do you want to quit?

intimacy, site, self
Morehshin Allahyari
Hannah Quinlan
and Rosie Hastings
Angela Washko

curated by Erin Gordon
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University Art Gallery
University of California, Irvine

More Information:
https://uag.arts.uci.edu/exhibit/do-you-want-quit-intimacy-site-self
“...your words are no longer merely what you have to say—they are your very presence, they’re what manifests you in the virtual world, and how you use them, consequently, tends to shape that world’s perceptions of you in much the same way how you look frames what the real world thinks.”

a hypnotic rhythm. Archiving an object or place through visual means is an attempt to preserve it for future use, and Hannah Quinlan and Rosie Hastings began filming over one hundred gay bars in the United Kingdom for this purpose. With their choice to strip the typical demarcating elements of the archive (such as naming and categorizing practices) from their documentation of the bars, the bars themselves become inhabitants of a hostile space through the emptiness that encapsulates them.

The decline of spaces for queer communities has been a subject of the duo’s research; they found gentrification was pushing gay bars in the UK out of business due to societal and economical factors that made it impossible for the bars to stay. However, to film an unoccupied gay bar is to encapsulate the memory of a feeling or experience despite the anxiety elicited by its emptiness.

In speaking to a queered spatiotemporality, artist and theorist Allucquère Rosanne “Sandy” Stone writes about falling in love with her prosthesis, and the act slipping in and out of disembodiment and between identities when confronted by technology. She says, “For all intents and purposes, your ‘root’ persona is you. Take that one away, and there’s nobody home.” Quinlan and Hastings’ UK Gay Bar Directory continues this thread of disembodiment and physical displacement of identity, allowing a communal social space to be isolated from its community with the camera. Its function as a space for the exchange of information between queer bodies is subverted with its emptiness, and the archive, as it strays from conventionality, creates for its publics what queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz refers to as “the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.” It is both a physical and intangible labor that preserves a node of the network for a community who will remain invested in it. However, to “re-figure,” to use Allahyari’s term, is a feminist act of recontextualizing the fundamental nature of these figures of storytelling. Over the last three years, her practice has evolved with the use of open source 3D modeling software and printing. Allahyari and her collaborator Daniel Rourke coined the term “Additivism,” a portmanteau of “additive” and “activism” to shed light on using 3D modeling and printing as a radical tool in response to destruction (it is typically presented with a hashtag for purposes of circulation—#Additivism). The project She Who Sees the Unknown is a continuation of the artist’s research into narratives of colonialism and oppression as well as Middle Eastern female figures of mythological origin. Her methodology is rooted in speculation, in that she performs research on her intended objects without an actual physical representation to draw from, enmeshing research into practices of performance, recreation, and storytelling. Allahyari uses “poor images” to do this—as Hito Steyerl uses the “poor image” to draw out a Marxist critique of the accessibility of imagery on the Internet—and without the “poor image,” she would be left to completely imagine a physical presence and space occupied by a nonexistent sculpted object. Her reconciliation of compiling a speculative archive with the actual archive itself is very much a self-driven project of monumental scale, calling forth what it means to “manage”; the term comes from the Latin word manus, or “hand.” “Hand” is quite precarious, as it denotes having power over an object through the act of holding it mentally or physically, and in Allahyari’s work, she does both.

**Self**

Mehrshin Allahyari’s practice functions as a site for using technology against disruption and distance. Allahyari’s video In Mere Spaces All Things Are Side By Side I captures the experience of using the Internet in a developing country through reconceptualizing a long-distance relationship that took place while the artist still lived in Iran. The space the video occupies is fictional, as the artist reconstructed the fantasy space of the instant messaging chat based on pure speculation of what a virtual space would look like. She speaks through the screen name “morehshina” with a timestamp displayed after the screen name as if we were watching a film with subtitles. This is ultimately a visualization of a relationship. It is quiet and careful, yet jarring when the screen cuts to black with an ambient screech. Because Net Neutrality in the United States is currently fraught with bureaucratic opposition, one cannot help but think of the dissonance a sub-optimal Internet connection might cause in our many relationships.

