

SEXDEM, LEGS & Feminist Readings present  
International conference

# Democracies in FLUX

LGBTI+ struggles,  
feminist politics,  
and anti-gender  
contestations

June 29-30, 2023

Campus Condorcet, Paris Region

Bat. Recherche Nord

Ⓜ 12 - Front Populaire

# Thursday 29

9:30 Morning coffee

9:50-10:00 Welcome and practical information  
salle 0.004

10:00-11:15 *Keynote 1*  
salle 0.004  
**Phillip Ayoub:** The Double-Helix Entanglements of Transnational Advocacy: Moral Conservative Resistance to SOGIE Rights.

11:30-13.00 *Parallel sessions*  
salle 0.004  
**Panel 1: Trans\* Issues** - chaired by Lara Cox  
**Andy Hills:** Trans-exclusive, Transnational: Gender-critical Feminism and the Overstatement of Harm in the UK and Germany.  
**Anambar Aditya Chaudhury:** Evolution of the Trans-MtF-community in India: From mandatory Hijra community living and profession to independent Trans-MtF.  
**Dean Leetal:** On transphobia and disability arguments.

salle 0.006 **Workshop 1 With Clara Maillé**  
**Discussion: Violence - a Tool for Feminist Struggles?**

13.00-14.00 Lunch  
canteen

14:00-16:00 *Parallel sessions*  
salle 0.004  
**Panel 2: Feminist struggles** - chaired by Myra el Mir  
**Vasiliki Polykarpou:** Social Movements, Knowledge and Power: Dismantling the Master's House.  
**Camille Riou:** French institutional feminism post-#Me-Too in the light of abolitionist feminism.  
**Pauline Dupret:** What Does Emancipation Mean? The Struggle over Sexual Emancipation in the Belgian Francophone Sex Work/Prostitution Debate.

salle 0.006 **Panel 3: Paradoxical politics of sexuality**  
- chaired by Toni R. Juncosa  
**Dusica Ristivojevic:** Geopolitics of Sexuality in Serbia  
**Eleanor Tiplady Higgs:** Some implications of a Christian identity: Homonationalism and LGBTQ inclusion in World YWCA discourses.  
**Juliette Brillet:** The paradoxical sexual politics of France and Germany's Anti-Abortion Movement: Between "Pro-Life-Feminism" and Traditional Motherhood.  
**Aine Bennett:** Leaking out of homonationalism: bisexuality, asylum and border abolition.

16:00-16:15 Coffee break

16:15-17:30 **Roundtable: Illiberal and right-wing challenges to sexual democracy.**  
salle 0.004  
**Julian Honkasalo, Katja Kahlina, & Olga Sasunkevich**  
moderator Riikka Taavetti.

18:00 **Film screening: No Democracy Here** (25 mn)  
Auditorium de l'Humathèque  
a film by **Liad Hussein Kantorowicz**, followed by a discussion with the director - chaired by Tal Dor.

# Friday 30

9:30 Morning coffee

10.00-12.00 *Parallel sessions*  
salle 0.004  
**Panel 4: Queer and LGBTI+ politics** - chaired by Diego Paz

**Benjamin Moron-Puech & Marion Pollaert:** "Democratic strategic litigation" and defence of LGBTI+ rights.

**Athina Mara:** Democracy for all? Pink families perceptions about (in)equality and ongoing revendications in Greece.

**Edma Ajanovic & Michael Hunklinger:** Queering public space - political graffiti and street art in Vienna.

**Toni R. Juncosa:** Queering the "Nation-as-Family" Metaphor in Danez Smith's HIV Poetry.

salle 0.006 **Panel 5: Sexed citizenship, democracy and the struggle for rights** - chaired by Katja Kahlina  
**Luísa Winter Pereira:** The few and the best of the sexual contract. Fantasy of cisheterosexual binarism vs. bodily democracy as an anti-oligarchic principle.  
**Rafael Vázquez-García:** Some notes for a Queer Theory of Democratic Citizenship.  
**Blanca Rodríguez Ruiz:** Democracy, gender self-determination and the non-binary challenge: federalist lessons.  
**Assumpta Sabuco Cantó:** Trans-visibility and Sexual Politics: Temporary passages through popular representations in Spain.

12.00-13.00 Lunch  
canteen

13.00-13.20 **To Raise: a Poetry Reading** by **Toni R. Juncosa & Lily Robert-Foley**  
salle 0.004

13.20-14.45 *Keynote 2*  
salle 0.004  
**Lenka Vráblíková & Elspeth Mitchell:** What Myco-Futures? Mycorrhizal encounters against racist cis-heteropatriarchy.

