

Being Seen Making Scenes: An Archival Exploration of Ottawa's First Gay and  
Lesbian Film and Video Festival

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Film Studies

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Ottawa, Ontario

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## Abstract

This thesis documents the history of *Making Scenes*, Ottawa's first lesbian and gay film and video festival, a festival that was active from 1992 to 2003. I have uncovered the history of this organization through archival work and by interviewing *Making Scenes* organizers, volunteers, and attendees. Today this festival is relatively unknown, despite a heavily branded and relatively recent presence in Ottawa. This work interrogates the festival's archival erasure. The archive of *Making Scenes* is interrogated through its queer and trans embodied affective reverberations both within and outside of the archive. This project hopes to add to the growing archival projects into lesbian and gay history that moves away from the focus on the metropolitan Canadian cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.

## Acknowledgments

I dedicate this thesis to all trans people in academia who came before me. Your courage and knowledge energizes and informs my entire existence. Your exemplary, fierce work and outstanding talent are the backbone of this project.

To everyone who participated in the interview process, thank you for your generous and lively commitment to this project. Your past work in organizing lesbian and gay space has paved the way for arts organizers like myself and I am so grateful for your commitment to our communities, past and ongoing.

To other unnamed gay and lesbian festivals and arts organizers, this project is an homage to you, and hopes to be a drop in the bucket of so much more talent and organizing to uncover both in Canada and abroad.

To my cats, Oliver and Wallace, for always providing much needed stress relief and entertainment, and demanding attention when you knew I needed a break.

To my copy editors, Cat and Em, thank you for fantastic and quick insight.

Thank you to the archivists who spent time speaking to me about *Making Scenes*, and answering my sometimes annoying, mostly difficult, questions. Specifically, the archivists at the ArQuives in Toronto, for your commitment to searching for many (often missing) *Making Scenes* ephemera.

Most importantly, I would like to thank Professor Laura Horak for your constant and unwavering support throughout this project. I could not have done it without you and your meticulous and rigorous attention to detail. You never stopped pushing me to ask those hard questions. Thank you for not giving up on me. I could not ask for a fiercer ally, both within the academic context, as well as in the face of (bureaucratic) violence within the university.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	i
Acknowledgments .....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Setting the Scene: The History of <i>Making Scenes</i> , Ottawa’s First Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival .....	6
Chapter 2: Remaking Scenes: Reactivating the Ephemeral in the Archive .....	44
Chapter 3: Being Seen: A Transsexual in the Archive .....	65
Conclusion .....	90
End Notes .....	92
Bibliography.....	96
Appendix 1: Consent Form.....	99
Appendix 2: Interview Questions.....	103

## Introduction

In this thesis, I argue that feelings of loss spurred by a forgotten piece of Canadian lesbian and gay history can be supplanted by ephemeral reactivations and affective connections both within and outside of the archive. I explore this through my research on the history of *Making Scenes: Ottawa's First Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival*, which ran from 1992 to 2003. In addition to reconstructing the history of this festival, I analyze ephemeral moments of fleeting connection with objects and archival experiences, which leads to a further understanding of lesbian and gay history, as well as affect within the archive. I chose to investigate *Making Scenes* because the festival seems to have been forgotten by Ottawa's LGBTQ+ community as well as Canadian film studies researchers, despite its accomplishments and longevity. Personally, as an arts worker for *Inside Out Toronto* and *Inside Out Ottawa* for the past 3 years, I had never heard the name of the festival throughout my time. This project hopes to supplant this loss by telling the story of this forgotten piece of Ottawa's lesbian and gay history, which is important to our understanding of lesbian and gay arts organizing both within Ottawa and more broadly within Canada. In this thesis, I use "lesbian and gay" to refer to lesbians and gays in Ottawa in the 1990s, as this was the denomination used by many organizations I researched at the time, and LGBTQ+ to refer to queer and trans communities more broadly.

Although *Making Scenes* was initially a grassroots organization focused on Canadian lesbian and gay content, it quickly grew into a commercialized festival by the late 1990s. *Making Scenes* emerged at the same time as New Queer Cinema (NQC) and similar lesbian and gay festivals within the region, such as *Inside Out* in Toronto and *image+nation* in Montreal. *Making Scenes* immersed itself into this broader network and grew from a festival with a few evening screenings at a University of Ottawa auditorium to a two-week festival. Trouble started brewing

in 2001, with the departure of some key organizers, and increasing woes surrounding financial and human resources management. Additionally, a number of outside political and economic factors, including increased financial burdens and budget cuts, put pressure on the organization. The festival was very hastily dismantled in 2004, and therefore has minimal presence both within the archive and outside of the archive. *Inside Out Ottawa*, an arm of *Inside Out Toronto*, has taken on the role of providing an annual queer film festival in Ottawa, further burying *Making Scenes*' legacy.

This thesis uses the lack of documentation about Making Scenes as an opportunity to explore the researcher's relationship with the archive, and how uncovering a forgotten piece of lesbian and gay history can spur ephemeral reactivations and affective connections within the archive. I define ephemeral connections as fleeting, affective, often undocumented moments between a researcher and the objects they are researching. These "ambient archival imaginations," in the words of sociologist E. Cram, provide alternatives to the restrictions of the archive and account for otherwise forgotten ephemeral connections throughout the archival process.<sup>1</sup> Instead of shying away from a lack of documentation, this thesis leans into that lack of documentation, and investigates how reconnecting with traces in the archive can lead to these ambient archival imaginations. Methodologically, this thesis relies on queer and trans archival theories that underline the embodied, personal and affective relationships we have with archives as researchers. Although the festival's rise and fall could be considered somewhat typical, its archival presence makes it a case study that contributes to the field of film festival studies. This is mostly due to its ephemeral behaviour and presence within the archive, and how we as researchers can see that ephemeral nature as an opportunity for analysis rather than a hindrance to researching its history.

One of the most crucial sources for this work has been textual records from a variety of archives. I visited both local and regional archives to uncover *Making Scenes*' history. Most importantly, the collection of Ottawa LGBTQ+ newspaper *Capital Xtra!* within the LGBTQ serials at the ArQuives in Toronto provided snapshots into the festival's history through articles, event directories, and festival programs, all of which were printed in their publication. In addition, I visited archives locally, including the University of Ottawa Library Archives and Special Collections (including the Canadian Women's Movement Archives collection and *The Fulcrum* student newspaper collection) and the City of Ottawa Archives. I consulted a number of records at each of these institutions, including student and alumni publications, newspaper clippings, and city council meeting minutes. I also utilized the Wayback Machine website and *Capital Xtra*'s limited online publications to uncover some of *Making Scenes*' online presence. I was also able to find information regarding *Making Scenes* via *The Charlatan*'s online records, Carleton's student newspaper.

Collecting and analyzing oral history interviews was the second crucial pillar of my research. My approach to oral history interviews sits at the intersection of preserving and documenting the history of the organization coupled with a body-based knowledge approach to the interview experience. Similar to queer historians Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horatio N. Roque Ramirez in *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*, I use a body-based knowing approach to analyze these interviews and supplant the erasure of *Making Scenes* and queer trans subjects like myself within archives.<sup>2</sup> Body-based knowing allows for the imprint of an experience on the interviewer, as well as a deep identification with the research subject. This was crucial to my understanding and analysis of the oral interview as a trans researcher, as body-

based knowledge has its roots in trans research. Identification was equally important, as I was connecting with a previous set of arts organizers, being an arts worker myself.

In this thesis, I engage with a range of scholarship related to film festival studies. Engaging with this emerging form of academic study was an opportunity for academic intervention, especially within the Canadian landscape. I rely on film scholars Leanne Dawson and Skadi Loist's work on LGBTQ festivals, specifically their comprehensive work on these festivals in Europe, as it helpfully identifies trends and overall trajectories of these types of film festivals.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Antoine Damiens' newest work *LGBTQ Film Festivals: Curating Queerness* helps untangle some of the challenges of researching festivals with relatively small and at times ephemeral archival presences.<sup>4</sup> Within Canada, Thomas Waugh's comprehensive work *The Romance of Transgression*, a true pillar of documentation of queer film in Canada, provides the only academic reference that mentions *Making Scenes* (though only one paragraph).<sup>5</sup>

I also explore ephemeral reactivation and affect in the archive through queer and trans approaches to the archive. I use ephemera in different capacities: specifically, I utilized queer and trans historian Leah DeVun and queer art historian Michael Jay McClure's concept of ephemeral reactivation, which accounts for fleeting, untraceable moments of connection within the archive, to analyze the ways in which the archive of *Making Scenes* was reactivated through this research project.<sup>6</sup> This reactivation is framed by lesbian scholar Ann Cvetkovich's insights into queer archival work and the researcher's connection with the objects within.<sup>7</sup>

I also harness E. Cram's concept of "ambient archival invention," which explains that creativity and affect within the archive are a means to further document history.<sup>8</sup> Their approach spurs questions regarding the pathologizing of trans bodies in the archive, and the reparative

affective work that can create alternatives to this specific harm. Finally, I rely on trans studies scholars such as Nicki Sullivan and Susan Stryker and their concept of somatechnics, to provide alternatives to queer and trans erasure in the archive.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis is organized into three chapters, each engaging with *Making Scenes* from a different lens, all specifically tailored towards combating the erasure of its history. In Chapter 1, I simply present the festival's history. This chapter serves as an act of defiance towards the archival erasure of *Making Scenes* to speak the festival's history into existence. I outline the festival's three distinctive phases, and provide some explanations as to why the festival has been forgotten. In Chapter 2, I turn to the ephemeral connection between myself and archival documents as well as my experiences conducting oral interviews, relying on the queer method of body-based knowing. I argue that harnessing ephemeral reactivation of *Making Scenes* objects and history in the archive intercepts its lost history, and provides an alternative to its erasure. In the third and final chapter, I explore my affective connection with two particular archival documents I encountered during this process, and draw affective connections within the archive while paying acute attention to my embodied experiences. Through the embodied practice of ambient archival invention, I argue that engaging with our affective and embodied experiences within the archive is an alternative to lost histories such as *Making Scenes*.

Overall, my goal is to utilize this under-documented festival as a queer and trans recovery project, to document the history of the festival which has been lost, but also to harness this loss as a means to create ways to circumvent erasure. In addition, this work contributes to the growing field of regional lesbian and gay research projects across Canada.

## Chapter 1: Setting the Scene:

### The History of *Making Scenes*, Ottawa's First Lesbian and Gay Film and Video

#### Festival

This chapter describes the history of *Making Scenes: Ottawa's Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival* and identifies different periods of the festival's history. With the rise of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s, lesbian and gays created a new cinematic movement called New Queer Cinema (NQC). Lesbian and gay film festivals proliferated across Canada—*image+nation* was founded in Montreal in 1987, *Vancouver's Queer Film Festival* in 1989, and *Inside Out* in Toronto in 1991. In Ottawa, *Making Scenes: Ottawa's Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival* was founded in 1992. Unlike these other festivals, though, *Making Scenes* has not made it into the history of Canadian lesbian and gay culture. This chapter will delineate this history through a series of chronological phases characterized by a set of themes. It will end with a discussion of why this festival has been forgotten within the larger picture of lesbian and gay film festivals in Canada.

All historical projects stem from a certain perspective and selection of sources, and therefore it is important to note that there is no objective way of documenting *Making Scenes* as an organization. This chapter relies upon archival research and oral history interviews in order to uncover the history of *Making Scenes*. The history outlined in this chapter stems from my visits to a variety of archives that house *Making Scenes* documents, including the University of Ottawa Library Archives and Special Collections, the ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives in Toronto, and the Ottawa City Archives. The ArQuives in Toronto housed the most comprehensive set of documents related to the festival, including the fonds of the newspaper *Capital Xtra!*, a bimonthly publication of lesbian and gay news in Ottawa in the 1990s, the David

Pepper papers, and documents from Pink Triangle Services. Pepper was an Ottawa activist and Pink Triangle Services was an LGBTQ+ resource center in Ottawa (not to be confused with Pink Triangle Press, which was based in Toronto and published *Capital Xtra!*). I also consulted the Carleton University student newspaper archives online. In addition to this archival research, I interviewed *Making Scenes* festival organizers, board members, and filmmakers. I have chosen interview excerpts strategically, in order to highlight certain events that were not necessarily captured in the literature on *Making Scenes*. Due to the selective nature of this process, once this thesis is completed, I will donate the full interview recordings to the ArQuives for accession and preservation to circumvent issues of selectivity.

#### Setting the Scene for *Making Scenes*: Ottawa's Lesbian and Gay Scene in the Early 1990s

In 1992, Curtis Magnuson, a Master's student in social work at Carleton University, wrote a thesis called "Lesbian and Gay Youth in Ottawa: The Importance of Community." Magnuson's research pointed to a multitude of violent hate crimes against lesbians and gays in Ottawa in the early 1990s.<sup>10</sup> He observed that lesbians and gays in Ottawa were not immune to the AIDS crisis, which was especially devastating to the gay male population. Violence against lesbians and gays at the hands of the Ottawa police department due to homophobia and HIV/AIDS stigma was prominent. The lack of educational resources and the rampant institutional homophobia worsened the HIV/AIDS crisis and also factored into a severe syphilis outbreak in Ottawa in the early 1990s. Examples include hate crimes on a multitude of levels, ranging from murder to assault to the spreading of hateful messaging.<sup>11</sup>

Despite this persecution, the community still had a strong network of physical spaces in which to organize, socialize, and consume in. Magnuson surveyed Ottawa lesbians and gays with

a variety of questionnaires to bolster his research and identified multiple spaces wherein the rate of return for his questionnaires was high, notably the Gay Pride Information Fair, Association of Lesbians and Gays of Ottawa, Centretown Pub, Ottawa Women's Bookstore, Pink Triangle Youth of Ottawa-Hull, and TakTiks Bar.<sup>12</sup> This indicates that in 1992, these establishments were frequented by lesbians and gays.

Centretown and Byward Market were hubs for lesbian and gay businesses, including bathhouses, restaurants, bookstores, and nightclubs. Cruiseline, run by Pink Triangle Press, was a chatline service providing a safe space for gay men to organize hookups and meetups. Club 363, Market Station, After Stonewall, Mother Tongue, Venus Envy, and TakTiks were popular venues for lesbian and gay events. Mother Tongue and Venus Envy were not just businesses, but also spaces run by and for lesbians and gays, often doubling up as meeting spots offering a café type setting. *Making Scenes* often entered into partnerships with these business. Mother Tongue, Venus Envy, and later Octopus Books would sell tickets in advance of the festival, and Market Station held after-screening parties as it was close to the National Gallery of Canada where *Making Scenes* held many of its screenings.

Ottawa also had a strong network of lesbian and gay publications that assisted in the promotion of community events geared towards lesbians and gays. The largest was *Capital Xtra!*, a publication of Pink Triangle Press, founded in 1993 as a subsidiary of Toronto's *Daily Xtra!*. The weekly newspaper quickly dominated the gay news cycle in Ottawa, expanding upon its predecessor, *GO Info*. *GO Info* was short for *Gay Ottawa Information* and was a source for lesbian and gay events information as well as a directory of lesbian and gay businesses and organizations. *Capital Xtra!* expanded on this mandate and reported on a multitude of subjects, ranging from HIV/AIDS, cultural events, advertisements for lesbian and gay owned and allied

businesses as well as Ottawa-specific lesbian and gay news. *Capital Xtra!* also continued to publish directory information as well as event calendars.

### Founding *Making Scenes*: 1992-1993

Though many today think of *Inside Out*'s 2007 festival in Ottawa as the earliest queer film festival in the city, Ottawa already had its very own lesbian and gay film festival in 1992. *Making Scenes: Ottawa's Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival* was founded around the same time as other queer festivals across Canada and throughout North America. The foundational phase of the festival (1992-1993) is characterized by a grassroots, non-hierarchical, community-based model with a small funding base and a small roster of film programs, mostly lent to the festival from grassroots Canadian independent film distributors. In its initial years, *Making Scenes* also relied on programming and curatorial support from *Inside Out: Toronto's Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival*, which had been founded one year prior.

Festivals such as *Inside Out* and *Making Scenes* stemmed from the New Queer Cinema (NQC) movement. Film festival historians Leanne Dawson and Skadi Loist explain that New Queer Cinema emerged in the late 1980s out of “the arrival of AIDS, cheap equipment and living costs, plus the emergence of queer as a concept and a community, highlighting the significance of finances, community and identity in relation to cultural output.”<sup>13</sup> Contextually, the creation of *Making Scenes* in 1992 fits squarely within the expansion of North American lesbian and gay film and video festivals as it relates to the creation of content “for queers, by queers,”<sup>14</sup> as well as the increased accessibility of this NQC content. In its inaugural 1992 program guide, *Making Scenes* explains why it was founded: “*The Making Scenes Collective* has assembled film and video in this festival that addresses issues we can all relate to: love, relationships, prejudice,

AIDS, culture, aging, eroticism and empowerment.”<sup>15</sup> In this sense, *Making Scenes* demonstrated from very early on how its mission fit squarely within the NQC movement.

