminist durational performance practice, which helps me to stay present mitigating against anxiety and the obsessive and repetitive thoughts that I experience.

Becoming with Wheat: Photosynthesis/Respiration Collaborations were collaborative performances made during the first national lockdown in June/July 2020 enacting the exchange and transformation of carbon dioxide and oxygen between plant and human. My kneeling over the wheat and taking deep breaths for a few minutes each day not only forged a companionship with the plants but also went some way to alleviate the anxiety and agoraphobia I was feeling.

Finally, I will share the beginnings of a new project based on the Nine Herbs Charm of the Lacnunga, a collection of Anglo-Saxon medical texts. My project celebrates the plant companions that I have been foraging since the start of the pandemic to enhance my diet and minimise visits to the supermarket for fear of infection. Through writing love letters to the plants and printing directly with them, the project will be both book and performed as magical speech acts to enact change in the world.

Amanda Couch is an artist, curator, researcher and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at the University for the Creative Arts Farnham. Amanda Couch researches, reinterprets and reimagines histories, myth, ritual and embodied knowledge weaving the theoretical, personal, and material processes. With an obsession with her own embodied e Her work straddles the domains of performance, sculpture, photography, print and the book, food, the everyday, participation, and writing. Alongside Catherine Morland, she co-curated *The Commons: Re-enchanting the World* (2020-22) at THE MERL, University of Reading; performed online (2021) and in person (2016, 2019) at the Wellcome Library, London; performed and exhibited at the Royal College of Physicians, London, (2020). She had a solo show and performed at Ivy Arts Centre, University of Surrey (2018). Her work is in public and private collections, nationally and internationally and her writing is published internationally in journals, online, in books and in her artist book publications

Panel 3:
Queering/Quarrelling Gynaecology

4.00-5.30

The Double Life of The Pill: Embodying Ambiguous Experiences with Contraception
Katie Paterson (Guildhall School of Music & Drama)

The Pill, standing for all hormonal contraception, lives a double life. It is a technological miracle without which the liberation of women is inconceivable, an inalienable right of the modern woman; and it is a disciplining rod of creeping medicalisation that seeks to regulate the disruptive female body and bring it under male control at any cost. Heather Brook Adams and Tasha Dubriwny, amongst others, have highlighted the complex agential relationship of so-called empowering technology to women and challenged the presumption of gratitude for liberation bestowed through the prescription of body-altering hormones. Curiously absent from the literature is a lineage of performance addressing this highly embodied intervention directly. This research is a small contribution to that gap, analysing a performance piece I presented at the Barbican's Pit entitled First Bite. The piece synthesises creative analysis of feminist standpoint interviews conducted with six women of similar backgrounds, my own autobiography and my attempts to grasp basic endocrinology. Drawing on cabaret structures and verbatim methods, several elements are considered; the use of Vampire as metaphor through which to explore complex resonances across the interviews, the synthesis of experiences to foreground emotional intricacies without singling out an individual, the exploration of embodied pathography in a 'healthy' body. I argue that performance can be a powerful site for generatively absorbing polarised perspectives towards multiplicity, ambiguity and the validation of experience that sits beside the framework of what medicine chooses to value. If, within established scientific practices, it is only by reference to existing studies that our experiences can be validated, how else can we be heard? Embracing Aston's feminist unruliness within a queer, scavenging methodology, performance can work to honour the complexity of hormonetaking without succumbing to definitive claims, answering a feminist bioethicist call to 'multiple rather than unitary solutions' to gendered problems.

Katie Paterson is a theatremaker and researcher currently working on her PhD at Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Her research looks at the potential of performance to illuminate lived experience and validate embodied knowledge(s), specifically experiences of taking synthetic hormones like the contraceptive pill and hormone replacement therapy. Her queer feminist practice embraces chaos, scavenging and care as methodologies for change. She teaches contextual studies in contemporary performance at Guildhall and Mountview and is currently enjoying her third year of COVID-Cancelled-Performances. Amongst the chaos, her theatre work has snuck into the Barbican, Pleasance, Theatre503, Edinburgh Fringe, Maiden Speech and Waitress Festival. Her work includes solo show Minor Disruptions, exploring the queerness of childhood, Game Face, a gig-theatre collaboration about body image and beauty myths and various credits as an actor, singer, and producer

19th Century Gynaecology and the Construction of Racialized Gender
Laura Smith (University of California, Los Angeles)

This paper considers how performance can materialize the obfuscated histories behind the production of medical knowledge. In 2017, Black Youth Project 100's activist performances at the statue of 19th century physician J. Marion Sims made visible the racial violence enacted by the "father of gynecology." Using the bodies of enslaved black women as raw materials, Sims developed medical innovations to benefit his white female patients. Sims's statue monumentalizes his contributions to prolonging white life while erasing the black suffering used to sustain it. Black Youth Project 100's activist performance visually disrupts the monument's attempted erasure of Sims's experiments on enslaved women. Through the performers' presence, they mobilize the history of the denial of the black woman's interiority and situate it in direct relation to the construction of white womanhood and the reproduction of whiteness.