14:45-15:00 Coffee break

15.00-17.00 **Workshop 2**  
salle 0.004  
**Feminist Readings: Exercise in Democracy**

17.00 Cocktail

## Keynote speakers:

**Phillip M. Ayoub** is Professor of International Relations in the Department of Political Science at University College London. He is the author of *When States Come Out: Europe's Sexual Minorities and the Politics of Visibility* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) and his articles have appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Comparative Political Studies*, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, the *European Journal of International Relations*, *Mobilization*, the *European Political Science Review*, the *Journal of Human Rights*, *Social Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and *Social Movement Studies*, among others. Further information can be found under: [www.phillipayoub.com](http://www.phillipayoub.com)

**Lenka Vráblíková** is a lecturer in Visual Cultures and a member of Critical Ecologies Research Stream at Goldsmiths, University of London (UK). She is also a member of Les [Woods] – Community for Cultivation, Theory and Art (Czech Republic) and a co-founding member of Feminist Readings Network. Lenka's work lies at the intersection of visual culture studies with transnational feminisms, political ecology, feminist deconstruction, and critical university studies. Her current research focuses on the cultural politics of the body, gender in art education, and feminist visual ethnomycology that she has been developing in collaboration with Elspeth Mitchell since 2017.

**Elspeth Mitchell** is the Griselda Pollock Legacy Lecturer at the University of Leeds (UK). Her work explores practices and theories of feminism and visual culture. She is a co-founder of Feminist Readings Network and a committee member of the Mid-Yorkshire Fungus Group. With Lenka Vráblíková, she is engaged in a project exploring feminist ethnomycology and the visual politics of fungi. Her other research focuses on theories of the girl and the moving image, feminist digital humanities and histories of feminism and visual art in the UK & Ireland.

## Roundtable participants:

**Julian Honkasalo**, docent in gender studies, University of Helsinki  
**Katja Kahlina**, Project leader of *Sexuality and Democracy: Exploring the links and re-thinking the concepts for feminist politics (SEX-DEM)*, University of Helsinki

**Volha/ Olga Sasunkevich**, Associate professor in gender studies, scientific coordinator for research school *The future of democracy: cultural analyses of illiberal populism in times of crises*, University of Gothenburg

**Riikka Taavetti**, University Lecturer in Gender Studies, University of Turku

## Panel 1: Trans\* Issues

**Andy Hills:** *Trans-exclusive, Transnational: Gender-critical Feminism and the Overstatement of Harm in the UK and Germany*

Abstract: Trans-exclusionary, gender-critical (GC) feminist attitudes have recently been mainstreamed in UK political discourse as a reaction to calls to simplify the process of legal gender recognition from 2015 onwards. Since 2021, the public profile of a similarly reactionary GC movement has grown in Germany, coinciding with the current centre-left coalition government's various trans-positive legal interventions. This environment creates a compelling opportunity to explore meaningful convergences of each movement's strategies through transnational comparison.

Examining the work of prominent GC thinkers in each national context, for example Kathleen Stock and Alice Schwarzer, it becomes clear that GC argumentation pushes for a biologicistic turn in feminist thought, which is itself viewed as a return to 'realism'. Exchanging this rhetoric transnationally strengthens and exaggerates pre-existing narratives about the potential harm to women that may result from measures for trans-inclusion.

Through an examination of this transnational exchange, the intention of this paper is to critique GC argumentation and examine how the potential harms of trans-inclusive policies become overstated. This critique will be mediated through a transfeminist understanding of sex and gender wherein the mutual dependency of women's and trans liberation is emphasised. Since GC movements have developed outsized media and political influence in both the UK and Germany, this work has become increasingly vital given the devastating material impact that GC rhetoric has on the democratic uptake and implementation of trans-inclusive policies.

**Anambar Aditya Chaudhury:** *Evolution of the Trans-MtF-community in India: From mandatory Hijra community living and profession to independent Trans-MtF*

Abstract: When I first started to work on my PhD, like every other doctoral student, I did not have any slightest inkling that writing about human experiences is indeed not an easy task. The constant fight to avoid my own interpretation, is indeed an incessant task. Finally, the changes in overall identity of Hijra and MtF Trans in Kolkata has put me into a complex yet very fascinating position to see and experience the importance of introspection to understand one's own self. Amrita, Joyita, Shintu, Debi or Nandini or Chandni Ma etc. everyone

has either once joined the Hijra community or never wished to join it. Reasons are indeed manifold, but the most important one is that their intention to take the risk of walking alone without taking any security from any community based on gender identity or not to join traditional professions (dancing, prostitution or to entertain people) for MtF Trans-individuals, i.e Hijra.