Most of the festival’s funding came from all levels of government. The Regional Municipality of Ottawa–Carleton, Ontario Arts Council, and Canada Council for the Arts were all frequent contributors. Additionally, the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre (CFMDC) and Vtape both supplied independent films to the festival. The festival also benefitted from the support of individual donors and small businesses.

*Making Scenes* would not have been possible without Robin Walsh, who had the initial motivation to bring a lesbian and gay film and video festival to Ottawa. Walsh was originally from Toronto and relocated to Ottawa in the early 1990s. He would frequently travel between Ottawa and Toronto, and after having the opportunity to attend *Inside Out* in Toronto in 1991, Walsh was adamant to bring a similar festival to the lesbian and gay community in Ottawa. He recounts the early idea of the festival this way:

We were living in the Shefford over here on Cooper Street, myself, Steve Lee, Christina Mckay and Louis Cabri, we were having dinner one night [...]. I was a recent transplant from Toronto and I had gone to gay and lesbian film and video festivals there and I said why wasn’t there one here in Ottawa? We’re all interested in film, so two gay guys and a straight couple, but very interested in film and gay and lesbian film and we decided that this is something that we would take on as a project and never having ever done anything like this before.<sup>16</sup>

The first edition of *Making Scenes: Ottawa’s First Annual Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival* ran June 8 to 11, 1992, at the Alumni Auditorium at the University of Ottawa Campus (85 University Avenue). Advance passes were available at Ottawa Women’s Bookstore, After

Stonewall Bookstore, and Octopus Books. This first iteration of the festival was funded by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa–Carleton, Ontario Arts Council, and the City of Ottawa. This funding was not without contention, as some complained that the \$5,800 grant *Making Scenes* received from the City of Ottawa’s Council Community Service Committee took resources away from other longstanding festivals in the region. Specifically, the *Ottawa Citizen* published an op-ed complaining that *Making Scenes*’ funding had essentially been stolen away from the *Kiwanis Music Festival*, which received no funding from the city in 1992, despite being one of the longest running festivals in the city.<sup>17</sup>

From its very early days, *Making Scenes* embedded itself within the lesbian and gay film festival landscape in Canada and this tradition would carry on throughout the entirety of the festival’s life. Walsh was fortunate enough to know Paul Lee, a programmer for *Inside Out* in Toronto. Between 1992 and 1995, *Making Scenes* relied on the curatorial and programming capabilities of its more established Toronto counterpart. Robin Walsh explains below:

Christina knew Paul Lee, who was the curator for the Toronto gay and lesbian film festival at the time [and a] Hong Kong Canadian [...] so we didn’t have to worry about [...] how to pick films. He basically put the program together for us, so basically our work was really about establishing working committees, figuring out how to get money for the film festival, getting it off the ground, getting a venue, and all that kind of organizational stuff. So, you know, we rolled up our sleeves and started working on that.<sup>18</sup>

The 1992 festival program was saved in the ArQuives in a small file of *Making Scenes* documents. Although the documents were stamped by Pink Triangle Services, the ArQuives does not have any other information about their provenance.

The festival programming in 1992 was entirely comprised of films by queer Canadian creators. Some highlights from the 31 films in the program include the opening night film, *Legal Memory* (dir. Lisa Steele & Kim Tomczak, 1992) and short films *R.S.V.P.* (dir. Laurie Lynd, 1991) and *David Roche Talks to You About Love* (dir. Jeremy Podeswa, 1983). Many of the films for the 1992 festival were provided by CFMDC and Vtape, as well as other smaller regional distributors. This first *Making Scenes* was entirely run by a small group of volunteers: Stephen Lee, Christine Mackay, Isabel Salole, and Robin Walsh. They called themselves the *Making Scenes Collective*. There were also two festival coordinators, Chris Sunter and Gilles Robinson.<sup>19</sup>

The resource sharing between *Inside Out* and *Making Scenes* as a result of Walsh's relationship with programmers at *Inside Out* was not a sign of a lack of capacity to curate and program films, but rather a reflection of the tradition of networking and resource sharing between lesbian and gay film festivals in Canada. *Making Scenes* was part of the wave of LGBT film festivals that exploded in number in North America in the wake of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the advent of NQC. As Dawson and Loist write:

Documentary, human rights and LGBTI\*Q film festivals, especially, started to actively create alternative distribution networks to compensate for lack of commercial film releases. By building specific circuits, these festivals use their networked structures to make up for limited funds and access to professional technology and to consolidate when negotiating with distributors to show a film within a larger network or sharing costs for, e.g. subtitles and guests.<sup>20</sup>

*Making Scenes* would work interdependently with *Inside Out* in Toronto, *image+nation* in Montreal, and *ImageOut* in Rochester, New York, to share film copies, programming, and guest travel within Central Canada and the Northeastern United States. In this way, *Making Scenes'*

interdependence on other geographically-adjacent queer film festivals is not a sign of a lack of resources, but rather an integration into the larger film festival network.

In 1993, the festival moved to the National Gallery of Canada (380 Sussex Drive) in downtown Ottawa. As with many niche film festivals, the social aspect and sense of community belonging of the event were a draw for attendees. Robin Walsh describes the audience demographic and party culture as follows:

When we moved to the art gallery for the second year, Market Station [...] was the post-screening party place and we had some *crazy* parties down in there, and a mix of gay, lesbian, [and] bisexual, old and young. That's the other thing with the film festival too—it brought together a range of all ages, so younger people saw older gay and lesbian experiences and vice versa.<sup>21</sup>

Many of these moments of gathering and celebration were captured by Shawn Scallen, photographer for *Capital Xtra!*. He photographed the festival and its many events from 1993 until the early 2000s. These photos would periodically be published in the photo section of the paper, *Xposed!*. *Capital Xtra!* was a marketing partner for *Making Scenes* throughout the festival's entire existence from 1993 through to 2004. This meant that *Making Scenes* was frequently a subject of articles in the newspaper and would occupy the front page of *Capital Xtra!* about a month before their annual event.

In addition to the photographic content, *Capital Xtra!* started to capture *Making Scenes* history from the newspaper's very first year in print in 1993. In fact, *Capital Xtra!* is so crucial to the documentation of this festival that my information about the festival's programming is almost entirely reliant on this source. Since the festival program for 1993 was not printed in

*Capital Xtra!* and was not preserved by Pink Triangle Services (unlike the 1992 festival program), I could not determine which films played that year.

Also in 1993, *Making Scenes* began holding year-round programming events, and permanently inverted “gay and lesbian” for “lesbian and gay” in their title, right up until the festivals adopted the more inclusive moniker of “queer” in its later years. *Making Scenes*’ year round events were designed to attract and maintain a larger audience as well as raise funds for *Making Scenes*’ annual festival. With an established audience, the festival was able to host two fundraisers in the winter of 1993 at the ByTowne Cinema (325 Rideau Street) in downtown Ottawa. The first fundraiser was on November 25, 1993, featuring the documentary *Sex Is...* (dir. Marc Huestis, 1993). They next screened *Zero Patience* (dir. John Greyson, 1993) on December 15, 1993.<sup>22</sup> These programming choices demonstrate that *Making Scenes*’ staff were aware of the tastes and current issues facing their community, as the screening of Greyson’s film was also a fundraiser for the Interagency Coalition of AIDS and Development. Walsh contextualizes *Making Scenes*’ programming choice as follows:

For me what was also interesting was at the time [...] the big film with Tom Hanks, *Philadelphia*, had come out and everybody got all excited about that. What was interesting when you compare that with John Greyson’s film, *Patient Zero*. [...] It was all about the first patient and the myth around that first patient, who was this flight attendant and [in] his film there was a famous scene in there, the famous scene with the singing assholes and a bunch of other stuff you know, he had so much more fun with the topic with HIV and AIDS than they did with *Philadelphia*, so it’s just really interesting to see [...] a Canadian gay filmmaker’s take on this issue [...]. It was a great film for its time.<sup>23</sup>

Seeing its success, and noticing that there was a real desire for this type of event in Ottawa, Walsh and other organizers decided to incorporate *Making Scenes* to allow the festival to operate as a not-for-profit. With the help of Peter Honeywell, a lawyer and active member of the arts community in Ottawa, *Making Scenes* was incorporated as a registered not-for-profit in Ontario. Honeywell would go on to assist the festival with many other matters throughout its existence. Robin Walsh explained this relationship between the festival and Honeywell as follows:

We also had a connection to the City of Ottawa, Peter Honeywell, who is their Arts Director I guess, for funding in the arts committee, and he advised us on how to approach the city, and then the province, and I think even the federal government, uhm, the little pots of money that we could use to help put on the film festival, so we got into grant writing application mode, and doing that, there was a lot of work to be done!<sup>24</sup>

This period of 1992-1993 was characterized by a grassroots, horizontal network, bolstered by outside assistance with programming and a strong network of passionate volunteers, eager to make *Making Scenes* part of the fabric of lesbian and gay life in Ottawa. The festival was progressing towards a growing audience in Ottawa and solidifying their place in the niche film festival network in Canada.

#### A Festival on the Rise: 1994-1999

The next period of the festival (1994-1999) was defined by rapid growth of audience attendance and expanded programming, with a continued investment in Canadian content. Additionally, this period of the festival also saw the organization build its capacities, by building and running workshops with local artist-run coop SAW Video and developing year-round programming, designed as fundraisers for the larger annual event. Within the organization, a

more hierarchical model emerged, wherein positions such as Executive Director and Programming Chair were created to steer the organization towards a more structured reporting framework. This included the creation of a variety of committees and a Board.

Between 1994 and 1999, the festival was constantly growing and expanding its programming, audience, and professional networks, and increasing its programming abilities. This was also a period when the festival expanded its roster to include after-screening parties, opening receptions, and fundraisers throughout the year to collect donations to support the festival's year-round operations. These types of activities are now mainstays of most Canadian LGBTQ+ film festivals. The locations of the parties and receptions varied, including the National Gallery of Canada, Market Station, and the Lookout Bar. The parties and other social elements of the festival were a big draw for audiences. This period of the festival's history was also defined by government censorship of lesbian and gay content and *Making Scenes'* continued focus on Canadian queer content.

The first iteration of the festival during this timeframe was the 1994 festival. *Making Scenes, Ottawa's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival* ran for almost one week from Tuesday, April 26, to Sunday, April 30, 1994, with screenings in the evenings during weekdays and all-day programming over the weekend. By this point, the festival had an established office at the Arts Court Building (2 Daly Avenue) in downtown Ottawa. Arts Court offered the office space to the not-for-profit at a low cost, as the building was and is owned by the City of Ottawa and is specifically designated to house arts not-for-profits.

The 1994 festival program shows a shift towards a more established, well-established festival. Paul Lee, who was formerly the only source of film curation for *Making Scenes*, was no longer solely responsible for sourcing content. A committee of local Ottawa-Gatineau artists was

formed to assist with programming decisions, including Jean Gagnon, the Associate Curator of Media Arts at the National Gallery of Canada. Despite these changes to film and video sourcing, *Making Scenes* continued its focus on Canadian content. The festival opened with a gala reception followed by a program of John Greyson-directed shorts including *The Perils of Pedagogy* (1984), *A Moffie Called Simon* (1986) and *The Jungle Boy* (1985). In fact, most of the 1994 program was comprised of short film programs, including Canadian-focused programs, such as a series focused on Halifax named “Halifax, Babylon of the North,” “Halifax, Babylon of the North I,” and “Halifax, Babylon of the North II,” as well as “Works from the Permanent Collection of the National Gallery.” Among the Canadian directors in this program were Richard Fung, Tanya Mars, and Denis Langlois. The festival also included a number of directors in attendance for artists talks, including John Greyson, Ann Verrall, Glenn Walton, Madame Simone, and David Sector.

The festival also publicly announced its mandate in its 1994 program: “to foster positive images of gay and lesbian lives, emphasize issues related to cultural diversity, gender and HIV/AIDS, and to encourage the participation of local artists, critics and audiences.”<sup>25</sup> *Making Scenes* organized multiple screenings leading up to the week of the festival to raise funds for its operations. *Making Scenes* added the Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Film Development Corporation as funders and began building a strong network of individual donors (called “patrons” and “friends of the festival”).<sup>26</sup> The festival was able to print a full, multipage program, which helped to raise funds by selling advertising space. The internal structure of the festival also became more detailed, with assistant coordinators Melina Young and Carl Stewart supported by graphic designers, the *Making Scenes Collective*, and a number of other organizers.<sup>27</sup> In 1994, the festival sold 2,500 tickets, more than double their audience in 1993.<sup>28</sup>

The 1995 festival, *Making Scenes*' fourth annual event, built upon the success of the 1994 festival. The program was comprised of almost fifty international and Canadian films, this time with a larger cohort of feature-length films.<sup>29</sup> The festival continued its commitment to Canadian programming, with three-quarters of programmed films being Canadian. Weaver and multimedia artist Carl Stewart took on the role of program coordinator. However, the leadup to the 1995 festival saw *Making Scenes* running into trouble with their graphic designer, Debbie Ozarko. This dispute was settled in small claim courts for \$2,000.<sup>30</sup> Tracey Clark, festival organizer, recalls the issue here:

In the later years as well [...] we tried to keep it local and we ran into a legal dispute, her name was Debbie Ozarko [...] We would give her all the programming materials and she had the template from Denise from the year before so all the files were stuck on her computer and she was stuck in some kind of dispute with her lover and we couldn't get the program out and we had all this stuff and then she ended up, we ended up having to get someone else and she ended up taking us to court for an unfinished contract and she won. And it's like, are you kidding? And that was damaging, that was damaging in the sense that, I forget, it was a couple thousand dollars, I can't remember, but it wasn't great.<sup>31</sup>

Despite this legal dispute, the festival had a steady stream of revenue stemming from individual donors, grant programs, and ad sales from their program. *Making Scenes* 1995 ran from Tuesday, May 2, to Saturday, May 6, 1995 at the National Gallery of Canada.

The 1995 festival's opening reception featured Dr. Shirley Thompson, Director of the National Gallery of Canada, as a featured guest. The reception was followed by a shorts program of exclusively Canadian content called "Personal Histories: Documenting Ourselves: Canadian

Queers Speak Out!” This program included films such as *Lonely Boy* (dir. Steve Reinke, 1993), *Exposure* (dir. Michelle Mohabeer, 1990), *Thick Lips*, *Thin Lips* (dir. Paul Lee, 1994), and *Leftovers* (dir. Janice Fung, 1994).

*Making Scenes* was also closely affiliated with *Capital Xtra!*. *Capital Xtra!* published the annual program and wrote articles covering the festival. In exchange, *Making Scenes* would list *Capital Xtra!* as their media sponsor in their program. *Capital Xtra!* was also the sponsor of the festival’s successful local program, called *Capital Xposure*.<sup>32</sup> The primetime Wednesday 7pm slot was reserved for films and videos produced by Ottawa and Outaouais queers. It featured films by festival organizers, such as *Gone Fishin* (1994) and *In/Visible* (1995) by the Rude Girls (Donna Quince and Tracey Clark) and *Man pissing, Man jerking off* (1994) and *Trust* (1995), by Carl Stewart. Additionally, this program included films by local filmmakers Wendy Demos and Mathieu Derouin, as well as a video installation at SAW Gallery by Canadian filmmaker Nancy Nicol.

The 1995 program also included the festival’s first ever entirely Francophone shorts program, called “La belle langue.” That year also saw many filmmakers attend the festival including Steve Reinke, Anne Golden, and Carla Wolf. The festival reserved its weekend programming on Saturday, May 6, for a filmmaker panel and photography exhibit. Quince moderated the panel, and the photography exhibit, “Hard to Image: Illicit Homoerotic Photography and Film 1880-1969,” was presented by queer film historian Thomas Waugh.<sup>33</sup>

Many niche film festivals seek to foster queer film within their specific local communities by mentoring emerging filmmakers through workshops that would usually culminate in a presentation of these films at the festival. Today, *Inside Out* fosters local Toronto talent through its filmmaking workshops and “New Visions” program, as well as its yearly

“Local Heroes” screening of Toronto filmmakers. However, from the very inception of the festival, *Making Scenes* showed not only an interest in fostering and documenting the best of local Ottawa filmmaking, but also in Canadian queer filmmaking more generally. Notably, their festival featured a sizeable amount of Canadian lesbian and gay programming: the 1995 festival boasted an impressive 36 Canadian-made films out of 47 films.

In partnership with SAW Video, *Making Scenes* started a program to assist local filmmakers with all aspects related to creating and producing their own independent films. The festival also expanded its funding from community, government, and corporate sources. Clark worked on establishing partnerships with local businesses and venues to help grow the festival, as she describes:

The second [year I] was a board member and [...] I ended up doing the partnership with *Xtra!* and the partnership with the National Gallery and then this notion of bringing on or trying to have some local filmmakers becoming involved with local material, that was a big push, which you know Donna and I ended up being “Rude Girls” together.<sup>34</sup>

Clark’s comments highlight the festival’s efforts towards fostering local talent. Her use of “Rude Girl” refers to her weekly op-ed in *Capital Xtra* called “Rude Girl” and her creative and professional relationship with Donna Quince (they were credited as “Rude Girls”).