Drawing on C. Riley Snorton's *Black on Both Sides*, Kyla Schuller's *The Biopolitics of Feeling*, and 19th century medical archives, this paper asks: How is interiority denied to the black woman through the process of medical knowledge production? What is the role of interiority in racializing violence? Does the reproduction of whiteness depend on privileging the interiority of the white womb at the expense of the black womb? How does performance make visible these historical relations of power?

Laura Smith is a 2nd year PhD student at University of California, Los Angeles researching the relationship between dance, gender, race, disability and medicine in 19th century Europe. Her chapter on medical perception and Romantic Era ballet is forthcoming in *The Articulate Body: Dance and Science in the Long Nineteenth Century* (University Press of Florida). She is a recipient of the 2021 Selma Jeanne Cohen Award from the Dance Studies Association.

Reading from *Family Tree* (2021)

Mojisola Adebayo (Queen Mary, University of London)

It's a play, a performance, a ritual, about human farming, farming humans, soil and the soul, seeds and cells, selling cells in prison cells prizing open, dividing, multiplying, multi-million incisions, incarcerations, extractions and experimentations – woman-child-man, in the lab, on the slab, in the land, the plantation womb and bred'ren bred for bread, planting and planning escape from living-dead, plotting from the plot to the pot but for the dread of night doctors, organ raiders, head drillers, cigarette smoking cowboys, cops with hands in pockets and the Klu Klux Klan; it's about cancer and capital, capitalism as cancer, cervical carcinoma in chicken culture (and the culture of chicken), compost and re-composition, giving of veins given in vain, philosophizing the threshold of black pain, inhospitable hospitals, monitored monetary mortuaries, eugenic medical obscenities, Mississippi appendectomies and the bad blood between us at Tuskegee, not-to-mention sugar addiction affliction, disease dis-ease, fibroids, obesity, HIV, vitamin D-deficiency, genes in jeans and cotton fields, cotton buds, cotton sheets and the unremembered history of gynaecology, implements' implications, dissecting dissections, fertilizing fertility slash secret sterilizations, speculums, scalpels, swabs of women slaves, taking us right up to today, corona virus and giving-a-fuck-or-not about climate change. It's about shaking the plastic money tree and out-falling Covid-19 onto a world that cannot breathe without change and cannot breathe without trees, where a woman in some African heaven hears her grown son calling "Mama... Mama..."... and she floats down... like leaves to the ground... lifts his face from the dirt... and carries her baby home... no more suffocation, pollution, asphyxiation... but the right to cellular respiration. It's about the *original* 'extinction rebellion' from the 'wretched of the earth', ethics of the earth, risking the earth, dying of whiteness, dying to whiteness to witness: burial as a form of gardening. See three women come running loosening their plaits and shaking their Afros free scattering seeds to sew soul food to eat. It's about where life grows, where a woman breathes life into an inner floating soul, drinking in, sustained in the Orisha of women, sweet water and unlocked-down hairdressers. It's about finding a route home through the roots of the tree they made on your back, the tree you hung from, the tree of your lungs, the tree in your womb, a family tree. It's about nursing the nursery, curing creation, remedies and vaccinations against white supremacist racism. It's about birthing revolution, raising redemption, finding yourself in the forest of futurity, the promise of immortality and the matter of black lives. Featuring: Anarcha, Betsey and Lucy (the unremembered victim heroes of plantation gynaecology at the hands Dr Sims - pulled down from his plinth); starring: three Black NHS nurses – Ain, Bibi and Lyn, calling on the names of Doreen Lawrence and Fannie Lou Hamer, vibing with Beyoncé and bowing to the wisdom of Toni Morrison. There's a cameo by the Man from Marlboro and in the leading role, the everlasting Henrietta Lacks. Rest in peace! Rise in peace! Rise in Power!

