

13 Artistic Responses to LGBTQI Gaps in Archives

From World War II Asian America to Postwar Soviet Estonia

Alpesh Kantilal Patel

In this chapter, I cast a gaze across the globe to consider artistic practices that suggest novel methods of addressing the gaps in material culture, or the complete erasure of the subjectivity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, and intersexual (LGBTQI)-identified individuals in archives.¹ I consider San Francisco, California-based Tina Takemoto's video *Looking for Jiro* (2011) alongside Tallinn, Estonia-based Jaanus Samma's installation *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman's Tale* (2016). Takemoto explores the homoerotic and material connected to World War II incarceration camps that are part of gay Japanese American Jiro Onuma's (1904–1990) archive, housed in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society in San Francisco, California, whereas Samma considers documents that are culled from official Estonian historical archives regarding Juhan Ojaste's (1921–1990) sodomy trial during the early postwar era.

Minor Transnational Approaches to Sexual Geography, or, Where Homophobia Meets Communism

I will begin by sketching out the contexts of "Asian America" and Soviet-era Estonia, admittedly strange bedfellows, with respect to homophobia. Scholar of American history Erika Lee, in her book *The Making of Asian America*, notes that the construct "Asian America" broadly refers to twenty-four distinct immigrant groups and a history that goes back half a millennium (2015, 3). Here, I will narrow my discussion to subject matter that Takemoto's work partially addresses: the period in the United States immediately after the surprise attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1941. In part because of this event, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ratified Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which led to the placement of approximately 120,000 subjects of Japanese descent into wartime incarceration camps.² They were euphemistically referred to as "War Relocation Centers" by the government.³ Many would remain incarcerated for four years and three months, or until the war ended. Crucial to my argument is that the fear of the Japanese was accompanied by a more general rise in anti-communist paranoia; and this, in turn, was entangled with homophobia. Even at the highest level of government, homosexuality was seen as endemic to the communist Soviet Union. As the United States Department of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security readily

admits, "[h]omosexuality was the era of McCarthyism, and the era of allegations rather than of Takemoto examining doubly vulnerable

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admits, “[h]omosexuals and Communism were quickly conflated” in and around the era of McCarthyism, which saw a series of accusations of treason by means of allegations rather than evidence (2011, 128). Though Onuma, whose archive Takemoto examines, was not officially persecuted for his homosexuality, he was doubly vulnerable, as both Japanese American and gay, to being cast as a traitor.

In another part of the world, in 1940, just two years before the onset of the incarceration of Japanese Americans, the Russian Federation’s Criminal Code replaced that of Estonia when the Soviets occupied the country and thereby re-criminalized male sodomy (Veispak 1991, 110).⁴ As noted by activist Lilian Kotter (1996, 53), though women were not explicitly named in the law, same-sex relationships between them were not condoned. As Estonian historian Teet Veispak perspicaciously writes, sexual liberation in the Soviet Union was considered as promoting individuality, supposedly a vice of the capitalist West (1991, 111). Homosexuality, then, was considered a threat to the core values of communism.

In both the US and the Soviet Union, homosexuality became tantamount to a betrayal of the state. What I am suggesting through reading these two histories/historical instances together is an alternative mapping of sexual geographies beyond the local and national toward something that is closer in spirit to what Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih have termed “minor transnationalism” (2005).⁵ Here, the transnational is understood as connections that are not between dominant, Western metropolitan locations but instead those that avoid the center and the metropolis. In addition, Lionnet and Shih suggest that an advantage of a minor transnational look is that it allows for a discussion beyond vertical relationships of power within nations. For example, LGBTQI Asian American subjects are positioned against an unmarked heterosexual, white American populace, while LGBTQI subjects from Estonia are situated against heterosexual Estonians. A minor transnational framework allows for a discussion of the specter of homosexuality and communism across these discursive spaces, rather than only within them as closed systems.

Minor Transnationalism and Horizontal Art Histories

At the same time as US-based Lionnet and Shih were theorizing their “minor transnationalism,” Poland-based art historian Piotr Piotrowski was fleshing out his “horizontal art history,” which is conceptually closely allied with it (Piotrowski 2006). More to the point, the latter allows me squarely to bring the conversation above, regarding a minor transnational approach to mapping sexual geographies, to the writing of eastern European art histories.⁶ In his theory, Piotrowski provocatively considers Edward Said’s term “Orientalism” in the context of how art history paradigms produced in the West are applied to art produced outside of it. He argues that, if the West is conceived as but one of the many regions in the world, it is possible to have conversations beyond the power differentials of the West as the center and everything else as the periphery (Piotrowski 2008, 4; 2015). Because the center often positions the periphery as being located or “rooted in a particular context,” while picturing itself as context-less, Piotrowski suggests exploring the idea of “provincializing centers” because “everything [even the center] is rooted in a particular context” (2015). He writes that such an approach allows for a comparison of “local” scenes. Drawing on US-based socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai’s definition of “locality,” Piotrowski cautions that locality “should be

