

Sex Diss events at-a-glance

Autumn term 2015

- 29 September**
Tuesday
Skoonheid [Beauty] (Film Club)
Arts B324, 6pm-8.30pm
- 2 October**
Friday
Robert Glück (Co-Sponsored Event)
Shawcross AS02, 4pm-6pm
- 7 October**
Wednesday
Force in Progress - Leo Bersani (Co-Sponsored Event)
Room and Time TBA
- 16 October**
Friday
Informatic Opacity - Dr. Zach Blas (Queory)
Arts A103, 4pm-6pm
- 27 October**
Tuesday
Queer Theory without Antinormativity (Reading Group)
Arts B324 6pm-7.30pm
- 10 November**
Tuesday
Normal Life (Reading Group)
Arts B324, 6pm-7.30pm
- 24 November**
Tuesday
Beautiful Thing (Film Club)
Arts B274, 6pm-8.30pm
- 2 December**
Wednesday
Emerging Trans* Practices - Juliet Jacques, Olga Lidia Saavedra Montes de Oca, Nat Raha (Queory)
Fulton A, 4pm-6pm
- 4-5 December**
Friday-Saturday
PRIDE and its Precursors (Co-Sponsored Event)
Birkbeck Cinema, Bloomsbury, London

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SexualDissidence



Queory: 'Informatic Opacity' - Dr. Zach Blas. 'Fag Face Mask', 'Face Cage #1', 'Mask'

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Queory The Sex Diss Speaker Series

Informatic Opacity

Dr. Zach Blas (Goldsmiths, University of London)

Fri 15th Oct, Arts A103, 4pm-6pm

This talk will focus on a developing concept, 'informatic opacity', and masked protest as means of defeating surveillance technologies. 'Informatic opacity' is an aesthetico-political practice that resists emerging modes of digital capture (such as biometric recognition) and insists on an embodied dimension of life that cannot be fully abstracted by technical processes of calculation and visualisation. Through engaging with Eduoard Glissant's writings on opacity and transparency, Blas uses his own artwork Facial Weaponisation Suite, a community-based mask-making project that creates 'collective masks' for public intervention. These masks elude recognition by facial detection technologies, responding to the pressures of surveillance and resistance.

Zach Blas is an artist and writer whose work engages with technology, queerness and politics, and is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. Blas has exhibited and lectured internationally, most recently at Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; e-flux, New York; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; and the 2014 Dakar Biennale. Books: *Escaping the Face* (Rhizome at the New Museum and Sternberg Press, 2016) and *Informatic Opacity: The Art of Defacement in Biometric Times* (forthcoming). His work has been featured in Artforum, Frieze, Art Papers, Mousse Magazine, The Atlantic, Al Jazeera America, Wired, and Art Review, in which Hito Steyerl selected him as a 2014 FutureGreat. During Autumn 2015 Blas is a resident at the Delfina Foundation, London.

Emerging Trans* Practices: Creative and Critical Explorations

Juliet Jacques, Olga Lidia Saavedra Montes de Oca, Nat Raha
Wed 2 Dec, Fulton A, 4pm-6pm

Current Sussex PhD candidates Juliet Jacques, Olga Lidia Saavedra Montes de Oca and Nat Raha present and frame their recent cutting-edge work in fiction, poetry, photography and performance. The showcase will be followed by a critically engaged open discussion.

Beautiful Thing (1996)



Sex Diss Film Club

Skoonheid [Beauty] (2011)

[99 mins], dir. Oliver Hermanus
Tue 29 Sept, Arts B324, 6pm-8.30pm
Introduced by Matthew Beetar (School of Media, Film and Music)

Awarded the Queer Palm Award at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival, this harrowing film charts the rising obsession of South African François (Deon Lotz) as he covertly pursues handsome Christian (Charlie Keegan). The film explores the complexity of François's attraction to men alongside his role as an openly racist and homophobic married man. His descent into obsession with Christian and the film's shocking violence make it a powerful and harrowing portrayal of lust and desire at the intersection of whiteness and masculinity in post-apartheid South Africa