Although the 1995 festival saw a minor dip in attendance, pass purchases and box office revenue actually grew.<sup>35</sup> Their push and support of local programming was very successful, leading to a packed house. Clark remember the screening of local films as follows:

You know, I remember the time at the National Gallery when we did the screening of all the local stuff and we actually help[ed] people with cameras, and we did everything at

SAW and we let them use their own images and that thing, we packed the house, we rocked it, it was wild.<sup>36</sup>

In the same vein of supporting local filmmakers, SAW Video launched a grant program for local film artists called “Changing Focus” in collaboration with *Making Scenes* in late 1995. The program provided \$1,000 for what the festival defined as “underrepresented minorities,” and provided a platform for the grant recipients to screen their films at the festival. Most notably, *Nice Shoes Faggot* (dir. Carl Stewart, 1996) came out of this program. There was also discussion about having the shorts packaged and sold to networks like Showcase or Bravo, but this does not seem to have happened.<sup>37</sup>

For the 1996 festival, *Making Scenes* was featured on the cover of the April edition of *Capital Xtra!*. The featured photo is of *Making Scenes* collective members Donna Quince, Gary Evans, Diane Lemieux, Tracey Clark, Dan Grummisch, and Christine Fretwell watching a 3D film while eating popcorn at the National Gallery theatre. The featured story, “Queer Visions: Exploring Gay and Lesbian Culture Through the Camera’s Eye,” explores some of the highlights of the festival, which ran from Tuesday April 30, to Saturday May 4, 1996, at the National Gallery. *Making Scenes* ran three workshops in collaboration with SAW Video and Gallery in the spring of 1996, leading up to the festival, each focused on the technical and political aspects of filmmaking as a minority community.

The program for the 1996 festival was not preserved by the ArQuives, even though it is quite likely that it would have been printed as an insert in *Capital Xtra!*. This is likely due to their policy of discarding inserts they receive along with publications such as *Capital Xtra!*. The featured story in *Capital Xtra!* however does highlight the films for “Capital Xposure!,” which included *Charlene’s Angels* (dir. Donna Quince, 1996), *The Lesbian Body* (dir. Wendy

Clouthier, 1996), and *What's Up Pope?* (dir. Andrew Griffin, 1996), as well as the previously mentioned *Nice Shoes Faggot*.<sup>38</sup>

As a sign of its increased capacity for building partnerships and diversifying its revenue streams, *Making Scenes* developed an awards system for its films this year, the most prestigious being the Viewer's Choice Awards, sponsored by the Independent Film Cooperative of Ottawa (IFCO) and SAW Video and Gallery. Wendy Clouthier won Best Film for *The Lesbian Body* and Donna Quince *Charlene's Angels* also won an award.<sup>39</sup>

### *Making Scenes* Goes International: 1997-1998

*Making Scenes* made a distinct effort to increase its programming abilities by strengthening its network outside of Ottawa in the period 1997-1998. Quince, an Ottawa artist, increased *Making Scenes*' ability to make, produce, and curate a variety of films tailored to the Ottawa community. Originally, Quince acted as a programmer, becoming the festival's Programming Chair in 1996. She then served as Executive Director in 1998 and 1999. Quince leveraged her access to the Canada Council Arts Bank and the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre to expand *Making Scenes*' programming. Quince also visited the National Film Board and began traveling to other festivals within Canada and abroad, further expanding *Making Scenes*' selection of films. Along with fellow programmers José Sanchez (a Carleton University film studies instructor) and Dan Grummisch (a local gay friend of Tracey Clark, and early festival organizer), the festival began to do more of its own programming and expanded its selection to include international titles. Clark describes this curation process as follows:

Donna took the curation to other levels [...]. There was kind of a network of film festivals I remember. [...] We started going to LA so we could see the film festival there

and then we went to Montreal and we were like, ‘Huh, they dress different than we do in Ottawa!’ We were so intimidated... just seeing things and then being able to curate a little bit more.<sup>40</sup>

This increased capacity to program and organize, especially because festival staff were networking and attending other festivals, was a key component of the growth the festival experienced between 1994 through to 1999. The programmers visited *Inside Out*, *image+nation*, *Rochester Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival*, *New Fest* in New York, *Vancouver Queer Film Festival*, *OutFest* in Los Angeles, and *Frameline* in San Francisco. This allowed for the sharing of curatorial resources and networking with festival organizers, attendees, and filmmakers. Quince explains the network this way:

We had ID passes that let us go from here there and everywhere. We knew Charlie [Boudreau] in Montreal, I think she still runs it [...]. In Toronto it was—her name is on the tip of my tongue... She was a powerhouse, both of them were powerhouses, very strong dykes that didn’t take no for an answer [...]. We went down to New York to the festival, she had a sports car, her father owned a car dealership and he gave his kids a car, and this was a Mazda, sport car, it was fun, we got stopped by the cops, she sweet-talked her way out [of a ticket], a bull dyke talked her way out of a ticket... So that was fun, you know?<sup>41</sup>

The slogan for the 1997 festival was “MORE *Making Scenes*.” It was held from Thursday, April 24 to Tuesday, April 29, 1997, again at the National Gallery of Canada. For a second year in a row, *Making Scenes* made the cover of *Capital Xtra!* for the April edition of the magazine. The featured story was called “Shutter Bugs: Producing Homegrown Stories for *Making Scenes*.”<sup>42</sup> There were 34 screenings that year, including, once again, a screening of local shorts by local

filmmakers produced through a collaboration between *Making Scenes* and SAW Video and Gallery, including Mathieu Derouin, Wendy Clouthier, and Carl Stewart.<sup>43</sup>

The 1997 program was designed to “inspire, educate, provoke and entertain.”<sup>44</sup> The focus shifted slightly this year, as the festival expanded the number of feature-length film screenings. *Making Scenes* also expanded its Canadian programming and screened a number of American and international titles, including *The Watermelon Woman* (dir. Cheryl Dunye, 1996), *Twisted* (dir. Seth Michael Donsky, 1996), *Paris Was A Woman* (dir. Greta Shiller, 1995), and *Outlaw* (dir. Alison Lebow, 1994).<sup>45</sup> The programs were also divided specifically into gay, lesbian, and gender nonconforming/trans-specific programs called “Dirty Dirty Dirty!,” “Dames and Chains,” and “Gender Outlaws,” respectively. *Making Scenes* also held its yearly *Capital Xtra!*-sponsored screening of local films, “Capital Xposure!.” The printed program featured an essay by Asian-Trinidadian-Canadian gay filmmaker Richard Fung about Western artists of Asian descent, focused on films within that category at *Making Scenes* 1997.<sup>46</sup>

The 1997 festival attracted over 2,000 attendees<sup>47</sup> and benefitted from an expanded network of corporate sponsorship on top of its grant funding, including the Mercury Lounge, Rideau View Inn, and community business owners Daniel Throop and Louise Tardiff. The festival also garnered support from local city councillors and art galleries.<sup>48</sup>

The following year, 1998, the festival graduated from the single-screen auditorium at the National Gallery to the Cineplex Odeon multiplex in the World Exchange Plaza on O’Connor Street. Moving to a multi-screen theatre gave the festival increased flexibility to show more films and increase its revenue. *Making Scenes* would continue to host its yearly fundraiser programs at different single-screen venues across the city such as SAW Video and Gallery and ByTowne Cinema, and would also use the National Gallery for gala receptions and events.

The festival also hosted a number of workshops throughout the year, including a queer animation workshop. The organizers realized that they were drawing in a considerable amount of young audience members and their early presence at the University of Ottawa and their programming was attracting many students. It became increasingly clear that exam season in April was conflicting with *Making Scenes*' spring program. As a result, in 1998, organizers moved the annual event to September to draw a larger student audience. Moving the timing of the festival helped *Making Scenes* further integrate itself into the schedule of films circulating amongst Eastern Canadian lesbian and gay film festivals such as *Inside Out* and *image+nation*.

The festival screened over 80 films over a period of 8 days from Thursday, September 17 to Sunday, September 20, 1998 and Wednesday, September 23 to Saturday, September 26, 1998. This was the largest cohort of films and the first time the festival coordinated multiple concurrent screenings. "Capital Xposure!," the local film program, was not featured, as local film production was down drastically that year. This was the first time that the festival had an Executive Director and that position was held by Donna Quince.<sup>49</sup>

Moving the festival to September had additional positive consequences for the festival, aside from attracting a younger audience who was previously distracted during spring exam season. Holding the festival in September created a better delivery system of film reels and DVDs coming into Canada from the southern border with the United States. Most notably, the network between lesbian and gay festivals in eastern Canada helped reduce issues around censorship from the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA). An informal system was created between *Inside Out*, *image+nation*, and *Making Scenes* wherein foreign films could cross the Canadian border and evade censorship from the CCRA. Quince explains this network in her interview:

We moved our festival dates to be closer to Montreal and/or Toronto, I can't remember. They were all sort of close to each so that [...] eliminated sending the film back to the States, and then somebody else trying to bring it in and it was like in Canada, 'ok, now Montreal its yours, you send it to Toronto.' [...] I can't remember the roundabout way it went, but you know we tried to kind of keep it in the country.<sup>50</sup>

In many ways, the festival was lucky not to have issues at customs or be the subject of censorship, as many lesbian and gay cultural organizations within Ottawa were not so fortunate. This was in the time when the CCRA was frequently censoring gay cultural imports. Stonewall Books, a long time sponsor and ticket seller of *Making Scenes*, was the subject of a censorship and seizure by the CCRA as late as 2000.<sup>51</sup> Other government institutions also participated in the censorship of lesbian and gay materials. CKTU, Carleton University's radio network, aired a gay radio show called *Defiant Voices*, hosted by *Making Scenes Collective* member Kevin A Gibbs. In 1994, *Defiant Voices* was frequently a source of complaints filed via the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC).<sup>52</sup> *Capital Xtra!* was also censored for its portrayal of male nudity, notably by the printer refusing to print the magazine.<sup>53</sup> Most of these censorship efforts were related to violating Canada's obscenity laws, and demonstrate that *Making Scenes'* concerns regarding censorship were not unfounded.

To avoid censorship and seizure, the festivals had to use creative ways to pass customs and get films into the country. Quince speaks of this in regards to a particularly pornographic 3D film called *Heavy Equipment* (dir. Lancer Brooks, 1977):

I remember this one film—it was 3D, you had to wear the goggles—it was *Heavy Equipment*, it was gay porn, it was hardcore gay porn, and so the place was packed for that and everybody's got their glasses on watching that, and you know, stuff's coming out of the

screen. But whenever it was sent to you—it might have been sent from another film festival—so they would put a little thing or send you a little thing that would say uhm, on the customs form you would put the title, you know it would say “Heavy Equipment in 3D,” and you would write, you know, it was about farm machinery. [laughs] And it was great, because, you know, Customs would look at it and be like “farm machinery, I don’t want to look it that.” So there were little things like that that our communities did that would help each to make things kind of go smoothly and not have to have issues at customs.<sup>54</sup>

The series of organizational and creative moves *Making Scenes* made in 1997 and 1998 were critical in setting up the festival for its most successful and expansive programming in the early 2000s.

#### *Making Scenes* Queers Canada: 1999

The mid-1990s was a time when mainstream and niche distribution companies were developing and distributing queer film as New Queer Cinema moved into the mainstream. *Inside Out*, *image+nation*, and *Making Scenes* worked together to negotiate bringing titles in to make the rounds across their respective festivals.

In keeping with their longstanding commitment to Canadian film, Quince and fellow *Making Scenes* programmer José Sanchez edited and published a book titled *Queering Canada: A Collection of Essays* in 1999. Published under *Making Scenes*’ name, this book was a set of interviews with the most important Canadian queer filmmakers of the time including Maureen Bradley, Kevin d’Souza, Mike Holbloom, Michelle Mohabeer, Shani Mootoo, Marc Paradis, and Steve Reinke. Quince and Sanchez express their intent to call attention to these Canadian artists as they “consider [that they] deserve more attention than they currently have within specialized

circles.”<sup>55</sup> This intention is also made clear in the programming choices of the festival, which often included a strong showing of films by Canadian artists.

The impact of this publication was felt primarily by the queer filmmaker community in Canada, which was often eclipsed by the influx of American media. *Making Scenes*' efforts to document and focus resources on important Canadian voices did not go unnoticed. To this point, Michelle Mohabeer, a Guyana-born, Toronto-based lesbian filmmaker featured in the book, described her experience with the festival as follows:

*Making Scenes*' primary goal was for queer filmmakers to have visibility and presence and through their programming to cultivate a diverse range of queer audiences to help this festival grow. I think this film festival was ahead of its time in term of how it foregrounded queer Canadian films and filmmakers in terms of these mini-retrospective screenings and the *Queering Canada* catalogue. No other queer Canadian festival had ever done this combination before. This was a unique approach.<sup>56</sup>

*Queering Canada* was published in 1999 and points to the expansion of the lesbian/gay binary divisions that used to govern the lesbian and gay community in Ottawa. In their introductory statement of the book, Quince and Sanchez argue for, wrestle with, and attempt to define the concept of “queer.” They state that “we define ‘queer’ as an alternative model of the constitution of subjectivity and of social identity [that...] displaces the traditional notions of Self as unique, abiding, and continuous while substituting instead a concept of the Self as performative, improvisational, discontinuous, and as a process constituted by repetitive and stylized acts.”<sup>57</sup> In line with this embrace of “queer,” the 1999 festival dropped “lesbian and gay” in their title and instead opted for the moniker *Making Scenes 8<sup>th</sup> Film and Video Festival*. The next year, in 2000, the title was changed again to *Making Scenes Queer Film and Video Festival*.

*Making Scenes*' ability to capitalize on its Canadian focus by publishing *Queering Canada* allowed for the festival to further solidify its identity and brand within the Canadian film festival landscape, both with filmmakers and their audiences. In addition, changing the festival name to a more inclusive nomenclature further advanced the festival's brand, setting the festival up for success in the early 2000s. However, as I outline in the next section, the festival encountered a variety of internal and external challenges which led to its disintegration in 2004.

#### Making Scenes Unspools: 2000-2004

Although the festival had a successful, almost meteoric rise in the late 1990s, by 2000, *Making Scenes* started to encounter serious challenges. In 2000, Quince moved abroad, and Dan Grummisch took up the helm of the organization as Executive Director in 2000. Under Grummisch, *Making Scenes* adopted a slightly different strategy than under Quince to attempt to adapt to a changing film festival landscape both in Canada and abroad. Systemic shifts in the queer film festival landscape combined with this shift in management led to a series of operational shifts. With all these changes, the festival faced considerable challenges.

Operationally, the three festivals by *Making Scenes* from 2000 to 2003 were characterized by feature-film-heavy programs with accompanying receptions, as well as screenings of television episodes (termed "episodic screenings"). The programs in the early 2000s were smaller than the previous iterations of the festival of the mid-1990s, with fewer screenings and events. In 2000 and 2001, screenings were only running over two weekends, and only over one weekend in 2003.<sup>58</sup>

Systemically, with the movement away from NQC and rise of commercial queer film in the 2000s, the festival struggled to adapt its model to the new forms of queer film distribution.

Additionally, this period saw *Making Scenes* wrestle with collective identity issues, as well as the rise of the internet. The programming was adjusted to include an expanded roster of commercial feature films and episodic content, a departure from the shorts-program-heavy programming of the mid-1990s. The early 2000s led to a significant shift in queer content, posing a representational challenge for *Making Scenes*. As NQC was transformed by the more mainstream distribution of queer content, the shift towards programming films developed by younger generations of LGBTQ+ people was a struggle for the festival. In 1996, sociologist Joshua Gamson defined this as the first organizational challenge for festivals that claim standing as lesbian and gay community organizations. This organizational challenge stems from “an organization attempting to culturally represent such a diverse population faces the political challenge of inclusiveness; this challenge has been felt with increasing strength on the last two decades of lesbian and gay organizing.”<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, Grummisch mentioned in an interview with *Capital Xtra!* in 2000 that the shift from NQC, which had been a focus of the organization since its founding in 1992, to a new type of queer filmmaking was not well received by the programmers of the festival. The article stated:

*Making Scenes* screening committee makes a point of attending a number of film festivals, including Toronto’s and San Francisco’s. Of course, the pickings at these may be slim. Grummisch says that this year’s crop – much of which was focused on the year 2000 – was particularly bad. ‘Millennial Angst?’ ‘Queer millennial angst, which is worse,’ [Grummisch] says.<sup>60</sup>

Arguably, *Making Scenes*’ focus on queer Canadian filmmaking in the 1990s helped offset some of the issues that arise from attempting to represent a wider variety of lesbian and gay

experiences. In the 1990s, the festival could focus its efforts on supporting the production and distribution of Canadian-specific lesbian and gay content. However, the rise of the internet welcomed increased internationalization of queer film, making digital films easier to stream and access, adding additional pressures on the festival to “culturally represent such a diverse [queer] population,” as Gamson puts it. Suddenly, the internationalization of the film festival landscape was looking very different than the festival’s initial interest in Canadian-specific filmmaking.