My journey to write my thesis, has indeed changed my personal perspective on seeing the Hijra community. For me, it's not just community or identity, not just based on a community of Trans- MtF individuals, but it is also an identity which is based on profession. Hijra's the identity also has its unique professional identification.

Many respondents who have either left the Hijra community or decided not to join, clearly expressed their decision of leaving/not joining the Hijra community is purely based on professions. They did not wish to do "hijra-giri".

Undoubtedly, the verdict of the supreme court of 2014 and eventually coming out of narratives of successful Trans-MtF like first college Principal or first lawyer, judge, school teacher, police constable or even taxi driver, paved the way for MtF individuals to select between two identities. This discussion of choice has indeed come out in narratives of many respondents.

This paper will focus on the evolution of diversified Trans-MtF identities in India, which was indeed only suffocated within only the Hijra identity.

#### **Dean Leetal:** *On transphobia and disability arguments*

Abstract: As of early 2023, JK Rowling has mocked trans inclusive language; hinted that trans people are sexual predators; repeatedly asserted that trans women are men; wished her fans a happy TERF-mass; compared boycotting her products for transphobia to setting one's dog on fire; and more recently, compared trans people to Pure-bloods, her Nazi equivalent. Rowling has also funded a sexual assault survivor center, that officially doesn't allow trans people entrance, let alone help. Still, Rowling maintains that she is not transphobic, and that she supports trans people. Rowling explains that her center is necessary to help cisgender women who can't help being transphobic – and upon seeing a trans women may be triggered and unable to receive help. This, Rowling explains, justifies opening an entire center that does not allow trans people. However, if examined from a disability studies perspective – this claim is exploitative. As a disabled, trans rape survivor, who is very much in need of content warnings to function, I recognize Rowling's claim, and it not a good one. Careful reading of the center's materials shows that the center promotes a liberal approach, universalizing white, non disabled, straight needs. The center has no programs or even basic accommodations for disabled people – it is not even wheelchair accessible. This is not care for disabled people's needs, it is exploitation of accessibility to promote transphobia. This is a common way of setting two marginalized groups against one another and getting away with harming both. This paper demonstrates the method, and concludes that it is particularly harmful and dangerous to those who are part of both groups.

### **Discussion: Violence - a Tool for Feminist Struggles?**

**Clara Maillé** In recent years, many countries in the world have been the scene of confrontations between a part of the population and the armed forces of police or military. At the same time, feminist move-

ments are developing and becoming more and more visible. They do not escape this trend of violent confrontations. From the Bloque Negro in Mexico to the Iranian women fighting against the violation of their rights, feminists are also in the front line. When the only response of the established powers to feminist demands is intense and disproportionate repression, is this not a sign of failing democracies? Far from being the "inadmissible" tool condemned by the governments, couldn't violence be seen as a questioning of the gendered order which imposes pacifism and self-sacrifice to women? Could violence be seen as a search for alternatives, rather than a problem? For this workshop, I propose we engage in collective reflection on the use of force in social and in particular feminist struggles, starting from a concrete example: the images of March 8, 2023 in Mexico City. We will watch a short video, after which I will facilitate a collective discussion on the subject.

### **Panel 2: Feminist struggles**

#### **Vasiliki Polykarpou:** *"Social Movements, Knowledge and Power: Dismantling the Master's House"*

Abstract: Already in the early 80s Audre Lorde taught us that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (1984). Her words can introduce us to the intense and controversial discussion concerning the relation between social movements, knowledge and power. Traditionally there is a strong tension that has been recorded between the social movements and the academic institutions, while both of them are in their own way knowledge producers (Hirai 2015, Schroering 2019). Critical academic research produces critique towards the political authority and at the same time can offer tools of reflection for the social movements. A typical example of the critique that has been introduced by academic scholars towards the queer and feminist movements are the notions of femonationalism and homonationalism (Farris 2017, Puar 2007), two terms that became tools for critical scholars. Social movements can bend the boundaries of knowledge and radicalize the academic institutions, the policy making processes and our understanding of the world itself. I will try here to observe the social movements as social producers drawing on the contemporary queer feminist movements in Greece. Since 2015 the queer feminist movements in Greece have been emerged in a much more massive and structured way in comparison with the past and have played a crucial role for the shaping of the political agenda and social atmosphere in the country. Through the narratives of my interlocutors I will try to describe the strong connection between the embodied knowledge of the activists and the political reality (Ellingson 2008, Rosaldo 1984).