Dr Mojisola Adebayo FRSL is a playwright, performer, producer, director, facilitator, Lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London and Research Fellow at Potsdam University. She has worked worldwide in theatre, TV, radio, community arts and education, for 30 years, from Antarctica to Zimbabwe. Her published / performed plays include *Moj of the Antarctic*, *Muhammad Ali and Me*, *48 Minutes for Palestine*, *I Stand Corrected*, *Wind / Rush Generation(s)*, *The Interrogation of Sandra Bland*, *Nothello* and *STARS*. Her latest play, *Family Tree*, won the 2021 Alfred Fagon Award.

Day 2

Thursday 16th June

Keynote 2

10.00-11.10

Embodied Knowledges – Performance-making as a Means of Redressing the Act of Being Vulnerabilised **Katharine Low (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London)**

Women's – especially women of colour – lived experiences of health are ignored and marginalised – forced onto the periphery of society's radar – not seen, not rated: overlooked. If we take the gendered experience of HIV as an example, 53% of the world's population of people living with HIV are women (UNAIDS 2021). In Sub-Saharan Africa, women and young girls make up 63% of those living with HIV (ibid). Similarly, gender-based violence and femicide are urgent public health challenges for South Africa (among many other nations). Yet, these statistics are barely attended to. This lack of acknowledgement and action both sets up a perception of vulnerability which serves to keep women in a particular state and mode of being, an enforced paralysis, and reinforces their existing vulnerability. In essence, through this disregard and lack of attention, they have been 'vulnerabilised' instead of being cast as agents in their own health narratives and experiences.

In this keynote, I discuss how this act of vulnerabilisation – of having your body vulnerabilised - is an attack and a disregard for the Other. Moreover, if the individual does assent to this vulnerabilisation – this constriction or proscribed paralysis – they are asked to demonstrate or perform their vulnerability in terms of their health concerns or pain in order to be accommodated or actually listened to.

While this remains deeply problematic and an untrue representation of women's lived experiences of health, as performance makers, by not challenging the idea of this vulnerabilisation or proscribed vulnerability, we are missing an opportunity to reach a broader understanding of health and empathy.

I will show how vulnerability has knowledge: it has expertise and choice and so can become useful for what it teaches us. I will draw on my experience of working co-collaboratively with two groups of women: the Women's group at Positively UK and the HEXlappies Collective in De Doorns, South Africa. When I consider these two groups of women I co-research with – one in rural South Africa, the other in London – both considering the gendered representations of health, either through gender-based violence or the experience of living well with HIV, what is clear is that they do not let their proscribed vulnerabilities and their rage at being overlooked lead to sickness (c.f. Ahmed's warning that "our rage becomes sickness" (2017: 255)). Quite the opposite: they make, they perform, they continue – quietly at times – and in doing so shift cultural representations of their lived experiences of health. In effect, their performance-making helps to make links, creates a sense of solidarity and empathy, and crucially disrupts perceptions of health vulnerabilities.

Ultimately, in this keynote I consider the role of performance in creating new and alternative modes of embodied knowledge production and I explore its potential for a better understanding of health and empathy.

Dr Katharine Low is Senior Lecturer in Applied Theatre and Community Performance at The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, University of London. She is a practitioner, academic and researcher working in the field of socially engaged theatre and sexual health. Her areas of research include feminist-led research, arts in health and theatre-making in urban settings, academia and motherhood, and the role of women in theatre. She is a Trustee, London Arts and Health and author of *Applied Theatre and Sexual Health Communication: Apertures of Possibility* (published with Palgrave in 2020) and co-editor of *Applied Theatre: Performing Health and Wellbeing* (published with Methuen Bloomsbury in 2017).

Panel 4:
Performances of Scrutiny

11.30-12.30

Performing Health and Gender Via Human Rights Scrutiny
Kate Seear and Sean Mulcahy (both La Trobe University)

Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognises that all people have a right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. Across the world, nation-states have different mechanisms for promoting this right to health. Australia is unique among Western nations in that it does not have a national bill of rights; in lieu of this, rights protections have proceeded in a piecemeal fashion, with states and territories and the federal parliament developing their own systems for protecting and fulfilling rights. In short, these systems involve parliaments 'scrutinising' proposed new laws for their compatibility with rights. These rights scrutiny processes are sometimes theorised as performative, in that they bring various material-discursive effects into being. Importantly, these material-discursive effects include the very problems and phenomena that law purports to be addressing. For instance, whilst problems such as family and sexualised violence are frequently said to pre-exist legislative practices designed to combat them, performative approaches instead draw our attention to the way these phenomena are made in and through legal approaches *themselves*. The legal process, as other scholars have pointed out (e.g. Peters 2008; Read 2015; Leiboff 2020), is itself a performance. The scrutiny process performs gender and health problems in particular ways and according to different audiences. Drawing on Judith Butler (2004) and Karen Zivi's (2019, 2012) work on human rights as shaping and constituting norms, rules, conventions, and worlds, as well as interviews (N=30) conducted with key stakeholders involved in rights scrutiny processes, we explore how these processes perform gender and health problems. Using a case-based approach (following Mol and Law 2002), we focus on three accounts of how scrutiny processes generate relations between alcohol, drugs, gender, bodies, and health and consider the deleterious effects of these performances on affected populations.

