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Corpus



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Corpus

An HIV Prevention Publication

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The word "Corpus" in a bold, red, serif font with a white outline, set against a light blue background.



v	Foreword George Ayala
x	Introduction Andy Quan
2	Bathing With Mishima Yukio Kentaro Ide
5	invAsian! Young Sun Han
10	Travel Carefully Tom Williams
20	Aboriginal Australia and HIV Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations
28	Jellyfish Moisés Agosto-Rosario
42	Exiles Sunil Gupta
47	A Triptych On Disease Aniruddha Dutta
51	Marmaris Tiresia's Prophecy Spring András Gerevich
54	Under the Flame Tree Anonymous As Told to James Passy
63	When I Arrive Loving you Only When Men Jumping Brane Mozetič
68	Art In the Context of the AIDS Crisis Antonio Salazar Bañuelos
78	Handsome Men and Pretty Girls: Desire between Men in Cambodia Sokunthear, Serasanit, and Chris Ward
90	bypass Week of the Dog Floating-by-night Andra Simons
93	Man In a Bind Semugoma
100	Measuring Gay Rights In Post-Apartheid South Africa Xavier Livermon
108	Condensation Andy Quan
109	Not Afraid to Love – Paris Youssef Nabil
110	Aubade Rodrigo V. Dela Peña Jr.
113	Caption Michael Carlo C. Villas
114	Burning / Pagkatupok Rogerick Fontanilla Fernandez
116	Nameless Bryan Mari Argos
118	Homophobia Kills Fernando Olivos
126	Mr. Malhotra's Party Sunil Gupta
131	Outlawed Le Moore
136	Contributors

Contents

Foreword

George Ayala

In the five years we have been publishing *Corpus*, there wasn't a single issue for which I was excused from having to justify or explain its purpose or *raison d'être*. I proudly and stridently did so every time. This issue is no different. However, the pride I feel in explaining *Corpus* is mixed with the melancholy that comes from sensing that *Corpus'* days are numbered. This 'body' will inevitably submit to how HIV/AIDS has come to change the way we think about ourselves, each other, and what is possible.

After twenty-six years of HIV/AIDS prevention activism and queer organizing, there remain too few critical works framed in the languages of love, resilience, art, communalism and pride. Essentialized identity politics and contemporary pre-occupation with 'science-based evidence' dominate AIDS discourse like never before, threatening the future of *Corpus*, and more importantly, our capacity to imagine a broader range of creative and credible prevention options. *Corpus* is unique in the mainstream HIV/AIDS industry because it refrains from reducing the lives of gay, bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) to isolated, behavioral acts in need of intervention, the way that science in the name of prevention tends to do. *Corpus* also complicates sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity and class by publishing work that

Prólogo

George Ayala

En los cinco años que hemos estado publicando *Corpus*, no hubo ni un tan solo número en el cual no tuve que justificar o explicar su propósito o *raison d'être*. Cada vez lo hice orgullosa y estridentemente. Este número no es diferente. Sin embargo, el orgullo que siento al explicar *Corpus* se mezcla con la melancolía que llega con el sentimiento de que los días de *Corpus* ya están contados. Este "cuerpo" inevitablemente se someterá a cómo el VIH/SIDA ha llegado a cambiar la manera de cómo nosotros pensamos sobre nosotros mismos, de los demás y de lo que es posible.

Después de veintiséis años de activismo en prevención del VIH y de la organización *queer*, todavía hay muy pocos trabajos críticos enmarcados en el lenguaje del amor, resiliencia, arte, comunidad y orgullo. Las políticas de esencia como identidad y la preocupación contemporánea con la 'evidencia basada en la ciencia' dominan el discurso del SIDA como nunca antes, amenazando el futuro de *Corpus*, y más importante aun, amenazan nuestra capacidad de imaginar una gama más amplia de opciones creativas y creíbles de prevención. *Corpus* es singular dentro de la industria del VIH/SIDA porque se abstiene de reducir las vidas de hombres gay, bisexuales y otros hombres que tienen sexo con hombres (HSH) como actos

de-centers whiteness, destabilizes heterosexism, explodes notions of masculinity, and questions class privilege, which identity politics sometimes fail to do. This is why *Corpus* is important. This is also the reason so many cultural workers, artists, poets, service providers and activists alike have long pushed for alternative co-existing ways of knowing, understanding and troubleshooting AIDS.

Skillfully compiled by Guest Editor Andy Quan, *Corpus 7* (lucky number 7) arrives to mark important turning points in the social history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As the global north and west squeak past the dark days of conservative governments with their censorious HIV prevention policies and fixations with HIV testing, circumcision and randomized control trials, MSM from the global south — Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Latin America — are unapologetically breaking silences about their existence and the disproportionate burden they shoulder in their region's respective epidemics. Breaking silence about issues related to sexuality and gender, including an unequivocal condemnation of homophobia and gender violence, comes at great personal cost for many of our bravest brothers and sisters around the world. Indeed, many of us are forced to leave our homes, beaten, and killed. At best, men who love and desire other men are stigmatized, ostracized and alienated away from vital access to life changing support opportunities (only 1 in 20 MSM around the world has access to HIV prevention, care and treatment).

de comportamientos aislados que necesitan intervenciones, algo que la ciencia, en el nombre de la prevención, tiende a hacer. También complica la sexualidad, el género, la raza, la etnia y la clase social al descentralizar lo anglosajón, al desestabilizar el heterosexismo, al explotar las nociones de la masculinidad y al cuestionar los privilegios de clase, lo cual las políticas de identidad no logran hacer. Precisamente por esto es que *Corpus* es importante. También es por eso que los trabajadores culturales, artistas, poetas, proveedores de servicios y activistas han presionado durante mucho tiempo para maneras alternativas coexistentes de conocimiento, comprensión y resolución del SIDA.

Editado con destreza por Andy Quan, *Corpus 7* (el número de la suerte) llega para marcar un momento decisivo en la historia social de la epidemia del VIH/SIDA. Mientras que el norte y el oeste global rechinan al pasar los días oscuros de los gobiernos conservadores con sus políticas de prevención del VIH censoras y la fijación con las pruebas de VIH, circuncisión y sus estudios de control aleatorio, los HSH del sur global, África, Asia, el Caribe, Europa del Este, el Medio Este, y Latino América sin arrepentirse y sin pedir disculpas rompen el silencio sobre su existencia y la carga desproporcionada que ellos acarrean en sus hombros en la epidemia de sus respectivas regiones. El romper el silencio sobre los temas relacionados a la sexualidad y al género, incluyendo una inequívoca condena de la homofobia y la violencia de género, se logra con

Years of relative silence about the needs of gay men and other MSM at international AIDS conferences and other regional gatherings gave rise to the Global Forum on MSM and HIV, which formed at the 2006 International AIDS Conference in Toronto, Canada. The Forum's expanding advocacy role as well as the mobilization of other international partner-groups, including the International AIDS Society, Aids Fonds the Netherlands, Hivos, amfAR and the Open Society Institute have led to a revived buzz about the needs of gay men and other MSM in regions of the globe where, as recently as a couple of years ago, no one dared mention the terms gay, bi, or MSM in connection with HIV/AIDS. The 2008 International AIDS Conference will, for the first time, have a program populated with gay or MSM themed sessions at a level that is proportionate to the epidemic's global impact on MSM, thanks in part to the Forum's work. More importantly, mobilization at this level creates opportunities to hold individual governments accountable by pointing out the deadly costs of silence, inaction and censorship. It is also worth noting that this is the first time the International AIDS Conference is taking place in Latin America, making its debut in Mexico City. Mexican gay liberation and AIDS activist organizations have done outstanding work in lobbying for anti-homophobia interventions.

Thus we are proud to launch *Corpus 7* at a conference of this historical import in a country that has offered important strategies for combating

un gran costo personal para muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas más valientes en todo el mundo. De hecho, muchos de nosotros somos obligados a abandonar nuestros hogares, somos golpeados y asesinados. En el mejor de los casos, los hombres que aman y desean a otros hombres son estigmatizados, marginados y alienados de los accesos vitales y oportunidades de apoyo que cambian la vida (solamente 1 de cada 20 HSH en el mundo tiene acceso a prevención del VIH, cuidado y tratamiento).

Años de relativo silencio sobre las necesidades de los hombres gay y otros HSH en las conferencias internacionales de SIDA y otras reuniones regionales dieron vida al Foro Global de HSH y VIH, el cual se formó en la conferencia Internacional del SIDA en el 2006 en Toronto, Canadá. El role de apoyo del Foro está expandiéndose al igual que la movilización de otros grupos internacionales asociados, incluyendo a la Sociedad Internacional del SIDA, Los fondos de Ayuda de Holanda, HIVOS, amfAR y el Instituto de la Sociedad Abierta han encamino y reavivado la voz sobre las necesidades de los hombres gay y otros HSH en las regiones del mundo donde tan solo hace unos años nadie se atrevía a mencionar las palabras gay, bi, HSH en conexión con el VIH/SIDA. La Conferencia Internacional del SIDA del 2008, por primera vez tendrá un programa lleno de sesiones temáticas sobre gays o HSH conmensuradas al impacto global de la epidemia en los HSH, esto

religious and structural homophobia. *Corpus 7* is dedicated to men who love and desire other men and those who dare buzz about us, especially in times of shrinking resources and expanding plague. Dubbed the ‘international’ issue, *Corpus 7* is a collection of invited works from different parts of the world. We wanted to produce this issue in anticipation of the 2008 International AIDS Conference to expand the buzz. In doing so, we highlight images and narratives not often privileged on the printed page. Nevertheless, these works

gracias al trabajo del Foro. Más importante aun, la movilización a este nivel crea oportunidades para hacer responsables individualmente a los gobiernos al apuntar al terrible costo del silencio, la inacción, y la censura. También vale la pena mencionar que esta es la primera vez que la Conferencia Internacional de SIDA se realiza en Latino América, debutando en La Ciudad de México. En México, movimientos gays y activistas contra el SIDA han hecho un trabajo sobresaliente en la creación de intervenciones contra la homofobia.

will feel or seem familiar in their themes of sex, struggle, hope and love and therein lies the power of *Corpus*, and other efforts like it: we find connection with one another in sharing our experiences. Although our perspectives, places of origin, histories, sensibilities, opportunities, spoken and performed tongues may vastly differ, it is through this act of sharing (storytelling and showing) that we are able to reclaim ourselves, find each other, and change what is possible. I suspect that our sharing will continue long past the days of *Corpus*, as it should. It must.

Por lo tanto estamos orgullosos de presentar β en una conferencia con tal importancia histórica en un país que ha ofrecido importantes estrategias para combatir la homofobia religiosa y estructural. *Corpus 7* está dedicado a los hombres que aman y desean a otros hombres y a aquellos que se atreven a hablar de nosotros, especialmente en los tiempos de escasos recursos y una plaga en expansión. Nombrado como la edición “internacional”, *Corpus 7* es una colección de trabajos invitados de diferentes partes del mundo. Nosotros queríamos producir esta edición en anticipación a la Conferencia Internacional del SIDA 2008 para diseminar este interés. Al hacer esto, nosotros subrayamos imágenes y narrativas que no siempre son privilegiadas en la página escrita. No obstante, estos trabajos se sentirán o parecerán familiares en los temas de sexo, lucha, esperanza y amor y dentro de éstos se encuentra el poder de *Corpus*, y otros esfuerzos como este: nosotros encontramos conexión entre nosotros al compartir nuestras experiencias. Aunque nuestras perspectivas, lugares de origen, historias, sensibilidades, oportunidades, y el lenguaje hablado y *performance* puedan diferir enormemente, es a través del acto de compartir (contando historias y demostraciones) que nosotros podemos reencontrarnos a nosotros mismos, encontrar a los demás y cambiar lo que es posible. Yo sospecho que lo que compartimos nosotros continuará más allá de los días de *Corpus*, como debe ser. Tiene que ser.



J. Díaz, “Untitled,” 2007, digital photograph

Introduction

Andy Quan

Desire is powerful. What is forbidden is powerful. Desire between men is often forbidden. Desire between men is powerful.

I admit I was cocky.

How hard would it be to find contributors to this issue of *Corpus*, “Desire Between Men: Voces Mundial”? In this networked, globalized age of instant communication? I’d use the global networks I’d developed during my career working in HIV and in gay and lesbian activism. I’d send out notices through contacts I knew of as a gay writer.

Certain guidelines would make the task more difficult. I noted that gay men in Western countries have published widely and I hoped to gather *global voices* from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. I wanted to try to have representation from all these regions. I hoped for a mix of joy and struggle, of carnal desire, and the politics of that desire.

I hoped that this process would create a dialogue between each of the artists, and with you, the reader. I loved the *possibility* of an arts journal, that by moving beyond the language of science and research, that art, in the form of words or images, would illuminate our lives through both reflection and contrast, that stories of shared experiences

Introducción

Andy Quan

El deseo es poderoso. Lo que es prohibido es poderoso. El deseo entre hombres a menudo es prohibido. El deseo entre hombres es poderoso.

Lo admito, fui engreído.

¿Qué tan difícil sería conseguir colaboradores para este número de *Corpus* sobre “Deseo entre hombres: Voces mundiales”? ¿En esta red de la era globalizada de comunicación instantánea? Yo usaría las redes globales que he desarrollado durante mi carrera en el trabajo del VIH y el activismo gay y lésbico. Yo enviaría notas a través de los contactos que conocía como escritor gay.

Algunos lineamientos harían el trabajo más difícil. Noté que los hombres gay occidentales han publicado ampliamente y yo esperaba recoger voces globales de África, Latino América, Oriente Medio, Asia, Europa del Este y el Caribe. Yo quería tratar de tener representaciones de todas estas regiones. Yo esperaba por una mezcla de alegría y lucha, de deseo carnal, y las políticas de ese deseo.

Yo esperaba que este proceso crearía un diálogo entre cada uno de los artistas y contigo, el lector. Me encanta la posibilidad de una bitácora de arte que al moverse más allá del lenguaje científico y de investigación, que el arte, en la forma de palabras e imágenes, iluminaría nuestras vidas a través de la

would move us beyond statistics, that a revelatory photo or phrase might bring enlightenment at the level of spirit or soul.

I believed that a journal focusing on desire between men would provide an appropriate and intriguing setting to talk about HIV, for responding to HIV is not about a condom or a poster or a pill. It is about understanding our desires, our sexual lives, how we take care of ourselves and others. While we did not ask that work specifically address HIV, we expected that it would be present in the way it affects our lives as gay and other men who have sex with men, how it affects our desire for each other, how it unearths the evidence of risk and resilience in our lives.

What strikes me about this collection of voices is their range. There are beautiful words and images from a wide scope of men from many countries. Desire between men is the foreground or background for all of the work; a few deal implicitly or explicitly with HIV, others do not. Their work appears here by chance and by design: the call for submissions reached contributors directly or through acquaintances, a public posting at a creative writing department in the Philippines resulted in a flurry of submissions from young writers, I even used ‘facebook’ as a way to correspond with some of our writers. Some

reflexión y el contraste, que las historias de las experiencias compartidas nos llevarán más allá de las estadísticas, que una foto o frase reveladora podría iluminarnos al nivel del espíritu o del alma.

Yo creía que una bitácora que se centrará en el deseo entre hombres proveería un espacio apropiado e intrigante para hablar sobre el VIH, ya que la respuesta al VIH no se trata de un condón o un póster o una píldora. Se trata de comprender nuestros deseos, nuestras vidas sexuales, cómo nos cuidamos y cuidamos a otros. A pesar de que nosotros no pedimos que el trabajo tratara específicamente el VIH, nosotros esperábamos que estuviera presente en la manera en que afecta nuestras vidas como hombres gay y como hombres que tenemos sexo con otros hombres, cómo afecta nuestro deseo por el otro, cómo desentierra la evidencia del riesgo y de resistencia en nuestras vidas.

Lo que me impresiona de esta colección de voces es su gama. Hay hermosas palabras e imágenes de un amplio grupo de hombres de muchos países. El deseo entre hombres es el plano o el fondo de todo el trabajo; algunos tratan implícita o explícitamente el VIH, otros no. Su trabajo aparece aquí por suerte y por diseño: El llamado para entregar las colaboraciones alcanzó a colaboradores directamente o a través de



J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph

artists I contacted weren't interested, some were never found (did the e-mail ever reach them?). I rejected others whose themes or voices I didn't feel were right for this issue.

Producing art often requires a certain amount of freedom – economic wealth produces cities and cultures that encourage creative expression, or allows individuals to pursue art as a vocation, whether full or part-time. To add to this, making art and writing about desire between men is easier if society is more tolerant, and sometimes

conocidos; un anuncio público en el departamento de escritura creativa en las Filipinas resultó en un frenesí de colaboraciones de jóvenes escritores, yo hasta use 'facebook' como una manera de correspondencia con algunos de nuestros escritores. Algunos artistas que contacté no estaban interesados, a algunos nunca los encontré (¿tan siquiera les habrá llegado el email?). Yo rechacé otros cuyos temas o voces sentí que no estaban bien para este número.

El producir arte a menudo requiere cierto espacio de libertad – la riqueza económica produce ciudades y las culturas que fomentan la expresión creativa, o que permiten que los individuos persigan el arte como una vocación, ya sea a tiempo completo o parcial. Adicionalmente, el hacer arte y escribir sobre el deseo entre hombres es más fácil si la sociedad es más tolerante, y a veces florece y deja la cultura doméstica represiva. Los que encontraron que era muy inseguro el exponerse no están aquí. El lenguaje, desde luego, también fue un factor. Yo hice el alcance a través de las redes de trabajo de habla inglesa, un proceso limitado que subraya la habilidad de difundir la comunicación. Así que estoy consciente de las limitantes de cómo el trabajo terminó apareciendo en esta publicación, y que este número no logra representar o definir el deseo entre hombres en todas las partes del mundo. No trata con todas las complejidades en nuestras vidas. A cada uno de nosotros nos parecerá que se inclina demasiado hacia una dirección o quizás que no se inclina demasiado hacia otra.

Pero es una foto interesante de la diversidad de nuestros deseos de escritores experimentados y

flourishes away from a repressive home culture. Those who would find it too unsafe to expose themselves are not here. Language, of course, was a factor as well. I reached out through English-speaking networks, a limited process, highlighting the ability to communicate as currency. So, I'm very aware of the limits of how work came to appear in this publication, and that this issue fails to represent or define desire between men in all parts of the world. It does not deal with all of the complexities in our lives. It will appear to each of us to lean too far in one direction and perhaps not enough in another.

But it is an interesting snapshot of the diversity of our desires by experienced and new writers, students, editors, artists, a doctor, and a few HIV professionals. Most live in locations far from where they were born, a few write from their original countries. Some submissions hinted at a global gay culture: shirtless boys dancing in bars that could be in dozens of cities on each continent. Others wrote or showed the specific dynamics of a local culture. Other work featured sex workers: desire being negotiated through unequal power or finances.

They have created here a dialogue, discussion, conversation and exchange about gay, bisexual and transgender identities in the context of a world where we are more aware of each other and more connected across borders and cultures. It is also a location where these identities make us vulnerable to HIV infection, to stigma and discrimination, and to violence, internal and

nuevos, estudiantes, editores, artistas, un doctor, y unos cuantos profesionales del VIH. Muchos viven en localidades muy lejanas de donde nacieron, unos pocos escriben desde sus países de origen. Algunas colaboraciones insinúan una cultura gay global: Chicos sin camisa que bailan en los bares que podrían estar en docenas de ciudades en cada continente. Otros escribieron o mostraron las dinámicas específicas de la cultura local. Otros trabajos mostraron trabajadores del sexo: El deseo negociado a través de poder y economía desiguales.

Aquí ellos han creado un diálogo, discusión, conversación e intercambio sobre las identidades gay, bisexuales y transgénero en el contexto de un mundo donde nosotros somos más conscientes entre nosotros y estamos más conectados a través de las fronteras y las culturas. También es una ubicación donde estas identidades nos hacen vulnerables a la infección del VIH, al estigma y la discriminación, a la violencia, externa e interna. A la misma vez, es un lugar donde nosotros tenemos el potencial de hacernos más fuertes a través de la diversidad y en donde nosotros creamos activismo, relaciones, arte y comunidad apasionados y positivos.

De mi parte, ha sido un honor particular el estar involucrado. Mi primer trabajo al salir de la universidad fue el manejo de la oficina de la Asociación Internacional de Gays y Lesbianas. Mi siguiente trabajo fue la prevención del VIH en Londres, Inglaterra. Mi encarnación más reciente es el trabajo en asuntos de VIH a nivel

external. As well, it is a place where we have the potential of becoming stronger through adversity and where we create passionate and positive activism, relationships, art and community.

For my part, it's been a particular honour to be involved. My first job out of university was running the office for the International Gay and Lesbian Association. My next was in HIV prevention in London, England. My latest incarnation is working on international and regional HIV issues, based in Sydney. In my private life, I've had published books of poetry, short fiction and gay erotica. So *Corpus* has combined my worlds. I've been able to use both professional and personal experience to help provide a space for established and new artists to speak about and show desire between men. It's been a privilege.

— Andy Quan, Sydney, Australia

internacional y regional, basado en Sydney. En mi vida privada he publicado libros de poesía, cuentos y erótica gay. Así que *Corpus* ha combinado mis mundos. He podido utilizar tanto las experiencias profesionales como personales para ayudar a proveer un espacio para artistas establecidos y nuevos para hablar de y mostrar el deseo entre hombres. Ha sido un privilegio.

— Andy Quan, Sydney, Australia



Bathing with Mishima Yukio / 「三島由紀夫との入浴」

Kentaro Ide

There are naked men all around me, some shuffling between the pools of water while others relax wordlessly in the hot springs. The cool mountain air breathes gently over the skin of my face and neck, the rest of my bare body comfortably submerged in the steaming water. Hideo sits across from me in our small wooden tub overlooking the rest of this outdoor bathhouse, keeping his nudity covered by holding his washcloth down with one hand as he stares into the distant landscape.

“All I need now is a beer,” Hideo says with a satisfied smile. “We’ve been in here a while now; you want to go get one?”

“Not yet,” I answer. “I don’t know about Saki, but Michiko loves to take her time at these hot springs.”

“Yeah, you’re right. They’ll probably be in there a while longer.” He tilts his head back and closes his eyes.

I rest my elbows on the rim of the circular tub, keeping only one end of my washcloth pinned between my thigh and the wooden bench below, letting the rest drift about gently. A drop of water rolls down from Hideo’s hair and over his smooth, clean cheeks, traveling past his chin and neck before disappearing into the water; I trace its phantom trajectory down the brown, naked skin of his muscular chest and stomach and over the thick hair of his thighs and shins before it slides off the tip of his second toe.

“At what age do Japanese men go from being skinny little boys,” I start, motioning toward two young brothers laughing together in the main pool, “to being old, flabby men?” I let Hideo observe for himself the colony of tired, middle-aged nudists, their chests and stomachs sagging like worn-out elastic.

“It’s hard to make time for exercise once you start working,” Hideo answers straightforwardly, taking a quick look at the scene.

“We’re the only people in the entire bathhouse with six-packs,” I mention.

“But soon our metabolism will pass its peak, and it’ll all be downhill from there,” he says, looking off toward the clouds. “In this country, it’s...”

I give Hideo the occasional nod as he continues talking, wondering if he might realize that what I want him to see is not really the fat, unappetizing men that surround us. I want him to look at me the way I look at him, to notice what lies inside the clear, steaming water that his line of sight refuses to enter.

My eyes wander back to the two boys in the main pool, now sitting quietly by their father; the younger of the two looks about four years old. Lines of ripples swim about his weak, slender body, refracting momentary glimpses of his erect penis in well-timed cycles. He is unashamed and unaware as he glances innocently around him. The father, his head leaning back and eyes closed, remains oblivious.

I feel tempted to interrupt Hideo and show him what I see, but instead I just occasionally repeat words of agreement. Keeping his vision above the water is instinctive on his part, and it makes me feel as if we exist only from the neck upwards. He almost convinces me – maybe there is nothing under the waves, for everybody else.

As I resist the urge to point out the little boy, I think I see a word spelt out in the shifting glimmer of the water’s surface – “vanity.” It is momentary, dissolving quickly into the water like ink, but it leaves me thinking of a line by Mishima Yukio – “Only vanity leads us to take risks.” And suddenly I decide I don’t need the boy.

“...That’s probably why high-school baseball is so popular,” Hideo continues. “Old, unathletic men living vicariously through the vigor and youth of the boys sweating in the field.” Yes, good point. That’s interesting. Go on.

As I keep my eyes focused on his, I sit up and raise my chest slightly above the waves, letting the water shine off my muscles, and then I slowly begin moving my legs. I picture my thighs as two lines on a mathematician’s graph, the angle between them marked by a quarter-circle gradually growing in size; flirtation is the gauging of numerous variables, the one constant being my desire to affirm nothing much more than my own desirability.