#### **Camille Riou:** *French institutional feminism post-#MeToo in the light of abolitionist feminism*

Abstract: In France, following the #MeToo and #Balancetonporc movements, the fight against gendered violence was declared a Great National Cause on 25 November 2017 and a law against gender-based and sexual violence was adopted on 03 August 2018. The drafting of this law gave rise to parliamentary debates that I will examine in my intervention, using the critical analyses developed by abolitionist feminism (penal abolitionism), heir or derivation of black feminism (Davis, 2003, 2005, Davis et al., 2022, Kaba, 2021; Ricordeau, 2019;

Wang, 2018, etc.). I will analyse how a political consensus on a punitive feminism (Pitch, 2017) is established and not questioned during these discussions, despite the dissensions between the different political parties. The recourse to the criminalisation of sexist acts remains an implicit part of the debates and controversies. Feminist abolitionist theory allows us to decentralise from margin to center (hooks, 1984) in order to analyse the parliamentary debates from an intersectional perspective by revealing the unspoken and underlying gender, race and class dynamics. In the same dynamic as the unveiling operated by Sara Farris and her concept of femonationalism (2017), I wish to analyse how institutional feminism serves as a justification and support for the intensification of a security discourse and legislation (Pitch, 2022) and how the logics of institutionalisation of post-#Me-Too feminism still seem to go hand in hand with that of penal populism (Pratt, 2007; Salas, 2010). Digital feminist movements thus do not seem to be able to challenge the securitarianist orientations taken by different governments and legislatures since the 2000s.

**Pauline Dupret:** *What Does Emancipation Mean? The Struggle over Sexual Emancipation in the Belgian Francophone Sex Work/Prostitution Debate*

Abstract: This study aims to analyze how different understandings of sexual emancipation and democracy structure the socio-political debate about prostitution/sex work. Interestingly enough, we find within this debate a competition between two groups: very roughly, feminist institutions and associations fighting against human trafficking versus 'TDS' [travailleur-euses du sexe] and queer associations. Both share a progressive, or in other words a 'liberal/democratic' horizon (versus a more conservative and value-loaded one), yet they disagree strongly on the political measures they support. That is, they support different visions of the kind of policy a democratic society/individuals should promote on the basis of democratic values regarding sex work/prostitution. In order to explore how these two groups understand and articulate sexuality and democracy, I will analyze some data from my current PhD research in discourse analysis. It will involve typical discourses from both sides of the debate and allow me to show that these two groups support divergent visions of what freedom means (procedural/formal versus substantial), especially when it comes to sexuality.

### Panel 3: Paradoxical politics of sexuality

**Dusica Ristivojevic:** *Geopolitics of Sexuality in Serbia*

Abstract: Serbia has been in the process of EU accession since 2012 when it obtained the EU candidate status. The EU candidacy simultaneously brought a wide range of financial benefits to the country through access to EU accession funds, but have at the same time imposed a set of economic, political and sociolegal requirements through which Serbia was expected to become more deeply incorporated into transnational financial and socio-political globalising processes. At the same time, with invoking cultural and religious commonalities, Serbia has been fostering close and warm ties with Russia, culminating in Serbia's governing regime persistently resisting the pressure of the EU and the US diplomats to bring sanctions to Russian federation because of its military interventions in Ukraine. This paper will focus on the political debates in Serbia in the last

decade and explore the ways in which main political actors have defined and interlocked sexual politics with geopolitics in their public discussions and activities. In doing so, the paper will trace and analyse the discursive dynamics through which sexuality started to function as a discursive trope for creating, negotiating, and affirming geopolitical alignments of all relevant actors in the political life of the country.