The struggle to provide culturally diverse and representational programming is visible in the film selection for the 2000 festival, which ran over two weekends, September 14-17 and 21-24, 2000, at the ByTowne Cinema, Ottawa Public Library, and SAW Video and Gallery. The program was almost entirely feature films. Notable highlights include the opening film *Pourquoi Pas Moi?* (dir. Stephane Giusti, 1999), *Aimée & Jaguar* (dir. Max Färberböck, 1999), *Full Blast* (dir. Rodrigue Jean, 1999), and *Common Ground* (dir. Donna Deitch, 2000).<sup>61</sup>

Gamson identifies the shift in the resource environment of a niche film festival as a second significant organizational challenge. Writing in 1996, he states: “the resource environment in which festivals began is dramatically different from that in which they currently operate.”<sup>62</sup> Gamson specifically explains that resource environments can be related to financial constraints, and although around 2000, many arts organizations were facing funding cuts from the city, for which *Making Scenes* was also at risk, there were other preoccupations for the organizers. In addition to this financial pressure, a number of other significant resources shifted dramatically in the early 2000s. The first was the advent of the internet and the second was the mainstreaming of queer cinema. These resource shifts fundamentally changed distribution models for niche film festivals.

First, the internet, which exploded in popularity in the early 2000s, transformed the desire and need for safe, queer, physical spaces. It was no longer as necessary for the queer community to have a physical place to come together, as online forums and spaces became a mainstay of queer community. Grummisch also points to the widespread availability of queer film through the internet, as well as mainstream awareness of queer issues as reasons for lower attendance at the festival.<sup>63</sup>

Second, the places of community togetherness in Ottawa steadily declined as LGBTQ+ people moved online and many of the institutions that bolstered and supported *Making Scenes* disappeared, including TakTiks (a gay nightclub) and After Stonewall (a bookstore and ticketing outlet). *Capital Xtra!*, a crucial marketing partner for the festival, began transitioning from print publication to online. *Capital Xtra!* significantly pared down its reporting in the process, leaving *Making Scenes* without the same level of exposure to their readership.<sup>64</sup> This relinquished most of the festival's marketing to the online domain at a time when print marketing was their most prominent way of promoting the festival.

Third, the early 2000s were a period of shift in the market for queer content within the mainstream, fundamentally and permanently changing the film distribution model for medium to large niche film festivals. The NQC content that was shunned from corporate and hetero focused spaces in the 1990s was starting to bleed into the mainstream.<sup>65</sup> As global awareness of queer issues grew, so did that appetite for queer content within mainstream television and films. This led to a fundamental change in the distribution model that existed in the 2000s. As queer films became part of commercial distribution networks, it became increasingly difficult for *Making Scenes* to obtain the rights to screen titles and screening fees were becoming increasingly prohibitive.<sup>66</sup> This was an almost unrecognizably different system than when most films were

distributed by filmmakers directly or by not-for-profit distributors, as was the case in the 1990s. Also, Quince had left the festival after 1999, so her connection to the Canada Council Art Bank was lost.

The increased pressure to strive for more competitive and creative programming, coupled with a more challenging distribution environment, created significant financial issues for the organization. By 2001, the festival listed the premiere status of films in its programs, showing that they were attempting to increase the prestige of the festival by securing premieres. This means the festival would enter in direct competition with other festivals for premiere status, and would often lose out, as it was perceived as a smaller festival.<sup>67</sup> This was not a consideration when *Making Scenes* was just starting out, as the programming was centered on films coming from *Inside Out* or pulling from the inventory of not-for-profit distributors such as Vtape, CFMDC, or the National Film Board of Canada. The program's detailing of premiere statuses in 2001 further demonstrates how different the resource environment had become. This stands in direct opposition to the 1992 grassroots programming, which primarily focused on independent low-budget filmmaking, regardless of year of production or premiere.

The 2001 festival ran September 13-16 and September 20-23 at the ByTowne Cinema. It included a number of Canadian premieres, including the opening night screening of an episode of *Metrosexuality* (dir. Rikki Beadle-Blair, 2001), *The Fluffer* (dir. Richard Glatzer and Walsh West, 2000), as well as a series of shorts programs and a presentation by an MGM representative at the Ottawa Library on the "sword and sandal" genre.<sup>68</sup>

The increased connectivity between *Making Scenes* and a network of film festivals in North America was a result of the efforts of organizers such as Clark, Quince, Grummisch, and Sanchez, who would frequently travel to different film festivals. This led to an increasingly

international program, drawing larger, more commercial titles to *Making Scenes*. However, due to the tightening of border security as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, these efforts to supply diverse and high-quality programming ultimately harmed the organization's capacity to maintain programming at the commercial level their audiences expected. This, coupled with the pressure to secure premiere status titles, turned *Making Scenes'* efforts against itself: its incorporation of international titles was almost too successful in the late 1990s.

*Making Scenes* relied on its network of festivals to offset this roadblock and worked with Canadian festivals to negotiate together to distribute titles amongst different festivals. Despite these efforts, *Making Scenes* was often caught footing the bill for customs and shipping, something it may have resolved only once it was already too late and festival finances were already in dire straits.<sup>69</sup>

When asked about why the organization folded, Tracey Clark, an early festival organizer, suspects it could be due to *Making Scenes* attempting to be something larger than it was intended to be:

[In] my view it tried to become something bigger than it should have been, in a way, and then it ran until all kinds of issues as a result, not unlike Pride right, like what is right sized? And uhm, what can you pull off and sometimes bringing in small teams to accomplish something for short bursts is way better than trying to become sustainable.<sup>70</sup>

As Clark's comment shows, the commitment to interconnection and growing the festival, coupled with the globalization of information through the advent of the internet fundamentally changed the resource environment for the festival. By the 2000s, the resource environment in which *Making Scenes* found itself was practically unrecognizable from its foundation in 1992.

## Making Scenes Collapses

In addition to the shifting resource environment, the festival experienced a variety of challenges in the 2000s that led to its collapse in 2004. The 2001 festival happened the weekend directly after the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York City. This decimated festival attendance, and a number of films that were slated to enter the country were not able to make it in time for their screenings. The low attendance led to a drop in revenue, and engendered a number of compounding issues for the festival after 2001, including a number of financial and operational setbacks from which *Making Scenes* was unable to recover.<sup>71</sup>

In 2002, the festival only ran 14 screenings, and was held exclusively at the single-screen ByTowne Cinema from September 12-15 and September 19-22. It opened with *Notorious C.H.O.* (dir. Lorene Machado, 2002), a film about queer comedian Margaret Cho, and included features such as *Danny in the Sky* (dir. Danny Langlois, 2001) and *Gypsy 83* (dir. Todd Stephens, 2001).<sup>72</sup>

The loss of revenue from low screening numbers and attendance as well as the continuously costlier imports made acquiring films from the United States and abroad more difficult. This posed significant challenges to *Making Scenes*. On top of these urgent issues, the province-wide blackout of August 2003 left all of Ontario, including Ottawa, without power for over a week. This posed significant organization challenges to the festival, as the blackout occurred only a month before the festival was slated to run. Grummisch described the situation as a “nightmare.”<sup>73</sup> By the time the festival had recovered from the loss of power, the venue they had secured at the National Archives suddenly fell through. The organizers moved the festival back to the World Exchange Plaza and held it a month later, over just one weekend, October 20-23, 2003.<sup>74</sup>

Throughout the same year, *Making Scenes* was looking for ways to reduce costs. An article in *Capital Xtra!* by James Moran explained that moving the festival to later in the year was tied to a new strategy for distributing films across North America, reducing the costs for the festival. He states:

The later date [for the 2003 festival] will also save money. Previously, the festival shipped films over from Europe for high fees and passed the flicks along to other North American queer film festivals. Now, festivals such as *image+nation* in Montreal and *ImageOut* in Rochester, New York, will get the reels first and pass them along.<sup>75</sup>

The 2003 festival screened films such as *Paradisco* (dir. Stephane Ly-Cuong, 2002), *Radical Harmonies* (dir. Dee Mosbacher, 2002), and *Sex, Politics & Cocktails* (dir. Julien Hernandez, 2002).<sup>76</sup>

The leadup to the anticipated 2004 edition of the festival pointed to a festival in crisis. The dates for *Making Scenes* were typically announced in *Capital Xtra!*'s events directory in the spring. The 2004 dates were vague and only listed a potential month of when the festival was to happen. By the spring of 2004, the festival quietly vacated their offices at Arts Court in downtown Ottawa and donated their archives to the Kelly McGinnis Library at Pink Triangle Services. Come summer 2004, *Making Scenes* was removed from the events listing in *Capital Xtra!* entirely.

In October 2004, an article was published in *Capital Xtra!* called "Festival's Mysterious Finances," which provided some information about how the organization collapsed. The article described an increasing worry amongst the festival's Board of Directors that the funds of *Making Scenes* were being mishandled and pointed to overly controlling top-down management reducing their ability to steer the organization in the right direction. The festival had in fact incurred a

huge financial burden, most notably a reported \$18,000 in rent owed to the city for the office space at Arts Court. No official investigation into these funds was undertaken.<sup>77</sup>

Fall 2004 marked the end of *Making Scenes*' almost twelve-year run. Externally, the internationalization of queer film, declining audience members, and the changing political landscape made it increasingly difficult for *Making Scenes* to be financially stable. Internally, communication between Board members and executive leadership broke down, and ultimately led to frustrations and scapegoating, most notably surrounding the issue of finances.

### *Making Scenes*' Legacy

The festival did demonstrate that Ottawa had the capacity to run its very own festival without the need to rely on other larger organizations from outside of the city. It is not possible to holistically account for the role that *Making Scenes* played in Ottawa, but all interviewees expressed sadness that the festival could not sustain itself past the mid-2000s. Measuring its impact on gay and lesbian life is therefore not accounted for in this analysis of its legacy – but instead focuses on the other efforts to bring gay and lesbian programming to Ottawa.

The hole that *Making Scenes* left in the queer community in Ottawa led to the creation of various other film festivals within Ottawa providing queer content. When the festival's 2004 iteration did not materialize, Jason St. Laurent, director of SAW Video and Gallery and programmer at *Inside Out* in Toronto, established *Inside Out Ottawa*. The first *Inside Out Ottawa* was in the fall of 2007, and it continues to run as an annual three-day-weekend film festival in November. The festival is held at the same venues as *Making Scenes*, including the SAW Video and Gallery, ByTowne Cinema, and, most recently, the National Gallery of Canada. This festival

is a pared down version of *Inside Out LGBTQ+ Film Festival of Toronto*, with the addition of some titles tailored to the Ottawa community (including Québécois and Francophone content).

*Inside Out Ottawa* was originally intended to be a placeholder to fill the void left by the sudden demise of *Making Scenes*. However, no one within Ottawa launched a new festival or decided to reboot *Making Scenes*. Clark pointed to the pain and disappointment within the community, mourning the loss of a beloved institution: “you know... It’s something that just nosedived and there weren’t necessarily people who were willing to say, hey, I care enough to resurrect it. [...] It’s just a lost period that’s painful.”<sup>78</sup>

There were also other, less successful initiatives that attempted to take up the helm of organizing queer-specific film festivals in Ottawa. *Little Pink Shorts*, a festival “focusing [its] energies on programming for a lesbian audience” was a festival designed to screen only short films. The website for this event points to its very existence coming out of the shock the community experienced when *Making Scenes* quietly but quickly disappeared: “when Ottawa’s only gay and lesbian film festival abruptly shut its doors in September 2004, the community was left with a huge gap in independent screenings. We were faced with the possibility that one of our few creative outlets would not be returning.”<sup>79</sup> There is no indication as to whether this festival actually launched or was held, though.

Ottawa’s reliance on a festival based in Toronto is problematic in many ways. *Inside Out* corners the queer film festival market in Ottawa, and benefits from the ongoing support of local, grassroots organizations such as Lesbian Outdoor Group, Ottawa Senior Pride Network, and Max Ottawa. There was something particularly poignant about a community organization that was made by the local community, for the local community, such as *Making Scenes*.<sup>80</sup>

### Why Was *Making Scenes* Forgotten?

There are a variety of factors to consider when assessing why this festival has not been the subject of academic research before. Many of the factors relating to the lack of popular memory of the festival and dearth of archival documentation are linked to Ottawa's position within Canada and the value attributed to archival objects, both online and physical.

The only academic work that mentions *Making Scenes* is Thomas Waugh's *Romance of Transgression in Canada*, which could be considered one of the most comprehensive writings on the history of queer cinema in Canada. A short entry on page 484 briefly mentions the efforts of Quince, Sanchez, and Grummisch in their quest to bring queer film to Ottawa, and recognized the festival's impact as well as its creative approach to programming:

Making Scenes. The capital's Queer Film and Video Festival was founded in 1992, and rivalled the big three metropolitan festivals in its innovative programming and hinterland community energy, evolving into a two-weekend event by 1998 and developing a year-long parallel screening profile. The original programming team was headed by the indefatigable Donna Quince and in the 2000s by Carleton-trained Dan Grummisch and José Sanchez.<sup>81</sup>

This was the only sliver of academic work I could find on *Making Scenes*. The documentation of the festival fell victim to the early internet era. The ways in which the internet is infrequently archived is a barrier to reconstructing the history of this festival. In the case of *Making Scenes*, the WayBack Machine, one of the few web-based archives dedicated to saving retired URLs, only provided small, incomplete glimpses into the festival's online presence. This demonstrates how incomplete archives of the early internet made information on *Making Scenes* difficult to uncover. Without *Capital Xtra!*, *Making Scenes* would not have been able to have such a strong

presence within the queer community, nor would there be documents available to reference for dates and events. Ironically, the proliferation of availability of information through the internet, especially when the internet was such a new tool in the late 1990s and early 2000s, led to a lack of thorough documentation of the festival's online presence. This makes this festival's history difficult to trace, especially from 1999 onwards, when many of its records moved online, with URLs that are now defunct or incomplete.

When asked about whether they kept any of the documents related to the festival, many of the interviewees said that they had kept a few ephemeral documents and promotional items (e.g., posters, T-shirts, and programs) but had since discarded them, as they took up too much space in their homes or were considered too old to be of value. Once again, what is considered a valuable and worthwhile archival object is called into question, as I will discuss in the next chapters.

Finally, the persecution of lesbian and gay government workers in Ottawa by way of the "Fruit Machine" had a major impact on the community. Originated by Frank Wake, a Carleton University psychology professor, the Fruit Machine was used as early as the 1960s to "detect" homosexuals in the Canadian public service in order to fire them. The idea behind the machine was a product of junk science, based on the idea that calculating a subject's pupillary size when they are exposed to certain images can detect whether or not they are homosexual.<sup>82</sup> It had a seriously detrimental and violent impact on the Ottawa community, as the machine continued to be put to use far past its funding cycle, as late as the 1990s. Unfortunately, this was only one part of the systemic persecution of lesbian and gays both within and outside of the public service in Ottawa. The RCMP also utilized sting operation tactics in order to arrest lesbians and gays caught in "criminal" sex acts and behaviours.<sup>83</sup>

George Hartsgrove, recounts the impact the Fruit Machine continues to have on lesbians and gays living in Ottawa. Hartgrove is a gay businessman and active community member in Ottawa. In the 2000s and 2010s, Hartgrove operated the Inn on Somerset, a popular bed and breakfast for lesbian and gay clientele, as well as a hub for community events.<sup>84</sup> He also worked for *Capital Xtra!* and *Making Scenes* in a marketing capacity, and said the following about the Fruit Machine and its impact on Ottawa lesbian and gays:

So, Ottawa was a very different environment than Toronto and Vancouver, the gay community in Ottawa, and let's be clear, was very much a quiet, very much a non-“wave the flag”-type of community because of that environment which still persisted in right after you know 1996, right after '96 I think was the final [year]? So you know, people didn't want to come out, people didn't want to be seen... [...] In general it was just a very different environment and that's why I think there wasn't so much written about it and there wasn't so much knowledge.<sup>85</sup>

Although not just used on the LGBTQ+ civil servants in Ottawa, the Fruit Machine had a disproportionate impact on LGBTQ+ outspokenness in Ottawa due to the concentration of civil servants who relied on the federal government for their livelihoods. Hartsgrove's words demonstrate this particular struggle for LGBTQ+ people living in Ottawa, as they are perceived as not very outspoken or visible, when in fact willful and violent persecution by the federal government may be part of the reason of this lack of outspokenness. The lack of documentation of organizations such as *Making Scenes* is a result of this institutional violence, which forced many to feel shame and fear over documenting their queer ties to community organizations such as *Making Scenes*.