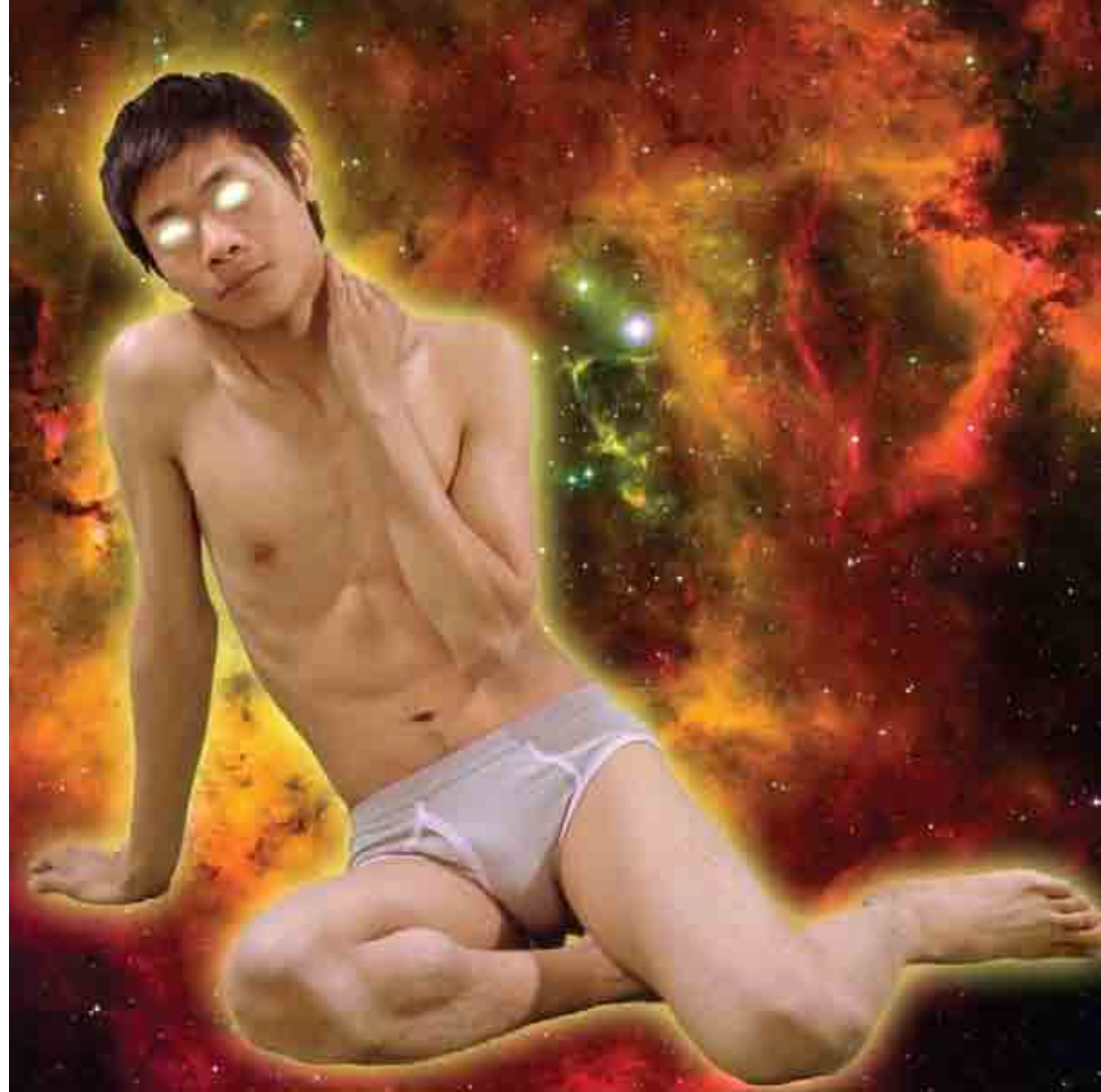
My legs open further, the white washcloth drifting carelessly, still trapped under my leg. Hideo, unaffected by the movements taking place before him, keeps talking incessantly. Already my legs are spread wide enough to swallow him whole, but his eyes stray not once, and I am quickly realizing the futility of my experiment. Hideo could spend an entire day naked in the company of other naked men without having thoughts such as mine enter his conscious mind.

Finally, I lift the heel of my right foot, pushing my right thigh off the wooden bench. The washcloth floats lazily to the surface, a white flag enormous in its visibility, and for a second, Hideo looks at it swimming upon the waves. It beckons to him in a way that I never could, and as I watch its white form reflected in his brown pupils, I imagine him being drawn in.

“Let’s go get that beer,” he says, returning his attention to me. “The girls might even be out by now.”

“Sounds good,” I answer, grabbing the washcloth and following him out of the tub. As we step out, exposing ourselves fully to the mountain air, I look at the little boy exiting the pool with his brother and father. His bare penis no longer erect, he holds hands with his brother, laughing and playing as they walk back inside.

FACING PAGE:
Young Han San, “Come In Peace,” 2007
C-type digital print mounted to di-bond, UV laminate, 30” x 30”



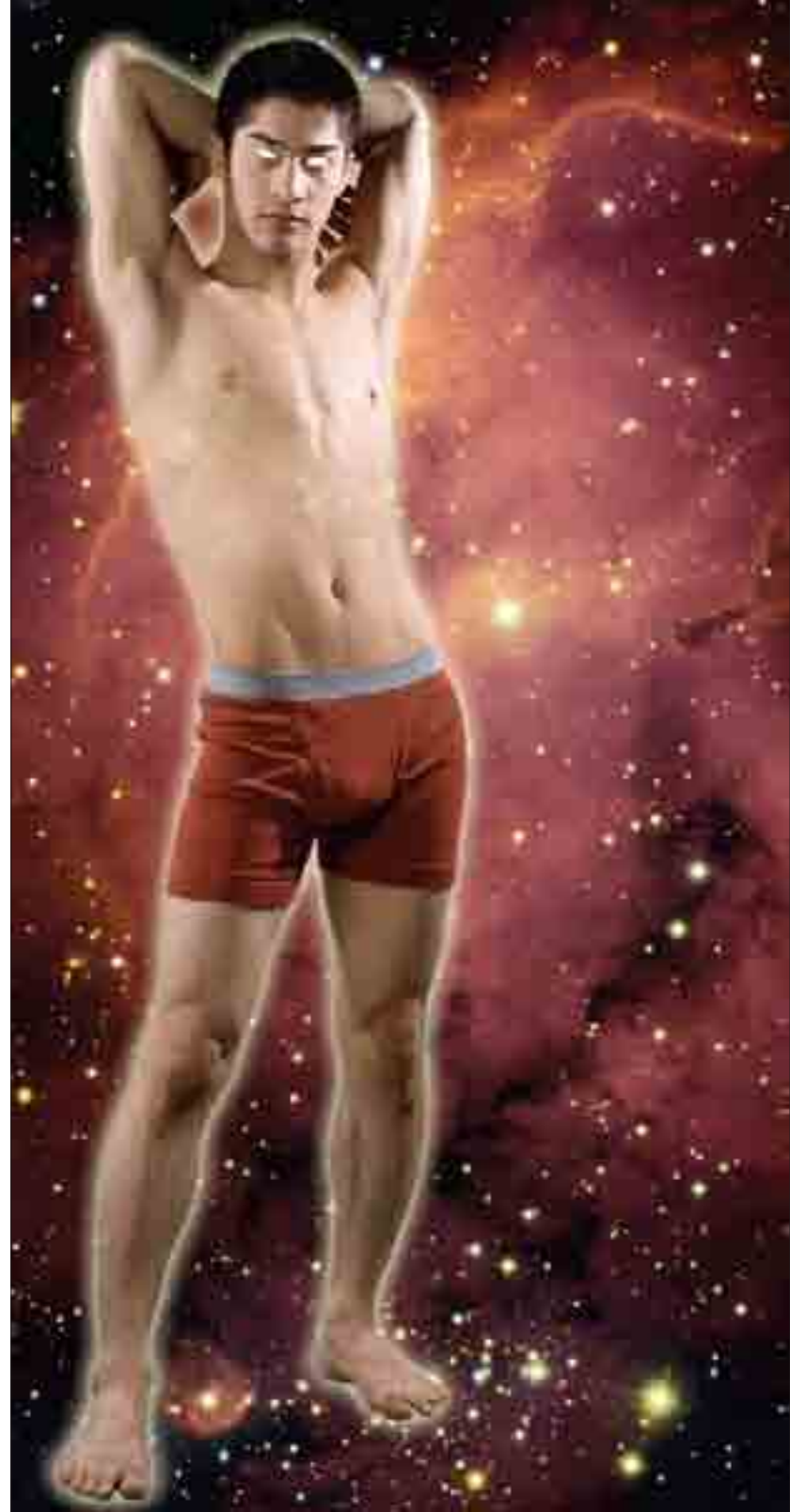
invAsian!
Young Sun Han

Stalwart and seductive, these cosmic entities are inspired by the 'red-eye' effect caused when photographing animals with a flash. Animals possess a light-reflecting layer behind their retinas causing a feral spurt of light to jump back at the camera, endowing them with a supernatural glow. I imagined this external glow as an act of defiance – in the same way celebrities don sunglasses when hounded by the Paparazzi, in order to protect their expressions and identities. If eyes are the windows to the soul, these eyes aren't letting anyone in.

The *invAsian!* series feature Asian males of varying ethnicities and in the original exhibition the portraits are human-scale. Their eyes, the most recognizable feature of Asian identity, have been altered to create an infinite and impenetrable gaze. This subtle shift strips them of any personal identity while allowing them to peer back at the viewer with an unwavering assertiveness and perhaps even dominance.

They hover in space as foreign creatures – invaders perhaps. The aesthetic is drawn from comic books and sci-fi, while the amateur poses in everyday skivvies allude to

"Halfing," 2007
C-type digital print mounted to di-bond, UV laminate, 36" x 72"



cheap underwear catalogs. I chose these references because these are all potential sites where boys can project early queer fantasies and desires.

Images can spur an affirmation of one's identity, and we are bound in a constant search of visual material that we can personally relate to. Mass media, marketing gurus, and advertisers are acutely aware of this. In attempts to cast the widest net of mainstream imagery, many sub-groups and identities get forgotten and become invisible. Often, specific categories become awfully caricatured – very prevalent in the depiction of Asian males in Western visual culture.

In this series, I have vamped up exotic qualities of these men in exchange for power. These bodies create desire from a position of control.

"Alpha Male, Beta Syndromes," 2007
C-type digital print mounted to di-bond, UV laminate, 36" x 72"



"Beholder," 2007, C-type digital print mounted to di-bond, UV laminate, 36" x 72"

"Mr. Universe," 2007, C-type digital print mounted to di-bond, UV laminate, 36" x 72"



Travel Carefully: Transgender Sex Workers in Guatemala

Tom Williams

The Guatemalan capital looks like a ghost town after dark. Most roads are silent and empty apart from the numerous clusters of transgender and cross-dressing sex workers in Zone One and a few other parts of town where traffic is relatively heavy and potential customers roll slowly by the curbs in taxis or private cars. I travel in a rented van with Debby Maya (born Rafael Sandoval), who survived nine years working on these streets, where prostitutes are regularly bashed, abducted, mutilated and murdered. Despite her effeminate, almost girlish character, Debby is direct and loud in conversation and aggressive in getting her point across. She now provides counseling, moral support and health services (including HIV testing) through a Guatemalan NGO, OASIS (Organization of Support for Diverse Sexuality Confronting AIDS). I am taking photos towards

Anda con cuidado: Transgéneros trabajadoras sexuales en Guatemala

Tom Williams

La capital de Guatemala parece una ciudad fantasma al oscurecer. La mayoría de las calles están silenciosas y vacías, a parte de los numerosos grupos de transgéneros y travestís trabajadores sexuales en la Zona Uno y otras pocas partes de la ciudad donde el tráfico es relativamente pesado y los posibles clientes pasan lentamente por el bordillo del pavimento en taxis y carros particulares. Yo viajo en una camioneta alquilada con Debby Maya (nacido Rafael Sandoval), quien sobrevivió nueve años de trabajo en las calles, donde las prostitutas a menudo son golpeadas, secuestradas, mutiladas y asesinadas. A pesar de su personalidad afeminada y casi pueril, Debby es directa y con voz muy fuerte en conversaciones y es agresiva al explicar su punto. Ahora ella provee servicios de asesoría, apoyo moral y servicios de salud (incluyendo la prueba del VIH) a través de la ONG guatemalteca OASIS (Organización de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral Frente al SIDA). Yo estoy tomando fotografías para una exhibición para recaudar fondos para la organización y al sacar mi cámara por primera vez estamos a una cuadra del lugar donde Paulina, colega de Debby, había sido asesinada a tiros el año anterior. Sulma, otra amiga, recibió disparos en la cara y el brazo esa misma noche, pero sobrevivió. Los testigos dicen que los tres agresores eran policías vestidos



"Zone One, Guatemala City"



"Piedad, Zone One, Guatemala City"

All images by Tom Williams, 2006. inkjet prints, 20" x 24"

an exhibition to raise funds for the organization and as I pull out my camera for the first time we are a block from the place where Paulina, Debby's former colleague, was gunned to death a year earlier. Sulma, another friend, was shot in the face and the arm that same night but survived. Witnesses say the three attackers wore police uniforms and rode National Civil Police motorcycles.

"The police are our main enemies," Jorge Lopez, director of OASIS, told me at our first meeting. "These killings are part of what they have called *limpieza social* (social cleansing) and they are carried out with complete impunity." The organization documented sixty-seven crimes against gays in 2006, eleven of them murders of sex workers. No one has been prosecuted.

Every night a crew from OASIS spends several hours distributing condoms and lubricant and doing a kind of roll call, checking who is on the streets so they know if someone goes missing. Guatemala is a country still slowly recovering from 36 years of civil war, military terror campaigns and human rights abuses on a vast scale. Speaking to many of the streetwalkers I become aware that a large number are essentially refugees from other parts of Central America, mainly El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, where according to them the situation for non-heterosexuals is even worse. Stacey, a tall, statuesque *Salvadoreña* with tightly braided hair, tells me she had to leave her town as a teenager because her family rejected her and the

de civiles y conducían motocicletas de la policía nacional civil.

"La policía es nuestra principal enemiga", me dijo Jorge López, director de OASIS, durante nuestra primera reunión. "Estos asesinatos son parte de lo que ellos llaman limpieza social y lo hacen con completa impunidad". La organización documentó sesenta y siete crímenes contra gays en el 2006, once de los cuales fueron asesinatos de trabajadores sexuales. Nadie ha sido procesado.

Cada noche el grupo de trabajo de OASIS pasa unas horas distribuyendo condones y lubricantes y hace algo así como pasar lista, revisando quién está en las calles y así saber si alguien se pierde. Guatemala es un país que a penas y lentamente se está recuperando de 36 años de una guerra civil, campañas militares de terror y una vasta y escalofriante escala de abusos de derechos humanos. Al conversar con muchas de las prostitutas callejeras, aprendí que un gran número de ellas esencialmente son refugiados de otras partes de Centro América, principalmente de El Salvador, Nicaragua y Honduras, donde, de acuerdo a ellas, la situación para los no-heterosexuales es aun peor. Stacey, una alta y esculpural salvadoreña con trenzas bien apretadas, me dijo que ella tuvo que abandonar su pueblo en la adolescencia porque su familia la rechazó y la comunidad no toleraría su homosexualidad. Ahora ella comparte un pequeño lugar con otros inmigrantes en una de las periferias de la ciudad. A ella le gustaría estudiar, pero no puede dejar de trabajar y aquí la prostitución es su única opción de trabajo. "Anda con cuidado", me



"Christmas Dance Competition, OASIS"

aconseja al momento que nos despedimos en la esquina donde ella se queda parada debajo de una lámpara amarilla. Así es como todos se despiden: *Anda con cuidado*. No es sorprendente en una nación donde dos mil mujeres fueron asesinadas entre el 2001 y el 2005, de acuerdo a Amnistía Internacional. Solamente cinco casos han llevado un proceso judicial.

En una fría noche Debby le dice a nuestro conductor, Alfredo, que se estacione al lado opuesto del bar llamado La Estrella. "Yo no llevaría tu cámara", me dice. "Aquí ellos definitivamente te asaltarían y robarían". Me quedo paralizado por un momento y al mismo tiempo miro cómo la masiva forma de Debby da zancadas confidentemente al cruzar la calle. Alfredo me dice que hasta los maleantes la temen y al estar ella cerca, que se conforman con las sobras de los cigarros en vez de asaltar la camioneta. Yo la sigo al entrar al bar donde ella pasa los condones, en gran parte a hombres heterosexuales incrédulos con sombreros de vaqueros que escuchan, frunciendo el ceño, a la charla sobre OASIS y sus actividades. Más tarde me dice que ella ve que es su rol es educar a cualquiera que la escuche. "Espacio, espacio, la actitud de la gente va a cambiar en Guatemala".

Nosotros vamos de regreso al centro cuando vemos a Chusita en la esquina de la calle 12. Como la había conocido antes en prendas casuales a penas y la reconocí con su peluca negra larga y tacones altos. Gabriela Espanic, alias Chusita, tiene el nombre legal de Mario René Méndez

community would not tolerate her homosexuality. Now she shares a small place with other migrants on one of the city's perimeters. She'd like to study but can't afford not to work and here prostitution is her only employment option. "Travel carefully," she advises me as we part ways on the corner where she remains standing under a yellow streetlamp. This is how everyone bids farewell: "*Anda con cuidado*." It's not surprising in a nation where almost two thousand women were murdered between 2001 and 2005, according to Amnesty International. Only five cases have gone through judiciary process.

One cold Friday night Debby tells our driver, Alfredo, to pull over opposite a bar called La Estrella. "I wouldn't bring your camera," she says to me. "Here they will definitely assault and rob you." I freeze for a moment as I watch Debby's massive form stride confidently across the street. Alfredo tells me that even the 'bandits' fear her and will settle for a few bummed cigarettes instead of holding up the van if she is around. I follow her into the bar where

she hands out condoms, mostly to incredulous looking heterosexual men in cowboy hats who listen, frowning, to her spiel about OASIS and its activities. Later she tells me that she sees it as her role to educate anyone who will pay attention: “Slowly, slowly, the attitudes of people will change in Guatemala.”

We’re on our way back to base when we spot Chusita on a corner of the 12th Calle. Having met her before in casual clothes I barely recognise her in a long black wig, miniskirt and high heels. Gabriella Espanic, aka Chusita, has the legal name Mario René Méndez Jiménez. She is fifteen years old. Her forearms are covered in scars and scabs that she tells me are from wounds inflicted by other streetwalkers. She doesn’t know her father and supports her mother with the help of her sister, who is a private armed bodyguard. She spends her days at the OASIS building playing board games and swapping stories with friends; at night she waits for clients within these few blocks. Sometimes they go upstairs to a room but often she has to have sex in the client’s car. When I ask her what she might be doing in ten years’ time,



Jiménez. Ella tiene quince años. Sus antebrazos están cubiertos con cicatrices y costra y me dijo que son de las heridas que le han causado las otras prostitutas. Ella no conoce a su padre y apoya a su madre con la ayuda de su hermana, quien es un guardaespaldas privado. Ella pasa sus días en el edificio de OASIS, jugando juegos de mesa y compartiendo historias con amigos; en la noche, ella espera por sus clientes en cuartos cercanos. A veces ellos suben a un cuarto pero a menudo ellas tienen que tener sexo en el carro del cliente. Cuando le pregunto que estará haciendo dentro de diez años, me dice que no se puede imaginar un vida más allá de la prostitución.

La noche del 17 de diciembre del 2006 nosotros nos desviamos de la ruta usual y nos detuvimos en la casa de la familia de Paulina en la Zona Nueve. Es el primer aniversario de su muerte y están rezando un rosario para la ocasión. Su madre, arrodillada ante un altar de la Virgen María, llora sin cesar durante los rezos y los cantos. Las fotos familiares están rodeadas con flores y velas. Paulina, nacida Juan Pablo Méndez Cartagena, aparece con ropa de hombre, no “vestida”. Después de la ceremonia Luis Zapeta, un representante de OASIS, dice unas palabras y nos despedimos: “Nosotros tenemos que irnos porque apenas empieza nuestra noche de trabajo y tenemos muchas zonas que cubrir. Esta noche nosotros llevamos regalos de Navidad para todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas que trabajan en las calles”.

THIS PAGE: “Chusita (Mario René Méndez Jiménez) on Calle 12, Zone One”
FACING PAGE: “Chusita (Mario René Méndez Jiménez) at OASIS Headquarters”





she tells me she can't imagine a life beyond prostitution.

On the night of December 17th 2006 we deviate from our usual route and stop at the house of Paulina's family in Zone Nine. It is the first anniversary of her death and a Catholic rosary is being held for the occasion. Her mother, kneeling before an altar to the Virgin Mary, weeps steadily through the prayers and songs. Family photos are surrounded by flowers and candles. Paulina, born Juan Pablo Mendez Cartagena, appears in men's clothes, not in 'drag.' After the ceremony Luis Zapeta, an OASIS representative, delivers a short speech and makes our farewell: "We have to go now because we've barely begun our night of work and have a lot of areas to cover. Tonight we're taking Christmas presents to all our brothers and sisters working out there on the streets."



La madre de Paulina, con lagrimas rodándole en la cara, nos besa de despedida afuera de la puerta. Sostiene mi cara con ambas manos. "Anda con cuidado", me dice.

OASIS (Organización de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral frente al SIDA) fue fundada en 1993 y principalmente trabaja con hombres gay y trabajadores sexuales. El número estimado de personas que viven con VIH en Guatemala anda entre 38.000 a 130.000, con un gran problema de sub-reporte. La epidemia está concentrada en trabajadores sexuales y hombres que tienen sexo con hombres quienes representan el 36% del total de todos los casos.

Una vida gay más público empezó a salir del closet en Guatemala a finales de los noventa, debido al persistente trabajo de activistas, dueños de bares y pioneros gay en el trabajo de la prevención del VIH/SIDA. Pero miles de gays y lesbianas todavía tienen que esconder su identidad sexual para poder sobre vivir en la sociedad de Guatemala que es Católica Romana y muy violenta. Básicamente toda la vida gay organizada toma lugar en la Ciudad de Guatemala, la capital.

La comunidad LGBT en Guatemala regularmente enfrenta ataques y amenazas, particularmente las transgénero trabajadoras sexuales. En el 2005, Amnistía Internacional

THIS PAGE: "Zone One, Guatemala City (ii)"
FACING PAGE: "Sulma at OASIS One Year After the Shooting"

Paulina's mother, tears streaming down her face, kisses us all goodbye outside the front door. She takes my face in both hands. "Anda con Cuidado," she says.

OASIS (Organizacion de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral frente al SIDA) was founded in 1993 and works mainly with gay men and sex workers. The estimated number of people living with HIV in Guatemala ranges from 38,000 to 130,000, with a major problem in the country with underreporting. The epidemic is concentrated in sex workers and men who have sex with men who comprise about 36% of this total number.

A more public gay life began to emerge from its closet in Guatemala in the late 90s, an evolution due in part to persistent, activist bar owners and gay HIV/AIDS prevention pioneers. But thousands of gay and lesbian Guatemalans still have to hide their sexual identity to survive in this Roman Catholic, very violent society. Virtually all organized gay life takes place in Guatemala City, the capital.¹

The LGBT community in Guatemala regularly faces attacks and threats, particularly transgender sex workers. In 2005, Amnesty International called for appeals to Guatemalan authorities expressing grave concern for the safety of sex workers and members of OASIS. In 2008, the situation has not improved and OASIS continues to work under threats of violence.

¹ Richard Stern, "Gay Life Emerges in Guatemala" 16 Oct 2000, The Gully

hizo llamamientos a las autoridades guatemaltecas, expresando las graves preocupaciones sobre la seguridad de los trabajadores sexuales y miembros de OASIS. En el 2008 la situación no ha mejorado y OASIS continúa trabajando bajo amenazas de violencia.



THIS PAGE: "Georgelly, Zone One, Guatemala City"
FACING PAGE: "Stacey With a Friend at OASIS Headquarters"



Aboriginal Australia and HIV:

An Introduction to the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV/AIDS Project

Australia has had a long concern about the impact of the HIV epidemic on Indigenous communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disadvantaged across a range of socio-economic factors - all of which can impact upon a person's health and wellbeing. They have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Australians and there are high rates of sexually transmitted infections in their communities.

AFAO, the peak non-government organisation representing Australia's community-based response to HIV/AIDS, established its Indigenous project in 1996, from a recommendation from Anwernekenhe I, the First National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Gay Men, Sistergirl, Transgender Sexual Health Conference.

The project, has produced a number of resources aimed both at indigenous and wider communities. The project has been managed by a volunteer group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gay men and sistergirls, known as the Indigenous Strategic Alliance (ISA) who provide national leadership on HIV issues as relating to their communities.

The ISA has recently become a full member of AFAO, and its current work is on organizational development and strategy as well as expanding their remit to lend their experiences of working with HIV to the broader Indigenous community. The ISA will soon become incorporated as a national organization to be known as the Anwernekenhe National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV/AIDS Alliance.

Following is an introduction to key resources produced by the ATSI project.

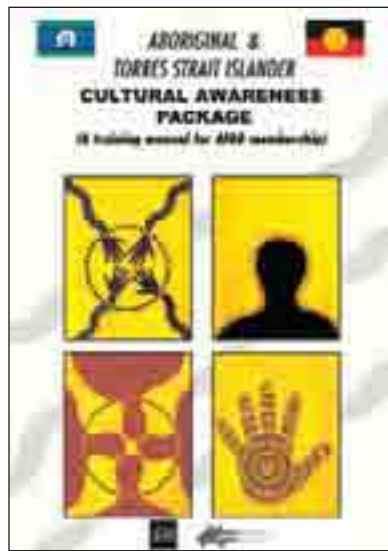
“We’re Family Too!” was developed in 2000, a poster designed to address issues of discrimination affecting gay, lesbian, sistergirl and transgender Indigenous Australians. The poster aimed to reduce the experience of discrimination, vilification and stigmatisation for Indigenous gay men, lesbians and sistergirls particularly in the area of community based service provision. This particular target group can experience discrimination in a range of life activities, which can include access to sexual health and support services.

The poster features a diverse range of faces against the backdrop of the four key elements of life, water, fire, earth and air, which connect Indigenous cultures to their creation and dreaming. The dotted circles containing the faces of Indigenous people represent communities that belong to that region symbolised

by the elements. These communities are linked by a series of dots known as pathways that connect our communities with our Aboriginality and represent the diversity and identity that an individual may choose to identify with.

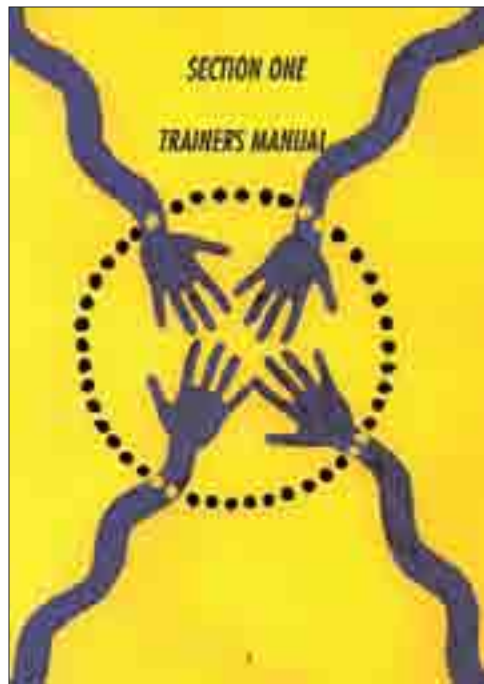


“Discrimination against Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders can happen because of someone's sexuality, HIV status, drug use, background or identity.” This is the leading statement that appears on the *We're Family Too* poster, reinforcing the common experience of the many different types of discrimination that occurs within this community.