approached in open terms crossing mono-ethnic identity; as a theoretical construction open to exchange with other (e.g., neighboring) localities, as well as cultural centers" (2008, 4). It is in this vein that I am bringing together the works of Takemoto and Samma, which I discuss in the remainder of this text.

While the artists provide biographical details of the subjects whose archives they explore in their artworks, they are not documentary in any way. In fact, I will argue that, through a strategy that blurs truth and fiction, the artworks provide a means of inhabiting the trauma and victimization associated with the incarceration camps and the sodomy trials while simultaneously re-orienting these narratives toward more generative ends. Moreover, Takemoto's work expands the conversation beyond gay male sexuality to other non-gender-specific subjectivities (not least of which is that of the artist), whereas Samma's restores agency to the subject whose archive he explores. Both works suggest alternative ways of relating to the elision of LGBTQI subjectivities in archives. To define and expand upon this point, I will draw on a theory based on women and gender studies scholar Ann Cvetkovich's writing on queer archive activism in my discussion of Takemoto's work, and on Martinican philosopher Édouard Glissant on opacity in my discussion of Samma's work.

Queer Feminist Archive Activism: Tina Takemoto's *Looking for Jiro*

There is often a dearth of material culture of women as well as minorities in the few LGBTQI archives that are extant. Supplementing these archives is important where possible. At the same time, it is useful to keep in mind that archive theory suggests not only a critique of archives but also the impossibility of creating them in the first place: the desire for records escapes representation.⁷ Even queer theory eschews or is skeptical of what visibility offers. Neither of these concepts helps to address the very real issue of how to document queer lives without creating new normatives; and how to deal with absences typical of any archive on queer lives, the traces of whom often go unmarked. Drawing on Alex Juhasz's conceptualization of "queer archive activism" (2006), Cvetkovich notes that at least one approach is to take "an activist relation to the archive that remains alert to its absences and that uses it to create new kinds of knowledge and new kinds of collectivities" (2011, 32). Instructive in this section is my conceptualization of a variant of Cvetkovich's use of Juhasz's term: "queer feminist archive activism," or, an activism toward predominately gay archives that is feminist while simultaneously conjoined with a queer relation to gay male sexuality (Patel 2016, 257).⁸ Through this framework, I will discuss lesbian-identified Asian American artist Tina Takemoto's artwork that engages with the modest archives of a gay Asian American man she did not know: Jiro Onuma. In the process, I will consider how she productively creates new collectivities that are not gender-specific.

Takemoto was first introduced to Onuma's archives in 2009 by American artist E.G. Crichton, who was organizing the project *Lineage: Matchmaking in the Archive*, in which she paired contemporary artists with the archives of LGBTQI individuals who had passed away. Crichton paired Takemoto with Onuma, whose personal collection resides in the queer historical archives of San Francisco, California. His collection is modest: it includes two photo albums, personal documents, and an assortment of homoerotic ephemera—all of which fit into a six-inch-wide file box (Takemoto 2014, 241).

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Takemoto was most intrigued by the material connected to Onuma's incarceration in a Japanese wartime camp (2014, 248). As she discusses in an essay about the project, she realized that she had always compartmentalized Japanese American history and LGBT American history as distinct from each other. She writes that "the struggles against the racial injustice of wartime incarceration remained separate in my mind from the challenges facing LGBT Americans during the pre-Stonewall era of the 1940s and 1950s" (Takemoto 2014, 244). Emboldened by what she found in Onuma's archive, Takemoto put out a call for others who were incarcerated to share their stories of queer intimacy (2011, 2). In the end, she was not successful in gathering more stories. In fact, she never again came across other photographs or visual evidence of LGBTQI-identified Japanese Americans imprisoned in the American concentration camps (Takemoto 2014, 246–248). Interestingly, Takemoto even discovered that some of the subjects identified as Onuma in images by other researchers in his archive were not in fact of him, but she remained attached to them nonetheless. Her reflections on this paradox are what led her to the black-and-white short video (five minutes, forty-five seconds) she produced: *Looking for Jiro* (2011).