Dr Kate Seear is Associate Professor, Australian Research Council Future Fellow and Lead of the Gender, Law and Drugs (GLaD) Program at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Australia. Kate is the author of numerous books, articles and reports on alcohol, other drugs, addiction, health, the body and gender, from feminist science studies and performativity perspectives. She is also a multi-award winning podcaster and practising lawyer.

Dr Sean Mulcahy is a Research Officer and member of the GLaD Program at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Australia. Sean completed a joint PhD in the School of Law at the University of Warwick and the Centre for Theatre and Performance at Monash University, writes on law and performance, and has worked as a freelance actor, director, and theatre producer.

Panel 5:

Bodies of Excess

1.30-3.00

Baking Cake Daddy: Whipping Fat-phobia into Fat-positivity with a Sprinkling of Queer Subversive Fun

Ross Anderson-Doherty (actor, singer and theatre-maker based in Belfast), Jonathan Graffam (Melbourne-based dramaturg and performer) and Alyson Campbell (University of Melbourne)

This paper examines a pair of performance moments that are key to the making of *Cake Daddy*, a queer and fat-positive live performance work (Belfast, Melbourne, Sydney, 2018-19). The first moment: Belfast-based performer Ross Anderson-Doherty emerges onstage in a jockstrap and apron in a production about HIV and AIDS, titled *Tea (Cell) Dance* (dir. Campbell, Outburst, 2016). He senses shock and fatphobia in the audience's response to his naked fat body. This moment—and the unpacking of it—proved a catalyst for Anderson-Doherty to respond in the best way he knows: through performance and his own form of queer performance pedagogy.

The second moment: it is the final part of *Cake Daddy* and Anderson-Doherty is back in jockstrap and apron singing “Cake Daddy's Recipe (Fat is a Verb)” — a striking, powerful, stage-owning reimagining of the first image. He is essentially wearing the same costume (though now pink and gold and spectacular), but the impact, the environment and the audience response is completely transformed. This time the audience is primed for celebration of the fat body.

Through a Practice as Research methodology the authors, who are all members of the *Cake Daddy* creative team, trace the queer and “fat” dramaturgical choices within the creation and staging of this fat-positive and celebratory production. This includes the hybrid cabaret-theatre form of the production, its (at times) conversational/dialogic mode, the visibility and participation of audiences, the virtuosity of Anderson-Doherty's singing and hosting, the sharing of deeply personal material, the flaunting of fat/ness and fat sexuality onstage and the shared act of committing to a fat-positive community pledge: all of these, we assert, lead to a fat-queer utopian performative moment. Borrowing from queer theory's move to see queer as a verb, rather than a noun, Anderson-Doherty's co-option of fat as a *verb* has brought this forth: Anderson-Doherty “fattens” the space—and in the performance's final moments he teaches audiences to conjugate that verb together as a temporary community.

An analysis of *Cake Daddy* offers insight into the queer performance ecology in the North of Ireland, with particular focus on gendered and sexual citizenship and the fat body in performance.

Ross Anderson-Doherty (they/he) is an actor, singer and theatre-maker based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He holds an MA in Drama and Performance from Queen's University and is a Certified Master of Estil Voice Training. Ross is known for their queer cabaret residencies in the Cabaret Supper Club, Belfast, and The Maverick in Belfast's Queer Quarter.

Dr Alyson Campbell (she/her) is a theatre director and dramaturg whose work sits mainly within the LGBTQI+ community. She is Professor in Theatre at the Victorian College of the Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, University of Melbourne, specialising in gender and sexuality. She is co-editor of two collections: *Queer Dramaturgies* (Palgrave, 2015, with Stephen Farrier) and *Viral Dramaturgies: HIV and AIDS in Performance in the Twenty-First Century* (Palgrave, 2018, with Dirk Gindt). Her current projects include Feral Queer Camp, a radical pedagogy program, and a new performance work *HERD* on queerness, pandemics and social bonding.