The hastiness with which the organization was dismantled also contributed to its lack of documentation. There was a sense of confusion and shock at the festival's collapse, and the rapid pace with which it ended did not give those involved time to plan how to document and preserve its history. Additionally, the fact that *Inside Out*, a larger organization with more resources and a larger audience, took over the queer film festival market in Ottawa so quickly meant that *Making Scenes* was outshone by its presence in the National Capital Region.

When asked about why the festival collapsed, many if not all organizers and attendees who were interviewed for this project avoided placing blame, not so much because there was not blame to place, but because of their awareness of the issues plaguing queer organizations. Upon examination of the *Capital Xtra!* editions and other archival documents from lesbian and gay communities in the 1990s, *Making Scenes*' untimely demise seems to be part of the norm rather than an anomaly. While the festival was enjoying its highest rate of attendees and ever expanding programming in the late-1990s, a number of queer organizations experienced financial and social issues. Many organizations, including Association of Lesbians and Gays of Ottawa (ALGO), the AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO), and Pink Triangle Services, experienced significant difficulties throughout their existences. There were often dramatic accounts of these organizations' issues in *Capital Xtra!*, with Boards of Directors walking out of meetings, to funding being abruptly slashed, leading organizations to scramble for cash, as well as constant conflict and disagreements at meetings. Some of these organizations still exist today, such as ACO.<sup>86</sup> As for Pink Triangle Services and ALGO, they now operate under the umbrella health service Kind Space.<sup>87</sup> This means that, compared to its fellow local lesbian and gay organizations, *Making Scenes*' trajectory is not an anomaly, but a staple of how lesbian and gay

organizations in Ottawa rose and fell in volatile and unpredictable social and economic environments.

## Conclusion

*Making Scenes* was a staple of lesbian and gay life in Ottawa for its twelve years of existence. Woven tightly within other organizations, including magazines, businesses, and theatres within Ottawa, *Making Scenes*' organizational structure took various forms throughout its life. Originally, the festival was founded in 1992 as a grassroots, Canadian-focused lesbian and gay film and video festival. By the mid-1990s the festival grew into a hierarchically-structured organization, with robust backbones of committees and staff, who would provide expanded capacities for the organization, including workshops and year-round programs. As with many niche film festivals, *Making Scenes* also organized many workshops and events as a complement to its regular film screenings, including artist talks, video installation, and exhibitions. In 2000, the festival began to suffer from a variety of organizational issues and faced an increasingly challenging macro-political climate, both at home and abroad, including increasing border restrictions and cuts to arts funding, which ultimately led to its collapse. Although collective identity processes and negotiations were a factor in the collapse of the organization, it succumbed to the same broad economic and social changes that other similar festivals in Canada suffered in the early 2000s. Overall, the festival's rise and fall was similar to other lesbian and gay film festivals. Instead of seeing the lack of documentation as an impediment to queer research into a lesbian and gay organization, I will explore how ephemeral reconnection within the archive can be a form of reactivating the past in the coming chapters.

## Chapter 2: Remaking Scenes: Reactivating the Ephemeral in the Archive

Rather than focus on the impact of *Making Scenes*, this chapter analyzes the ways in which the archive can be an interactive place, one that enables often-ignored ephemeral connections with often-ignored ephemeral objects, to create a set of reactivations of ephemeral feelings and materials. *Making Scenes* would seem to be a perfect research subject. At the inception of this project, it had yet to be written about by any scholars, even though it operated successfully for twelve years in one of Canada's largest cities. This is what makes *Making Scenes* an interesting, complex and at times contradictory research project, as the festival's impact on the community in Ottawa was quite pronounced, but it left very few traces in archives.

Focusing on ephemeral reactivation within the archive of *Making Scenes* refutes the progressivist and capitalist framework of focusing in on a film festival's impact, which is especially fruitful when a festival's impact on and presence in a community is not matched by its archival documentation. Thinking about ephemera also allows me to approach film festival documentation in archives from different lenses, moving away from progressivist history and towards a queerer process of archival involvement and ephemeral connection which is not solely rooted in the capitalist framework of progress and impact. In addition, ephemeral reactivation and connection is unclassifiable, rejecting often misplaced or misconstrued lesbian and gay documents within the archive.

This chapter aims to expand our understanding of ephemera in the archive in the context of film festival research. I will analyze the two main methods I used to investigate the history of *Making Scenes*—archival research and oral history—and trace the ways they created queer ephemeral reactivations of the festival's traces within the archive. I will consider the interconnections between multiple kinds of ephemerality that I encountered—ephemeral events,

ephemeral objects, and ephemeral reactivation (a concept that articulates the fleeting feelings within the archive). First, my encounters with *Making Scenes*' ephemeral physical traces in archives demonstrate how reactivating these documents can assist when conducting research into this type of organization. Second, the oral history interviews I undertook can be understood as a set of body-based ephemeral reconnections and a way of reactivating history, exploring lesbian and gay life through lived experience that extends archival space outside of restrictive institutional archives.

### What Is The Ephemeral Archive? How Can It Be Reactivated?

This chapter triangulates all three definitions of ephemera in the archive: ephemeral events, ephemeral objects, and ephemeral reactivation to articulate the experience of conducting research into *Making Scenes*. The concept of ephemerality as an event that is fleeting would seem to be at odds with the purpose of an archive, designed to preserve objects. The archive therefore does not account for the fleeting, short ephemeral moments between researcher and archival object. Instead of rejecting this use of the word, this chapter leans into the concept of ephemera as fleeting and untraceable and uses this to further document and analyze *Making Scenes* within the archive. I argue that this approach can be distinctly useful when researching a forgotten or loosely documented organization such as *Making Scenes*.

My approach in this chapter sees the archive as a continuous set of reactivations, as an homage to the ephemeral tracings of queer history and to a festival whose legacy has remained “dormant” for quite some time. Centering ephemera is also distinctly queer, as most of our history can be traced back to these often untraceable, degradable objects and queer scholarship has a particular legacy of analyzing ephemeral connection within the archive. Harnessing these

fleeting moments of connection with a queer subject play a distinctively important role in uncovering histories that are often neglected.

Queer film festival scholar Antoine Damiens describes queer film screenings the 1970s and 1980s as events that are “ephemeral by design, which do not name themselves ‘festivals,’ or which adopt a slightly different format.”<sup>88</sup> Damiens’ definition points to ephemeral events that are untraceable by design; *Making Scenes*, by contrast, did call itself an annual festival and lasted for twelve years, although memory of the festival has proved more ephemeral than one might expect. These types of ephemeral events cement the notion that fleeting, untraceable events are still part of lesbian and gay history, contextualizing ephemeral connection in the archive of *Making Scenes* as the festival itself is built on a legacy of ephemeral events. Lesbian scholar Ann Cvetkovich describes the typically ephemeral objects that make up so much of LGBTQ archives by deploying the term as it is used by archivists and librarians: “The stock in trade of the gay and lesbian archive is ephemera, the term used by archivists and librarian to describe occasional publication and paper documents, material objects, or items that fall into the miscellaneous category when catalogued.”<sup>89</sup> This definition is also fruitful, as it validates the physical but degradable objects which are so crucial to lesbian and gay history.

This chapter expands our consideration of ephemera to include the often undocumented connections made within archives when a researcher comes into contact with archival objects, both within and outside of the archive. This includes our affective and embodied experience with objects, and potential creative solutions to a lack of documentation. This definition of ephemeral reactivation comes into contact with queer and trans historian Leah DeVun and queer art historian Michael Jay McClure’s description of their experience doing research in queer archives: “We envision instead an accumulation, the strata of gestures that have built up around

the original object [...] Rather than limit the archive to inevitable loss – dead people and finished histories – the most queer aspect of this queer archive might be its expanding set of reactivations.”<sup>90</sup> DeVun and McClure expand our attention to the fleeting, obsolete moment experienced by researchers, especially within queer archives. Their reactivation of the objects they analyze is a set of gestures that led to a photo exhibit, allowing for other reactivations to surface in the process. This expands the archive to include the reactivation of its objects through these clearly defined and equally undefinable ephemeral connections, demonstrating the ways in which we can reactivate the archive of “dead history.” Ephemera therefore becomes the unspoken or disconnected, or the untraced within the archive.

#### What Can We Learn from *Making Scenes*’ Minimal Presence in the Archive?

Although *Making Scenes* was not an ephemeral event, in the way Damiens understands the concept, it did not leave many traces in archives. Julia Weisberg opens her 2004 article about *Making Scenes*’ collapse in *Capital Xtra!* with the following sentence: “*Making Scenes Queer Film and Video Festival* has vanished without a trace, no files, no films, no records, no money, no executive director – and now, no remaining board members.”<sup>91</sup> This contemporary recount of *Making Scenes*’ collapse explains why this might be the case.

As there is a lack of documentation of the festival, drawing ephemeral reactivations within the archive can help highlight and further understand the contradictions of *Making Scenes*, which was a big, commercial, relatively long-lived festival that nonetheless left very few traces. This contradiction distinguishes this case study, as it demonstrates that not all festivals with a strong brand and commercial presence throughout their existence have a strong archival presence. Other long running Canadian lesbian and gay festivals have robust fonds: The

ArQuives in Toronto has extensive fonds dedicated to *Inside Out* (Toronto), *Out on Screen* (Vancouver), and *image+nation* (Montreal), tracing these organizations from grassroots community events to full-fledged, commercialized not-for-profits. An apt example of how this type of collection of archival materials creates a long lasting legacy is the fact that as the thirtieth anniversary of *Inside Out* approaches, the ArQuives are assisting the festival in organizing distinctive and elaborate retrospectives, relying on the extensive documents housed at the institution.<sup>92</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 1, as *Making Scenes* was winding down in 2003, the festival donated boxes of documents to the Pink Triangle Services in Ottawa, now known as Kind Space.<sup>93</sup> Since then, most of these documents seem to have disappeared. Although some of the festival organizers initially saved material from the festival, today the festival lacks any sort of organized archival presence, be it in the form of dedicated fonds or collections. Many of the festival organizers I interviewed also expressed having varying amounts of ephemera (e.g., pins, t-shirts, printed programs) at some point in time, but have since discarded them or were unable to locate them at the time of the interview.

As such, *Making Scenes*' archival presence is much closer to the ephemeral events of the 1970s and early 1980s, as opposed to the more commercialized lesbian and gay festivals of the 1990s. Damiens writes:

“It is thus necessary to distinguish festivals which have the resources, expertise, and will to preserve their own history from amateur or less legitimate events which never attempts to safeguard their historical records in the first place. [...] For instance, 1970s French film festivals were organized by local gay liberation groups as a way to circumvent

ensorship legislation and to energize in-group debates about the direction of the movement.”<sup>94</sup>

Despite the festival’s extensive corporate and public funding and the fact that it was founded when NQC was on the rise, its archival presence is more similar to the ephemeral events of the 1970s Damiens describes. The complex archival presence of *Making Scenes* is therefore what makes it so ripe for analysis into ephemeral reactivation within the archive. As this history is disjointed and ephemeral, so too were my connections with its objects. Drawing my own queer history reaffirms *Making Scenes*’ impact.

The bulk of the documentation I encountered in my research was ephemera—student and community newspapers and festival programs, tickets, personal papers of attendees, fons, and flyers. As Cvetkovich observes, this is not uncommon in the research of an organization rooted in a grassroots movement and designed to cater to lesbian and gay communities. Ephemera is in many ways, an essential part of that history. At once, the availability of cheaper printing is what allowed marginalized histories to circulate but also often leads to their degradation and lack of care within the archive. The surviving documents related to *Making Scenes*, and their lack of provenance, exist in a very real, albeit mysterious, lifespan that includes being handled and owned by countless unnamed queer bodies. As DeVun and McClure suggest, these documents are ripe for ephemeral reactivations through archivists and researchers handling and analyzing them and their forgotten or misplaced histories.

The lack of provenance for *Making Scenes*’ ephemeral documents preserved in archives also provides a window into the contradictions of researching marginalized histories, so often rooted in physical ephemera, as Cvetkovich notes. The documents in the archives related to

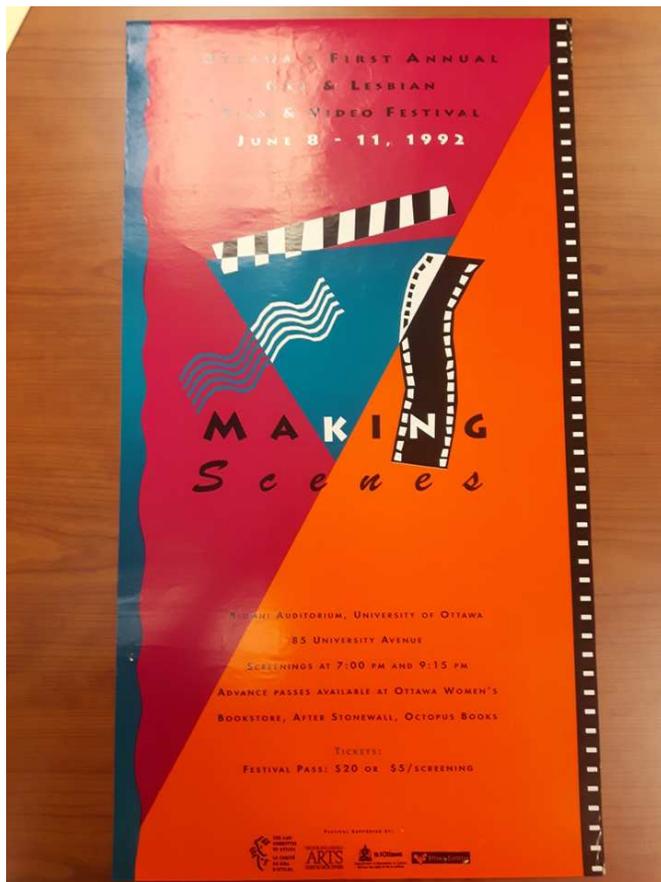
*Making Scenes* suffer from a lack of provenance and traceability, but at the same time provide a space to reactivate ephemera through this lack of documentation.

### Documentation as Reactivation

*Making Scenes*' presence in the archive lays bare how ephemeral reactivation can help circumvent contradictions and loss within the archive. Subsequently, documenting my interaction with the festival's objects helps contextualize and further reaffirm *Making Scenes*' important contributions to the film festival landscape in Canada. My connection with film festivals in Canada demonstrates how reactivating this history was formed by a set of reactivations—my fleeting connection with a misplaced object centered this entire project. A series of accidents or misplacements further speaks to the queer notion of a fleeting ephemeral event. The lack of documentation of the festival was in and of itself, ephemeral – a flash bang in the lesbian and gay history of Ottawa. My choice to reactivate *Making Scenes* history through its documentation comes from a set of ephemeral connections made at the University of Ottawa Archives and Special Collections outlined below.

The inception of my research process, and the subsequent reactivation of the ephemeral history of *Making Scenes*, was accidental. In my required Film Studies MA methods course, one assignment required us to analyze and research a film-related object within a local archive. I chose a textual document from the Canadian Women's Movement Archives Collection (CWMAC) at the University of Ottawa Library Archives and Special Collections. As an arts administrator who had spent the last few years working for the *Inside Out LGBTQ Film Festival* in Toronto and Ottawa, my curiosity was spiked by a document simply titled "Lesbian and Gay – Making Scenes Festival" from the collection's online catalogue. When I visited the archive in

person, the document revealed itself to be a poster from the first iteration of Making Scenes in 1992. The poster is in full colour, with contrasting red, white, bright orange and black colouring, with blue highlights. The type font is in black and white, and is evidently computer generated as the shapes and sizes of the lettering are extremely consistent and crisp. The poster's design is framed by a blue wave-like strip running vertically down the entire left side of the poster. The right side of the poster simulates a strip of celluloid film (a design of black and white dots) running vertically down the entire right side of the poster. The background is two triangular blocks of orange and red. The top portion of the poster features black and white type font which reads "OTTAWA'S FIRST ANNUAL GAY & LESBIAN FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, JUNE 8-11, 1992". The bottom of the poster has black type font which specifies the time, location, and ticketing information for the event, as well as the logos of the sponsoring organizations.



**Figure 1.** *Making Scenes* 1992 promotional poster. University of Ottawa Archives and Special Collections at the University of Ottawa Library (Ottawa).

I was struck to read the title of the festival and not have heard of it, let alone handle the document itself. What was even more surprising was that the additional ephemeral documents at CWMAC suggested this festival was more than just a one-time ephemeral event: the collection also listed two other documents from the festival: a 1994 festival pass and a 1996 festival poster.