Beautiful Thing (1996)

[85 mins], dir. Hettie Macdonald
Tue 24 Nov, Arts B274, 6pm-8.30pm
Introduced by Michael Rowland (School of English)

A landmark gay film when it was first released, and based on the play by Jonathan Harvey, Beautiful Thing charts the blossoming romance between teenage boys Jamie (Glen Berry) and Ste (Scott Neal) on London's Thamesmead estate. Jamie and Ste's relationship and coming out is only part of this examination of working-class life in London and the difficulties faced by teenagers both gay and straight. Standout performances from Jamie's mother, Sandra (Linda Henry) and their quirky neighbour Leah (Tameka Empson), plus a Mama Cass soundtrack, give the film a positivity rarely seen in contemporary gay films of the time.

Queer Studies Reading Group

differences Special Issue: 'Queer Theory without Antinormativity' (Vol.26, No.1, May 2015) 'Antinormativity's Queer Conventions'

Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson
'Sex After the Black Normal'
Erica R. Edwards
Tue 27 Oct, Arts B324, 6pm-7.30pm

Can queer theory proceed without an allegiance to antinormativity? This special issue establishes the value of this question by staging an encounter with the most widely held assumption in queer theory today: that the political value of the field lies in its antinormative commitments.

Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law (South End Press, 2011) Dean Spade

Tue 10 Nov, Arts B324, 6pm-7.30pm

It is usually assumed that trans and gender nonconforming people should follow the civil rights and "equality" strategies of lesbian and gay rights organizations by agitating for legal reforms that would ostensibly guarantee nondiscrimination and equal protection under the law. This approach assumes that the best way to address the poverty and criminalization that plague trans populations is to gain legal recognition and inclusion in the state's institutions. But is this strategy effective?

Co-Sponsored Events

Robert Glück: Reading and in Conversation

Fri 2 Oct, Shawcross AS02, 4pm-6pm
Co-sponsored with the Centre for American Studies.

Robert Glück was a founding member of the New Narrative literary school, formed in San Francisco in the late 1970s. He is the author of nine books of poetry and fiction, including two novels, Margery Kempe (1994) and Jack the Modernist (1995) and a collection of stories, Denny Smith (2003). His work has appeared in The Faber Book of Gay Short Fiction, The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Village Voice, artforum international, TLS, and The Review of Contemporary Fiction. Glück was Director of The Poetry Center at San Francisco State, where he is Professor of Creative Writing. In 2016 Semiotext(e) will publish his Collected Essays.

Force in Progress

Leo Bersani (University of California, Berkeley)

Wed 7 Oct, Room and Time TBA

Co-sponsored with the Centre for Creative and Critical Thought.

Sussex welcomes renowned psychoanalyst and queer theorist Leo Bersani, who will be speaking on (amongst other things) Lacan, Lawrence, Beckett, Peirce's 'Boys Don't Cry' and von Trier's 'Melancholia'.

Leo Bersani is Professor Emeritus of French at the University of California, Berkeley. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science in 1992. His landmark publications include: *Is the Rectum a Grave?* (2010), *Homos* (1995) and *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (1986).

Symposium PRIDE and its Precursors: Political Mimesis, Nostalgic Dissidence and Popular Film

Fri 4 Dec (6pm-9pm)
Sat 5 Dec (10.30am-5.30pm)
Birkbeck Cinema, Bloomsbury, London

Co-sponsored with the Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image (BIMI) and Birkbeck Institute of Gender and Sexuality (BIGS).

Organisers: Catherine Grant (University of Sussex), Frances Hubbard (University of Brighton) and Diarmaid Kelliher (University of Glasgow).

This two day event will examine the 2014 film PRIDE against some of its queer video precursors, including the 1983 video Framed Youth: the Revenge of the Teenage Perverts. Past and present Sex Diss academics such as Lucy Robinson, Mandy Merck, Michael Lawrence, Frances Hubbard and Catherine Grant will present alongside other academics and original members of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners in what promises to be a lively and fascinating two days of discussion.