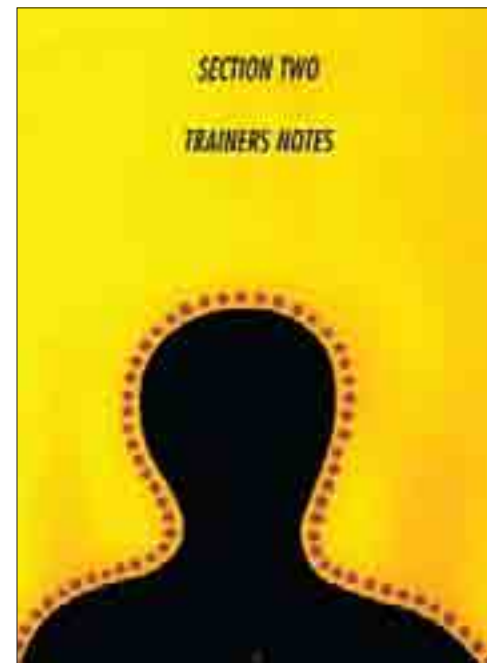
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Package

In 2003, the ATSI project produced a training manual for AFAO membership as a resource for cultural awareness. While it may not represent all aspects of the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures, it aimed to increase awareness of Indigenous culture and protocols when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and included an overview of Aboriginal Health and Indigenous Sexual Health, overheads for use in the training session and handouts for discussion. The Cultural Awareness Package was written by Maurice A. Shipp and Michael Costello.



Section One: Trainers Manual

This Section covers Workshop Preparation, presentation skills, using visual aids and handouts, and evaluation.



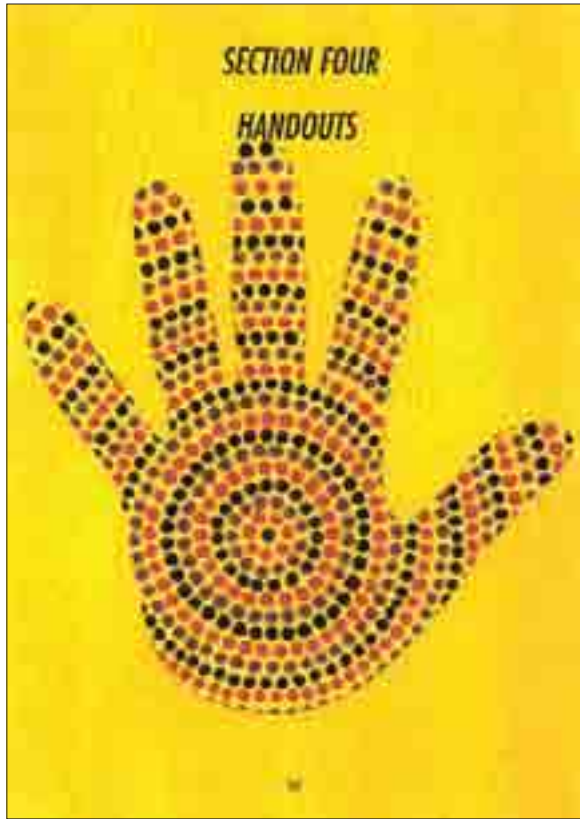
Section Two: Trainers Manual

This Section contains an overview of Aboriginal Health and Indigenous Sexual Health, an overview of history, and looks into the future.



Section Three: Overheads

This section contains overheads for use in the training session, including an overview, history, sexual health information, the NIASHS, risk factors, access, and group exercise questions.



Section Four: Handouts

This section includes handouts for discussion and further information, Islander flags and copies of the flags that can be used for display.



Sistergirl Resource

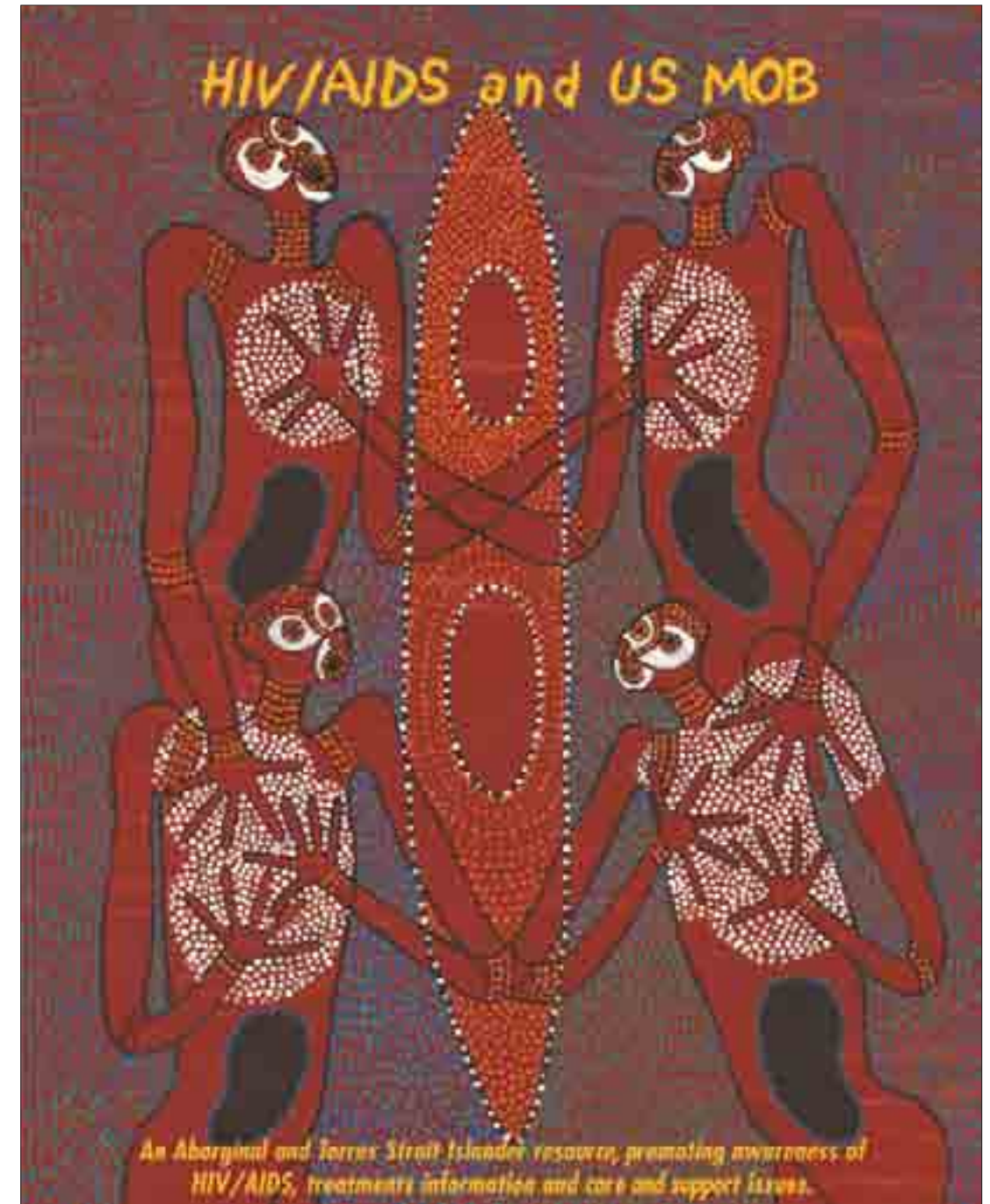
“Sistergirl – Keep Yourself Covered,” a health promotion resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sistergirls was launched in Sydney 30 October 2004.

The posters promoted positive self-esteem and incorporated essential HIV/AIDS and sexual health messages, to be used on a national basis. By promoting positive self-esteem, the resource aimed to address underlying issues such as isolation and discrimination. The resource was also designed to raise awareness of sistergirl identity within the broader HIV/AIDS and sexual health service provision area.



HIV/AIDS and US Mob

“HIV/AIDS and US Mob” was developed to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS, testing, care and support issues. The booklet targeted Indigenous PLWHA and provided baseline treatment information including how the immune system works, antiretroviral treatments, side effects and structured treatment interruptions. The resource was also designed to provide the broader Indigenous community with an understanding of some of the complex issues that Indigenous PLWHA may confront. Copies were available through local AIDS Councils and Aboriginal Medical Centres. The first edition was released in 2003, followed by a second edition in 2005.



Jellyfish

Moisés Agosto-Rosario

I.

It was one of those spectacular beach days. The sky made the water, laced with foam, seem intensely blue. I floated on my back, away from the crowd of people who congregated here each Sunday to tan, share the latest gossip, and show off their hairy chests, well-trimmed moustaches, and neon bathing suits. I looked at the line dividing the sky from the sea, its infinite space before my eyes. The warm water swung me from side to side, hypnotizing my body.

Suddenly, I heard a shot. Screaming men and women ran into the water towards me, their faces filled with terror. I turned to look at the commotion; there, a man held a pistol to the head of a young man who'd been sitting next to my belongings. They struggled over a gold chain. The assailant won, snatched it away, and fired two shots in the air as he shot out of the water like a bat out of hell. There was no one left at the shore. Everybody had fled into the sea, had decided collectively that it was better to drown than to get shot in the head.

Once the mugger had disappeared, people started to get out of the water.

-Baby, how scary! See, this country's fucked up.

-I always see that thief walking around here, cruising on the beach.

I left the water too, walked straight to my belongings. There, the police were questioning the young man, who seemed calm. I grabbed my knapsack and walked up to the bar, to the courtyard of the *Beach House*, where I'd hang out at the end of the day to socialize, find a man to hook up with, and snort a thin line of cocaine.

I pushed open the guesthouse's iron gate, shook the sand off my feet then put on my sandals and carried my belongings to one of the lounge chairs close to the fence that faced the beach. I took out a change of clothes from my knapsack and put on some khaki shorts. I asked for a drink at the bar, a Piña Colada and returned to my chair ready myself to watch the parade of queens about to come in

Aguaviva

Moisés Agosto-Rosario

I.

Era uno de esos días de playa espectaculares. El cielo hacía que el agua, con encajes de espuma, se viera azulita. Flotaba de espaldas a la multitud de gente que se congregaban allí todos los domingos; para broncearse, enterarse del bochinche más reciente, modelar sus pechos velludos, sus bigotes bien recortados y los trajes de baño de color neón. Observaba la línea que dividía el cielo del mar, lo infinito de ese espacio frente a mis ojos. El agua tibia me llevaba de un lado hacia el otro, hipnotizándome el cuerpo.

De momento, escuché un tiro. Una gritería de hombres y mujeres venían corriendo hacia el agua con sus rostros invadidos de terror. Me volví hacia el tumulto; allí se encontraba un tipo con una pistola en la cabeza de un muchacho sentado al lado de mis cosas. Forcejeó con el asaltante por su cadena de oro, pero éste logró arrancársela de un tirón. Disparó dos tiros al aire y salió corriendo como alma que lleva el diablo. No había nadie en la orilla. Todo el mundo huyó hacia el mar; colectivamente decidieron que era mejor morir ahogados que de un tiro en la cabeza.

Una vez el asaltante desapareció, la gente comenzó a salir del agua.

-Nene, qué susto... Tú ves, este país está cabrón.

- A ese pillo siempre lo veo caminando por ahí, cruceando por la playa.

Salí del agua. Me dirigí hacia mis cosas. Allí el muchacho interrogado por la policía se veía tranquilo. Recogí mi mochila. Me fui a la barra, en el patio del *Beach House*, donde al final del día iba a socializar, encontrar macho y aspirar mi rayita de coca.

Empujé el portón de la hospedería. Me sacudí la arena de los pies. Luego me puse las sandalias y llevé mis cosas a una de las sillas vacías cerca de la baranda que daba a la playa. Saqué de la mochila una muda de ropa y me puse unos cortos kakis. Pedí un trago en la barra. Ordené una piña colada; volví a la silla a prepararme a observar el desfile de locas que venía. Diez minutos más tarde, los mismos

from the beach. Ten minutes later, the same men who ran into the sea during the assault began to enter the guesthouse. They placed themselves strategically in small groups in corners of the bar that offered the best panoramic view.

The young man who'd been assaulted entered the guesthouse. A few queens started to accost him with questions. Paying no attention to them, he scanned the courtyard in search of a place to sit down. Then, he walked toward my chair. For the first time, I watched him closely. His movements were gentle, but firm. Not a bit of shyness was reflected on his face. His dark and wavy hair contrasted with his blue eyes, like the sky that gave me peace when I floated on the sea. As he came closer, I could see his fine features, the tone of his smooth skin, the contours of his masculine body. I could see the shadows of his muscles in his legs and arms, which were covered with soft, straight hair that repeated itself on his body moderately, in just the right amounts. The color of his skin was as white as the sand on a virgin beach. He stopped in front of me and smiled.

-Do you mind if I sit here?

-Of course not, why would I mind? How are you holding up after the big scare?

-I'm fine. To tell you the truth, even though I tried to fight back, I was very nervous. That chain was a very special present, but what can I do?

que corrieron hacia el mar comenzaron a entrar a la hospedería. En grupos pequeños se hubieron estratégicamente en las esquinas más visibles de vista panorámica.

El muchacho asaltado entró por el portón. Unas cuantas locas lo comenzaron a acosar con preguntas. Sin prestarles atención miró alrededor del patio en busca de un lugar donde sentarse. Entonces, caminó hacia la silla en donde yo estaba. Por primera vez lo observé detenidamente. Sus movimientos eran suaves, pero firmes. Ni una pizca de timidez se reflejaba en su rostro. Su pelo negro y ondeado contrastaba con unos ojos azules, como el cielo que me dió paz cuando flotaba en el mar. Mientras más cerca, más podía observar sus facciones finas, el tono de su piel tersa; las curvas y los contornos de su cuerpo masculino. En sus piernas y brazos pude ver las sombras de unos músculos fuertes rodeados y cubiertos de vellos negros, lacios, repitiéndose por su cuerpo justa y moderadamente. El color de su piel era blanca como arena de playa virgen. Frente a mí sonrió.

-¿Te importa si me siento aquí?

- Por supuesto que no. ¿Cómo estás después del susto que pasaste?

-Estoy bien. La verdad que aunque estaba forcejeando con el tipo, estaba bien nervioso. Esa cadena fue un regalo muy especial, pero qué se va a hacer.

-Well, what's important is that you are alive. What's your name?

-Edgardo. You?

-Sebastián. Would you like something to drink?

-No, thanks, I think I'm leaving soon. Are you staying here for the night?

-I don't expect to. I'll finish this drink, have a quick bite to eat somewhere, and head home.

-Well, I was thinking of going home and watching TV, or going to the movies, just to get it out of my head... If you like, we can go to Kasalta for a steak. We can do take-away and eat at my place. I live nearby, in Calle San Jorge.

-Cool, but let's go soon.

He went off to shake the sand off his feet, returned, took some broad cotton trousers out of his bag and pulled them on. The weekend boozehounds that filled the courtyard bar tracked our path as we left the bar. I could feel their gossip.

We walked out. He pointed toward his car, opened the passenger door for me. His car was a red Volvo, this year's model, with black leather

-Lo importante es que estás vivo. ¿Cómo te llamas?

-Edgardo. ¿Y tú?

-Sebastián.

-¿Te quieres beber algo?

-No, gracias, yo creo que me voy pronto. ¿Vas a estar aquí por mucho tiempo?

-No necesariamente, tengo que terminar este trago, ir a comer algo y luego para la casa.

-Yo estaba pensando irme a ver televisión, o al cine, para sacarme de la mente el susto. Si quieres te invito a comer un bocadillo de bisté a Kasalta. Quizás nos lo podemos traer a mi casa. Yo vivo cerca de aquí en la calle San Jorge.

-Chévere, pero vámonos pronto.

El se fue a sacudir la arena de los pies, volvió, sacó unos pantalones de algodón anchos y comenzó a vestirse. Nos levantamos de la silla y las miradas de los bebedores de fin de semana nos persiguieron. Podía sentir el cuchicheo.

Salimos. Me hizo señas hacia su auto. Se acercó y me abrió la puerta. Su automóvil era un Volvo suizo del año, rojo, con asientos negros tapizados en cuero. Mientras encendía la ignición me miraba con el rabito del ojo y sonreía.

seats. While firing the ignition, he looked at me with the corner of his eye and smiled.

We parked the car a few blocks away from Kasalta. We entered. The aroma of fresh baked bread twisted up our noses. Edgardo began to greet people. While he ordered our sandwiches, I looked at the glass-encased displays of cheese pastry fingers, sweet buns dusted with fine sugar, and shelves of tinned caviar, Spanish olives, soft and hard almond brittle.

-I could have been dead meat like this after the mugging, Edgardo said, pointing to the sausages, salamis and hams hanging from the ceiling. Do you eat here often? he asked me.

-I have breakfast and lunch here on weekends, when I come to the beach.

-What do you do for a living?

-I'm a student. I work part-time at the University library. And you?

-I've got a flower shop at the Caribe Hilton in El Condado.

We went back to the car, drove off to Calle Loiza and turned onto Calle San Jorge. While driving, I looked at the pastel-colored buildings in the tropical style of the 50s and 60s. Some well preserved, others neglected, filthy or with walls of crumbling paint. They were testimonies of the

Estacionamos el auto unas cuerdas más abajo de Kasalta. Entramos. Un olor a pan recién horneado se nos enroscó por las narices. Edgardo comenzó a saludar gente. Mientras él ordenaba, yo observaba los dulces horneados, los quesitos, las mazorcas cubiertas de azúcar blanca, los turrónes blandos, duros, latas de caviar y de aceitunas.

-Así iba a quedar después del asalto -comentó Edgardo, señalando los salchichones, chorizos y jamones colgando del techo. ¿Vienes mucho aquí? -me preguntó.

-Desayuno y almuerzo mayormente los fines de semana cuando vengo a la playa.

-¿En que trabajas?

-Soy estudiante. Tengo un trabajo de tiempo parcial en la biblioteca de la Universidad. ¿Y tú?

-Yo tengo una floristería en el Hotel Caribe Hilton del Condado.

Regresamos al auto. Salimos hacia la calle Loiza para conectarnos con la calle San Jorge. Durante la travesía observé los edificios color pastel de los años cincuenta y sesenta. Algunos, bien preservados, otros descuidados, cubiertos de mugre o paredes con pintura descascarada. Eran testimonio de innumerables tormentas tropicales o el desvanecimiento de alguna

countless tropical storms or the vanishing of prominent families, who for whatever reason, had abandoned their architectural jewels. The buildings closer to the beach were kept in better shape. But I could see, at a short distance, the neighboring slums of wooden houses with aluminum roofs; the usual view in a country like ours, on its way to development. The freeway, the Pavía Hospital and the Fine Arts Center sitting behind the wooden shacks promised the arrival of progress. Finally, we arrived at a building of rose tints and blue pastels, well-preserved but stained with the tracks of storms and downpours. Edgardo stopped the car, took out a remote control and opened the garage door.

-It's better to open the garage from here because of the way things are these days. You never know if a hoodlum from the barrio will try to take your car.

We entered. I grabbed the bags with the sandwiches while Edgardo closed the garage door and turned on the lights. We took the elevator up to his apartment and entered through a living room that opened to a terrace with a view of El Condado. He grabbed my arm to show me the other rooms. The first door to the right was a wall-closet packed with vitamin small bottles.

-Solgar? I've never seen these vitamins.

-They're the best. I get them through my roommate who owns the company that makes them. The company is in New York

familia prominente que, por alguna u otra razón, abandonaron su joya arquitectónica. Más cerca de la playa los edificios estaban mejor cuidados, pero más lejos se veían las barriadas con sus casas de madera y techos de aluminio; paisaje habitual de un país como el nuestro, en vías de desarrollo. La autopista, el hospital Pavía y el Centro de Bellas Artes, por detrás de las casuchas de madera, prometían la llegada del progreso. Al fin llegamos a un edificio de tonalidades rosadas y azul pastel, muy bien preservado pero con rastros de aguaceros y tormentas impregnados sobre él. Edgardo se detuvo y sacó un cajita de control remoto con la cual abrió la puerta del garaje.

-Como están las cosas es mejor abrir el garaje desde aquí, no sea que venga un charlatán de la barriada y nos lleve el carro.

Entramos, agarré los bocadillos mientras Edgardo se encargaba de cerrar el garaje y encender las luces. Tomamos el elevador y subimos a su apartamento. Entramos por la sala conectada a una terraza con vista al área del Condado. Me tomó del brazo para enseñarme el resto del apartamento. La primera puerta a la derecha era un closet de pared lleno de frascos de vitaminas.

- ¿Sólgar? Nunca había visto esas vitaminas.

-Son las mejores. Yo las consigo a través de mi compañero de piso que es el dueño de la empresa. La compañía está en Nueva York; es por eso que él casi nunca está aquí, siempre anda viajando.

City; that's why he's never here. He's always traveling.

It was the first time he mentioned any roommate. The next door to the right was a bathroom painted pink. The toilet, sink, bathtub, floor tiles, medicine cabinet - they were all testimony to the local architectural design of the 50s where the curves and rounded corners gave the distinction of tropical sophistication. We walked to the last door to the right to find a room with two small beds, an empty desk, and an old computer covered with dust.

-My roommate's bedroom. He's in New York on business.

He took me to his bedroom. In the middle sat a huge king size bed with a cotton bedcover in dark green. On top of that, cushions and pillows with tropical prints in yellow and pink. Hardy plants and floral arrangements invaded most of the space; photos on the bed table, stacks of papers, magazines, books and a computer sat on a mahogany desk. A ceiling fan, with a red silk scarf intertwined between the blades, turned constantly, filling the air with a humid, salty ocean scent coming from large open windows, the plants and the flowers.

Edgardo took me by the hand. We walked from his bedroom to the kitchen, making small talk. He took out plates and trays for the sandwiches and suggested we take them to the bedroom. We sat on the bed and talked about life in

Por primera vez mencionó un compañero de piso. La próxima puerta a la derecha era el baño color rosado. El inodoro, el lavamanos, la bañera, las losetas del piso, el botiquín, eran todos testimonio del diseño arquitectónico de los cincuenta donde las curvas y la carencia de esquinas daban una distinción de sofisticación tropical. Caminamos a mano derecha hacia una habitación con dos camas pequeñas, un escritorio sin papeles y una computadora llena de polvo.

-Este es el cuarto de mi compañero de alquiler; está en Nueva York en un viaje de negocios.

Me llevó a su dormitorio. En el medio se desplegaba una cama tamaño "King" con un sobrecama verde oscuro en algodón. Sobre ella muchos cojines de diseños tropicales, amarillos y rosados la adornaban. Plantas robustas y arreglos florales invadían toda la habitación, fotos sobre la mesa de cama, un escritorio de caoba lleno de papeles, revistas, libros, una computadora, una lámpara verde, más fotos y más plantas. En el techo, un abanico de techo con una bufanda roja de seda entretejida en las aletas daba vueltas constantemente; llenando el aire de un olor a mar salado, húmedo que provenía de los ventanales abiertos, las plantas y las flores.

Me tomó de la mano. De su habitación fuimos a la cocina, donde conversamos un poco. El sacaba los platos para poner los bocadillos. Tomamos las bandejas. El sugirió que fuésemos a su cuarto. Nos recostamos en su cama. Conversamos de

general. He told me all about his florist and designer business at the Hilton. I told him about school. We talked about our families, friends, ex-boyfriends, our politics, and our most terrible moments of loneliness. As we talked, his feet touched mine with tenderness and desire.

-Do you want to listen to Pachelbel's Canon? he asked me.

-Of course.

We started listening to the arpeggios of Pachelbel. Edgardo came back and leaned very close to me. He ran his fingers through my hair and slid his hand down the back of my head. He held my neck and drew me closer to his face. He opened his lips and started playing with mine. It was as if he knew how to find my most sensitive nerves; he knew the most precise way of introducing his tongue in my mouth to explore and taste my teeth, my gums, and exchange the exact amount of saliva. His kisses were soft, deep, and diligent; designed for me. He undressed me, kissing every part of my body that he revealed. He ran his hands smoothly down my back. I let go without any resistance. His legs made way between mine. He opened my legs the same way the air opens up before something beautiful. He raised my legs over his shoulders and aligned his pelvis with my ass. He entered my body as powerful as the sea during hurricane season. I focused on the sensation of feeling that part of his body expanding within me, making his way into my soft, moist, warm tissue. His

la vida. Me contó sobre su negocio de florista y diseñador en el Caribe Hilton. Le hablé de mis estudios. Hablamos de nuestras familias, amigos, novios, política y nuestras más terribles soledades. Mientras la conversación continuaba, sus pies tocaron los míos con ternura y deseo.

- ¿Quieres oír el Canon de Pachelbel? -me preguntó.

- Por supuesto.

Comenzaron a oírse los arpegios de Pachelbel. Edgardo volvió. Se recostó cerca de mí. Me acarició el pelo, su mano se deslizó hacia mi nuca sosteniéndola, acercando mi rostro al de él. Sus labios se abrieron, comenzaron a jugar con los míos. Supo dónde encontrar los nervios más importantes, el modo exacto de introducir su lengua para explorar y saborear mis dientes, mis encías e intercambiar la cantidad correcta de saliva. Sus besos eran suaves, profundos, diligentes; echos para mí. Me desvistió, besó cada esquina que desnudaba. Sus manos bajaron por mi espalda despacio. Me dejé ir sin resistencia. Sus piernas se abrieron paso entre las mías. Las separó, como se despeja el aire ante la presencia de algo bello, y las puso una sobre cada uno de sus hombros. Alineó mis nalgas con su vejiga. Entró a mi cuerpo con la potestad del mar en temporada de huracanes. Mientras tanto, me concentraba en sentir esa parte de su cuerpo expandiéndose dentro de mí abriéndose paso entre tejidos suaves, húmedos y tibios. Sus ojos no me miraban. Los mantenía cerrados; fruncía

eyes did not gaze back at mine; he closed them tightly as he knit his eyebrows and stuttered undecipherable moaning. Was he enjoying it or suffering, I asked myself. He opened his eyes and met mine. A tender, more intensely felt moan escaped through his lips, and I felt his juice pool inside me. His body continued to shudder against mine as if reeling from a shock. And, suddenly, he began to cry; he dropped on top of me and hid his face on the pillow, his head next to mine. The overhead fan with the red silk scarf turned and turned above us, keeping our naked bodies cool.



sus cejas y balbuceaba un gemido indesifrable. ¿Lo disfrutaba o lo sufría?, me preguntaba yo. Abrió sus ojos. Se encontró con los míos. Un grito suave, tierno se le escapó de los labios y sentí como la leche de su cuerpo rebotaba dentro de mí. El siguió dando saltos; lo sorprendió un torrente de lágrimas saliendo por sus ojos dejándose caer sobre mi tapándose el rostro con la almohada. Mientras tanto, el abanico de madera con la bufanda de seda roja daba vueltas y vueltas refrescando nuestros cuerpos desnudos.

II.

Después de esa noche nos vimos todos los días por una semana. Conocí a la mayoría de sus amigos. Me enamoré de él. Admiraba cada paso que daba, las carcajadas que salían de su boca, toda caricia que me daba, su cuerpo, su apartamento, sus pertenencias, el modo en que me hablaba, su trabajo, su auto; todo lo que tuviese que ver con él me fascinaba.