**Eleanor Tiplady Higgs:** *Some implications of a Christian identity: Homonationalism and LBTQ inclusion in World YWCA discourses*

Abstract: In this paper, I consider the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) and its central legislative body, the quadrennial World Council meeting, through the critical lens of "homonationalism" (Puar 2013). Doing so allows an analysis of how Christian identity, "diversity", and queerphobia were/are connected within the transnational YWCA movement, focusing on an eight-year period from 2011 to 2019. The YWCA is a foundationally Protestant Christian women's movement established in Victorian England, and now active in more than 100 countries around the world (testament to its deep roots in the British Empire). The World YWCA, the umbrella organisation that governs the transnational movement, has become a gender equality NGO in the international development industry, but remains a membership organisation with a democratic structure of elected representatives. At World Council 2019, YWCA Netherlands proposed a pair of amendments to the World YWCA Constitution, intended to legitimise and encourage the "inclusion" of non-Christian women. At the same meeting, a workshop on LGBTQIA+ inclusion-claimed to be a first for the World YWCA-sought to address Christian queerphobia. The discourse initiated by each of these events positioned inclusion, i.e. LGBTQ-tolerance and plural European secularism, against exclusion, i.e. homophobia and staunch Christianity. I apply the notion of the "racialisation of religion" to show how racialisation, "race", and "religion" are fundamentally connected (Nye 2018). I argue that attitudes towards non-normative sexualities within the World YWCA are critical for understanding the racialisation of religion and the movement's definition of, and claims to, a "Christian" identity.

**Juliette Brillet:** *The paradoxical sexual politics of France and Germany's Anti-Abortion Movement: Between "Pro-Life-Feminism" and Traditional Motherhood*

**Aine Bennett:** *Leaking out of homonationalism: bisexuality, asylum and border abolition*

Abstract: Asylum provision on the basis of sexuality and gender identity (re)produces orders of perceived deservingness between individuals and racialised orders between states. In so doing, it upholds the violence of bordering regimes. Bisexuality, however, appears to trouble the categorisation of people seeking asylum into a position along these orders. Claimants on the basis of bisexuality are often persecuted as too queer in their countries of origin, but are not read as queer enough in receiving states to be granted international protection. While this has material consequences for bisexual+ claimants, in this paper I do not advocate the pursuit of greater state recognition for bisexual+ people. Rather, this tension provides a standpoint from which to examine the exclusionary processes of all borders and potential avenues for dismantling such structures.

This paper makes a theoretical contribution by setting out a frame-

work for understanding the ordering and filtering processes of LGBTQ+ asylum. This supports the mobilisation of bisexuality's leaking out of such processes towards border abolition. I draw on theories of racial capitalism and critical border studies to understand the functioning of asylum systems and bring these together with the thinking of gay liberationists, queer theorists and (border) abolitionist organisers to propose challenges to such systems. I suggest that the experiences of bisexual+ people seeking asylum can help to inform non-reformist reforms, identify solidarities, and expose the homonationalist fallacy of global north states saving the oppressed queers of the global south through asylum.

#### Panel 4: Queer and LGBTI+ politics

**Benjamin Moron-Puech & Marion Pollaert:** *“Democratic strategic litigation” and defence of LGBTI+ rights*

Abstract: Sexual, sexed and gendered minority status in society makes it difficult to effectively advance the rights of these people in a representative democracy. This difficulty is further compounded by the way political institutions operate, to the point that the recent better representation of sexual, sexed and gendered minorities often seems to be reduced to a quasi symbolic victory. This paper aims to question the possibility that strategic litigation brings about real social and political changes and benefits sexual, sexed and gendered minorities.

The first difficulty is that strategic litigation has been used and is effectively used by conservative groups to block the progress of LGBTI+ rights. And yet, strategic litigation has proven in some occasion that we will look at, to be a coherent response to the minority position of LGBTI+ individuals and groups and thus be an auxiliary to traditional democratic institutions. The judicial sphere allows personal rights to be defended in a fairer manner than in the political arena or in the Kafkaesque paths of administration, where these rights are barely represented. Consequently, the only possibility for certain minorities to take part in the process of decision-making is through a lawsuit, whether due to lack of support in the general population, or their inability to form an influential lobby.

Under what conditions can the judge, through strategic litigation, play a role in ensuring the best implementation of LGBTI rights? The claim of equality at the base of democracy finds here an alternative means of realisation to those of deliberative democracy or the aporias of democratic representation.

**Athina Mara:** *Democracy for all? Pink families perceptions about (in) equality and ongoing revendications in Greece*

Abstract: Within the broadened European context, the socio-legal rights of pink families, are a main objective of the LGBTI+ human and civil rights, under the standard obligations of the EU Member States to respect. The European Convention of Human Rights Family for example, protects life, marriage, and gender equality. Nevertheless, despite EU treaties for equality, pink families often experience socio-legal discrimination in the European societies. In this paper, I will examine the case-study of Greece, a country-nation that holds strong values about sexuality and gender.