The video begins with a grainy, black-and-white scene in which Takemoto, wearing a short-sleeved white shirt and dark-colored pants, unfolds an apron. It is the documentation of a live performance by Takemoto. At the loud "crack" made when Takemoto shakes open the apron, Madonna's single "Hung Up" (2005) begins to play. The lyrics "time goes by so slowly," which open the song, point to what the passage of time might have been like for those in the camps. It repeats in the title slides that indicate that the work is "A Queer Meditation on Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II" and "Inspired by JIRO ONUMA (1904–1990), a gay inmate who worked in the mess hall and liked muscle men."⁹ With the text, it becomes clear that Takemoto's clothes signify that she is in drag as Onuma in the mess halls.

The video often includes quick cuts between Takemoto's performance and official WWII US propaganda footage of wartime incarceration camps—everything from pedestrian goings-on, such as food being served and eaten in the dining halls and a young man dreamily looking off into the distance, to training exercises of the 442nd Japanese American Regiment of the US Army. Ironically, while the Japanese were corralled into camps, the United States government allowed men of Japanese descent of a certain age to sign up for the armed forces. At first glance, each video clip is easily discernible as that of a staged performance or a document of the camps, but the quick editing eventually blurs these significations. The "documentation" of the camps is a propaganda film, as I previously noted, and therefore just as staged as the art performance. In addition, Takemoto's contemporary performance is shot in a grainy style that is more typical of footage that is dated, whereas the historical footage is clean, crisp, and sharp. What is truth and fiction or past and present becomes unclear in this sort of formal structure. By creating this condition, I argue, Takemoto provides the possibility for viewers to see Japanese American males not only as victims of the war but also—in the aforementioned specific mix of edited clips in Takemoto's work—as dreamers, American heroes, and even queer.

At a later point, the aforementioned title slides cut to a grainy scene again in which Takemoto is putting on a baker's hat; to more propaganda images of the wartime incarceration camps; and back to Takemoto, engaging in the mundane act of sweeping, at which point the upbeat dance and disco beats of "Hung Up" begin.

The music then switches seamlessly to the band ABBA's song "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)" (1979), to which Takemoto lip syncs and dances (with her broom). The track, a sample of which Madonna used in "Hung Up," also continues to play in tandem with vintage footage of musclemen posing in homage to the trope of male physique magazines Onuma had collected (Takemoto 2014, 241–242).¹⁰ The themes of unrequited love and unfulfilled yearnings in the lyrics of "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)" and "Hung Up" might refer to the improbability of a same-sex relationship for Onuma in (or outside of) the camps and the poignant, unfulfilled platonic desires of the artist to know more about Onuma.¹¹ However, the lyrics of both songs are paired with upbeat disco dance beats. In the end, the dissonance between the pathos of the lyrics and the glee of the tempo are held in tension. The work neither discounts Onuma's admittedly compromised position or the sparse material culture related to his gay life that Takemoto encountered, nor forecloses the possibility of hope or optimism for intimacy, sexual or otherwise.¹²

Toward the end of Takemoto's video, she is shown removing the bread she has kneaded and baked with Crisco, a vegetable shortening that she then uses to grease up her forearms.¹³ Making a fist with her hand, she inserts her arm into the hole of the bread and repeats the action with her other hand into the hole of another bread. The bread stays on her upper arms like floatables and becomes make-shift muscles when Takemoto takes up the poses of muscle men.

Images of her inserting her arms into the bread are repeated twice and conjure images of fisting, a sex act of inserting a hand or fist into a rectum that is typically