El sábado siguiente a la semana del romance me dijo que no iba a poder verse conmigo por una semana. Unos amigos de Nueva York venían a visitarlo con su compañero de alquiler. Entendí, Edgardo era quince años mayor que yo, al igual que sus amigos. Me pidió que no lo llamara, necesitaba espacio.

Pasó una semana y media. No había oído de él. Lo llamé a su casa, dejé un mensaje, pasaron dos días y no contestó. Finalmente, decidí llamarlo a la floristería.

J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph

II.

After that night, we saw each other daily for a week. I met most of his friends. I felt in love with him. I marveled at every step he took, every single burst of laughter, each caress that he gave me, his body, his apartment, possessions, work, the way he talked to me, his car; anything to do with him fascinated me.

The Saturday after this week of romance, he told me he couldn't see me for a week. Some friends from New York were flying down with his roommate for a visit. I understood, he was fifteen years my senior, as were most of his friends. He asked me not to call him; he needed space.

A week and a half passed. I hadn't heard from him. I called him at his home and left a message; two days went by without word from him. Finally, I decided to call the flower shop.

-What's up? I called you several times but I haven't heard from you. Are you all right?

-My friends stayed with us a few days longer, that's why I couldn't call you. What are you doing tonight?

-Nothing.

-Well, come on over to my place tonight, I'll cook.

-¿Qué tal? Te llamé varias veces, pero no he oído de ti. ¿Estás bien?

-Mis amigos se quedaron por varios días más; por eso no te pude llamar. ¿Qué vas a hacer esta noche?

-Nada.

-Bueno, pues ven a casa esta noche. Te invito a cenar.

Salí de la biblioteca a la parada de autobús. No podía evitar los retortijones en mi estómago. Ya era más de una semana sin verlo.

Después de media hora, llegó la guagua repleta de gente. No podía esperar hasta el próximo autobús, ya estaba tarde. Me bajé en la parada de la San Jorge. Llegué a su apartamento, toqué el timbre de la puerta. Edgardo no respondió. Volví a tocar el timbre y me di cuenta de que la puerta estaba abierta. La empujé y entré. Lo llamé, pero él no respondió. Cuando me viré hacia la cocina allí picaba unos tomates. Me acerqué a abrazarlo. Me evadió y se viró hacia la estufa para echar a su guiso los vegetales picados.

-¿Qué te pasa?

-Nada.

Traté de besarlo. No me dejó.

I ran out of the library to the bus stop. I couldn't help but feel butterflies in my stomach. It had already been more than a week without seeing him.

Half an hour later, the bus arrived packed with people. I couldn't wait until the next one; I was already late. I got off at the San Jorge bus stop, arrived at the apartment and rang the bell. Edgardo didn't answer. I rang the bell again then noticed that door was unlocked. I pushed it open and went in. I called for him but he didn't answer. When I turned toward the kitchen, there he was, in front of a cutting board, slicing tomatoes. I walked towards him to embrace him but he shrugged me off and turned to the stove to drop the chopped vegetables into the stewpot.

-What's up with you?

-Nothing.

I tried to kiss him. He didn't let me.

-Are you upset? I'm sorry for being late, but the bus took forever.

-Well, if you'd planned your time better... Why didn't you call me?

His coldness and annoyance took me by surprise. I tried to engage him in small talk, but he kept to himself, cooking as if nobody else was there.

-¿Estás molesto? Perdona la tardanza, pero el autobús se tardó muchísimo.

-Si hubieses planificado tu tiempo mejor...¿por qué no me llamaste?

Su frialdad y su enojo me sorprendieron. Traté de conversar trivialmente, pero él se mantenía callado, cocinando como si nadie estuviese allí. De momento dijo, sin mirarme a los ojos:

-Sebastián, ¿sabes?, pienso que eres un engreído.

El comentario de Edgardo me confundió. Me mantuve en silencio por varios segundos.

-¿Por qué lo dices?

-Porque tú eres un engreído.

Salí de la cocina. No podía entender su mal humor. ¿por qué tenía que insultarme de esa manera? A los cinco minutos volví y le pregunté.

-¿Por qué piensas que soy un engreído?

-Porque lo eres.

Me volví de espaldas, me dirigí hacia la puerta.

-Qué pena que pienses así.

No lo volví a ver en mucho tiempo. Seguí mi rumbo por la vida. Novios, amores, desencantos,

Then, without looking at me in the eye:

-Sebastián, I think you're conceited.

His statement confused me. I stayed silent for a moment.

-Why do you say that?

-Because you are.

I left the kitchen. I couldn't understand his bad mood. Why did he have to insult me that way? Five minutes later I went back and asked:

-Why do you think I'm conceited?

-Because you are.

I turned away from him and walked to the door.

-What a shame that you think that way.

I did not see him for a long time. I went on with my life. Boyfriends, lovers, heartbreaks -- they all became a part of the social routine. Year in and year out with the same queens and the same places. I moved to New York two years later. Every time I returned to Puerto Rico I would see him at the bars. If I didn't approach him to say hello, he would ignore me as if I were a stranger.

formaron parte de esa rutina social. Año tras año entre las mismas locas y en los mismos lugares. Dos años más tarde me mudé a Nueva York. Cada vez que venía a Puerto Rico lo veía en las barras. Si no lo saludaba, él actuaba como si fuese un extraño.

III.

En uno de mis viajes a Puerto Rico, fui a la playa un domingo con un grupo de amigos. Alineamos nuestras pequeñas sillas de frente al sol. Rápido me quité la camisilla, los bermudas, las sandalias y corrí hacia el agua como se corre hacia un viejo amigo al cual no se ha visto en mucho tiempo.

Era uno de esos días de playa espectaculares. El cielo azul se reflejaba en el agua azulita. Floté de espalda a la multitud de gente que se congregaban a broncearse, a bochinchar o a exponer sus bigotes bien recortados. El agua tibia arropaba mi cuerpo meciéndome de un lado a otro, me sentí tan bien, tan tranquilo. De momento, miles de agujas se enterraron en una de mis piernas. Un dolor y picazón me hizo salir del agua corriendo. Era una aguaviva. Mis amigos vinieron a ver qué me había pasado. Mi pierna comenzó a hincharse y a tornarse roja.

-Orina en tu mano. Pásate el orín por donde te pica. Coge también un poco de arena mojada y frótala sobre el área irritada. Sigue poniéndote orín por un rato eso te va a ayudar.

III.

On one of my trips back to Puerto Rico, I went to the beach on a Sunday with a group of friends. We unfolded our small beach chairs in front of the sun. I stripped off my tank top, shorts and sandals and ran into the surf as if I were running toward an old friend who I hadn't seen in years.

It was one of those spectacular beach days. The blue sky reflected back from the blue water. I floated on my back, away from the crowd of people who had come to tan, gossip or show off their well-trimmed moustaches. The warm water wrapped around my body rocking me from side to side, making me feel so good, so relaxed. Suddenly, thousands of needles pricked my legs. A pain and sting made me run out of the water. It was a jellyfish. My friends came to see what had happened to me. My leg began to swell and redden.

-Pee in your hand and rub it on the sting.
Then grab some wet sand and scrub it where it hurts. Keep putting urine on it for a while. That's going to help you.

I peed on my hands and scrubbed my skin. The pain and the itch began to subside. I decided to go into the guesthouse to use the restroom. I opened the gate without looking at any of the people in the bar.

-Sebastián!



J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph

Me oriné en la mano y comencé a frotarme la pierna. El dolor y el picor se atenuaron. Decidí entrar a la hospedería para poder ir al baño. Abrí el portón sin mirar a ninguna de las personas en la barra.

-¡Sebastián!

Cuando miré, eran los amigos de Edgardo.

-Ahora mismito estábamos hablando de ti. No sabíamos que estabas en la isla. Sabes, esta mañana tiramos las cenizas de Edgardo a la playa. No sé si te enteraste que estuvo

I glanced up and saw the friends of Edgardo.

-We were just talking about you. We didn't know you were in town. You know, this morning we threw Edgardo's ashes to the sea. I don't know if you knew he was sick. He died two days ago. He always asked us about you and here you are, what a coincidence ...

The memory of Edgardo, his blue eyes, his tenderness, the beauty that he allowed me to enjoy for a week, returned to me. I did not know what to say. A lump had formed in my throat. I looked at them and the only thing I could do was offer my condolences and excuse myself. Then I ran toward the restroom, went in, closed the door behind me, pursed my lips, pulled down my bathing suit, and began to pee on the ache that the jellyfish had caused me.

enfermo. Antes de ayer se nos murió.
Siempre nos preguntó por tí y mira qué cosa, hoy ...

El recuerdo de Edgardo, sus ojos azules, su ternura, esa belleza que me dejó disfrutar por una semana, volvió a mí. No sabía qué decirles; un nudo se me había formado en la garganta. Los miré. Lo único que pude hacer fue darles mis condolencias y disculparme. Corrí hacia el baño, entré, cerré la puerta, prensé mis labios, me bajé el traje de baño y comencé a orinar sobre el dolor que la aguaviva me había causado.

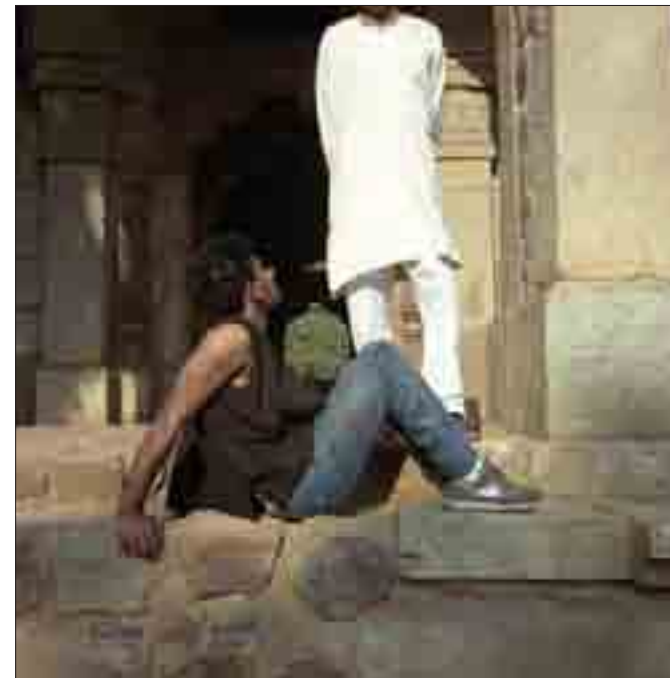


Exiles (1986) Sunil Gupta

It had always seemed to me that art history seemed to stop at Greece and never properly dealt with gay issues. Therefore it became imperative to create some images of gay Indian men; they didn't seem to exist.

After some experimental starts in the early 80's, I was awarded a commission from the Photographers' Gallery (London) to make this project that visualized the experience of gay men in Delhi, my hometown.

At the time they seemed particularly vulnerable as a group and didn't have a recognizable place in society. As a gay man, I felt I couldn't live in such a repressive atmosphere. Now there is a claim for more visibility but there is still a shortage of cultural production.



"Lodhi Gardens," Colour 'C' Type print, 19" x 19". The difficulty with organising a gay group is the question of whether one should include the riffraff.

FACING PAGE: *"India Gate," Colour 'C' Type print, 19" x 19". Even if you have a lover you should get married and have children. Who would look after you in old age?*

*"Lakshmi," Colour 'C' Type print, 19" x 24"
We're sharing this flat with a woman. The neighbours have learnt to live with us. We like our freedom.*





*"Connaught Place," Colour 'C' Type print, 19" x 19"
This operates like a pick-up joint. People don't want to talk,
they just want to get off.*



*"Hauz Khas," Colour 'C' Type print, 19" x 19"
It must be marvelous for you in the West with your bars, clubs, gay liberation and all that.*



A Triptych On Disease

Aniruddha Dutta

... A frightened web,
Like love itself,
The disease we spun
On your third night out ...

1. The Floor in Delhi

Starved white and pitiless,
It slid underneath
My pause and gasp
At finding you at last
... You as I had wanted you,
Not straining, embarrassed,
For a touch of hand but alone.
... You as I had never imagined you,
In a sanitized, long wide tunnel,
And smelling of fear, spirits and bureaucracy.
Now in the rains, when stragglers
Overwhelm our cities, fleeing floods
And cholera, I see you alone and stranded
On a far bank where the waters can't reach.

2. The Night Wind

When we talked into machines we didn't
Think of the night winds that flowed
Between us and our speakers
Pure, fresh, linking our bodies
Connected as much in affection
As in virus. When clouds

FACING PAGE: Sunil Gupta, "Humayun's Tomb," 1986, Colour 'C' Type print, 19" x 19"

Americans — talking about AIDS and distributing condoms. Nobody believes them. They're always telling us what to do.

Created refugees in my country
 And dams were let out and our petty sorrows
 Joined into that deluge, those winds
 Kept our space alive, sacrosanct,
 Disease-free.

3. The Tray in Calcutta

Now the rains almost over
 People stream back through clogged streets ... and even you,
 Back in my city at last, squared and fitted
 Into a narrow tray, celebrate your homecoming
 In fire and bones. That blackened mass will
 Now mix in the clay and into a web
 Far vaster than my little sorrow, into
 The dead from myriad diseases to which
 We have added our own. Or will that stench rise
 Into living minds, and spur flesh to revolt
 Against the tunnels and starched floors
 Of smells, spirits and bureaucracy
 That keep our night winds out?

Editor's Note: During the 2007 monsoon, floods affected various parts of India, and were especially severe in states like Bihar and parts of Assam and Orissa.

Gay Lib

Because
 In search of his lips, mine
 Have so often run into sand,
 And glass and smooth asphalt have
 Proven as barren of solace as holes
 That reflect the rainbow in muddy roads
 On rainy days,

I am stuck in a room
 In my globalizing city;
 Tired of the sanity of going on
 And waking up to triumphal calls,
 Stretching my eyes open
 To the display – vibrant, tenuous
 As the rainbow, and as tremulous before the Sun:

That will yet scorch desire,
 Or vulnerability.

I hate sex

So I still don't know how the story
 Ends, but it started when I first noticed how they
 Rubbed bodies on television, and my teenage desire
 Got all moulded and pruned into fantasies of sizes, curves and
 Bends. Then again, when petals meant not spring but endless
 Speculations on insecurity and love. Then ... you know when
 Couples become hotter than fashion, displays of affection the latest
 Trend? Thus slowly I hated sex. When flowers lost their innocence
 To codes of show, or when I lost sleep over which fool liked me or not...
 In a game that I always lost, allies turned foes and would-be lovers
 Friends. All for the better, I was first told – this was a time to train
 My nimble mind for the world, to advance and take on the oyster such
 That the pearl, the beautiful home and wife, would all be mine ... well, time
 Mends, or so we hear – but it only put the lid on tighter, the thermostat
 Higher, the cries shriller, the boys crueler, the streets drearier, and the urge
 More exasperatingly familiar. Slowly, the mind better retains the sanity it
 Defends – and the body, more uncaring and uncared for, grows skin into
 Thick armor and stumbles by fluke onto pleasures: gaining weight, passing
 Stool, sprouting boils, scratching groin, itching here and there, flouting
 Trends. Not much there to it, is there, this thing called sex? What fun
 To turn a cold cheek to muscle and grace and botox and lace. What joy
 To trace the contour of a neat and empty night which wordlessly
 Blends into day ... the white light of freedom slowly let in, with
 Only music and peace for company. But the stubborn eye turns and asks,
 What of love? Where does it come in, if indeed it does – and how it
 Transcends this web of smug exhibition and weary play ... if indeed
 It does? I hate sex, I don't care where I stand in this culture of gods
 Who rule the bed – but love hangs the jury, so not knowing how the story
 Ends, one falters in the way, scared to miss roses for thorns, yet wary.

Marmaris

András Gerevich

In a racing car
 The buzz of a wasp:
 Your body beneath clothes

Date clusters dangling,
 Bustle on the shore:
 Your hairy chest.

A plane in the sky,
 Slipper on the beach,
 Birthmarks on your skin.

In the sweltering sands
 A sweating anchor:
 Your swollen nipples.

The sea rubbing up
 Against the blinding sky:
 The surge of your muscles.

Translated by Thomas Cooper

Tiresias's Prophecy

András Gerevich

“You'll not be able to tell the men from the women,
there'll no longer be any difference, men will turn into women
and women turn into men several times in a lifetime.”

Tiresias on the bus, sits opposite me, gazing
Drunkenly before him and scratching his shin
with his white stick as he explains it all:

“One man kisses another regarding him as a woman,
not knowing which he himself was at birth. The organs
are a poor guide once a man can fall pregnant.”

His brow perspires. I can hardly breathe for his stench:
Alcohol, urine and something bitter, medicinal.
The bus is nearly empty, an early-dawn service, few stops.

“Life will be so much easier in the first few years,
then, in the latter years, there'll be no more children,
everyone self-fulfilled, complete in their being.”

He looks ever more cheerful, he's practically smiling.
“Kiss me, I shall be young, beautiful beyond measure!”
He squeezes my hand and gradually, panting,

Leans his face towards me. “I've been a woman too, a girl,
and it was only once I reassumed my shape it came to me
I wish I'd stayed a woman, a wife, a mother with many children.

Then with my growing blindness I lost all physical desire,
That's why I have neither wife nor children. Nowadays they
follow me with their confused desires. Not quite women. Nor men.”

Translated by George Szirtes

Spring

András Gerevich

I keep turning the radiator on and off,
there is still frost at night
although there are already flowers in the garden,
yellow and mauve ones. I don't know their names.
They are coloured, like thrown-away sweet wrappers,
adverted in telephone kiosks,
dressed windows in the shopping centre,
like a Krishna-march passing through hugging males
on Saturday nights in Old Compton Street,
like the traffic light's red, amber and green
running into one another,
when music is booming from the bars
and silence from the bookshops.
Sitting alone with my coffee I gaze and gaze
at the limitless forms of beauty
in male eyes, faces, bodies
and I want to kiss your nipple, your navel,
I want to bury my face in your rich head of hair,
I want to taste the dinner on your tongue,
although I don't even know
if you prefer women or me.

Translated by Peter Zollman



All photographs courtesy of James Passy.

Under the Flame Tree

Anonymous As Told to James Passy

I've heard it said, by my own people and others, that 'Africans don't kiss' or 'only white people practice oral sex', and of course 'homosexuality doesn't happen in our culture', particularly of my community, the Maasai. I am living testament that this is all untrue.

To accuse my people of not having the imagination ('it was only about making babies') or the time ('they were too busy planting/hunting/gathering') to discover sexual pleasure is at best foolish and at worst a racial attack. The fact that so many of my own people say this of themselves is a demonstration of how horribly our cultures were 'sanitized' by Christianity. I know it is not simple - some in my community, in rural areas, still practice female circumcision. Sexuality and pleasure are a messy business.

I was never 'taught' to kiss (well, perhaps by Dominic as you will see, but he was also Maasai!). I was never 'corrupted' by a white person - I didn't have a conversation with a white person until I moved to Nairobi. I did not see pornography until I was in my twenties and had no notion that anyone else had discovered what Dominic and I had discovered under the flame tree. However, equally, I had no name. There is no word for 'gay' or 'homosexual' in my language. The identity simply does not exist. For the realization of my identity I must thank the only real Western influence in my life at that time - the Oxford English Dictionary for Advanced Learners.

What follows is a true account of my first sexual experience.

We were both about 16 the first time it happened. At school of course - it was a boarding school called Ole Sakale Boys Secondary¹ on the Rift Valley floor, 50 kilometers from Narok in Kenya². The afternoons we'd spent playing football, kicking up clouds of the yellow-orange dust that pretended to be a football pitch. This particular day, just as the game was ending and the other boys were ambling towards the showers, Ndegwe, the short, nasty science teacher called both of us over. Dominic was always braver than me. I had a timidity it took me years to lose. 'Come, both of you,' he snapped and we thought, in tandem, 'Oh shit, what now.' 'Go to market and bring me vegetables and a half-kilo goat. And milk. Long-life.' The words fired out.

By the time we got back and delivered the shoppings to his house on the school compound, the heat of the day had lifted. It was my favourite part of the day, when the shadows are long and the air is slowly

¹ All names changed.

² Consensual sex between adult men remains a criminal offence in Kenya, punishable by 14 years imprisonment.

cooling, relaxing into the dusk. We both picked our towels and soaps from the dorm and went to the showers. The taps were dry, as always; I'm not sure I ever once saw water come from them; but we took water from the huge concrete tank near the kitchen. We laughed and joked as we undressed, unconscious of each other's nakedness; only slightly conscious of our own. Two years bathing in an open shower area separated only by tin sheets from the rest of the world, the complete lack of privacy in the dorm, at home even, quickly dissipates any sense of shame about one's body, not to mention our very public circumcision ceremonies. Otherwise those four years at school would become a hell of attempting to conceal oneself constantly and being ridiculed because of it.

I have lied. I have said we were not conscious of each other's bodies. This is not true, at least for me – though I imagine Dominic remained blissfully unaware of the other boys' nakedness and mine as well, at least up until that evening. I, on the other hand, had to constantly conceal not my nakedness but my interest in everyone else's.

We stood close to each other, washing from the same bucket. Wetting our bath rags and soaping them up, scouring our skin, removing the dust and dirt of the soccer game. As I bent down to rinse my rag in the water he playfully slapped my buttocks with his rag. I shrieked because I was surprised and called him a



he-goat. When he did it again, I was about to stand and push him but realized he had slapped me with his open hand, his hand still on my ass, daring me. I stayed as I was, legs straight, bent over with my hands in the soapy water. My rag was surely rinsed but I stayed in that position waiting to see what he was going to do. I thought about tackling him to the ground, punching his stomach, but I was becoming aroused as he began gently stroking my buttocks. I pretended to ignore him. I felt dizzy as I bent over the bucket and wanted to stand but couldn't. It would have been more than my life was worth - to get an erection with another boy - the teasing and bullying would have been without end. My groin ached as he circled his hand over my buttocks, laughing softly, taunting me, daring me to react. When he took soap and massaged it between my buttocks, over my anus, I stood up quickly to push him away, or hit him, or something. Slipping on the soap, I hit the floor with a whack. Shamed, I looked up at him and his penis looked back, standing proud, shameless, unabashed and accusing. He offered his hand and pulled me up. We stood and looked at each other's penises without speaking. He glanced around before he smiled and took hold of me with both his hands and the soap, one cupping my testicles and the other pulling on my penis. I did the same. The feeling was indescribable. From the soles of my feet I felt it rush to behind my eyes. I cupped his testicles and pulled on them gently, manipulating them as I had my own so many times in the silence of the dorm at night. Silences punctuated by occasional gasps, creaking of beds, a body pretending to reposition to cover a tremor.

I worked his penis in the same way he worked mine, each the other's teacher, each a student, the two of us mirror images of one another. Abruptly he pulled away. 'Wait' he said. I thought with panic and shame that he wanted to stop, suddenly disgusted by what we were doing. 'Ngoja' he said again. 'I have an idea'. He bent down, and cupping his hands, washed the soap from my groin and the sparse pubic hair around it. He quickly did the same to himself and I washed the soap from between my buttocks.

When we got to the river bed it was dusk. We sat beneath the flame tree where those of us brave enough came to smoke strong, furtive cigarettes. But we knew none of the other boys would come at this time, not so close to evening prep. The reason it was chosen by the smokers was because you could see people coming in either direction before they saw you. Mostly moran with their emaciated cattle.

He looked at me and laughed. We were both still hard; I could see the bulge in his shorts and could



feel my own wetness. He came close to me as I leaned against the huge weight of the tree, still dizzy, still unable to think or speak. We pulled each other's t-shirts off and stood there aching in our shorts. Slowly, carefully we began caressing each other, this time really noticing each others bodies. I ran my hands over his shoulders, darker than the rest of him, and over the rich red-earth brown of his chest, smooth and brown over his belly. I traced the trickle of loose black hair from this navel down to the top of his shorts and smoothed the swell in them with the back of my hand. We caught each other's eyes; he held my gaze with a mischievous smile whilst his hands tried to get into my shorts. After impatiently struggling with my zipper for less than a moment he knelt down in front of me and pulled them down. I was still frozen but managed to rest my hands on his beautifully formed shoulders. This was all so unreal. This must be one of my night dreams. I will wake up wet and exhilarated and lonely.

I had had so many fantasies about putting his penis into my mouth – though the first time the idea occurred to me I almost went straight to the priest for forgiveness– that I thought he was going to do exactly that. But he didn't. He just held my penis with one hand and touched my balls with the other. He just looked, turning my penis this way and that, looking underneath, examining the gentle pubic hair at the base, smoothing my balls. Still holding me with his right hand he used the index finger of his left to touch the wetness that our game had caused my body to release. I never knew what that was; I only knew it came when you felt very, very hot and it happened before the sperms came out. In small circles he worked the wetness around the head of my penis until I thought my legs would give way and I'd have to lie down. All the time staring in awe at my groin.

I could feel that my sperms were about to come and quickly pulled away from him, back into the hardness of the tree, momentarily terrified my sperms would get on him and that he would be disgusted by me as I had often been after masturbating. I think he understood because he stood and clumsily kissed me. I didn't open my mouth but remained still, my hands on his shoulders. We stood like that, my back resting against the tree, his body resting into mine, for what seemed like countless moments but must have only been minutes. We didn't move our opened mouths pressed half against each other, like surprised fish, tasting without tasting, half-sensing the heat in our breath. I moved my hands down his sleek smooth back, the softest thing I felt I'd ever touched until my hands were on his buttocks. He moved away slightly and I moved my hands to his groin and he slipped down his shorts. I held his penis again; our foreheads pressed together; both looking at my hands working him. He was wet too and when I took some of that wetness on my fingers and tentatively tasted it he didn't look disgusted, only surprised. 'What does it taste like?' he whispered. I didn't reply and so he did the same to me, squeezing the head of my penis and taking the sticky, shiny wetness to his lips on the tips of his fingers.



It was almost dark now and I was disappointed I couldn't examine his penis in the same way he had examined mine. Nevertheless I went down on my knees, his penis grazing my cheek. I could feel his wetness there and chose not to wipe it off. Daringly I held his penis, longer and straighter than mine, and licked the head. He whimpered and I felt his legs give way slightly before he regained himself. I looked up at him to gauge his reaction. 'Do it again' he said, a look of sheer seriousness on his face and inside I rejoiced and was thankful. I did it again and again. Licking him and tasting his wetness until his hands gripped my shoulders and he tried to pull me into him. I pulled back a little and felt the heat of his sperm on my neck and chest. He doubled over and then sat on the ground.