This study questions whether the exclusion of same-sex families from the current Greek policy framework of family and kinship, cor-

responds to opinions and the experiences of same-sex families of (in) equality. The existing policy framework stands as a starting point, and as laws are not enough to determine whether a society has actually integrated and/or accepted pink families, semi-structured interviews provide more in-depth information. The impact of policy framework in the lives of pink families will be explored, through the critical discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews with gay and lesbian parents.

The assumption that parenting is heterosexual originates from the ideological foundation of the heterosexual nuclear family and can lead to discrimination against non-traditional same-sex families (Berkowitz, 2007). It is considered “natural” for heterosexual couples and individuals to be able to have a family, but not for homosexuals. In this way, gays and lesbians are destined to live a life of solitude and experience future loneliness because society has excluded them as capable parents. Since kinship is tied to procreation, in the majority opinion, pink families cannot be sexually productive and are set apart from the rest of humanity because they chose to not to accept heteronormativity (Weston, 1991).

As emerged in most interviews conducted with gay parents, the contribution of a combined intervention is necessary to achieve societal change and transformation in norms and social acceptance. That is, a socio-political plan focusing on upgrading the educational system and to provide inclusive tools to educate (from an early age) the society as a whole. The social training/education is represented as potentially capable of giving visibility to unseen, unconsciously un-lived forms of kinship and living. The necessity to reconcile the legislation with the sociological change in defining family and recognitions of family formations beyond the marital heterosexual relationship, takes on using law as an educational tool for the society to familiarize itself with non-stereotypical family forms. In line with the teachings of classical sociological theory, change is inevitable, since it is inevitable that societies change over time, albeit at different and varying rates. The issue here is not whether or when change will come, but what quality change will have, and how the Greek welfare state will choose to frame such change.

**Edma Ajanovic & Michael Hunklinger:** *Queering public space – political graffiti and street art in Vienna*

Abstract: In the past years, more and more images, posters, text, stickers and paintings addressing queer-political issues (e.g. queer visibility, LGBTIQ\* rights and homophobia) as well as other issues concerning gender identity and equality (e.g. binary) appeared in Vienna. Against this background, this paper looks at Street Art as an ‘unconventional’ form of queer-political participation in Austria and therefore contributes to the field of political participation research as well as empirical Queer Studies. We analyze political imaginaries and their discourses, by looking into street art and graffiti and understand it as interventions into hegemonic spaces and discourses (Chaffee 1993, Hanauer 2004, Jordan 2002).

Grffiti has been a form of political participation for decades, if not for centuries (Olteanu 2013). Moreover, it has been a vital part of the LG(BTIQ\*) movement and LGBTIQ\* citizens have used it to (re)claim public space. However, there are only few studies that examine graffiti as a mean of political participation and even fewer focusing on LGBTQ+/ queer politics.

This paper tries to fill this gap with an empirical contribution from Austria.

One preliminary result is that queer-political street art are being used as a form of activist participation, party mobilization and advertising. Political parties as well as NGOs and individual activists use Street Art to promote legal equality and queer visibility as well as raise awareness towards issues like homophobia or discrimination. Mostly, but not always, it challenges traditional gender and sexuality norms. However direct references to or critique of far-right LGBTQ+ politics are seldom.

**Toni R. Juncosa:** *Queering the "Nation-as-Family" Metaphor in Danez Smith's HIV Poetry*

Abstract: Danez Smith's poetry bears testimony to the intricate ontological experience of queer, Black people living with HIV in the United States of the 21st century. Embodying such an epitomically intersectional social position, the lyric I in Smith's *Don't Call Us Dead* (2017) articulates an identity in the crossfire of unrelenting anti-Black violence, hostility toward sexual anti-normativity, and serophobia. In "it began right here," the specific experience of becoming HIV+ as a queer, Black person is considered in terms of domestic space: "i am a house swollen with the dead, but still a home" (55). Here, the notion of home is presumed incompatible with the (metaphorical) preservation of death, yet at the same time such incompatibility is challenged. How, then, to work with such allegedly opposed concepts? On the one hand, in the poem death prevents the feeling of comfort necessary for the emotional attachment which normally differentiates a home from a house. On the other, for marginalized populations such as queer people, the African diaspora, and people living with HIV, the preservation of memory has been a survival strategy against the perpetuation of oppression enacted by the "unremembering" effects of mainstream discourse (Castiglia & Reed 2011). If it is true, as Briganti & Mezei (2013) claim, that "ideas of home are contingent on place and time, reflect religious and cultural practices, and are modulated by economic and social factors" (17), then what are the consequences of such (re)introduction of the dead into our homes? In light of George Lakoff's theory of the "Nation-as-Family" (1996), Tim Dean's queer reconsideration of kinship through HIV (2008), and Marlon M. Bailey's study of houses in Ballroom culture (2013), I will be reading Smith's poem as a much-needed democratic expansion of the family, and thus, the nation, in the context of Donald Trump's presidency.