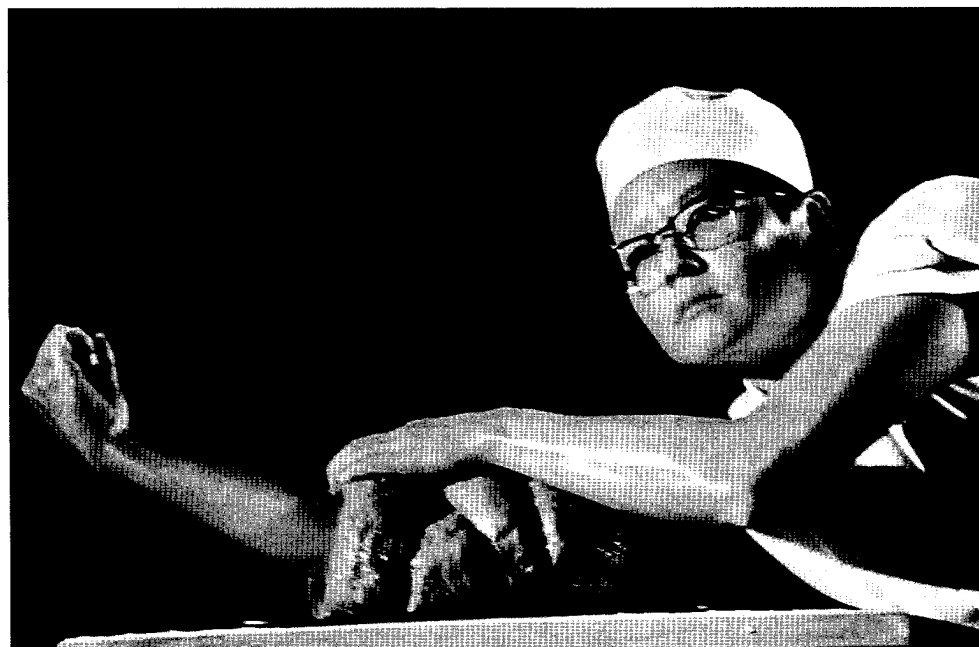


Figure 13.1 Tina Takemoto, *Looking for Jiro*, 2011. Production stills
Photograph by Bret Parker. Courtesy of the artist

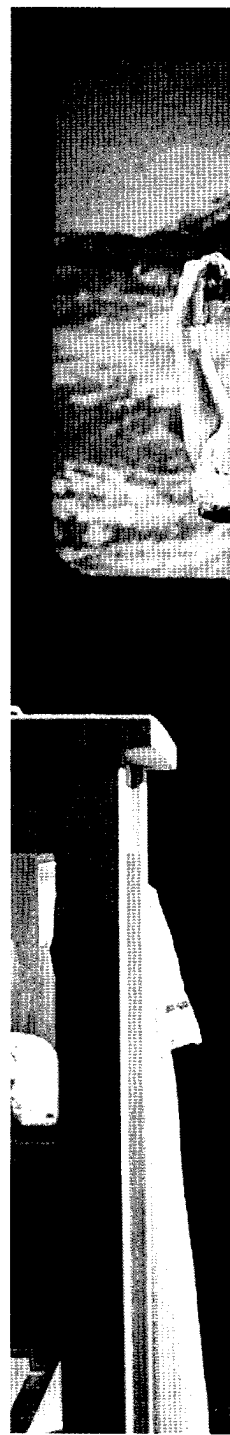


Plate 13 Tina Takemoto
Photo by Maxwell Leung



Plate 13 Tina Takemoto, *Looking for Jiro*, 2011. Production stills
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associated with gay males. The bread glistens and resembles the flesh of a body. Rather than being abstracted by the state, as in the propaganda videos, and considered abject, the body here is transformed into a site of pleasure and empowerment. Takemoto's depiction of a butch Asian male is related to her identification "as a masculine-of-center gender nonconforming dyke" as she noted in an email to me on May 27, 2017. This gesture is a welcome redress of contemporary visual culture that effeminizes Asian and Asian American males.¹⁴ In this way, too, Takemoto's work expands the remit of the archive of Onuma beyond gay Asian male sexuality by bringing to the fore a range of non-gender-specific identities, including her own.

The Right to Opacity: Jaanus Samma's *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman's Tale*

Takemoto's work re-considers the gaps in LGBTQI archives through what I have argued is an act of queer feminist archival activism. Jaanus Samma's work is concerned, I will illustrate, at least partially with the agency, or lack thereof, of Juhan Ojaste, the documents of whose trial can be found in the Estonian Historical Archives. Samma would often hear stories about Ojaste, a charismatic individual referred to as the "Chairman," while compiling oral testimonies for the 2011 special issue of Warsaw-based artist Karol Radziszewski's *DIK Magazine* that focused on homosexuality in some of the countries of eastern Europe before 1989 (Viola, Põldsam, and Samma 2015, 1: 89). The moniker refers to the fact that he was, in fact, a chairman of several collective farms, or *kolkhozy*.¹⁵ *Kolkhozy* were an agricultural system based on collective farm ownership that was imposed upon Estonians after Soviet occupation and were implemented across the USSR (Viola et al. 2015, 1: 18). If successful, as Ojaste was, the head of a *kolkhoz* could receive privileges not available to most subjects. Despite being a successful chairman, accusations of homosexuality did not render him immune from being expelled from the Communist party, as he was in 1964 (Viola et al. 2015, 1: 19). As noted earlier, homosexuality was tantamount to treason and, in this case, anti-communism. The Chairman would endure a humiliating trial, complete eighteen months of hard labor, and, upon release, relocate, and work in low-paying jobs. From all accounts, the Chairman led a convivial, if sometimes contentious, life in the city of Tartu, to which he moved. His apartment was often the site of "raging parties," and in the 1980s many would come to his apartment to watch pornography—primarily heterosexual, since this was all that was available—on his VCR (rare for anyone to own at that time). Much of what we know about the Chairman's life, though, is based largely on gossip, and even the details of his death are unclear: he was killed in his home by an individual who was allegedly a prostitute and a Russian marine, in 1990 (Viola et al. 2015, 1: 19), incidentally the year homosexuality was decriminalized in Estonia and when Onuma died.