Jonathan Graffam (he/him) is a Melbourne-based dramaturg and performer. He works as a Research Assistant and sessional Tutor at the VCA, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, University of Melbourne, where he recently completed a Master of Fine Arts (Theatre), examining the dramaturgical strategies used in staging fat-positive queer performance work. He continues this research in a PhD at Monash University titled, “Fat Dramaturgies: queer strategies and methodologies in staging fat activist performance.”

The Ante-Partum and Post-Partum Vulnerability of an Enceinte Being: Articulating Chaos, Quest and Identity Dissonance through Narrativization

Monisa Rajkumar and Dr. V. David Arputha Raj (both Bharathiar University, Coimbatore)

It is very likely that in a disturbed individual, chaos is experienced from the anxiety caused by a disease, gets compounded, further, by an agencylessness to control physical and mental health, and gets aggravated at an inability to practice naturality and come to terms with normality. The chaos inducing conditions that would be focussed upon here are 'Tokophobia' and 'Labour Dystocia,' (as put forward by the National Center for Biotechnology Information [NCBI]) which bring out the ante-partum and post-partum vulnerability of an enceinte being. So then, chaos caused as a result of the above mentioned conditions or due to any infirmity, cannot continue and must be overcome through the exercise of some kind of agency, which can even be the narrativist revisitation of chaos. So then, the narrativist revisitation of the trauma of chaos and the urge for restoration coupled with a resolved vision for life and a lookout for quest, can result in a physical and mental amelioration. In consequence, a disjuncture in the narrativised fabrication of the chaos, may pave way for an alienation with the existing identity, since narratives and identities are inextricably bound together, with one mirroring the other. The panacea for dealing with fragmented narratives can be got through the stabilisation techniques of progression from the past to the present and movement from the present into the future. When the narratives, thus, expand upon a comprehensible continuity the sifting identity moves towards a reconfigured one. In short, by giving a close reading of Amber Mcnaught's *The Anxiety Filled Diary of a Pregnant Hypochondriac: One Ectopic, One Miscarriage, One Last Chance*, a memoir on 'Tokophobia' and 'Labour Dystocia' – this article brings out how distressed individuals revamp their disintegrated identities by the narrativist (fragmented and stabilised) reconstruction of the subjectival anamnesis of the excruciating pain and focus on the sewing of disfigured temporal dimensions in narrativist presentation, along with the aligning of dissociated identities.

Ms. R. Monisa is a UGC - Junior Research Fellow, currently pursuing her Doctoral Programme in Health Humanities at the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. She hails from Tamil Nadu, India. Her thirst to explore the vital intersection between literature, medicine and healthcare, drives her to work on the role of literary pathographies and iconographic narratives in the alleviation of trauma in gender-related perturbations. She has presented papers at International Conferences and Seminars on the topics of eating disorders and pregnancy and childbirth. She is currently investigating the areas of Tokophobia, Labour Dystocia and Childbirth-induced Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and their corresponding literary contributions from victim authors to gauge their experiential realities.

Dr. V. David Arputha Raj is an Assistant Professor of English in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Bharathiar University, Tamil Nadu. He has a research experience of eight years with areas of specialisation in English Language Teaching, Research Methodology, Disability Studies, Cultural Studies, and Personality and Skill Development. He has authored four books and edited three books so far.

Framing Agnes: Reperforming Trans Medical History Records through Film
Amy Siegel (York University)

Queering the canon of writing and representation of trans bodies and access to health care, this presentation will examine the performance of historical trans medical records in the documentary film *Framing Agnes*. This presentation will allow for a nuanced understanding of *Framing Agnes* and the mechanisms through which self-determination in trans bodies, both in terms of representation and access to health care, are recurrently regulated and how trans filmmakers and performers are responding to and subverting that discourse.

Framing Agnes is a performative documentary film co-directed by trans filmmaker and academic Chase Joynt and sociologist Kristen Schilt. The filmmakers gained access to archival transcripts from the 1950s, of trans people trying to access sex reassignment surgery. The filmmakers worked with a diverse group of trans and nonbinary artists to reenact the historical transcripts, as well as engage with the archival material on a personal level. Infusing their own subjective contemporary experiences, the actors create a mediation into the hyper-medicalized trans historical record. By troubling the archival representation of trans bodies in the medical case files, in-community discussions are able to take place that focus on access, medical gatekeeping, the desire and pressure to medically transition, and informal networks of support and care. In so doing, the filmmakers' use of re-enactment and documentary intervention complicates and critiques the medical definition of sex and gender in the mid-century, exposing the roots of how policies for trans care were first established and how they continue to impact the trans community today.