## Panel 5: Sexed citizenship, democracy and the struggle for rights

**Luísa Winter Pereira:** *The few and the best of the sexual contract. Fantasy of cisheterosexual binarism vs. bodily democracy as an anti-oligarchic principle*

Abstract: Bernard Manin (1995) has argued that with the liberal revolutions, a system of representation was constructed according to which the citizens who exercised representation had to be distinguished citizens, that is, socially different from those citizens who voted and were then represented. Although gradually the right to vote was extended, representation was not, as mechanisms (legal and cultural) were established to ensure that those who exercised as representatives were of a better social position than the electorate (Moreno

Pestaña, 2021). The conquest of universal suffrage to a certain extent concealed the possibility of a non-egalitarian or aristocratic dimension to elections: a distinction between those who vote and those who are voted for, or what Manin calls the elective aristocracy. This paper seeks to apply Manin's idea through Carole Pateman's sexual contract to speak of a sexual aristocracy. Western democracies have privileged a few according to their bodily, sexual and gender characteristics (cisheterosexual men), placing them as the model of legitimate subjectivity (in the Cartesian sense). As the few and the best. This has led to the exclusion of subjectivities that do not fit within the normative model (bodily, sexual and gender diversities). The heterosexual political regime (Rubin, 1975; Rich, 1980) closes the doors to diversities, imposing the few and the best of the sexual contract. Against this fantasy of cisheterosexual binarism, a *ligne de fuite* is proposed through a bodily democracy (somato-political) as an anti-oligarchic principle, as a form of rupture with the sexual aristocracy.

**Rafael Vázquez-García:** *Some notes for a Queer Theory of Democratic Citizenship*

Abstract: The basic assumption of this proposal is that if feminism is inherently democratic and has meant an expansion of the very conception of the idea of democracy, it cannot but must continue to reinforce its democratic nature through the theoretical framework and action proposed by the idea of non-binary citizenship conceived by Queer Theory. The current work proposes a commitment to extend the conception of democracy towards a non-binary conception of citizenship, that is based on four main ideas: -Widening the "demos": LGTBIQ+ recognition implies to extent full-rights citizenship beyond the liberal conception of democracy and capitalist markets do. -Supporting the idea of Decolonized Cosmopolitan Democracy: Non-binary citizenship is also decolonial, because it blows up all the binary opposition mechanisms that are nurturing colonial, imperialist and eurocentric thinking. -Conceiving Democracy as pleasure: a pleasure detached from the rules of the market can become an instrument of transformation. Sexuality should not be longer bound to the demands of reproduction, nor is it surrounded by the narrow space of monogamy and the traditional family models. -Posthuman Knowledge and utopia: invites us to investigate the possibilities of a plurality of masculinities and feminities, a range of ways of living our lives. This tends towards an implosion of gender as a useful category of analysis, disentangling sex, gender and desire.

**Blanca Rodríguez Ruiz:** *Democracy, gender self-determination and the non-binary challenge: federalist lessons*

Abstract: The deconstruction of the binary sex-gender system that sustains modern western states demands the deconstruction of its dichotomies and their excluding effects on nonnormative identities. This demands in turn that gender self-determination be recognised as a right. In Spain this right has been given constitutional status (STC 99/2019) and has recently been articulated in legislation, albeit not without resistance. Yet this new legal framework leaves out non-binary sex-gender identities. Non-binary identities pose a serious challenge for modern Western democracies, as they undermine at its core the binary sex-gender system that sustains them. Yet increasingly more countries and jurisdictions are articulating their recognition, thus exposing the need that this recognition be expanded to others.