Intrigued by the stories about the Chairman, Samma decided to find out more about him. This eventually led him to the criminal files of the Chairman in the state's archives, where he found copious documents (167 in total) such as court rulings and transcripts of interrogations and court hearings, redacted versions of which are available in the catalog (Viola et al. 2015, 2: 1–65), for his installation *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman's Tale*. The artwork was commissioned for the Estonian pavilion for the 2015 Venice Biennial and it was based on his research into

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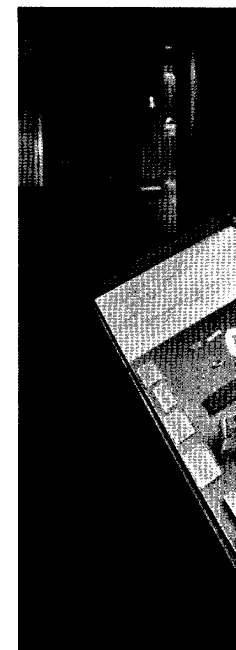


Figure 13.2 Jaanus Samma's *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman's Tale* from the Estonian pavilion for the 2015 Venice Biennial. Courtesy of the artist.

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the historical archives as well as the oral histories he collected on the Chairman. I will be discussing this work as installed and presented a year later at Estonia’s Museum of Occupations, which chronicles the subjugation of the country by Soviets and Germans from 1940 to 1991.

Outside of the installation, Samma hung a plethora of black-and-white photographs that depicted the supposedly quaint, bucolic, and happy life of Estonian subjects under Soviet rule. As one enters the installation, the first room presents a timeline of the life of the Chairman that acts as a foil for the propaganda images. A display case is also included in this room: on one side is ominous-looking forensic equipment, which we later see used by case investigators to molest the Chairman in the short film played in the adjacent room. On the opposite side of the display case are items such as gloves, a medal, and a green fedora—all of which are presumably material remains of the Chairman’s life.

In this room are black-and-white stills from another short film playing in the adjacent room, which are hung on the walls, too. The stills are of a recreation of the moments between the Chairman and the (alleged) prostitute leading up to the Chairman’s death. The backdrops of the *mise-en-scène* include painterly renderings of clouds through which rays of light are emerging. Though clearly the individuals are actors and therefore the film is not a documentary, the painted backdrops further instantiate the viewer’s Brechtian distanciation from the depicted action. Taken together so far, the photographs outside and the stills inside are both staged.

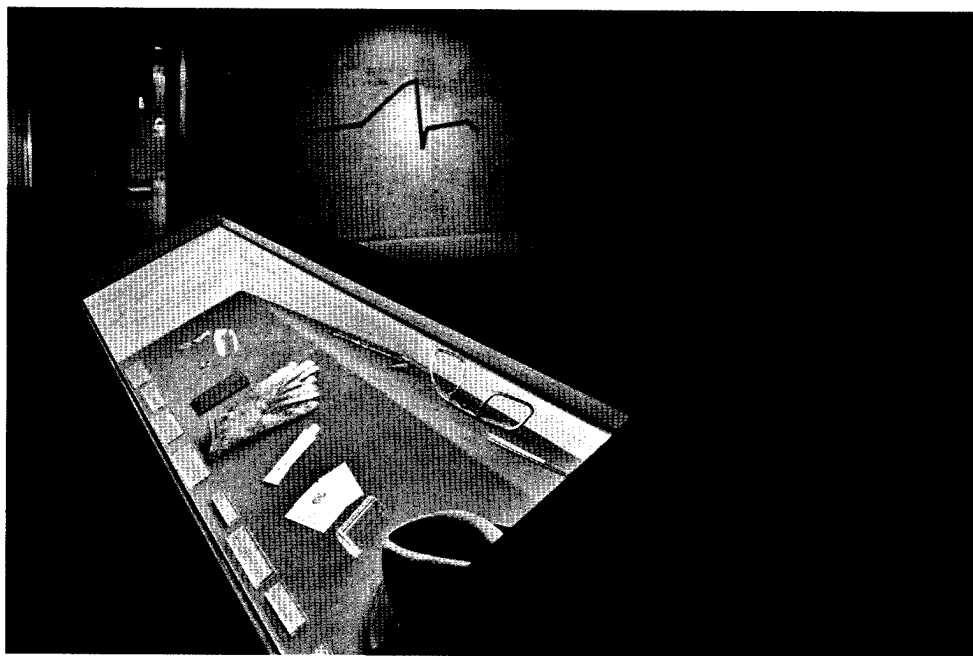


Figure 13.2 Jaanus Samma, *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman’s Tale*. Installation view from Museum of Occupations, Tallinn, 2016