I remained kneeling, looking at him in the moonlight, suddenly aware of the cricket song and the night sounds. He chuckled. After all it was just a game. Just 'fun'. I said nothing; suddenly fearful again that he would abruptly grab his clothes and run,

or that he would sit silently guilty and ignore me. So many times I had lain awake after masturbating, touching the sperms spilled by my own hand on my stomach and experienced the heavy weight of guilt and disgust, almost equal to the urgency and lust that had me defiling myself in the first place – the euphemistic warnings of the Catholic priest ringing like a bell in my head.

He sighed. 'Thanks,' he said, and I could see him look at me through the darkness. 'You want me to do that to you?' I said nothing. But he was serious and my fear subsided. I arranged my t-shirt and shorts and sat on them, my back against the tree, my legs open, my penis pointing at the low moon.

Without speaking he lay across me and took me into his mouth. His teeth against the head of my penis made me shudder but the pain was quickly followed by the sensation of his tongue gently lapping me. It was only a moment before I tried to push him away, my hands on his shoulders. He resisted and I gave in; my sperms rushing into his mouth. He remained there until my body went limp, legs spent, arms useless at my sides. He sat up and spat into his hand and then wiped his lips and face with his t-shirt. 'It's salty' he said, matter-of-factly. Before we dressed, we stood, his sperms still wet across my chest, and kissed. This time our mouths moved and our tongues touched. We were hard again, pressed against each other in the moonlight, and we knew there was no rush.



Photograph courtesy of James Passy.

When I Arrive

Brane Mozetič

when I arrive, you throw your arms wide open,
 you want so much tenderness, caressing
 and kissing, you keep grasping for my
 hand, you long for my mouth, wanting more

I take off your clothes and fondle you
 in my lap as I would a child who will grow up and leave
 at times I see the marks of other
 teeth, scratches, sometimes my own saliva

released into you, like sap,
 we walk across the fields and you hold onto me
 you stop, snuggle up to me, you whisper

I love you, you shiver, it is cold,
 you bow down, feel the earth with your hand, look
 at me, it calls, you softly say.

Translated by Mia Dintinjana and Phillis Levin

Loving You

Brane Mozetič

loving you frightens me, you see,
not because I might fear death,
decay, damp earth, nor
long separations, you do not feel enough

you are all too quick to strike a new wound, utter
a mindless word, tear down everything
in your sight, you take like a hurricane,
alien, and cold as life

I'm afraid that as I walk through the city
I'll fall down, vanish into
nothingness, crushed by your force,

afraid the river will overflow, the sun
will fall, my head explode, dreams
will die, fear is larger, like the world.

Translated by Mia Dintinjana and Phillis Levin

Only When

Brane Mozetič

Only when thousands of kilometres away from you
do I dare admit that I've fallen in love
with your sperm, with the death that it brought.
I watched it, spilled out over your stomach,
and drowned my face in it. Its scent, which became
the scent of death, brought me
endless orgasms. As though I were using you
for my self-destructiveness. You know it
too, just in a different way. I've
pulled thousands of words from your sperm,
put them to music which held me
on the edge. It seemed to me that I wasn't worthy
and that you'd leave me too.
I couldn't get rid of my father who
didn't think it worthwhile to stand beside me.
That's why I didn't find it unusual when you left me
a thousand times. And each time I
returned to the edge of your stomach with wet
cheeks I lay there waiting for you
to get up and leave once more.

Translated by Elizabeta Zargi and Timothy Liu

Men Jumping

Brane Mozetič

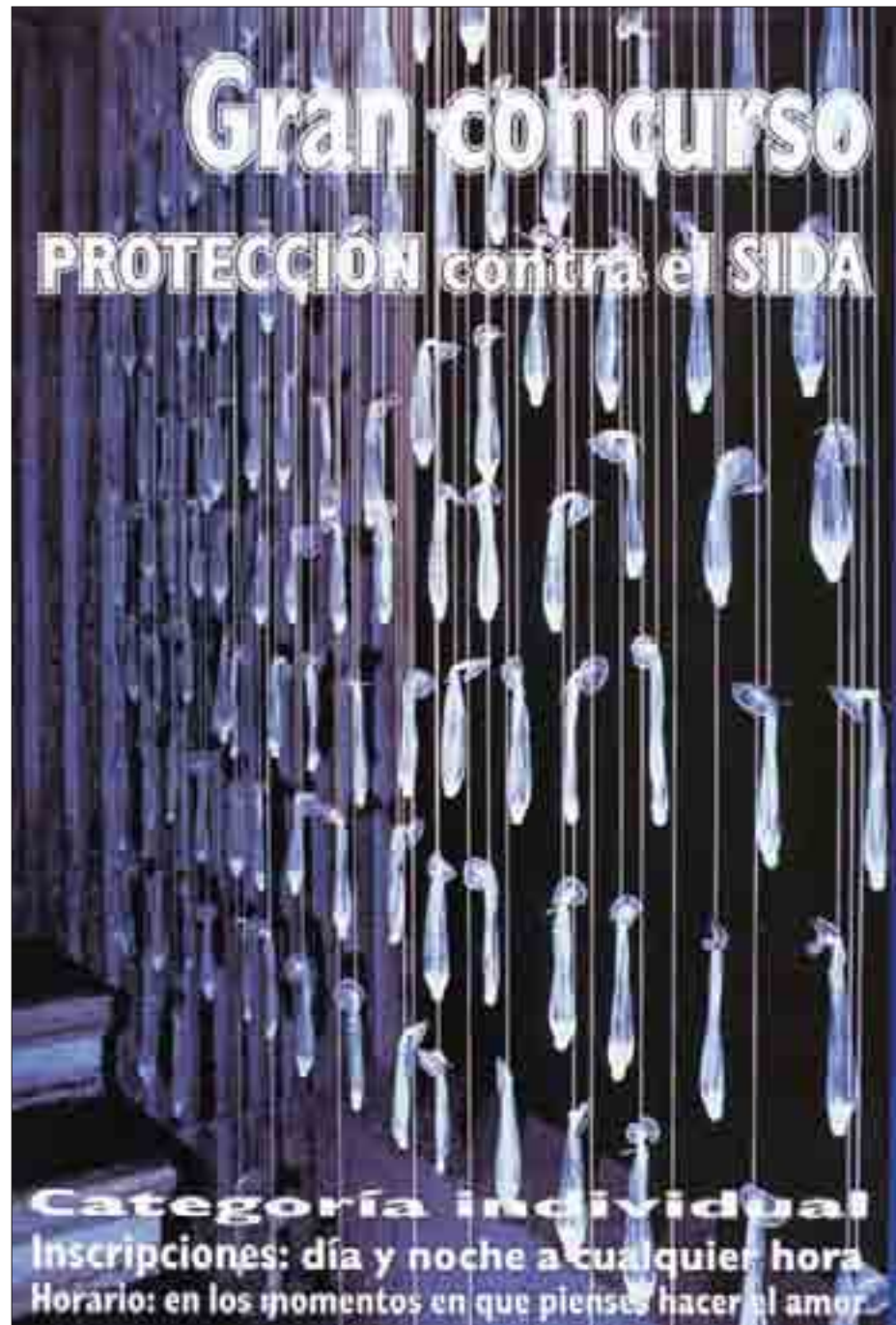
Men jumping on top of the bar and taking off
their clothes. Perfected bodies, tanned skin,
muscles. Then again, the ones who scream and shake
their hips, slap your ass, spring back,
mouths twisted into a smile, baring
their teeth. Dancers who stick
injections into their dicks before flying onto
the stage so that for a moment the crowd can't speak
roll out again into a whirlpool of lights
and sweat. My bed is not a medical-examination room, I
say to myself. I want to tidy up the hugs, kisses,
the burdens that have piled up on it. Yesterday
I dressed the wounds of a thin boy who
came to town and injured himself.
Now he throws himself about and shamelessly
goes on about his exploits. Would he understand if
I told him to stop? They often drop by,
those who would debate their own
weaknesses, changes on their skin, cells,
a virus that spreads then disappears.
Or they who tremble for drugs, and have completely
forgotten about sex, altogether impotent.
It would be absurd to say
that people once knew love,
that they could calmly sit on the porch,
and look into each other's eyes, or at the sun as it set,
at the stormy clouds as they approached.
Every so often, they might open a book and read
old texts. I look at prescriptions,
already prepared, already signed, for me

to throw in the trash. The day is so gloomy.
It's Sunday. In the room next door I hear
the sound of those who've just returned from dancing.
I lock the door and lower the blinds.

Translated by Elizabeta Zargi and Timothy Liu



Patrick "Pato" Hebert, "Men," 2008, digital photograph



"Gran Concurso," 1995/1998, installation, photography and poster
All images by Taller Documentación Visual (TDV). ENAP/UNAM.

Art In the Context of the AIDS Crisis

Antonio Salazar Bañuelos

The Mexican panorama

In Mexico, the artistic community shows spontaneous solidarity with social problems, but it does not always keep that attitude for the time needed. This is something that keeps bringing up questions about its firmness to its commitment. Specifically in the field of plastic arts, it seems that very few artists have known how to base their work in a knowledgeable understanding of the AIDS pandemic.

In 1995 at the "Second Great Festival of 100 Artists Against AIDS", for example, the aforementioned problem was evident. Only one third of the artwork expressed an opened and informed commitment; this translated into a fortunate and persuasive proposal related to prevention of HIV transmission and to dignify people living with AIDS. But the rest of the presented artwork showed superficial or no understanding of the topic at hand.

In the fight against AIDS, where morals, dogmas and deliberate misinformation gravitate, it is even more necessary for the artwork to be enlightening through clear, lucid and informed communication strategies. The effectiveness of the dialogue between the artist and his viewer depends on being open to the other person, learning from

El Arte en el Contexto de la Crisis del SIDA

Antonio Salazar Bañuelos

El panorama mexicano

En México, la comunidad artística se solidariza espontáneamente con los problemas sociales, pero no siempre sostiene esa actitud durante el tiempo necesario, cuestión que no deja de abrir interrogantes acerca de la firmeza de su compromiso. En el terreno concreto de la producción plástica, ocurre que pocos artistas han sabido enraizar su obra en el verdadero conocimiento de la pandemia.

En 1995 durante el "Segundo Gran Festival 100 Artistas contra el SIDA", por ejemplo, pudo observarse la problemática señalada. Sólo alrededor de la tercera parte de los trabajos presentados expresaba un compromiso abierto e informado, que se traducía en una propuesta afortunada, persuasiva en relación con la prevención del contagio y la dignificación de las personas que viven con SIDA. Pero el resto de las obras presentadas acusaba un manejo nulo o superficial del tema.

En la lucha contra el SIDA, sobre la que gravitan moralismos, dogmas y desinformación deliberada, es aún más necesario que la obra artística sea esclarecedora a través de estrategias de comunicación claras, lúdicas, informadas...



“... en el baño,” 1997, color photograph

him and with him, feeding his work with the other’s opinions to then offer back, in reciprocity, artistic work in which the viewer can identify himself.

The Visual Documentation Workshop (TDV, Spanish acronym) (1984-1999) facing the HIV and AIDS pandemic

In 1993, members of the TDV incorporated the problems of HIV and AIDS into their artwork. They did it hesitantly, without fully knowing which path to follow. How was TDV’s plastic art discourse becoming clear in regards to the fight against AIDS? The same way it was for the rest of the artistic community: TDV reacted to the powerful deterioration of people living with HIV and to the passing of friends and comrades due to AIDS. In 1992 my partner developed AIDS and passed away within a few months. The TDV made a photographic registry of his terminal stages with the intention to confront people with the reality of AIDS.

La efectividad del diálogo entre el artista y su espectador depende de que el creador se abra a la experiencia de “el otro” aprendiendo de él y junto a él, alimentando su trabajo con las opiniones del destinatario para ofrecerle, en reciprocidad, trabajos artísticos donde se vea reconocido.

El “Taller Documentación Visual” (1984-1999) frente a la pandemia del VIH/SIDA

El 1993 los miembros del TDV incorporaron a su obra la problemática del VIH/SIDA, de manera titubeante, sin pleno conocimiento del camino a seguir...¿De qué manera fue cobrando claridad el discurso plástico del TDV en relación con la lucha contra el SIDA? De la misma manera que el resto de la comunidad artística: el TDV reaccionó ante el impactante deterioro de las personas infectadas por el VIH y la muerte de amigos y camaradas por SIDA. En 1992 mi pareja desarrolla el síndrome y muere a los pocos meses. El TDV realiza un registro fotográfico de la etapa terminal con la intención de confrontar a las personas con la realidad del SIDA.

El testimonio fotográfico fue publicado varias veces y presentado en diversas exposiciones. Es importante subrayar que hasta antes de 1992, en México sólo habían circulado en la prensa fotografías de personas extranjeras infectadas por el VIH, un hecho revelador en tanto que

The photographic testimony was published many times and exhibited in different art showings. It is important to emphasize that until 1992, in Mexico the only photos that had been shown in the newspapers had been of foreigners with HIV, a very telling fact since it showed the way in which there was an intention to control the public’s reaction, making them believe that the AIDS pandemic did not affect Mexican people.



“El beso de Judas”



All photographs this page:
1992, silver gelatin prints

“La misma sangre”

acusa la manera en que se pretendía controlar la reacción de la población, haciéndole sentir que la pandemia aún no atacaba a los mexicanos.

El TDV abordó el tema del VIH/SIDA en pinturas, collages, fotografías e instalaciones, usando los medios tradicionales de difusión del arte, pero pronto comprobó lo limitado de estas vías de comunicación. Dado lo anterior, los miembros del TDV decidieron socializar aún más su producción plástica, privilegiando la realización de carteles, folletos y tarjetas informativas; el medio de difusión se trasladó de la galería o el centro cultural a los lugares públicos y a las sedes de las ONGs comprometidas en la lucha contra el SIDA, las cuales se encargaron a su vez de distribuir el material por todo el país.



“Jesús y yo”

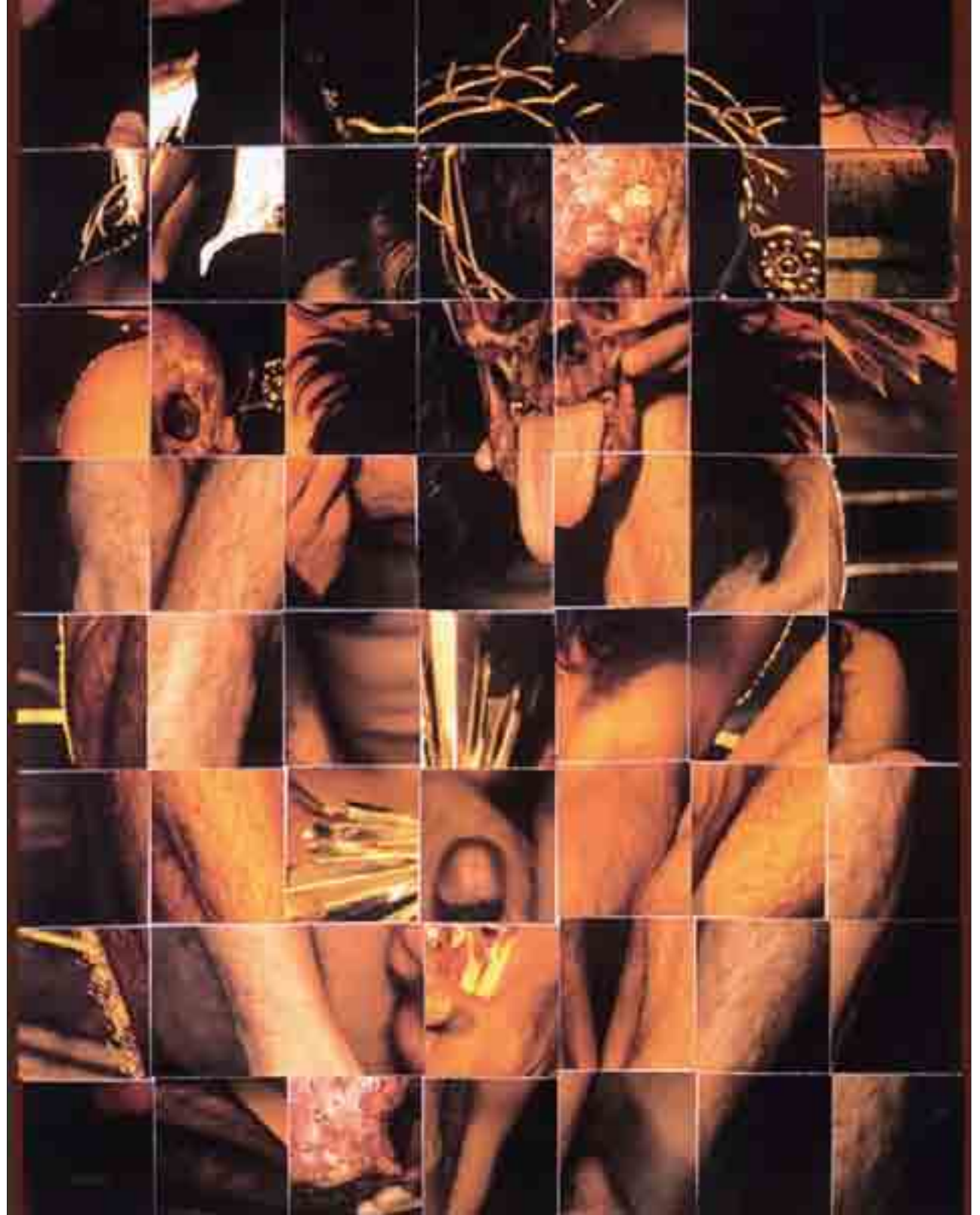
The TDV approached the theme of HIV and AIDS with paintings, collages, photography and art installations, using traditional art mediums of diffusion. But the TDV soon realized the limitations of this medium of communication. Then TDV members decided to distribute their plastic arts production even more accessible, giving priority to making posters, brochures and informative post cards. The diffusion medium changed from the art gallery or the cultural center to public spaces and to the realm of NGOs — sites committed to the fight against AIDS. In turn, the NGOs were responsible for distributing the materials throughout the country.

In Mexico, as in many other countries, the artist community was one of the most active in responding to HIV given that it was one of the hardest hit by the pandemic. The constant loss of members of this community, partners with varying degrees of intellectual and emotional relationships, quickly generated an artistic stance to face AIDS. This influenced — during the 80s — their art as well as their moral leadership. The issue now is how, for what purposes and with what efficacy can committed artists face the HIV pandemic in the 21st century?



En México, como en otras naciones, la comunidad artística fue una de las más activas en este renglón debido a que fue una de las más flageladas por la pandemia. La frecuente pérdida de miembros de la comunidad artística, compañeros con mayor o menor cercanía intelectual y afectiva, generó rápidamente una toma de posición de los artistas ante el SIDA que influyó — en los años ochenta — tanto en su obra como en su liderazgo moral. Otro tema es cómo, con qué propósito y con cuánta efectividad, encaran los artistas comprometidos del siglo XXI esta pandemia.

THIS PAGE: "Sanborn's," 1987, collage
FACING PAGE: "Rompecabezas," 1999, photomontage





"Uno mismo," 1998, photomontage



"Asegúrate con un buen condón," 1998, photomontage



"La banda de la Tlacotal," 1994, silver gelatin print

"No me olvides," 1993, color photograph



Handsome Men and Pretty Girls: Desire between Men in Cambodia

Sokunthear, Serasanit, and Chris Ward

Introduction:

Cambodia is a country of approximately 13.5 million people, located between Thailand to the west, and Vietnam to the east, with a small coastline to the south on the Gulf of Thailand. Internal political conflict during the early 1970's and the bombing of large areas of the country by the United States during the Vietnam war, led to division and instability in Cambodian society. In 1975 the murderous Khmer Rouge regime took control of the country. Out of an estimated population of seven million people, somewhere between one and two million Cambodians lost their lives through torture, summary execution, forced labor, and starvation. Vietnamese forces overthrew the Khmer Rouge in 1979 and occupied the country until 1989, when all Cambodian political factions agreed to the installation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which administered the country until a new constitution could be adopted and elections held in 1993. Cambodia still has the highest HIV prevalence of any country in southeast Asia, but through the support of foreign donors, and the willingness of the government to confront the challenges posed by the epidemic, HIV prevalence continues to fall. The scale-up of access to antiretroviral drugs continues, and Cambodia may be one of the few countries to meet its Millennium Development Goals in this respect.

It was the stated aim of the Khmer Rouge to create an agrarian utopia, and to rid Cambodia not only of all influences from the modern world, but also of all knowledge of the country's own history and culture. They declared 1975, the year they took power, to be "year zero." Previous research on men who have sex with men (MSM) in Cambodian culture and history (e.g. Kha and Ward, 2004) has shown an almost complete lack of knowledge by present day Cambodians of the role of MSM in Khmer society and culture, although it is likely that there were a variety of socially acknowledged roles for such men, as there were and continue to be in other Asian societies.

The following interviews with two Cambodian MSM are obviously not representative. The term "MSM" is used to refer to biological males who have sex with other biological males. It does not connote a particular identity or sexual orientation, and the two interviews offer contrasting portrayals of MSM, their lives, and beliefs, in present day Cambodia.

My name is Sokunthear and I am 40 years old. I grew up in Kandal province which is near Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. I have been living in Phnom Penh for more than one year now, and work

Hombres guapos y chicas lindas: El deseo entre los hombres en Camboya

Sokunthear, Serasanit y Chris Ward

Introducción:

Camboya es un país con aproximadamente 13,5 millones de personas, ubicado entre Tailandia al oeste y Vietnam al este, con una pequeña zona costera al sur del Golfo de Tailandia. El conflicto político interno durante la década de los setenta y el bombardeo de enormes zonas del país por los Estados Unidos durante la guerra de Vietnam, llevó a una división e inestabilidad en la sociedad de Camboya. En 1975 el régimen asesino Jemer Rojo [Khmer Rouge- original en francés] tomó control del país. De un estimado de siete millones de personas, entre uno y dos millones de camboyanos perdieron la vida por tortura, ejecuciones sumarias, trabajo forzado y hambruna. Las fuerzas vietnamitas derrocaron a los Jemeres Rojos en 1979 y ocuparon el país hasta 1989, cuando todas las fuerzas políticas camboyanas acordaron en la instalación de la Autoridad de Transición de las Naciones Unidas en Camboya, UNTAC [siglas en inglés], la cual administró el país hasta que se adoptó una nueva constitución y se sostuvieron elecciones en 1993. Camboya aún tiene la prevalencia más alta de VIH que cualquier otro país en Asia del sudeste, pero a través del apoyo de donantes extranjeros y la buena voluntad del gobierno de enfrentar los retos presentados por la epidemia, la prevalencia del VIH continúa en bajada. El aumento del acceso a medicamentos antirretrovirales continúa, y Camboya podría ser uno de los pocos países que cumpla con las Metas de Desarrollo del Milenio.

El objetivo del Jemer Rojo era crear una utopía agraria y quitarle a Camboya, no sólo las influencias del mundo moderno, sino también su propio conocimiento de la historia y cultura del país. Ellos declararon a 1975, el año en que llegaron al poder, como el "año cero". Investigaciones anteriores sobre hombres que tienen sexo con hombres (HSH) en la cultura e historia camboyanas (e.g. Kha y Ward, 2004) han demostrado casi una completa falta de conocimiento de los camboyanos actuales sobre el rol de los HSH en la sociedad y cultura Jemer, aunque es probable que hubo una variedad de roles socialmente conocidos por estos hombres, así como lo hubo y continúa habiendo en otras sociedades asiáticas.

Las entrevistas que aparecen a continuación con dos hombres HSH camboyanos obviamente no son representativas. El término HSH se usa para referirse a hombres biológicos que tienen sexo con otros hombres biológicos. No denota ninguna identidad u orientación sexual en particular y las dos entrevistas ofrecen panoramas contrastantes de los HSH, sus vidas y creencias en la Camboya del presente.

for Kanhnha, a local organization that has programs for HIV prevention and sexual health for Srey Sros and Bros Sart. These are two terms we use for MSM in Cambodia. “Srey Sros” means “pretty girl” in English. We call MSM “srey sros” if they have long hair and like to dress as a woman and act like a woman. Bros sart means “handsome man” in English, and we call MSM “bros sart” if they have short hair and act like other men. Sometimes we also say “MSM long hair” and “MSM short hair.”

I can remember being sexually attracted to other men from when I was in primary school. It wasn't until I was 18 or 19 years old that I started having sex with other men. I finished high school but wasn't successful enough to go to university, so I stopped my education after high school. Although I have short hair and dress like other men, people could tell that I was MSM, I think it is because of the way I walk. When I told my parents that I was MSM, my mother was angry and now she hates me. But my father still loves me and he understands this kind of behavior. Most of my friends still supported me when they came to know I was MSM. I think 90 percent of my friends still support me, and only 10 percent stopped being my friend.

The way I meet other men for sex, it depends on the situation. Sometimes I go out looking for a man to have sex with, and sometimes

Mi nombres es Sokunthear y tengo 40 años de edad. Yo crecí en la Provincia de Kandal que está cerca de Phnom Penh, la capital de Camboya. Yo he vivido en Phnom Penh durante más de un año y trabajo para Kanhnha, una organización local que tiene programas de prevención de VIH y salud sexual para *Srey Sros* y *Bros Sart*. Estos son dos términos que nosotros usamos para referirnos a HSH en Camboya. “*Srey Sros*” significa “chica linda” en español. Nosotros le decimos “*srey sros*” a HSH si ellos llevan cabello largo y les gusta vestirse como mujeres y actúan como mujeres. Bros sart significa “hombre guapo” en español, y nosotros les decimos “bros sart” a HSH que llevan cabello corto y actúan como hombres. A veces nosotros también decimos: “HSH con cabello largo” y “HSH con cabello corto”.

Yo puedo recordar que era sexualmente atraído por otros hombres desde que estaba en la primaria. No fue hasta que tenía 18 ó 19 años que empecé a tener sexo con otros hombres. Yo terminé el bachillerato pero no fui lo suficientemente exitoso para ir a la universidad, así que no continúe mi educación después del bachillerato. Aunque yo tengo el cabello corto y me visto como otros hombres, la gente puede darse cuenta que soy un HSH, creo que es por mi manera de caminar. Cuando yo les dije a mis padres que yo era HSH, mi madre se enojó y ahora me odia. Pero mi padre todavía me ama y él entiende este tipo de comportamiento. La mayoría de mis amigos aun me apoyan después

Photograph courtesy of the authors.



men just approach me. Often during festivals and holidays when I go out, men will approach me to have sex with them. Or I can find someone just by looking at them, and they will know from the way I am looking at them that I want to have sex with them. When I visit my family, some of the sons of my relatives know that I am MSM, and they will approach me to have sex with them.