This is so within individual countries, such as Spain, where the recognition of non-binary identities in some regions is putting pressure on others and on national authorities to follow suit. Within the European Union, this pressure can translate into dynamics of competitive federalism, as citizens' right to free movement can force Member States to acknowledge and protect non-binary identities that have been recognised in another Member State. This is coherent with the democratic relevance of both federalist dynamics and gender self-determination

**Assumpta Sabuco Cantó:** *Trans-visibilitys and Sexual Politics: Temporary passages through popular representations in Spain*

Abstract: This paper aims to review the models of representation and stigma that historically have shaped technologies of gender through popular representations in Spain. It will first analyse the naturalized Catholic-Francoist models that exalted heterosexual dichotomies and reproductive marriage. Although the criminalization of transsexuals aggravated their situation, resistance movements generated a wide range of cultural references and possibilities for inclusion. Second, it will review the models associated with the so-called democratic transition and their evolution until the beginning of the 21st century. Finally, it will draw an outline of new trans, gay, and non-binary models produced during the last two decades and the conflicts their legal claims provoke with part of institutionalized feminism

### Film screening: **No Democracy Here** (25 mn)

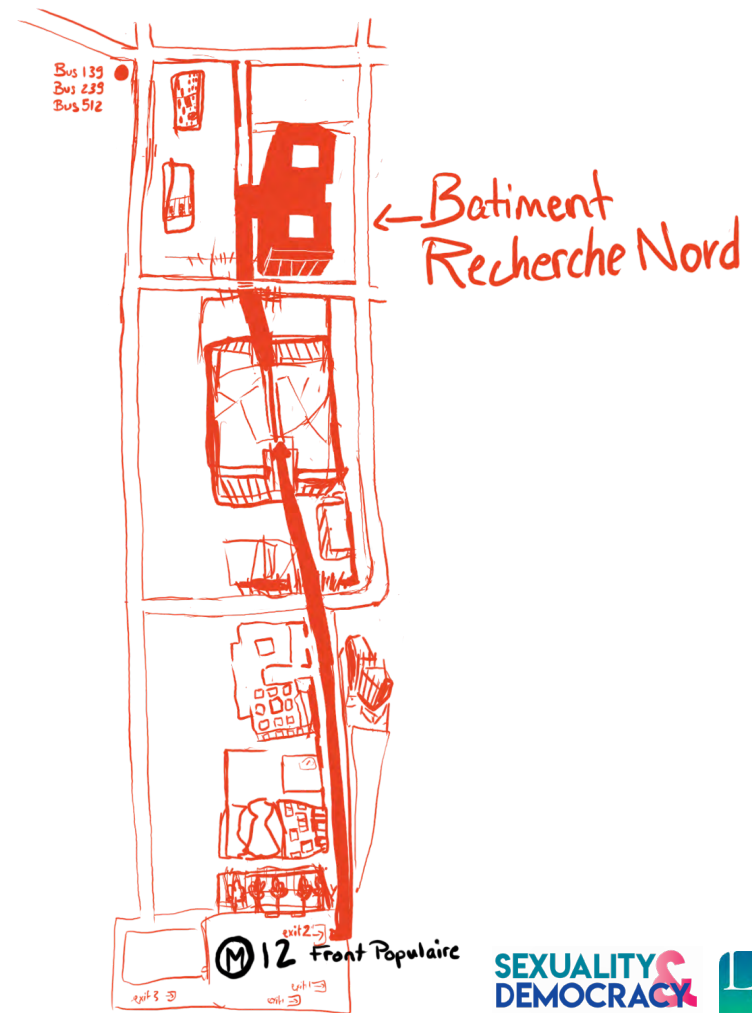
a film by **Liad Hussein Kantorowicz**

<https://vimeo.com/178736945>

### Workshop

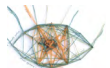
### Feminist Readings: Exercise in Democracy

Abstract: Continuing in the spirit of previous workshops and participative performances and rituals, the Feminist Readings Network is calling women and allies to gather publicly for an exercise in democracy. We'll open our assembly with a corps-centration—a centering of bodies. Embodying space together, we'll lend our voices to the words of feminist and queer thinkers, poets and writers who have questioned, explored and envisioned democracies in a participative performance. In addition to making noise, we'll leave our marks on one emblem of democratic traditions—the voting booth. This installation will remain open for the duration of the conference, and participants will be invited to share texts and images and to make noise in this space. An online space will also be available to extend and sustain our collective work.



SEXUALITY & DEMOCRACY

Legs



UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 8  
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HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
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