Courtesy of the artist

Moreover, as Samma notes in the catalog, he has constructed one narrative of the Chairman from his conversations with three different individuals. Samma notes that this approach of merging stories emphasizes “the intermediated nature of the myth that surrounds him” and the “fragmented, sometimes conflicting perspectives” of the Chairman’s story (Viola et al. 2015, 2: n.p.). The veracity of the facts on the timeline and the authenticity of the material culture in the display cases are called into question as well. Much like in Takemoto’s work, Samma takes an approach that intertwines the documentary with fiction and, in the process, confuses them both. He opens up the possibility for the Chairman to be seen in a manner that goes beyond that which was found in the official archives.

There is a room on one side of the main room playing films (realized in collaboration with director Marko Raat) and on the other side a winding staircase. In the former, two screens are installed on opposite sides of the room from each other. A viewer can watch one or the other, but not both at the same time. A series of short films, loosely based on the interviews as well as the criminal files, are on view. One short film includes a scene of “watersporting”—erotic play involving bodily fluids, typically urine—in a public restroom between the Chairman and the prostitute.



Plate 14 Jaanus Samma and Marko Raat, *Public Toilet*, 2015. Production still, part of Samma’s installation *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman’s Tale* in Museum of Occupations, Tallinn, 2016

Photo by Anna Stina Treumund. Courtesy of the artist

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In another film, a penis covered in black ink is being marked for a print (as if a finger) and prodded by various instruments, some of which are in the display cases in the other room. The artist explained in an email to me on March 12, 2017, that there is no evidence a penis print was taken; it was a metaphor for the invasiveness of the entire court trial. Continuing the theme above of blurring truth and fiction, though the films appear to represent re-creations of actual court events, this is not always the case. The series of winding stairs to the left of the central room are reminiscent of those found in a theater or opera house. They lead up to a loge where opera music is playing—seemingly completing the effect of the artwork’s high drama.

Commissioned by Samma, the aria was composed by Maarja Kangro and written by Johanna Kivimägi (Viola et al. 2015, 1: 109–120). The drama is put into motion even before entering the installation: the walls of the ramp, down which one walks to the museum basement where Samma’s work is installed, have been lined with a plush red carpet that seems appropriate for an opera house. This all leads to an anticlimactic moment, though: when one looks out from the loge, there is nothing to see but a dark void.

Samma’s work sits at the crossroads of the haunting archival absences that accompany histories of violence and the desire to reveal suppressed queer subjectivities. As Cvetkovich writes, “the ephemeral nature of queer life often necessitates a creative approach to archiving . . . an acknowledgement of that which escapes the archive” (2011, 32). I argue that Samma accomplishes this by giving back to the Chairman what Édouard Glissant would characterize as his right to “opacity” that he was denied (1997, 189–195). Glissant’s opacity is a concept he deploys to defend the right of the postcolonial subject not to be appropriated by discourses of power that originate elsewhere.¹⁶ The opacity of Samma’s installation—its inability to be read either as truth or as fiction—poignantly provides the possibility for the Chairman to reclaim his subjectivity from the archives: the right not to be known or seen (literally in the void I referenced above) or understood. The phrase “Not Suitable for Work” in the artwork’s title is instructive in this context. It refers to language often used to announce content on the Internet that is purportedly not appropriate for viewing in the workplace, and Samma appropriates it to suggest that the Chairman’s criminalization was tantamount to the branding of “NSFW” on his forehead. This level of transparency would work against Glissant’s note that opacity is “the most perennial guarantee of participation and confluence” (1997, 191).

