

THEORY ASSIGNMENT

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Technology binds life to the rhetoric of militaristic desire and corporate capital: technology is here to make our lives better for the greater good of society and to protect us from everything bad.

Technological standards box us into a life capital wants us live. A life of hyper-consumption predicated on the need for always newer technologies. A life of heteronormative networked power, where Steve Jobs is the smiling (white, heterosexual, capitalist) face behind a company that ‘thinks different’. A life of imported family photos and children’s 1st birthday parties (literally, iLife).

Importantly, a life where possibilities and decisions are made by a heteronormative elite before the queer user ever turns the computer on. Nothing on the computer is ever user-friendly.

Blas, Zach. “Queer Technologies // Gay Bombs: User’s Manual.” *Public Rage*, 2008, pp. 105–109.

[2]

It is possible to feel both admiration and contempt for dominant culture, and queers may easily have contradictory feelings about the culture that ignores and ridicules us. We are not acknowledged, nor are we invited to participate in this culture, but we comprise part of its audience.

Bordowitz, Gregg. “The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous.” *The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous: And Other Writings, 1986–2003*, edited by James Meyer, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2004, pp. 43–67.

[3]

“I’m excited about living in history,” says Gorell Barnes. As if he doesn’t already! And that’s the point, we suppose, of our being here at this party. Barnes feels himself supremely suited for the Darcy-ish role. History has to be entered deliberately, as a diorama or a wax museum. It has to be acted upon, acted out. Danced.

Bryant, Tisa. “Unexplained Presence.” *Unexplained Presence*, Leon Works, 2007, pp. 143–59.

[4]

So why look at recordings of the mundane and ordinary? Because this footage provides an example of what else could have been, of how else the film might have attuned its viewers to everyday queer-of-color life. The documentary's narrative framework prioritizes ball culture, language, and style over the material realities of its protagonists' lives, like poverty, anti-Black racism, houselessness, trans violence and death, and HIV/AIDS. There is even less space to account for the ordinary existences of these people who must always be charismatic, performative, and innovative.

Gonzalez, Marcos, and Johannes Lenhard. "Paris Doesn't Always Have To Be Burning." *Public Books*, 16 Sept. 2020, www.publicbooks.org/paris-doesnt-always-have-to-be-burning.

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Indeed, in addition to sitting uncomfortably between and across these disciplines and downplaying the role of the individual artist, socially engaged art is specifically at odds with the capitalist market infrastructure of the art world: it does not fit well in the traditional collecting practices of contemporary art, and the prevailing cult of the individual artist is problematic for those whose goal is to work with others, generally in collaborative projects with democratic ideals.

Helguera, Pablo. "Definitions." *Education for Socially Engaged Art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook*, Jorge Pinto Books Inc., 2011, pp. 1–8.

[6]

That said, our built environments can still reflect patterns of gender-based discrimination. To imagine the city and its structures as neutral places where complicated human social relations are staged is to ignore the simple fact that *people* built these places. As the feminist geographer Jane Darke has said: "Our cities are patriarchy written in stone, brick, glass and concrete." In other words, cities reflect the norms of the societies that build them. And sexism is a deep-rooted norm.

Kern, Leslie. "'Upward-Thrusting Buildings Ejaculating into the Sky' – Do Cities Have to Be so Sexist?" *The Guardian*, 6 July 2020, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/jul/06/upward-thrusting-buildings-ejaculating-cities-sexist-leslie-kern-phallic-feminist-city-toxic-masculinity.

[7]

Friendship was not an idea or a status you took for granted, but something you *did*, over and over: When your friend is flying into town, you find a car and pick them up at the airport, and you take them to get burgers at In-N-Out. When it's your friend's birthday, you bake their favorite cake (Earl Grey if you're lucky) and make them a beautiful card from thick pieces of paper and stickers you have collected for the purpose. When your friend needs a place to stay because they are visiting town or recovering from a surgery or getting out of prison, you make them a bed from the extra pair of sheets and pillow you keep for visitors, and you leave them a snack in the fridge. In the shadow of structural

abandonment, political alienation, family rejection, chronic illness, state violence, and medical neglect, queer friendship saves us.

Mitchell, Larry, et al. "Introduction." *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*, Nightboat Books, 2019, p. XIII–XXVII.

[8]

In a recent report, only 11% of art acquired by America's top museums, between 2008 and 2018, was by female artists. Why would artists be so afraid to make trouble and speak up about this? "There's so few people who pull the strings, that's why," notes Kahlo. "It's a smaller place than you imagine when you climb that ladder."

Sayej, Nadja. "The Guerrilla Girls: 'We Upend the Art World's Notion of What's Good and What's Right.'" *The Guardian*, 19 Oct. 2020,

www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/oct/19/the-guerrilla-girls-interview-art-world-rebels.

[9]

Transgender activism and theory, on the other hand, tend to treat trans as a modality rather than a category. Trans segments the sexual orientations and gender identities in much the same manner as race and class – in other words, a transsexual woman (someone with a transsexual mode of embodiment who lives in the social category woman) can be a lesbian (someone who lives in the social category woman and is sexually oriented toward women), just as a black man could be gay, or a bisexual person could be poor. In doing so, transgender theory and activism call attention to the operations of normativity within and between gender/sexual identity categories, raise questions about the structuration of power along axes other than the homo/hetero and man/woman binaries, and identify productive points of attachment for linking sexual orientation and gender identity activism to other social justice struggles.

Stryker, Susan. "Transgender History, Homonormativity and Disciplinarity." *Against Homonormativity*, 2008, pp. 200–04.

[10]

Here is Sartre's version: when you are waiting for a bus with a group of people, you are not a collective. When the bus stops, and you all get on, you still remain the individuals in the same place, passively doing the same thing. But: if the bus passes you by, just blows through the stop for no apparent reason, this is the moment that the group becomes, in the language of existentialism, fused.

Winant, Carmen. "Togetherring." *Accompaniment to the video work 'Togetherring'*, 2019.