This presentation will bring together voices and storylines from *Framing Agnes*, performance theory, queer theory and histories of psychology and medicine, to inform an examination of how access to trans health care is being enacted, represented, and subverted in the film, in the historical record, and in the contemporary media and political landscape.

Amy Siegel (they/them) is an artist, academic, educator, and organizer of artistic projects. Amy is currently the Creative Director of the ReFrame Film Festival, a social justice documentary film festival in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. Amy is also a doctoral candidate in Communication & Culture at York University. Amy's recent published book chapter 'Wradical Wrestling: What Happens When Women Run the Ring' appeared in Sharon Mazer, Heather Levi, Eero Laine and Nell Haynes (eds), *Professional Wrestling: Politics and Populism*, 2020, New York: Seagull Books. Amy's art practice spans film, performance and socially-engaged art.

Panel 6:
Visions of the Self

3.10-4.30

Theatre of the Selfie: Staging Ill Health in Visual Autopathographies
Claire Hampton (University of Wolverhampton)

Mobilising what photography and selfie scholar Tamar Tembec refers to as 'a politicised dramaturgy of the lived body' (2016, p.1), this paper will consider the complexity of living with (and beyond) serious illness. The analysis draws on autopathography, a branch of autobiography concerned with self-narrating the lived reality of illness and disease, to consider how selfie-taking, as an affective and performative practice, offers a tangible means of experiencing, living, owning, and communicating the diseased body.

The intention is to illustrate the critical and political value of self-representational images of illness and disease, alongside exposing the historicity of said criticality by drawing on a genealogy of painting, photography, and performance art. The paper considers self-portraits by Frida Kahlo, examples from Hannah Wilke's *Intra Venus* series (1991-93), and Karolyn Gehrig's #HospitalGlam selfie campaign on Instagram (2014 – present). Reading these through the lens of Marvin Carlson's performance ontology, 'consciousness of doubleness' (2018), the analysis questions how 'selfies of ill health' (Tembec 2016) might constitute a conscious corporeal doubling, a strategic wielding of theatricality, as a means of introspective self-witnessing, momentarily rendering the ephemeral, phenomenal experience of illness tangible and legible for the selfieing subject along with the spectator.

Employing a feminist new materialist lens, the discussion considers the agential entanglement of the ailing subject -body as a performance material, a conscious mimetic doubling of the subject, asserting the artificiality of the constructed pose as intrinsic to this 'performance', a pose which often points to a category of identity seemingly incongruent with illness. The images considered disrupt the familiarity of "feeling bad" for both performer and spectator, demonstrating the liminal potential of selfie-taking in the context of personal illness narratives.

References

Carlson, M. (2018) *Performance: a Critical Introduction*. 3rd edn. Oxon: Routledge. / Tembec, T. (2016) 'Selfies of Ill Health: Online Autopathographic Photography and the Dramaturgy of the Everyday', *Social Media and Society*, pp. 1–11.

Dr Claire Hampton recently completed a PhD at Brunel University London. Her research examines selfies through the lens of performance studies, specifically mobilising the concepts of dramaturgy, performativity, eventness, and theatricality, to consider the relationship between selfies and feminist new materialist politics of subjectivity. Her work employs an autoethnographic methodology to reflect on the performative and affective potential of selfie –taking as an embodied and authorial act of space-making and self-witnessing, particularly for female self-narrating subjects who are negotiating trauma and illness. She is a Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Performance at the University of Wolverhampton

Focusing Screen

Sarah Sudhoff (Cuban-American interdisciplinary artist based in Houston)

“Focusing Screen” reframes the objectified female figure through a series of performative black and white photographic self-portraits pictured with the new VieVision mirror designed specifically for women to explore their own bodies and serves as surrogate for the other. This new body of work reflects my ongoing interest in the female body, reproductive health, access to care, and our interactions with medical devices. The device – and in turn, the photographs – aim to facilitate a moment to reclaim familiar knowledge of the most intimate parts of the human anatomy, anatomy that is more mysterious to oneself than it is to others, be they lovers or doctors.

In 2006, I documented my first private performance for the camera, titled “Self Exam”. In my gynecologist’s office, following numerous consecutive abnormal pap smears and a LEEP -- a surgical procedure to remove cancerous tissue from my cervix caused by HPV -- I used a handheld mirror to guide my hand to perform a self-pap smear and collect tissue samples from my cervix.