I argue, too, that the rectangular blocks over the Chairman’s eyes in the photographs in the catalog can be seen not only as protecting his privacy but also returning agency to him. Indeed, opacity is not the right to privacy but the right not to be interpellated into discourses of power, such as those of the Nazis and Soviets that the Museum of Occupations provides as context for the work. Samma’s work re-configures the experience of viewing some of the museum’s objects. For instance, across from his installation are the museum’s toilets, in front of which are installed larger-than-life sculptures of former high-ranking Communist officials from the collection. The museum certainly disempowers the depicted men by placing them adjacent to the toilets. However, the watersporting scene in the bathroom in Samma’s work brings fresh meaning to the metaphorical “draining” of power implied by the latter: for instance, the fact that homosexuality in western and eastern Europe was taboo resulted in many gay men meeting at saunas, parks, and public toilets (Hillhouse 1991, 67).¹⁷ In this way, I would argue that Samma’s more sexually explicit act of

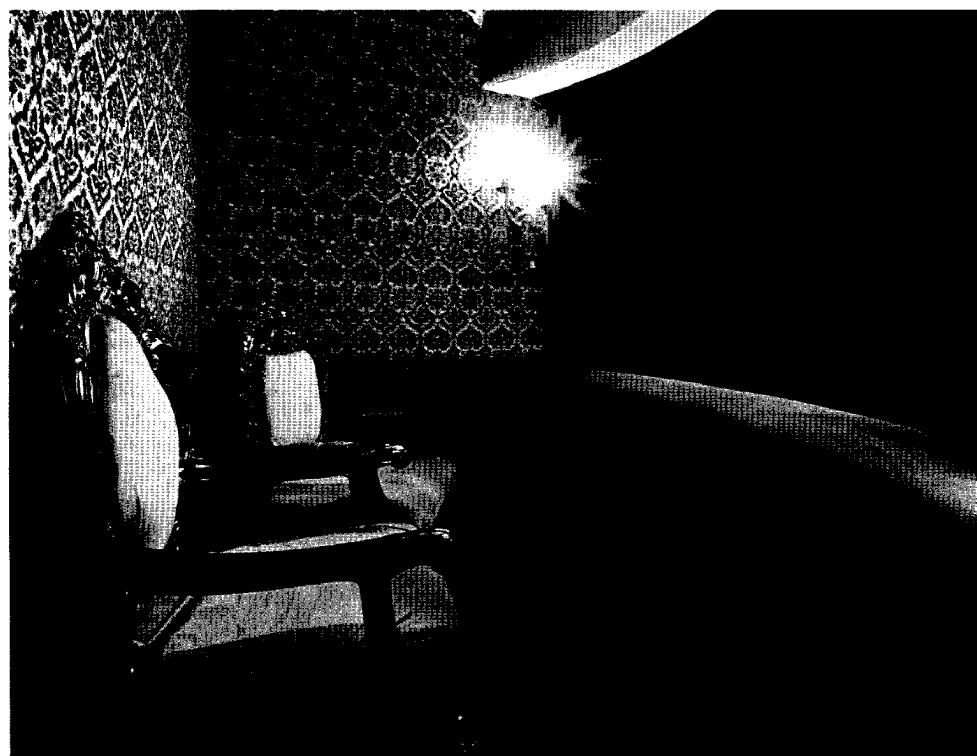


Figure 13.3 Jaanus Samma, *Loge*, 2013. Part of Samma's installation *Not Suitable for Work: A Chairman's Tale* in Museum of Occupations, Tallinn, 2016

Photo by Johannes Säre. Courtesy of the artist

watersporting not only re-casts the toilets as sites of queer empowerment but also where opacity (the right not to be interpellated into the logic of the state) became possible.

Coda: Toward Subject-less Art Histories

At stake in this chapter in the context of this anthology is the importance of thinking about eastern European art histories beyond the region. Given the artworks I explore in this article, I would expand this to art histories of other discursively bound spaces, such as Asian America. Of course, this is not to replace or render obsolete the importance of recovering LGBTQI artistic practices within eastern Europe or Asian America. In terms of eastern European art history, Polish art historian Pawel Leszkowicz has been a trailblazer in making visible the practices of gay-identified artists from the countries of eastern Europe (Leszkowicz 2010a; 2010b). This project needs to continue, as does the bringing of attention to those by LGBTQI subjects from this region. Moreover, in 2017, the anthology *Queering Contemporary Asian American Art* also made visible a range of artistic practices of Asian American and LGBTQI-identified artists, including that of Takemoto (Kina and Bernabe 2017).

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As Piotrowski's theory of horizontal art history indicates, though, considerations beyond vertical power dynamics within systems of thought can be crucial to realizing entanglements beyond the region.