The provenance of these documents is mostly unknown, however the collection they belong to has an interesting history as an activist archival project. The CWMAC grew out of a grassroots archival project, the Women's Information Centre (WIC) in Toronto, a group of feminists who gathered documents regarding women's activism in Canada.<sup>95</sup> When they ran out of money and space in the late 1980s, WIC went shopping for an institution that could preserve their archival collection and continue their activist mandate of accessioning materials about women's movements in Canada. In 1991, the University of Ottawa Library Archives and Special Collections accessioned the CWMAC fonds and continued to add related items to the collection. It is unclear who donated *Making Scenes* materials to the CWMAC and when. Although originally maintained as a fonds (e.g. a collection created by one person or organization and maintained in its original order), accession of materials continues, making the CWMAC a type of hybrid collection/fonds. Clearly, the "original order" cannot be upheld if a collection continues to grow and accession materials. The hybridity of the CWMAC, a fonds that grew into a collection, allowed *Making Scenes*' ephemeral documents to make their way into the WIC fonds. This shift in how CWMAC is handled by the archive at the University demonstrates how marginalized communities or activist archival endeavours, have found ways to upend traditional preservation norms to ensure archives preserve and maintain documents related to their movements and lives.

Solely relying on textual documents and their place within the archive, without taking into consideration their ephemeral connections or interaction with them, makes it harder to recognize the rich history of marginalized communities creating ways to properly document their histories. This ephemeral reactivation within the archive has a real impact on how archives maintain documents, for which *Making Scenes* plays a part.

### Intimacy as Reactivation

Although CWMAC was the birthplace of this project, it was not the only archival space where *Making Scenes* documents spurred ephemeral reactivation. I found additional documentation related to the festival at Carleton University's MacOdrum Library, the ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives in Toronto, the University of Ottawa Archives, and the City of Ottawa Archives. I will use three types of material that I encountered at these archives as a way of thinking through the roles of accessibility, intimacy, and grief as forms of reactivating ephemera. First, I was able to check out an anthology titled *Queering Canada: A Collection of Essays*, published by *Making Scenes* in 1995, from the MacOdrum library. My experiences with the book spurred an ephemeral connection of intimacy and familiarity with the past. Second, at the ArQuives, I pored through the David Pepper fonds, donated by an Ottawa activist and supporter of *Making Scenes*, which reactivated the voices of unidentifiable queer bodies of the past. Finally, my inability to view and handle the collection of promotional t-shirts for *Making Scenes* at the ArQuives produced a sense of grief. I will end this section with a journal entry from my time at the ArQuives:

*Queering Canada's* position within the university research library created an ephemeral sense of displacement due to its classification as a library book at MacOdrum Library at Carleton

University. However, this displacement created an opportunity for an intimate connection with the object. Its classification could even be considered as existing outside of the confines of traditional archival space, as it is catalogued as a library book and not an archival object.

*Queering Canada* is a collection of interviews and freeform essays, each concentrating on Canadian queer filmmakers. The process of writing and publishing *Queering Canada* was led by Donna Quince, then Executive Director of *Making Scenes*, and Jose Sanchez, programmer and organizer of the festival. It is just as much of an artifact as it is an academic reference.

*Queering Canada* was the only object I could find within Carleton University's Library and Archives related to *Making Scenes*. The library has two copies (which were not in high demand) and as soon as I knew that the book existed, I checked the item out. The longer I spent time with the book, the more I saw it lingering on my bedside table, or stacked with the accumulating pile of research items amassed for this project. I carried it in my backpack for months on end, to the point where my copy's front cover wore thin from the constant back and forth of my movements. This lingering item was a reminder of the powers of classifications and how these classifications can help or hinder how we build ephemeral connection, as I was able to intimately organize and reflect with *Queering Canada*, in ways I could not with other documents that could not leave archival spaces.

Mostly, I found it unsettling that this book was something that was so freely given to me, and that I could access the book outside of institutional space, as opposed to the other, carefully preserved and monitored archival objects I was examining for this project. This contrast made the archive seem like an artificially classified space, whose classifications and norms seem artificial but also determine how objects can be handled, impacting the relationships we develop with them. For this reason, my ability to handle *Queering Canada* was so different. There was

something so tactile and visceral about having access to *Queering Canada* on a longer term, intimate basis.

Although I was able to physically look at and touch all of the objects at the ArQuives that were made available to me, there were strict limitations on how and when I could access these objects. Similarly to a conventional archival space, with storage spaces that are usually not publicly accessible and a reading room available to registered researchers, the ArQuives only allows for items within their collections to be read and handled within their building.

The David Pepper Papers at the ArQuives provided an intimate glimpse into the festival itself, and allowed for a reactivation of unnamed queer voices of the past. Pepper was a gay activist in Ottawa in the 1990s whose work centered around decreasing police brutality and prejudice towards lesbians and gays through building community connections. He was also a prominent HIV/AIDS activist. I also learned through his papers at the ArQuives that he was a frequent attendee and supporter of *Making Scenes*, as his papers include a number of ephemeral documents from *Making Scenes*, including programmes and passes as well as fundraiser tickets and pamphlets. His papers demonstrate the ways in which ephemera is so important to lesbian and gay history; not only did he deem these of interest to be preserved, but his papers created an intimate ephemeral connection with the past.

As communications scholar E. Cram explains, LGBTQ archives often “focus on voice, visibility and recuperation.”<sup>96</sup> The David Pepper Papers come with scribbled notes and tiny annotations. Although his name and identification are all over his documents, the notes and annotations are manifestations of thoughts and past experiences of gay life. Pepper’s voice, as well as those who had printed, written, and scribbled upon his documents, demonstrate how his collection has a visible trace of voice and recuperation. These papers felt very intimate; they

remind me of the many times I have worked with countless festival stakeholders, poring over festival programs, communicating information, and organizing events. In this sense, *Making Scenes* becomes reactivated and the connection between past and present festival organization is made.

My experience with *Queering Canada* and the David Pepper Papers contrasts with my experience with the ArQuives's collection of promotional *Making Scenes* t-shirts. When I sent my initial list to the ArQuives to ask for the documents I needed to consult, I asked that a number of promotional t-shirts from *Making Scenes* be pulled from their collection so that I could examine them. I was told that these were in deep storage and could not be retrieved. My first feeling was one of grief, as I was searching for connections between myself and these objects, the feeling of looking at the materials and investigating the printed words on the shirts. These t-shirts were of specific interest to me, as they could have served as a stand in for the embodied experience of representing and attending the festival. They would have carried skin fragments, hair, and sweat of those labouring for the festival, the closest trace of embodiment one could find within the archive. As feminist scholar Marika Cifor says when handling a lipstick in the San Francisco GLBT Historical Society's reading room that had traces of hair from transgender woman, sex worker, and activist Victoria Schneider, "It is not that this hair looks like a body, but that it *feels* like one. Victoria's hair refuses distance."<sup>97</sup> The t-shirts would have been an opportunity to draw a strong physical connections within the archive, and an opportunity to reactivate their history. I was limited to digital images of the t-shirts on their website, producing a distance between myself and the unnamed queer bodies who wore these garments in the past. Feeling grief for not being able to handle these objects is a form of reactivation, as it encompasses feelings related to the loss of histories that are often rooted in ephemera, such as

*Making Scenes*. This feeling of grief also underlines one of the key points of tension in ephemeral preservation, where physical access to these objects would allow for further ephemeral reactivation, but that access itself could lead to the break down of the objects.

Finally, writing in a journal assisted with the ephemeral reactivation of the history of *Making Scenes*. My journal entry from September 5, 2019, when I was consulting documents at the ArQuives, reads:

A student came in looking for himself in the ArQuives to see if he “made it” – he was on the cover of some newspaper, and was arrested for nondisclosure of his HIV status. At this moment, I find myself looking forward, and looking back – simultaneously wanting more from the 1995 and 1994 festivals, but also wanting to skip forward and find other items. The “AIDS quilt” memorial stain glass is always illuminated in the reading room, creating a sense that time doesn’t pass in the reading room, and adds to the backdrop of history.

The student was part of a tour group, and was inquiring as to whether his article, and subsequently his lived experience, had made it into the ArQuives. This interaction between inquiring about being forgotten (the student), being forgotten (the 1994 festival), and the AIDS quilt art work demonstrate how different parts of history can be triangulated and reactivated through experience and speech. This sense of feeling triangulated, in between both the student and the AIDS quilt stained glass, shows how histories reverberate between walls of archives and as well as outside. I felt as though I was oscillating between past, present and future. These experiences demonstrate how ephemeral connections can spur feelings of intimacy with the past, and that without interacting with our fleeting, ephemeral connections, denies the humanity of archival work.

### Making Scenes' Ephemeral Oral History

Recovering the oral history of *Making Scenes* is a means to understand its complex legacy, but also to move away from the focus on impact, typically related to the notions of progress, capitalism and growth, and instead favouring a body-based knowing approach. In this section, I outline how I used a body-based approach when collecting interviews from festival organizers, attendees and volunteers, and how this created new ephemeral reactivations of the archive. First, I outline how the approach I took to the interviews was informed by a body-based approach, and second, I explain how the interview process is a type of living archive.

The body-based approach within the practice of oral interviews has a legacy within collecting trans, lesbian and gay history, to which this part of this project owes its methodological framework. In *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*, oral historians Horacio N. Roque Ramírez and Nan Alamilla Boyd explain that:

[This approach] draws its meaning from body-based knowing. This concept asserts that the sexuality of the body (or bodily desires) is an important, indeed material, aspect of the practice of doing oral history. In addition to documenting the political quality of the oral history work done by generations of queer narrators and historians, [body-based knowing] seeks to better understand the role the body itself has played in the way queer oral histories have been conducted.<sup>98</sup>

Body-based knowing is a form ephemeral reactivation of the past, through the oral interview, as it focuses on the fleeting ephemeral affects and embodied experiences throughout the interview process. Furthermore, body-based approaches allow for further subjectivity and empowerment to be placed squarely with the interviewee, and circumvents some of the ethical conundrums of oral

history gathering. In “Hidden From Historians,” lesbian oral historian Elise Chenier explains the shift in perspective from viewing oral history as means to an end (a simple gathering of fact) towards a project of identification. She explains how this framework impacted the practice of lesbian and gay oral history as early as the 1960s:

This generation of activist oral historians rejected the traditional hierarchical relationship between research and subject. They critiqued folklorists’ and anthropologists’ construction of informants as “objects” of study. Indeed, though class differences existed, researchers did not regard their subjects as the “other”; instead, they strongly identified with them.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, the term oral testimony would be much more specific to the type of recording that this project attempted to do throughout the interview process. Oral testimonies are designed to not necessarily collect accurate information, but to account for the lived experience of the person who is speaking. In this sense, the interviews were not only designed to recover facts, but also to understand that facts stemming from memory are often inaccurate, and capturing someone’s lived experience supersedes the collection of fact.

The oral testimony becomes a form of historical reactivation, as it places agency squarely with the interview subject, and allows for their experiences to be brought to the present through voice. This approach empowered participants to speak to their specific histories as opposed to having the sparse textual documents on *Making Scenes* speak for them. These interviews would also fit into the framework of queer archives, which often collect and classify information which centre on an individual’s voice (ephemeral documents, fonds from a particular person’s life), rather than aiming for accuracy or a holistic representation of fact.

Damiens explains that traces of festivals, including interviews, “act as a testament to the remarkable work of an army of anonymous festival organizers and film lovers whose existence may never be evidenced or proven through so-called objective methods.”<sup>100</sup> Although I prepared a set of questions for these interviews (in accordance with Carleton University’s Research Ethics Board requirements), the interviews were meant to be conversations and I was most concerned with allowing each interviewee to guide their own interview. The conversations were more of a celebration and of the work undertaken by each subject rather than a discovery of fact. Speaking these memories into existence brings the present and past together, reactivating the festival into the present.

#### The Living Archive of *Making Scenes*

These oral interviews created ephemeral connections between myself and a previous generation of festival organizers, and created a type of living archive. The archive of *Making Scenes* was ephemerally reactivated through voice throughout the process. The interview moment in and of itself is ephemeral. Each interaction, and its distinctive space is an ephemeral reactivation of the archive, confounding past, present, and future.

Conducting interviews was an opportunity to create ephemeral connections between these older lesbian and gay festival organizers and me, a younger trans researcher and festival worker. My experience of conducting these interviews created intergenerational ephemeral connections and centered queer subjects, with the recovery of “facts” about the festival coming in second to the importance of connecting with the interview participants’ humanity and voice. Documenting these ephemeral connections within the interview process do not make these experiences any less

ephemeral, but instead provide a justification for the importance of the documentation of these experiences which are often forgotten or dismissed.

Taking place solely in Ottawa and focusing uniquely on Ottawa organizers, the information shared in these interviews far exceeded the documents related to *Making Scenes* which were held in archives. Tying the festival to its location allowed for the emergence of a queer living archive of *Making Scenes*. Conducting interviews in coffeeshops and office buildings in Ottawa extends of the archive outside of the traditional archival space, and reclaims public space as distinctly queer whilst also reclaiming a forgotten piece of history. DeVun and McClure explain the distinctly queer “living” archive of West Hollywood: “the visual qualities of the queer, as a lived phenomenon, are similar to that of the archive; rather than a hierarchical arrangement of material, a system by which we might understand items of greater and lesser importance, the visual (or visible) aspects of queer life are assembled and glimpsed by happenstance.”<sup>101</sup> Much like this experience of visible queer life in West Hollywood, conducting interviews therefore was an opportunity for me to experience and visualize aspects of queer life in Ottawa directly.

For example, Donna Quince and I met at a coffeeshop near her home in Western Ottawa. When she came into the shop, I immediately recognized her as my subject, partially from the photos I had consulted from my archival work which bore her semblance, but also from the fact that she was clutching a copy of *Queering Canada*. As we sit and begin to discuss the festival, the store is relatively quiet. Slowly it starts to fill, and a boisterous group of men sit beside us, speaking loudly. I remember feeling as though the intensity of noise resounded in the swirling amount of experiences Quince was stirring up throughout our discussion, and how the environment was matching the intensity of these memories. This “interruption” can be heard in

the interview recording, and although could be interpreted as problematic to hearing the interviewee's voice, I choose to instead see this as a type of documentation of an embodied moment, where we both wrestled through the noise to drum up emotions and facts from the past. Our embodied experience in that moment is archived within the recording, standing for an archive of embodiment.

Before and after each interview, I would take the time to write down my thoughts, and I was particularly interested in what the moment felt and looked like. Similarly to the living archive of West Hollywood, these thoughts are not ordered by importance, but rather "glimpsed at," and documented as what I was feeling in the moment, and not so much the importance of the feeling. Partway through my interview with George Hartsgrove, he turns to the window and says "Oh! There's a bunch of people I know!" and he waves as they walk by. The interview becomes an embodiment of gay life in Ottawa, as Hartsgrove and I glimpse at the past (his recalling of *Making Scenes*) and present of Ottawa's gay life (his friends through the window).

Also, as the bulk of physical documentation of *Making Scenes* is stored in Toronto at the ArQuives, the fact of collecting these interviews in Ottawa brings this this history closer to its roots. While Damiens describes film festival studies as a field fixated on impact and physical documentation, these interviews were a way to circumvent this focus and provide a queer look into *Making Scenes* by providing infinite potential for moments of ephemeral reactivation within the archive. Not only did the interviews create a reactivation directly to me and the participants, they also provide for infinite potential of reactivation through their preservation within the archive. Once I have completed this thesis, I will donate the recordings and transcripts of these interviews to the ArQuives, so that they will be available for consultation and subsequent ephemeral reactivation by future researchers. This is a complex decision, as multiple

interviewees expressed sadness that *Making Scenes*' records did not live in Ottawa, and that local institutions were not able to preserve items at the time of *Making Scenes*' collapse. However, to ensure that the interviews are properly preserved, I had to make the difficult decision to donate them to an institution outside of the city. At one of the largest independent LGBTQ archives in the world, I am confident that the interviews will be available for subsequent reactivation well into the future for further research. Thus, *Making Scenes*' lost fonds and misplaced classifications can be circumvented and complemented by a new collection of oral history which can now be recovered and maintained within the archive.

Conducting these interviews reactivated the voices of the past and connected them directly with the present, creating in themselves an archive sitting outside of the confines of time and space. The interviews collapsed the space between past and present, and become a type of living archive that focuses on body-based knowing.

## Conclusion

The two pillars of ephemeral archival documents and interviews utilized throughout this project reveal how ephemeral reactivation within the archive can be harnessed and documented, especially when researching organizations with faint archival presences. As a case study, *Making Scenes* expands the concept of the ephemeral to include ephemeral connections within and outside of the archive. Producing research on *Making Scenes* was therefore an act of recovery, to better understand both the lesbian and gay community here in Ottawa but also to weave a queer organization into the very fabric of what we consider lesbian and gay history in Canada. This project is another way to remember this history, and to document a forgotten piece of Ottawa's

lesbian and gay history, while also attempting to understand how ephemeral presences and activities both within and outside of the archive help supplant normative ways of interacting with film festival research. The next chapter further investigates this expansion of our understanding of archival work by harnessing archival inventions to further analyze queer and trans connections within the archive.