When I go out looking for sex with other men, there are certain things you can say to let another man know you'd like to have sex with him. For example you can ask another man: "Would you like to eat ice cream tonight?" This sounds like you are asking about oral sex, but it can mean any kind of sex. Or you can ask a man: "Would you like to squeeze the water bottle?" That means a hand job or mutual masturbation. But actually any kind of conversation can lead to sex, you don't have to use special words. If you follow the conversation, then you will find out whether it will lead to sex. It is not the words which are most important, it depends on how you say them.

I don't worry a lot about violence against MSM, because I think it is quite rare. I have heard a few times when MSM have been bashed or got in a fight because they are MSM, but I don't think it happens often. One situation that happened to me was when I had sex with another man, and then he wanted to be paid by me. I said, "Why

que se enteraron que yo era HSH. Creo que el 90 por ciento de mis amigos todavía me apoyan, y sólo un 10 por ciento dejaron de ser mis amigos.

La manera en que yo conozco a otros hombres para el sexo depende de la situación. A veces, salgo a buscar a un hombre para tener sexo con él, y algunas veces los hombres simplemente se me acercan. A menudo, durante los festivales y días festivos, cuando salgo, los hombres se me acercan para tener sexo con ellos. O yo puedo encontrar a alguien con sólo el hecho de mirarlos, y ellos saben que por la manera en que los miro que yo quiero tener sexo con ellos. Cuando yo visito a mi familia, algunos de los hijos de mis parientes saben que yo soy HSH y se me acercan para que tenga sexo con ellos.

Cuando yo salgo a buscar sexo con otros hombres, hay ciertas cosas que uno puede decir para avisarle a otro hombre que uno quiere tener sexo con él. Por ejemplo, le puedes preguntar a otro hombre: "¿Te gustaría comer helado esta noche?" Esto suena como si le estás pidiendo sexo oral, pero puede significar cualquier tipo de sexo. También puedes preguntarle a un hombre: "¿Te gustaría apretar la botella del agua?" Eso quiere decir una jalada y masturbación mutua. Pero en verdad, cualquier tipo de conversación puede llevarte al sexo, tú no tienes que utilizar palabras especiales. Si sigues la conversación, te darás cuenta si terminará en sexo o no. No son las palabras las que son las más importantes, depende de cómo las usas.

Yo no me preocupo tanto sobre la violencia en contra de los HSH porque pienso que es bastante

should you be paid money when you were the one who got all the action?" He hit me when I said that.

I first heard about HIV during the UNTAC period. I learnt about the risk of getting HIV from having sex with other men from NGOs that organized special campaigns to inform MSM about the risk of HIV. They organized meetings and invited MSM to come and get education about this sort of HIV transmission, and how to protect themselves. They also trained MSM at the meetings so that the MSM could teach their friends the same information they had learnt.

I know that you can use a condom to protect yourself against getting infected with HIV when you have sex, but I would not have sex with a man who I know has HIV, even if he agrees to use a condom. I can't explain why, that is just how I feel.

I would like to see international organizations in Cambodia organize public campaigns so that all MSM are aware of the need to use condoms when they have sex. There are still a lot of MSM who refuse to use a condom when they have sex, because they say it stops them from "fulfilling their needs."

raro. He escuchado algunas veces cuando unos HSH han sido golpeados o de alguna pelea porque son HSH, pero no pienso que pasa a menudo. Una situación que me pasó fue cuando tuve sexo con otro hombre y luego quería que yo le pagara. Le dije: "¿Por qué debería de pagarte dinero cuando fuiste tú el que tuvo toda la acción?" El me golpeó cuando dije eso.

La primera vez que escuché sobre el VIH fue durante el periodo de UNTAC. Yo aprendí sobre el riesgo de adquirir el VIH a través de tener sexo con otros hombres por las campañas especiales organizadas por ONGs que informaban a HSH sobre el riesgo del VIH. Ellos organizaban reuniones e invitaban a HSH para que llegaran y recibieran información sobre este tipo de transmisión del VIH, y cómo protegerse asimismo. Ellos también entrenaban a HSH en las reuniones para que los HSH pudieran enseñarle a sus amigos la misma información que habían aprendido.

Yo sé que tú puedes usar un condón para protegerte a ti mismo para no adquirir el VIH cuando tienes sexo, pero yo no tendría sexo con un hombre que yo sé que tiene el VIH, aunque él esté de acuerdo en usar condón. No puedo explicarlo porqué, sólo que eso es lo que siento.

Me gustaría ver que organizaciones internacionales en Camboya organicen campañas públicas para que todos los HSH estén conscientes de la necesidad de usar condones cuando tienen sexo. Todavía hay muchos HSH



Photograph courtesy of the authors.

My name is Serasanit. I was born in Battambang province, near the Thai border, but I've lived in Phnom Penh since I was ten years old. I never had to tell people that I desired other men. Other people always recognized it in me. In our society, boys and girls act differently from a young age. I looked like a boy but I acted like a girl, and I preferred playing with girls from as early as I can remember. I wear my hair long, like a woman. When I was ten years old my parents became very angry and tried to change my behavior. I didn't change, and when I was thirteen, I explained to them that the way I acted was natural for me. It was not something I had chosen. It took a long time, but many people have changed their attitudes since I was thirteen, and now more people accept and appreciate people like me.

For a long time I didn't try to meet other men for sex. I had heard about HIV and other diseases, and I was afraid of having sex with another man in case I caught a disease. As I grew older I started having sex with men for money. It wasn't something that I planned to do, but when I started going out dressed as a woman, men assumed I was a sex worker. They thought I was beautiful and would ask me to have sex with them for money. Foreigners would sometimes give me \$50 for having sex, but a local man would usually only pay about \$5. I dress as a woman on special occasions, like when I go out to look for clients, or when there is a special MSM event or a party.

que se resisten a usar condones cuando tienen sexo porque dicen que "no los dejan llenar sus necesidades".

Mi nombre es Serasanti. Nací en la Provincia de Battambang, cerca de la frontera con Tailandia, pero he vivido en Phnom Penh desde que tenía diez años. Yo nunca he tenido que decirle a otras personas que deseo a otros hombres. Las otras personas siempre lo reconocen en mí. En nuestra sociedad, los chicos y las chicas actúan de diferente manera desde temprana edad. Yo parezco como un chico pero actúo como una chica y prefería jugar con niñas desde muy pequeña, desde que tengo memoria. Llevo mi cabello largo, como una mujer. Cuando yo tenía 10 años mis padres se molestaron mucho y trataron de cambiar mi comportamiento. Yo no cambié, y cuando tenía trece años les expliqué que la manera en que yo actuaba era natural para mí. No era algo que yo había escogido. Tomó mucho tiempo, pero mucha gente ha cambiado su actitud desde que tenía trece años y ahora más gente acepta y aprecia a personas como yo.

Durante mucho tiempo no intenté conocer a hombres para el sexo. Yo había escuchado sobre el VIH y otras enfermedades y yo tenía miedo de tener sexo con otros hombres por eso de coger una enfermedad. A medida que fui creciendo empecé a tener sexo con hombres por dinero. No fue algo que yo planifiqué hacer,

There are “hotspots” in Phnom Penh where I know a lot of the clients go, and I know I can make money from sex if I go there. The clients usually ask for “massage boom boom,” which can mean different kinds of sex. Sometimes I will use words like “bros sart” meaning handsome man, or “sexy boy” when I approach a man, if I want to pick him up as a client. Usually the way the clients speak to me is quite straight forward. A client will approach me and ask me will I have sex with him if he pays me. There is a term which sex workers use when there are no clients around, which is “clap clau.” It’s the same meaning as if you have an empty bowl, and you turn it upside down to show that it is empty.

A big problem for MSM in my country is that the legal system doesn’t offer us any protection. Sometimes clients will have sex with me and refuse to pay. Or else I will agree to go somewhere with a client to have sex, and when we arrive there is a whole group of men waiting to have sex with me. There is nothing I can do to escape, and I have to have sex with all the men. We call this “bauk” which means “plus” in English. It is another term for gang rape. There is nothing a sex worker can do if a group of men decide that they want “bauk”. The police never offer any help, no matter what happens to an MSM sex worker.

Some of my clients are men who normally have sex with women, but want to try something different. I think the reason for this is that most Cambodian women don’t have the practical skills

pero cuando empecé a salir vestida de mujer, los hombres suponían que yo era una trabajadora sexual. Ellos pensaban que yo era hermosa y me pedían que tuviera sexo con ellos por dinero. Los extranjeros a veces me daban \$50 por tener sexo con ellos, pero el hombre local a menudo solamente paga unos \$5. Yo me visto de mujer en ocasiones especiales, como cuando salgo a buscar clientes, o cuando hay un evento especial o fiesta de HSH.

Hay lugares “calientes” en Phnom Penh donde yo sé que van muchos clientes y yo sé que con el sexo puedo hacer dinero si voy allá. Los clientes por lo general piden el “masaje boom boom”, lo que puede significar diferentes cosas en el sexo. A veces utilizo palabras como “*bros sart*”, que quiere decir hombre guapo, o “chico sexy”, cuando me acerco a un hombre, si es que quiero levantármelo como cliente. Usualmente la manera en que los clientes me hablan es de una forma directa. Un cliente se me acerca y me pregunta si voy a tener sexo con él si me paga. Hay un término que los trabajadores sexuales usan cuando no hay clientes alrededor, el cual es: “*Clap clau*”. Es la misma cosa como si tuvieras una vasija vacía y le das vuelta para mostrar que está vacía.

Uno de los grandes problemas para los HSH en mi país es que el sistema legal no ofrece ninguna protección. A veces los clientes tienen sexo conmigo y se niegan a pagar. O a veces yo quedo en acuerdo de ir a algún lugar con un cliente para tener sexo, y cuando llegamos hay todo un

to fulfill all of men’s sexual desires. But MSM are more skillful at satisfying men sexually. When a man has sex with another man, he can fulfill his highest sexual desires.

I first heard about HIV in 1993, during the UNTAC period. At that time I didn’t know that you could get HIV from having sex with another man. I knew there was a blood test that could show whether you had HIV. I also heard about some information from doctors in the United States about HIV, but it was only later when non-government organizations started providing information about HIV that I found out you could get HIV from having sex with other men. I learnt that you can’t tell from a person’s appearance whether they had HIV or not, unless they were in the last stages of HIV infection and very sick.

I became afraid of having sex with men who I knew had HIV. It didn’t affect my personal relationships with other people because I knew HIV couldn’t be spread by being friends with people who have HIV, or doing everyday things with them. Now I don’t think there is any problem having sex with a person who has HIV, as long as the person uses a condom properly.

In Cambodia we need to push for equal legal rights for MSM. The government needs to understand the needs of MSM all around Cambodia, and the discrimination that we face. We should have the right to get married, and the right to work. There is a lot of discrimination

grupo de hombres que están esperando para tener sexo conmigo. No hay nada que pueda hacer para escapar, y yo tengo que tener sexo con todos los hombres. Nosotros llamamos a esto “*bauk*”, quiere decir “más” en español. Es otro término para decir violación grupal. No hay nada que una trabajadora sexual pueda hacer si un grupo de hombres decide que quieren hacer un “*bauk*”. La policía nunca ofrece ningún tipo de ayuda, sin importar qué es lo que le pase a un trabajador sexual HSH.

Algunos de mis clientes son hombres que normalmente tienen sexo con mujeres, pero quieren probar algo diferente. Yo pienso que la razón es porque la mayoría de las mujeres camboyanas no tienen las habilidades prácticas para satisfacer los deseos sexuales de los hombres. Pero los HSH tienen más habilidades para satisfacer sexualmente a los hombres. Cuando un hombre tiene sexo con otro hombre, él puede satisfacer los más altos deseos sexuales.

Yo escuché sobre el VIH por primera vez en 1993, durante el periodo de UNTAC. En ese entonces yo no sabía que tú podías adquirir el VIH al tener sexo con otro hombre. Yo sabía que había un análisis de sangre que podía mostrar si tenías el VIH. Yo también había escuchado alguna información de los médicos de Estados Unidos sobre el VIH, pero fue hasta después, cuando las organizaciones no gubernamentales empezaron a proveer información sobre el VIH que yo me enteré



J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph

que tú podías adquirir el VIH al tener sexo con otros hombres. Yo aprendí que tú no puedes decir si la persona tiene VIH basado en su apariencia, a menos que estuvieran en sus etapas finales de la infección del VIH y estuvieran muy enfermos.

Yo tenía mucho miedo de tener sexo con hombres que yo sabía que tenían el VIH. No afectó las relaciones personales con otras personas porque yo sabía que el VIH no se podía transmitir por ser amigos con personas que yo sabía que tenían el VIH, o al hacer cosas cotidianas con ellos. Ahora yo no pienso que haya algún problema al tener sexo con una personas que tiene el VIH, siempre y cuando la persona utilice un condón adecuadamente.

En Camboya nosotros necesitamos presionar por la equidad de los derechos legales para los HSH. El gobierno necesita comprender las necesidades de los HSH en todo Camboya, y la discriminación que enfrentamos. Nosotros deberíamos de tener el derecho a casarnos, y el derecho al trabajo. Existe mucha discriminación de los HSH que intentan encontrar trabajo. Mucha gente viene a Phnom Penh a buscar trabajo en la industria de la fábrica de ropa, pero yo no pude encontrar un trabajo así porque tengo cabello largo y actúo como una mujer. Yo no puedo esconder mi identidad cuando estoy en público. Las personas saben que soy un HSH cuando me conocen y nadie me da trabajo.

against MSM who try to find jobs. Many people in Cambodia come to Phnom Penh to get a job in the garment factories, but I couldn't get a job like that because I have long hair and act like a woman. I can't hide my identity when I am in public. People know that I am MSM when they meet me, and no one would employ me. A few MSM are able to get jobs working in beauty parlors or as hairdressers. If I could choose a job, I would like to work in an NGO to teach people about sexual health and HIV. I am happy that information about MSM in Cambodia will be published in a magazine in the United States, but we also need to publish the same information in Cambodia.

Pocos HSH pueden conseguir trabajo en los salones de belleza o como estilistas. Si yo pudiera escoger un trabajo, a mí me gustaría trabajar en una ONG para enseñarle a las personas sobre la salud sexual y el VIH. Yo estoy contenta de que información sobre los HSH en Camboya se publicará en una revista en Estados Unidos, pero nosotros también necesitamos publicar la misma información en Camboya.

bypass
Andra Simons

stars on his torso
i kiss each

floating under dawn's thigh
two indigo lagoons in
pale african shore stones
lying on cool tensions
during the hour
waters do not move
 a border stitched
through the centre
 of his breast
he lets my brown fingers
emigrate settle that spot
no longer harbouring
him cut out pierced
in the early heat turning
he has been opened
sealed barbed away
from me

he sails

Week of the Dog
Andra Simons

i. 50,000 Dogs Killed in China.

here in london, during that week
i on the southern end of
the porcelain tub, he on the northern
our blue walls reflecting off the still clear water
we care not for summer shortage
steal we do, guiltless moments
highbury humming around us
the water grows to chill
seven days our bodies lie baptized
silent underneath
he lathers and washes my mess of hair
i shudder under the jug.

ii. Forecasters Expect Seven Atlantic Hurricanes.

shrivelled this morning and rinsed out
onto the floor from the bath too deep for one
flows a river dampening and staining my feet
canine red, i howl as i shiver dry.

Floating-by-night

Andra Simons

For g.c.

One night before you left me behind
to deal with the coming storms of summer
you opened up and took hold of all, grasping tight.
You placed me there and wept.

As moons pass I swell and rot in our wide bed.
Floating on my back I can see through the black,
you left me here with everything.

Man In a Bind

Semugoma

He gazed down at his daughter, marvelling. A tiny human being, sleeping now, yet a human being that was perfect, in every detail. Beautiful, like her mother, he thought. A finger touched the smooth skin, traced the chin to the earlobe. The child did not wake. She was perfect.

In that moment he felt his despair lifting. The frustration stilled, for a moment. There was nothing as perfect, beautiful, as wonderful as the daughter that he was so carefully holding in his arms. And he knew it, with a clarity like a knife cutting through the darkness in his mind.

Someone coughed behind him.

Carefully, gently, not to wake the sleeping baby, he laid her in the crib, pulled the covers over her, and the mosquito net. She turned in her sleep. A little moo to the mouth, and back to slumber. He smiled down at her.

“I have told the Criminal Investigations Department to look for homosexuals, lock them up and charge them,” Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda (Sept. 1999)¹

Slowly, he turned to face the woman.

She smiled at him for a moment, sharing his awe. Then the eyes dropped. She must not look him too long in the eye. She was an African woman; he was her husband.

She was beautiful, he mused, fittingly beautiful for a man of his status. Younger than him, of course, and well taught in the customs. A perfect wife for him.

She was a woman, through and through. And as such, unattractive, undesirable to him.

He shivered, involuntarily.

“God created us like this, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI), Let Us Live In Peace” (Aug. 2007)²

For a moment, he felt pity for her. She was in a bind. Younger than him, an arranged marriage, a husband she had to respect, by custom, and by law, and the husband simply did not desire her.

It would have been better if she had given him a son, he thought grimly, pushing aside political correctness.

He did not desire her. The child was a blessing, better it had been a son, to assure him of an heir. But the child was not male, and he could not bring himself to sleep with the woman. Not again.

He knew he would have to, eventually. It was inevitable. He needed a son. Culture, custom, the clan demanded a son, sons. But not now...

He shivered again, still looking at the woman with downcast eyes.

Sooner or later, she would look for a lover. Probably she would have other children, not his. This one, he was sure, this one was his. But maybe she would not have any more children. Maybe she would stick with him, have lovers, but fear to have children because her man did not touch her. She could not divorce him. Her religion would hold her to that.

“There are no rights for gays and lesbians in this country. Let them go anywhere else if they don’t want to change.”
*Nsaba Buturo, Minister of State for Ethics and Integrity, Uganda (Aug. 2007)*³

No sex? Abstinence in marriage for life? Grimly, he shook his head. The woman would get lovers. For now, maybe the child would satisfy her. For now.

But tomorrow would be different.

‘I am going out.’ He said brusquely.

She nodded, had expected it. He rarely spent much time with her these days. Seemed only to want to look at the child when they were together, not even talking much. Her ‘*Senga*’, the girl’s paternal aunt and traditional marital counsellor had advised not to push. He was the man of the house. He would do as he wished, and she was still his wife. He would come back. And he loved his daughter.

Briefly, he touched her cheek, and then was out of the house, striding purposefully.

A beautiful day outside.

He loved this country, this city, he thought, inhaling deeply. Kampala, always beautiful to his eyes. Even the perennial dusting of dirt could not hide a deeper, essential beauty. It was his home, and that biased him. But it was beautiful.

He had been taking a lot of walks these days, he thought, turning towards Namirembe hill. Many walks. Just not able to stay at home. He knew the woman suspected that he had a woman on the side. A woman. He laughed, grimly.

He walked briskly, enjoying the exercise. The steep climb. There were few vehicles on the road. It was tarmacked, a grey ribbon disappearing round a corner of the hill. Trees, and shrubs, and green, everywhere. Few of them planned, or planted, just a remnant of the abundant, luxurious growth that was Kampala’s natural clothing.

Namirembe hill. The air was pure, clear; the view breathtaking. A cathedral hill, like many of the others that made up the original seven hills of Kampala. For some reason, religious groups had taken the major hill tops. Namirembe was for the Anglicans. The imposing red burnt brick of St. Paul’s Cathedral a prominent feature at the summit.

But it was not the cathedral which drew him. He rarely entered its holy interior. Maybe because he felt too unholy. He was an Anglican, at least nominally.

What drew him to the hill was the huge view, in the middle of the city.

To one side, the valley stretched out to the west horizon. A huge hollow, truly an expanse of proportions. The sun would soon be slanting down upon it. Not even the clouds on some days could limit the breathtaking vista. And he came here often. Very often.

To the east was the city. The city of Kampala, the valleys that made up the original settlement. On Old Kampala hill, the bulk of the new mosque glittered cream and bronze in the sun. He could not see the Catholic cathedral, Rubaga, behind him.

His eyes swept over the few buildings that he could see, to the valley floors. The great valleys which more than make up Kampala now. In their depths were the slums, as befitted such hovels. Slums, he thought, his eyes narrowing as he looked out to Kisenyi. Slums, the slums where he used to hunt for sex before. Furtive, hurried, encounters of a darker kind.

He knew he could get drugs. Any kind there. He had got them to pay for the sex, sometimes.

Eyes were drawn like magnets. The place he always stared at.

He could not see the house from this far. It was a hovel, more or less. One of the slum houses. Mud and brick, low lying; when it rained the valley floor flooded. Residents had to move out of their hovels. Every time, every day it rained. The sun was not much better.

There. He could see the steeple of the church nearby. That was the marker. Next to it, there. That is where he was now.

The man thought about him. The boy that he loved.

He had met him when he had been on the hunt for sex in the slums. He knew he was a prostitute. A very proud prostitute.

“Homosexuals should absolutely not be included in Uganda’s HIV/AIDS framework.” Martin Sempa. Ugandan pastor, HIV Abstinence activist, Moralistic, advisor to Uganda AIDS Programme. (Sept. 2007)⁴

They had had sex. They had, more than once. He had paid for it.

But then, he had come back. Again, and again.

He had fallen in love with a prostitute. A cheap boy prostitute of the slums of Katwe in Kampala. And he found that the boy had fallen in love with him.

He shivered with worry. These days, when they made love, the man wanted to take the boy with him. Give him a home, a nice suburban place. He could save up and do it.

But the boy, he was a man. An African man. Stubborn, nothing of the lack of pride the other boys had had. He was now doing it for love.

He refused the money. He was a man. He refused to be kept, like a woman, he had said, arrogantly. And he refused to move to a nice tidy place.

The man could understand. After all, he was also African. Ugandan too. Yet, he could not understand. He was used to the desperate, money grabbing need of rent boys. A desperate, need-driven poverty. Any other boy would have jumped at the chance to get out of the slums, leave behind the need to sell his body for food and shelter.

This boy insisted that he wanted a job, a job where he could earn money, and support himself. A job that he could not get for him. He had no qualifications, no language abilities, nothing, but a pride in being what he was. A man.

The man stared off into space. Lost in thought. The beauty of the early afternoon was lost to him. Far to the east, rain clouds rose, thickened. A hope, a threat; promise of rain in the air.

A crow cawed high above him.

He woke up from the reverie, suddenly decisive.

He would go see the boy. He needed to. He could feel his loins stirring. Anticipation. Thinking of holding his thin body close to him, feeling the leech of warmth, the glide of his skin on the boy’s smoothness. He needed him. He needed his love.

He had fallen in love with a prostitute, yes. A commercial sex worker. But it was a human being that he loved. And that love was drawing him to that place.

Resolutely, he determined, again, to take the boy out of the slums. He must. Despite everything, the risk to himself too. Being discovered, found to be gay. But he loved the boy.

Minister of Information (official government spokesman) wrote to both UNAIDS and the Uganda AIDS Commission to protest the inclusion of LGBT people in HIV/AIDS initiatives and coordination mechanisms. (Nov. 2004)⁵

He would take him from the slums. Beg. Persuade him. He would get him a job. He would get him one, because it was simply impossible for the man to go into the slums so often.

But go he did, thinking of a warm body, the feel of another man in his hands, moulding into his hard curves, shivering with ecstasy. He was going to see his man.

¹ Lock up gays, says Ugandan president <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/460893.stm> Accessed 11 October 2007

² Homosexuals demand acceptance in society <http://www.mask.org.za/article.php?cat=uganda&id=1665>
Accessed 11 October 2007

³ Dr James Nsaba Buturo advises homosexuals to emigrate, calling their acts “shameful, abominable and un-godly.” <http://www.mask.org.za/article.php?cat=uganda&id=1682> Accessed 11 October 2007

⁴ “It is a crime, and when you are trying to stamp out a crime you don’t include it in your programmes,” <http://www.plusnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=73931> Accessed 2 September 2007

⁵ “Government warns UNAIDS over gays,” The Daily Monitor newspaper, 29 November 2004.



J. Diaz, “Untitled,” 2007, digital photograph

Measuring Gay Rights In Post-Apartheid South Africa

Xavier Livermon

In 1996, South Africa became the first country in the world to enshrine protections on the basis of sexual orientation into its constitution. Nine years later, the Constitutional Court ruled that the state had a duty to extend the rights of legal marriage to same-sex couples. In 2006, same-sex marriage became legal in South Africa, making South Africa one of only four countries worldwide (the others being Belgium, Spain and Canada) to offer legal marital rights to same-sex couples on a national basis. In between the historic constitutional clause and the ruling allowing same-sex marriage a number of other legal milestones were reached in post-apartheid South Africa including the right to place same-sex partners on health insurance policies and adoption rights. The end result is a progressive legal code concerning sexual citizenship that sets South Africa apart, not only on the African continent, but also around the world.

However, progressive legislation does not always transfer into actual rights and benefits for queer South Africans on the ground. Legislation has not obliterated homophobia. Furthermore, stark economic, racial, and cultural divisions continue to linger in post-apartheid South Africa. Activists and scholars are divided on just what benefit, if any the progressive legislation has had on the daily lives of queer South Africans. In this short essay, I explore the meaning of the law for a group of queer black South Africans, whose lives are often at the center of such debates.

I approach these issues as an outsider, but as an outsider with a belief in the interconnectedness of human experience on the one hand, and a strong orientation toward Pan-African and African Diaspora politics on the other. As a young child growing up in the 1980s I was invested in the anti-apartheid struggle. I remember writing an essay in the seventh grade speaking of my hope to live long enough to witness a free South Africa. I identified with what I knew to be a similar experience of racial oppression. Little did I know that my work with the Peace Corps would bring me to Southern Africa. Consequently, I was to experience first hand the

transformations brought about by the collapse of apartheid. At the same time, I also began exploring and becoming more confident in my sexual identity. In contrast to other African countries I had visited, I found a vibrant and relatively open gay culture in South Africa. The friends I met while serving in the Peace Corps facilitated my own coming out process, allowing me to see examples of men negotiating the complex social codes involved in the intersection of racial and sexual identity.

Years later, when I began graduate studies toward a doctorate in African Diaspora Studies, I merged my scholarly, political, and personal interests into a project examining youth culture in post-apartheid South Africa. My research required me to be present in township communities across South Africa. While I live most of the year in the United States, the observations I make in this essay come from over ten years of experience of living and working in South Africa. Along the way South Africa has become a second home for me, full of familiar faces and spaces of comfort.

That sense of familiarity and comfort was slightly shaken by an experience nearly three years ago when myself and a group of friends, including my then-boyfriend, were subject to a homophobic attack while on a visit to my boyfriend's childhood home three hours outside of Johannesburg.

Specific places that cater to black gay township residents are not abundant. There are a few places in the major townships in places like Soweto and Mmamelodi, but for the most part, township gay residents go to "straight" places and carve out queer spaces for themselves in these establishments.