It is worth noting that eastern European art history and Asian American art history are already based on a transnational approach to art history. That is, both these art histories are not inherently based on essentialized notions of regional identity. Kandice Chuh suggests in her seminal book *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* that a "strategic anti-essentialism," rather than bounded notions of identity, is what coheres Asian American studies (2003, 10).¹⁸ Chuh is concerned with literature, but her point is transferable to Asian American art history as well as to eastern European art history. Chuh provocatively writes that, rather than evincing a "desire for subjectivity," the field of Asian American studies should be "subjectless" (2003, 151). This chapter is consistent with this ideology, which is a reminder of the porousness rather than rigidity of the region or nation.

Notes

- 1 The asterisk in trans* refers to all transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming identities.
- 2 Statistic sourced from the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum website educational resource entitled "The War Relocation Authority & the Incarceration of Japanese-Americans During World War II."
- 3 The word "internment" is sometimes used to describe the camps. However, I prefer to use "incarceration," per historian Roger Daniels' compelling argument (2005).
- 4 Prior to this, the Republic of Estonia (1918–1940) had repealed similar laws inherited from the Russian Empire, but these amendments were moot in the newly-formed Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR). Homosexuality was still punishable in the Republic of Estonia but only in the case that the partner was a minor or if violence was involved.
- 5 "Sexual geography" refers to a burgeoning field that recognizes that "sexuality is foundational to the making of social and spatial orders (cf. class, race, or gender)," as Phil Hubbard notes in his succinct overview of the field: <http://oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199874002/obo-9780199874002-0026.xml>. The minor transnational sexual geography I map approximates my own movements. That is, I am a queer Asian American subject who was a visiting scholar in Poznań, Poland during most of 2015 and 2016, exploring contemporary artworks with LGBTQI themes.
- 6 I am putting the theories of Piotrowski, Lionnet, and Shih in conceptual contiguity in a manner similar to Belgium-based literary theorist and cultural studies scholar Mieke Bleyen's bringing together Piotrowski's horizontal art history with the writings on which Lionnet and Shih's "minor transnationalism" is partially based: those of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on "minor literature." See Bleyen's chapter "A Minor History of Art" (2014, 53–62).
- 7 I am referring here to Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1996).
- 8 I invoke the word "activism" in "queer feminist archive activism" to be consistent with the genealogy of this theory: Cvetkovich's "queer archive activism," which in turn is based on Alex Juhasz's conceptualization of it. I want to clarify, though, that activism, more broadly, has clear aims and outcomes; and, whereas an artwork might gesture toward such aims, it does not demand them. *Looking for Jiro* leans toward a kind of activism but it is not didactic.
- 9 Capitalization in original.
- 10 Onuma was particularly fascinated with the muscle man Earle Liederman, who ran a popular mail-order bodybuilding school during the 1920s and 1930s.
- 11 The following lyrics of Madonna's "Hung Up" suggest unrequited love: "Every little thing that you say or do/ I'm hung up/ I'm hung up on you/ Waiting for your call/ Baby night and day/ I'm fed up/ I'm tired of waiting on you," while those of ABBA's "Gimme!

- Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)" suggest unfulfilled yearning: "Won't somebody help me/ Chase the shadows away/ Gimme, gimme, gimme a man after midnight/ Take me through the darkness/ To the break of the day." Madonna, "Hung Up," lyrics by Madonna, Stuart Price, Benny Goran, Bror Andersson, and Bjoern K. Ulvaeus. Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Records, 2005. Available from Google Play Music: https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tki33xvk4spibyep5jmkbzolzi?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics. ABBA, "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)," lyrics by Bror Andersson and Bjoern K. Ulvaeus. Stockholm: Polar Music, 1979. Available from Google Play Music: https://play.google.com/music/preview/Ta227zzqbhrep34u2uwxejr2g4?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics.
- 12 Takemoto believed an image of Onuma with his lover Ronald in the archive was taken during their overlapping stay at the Topaz incarceration camps (Takemoto 2014, 266).
 - 13 Crisco only appears for the fisting scene on stage; it is not explicit in the performance.
 - 14 Tan Hoang Nguyen has published a provocative book that powerfully challenges the notion of bottoming as a disempowered position in the context of Asian American masculinity. See his book, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (2014).
 - 15 His name is classified per the Estonian Personal Data Protection Act, so in the artwork only the moniker "Chairman" is used.
 - 16 Though Samma's work is not about a postcolonial subject, it is about differentials in and abuses of power, and therefore I believe applicable here.
 - 17 See also Riikka Taavetti and Rebeka Pöldsam's essay "Rumors and Other Stories about Lesbians and Gays behind the Curtain and beyond" (Viola et al. 2015, 1: 89–107).
 - 18 Emphasis in original.

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