Over the last fifteen years, attention to my health and my body have come in and out of focus as the subject of my art. As recently as 2020, my HPV returned, and prompted me to undergo two colposcopies to gauge the severity of the infection. As a divorced, single mother of two children, I have encountered financial challenges in accessing healthcare, relying primarily on Medicaid for care. As a stark reminder of this, in 2021, in the midst of global pandemic, the Texas legislature chose to vote, ending women’s right to choose. The photographs and performance aim to serve as a gentle reminder of the strange ways in which we, others, and even disembodied institutions like the state and the medical establishment treat and regulate the most intimate parts of women’s bodies.

Sarah Sudhoff is a Cuban-American interdisciplinary artist based in Houston, Texas. whose work interweaves themes of gender, science, and personal experience. Sudhoff’s works can be categorized into these three areas of concern: Ethics of Care, Social Practice, and the Visualization of Data. By using creative practice as a mediator between subjective and objective experiences, her work engages in conversations that address bodies and communities as shared and yet, ultimately, distinct. Sudhoff’s most recent performances produced during the pandemic, “El Recuerdo,” “60 Pounds of Pressure,” “Will You Hug Me Forever,” “Siloed,” and “Focusing Screen” explore inherited memories, the anxiety of isolation, survivorship, familial relationships, and the body as data and material. All feature the female figure as a unifying form. Sudhoff’s recent exhibitions and performances include; Ivester Contemporary, ICOSA Collective, Collar Works, Houston Health Museum, Nancy Littlejohn Fine Art, Blaffer Art Museum, The DoSeum, Filter Photo, grayDuck Gallery, and the Colorado Photographic Arts Center.

Panel 7:
Bloody Embodiments

5.00-6.30

Dangerous Desire and the Performance of Blood in Julia Ducournau's *Raw* and *Titane*
Camille Intson (University of Toronto, St George)

This presentation provides a close reading of the performance of blood within Julia Ducournau's postmodern body horror films *Raw* (2016) and the Palme D'Or-winning *Titane* (2021). By interpreting Ducournau's visual and symbolic autership through Sara Ahmed's theorization of a "queer phenomenology", the issue of gendered excess within genre film, and a transdisciplinary analysis of constructing meaning through corporeal sense, it will explore the viewer's orientation towards the representation of blood as a simultaneous object of horror and desire with complex, competing carnal affects. Through the visual language of blood and violence, this essay essays that these films perform a subversion of cisheteropatriarchal psychoanalytic gaze within contemporary cinema, instead adopting a postmodern gaze (Massumi 2002, Shaviro 1993) with queer-feminist sensibility (Sobchack 2004).

Ahmed's "queer phenomenology" takes up the subject of orientation by redirecting our attention towards deviant object-subjects. Following Merleau-Ponty's concept of "queer moments" of disorientation and reorientation, this paper reads Ducournau's surreal interventions into the body horror genre as transforming moments of excess horror into something other: joy, ecstasy, or the fulfillment of desire. Ducournau's films consider body horror's value in thinking through performances of excess and what Linda Williams dubs the "sensational" (1991). Whereas female subjects are often dramatized as embodiments of excess, particularly through phenomena such as bodily hysteria, emotion, and menstruation, Ducournau's films reclaim this cis-heteropatriarchal trope by centring the performance of blood and violence in her female protagonist's quests for desire. By conflating corporeal reactions of horror and desire, Ducournau's genre films turn what is deemed "excess" on its head, exposing their gendered construction through the performance of blood as an expression of queer-feminist desire.

Camille Intson (she/her) is an award-winning Esto-Canadian performance and media artist, writer, musician, and academic researcher. As a PhD student within the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information, her research areas include: queer-feminist and anticolonial STS, collaborative and community-based practices of making and repair, design justice, practice-led artistic research, and the integration of emerging (digital, AI) technologies into creative work. As an emerging scholar, Camille has published with the *International Journal of Performance Art and Digital Media*, *Journal for Intermedia and Literary Crossings*, *TDR: The Drama Review*, and *Canadian Theatre Review*. Her academic research comes generously funded by a SSHRC Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship - Doctoral (CGS-D) Award. Camille currently resides in Tkaronto (Toronto) and can be found everywhere on the internet at @thecamiliad, or at camilleintson.com.