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"In Defense of the Poor Image," e-flux 10 (Nov. 2009).

**Notes**


Morehshin Allahyari is a media artist, activist, educator, and curator. Her work deals with political, social, and cultural contradictions, documenting personal and collective struggles humans face in this century. Allahyari’s *Dark Matter* is a series of 3D printed sculptures that form humorous, merged juxtapositions. Underlying the humor, however, is the reality of authoritarianism: the objects chosen (dog, dildo, gun, necktie, satellite dish, etc.) are representations of things censured by the Iranian government — possession of which puts one at risk of harassment, incurring fines or incarceration. Her *Material Speculation: ISIS* series uses digital fabrication technology to reconstruct artifacts destroyed by ISIS in 2015. The project has achieved wide acclaim for proposing 3D printing technology as a tool both for resistance and documentation.

Allahyari’s work has been part of numerous exhibitions, festivals, and workshops including Centre Pompidou in Paris, Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, Pori Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, Museo Ex-Teresa Arte Actual, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, and Material Mexico City. She has been an artist in residence at Carnegie Mellon STUDIO for Creative Inquiry (2015), Autodesk Pier9 Workshop in San Francisco (2015), and BANFF Centre (2013), among others. The many publications featuring her work include *The New York Times*, Huffington Post, Wired, NPR, Rhizome, Hyperallergic, Dazed Digital, VICE, Neural Magazine and Al Jazeera. Allahyari is the Co-Founder of the Experimental Research Lab at Pier9/Autodesk. She is currently a Research Resident at Eyebeam Art and Technology Center, New York.


Courtesy of the artist and Upfor Gallery.
Hannah Quinlan & Rosie Hastings live and work in South East London. They graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London in 2014. Their work centers themes of queerness and resistance, and includes an ongoing project @Gaybar, wherein the artists rematerialise the historic gay bar as a container for queer practice. Selected solo/duo exhibitions include *Fuck Me On The Middle Walk*, *Truth and Consequences*, Geneva (2017); *GENTRIFICATION*, presented by Daata Editions and Zuecca Projects, 15th Venice Architecture Biennale (2016); *How to survive a flood* @Gaybar, DRAF Studio, London (2016) and *Cruising Extinction*, @Gaybar, Oslo 10, Basel (2015).


Angela Washko is an artist, writer and facilitator devoted to creating new forums for discussions of feminism in spaces frequently hostile toward it. Since 2012, Washko has operated The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft, an ongoing intervention inside the most popular online role-playing game of all time. Washko’s most recent project, The Game: The Game is a video game presenting the practices of several prominent seduction coaches (aka pick-up artists) through the format of a dating simulator. In the game these pick-up gurus attempt to seduce the player using their signature techniques taken verbatim from their instructional books and video materials. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University. A recent recipient of a Franklin Furnace Performance Fund Grant, a Frank-Ratchye Fund for Art at the Frontier Grant from the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, and a Rhizome Internet Art Microgrant, Washko’s practice has been highlighted in Art in America, Frieze Magazine, Time Magazine, The Guardian, ArtForum, ARTnews, The Hairpin, VICE, Hyperallergic, Rhizome, The New York Times, Neural Magazine and more. Her projects have been presented nationally and internationally at venues including Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki), Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Milan Design Triennale, the Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennial and the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Her writing has been published in Creative Time Reports, FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism, NTIK, Neural Magazine, VASA Journal on Images and Culture, .dpi, ANIMAL, and more.
(Enter your name and phone number into his phone.)
(Enter a fake name and fake phone number into his phone.)
(Give him the phone back. Do not say anything.)
(Throw the phone and run the fuck out of there.)

**Luke**
You seem like the kind of girl who likes reality television.

**Several men are blocking your view.**

**Intense Guy**
What the fuck? Why do you hate me?

**Older Gentleman**
I'm a lonely person trying to overcome my shyness and you've just slammed me back into my shell for months.
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