### Chapter 3: Being Seen: A Transsexual in the Archive

*Making Scene's* history, as well as how it has been documented in the archives, provides clues as to how queer history can be restored and remembered despite a lack of documentation. After taking into consideration both the object of research and how it has been recorded within the archives, I now turn to the affective relationship between me and the objects of my research and my experiences uncovering the history of *Making Scenes* despite the limitations of the archive. I analyze my affective experiences using E. Cram's concept of "ambient archival invention," which "challenges modern theories of invention and foregrounds the entanglements of sensory culture, corporeality, sensation, feeling and memory."<sup>102</sup> This theory accounts for my deeply personal, affective, trans experience conducting archival research, and speaks to how archival space can be expanded to include invention and affect, especially when classifications and objects prove limited. I analyze two affective experiences I had when researching *Making Scenes*, and demonstrate how ambient archival imaginations provide alternatives to the restrictions of the archive and account for otherwise forgotten ephemeral connections, disrupting normative assumptions about time, space, and embodiment.

This chapter uses an autobiographical, ethnographic approach to understanding my interaction with two archival documents I encountered in my research into *Making Scenes*. First, I will analyze my experience searching for event listings and media coverage of *Making Scenes* in *The Fulcrum* student newspaper at the University of Ottawa Archives, which reveals similarities between the somatechnical body and the paper record within the archive. Second, my attachment to filmmaker John Greyson's photograph that accompanied Winston Sin's 1993 article in *Capital Xtra!* demonstrates the ways in which a rejection of temporal linearity and

spatial constraints can account for queer and trans affective connections to the archive. Initially, I consulted Greyson's photograph at the ArQuives in Toronto. However, the experience examined below stems from my interaction with the digital reproduction of the photograph during my secondary analysis and research at my home.

Drawing upon my archival experience with two specific textual documents, I tease out interpretations of the trans corporeal, the temporal, and the spatial within the archive in order to create new archival inventions. This essentially turns the trans experience into a radical alternative to the limitations of archival classification and documentation, and normative understandings of time and space. Cram's ambient archival invention stems from their experience with settler/colonial dynamics in the archive, and their reaction is to imagine creative alternatives to the physical documentation, and to circumvent and confront the violence of this type of archive. I utilize this methodology to circumvent a lack of documentation of trans people within the archive of *Making Scenes*, and to therefore circumvent the violence of this erasure. Archival invention is particularly important for trans interpretations of the archive as trans bodies are in constant flux, movement, transition – moving simultaneously forward and backward through gender, corporeal embodiment, time, and space.<sup>103</sup>

One of the archival objects in this chapter is physical, the other is digital, and comparing my experiences with them utilizes both queer and trans archival methodologies to explain the importance of affective connection within the archive and its subsequent inventions. I use both a queer and a trans lens, both subject positions I identify with and have deeply personal connections with. For the purposes of this chapter, queer theory helps me understand that which escapes classification. The trans theoretical framework I deploy to better understand the

embodied experience of archival work, its impacts and considerations, including embodiment, anti-futurity, and somatechnics.

### Transsexual Fingerprints: Paper, Dust, and Oil

The archival experience I outline below intervenes in archival space by imagining an alternative to how we interpret archival materials, particularly textual documents like *The Fulcrum*. Endlessly flipping through pages of *The Fulcrum* laid bare the fact that as a trans person, I was not represented in *The Fulcrum*'s content. This speaks to the contradictory nature of the work I undertook, wherein I was frustrated by a lack of trans representation, but this frustration led to a more comprehensive, critical interaction with the archive of *Making Scenes*. In this sense, my lack of representation took a physical and emotional toll, but produced an affectively rich and productive archival invention.

This alternative imagining is done by documenting and illustrating the ways in which my trans body and the textual document come into contact within the archive, which draws out how I can imagine my trans body and the archive as similar. These similarities point to clues as to how trans bodies are both physically and affectively pathologized both within and outside of archival space, and how trans bodies can produce alternatives to these mischaracterizations of trans bodies.

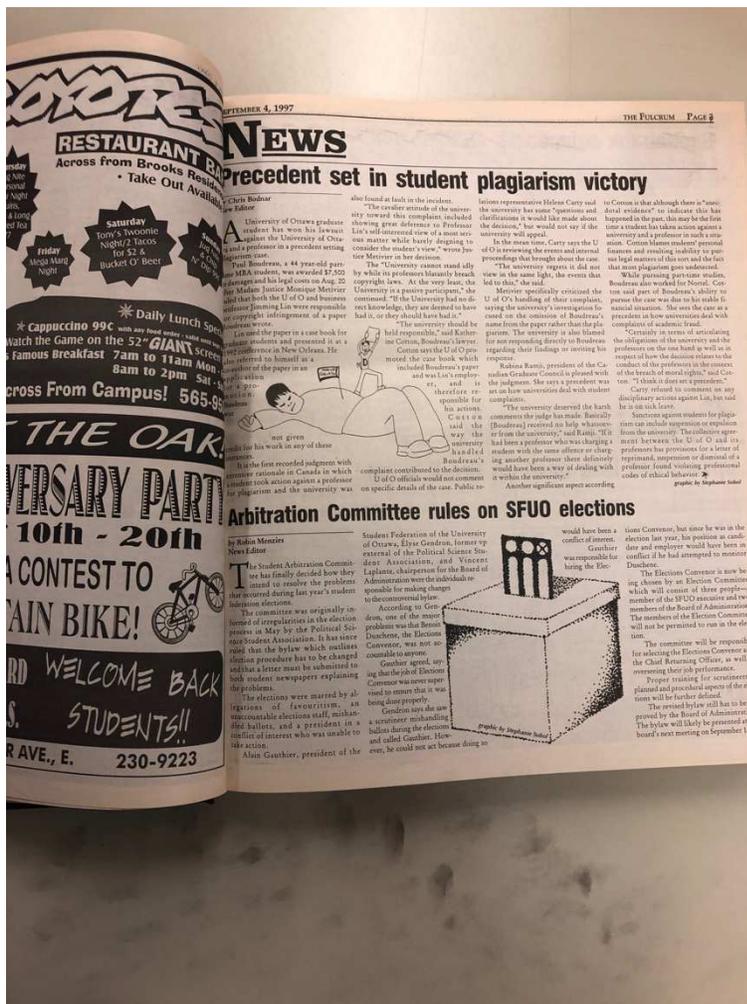
The following ambient archival invention stems from my interaction with *The Fulcrum*, the University of Ottawa's student newspaper, at the University of Ottawa archives. This archive is an institutional archive, designed to "analyse, acquire, select, organize and preserve records that have been created or acquired by the University of Ottawa personnel in the course of their work, as well as any other documents useful to the management of the University due to their

legal or historical value.”<sup>104</sup> I went looking for information on *Making Scenes* in the student newspaper at the University of Ottawa for a variety of reasons. First, the University of Ottawa alumni theatre was the venue for the inaugural edition of the festival in 1992, so it was plausible that the student newspaper would report on *Making Scenes*. Second, numerous interviewees had expressed that local students were a large part of the festival audience, particularly in its early years. Third, Carleton University Archives and Special Collections’ digital records had holdings of *The Charlatan* (Carleton’s student newspaper), which also reported on *Making Scenes* throughout the 1990s.

In “Affect in the Archive: Trauma, Grief and Delight,” historian Lynette Russell documents her experiences of feelings of stress, anxiety, happiness, and grief whilst interacting with colonial documents at the Melbourne Museum. Russell explains that these feelings demonstrate that “archives can be tactile, visceral, aural and olfactory, something that is certainly reduced when the physical becomes digital.”<sup>105</sup> Russell’s notion of the affective connection with physical documents demonstrates the ways in which physical documents, even easily reproducible textual records, can spur affective connections. This is particularly salient for my experience with *The Fulcrum*, as the direct contact between my fingerprints and the newspaper’s ink is what spurred a tactile, visceral connection.

The copy of *The Fulcrum* available for consultation is not kept in cold storage to limit the breakdown of the paper fibres and can be handled without gloves. These are ephemeral paper documents: the editions are original copies from their respective print lines, and are kept together in loosely bound books. *The Fulcrum* is a bimonthly publication, and I had over ten years of volumes to review. There were no digital scans or other finding aids which could point me towards relevant information, therefore my only recourse was to flip through its seemingly

endless pages, scanning for tiny fragments of *Making Scenes*. I wanted to be efficient, so I flipped through its pages relatively quickly. The repetition of the movement in the muscles of my hands, lifting my fingers to touch and turn the pages was almost mechanical. This repetition mirrored the motion of a photocopier's light moving back and forth on a page, capturing its likeness and creating a copy of itself. The ink from the newspaper transferred onto my fingerprints, which I would then unconsciously place on the desk in the archive's consultation room. My fingerprints, smudged with ink, transferred traces of themselves onto the desk. I repeated this process, almost subconsciously, and the desk became replete with repetitious traces of my fingerprints.



**Figure 2.** The Fulcrum News, and my fingerprints. The University of Ottawa Archives (Ottawa).

*The Fulcrum* stands apart from many of the documents and collections I consulted for this project, as it was not directly relevant to the research into *Making Scenes*. Entries on anything lesbian or gay was minute. However, this very exclusion (or very minor inclusion) is what led to the speed with which I could consult the object, and the subsequent reproduction of my fingerprints on the desk. This fleeting moment, captured within the archive, is almost arbitrary, as Cvetkovich explains in “In the Archives of Lesbian Feeling”:

Like the arbitrariness (or ephemerality) of the connections between feelings and object, and especially between traumatic memories and objects, the queer dimensions of popular culture’s presence in the archive are unpredictable because they are so often not intrinsic to the object.<sup>106</sup>

Cvetkovich’s idea of arbitrariness is particularly important to my interaction with *The Fulcrum*, as it exposes the contradictory nature of the ephemeral archival experience: *The Fulcrum*’s arbitrary attachment to queerness is due to the fact that queerness itself is not intrinsic to the object. It is queer because I make it so, determining that at once the speed with which I could consult this paper document was a product of its very estrangement to my queer research subject. This demonstrates the ways in which queer voices, when pushed to the margins, can create archival inventions from their frustration that circumvent dominant and exclusionary narratives.

### The Archive as Body

The looseness of where the natural body ends and the technological body begins raises questions related to what is considered natural and unnatural reproduction in the archive. Paper documents and trans bodies, through their association with the artificial, or the reproducible, call into question notions of reproduction, photocopy, and value.

Although the copies of *The Fulcrum* I consulted are bound into volumes for consultation, the copies in the archive are part of the original run of the newspaper. This meant that each edition has a certain provenance of its own, having been handled, read, and consumed by students at the University of Ottawa before ending up in archival storage, or alternatively, handled by archivists and student journalists to be set apart to be archived for the University's records. When my skin came in contact with the magazine's paper, the newspaper transferred part of itself, although not a legible or decipherable part of itself, onto my body, and then on to the table. The ink transferred to my fingerprints therefore carries traces of dust, skin, and paper from the past, and mixed with the skin cells, oils, and sweat from my fingerprints. This experience, as Cram explains, "emphasizes dimensionality and capacity for experiences to be handled, to generate contact between hands, skin, paper and dust."<sup>107</sup> In this sense, my body becomes one with the object and the archive, in the distinct moment when my fingerprints touch the desk and transfer the object's trace from paper to skin to surface. In this moment, hands, skin, paper, object, and archive are fleetingly one, represented by the smudged fingerprints on the desk. This paper document, and this archival experience, at once not traced, leaves a unique and ephemeral patterned trace.

This interaction between two objects, one sentient, one non-sentient, coming into contact on the desk, raise questions about the limitations of the archive and how including the body can further interrogate notions of classification, particularly the inclusion of the somatechnical body within the archive. Somatechnics is a term used to describe the process and interrelation of reproducing or manipulating the born body to infuse it with technology.<sup>108</sup> Queer theorist Nikki Sullivan defines somatechnics as follows:

The term somatechnics, derived from the Greek *soma* (body) and *techné* (craftsmanship), supplants the logic of the “and,” indicating that *techné* is not something we add or apply to the already constituted body (as object), nor is it a tool that the embodied self employs to its own ends. Rather, *technés* are the dynamic means in and through which corporealities are crafted: that is, continuously engendered in relation to others and to a world. What we see here, then, is a chiasmatic interdependence of *soma* and *techné*: of bodily being (or corporealities) as always already technologized and technologies (which are never simply “machinic”) as always already enfleshed.<sup>109</sup>

In the moment when contact between archive and body is so close, through framing this interaction in all its dimensions, we can interrogate the porousness of body and archive, and interrogate the unique ways in which this permeability interacts with a trans notion of the somatechnical body.

Conflating and comparing the textual document of *The Fulcrum* with the somatechnical body allows for new ambient archival imaginations, which imagine the archive as corporeal and the body as archival. *The Fulcrum* is a type of print material that is born out of an unnatural medium, as it is created via digital medium (a computer layout system) and photocopied and printed via a machine. Access to these types of records is becoming increasingly technologized, to the detriment of archival research that favours an embodied experience. One of the essential and liberating aspects of somatechnics is its legitimation of trans bodies, and in its similarities with ephemera in the archive, so too does it make an argument for the reliance on the physical ephemera. Sullivan’s definition of a body in continuous motion and in conversation with the technologized world speaks to my fingerprints as a result of the mechanics of my movement in contact with *The Fulcrum*. The *technés* is dynamic and interdependent with the *soma*, as both my

body and the textual record bearing traces of the corporeal (dust/skin) and of the technological (ink/printing) come into contact.

This unique pattern mirrors the unique trace of a fleeting, ephemeral moment of archival labour. My fingerprints become a broader representation of the ideal of digging, of searching and of finding within the archive. My fingerprints carry incomplete mysteries, missing pieces and clues. Similar to the process of digging and uncovering, so too do new processes and reproductions happen throughout this process of flipping through *The Fulcrum's* pages. The smudged ink on the table is tracing the paper, something which would have been lost without a direct contact between paper and skin.

Both my somatechnical trans body and the textual record of *The Fulcrum* stem from a technologized reproduction, and in this way bear similarities. The mechanical repetition of my hands within the archival process became similar to a process of repetition or photocopy (an applied *techné*), combined with the natural oils, sweat, and skin fragments of my “natural” body (the *soma*). Similarly to how trans bodies move through medical reproductions of their physical selves, as we allow others to dig into our bodies, remove, replace and transform ourselves through the who and what we wish to be, so too do we utilize the archive to build ourselves and our histories into them, slowly carving ourselves into history in the process.

Somatechnical bodies engender the notion that scientific manipulations of the body are as innate to the body as its already constituted qualities. This definition of somatechnics therefore allows for the archive to extend into body, and the body to extend into the archive, as they are seen as both simultaneously technological and corporeal. This unique transfer supplants the ideal of the separation of body/archive, as the en fleshed (my body) is technologized, and the archive becomes corporeal. Somatechnics is a process, a reverberation, similar to the archival project of

going back and forth, of reviewing and applying technology to our natural lives and vice versa. This expands the confines of where the trans body ends and the archive begins, in an effort to reassert and posteriorly claim exclusionary space.

### Transsexual in the Archive: Physical and Affective Pathologies

The close relation of my somatechnical body with the textual record of *The Fulcrum* raises questions regarding the pathologizing of trans physical and affective qualities. First, the somatechnical understanding of the body defines all bodies as a combination of both technological and natural elements. Although all bodies are considered a combination of both, trans bodies have been at the forefront of the debate regarding what is considered a “good” body, or one that harnesses somatechnics “properly.” Existing outside of the hetero-patriarchal ideal of the codified binary, transgender somatechnics are constantly called into question. As most transsexuals (myself included) rely on technology (surgery, hormone treatments) to shape and mold our bodies, the very legitimacy of this technological modification is constantly called into question.

Trans historian Susan Stryker, who originally coined the term somatechnics, further explains the ways in which trans bodies go against what is considered the natural order of gender.<sup>110</sup> In “My Words to Victor Frankenstein from the Village of Chamounix: Notes on Transgender Rage,” she explains: “the transsexual body is an unnatural body. It is the product of medical science. It is a technological construction. It is flesh torn apart and sewn together again in a shape other than that in which it was born.”<sup>111</sup> As we tear flesh from flesh, we tear page from page, and suture together similar facts and flesh, an already enfleshed/sentient/non-sentient experience draws closer to both archive and somatechnical body. Trans bodies, in their

application of somatechnics, produce and reproduce themselves in an image that quiets dysmorphia and gender dysphoria. As Stryker further recounts, “I who achieve the similitude of a natural body only through an unnatural process.”<sup>112</sup> If we are to accept Stryker’s definition, it is to accept that trans identity was always present, regardless of whether the body underwent any type of “technological” (medical) procedure or treatment, and is valid in seeking technological change, despite living outside of a prescribed binary.