All photographs courtesy of the author.



childhood friends, and myself decided on a night on the town. We began the evening with a small and impromptu house party then we headed to the local watering hole to dance and meet up with friends. Like many township bars (universally called shebeens in local South African parlance) this place was nothing fancy. It was a converted home, where the living area served as the main dance floor/congregating area, while the kitchen area served as the bar. Much of the action occurred outside where people smoked, drank and had an opportunity to escape the loud and blaring music going on inside.

At some point in the evening, our group of friends became the target of homophobic name-calling that escalated. Sensing the surprisingly unfriendly vibe, I left, only to miss what escalated into a physical confrontation whereby one man held my boyfriend while the other bashed a beer bottle over his head. In many of my travels and experiences in South African townships, the presence of gay men at local bars was a tolerated and accepted part of life. What exactly had transpired to turn an uneventful evening into a homophobic attack was still unknown to me, but I did know that I wanted to pursue some kind of justice.

Once everyone returned home, I made a point of taking pictures of my boyfriend's injuries. Switching immediately into the role of investigator, I interviewed him and his friends about what had transpired in my absence. Then I phoned the police. In South Africa, the police are notoriously inefficient and

The absence of safe and accessible spaces for black township queers is one complaint I have often heard over the years in South Africa. In addition, there is a thriving house party circuit that attempts to compensate for the lack of space. Gay parties in townships are known for being elaborate fun affairs that straights will sometimes attend.

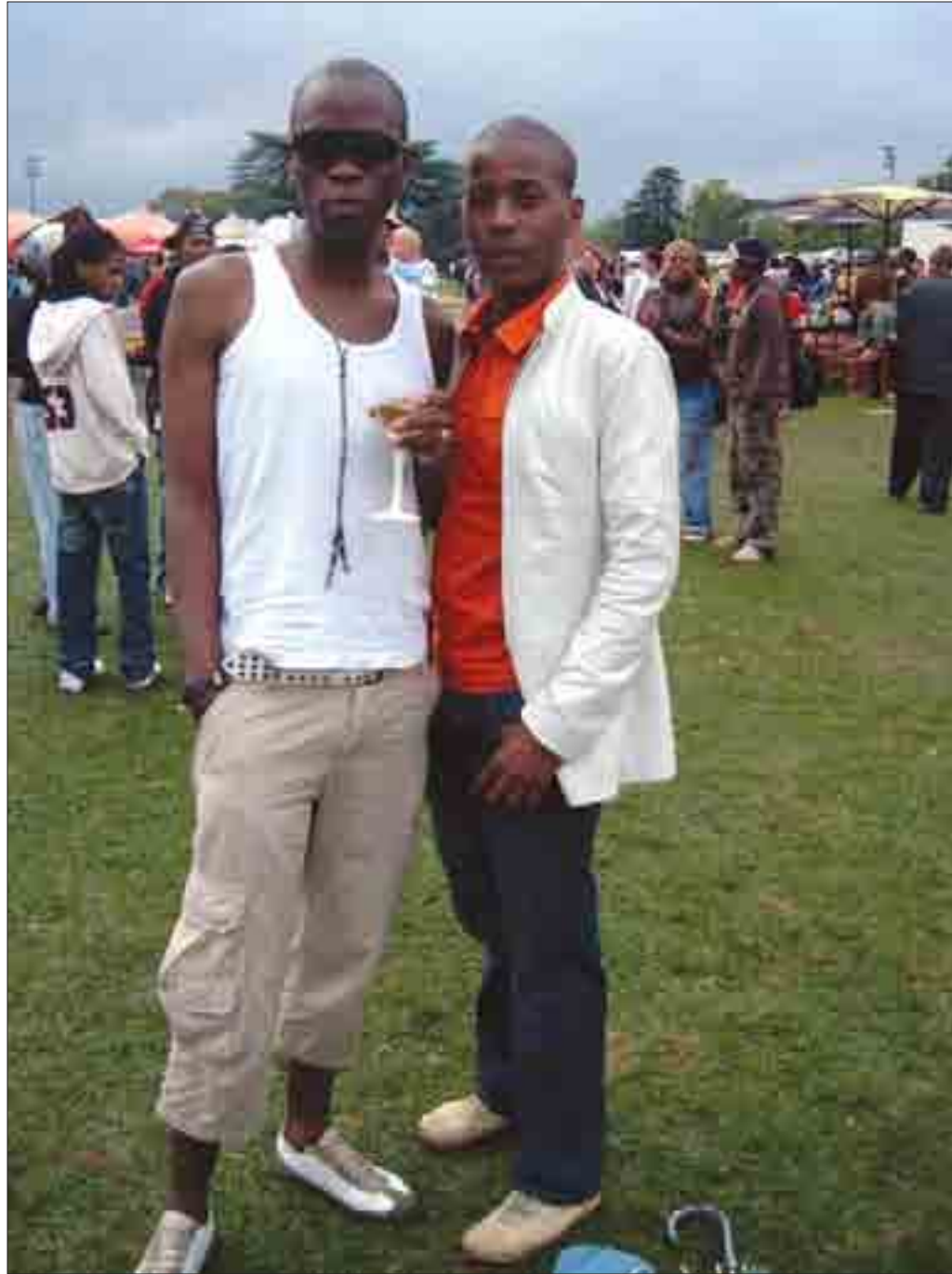
After our bus ride from Johannesburg, a group consisting of my boyfriend, some of his

are listed by many human rights observers as being the largest impediment to successfully prosecuting crime in the country. When the policeman arrived at the home where we were staying, we received little support or encouragement to press charges. In fact I felt as if we, the black queer folk, were being treated with suspicion.

The next day, I asked my boyfriend if he was still interested in pressing charges. He assured me that he was. I accompanied him to the police station so that we could bring charges against the perpetrators of this crime. However, it became clear to me that the police in this small town knew the perpetrator of the crime personally. As part of the investigation, we (the victims of the crime) were actually brought to the perpetrator's home to identify him. Ostensibly the police would be there to protect us, but I began to imagine the horror of the possibility that we would be seen by the perpetrator. Fortunately for us, he was not home. However, if we had lived in the community on a permanent basis, how would this affect our safety? Would the police be there to protect us if members of the community decided that we were wrong in pressing charges? What if the perpetrator or his associates tracked us down? I shuddered at the thought and began to realize that in a tight knit community such as this, reporting a crime was an act of bravery.

Later in the day, we went to the doctor to have my boyfriend's wounds inspected further. We requested that she write up a report that we could take to the police or give to the gay right's organization once we arrived in Johannesburg. She refused, stating that she did not have time to waste a day in court testifying. She would lose too much business and would not be compensated if she had to miss time off from her practice.





The final indignation consisted of a group of local black queer men who blamed my boyfriend for being too outlandish, too comfortable in his gayness, thus drawing unnecessary attention to himself. “You were too loud,” they said, commenting on his assertiveness, and outness. Needless to say I felt that we were alone. Unhelpful police, indifferent doctors, and “friends” who blamed the victim left me feeling powerfully hopeless.

The rest of the weekend was spent at home. We dared not go out at night. The attacker(s) succeeded in affecting our mobility. Their act of terror was not simply a message to us, but one to all queers in the community not to be “too loud.”

When we arrived in Johannesburg I called the Gay and Lesbian Equality Project to ask them to follow up on the case, only to be told there was nothing the organization could do, since we did not have a police case number. We had no idea we needed one. We were not even sure there was a case, and we certainly could not expect to call the police and get any information from them. I thought to myself if I, a relatively knowledgeable well-educated person could not get justice for my boyfriend, how could those of lesser means or access?

I reflect on this experience as I consider the momentous changes that have occurred in just a little over a decade throughout South Africa. Currently there is a dearth of community organizations and community centers easily accessible to black township queers. Health information, and treatment, particularly concerning HIV/AIDS is not always easily accessible to these communities. The heterosexualization of HIV/AIDS on the African continent has meant that a silence exists on the epidemic in queer communities. There is little prevention information that specifically targets MSM transmission. Stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS remains particularly acute in black communities and works along with homophobia to disenfranchise black queers. On a very basic level, unemployment rates among black youth are particularly acute, and this affects the access to basic life needs.



However, I would contest the notion that the legislation enacted is only for the wealthy and the white. The poor and the black also benefit from increased citizenship and participation in civic society. That my boyfriend felt he had the right to pursue a case against his attackers speaks to a shift in the understanding of rights to citizenship among black township queers. The key for a more integrated and progressive rights movement concerning sexuality would be to effectively integrate the narratives of black South Africans into political movements for equality. This would work toward both a more inclusive definition of rights in relationship to non-heteronormative sexualities, as well as a definition of rights that recognizes how economic inequality hampers efforts toward equity. Ultimately, queer black South Africans are not singularly defined or contained by either their sexuality, racial, or economic status. “Gay rights” movements that recognize this have the best opportunity of being truly transformative.



Condensation

Andy Quan

it has rained all week like a broken faucet that drips and stops and drips

it is Sunday which is never busy except when the rain drives people inside into waiting arms

at the bathhouse I peer into rooms sweat forming at the base of my back bare feet grate carpet

here he is with me all sweat and glow my chest against his wide back we rock one branch in the wind

my finger's indentations in his thigh I am fascinated by his mouth changing shapes in response to pleasure

he asks me why I'm here I tell him it is because you are away returning in twenty days from Shanghai which you write is damp and cool and crowded

and we called it kaputs quits no longer

and because I've been trying to pretend I'm healing and that you are not all that I think of

he tells me it is because his lover returned to Hong Kong after five years for work and family and sometimes it is nice to hold someone and be held and why do we need reasons

and he tells me lately because he and his friends have been saying these days how you hardly ever get what you want

we thank each other I drench my body which is moist and dry

and I miss you and I do not miss you and my body feels good and I am still in love



Youssef Nabil, "Not Afraid to Love - Paris", 2005

Four Poets from the Philippines

Aubade

Rodrigo V. Dela Peña Jr.

Window as vantage point, dawn glides
stealthily into the city still asleep:

pale sliver of light barely peeking
from the world's razor edge.

All night, we fumbled in bed, our arms
errant and casually tangled, as though

one moment our bodies didn't connect
would instantly mean estrangement.

Darkness, which has muffled random noises,
melts away in half-tones, like black velvet

thinning gradually into air.
Encouraged by outside's subtle sheen,

my fingers venture into
the cartography of your flesh:

from the halo of your navel
to your sloping chest in rhythmic rise

and fall, from the hollow between
your clavicles my hands sweep down

to your open palms, which I clutch
and bury with an embrace.

It dawns on me what daybreak means —
isn't it the time when the earth's arc

we inhabit faces the sun sideways,
when night and day are weaved into one?

Perhaps we can be part of this momentary
merging, illusion of us as Siamese

twins: conjoined, inseparable, *whole*.
Exactly how Plato pictured lovers

who've found each other, one continuous
being. Undisturbed, you know nothing

of the reverie I've lost myself in
while I gaze blankly outside. Our window frames

an ambergris sky, how magically
the hour unfolds its spectrum of colors —

light shifting from pewter to faintly
glowing ash, a crescent of topaz

emerging from the east. After this,
the day will begin to ramble

towards lush disorder, a jumble of details
all in blazing splendor. After this,

we will diverge into a *You* and an *I*,
each drifting to one's own corner, alone.

Let me relish this present first.
I tighten my grip and you stir.

Don't wake up yet, don't leave; for now
everything's enough as it is.



J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph

Caption

Michael Carlo C. Villas

what caption is there
for me to write
when your photograph
pronounces well
the skin's secret:
contours formed
to the mold of the light
where it meets darkness —
shadowy silences
between the click and flash
of my camera —

and only the pixels
of your oiled geography
shaped without censure,
curve of your chest,
strength of your limbs
in a relentless pose,
viscous visual
 filled for the moment
 hollow of my soul?

Burning / Pagkatupok

Rogerick Fontanilla Fernandez

For S.

He denounces dreams
about water. *God is fire.*

Fire is life. It is no wonder that
on his reflection of the Most Sacred Love,

he was consoled repeatedly
by the wriggling tongue of fire,

until his lips blossomed
into fullness – *My God! My God!*

His heart was filled with glory.



J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph

Para kay S.

Itinatakwil niya ang mga panaginip
na tungkol sa tubig. *Ang Diyos ay apoy.*

Ang apoy ay bubay. Hindi kataka-takang
sa kaniyang paglirip sa Banal na Pag-ibig,

pinuspos siya ng kumikiwal-kiwal
na dilang apoy, paulit-ulit,

hanggang mamukadkad ang mga talulot
na labi – *Diyos ko! Diyos ko!*

Ang puso niya'y napuno ng luwalhati.

Nameless

Bryan Mari Argos

stranger,
what name
shall I call you
when I have read
sweet verses
from your eyes
and have decided
to read more
from pages
tucked far
beyond
your gaze?

what, stranger?
what name shall I
call you when
the lights have
gone and
i must read you
with my fingertips?

Tell me
now,
stranger,
before I am
silenced
by the flow
of your
poetry.

shall I call you

Manuel?
Christian?
Luis?

what, stranger?
what?



J. Diaz, "Untitled," 2007, digital photograph



Homophobia Kills

Fernando Olivos

If they give the same light, why do you blow them out?

The project, EXPERIENCE: Art and Human Rights, developed two public art interventions addressing stigma and discrimination, HIV and sexual diversity in Lima, Peru in 2006. Working out of the Health, Sexuality and Human Development Unit of the Cayetano Heredia Peruvian University, Lima, in conjunction with the Dutch NGO, Hivos, the interventions were developed as an action-research pilot project to reflect upon and evaluate the role of art and its impact on the fight against discrimination and stigma, in this case in relation to HIV and sexual diversity. They would also look at the impact on those who participated.

The project was responsible for providing the institutional support to create a space for collaboration between artists, academics, activists and affected communities, as it is rare for such spaces to develop on their own. Art (and the training of artists) and human rights do not coexist



La Homofobia Mata

Fernando Olivos

Si dan la misma luz, ¿por qué la apagas?

El proyecto EXPERIENCIA: arte y derechos humanos (Unidad de Salud, Sexualidad y Desarrollo Humano de la Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia-Lima, con el apoyo de Hivos) desarrolló, a manera de proyecto piloto de investigación-acción, dos intervenciones de arte público que buscaban reflexionar y evaluar el papel del arte y su impacto en la lucha contra la discriminación y el estigma (en este caso específico asociadas al VIH y a la diversidad sexual) así como evaluar el impacto en los actores involucrados.

El proyecto se encargó de proveer la base institucional y logística para crear un espacio de colaboración entre artistas, académicos, activistas y comunidades afectadas, ya que no es común que se desarrollen naturalmente estos espacios. La formación de artista y la lucha por los derechos humanos no tienen un espacio natural de confluencia, por lo que los artistas no tienen una cabida clara en esta lucha. Siendo el estigma y la discriminación resultantes de prejuicios no fácilmente cuestionables desde lo racional, decidimos utilizar el potencial del arte, sobretudo

All photographs courtesy of the author.

naturally, leaving artists without a clear space for involvement. However, certain forms of art have great potential to apply in this area. Stigma and discrimination are the result of irrational prejudices; art can reach beyond the rational to provoke emotion, to challenge unconscious ideas, and at the same time create processes for identification with the other: empathy.

Living with HIV – Wear the T-Shirt.

The first cultural activist intervention by EXPERIENCE involved paint, volunteers and a positive message. After visiting hospitals and doing interviews and workshops with people living with HIV (PLHIV), artists and researchers reflected upon the causes and consequences of stigma and discrimination; the collective result of this process was “Living with HIV – Wear the T-Shirt.” During the intervention, project implementers burst into the door of hospitals and health clinics inviting people to wear printed T-shirts with the letters VIH (the Spanish abbreviation for HIV) imprinted upon them. Then, artists and volunteers with paintbrushes and paint arrived to enact the next action: the letter H was replaced by the DA or VO letters, changing ‘VIH’ into “VIDA” (LIFE) or “VIVO” (ALIVE or TO LIVE). This action and performance emphasized above all that a person living with HIV is a person who is living.

Homophobia Kills

Homophobia Kills was the second intervention carried out by EXPERIENCE and it was decided to be held on Peru’s Day Against Homophobia.

en algunas de sus formas, ya que puede llegar a niveles no racionales donde puede ayudar a confrontar emociones y retar las visiones inconscientes que estigmatizan, así como lograr procesos de empatía, de identificación con el otro.

Vivo con VIH – Ponte la Camiseta

La primera intervención fue *Vivo con VIH- Ponte la Camiseta*. Esta se produjo con la participación de artistas, activistas PVVS e investigadores; quienes, luego de visitar hospitales, realizar entrevistas y talleres con PVVS, generaron un proceso de reflexión colectiva sobre las causas y consecuencias del estigma y la discriminación, el resultado de todo este proceso fue *Vivo con VIH- Ponte la Camiseta*. . La intervención irrumpía en hospitales y centros de salud invitando a las personas a colocarse camisetas impresas con las letras VIH a manera de sello; luego los artistas y voluntarios con pinceles y pintura entraban en escena: la letra H era reemplazada por las sílabas DA ó VO, convirtiendo ‘VIH’ en ‘VIDA’ ó ‘VIVO’, y subrayando así que una persona que vive con VIH es ante todo una persona que vive.

La Homofobia Mata

La segunda intervención de activismo cultural que realizó EXPERIENCIA fue *La Homofobia Mata*. Esta se desarrolló de Febrero a Mayo de 2006 con la participación de artistas plásticos y escénicos, activistas LGBT e investigadores y evaluadores del proceso, además del apoyo de un Comité Asesor integrado por representantes de agrupaciones y colectivos de defensa de los



While the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) is commemorated elsewhere in the world on May 17, the day that WHO removed homosexuality from its list of illnesses, in Peru, it is commemorated on May 31 as the “Day Against Violence and Hate Crimes Against Sexual Minorities.” It was on this date, as noted by the Final Report of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Peru, that nine transvestites were assassinated in 1989 in Tarapoto City in San Martin State in Peru’s Amazonian area. Members of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement killed them as part of their strategy to eradicate any they considered undesirable. So, on this day, Peruvian activists seek to highlight and condemn all forms



derechos LGBT, los cuales proporcionaron, además de un vínculo fuerte con toda la comunidad, el marco conceptual y el soporte de la actividad. Fue así que en conjunto y cada quién dando su experiencia y punto de vista se logró crear esta intervención.

En el Perú el día de Lucha contra la Homofobia (*IDAHO*, que se conmemora en el mundo el 17 de Mayo –día en el que se eliminó a la homosexualidad de la lista de enfermedades de la OMS) tiene un carácter particular. La fecha en la que se conmemora es el 31 de Mayo y se le conoce como el Día Contra La Violencia y los Crímenes de Odio Hacia las Minorías Sexuales. Esta fecha está registrada en el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación del Perú como el día en que se cometió el asesinato de 9 travestis en la ciudad de Tarapoto (en el departamento de San Martín, en la amazonía del Perú) en 1989 a manos del Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru, en su plan de erradicación de indeseables. En esta Conmemoración lo que se quería es resaltar y condenar la violencia en todas sus formas, desde la física (con la muerte como su consecuencia más grave) hasta la psicológica, la del día a día, que conlleva también, muchas veces, una muerte social.

Con el marco conceptual creado en las reuniones de grupo con el comité asesor es que nació *La Homofobia Mata*. Utilizando símbolos tradicionales peruanos para expresar dolor y honrar a los muertos, a los desaparecidos, es que



of violence, from physical (where death is the most serious consequence) to psychological, the daily violence that saps the life from us over and over on a daily basis.

“Homophobia Kills” was born during the meetings of an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of groups and associations that advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights. In addition to providing a strong link with the community, the group provided the conceptual framework for the intervention. Starting in February 2006, the project worked with artists, performing artists, LGBT activists, researchers and evaluators and advisory committee members gathering together their experiences and viewpoints. Each part of the intervention – materials, diffusion strategies – was designed collaboratively; each activity and symbol was discussed, considered and consulted upon.



se decidió organizar una Marcha – Romería en completo silencio, con procesión de ropa “de los desaparecidos” y la velación de la ropa “a falta de un cuerpo a quién llorar”, con una vigilia, todos con ropa negra como símbolo de luto y un fin de fiesta con bandas de música de fiestas patronales, resaltando con esto la dualidad característica de la cultura andina: la presencia de los ausentes, la convivencia con los que ya no están, melancolía/alegría, muerte/vida, duelo/fiesta. Durante la marcha se entregaron a manera de “Recuerdos de Misa de Difuntos” folletos con mensajes e información alusivos.

Los artistas y representantes de las comunidades diseñaron la intervención en su conjunto, incluyendo materiales y estrategias de difusión, siendo cada acción, símbolo y paso discutido reflexionado y consultado.

El éxito de esta intervención lo vimos reflejado en lo que logramos:

- Empatía del público espectador, gente intrigada con los símbolos de luto y atraída por la música, preguntaba y se interesaba por estos hechos ocurridos durante la época del terrorismo y que se sorprendía con la homofobia que se replicaba hasta hoy, muchas veces por ellos mismos. La conciencia que se toma en esos momentos es muy difícil de olvidar.
- Apoyo de organizaciones de Derechos Humanos (Amnistía Internacional,

The result? A march utilizing Peruvian traditional symbols to express pain and to honor the dead and missing persons: a Romería [a pilgrimage] in complete silence, with a procession of garments belonging to “the missing persons.” A wake would be held for each garment “since there is no body to cry for.” They held a Vigil with everyone wearing black garments as a symbol of mourning, and ended with a celebration with the Patron’s Saints musical bands. They therefore highlighted the dual characteristics of Andean culture: those who are missing and those who are present, melancholy and joy, death and life, mourning and celebration. During the march, brochures with information and evocative messages were given out as souvenirs of the event.

The outcomes reflected the success of this intervention:

- The empathy of the audience: people were interested in the mourning symbols and attracted by the music, they asked and wanted to know about the events that took place during the period of terrorism and were surprised by the many incidents of homophobia of date.
- Support from human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and UNAIDS and Peruvian State Agencies involved with Human Rights such as the Supreme Court and the Public Ombudsman who showed solidarity through their official documents even if they didn’t participate directly.
- Groups within the LGBT community united at the march in spite of ideological and programmatic differences, demonstrating a

ONUSIDA) y de organizaciones del Estado Peruano involucradas en la defensa de derechos (Corte Suprema de Justicia, Defensoría del Pueblo) si no con su participación directa, con su solidaridad con la acción a través de documentos oficiales

- Consenso y participación de muy diversos sectores de la comunidad LGBT (unidos en la Marcha a pesar de diferencias ideológicas y programáticas) El priorizar la unión en la lucha por una causa común demostró la madurez alcanzada por las organizaciones LGBT locales y fue una muestra para todos de la fuerza que pueden tener.
- Asistencia mayor a la esperada a pesar de la hora y de que fue hecha en un día laborable en una semana de Elecciones NacionalesPresidenciales (a las 9 de la noche del martes 30 de Mayo) La convocatoria se realizó a través de los medios (se enviaron notas de prensa, información, fotos), la Web (a través de las listas de contactos de todas las organizaciones participantes) y espacios públicos (se inundó de afiches el área del recorrido, así como en espacios públicos de socialización de la comunidad LGBT)
- Buena cobertura periodística: el trabajo con prensa y medios fue fundamental Se trabajó con una profesional en comunicaciones que se encargó de los contactos y se lograron entrevistas en medios escritos e informes y reportajes en radio y TV (esto último fue todo

new level of maturity for local organisations and showing the strength that can be achieved through cooperation and consensus.

- Larger attendance than expected in spite of the hour and date, which was a working day during presidential election week (at 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 30th), proof of good publicity through the internet and public postering.
- Good media coverage through working with a communication specialist that fostered good relations with the press and media.
- Good coordination and relations with public offices responsible for permits for the march, resulting in being able to take the march through particularly symbolic spaces: Jirón de la Unión y Plaza San Martín (places of violent repression of the transvestites and MSM community who do sex work) and the Palace of Justice (where the demonstration ended with a call for justice and respect for Human Rights, and the unfurling of a gigantic flag with the phrase: Homophobia Kills).

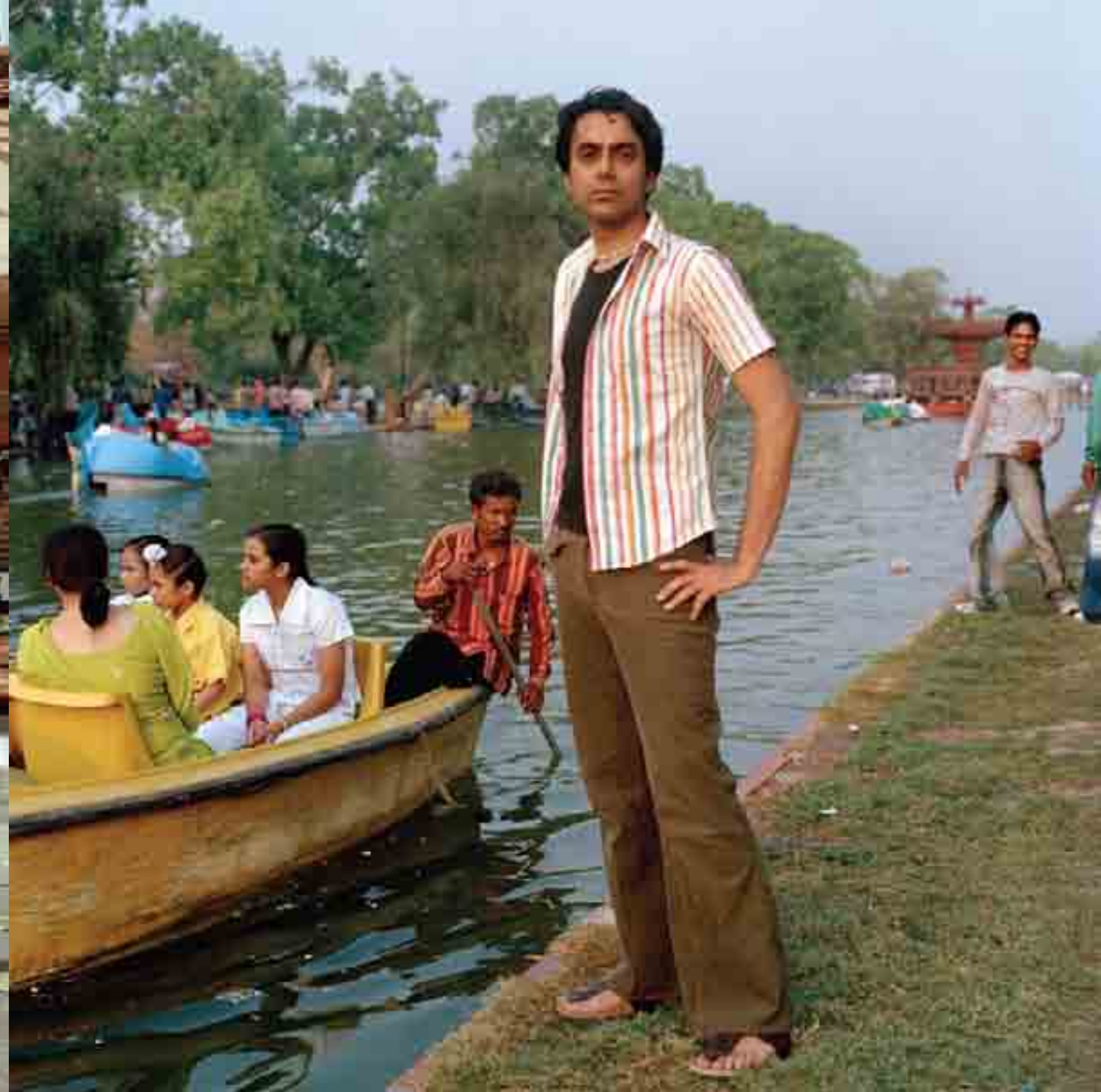
The Project organizers concluded, “It was particularly exciting and inspiring, in spite of scheduling complications and our lack of resources. The awareness raised during the processing was unforgettable. Everyone involved gave all of their strength and best efforts. We, at the project, were left forever with an image in our minds and hearts: national and municipal police officers closing down the streets so that mourning transvestites giving out flowers could walk through Lima’s Historic Downtown’s avenues.”

un éxito ya que como se mencionó anteriormente, debido a la coyuntura electoral todo estaba centrado en las elecciones)

- Buena coordinación y relación con las dependencias públicas encargadas de los permisos para las marchas y manifestaciones, pudiendo así hacer esta por lugares particularmente emblemáticos: Jirón de la Unión y Plaza San Martín (escenario de represión violenta a integrantes de la comunidad Travesti y HSH por ejercer el trabajo sexual) y Palacio de Justicia (donde terminó la marcha y se clamó por justicia y respeto a los derechos desplegando una banderola gigante en la que estaba escrita la frase LA HOMOFOBIA MATA)

Fue particularmente emocionante e inspirador, a pesar de lo complicado de la fecha de realización y los pocos recursos con los que contábamos para el desarrollo de este evento, la fuerza y ganas de todos y todas, el deseo de involucrarse y dar lo mejor de sí. En el proyecto nos quedamos con una imagen grabada para siempre en nuestras mentes y corazones: miembros de la Policía Nacional y Municipal cerrando el tránsito para que las travestis de luto y entregando flores puedan cruzar por las avenidas del Centro Histórico de Lima.