28 Days Greater: Embodying Acts of Unhiding
Carolyn Defrin (artist and researcher based in the UK)

After 27 years of having a period, I have only recently recognised it as empowering. Pope's *Wild Power* (2017) introduced me to the menstrual cycle as a secret code for reframing weaknesses as strengths. In response, I created *28 Days Greater* - a collection of 28 short films combining moving image, poetry and music that were informed by each day of my own cycle and conversations with 28 people across age and gender. Premiering at Camden People's Theatre's 'Calm Down Dear' festival of feminism (2021), I now view this performative embodiment of the menstrual cycle less as a formula for well-being and more as an unfolding entanglement of emotional landscapes comprising and revealing nuances of gender and health. In this paper, I will present aspects of *28 Days Greater*, showing some of the films and analysing them in the context of Barad and Haraway's embrace of the temporary meaning making between humans and 'more than human worlds.' With attention to the ways in which expressive interconnections between the body and nature reflect Barad's 'intra-active' world as an "ongoing reconfiguring ... of meanings, and patterns of marks on bodies" (2002: 817), I will also examine Puig de la Bellacasa's related 'ethics of care.' In her critique of systemic care as often unsupported, I will explore how artistic renderings of the menstrual cycle can both envision and enact self-care- which in the context of government subsidised healthcare, contributes critically to the need for "some form of care going on somewhere... for living to be possible" (2017: 5).

References:

- Barad, K. (2003) Posthumanist Performativity: Toward An Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28 (3), pp. 801-831
- Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2017) *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Pope, A. (2017) *Wild Power: Discover the Magic of Your Menstrual Cycle and Awaken the Feminine Path to Power*. London: Hay House.

Dr Carolyn Defrin is an artist and researcher currently focused on subject matter related to intergenerational connection, feminism, nature, care and migration. Originally from the United States, based in the United Kingdom, she works across film, installation and theatre practices. This work has been commissioned and/or presented by Dulwich Picture Gallery, Tessa Jowell Health Centre, Camden People's Theatre, LADA, performing.borders, Ovalhouse, The Albany, The Yard, the Barbican, Borough Road Gallery and Westfield Shopping Centre. Recent research includes *Project Finding Home* - a 3 year cross-continental project with Canadian and Australian partners exploring the impact of hostile migrant policy on migrant artists. She holds an MA in performance and design from Central Saint Martins and a Ph.D. from London South Bank University, which examined artistic strategies for cocreating culture and policy. She is the co-founder of Kissing Project (a multimedia platform for stories and experiences that celebrates diverse humanity).

**Performing Endometriosis, a Rehearsed Reading Directed by Magdalena Mosteanu
Verónica Rodríguez**

Performing Endometriosis is a short theatre piece by Verónica Rodríguez presented at the “Material Selves: Gender, Health and Performance” Symposium as a rehearsed reading (directed by Magdalena Mosteanu). *Performing Endometriosis* started life because, having received a diagnosis of stage 4 endometriosis, I felt the need to write about and understand my illness and body. But the beginning was not easy. I was sick, terrified and depressed, and yet: 1) I started noticing that listening to friends talk about it was helpful; 2) I sensed that I also wanted to communicate about it to both come to terms with it and help others; and 3) I began being more outspoken and doing research on the illness. Leaving aside the 5% of cases where illness seems a genetic given, illness is the result of a process of un-hearing to the body’s demands. Whilst receiving numerous treatments and therapies, the shape listening took for me was to start engaging creatively with endometriosis. That is how I started writing a creative writing piece for the *Routledge Companion to Audiences and the Performing Arts* (2022) that thinks at the intersection of endometriosis and spectatorship. In the process of edition of that publication, I turned the piece into a performance lecture, which I delivered in a Conference entitled “Representing Women’s Health” (University of Glasgow, June 2020). Beata Gubacsi reflected on my piece as follows: “in a creative, autobiographical and performative presentation “Representing Endometriosis: Thoughts on My Sick Body and Spectatorship” Veronica Rodriguez offered glimpses into her experience living with endometriosis. The illness is represented not just as its medical definition but through the notion of spectatorship which consists of the way the sick body is seen in the operating room to be deconstructed into specimen, and the very effect of this representation and self/spectatorship on the lived experience” (2020). Since the first time I shared this piece publicly and in the many subsequent workshops on women’s health I have facilitated, people very often use the adjectives: “beautiful”, “poetic”, “emotional” and “visceral”. Like postponing healing, the time of postponing performance has come to an end. In this solo performance, that I like to call “sola”, I will face my body in front of you. Through glimpses, I will take you through my body’s endo process in a way that hopefully will not afford any further world un-sensing. I have bled. I have bled too much, in too many places, but the good thing is that I have grown a new skin. Let’s go into a dark place together; only momentarily, as there shall be lots and lots of light.

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