Outlawed

Le Moore

Back pushed against the soundproof wall of a movie theater, my gasps for air and deep sighs silenced, I felt his weight against me for the first time. I had fantasized about this moment from the time he walked into the bakery where we met. Friends in common had raved “there would be wild chemistry between you two!” and so, through an exchange of rather dry emails, we decided to meet for pastries. Wearing a plain red shirt, Converse shoes and dark jeans, from which the Lee label had been carefully cut, he breathed deeply and stared for a second too long when we shook hands.

That first conversation was a test for me: of concentration, of focus. Wildly attracted to him, I thought I would have to force myself to pay attention to his musings on ethics, philosophy and life. But I didn't have to; I was interested in what he had to say. Unlike previous conversations with attractive men where I fixated on their loins, imagined them naked and stole glimpses of their crotches, this was different. I was mesmerized by not only his words, but also his face: the curve of his mouth, the contours of his cheekbones, the patches of stubble imitating a five o'clock shadow (a futility), and most of all the tenderness in his brown eyes.

The tenderness remained even at this moment. Overtaken by a carnal passion, he hungrily ravished

Illegal

Le Moore

Empujado contra la pared a prueba de sonidos en un cine, mi bocanada de aire y mis profundos deseos se acallaron; sentí su peso encima de mí por primera vez. Yo había fantaseado sobre este momento desde la primera vez que entramos a la panadería donde nos conocimos. Nuestros amigos en común animados decían: “¡habrá una salvaje energía entre ustedes dos!” y así, entre intercambios de áridos emails, decidimos reunirnos para comer pastelitos. Llevaba puesto una camiseta roja, zapatos Converse y jeans oscuros cuya viñeta de Lee había sido removida con cuidado; él respiró profundamente y fijó su mirada un segundo de más cuando nos dimos la mano.

Esa primera conversación fue la prueba para mí: de conexión, de centrarse. Salvajemente atraído a él, pensé que tendría que esforzarme para poner atención a sus contemplaciones sobre la ética, la filosofía y la vida. Pero no tuve que hacerlo; yo estaba interesado en lo que tenía que decir. A diferencia de conversaciones anteriores con hombres atractivos en los que me fijaba en sus partes, los imaginaba desnudos y le daba vistazos a sus entrepierna, esto era diferente. Yo estaba anonadado, no sólo por sus palabras, pero por su cara también: las curvas de su boca, los contornos de sus pómulos, los parches de la barba sin afeitar del día (una inutilidad), y sobre todo, la ternura de sus cejas.

me all over — wandering hands went up my shirt to grope my chest and squeeze the muscles along my back. I reciprocated, much more gently, at first, and grabbed his tapered waist, darted my hands between his jeans and his boxer briefs before I too, gave into this overwhelming temptation and lifted his shirt so we stood, in the dark, bare chest to bare chest. Feeling his toned stomach against mine, I pulled him closer and our mouths explored each other's, I licked down his neck and engulfed his scent. A quiet sigh escaped his mouth right before he pulled away.

“This isn't how this is supposed to happen,” he said, almost out of breath. He smiled, biting the right portion of his bottom lip, eyes darting from side to side. “Let's go.” We left the dark movie theater, walking hand-in-hand following the orange lights lining the floor towards the exit. Still hand-in-hand, we re-entered the Bombay night, traversing the honking, speeding taxis and acclimating to the overwhelming humidity, a harbinger of the imminent Monsoon.

We walked the streets of Colaba, down the Causway, past the stately Taj hotel and the regal Gateway to India, erected to commemorate King George V's and Queen Mary's visit in 1911. Wandering through the streets, I walked twice as fast to keep up with his long strides, while all the time avoiding the scurrying rats, protruding tree roots and uneven sidewalks.

Our hands remained clasped together. I had never wandered through public streets displaying

La ternura aún permanece en este momento. Sorprendido por la pasión carnal, él me devoró—las manos vagas entraron entre mi camisa tocando mi pecho y apretando los músculos en mi espalda. Yo reciproqué, al principio mucho más suave, y cogí su delgada cintura, revoloteé mis manos entre sus jeans y su calzoncillo antes de que yo también sucumbiera a esta irresistible tentación, y levante su camisa para que pudiéramos estar de pies, en la oscuridad, con nuestros pechos desnudos. Sentía su estómago tonificado contra el mío, y lo halé más cerca de mí y nuestras bocas se exploraron entre sí, lamí su cuello y me tragué su aroma. Un callado suspiro se escapó de su boca antes de retirarlas.

“Esto no está supuesto a pasar de esta manera”, dijo, casi sin aliento. Sonríó, mordiendo la porción derecha de su labio inferior, sus ojos brincando de lado a lado. “Vayámonos”. Nos fuimos del oscuro cine, caminando mano a mano, siguiendo la línea de luces naranjas en el paso que llevaban hacia la salida. Todavía cogidos de la mano, nosotros re-entramos la noche de Bombay, atravesando la pitadera de los rápidos taxis y aclimatándonos a la insoportable humedad, un precursor de la inminente mamada.

Nosotros caminamos las calles de Colaba, sobre el Causway, pasando el majestuoso hotel Taj y el majestuoso Gateway to India, edificados en conmemoración de la visita del Rey Jorge V la Reina María en 1911. Vagando

affection. With my heart racing, the thumping was so loud to me I could barely concentrate on the conversation. I zoned out and didn't realize we had stopped in front of the Marine Drive Café Coffee Day filled with boisterous university students. He pulled me close and without warning, started kissing me, gently and affectionately. Silence blanketed the shop as heads turned to see what was going on outside. He pulled away, unphased by the stares we received, continued walking and picked up his previous thought on Aristotle and ethics.

“I just don't believe we can live following the ‘ethics’ that Aristotle taught. How can ‘ethics’ be a fluid term [a guideline?] determined by location, culture and time? Do you really think that the same situation in a different place, for example, has a different ethical response? I wonder if Plato was on to something with his view on ethics: one that propagates a set of rules we follow, no matter the place or the period? Maybe there's a middle ground of rules and suggested guidelines we should shape for ourselves ... a personal ethics?”

I wasn't paying much attention at that point. I was busy smiling and remembering that in a country where being gay is still illegal, where one can receive a fine of 10,000 rupees, 10 years in jail or death for being “caught” in a compromising position with another man, he wouldn't let go of my hand as we walked down the curving sidewalk of Marine Drive. Maybe it was the subversiveness of the act, but thinking

por las calles, yo caminaba más rápido para poder mantener el ritmo de sus zancadas, al mismo tiempo que evitamos las ratas escurridizas, las raíces salidas de los árboles y las aceras desniveladas.

Nuestras manos las mantuvimos apretadas. Yo nunca había andado por las calles públicas demostrando afección. Con mi corazón palpitando rápidamente, la palpitación era tan fuerte que a penas pude concentrarme en la conversación. Me despisté y no me di cuenta que nos detuvimos enfrente del café Marine Drive Café, lleno de estudiantes universitarios bulliciosos. Me haló y me acercó a él sin ningún aviso, empezó a besarme suavemente y con afección. El silencio invadió el café al momento que las cabezas giraban para ver lo que estaba pasando afuera. Se alejó, sin mosquearse con las miradas que recibimos, continuó caminando y siguió con el pensamiento anterior sobre Aristóteles y la ética.

“Sencillamente no puedo creer que nosotros podemos vivir siguiendo la “ética” que enseñó Aristóteles. ¿Cómo puede ser que “ética” sea un término fluido (lineamientos) determinado por la ubicación, la cultura y el tiempo? ¿En verdad piensas que la misma situación en un lugar diferente, por ejemplo, tiene un respuesta ética diferente? Me pregunto si Platón estaba en algo con sus pensamientos sobre la ética: ¿Una que propaga un grupo de reglas que nosotros seguimos sin importar el lugar ni el tiempo? Tal vez hay un lugar intermedio de

about this made me even more elated while I grasped his hand and caressed his fingers.

With the handful of men I dated in the past, I would shy away from any form of public affection: I would pretend to sneeze if a guy tried to hold my hand or cough if he tried to kiss me. I had been with these men in “liberal” cities: Los Angeles, New York, London, where people might have glanced, but not arrested you for being affectionate with another man. With this one though, I wasn’t uncomfortable; my heart was pounding, but I wanted to hold his hand, I wanted to kiss him, even if it meant dealing with people’s gawking faces and raised eyebrows. He was different. It took a friend to point out to me—he was the first other Indian man I had dated.

The other men I had been intimate with excited me physically, but in retrospect, my attraction and desire for them was not in fact pure desire at all, but rather lust. They had all been Caucasian, not that I’m saying it was a mistake to be with a white guy, but reflecting back on those encounters, something was missing. There had always been lust that brought us sweaty, carnal nights, but it was this connection with a lanky, over-philosophical Indian man that made me finally feel safe and fulfilled inside. Was it the sprinkling of Hindi phrases? The unspoken cultural understanding? But when I looked at him and he at me, I realized that the spark that had ignited hadn’t grown to its full potential. There were many more

reglas y lineamientos sugeridos que nosotros mismo podríamos darle forma... ¿Una ética personal?”

Yo ya no estaba poniendo mucha atención en ese momento. Yo estaba ocupando sonriendo y recordando que en un país donde aun es ilegal ser gay, donde podemos recibir una multa de 10.000 rupias, 10 años de prisión o sentencia de muerte si uno es “atrapado” en una posición comprometedor con otro hombre; él no soltaba mi mano mientras caminábamos en las curvadas aceras de Marine Drive. Tal vez fue lo subversivo del acto, pero el pensar en ello me hacía sentir más eufórico cuando yo cogía su mano y acariciaba sus dedos.

Con el puñado de hombres con los que he salido en el pasado, yo siempre me he refrenado de cualquier forma de afección en público: yo pretendía estornudar si algún hombre trataba de sostener mi mano o pretendía toser si trataba de besarme. Yo había estado con estos hombres en ciudades “liberales”: Los Angeles, Nueva York, Londres, donde las personas tal vez te miren, pero no te arrestan por ser afectivo con otro hombre. Con este, sin embargo, yo no estaba incómodo; mi corazón latía, pero yo quería sostener su mano, quería besarlo, aunque esto significara que tenía que lidiar con las tontas miradas de la gente y sus cejas fruncidas. Fue uno de mis amigos el que me señaló que él era el primer hindú con el que yo salía.

Los otros hombres con lo que había intimado me excitaban físicamente, pero retrospectivamente, mi atracción y deseo por estos hombres de hecho, no era deseo puro para nada, sino lujuria. Todos habían

nights of movie theater make-out sessions, and arguments about ethics ahead.

We reached his flat after what seemed to be hours; at the awkward “Do you want to come up or go home?” moment, it felt natural to enter the creaking wooden elevator, which transported us to the top floor. It was that dark, humid night where I experienced a different aspect of desire: it wasn’t the physical lust I felt before, but extended far beyond the usual fuck-and-runs. With him, it was deeper – our eyes were locked – I didn’t just want to fuck him, I wanted to touch, smell, inhale him, feel the contours of his arms, twirl my finger in his chest hair and tenderly nibble down his nape to his shoulders.

Enveloped in darkness, desire overwhelming us, we consummated our illegal relationship in a country where we could face death if caught.

sido caucásicos, para nada estoy diciendo que haya sido un error estar con hombres blancos, pero al reflexionar sobre esos encuentros, algo hacía falta. Siempre hubo lujuria que nos trajo noches carnales sudorosas, pero fue la conexión con este hindú lánguido sofisticado que finalmente me hizo sentir seguro y realizado por dentro. ¿Habrá sido el rocío de frases hindúes? ¿La comprensión cultural tácita? Pero cuando lo miraba a él y él a mí, me daba cuenta que la chispa que se había encendido no había crecido en todo su potencial. Hubieron muchísimas más noches de goce en el cine y peleas sobre ética.

Llegamos a su apartamento después de lo que parecieron horas; durante el momento incómodo de “quieres subir o quieres irte a casa”, se sintió natural entrar al ascensor chirriante de madera, el cual nos transportó hasta el último piso. Fue esa noche oscura, húmeda, en la que experimenté un aspecto diferente del deseo: no era como la lujuria física que había sentido antes, pero se extendía mucho más allá de las cogidas rápidas de siempre. Con él, era más profundo – nuestros ojos están entrelazados – yo no sólo quería cogerlo, yo quería tocarlo, olerlo, inhalarlo, sentir el contorno de sus brazos, enrollar mis dedos en su velludo pecho, y mordisquear su nuca suavemente hasta llegar a sus hombros.

Envueltos en la oscuridad, con el irresistible deseo, nosotros consumimos nuestra relación ilegal en un país donde nosotros podríamos enfrentar la muerte si nos atrapan.

Contributors

Moisés Agosto-Rosario is a Puerto Rican writer based in San Juan. He earned his B.A. from the University of Puerto Rico in 1988. His poems and stories have been published in various print and electronic media including *Contornos*, *Revista Cupey* of the Universidad Metropolitana, *Revista Hostosiana* from Hostos College, CUNY, and *Revista Identidad* from Universidad de Puerto Rico en Aguadilla. In 2007 he published his first collection of stories, *Nocturno y otros desamparos*. With David Caleb Acevedo and Luis Negrón, he compiled and edited the first anthology of Puerto Rican Gay, Lesbian and Queer writing, *Other Bodies*. He is currently working on his second novel.

Bryan Mari Argos is 30 years old and from Roxas City, Capiz in the Philippines. He usually writes in the Hiligaynon language. In 2006, he won a Palanca Award, his country's most prestigious literary award, and he has been published in various anthologies and collections. He graduated with a Masters in the Professional Studies in Development Communication during which his special project focused on the effects of information dissemination on HIV/AIDS awareness. He has many distinctions including a Soroptimist International Youth Leadership Award.

George Ayala served as the Director of Education at AIDS Project Los Angeles from 2002-2008. He oversaw prevention services, cultural production, capacity building and research, and international programs. Ayala has nearly two decades of experience in HIV/AIDS prevention, education and research with a focus on Latino and gay communities. Although he received his graduate education in clinical psychology, Ayala often looks to his artistic training for perspective, insight and a renewed sense of possibility. He currently holds a research post at RTI International.

Antonio Salazar Bañuelos was a founding member of the Taller Documentación Visual from 1984 until its dissolution in 1999. In 2002 he earned his Ph.D. in Fine Arts with the thesis, "The Visual Documentation Workshop In the Battle Against AIDS: Artistic Practice and Political Action In Mexico City, 1990-1999." In 2004 he published the book *15 Years of the Visual Documentation Workshop* (ISBN 970-32-2208-0). In late 2007 he edited *Ecce Homo*, which uses photomontage to address the relationship between AIDS, religion and sexuality (ISBN 978-970-95791-0-9). He is currently a full-time Professor in graduate studies of visual art.

J. Diaz is a poet and photographer who lives and works in New York. He takes inspiration from Estefano and Mark Anthony who say, "Valio la pena lo que era necesario estar contigo amor. Tu eres una bendicion. Las horas y la vida de tu lado estan para vivirlas pero a tu manera."

Aniruddha Dutta is a Ph.D. student working in media and cultural studies and a musician by passion. He was born and grew up in a suburb of Kolkata, India, and did his M.A. there at Jadavpur University, before coming to the States as a MacArthur Scholar at the University of Minnesota. In India, he was also involved in activism and has worked with some NGOs dealing with LGBT issues. His first academic publication, dealing with media representations of queerness in India, is forthcoming in a volume to be published by Raw Nerve Books, UK, and he recently had the first professional performance of his music at a local concert in Minneapolis, which was even more fun.

Rogerick Fontanilla Fernandez was born in Valenzuela City, Philippines in 1982. He finished Political Economy from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Manila, and currently works full-time at a Business Process Outsourcing company in Quezon City. He is a member of the Pinoypoets (www.pinoypoets.com), a community of poets and literary enthusiasts with a particular inclination to poetry in English, Filipino and vernacular languages. His poems have appeared in the group's poetry chapbook, the Obverse. Visit him at: www.tabulas.com/~GHV2/

András Gerevich was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1976. He graduated with a degree in Creative Writing from Dartmouth College in the US and one in Screenwriting from the National Film School in Britain. He has published widely in his native Hungarian and his work has been translated into several languages, including English. Among his many activities he is a commissioning editor for Chroma, the London based queer literary and arts journal. He has published two books of poems in his native Hungarian and made a number of short films in London, some gay in theme, that have been performed successfully at many festivals around the world.

Born in New Dehli, and growing up watching Bollywood films in all their glorious colour, **Sunil Gupta** moved to Montreal with his family in the late 1960s, where his interest in photography began

to develop. From the mid-1970s he lived in New York, where he studied photography at the New School for Social Research under Lisette Model. At the end of the 1970s, he moved to London to continue his studies at the Royal College of Art. He was involved in the founding of Autograph (Association of Black Photographers) in London, and he also set up the Organisation for Visual Arts (OVA) to promote a greater understanding of questions regarding cultural differences and their incorporation into the sphere of fine art. He works as a photographer, writer and curator. Recent publications by or about him include: Sunil Gupta, *Pictures from Here*, London 2003; David A. Bailey, *Sunil Gupta: Monograph*, London 1998; Sunil Gupta (ed.), *An Economy of Signs: Contemporary Indian Photography*, London 1990. He lives in London and New Delhi.

Young Sun Han is an emerging artist and curator based in Auckland, New Zealand and Chicago, United States. Born in the Chicago suburb of Skokie, Illinois, he was highly influenced by stories of survival and tragedy in this largely Jewish community. Stories of his own family's war-torn past of escaping North Korea ignited an interest in 'what could have been,' usually pondered while perusing old photo albums. Art saved Young's life during a tumultuous coming of age, and he has pursued it around the world ever since. Following an artist residency in Greece and study-abroad at Goldsmiths College, London, Young graduated with a B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2005. Receiving a government grant to live in Germany the following year, he further pursued his curatorial and artistic practice. In 2007, Young re-located to New Zealand and became a permanent resident, where he continues to explore the absurd, beautiful, and fucked-up wonders of the world.

Patrick "Pato" Hebert is an artist, educator and cultural worker based in Los Angeles. He currently serves as the Associate Director of Education at AIDS Project Los Angeles, where he develops community-based publications and creative interventions as an innovative form of HIV prevention. He also teaches in the Photography and Imaging Department at Art Center College of Design. He was recently featured as one of five "Practical Visionaries" in the debut issue of *RealTALK LA*. Forthcoming exhibitions and projects include: the 2008 California Biennial; a solo exhibition at the University of Maine, Augusta; an artist-in-residency at Haverford College outside Philadelphia; and a commission from LACMA to develop a series of works with Plasencia Elementary School in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. He earned his B.A. from Stanford University and his M.F.A. from the University of California, Irvine.

Kentaro Ide is a writer, translator and editor whose work has been featured in numerous Canadian and Japanese publications. He was born in Banff and lived in Dhaka, Singapore, Jakarta and Yokohama before moving to Vancouver and completing a B.A. in English Literature and Political Science. His hobbies include writing fiction, playing bass guitar and rapping. you can visit him at: www.kreativity.spyw.com.

Xavier Livermon is a 2006 graduate of the African Diaspora Studies program at U.C. Berkeley. His dissertation, entitled "Kwaito Bodies in African Diaspora Space: The Politics of Popular Music in Post-Apartheid South Africa" examines how popular performance cultures in post-apartheid South Africa are shaped by Afrodiasporic consciousness as well as the effect of these popular performance cultures have on rapidly changing sociopolitical circumstances in contemporary South Africa. His research interests include examining the role of Africa in African Diaspora Studies, gender and sexuality in the African Diaspora, and Music and Performance cultures of the African Diaspora. Currently, he is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In the Fall of 2008, he will begin an Assistant Professor position at Wayne State University in the Department of Africana Studies.

Brane Mozetič is a poet, writer, translator, gay activist and publisher of GLBT series Lambda from Ljubljana, Slovenia. He has won many awards and his books are translated into several languages. In the U.S. he has published the poetry books *Butterflies* (2004) and *Banalities* (2007), and a book of short stories, *Passion* (2005).

Le Moore hails from the Bluegrass state of Kentucky, but spent much of his childhood in New Delhi and Chandigarh with his parents and extended family. He attended college and graduate school at UCLA before returning to India to continue his research and work on HIV and health education for marginalized communities through performance art.

Youssef Nabil was born in Cairo in 1972. He lives and works in New York. Between 1999 and 2002, Nabil worked for Middle Eastern magazines photographing Arab celebrities such as singer Natacha Atlas, actress Youssra and legendary belly dancer Fifi Abdou. In 2002 he began an ongoing project photographing women artists, including Nan Goldin, Shirin Neshat, Mona Hatoum,

Ghada Amer, Marina Abramovic, Zaha Hadid and Louise Bourgeois. In 2003 Nabil held a solo exhibition at the Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie in Arles. He also took part in the African Biennial of Photography in Bamako, Mali, where he received the Seydou Keita Prize for Portraiture. That year, he was invited by the French Ministry of Culture to take up an artist's residency in Paris at the Cité Internationale des Arts. Nabil exhibited his self-portraits for the first time in Egypt in 2005. The show, at the Townhouse Gallery in Cairo, was titled *Realities to Dreams*. Nabil's work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions at venues including the British Museum, London; Fries Museum, Leewarden; Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town; Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; FotoFest Houston, Texas; Centre de Cultura Contemporànea de Barcelona; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Third Line Gallery, Dubai; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla; and Aperture Foundation, New York.

Fernando Olivos is a visual artist living and working in Lima, Perú. He has developed his work in concert with activist projects such as "Sexualities, Health and Human Rights" (2002-2006) and his current project "CIUDADANIASX: Cultural Activismo and Human Rights." In this work he reflects on the potential of art and cultural activism as tools for change. He creates art interventions in public spaces that fight against the stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS. His work also addresses diverse sexual expressions and other related themes. He develops his work in collaboration with team members Carlos F. Cáceres, Griselda Pérez-Luna and Ximena Salazar.

James Passy, born in the UK, has spent the last five years in East Africa designing and implementing sexual health and HIV programmes for men who have sex with men. Describing himself as full-time sexual rights activists, part-time whore, full-time troublemaker and part-time photographer, he currently resides in Kenya and the UK. He describes the aim of his photography to 'disturb, stir and arouse.' His thematic interest, both artistic and professional, is the disconnection between male-male desire, behaviour and identity and the dynamics of sanctioning of these spheres. He can be reached at jamespassy@gmail.com.

A graduate of Political Science from the University of the Philippines, **Rodrigo V. Dela Peña Jr.** has been a fellow for poetry in various national writing workshops. His poems, stories and essays have been published in local magazines and anthologies. He is working for a strategic communications firm in Manila.

Andy Quan has worked for gay and lesbian rights since the late eighties, talking about sex, cultural diversity within queer communities, and more. He was the coordinator of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) in the mid-nineties, and has since worked for the London gay men's HIV prevention agency, Rubberstuffers, and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. He is the author of two books of poetry, one of short fiction and one of gay erotica, and his writings have appeared in a broad range of anthologies and literary reviews. Born in Vancouver of Cantonese origins, he now lives in Sydney, Australia where he works on regional and international HIV and AIDS issues. Visit him at: www.andyquan.com.

'Semugoma' is a 37-year-old Ugandan, living and working in Kampala, Uganda in the medical field. He has been working towards establishing an HIV prevention programme in Uganda for gay men, in particular, but also for other sexual minorities (LGBTI), but without success to date. He writes a medical column in a local newspaper, writes original material for his blog, and has been published in *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*, Robyn Ochs, editor.

Andra Simons is a Bermudian writer, director and actor currently living in London. He is recipient of both the Bermuda Gold Award and the Golden Inkwell for his poetry and plays. In Bermuda, he founded one of the most experimental and acclaimed theatre companies, Waterspout Theatre, as well as the first open mic poetry series, Flow Sundays. Presently Andra continues to publish work in Canada, Bermuda and the UK.

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Tom Williams is an Australian photojournalist and documentary photographer. His work has been exhibited and published around Australia and in North and Central America. His series on the Mexican cult 'La Santa Muerte' is part of the Sixth Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award traveling exhibition and he is currently finishing a long term project on public housing residents in Waterloo, Sydney.

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