This physical notion of archive and somatechnical body, in their physical application, uncovers how textual records and trans bodies are pathologized. The textual records of *The Fulcrum* are considered born out of a technological reproduction, wherein photocopies or reproduction in the archive are considered less rare. Drawing similarities between both the somatechnical body and the textual record, both born partially out of technology, challenges the notions of physical value. Although all bodies are somatechnical, trans peoples’ specific harnessing of somatechnics is seen as contradictory to the culturally acceptable gender binary, as we transcend binary ideas of gender so entrenched in society. Our bodies are prone to be left destitute through our rejection of these by way of our somatechnical embodiments.

Second, the concept of affective economies can help us understand the fear that is often directed towards trans bodies through the lens of the archival moment described above. This is where theories surrounding pathology and trans bodies intersect with feminist scholar Sara Ahmed’s notion of “affective economies,” wherein our affects enter into conversation with our environments, and create a permeability that she argues is much more porous and visceral than previously assumed.<sup>113</sup> Affective economies allow for an experience that removes or in part allows for an alternative, undefinable subject to represent an affect. This allows for other types of trans ambient archival imaginations to exist within the new affective realm of the archive.

This affective connection, the entering and passing by of affect from trans bodies to the archive demonstrate a repurposing of our bodies, a recentering of our subjecthood within the archive. Ahmed also explains that affects spurred from events that “pass by” a community can serve as a vector for fear.<sup>114</sup>

As a transitional body, one that takes many forms, and moves back and forward on a spectrum, so too does the trans body inspire fear and threaten the cisgender collective identity. The fear that is so fundamental to the collective identity is therefore threatened by the very nature of transness, characterized as one of “passing by.” It provides an explanation as to why those who diverge from accepted notions of embodiment within the collective are often met with violence, fear, and rejection. As Ahmed explains, “the policies of continual surveillance of emergent forms is sustained as an ongoing project of survival.”<sup>115</sup> Trans bodies, transgressing binary models of gender, therefore threaten the binary, and threaten what is considered the very fibres that hold cisgender “communities” together. Ahmed explains this fear as a “fear of degeneration,” threatening “social forms”:

The proximity of such other bodies [...] “causes” the fear that the forms of civilization (the family, the community, the nation, and international civil society) have degenerated. Those who speak out against the “truth” of this world become aligned then with the terrorists as seeking to cause the “ruin” of the world. What is important, then, is that the narratives that seek to preserve the present through working on anxieties of death as the necessary consequence of the demise of social forms also seek to locate that anxiety in some bodies, which then take on fetish qualities as objects of fear. Such bodies engender even more fear, as they cannot be held in place as objects, and threaten to pass by.<sup>116</sup>

Being trans is a transitory experience. It is existing in a perpetual sense of limbo, of never catching up to a binary ideal.<sup>117</sup> It is a body in constant fluctuation upon a spectrum. This provides a potential explanation for the fear that Ahmed speaks of as so necessary to notions of collective identity. Therefore, it is very common that trans related objects and trans bodies serve as an object that “passes by” in its malleability, in its somatechnical application of fluctuation between physical and affective change and exchange. Trans bodies take on fetish qualities as “they cannot be held in place.”

These physical and affective pathologies do not come without alternatives. Centering trans bodies allows therefore for new classifications and affectively rich archival experiences and documentations, and becomes a way to circumvent these projects of surveillance and violence. My fingerprints therefore were a stand in for the fear and also the close proximity I drew with the archival documents. Fingerprints can be sites of trauma as a physical reminder of a body that does not fit one’s identity, utilized for surveillance and terror but also of deeply personal identification. The contradictions of an experience surveilled but unsurveilled, forgotten but also distinctly remembered, served as a reminder for both the oppression facing trans identities, but also the ways in which transness can expand restrictive notion of binary gender in the archive.

Trans and intersex studies scholar Hil Malatino explains that sense of never fully arriving at a complete transition, and how our association with an ideal trans body can be problematic: “The promise implicit in [transition] narratives is that, as one takes steps to bring their embodiment in line with their gender identity, a radical metamorphosis takes place that makes the rhythms and patterns of everyday life easier, more bearable, and less traumatic.”<sup>118</sup> Instead of attempting to represent some type of binary ideal, Malatino instead advocates for a presence in the present that accepts “the creative and caring acts of trans intimacy that render life in the

interregnum—in the moments during transition, which may very well not have a definite end—not only livable but also, sometimes, joyous.”<sup>119</sup> This moves away from the somatechnical application of transness and into an approach that centers the body in the present.

Marika Cifor’s experience with Victoria Schneider’s lipstick at the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco underscores the ways in which visceral connections to the trans corporeal can transcend and even create new types of imagining archiving trans experiences. As I mentioned in the last chapter, Schneider was a trans woman, sex worker, and activist who donated her makeup to the GLBT Historical Society. Cifor explains her connection with a strand of hair she found in one of Victoria’s lipsticks:

Victoria’s hair exposes the promise of animation offered by present bodies and bodily fragments for archival discourses and practices. It pushes us to consider more deeply what is absent in archives and how we might critically address and redress such absences to capture and properly value trans bodies, embodiment, and bodily experiences in their centrality, affect, and power.<sup>120</sup>

Cifor’s experience underscores the somatechnical applications of the body as the lipstick represents a somatechnical modification of Victoria’s body, coupled with the enfleshed representation of her hair within it. Similarly do my fingerprints and skin carry fragments of the rough outlines of my hands, engrained with somatechnical modifications. The somatechnical body serves as a vector for authenticity, as opposed to an affectively menacing corporeality. Accepting this “already enfleshed” notion removes the stigma associated with what is considered an “already artificial” body.

Cifor’s enunciation of the affective power of Victoria’s hair makes a powerful argument for the use of the trans body as an attempt at seeping closer to the essence of the lived experience

that the archive attempts to represent. The trans body provides an alternative to the current archival classification and demands something closer to a bodily classification. Once seen as a closed system, leading only to premature death, the trans body actually opens itself up as a vector of many possibilities, maybe even endless possibilities through its somatechnical application of en fleshed technology and technology en fleshed. It opens the possibilities of whether our trans ancestors' blood, bones, organs, teeth, and their complex organizations and reorganizations of their bodies therefore lead to a new, more human-oriented, affective archive. It is an affirmation of our pathways, organs and veins as a legitimate form of classification within the archive.

Comparing *The Fulcrum*'s textual records to the somatechnical definition of trans bodies underlines the relationship of the archive with bodies that are often excluded from dominant narratives, such as trans bodies or those existing outside of the societally prescribed versions of the gender binary. This similarity with how trans bodies are classified as less than in society helps spur ambient archival imaginations that sit outside of our traditional archival interpretations, such as the understanding of the body and archive as finite, separate materials. Both physically and affectively, this ambient archival invention underscores how trans bodies are pathologized both within and outside of archives, but also provide ways in which we can reimagine an archive centered on trans identity. Our often discarded trans experiences and the fears they engender are countered by an affective experience within, our folding in of our bodies and weaving them as closely as possible to the archive, which allows for an alternative to the spaces that seek to simultaneously police and erase us.

### Spatial and Temporal Imaginings in John Greyson's Photograph

As archives increasingly digitize ephemeral records, imagining ways in which we can apply archival invention to digital records is becoming increasingly relevant. Unlike my experience with a physical document at the University of Ottawa Archives, the following analysis stems from my experience with a prolific gay Canadian director's photograph in an article from *Capital Xtra!* that is housed at the ArQuives in Toronto. This ambient archival invention did not stem from my initial consultation of the object, but later in the research process, when I was accessing this record digitally in my home for secondary research and analysis. This photograph struck me, and my affective connection to this photograph spurred imaginings that push against spatial limitations and linear interpretations of temporality.

Unlike Cvetkovich's arbitrariness related to objects that are not inherently queer, Greyson's photograph is glaringly, unapologetically queer. Greyson is not only a director and creative, he is also a long-time supporter and arts worker for organizations that support independent filmmaking in Canada, such as Vtape and *Inside Out LGBT Film Festival*. Considered a canonical master of the new queer wave genre, he has won multiple awards and has made over 40 short and feature-length films. In December 1993, John Greyson's musical film *Zero Patience* (dir. John Greyson, 1993) was the title program of *Making Scenes*' fundraiser for the Interagency Coalition of AIDS and Development. *Capital Xtra!* covered this event, as it did many other programs from the festival, as the newspaper was a key marketing partner for *Making Scenes*. In November 1993, *Capital Xtra!* published an article by Winston Sin entitled "Greyson: Doin' the AIDS Mythology Rag," along with a photograph of Greyson.

*Making Scenes* demonstrated from very early on that it had fine-tuned programming capabilities, specifically through leveraging the festival's relationship with curators from *Inside Out* in Toronto, as well as relying on local Ottawa artists and arts managers. As such, *Making*

*Scenes* tailored its programming to up and coming trends, such as the new queer cinema. *Zero Patience* was within this emergent vein of filmmaking and propelled Greyson to cult status within the genre.

The photograph of Greyson that accompanied the article features a dark background and positions Greyson at shoulder length (see Figure 3). He is wearing a light leather jacket and a t-shirt. His head rests on his hand, and the light illuminates his lightly bearded, pale face. He has an almost expressionless look and his dark eyes stare fixedly, directly into the camera. There is something soft but also distinctly masculine or even subtly defiant about Greyson's expression. I find that Greyson's photograph is one that lingers on for longer, a recalcitrant image. He is not something that is left over, but something that lingers. My affective connection to this photograph spurred imaginings that push against spatial limitations and linear interpretations of temporality.

As Cvetkovich explains, "gay and lesbian archives assert the role of memory and affect in compensation for institutional neglect."<sup>121</sup> This compensation is a challenge to the notions of continuity, and creates a new module of conceptualizing spatial and temporal classification that circumvents notions of binary notions of gender and identity. Disrupting the archive's spatial and linear rigidities therefore allows for the possibility of reclaiming space and time, and provides an outlet through which to process distinctive traumas. Previously an impossibility, the contradictory notions of what is possible and impossible become one within this archival time and space.

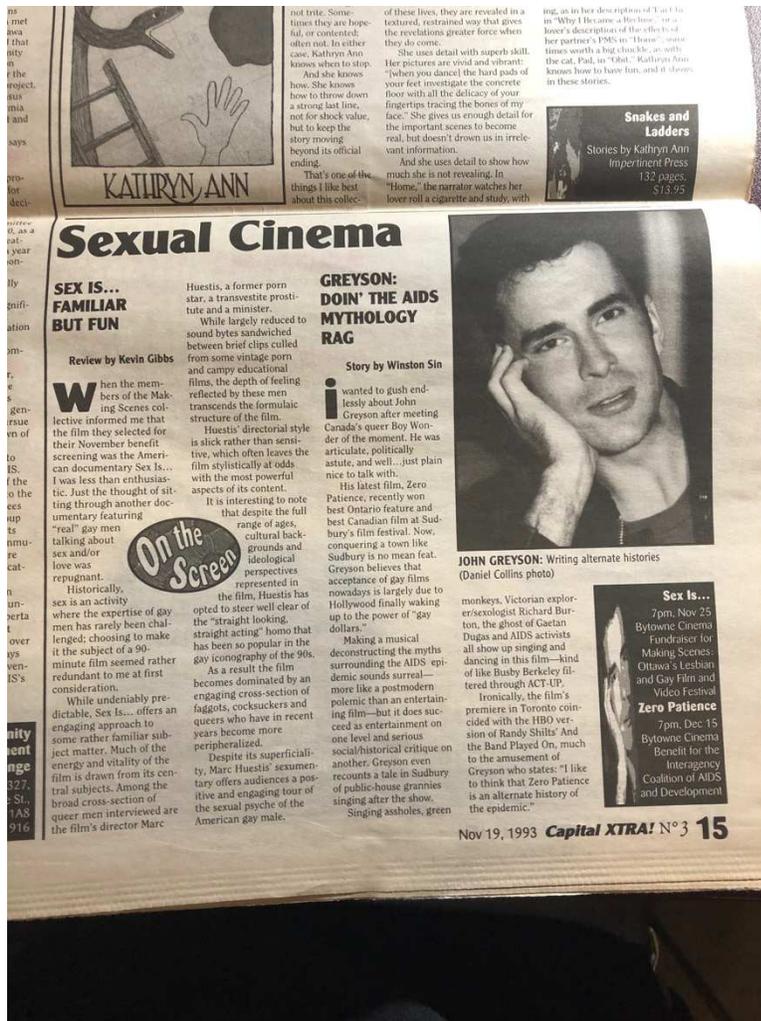


Figure 3. Greyson's photograph, *Capital Xtra!*, The ArQuives (Toronto).

### Greyson's Geosemiotics

First, my affective connection with the photograph explores the ways in which space deeply influences access to affect within archival research. Trans rhetoric scholar K. J. Rawson underlines two key factors that “significantly influence access to transgender material and access for ‘transgenders’: the archival environment, imagined broadly, and the language practices in and around archives.”<sup>122</sup> Rawson further explains that the physical, social, and intellectual connections we make with objects hinges on that accessibility. Therefore, the nature of our physical interactions with archival objects are heavy with meaning and are highly contextual. Rawson’s describes this creation of meaning through a physical space as “geosemiotics.”<sup>123</sup>

Institutional archival spaces can be exclusionary and this hampers the potential for affective connection with archival objects, creating barriers to access for transgender research. The subsequent analysis describes how accessibility within a space helped to supplant the inaccessibility of restrictive archival environments when establishing my affective connection with Greyson's photograph.

Accessing trans affect within Greyson's photograph was interrupted by intellectual barriers to access within the archive. In this sense, my affective connection with Greyson's photograph speaks to this notion of geosemiotics, as it allows for an expansion of what we consider archival space. Although I was able to physically handle *Capital Xtra!*'s newspapers throughout my research in the reading room at the ArQuives, my affective connection with Greyson's photograph was only possible through the geosemiotics of my own home.

More specifically, the space where I had already created meaning and safety, my home, was where I found to be just as productive, if not more so, than institutional spaces that seek to insulate or sanitize. Even though the ArQuives are a community archive, my experiences at university and government archives were similar to my experience with the ArQuives, with similar limitations to documents and similar bureaucratic hurdles to access documents. My journal entry from December 28, 2019, illustrates this point. It was three days after Christmas and I was back home from visiting my family in Toronto, sitting on my couch in Ottawa. I am cataloguing the hundreds of photos I took of *Capital Xtra!* from the ArQuives:

It's December 28. Three days after Christmas. I work a unionized job which treats working over the holidays as a strange space where we create worlds in between beings, persons, times. I see John Greyson's eyes staring back at me. His pixelated stare is

looking right into the camera, somewhat sad, but also, slight[ly] defiant. I feel sad I did not catch the nuances of his picture before.

In contrast to my experience with *The Fulcrum*, my experience with Greyson's photograph is a mediated experience, through my computer screen. I wished I could have been drawn into Greyson's pixilated, fixated stare at the ArQuives in Toronto, when I first encountered his photo, unmediated by a technological barrier. It was only within the confines of my own space, nestled within my own aesthetics and architectures of meaning, that I was truly able to connect with this piece of Ottawa's past. My home, in this moment, served itself as a type of archive, both physical and not, wherein I was able to make more sense of archival objects. There is less intellectual labour in my home where I am free to be and not need to handle outside noise or the pressure of justifying space as a trans subject. The length of time this archival object took to impact me and my ultimate response demonstrates how spaces can dictate how we create meaning and what can truly be deemed an accessible space for both critical and physical access to archival investigation and interpretation.

Greyson's and my queer connection transcends our individual identities and involves a deep connection which confuses notions of gender and sexual feeling, only achievable through an affectively rich, accessible space. In my home, as I stared back at Greyson through the screen, I felt as though we had found each other, although fleetingly. This moment spurs feelings of loss, of queer intergenerational connection, of grief and of euphoria. I knew that *Zero Patience*, although satirical and outrageously comical, stemmed from a catastrophic tragedy that deeply impacted (and continues to impact) LGBTQ people. His eyes in the photograph seemed to long for something (maybe those lost to the crisis?) but also carried a light touch of subversion. The

subtle hint of loss in his eyes translated to a feeling of intergenerational grief, where the lives lost to the crisis leads to an often ruptured connection with past generations, lost to HIV/AIDS.

However, there was not only grief in my connection with Greyson. It seemed as though Greyson's stare in his photograph, looking defiantly into the lens of the camera, was a sort of challenge to the terrible tragedy of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and served as a compliment to the defiant nature of his film. I feel a sense of pride and belonging. What struck me about the photograph was how direct it was, as if I was touching an important part of the past, that was left untouched until I turned the page to find his photograph.

Cvetkovich provides an explanation as to why affect is not generally considered archival. This explanation is present in what she defines as "the archive of feelings": "The archive of feelings is both material and immaterial, at once incorporating objects that might not ordinarily be considered archival and at the same time resisting documentation because sex and feelings are too personal or too ephemeral to leave records."<sup>124</sup> Cvetkovich's archive of feeling intersects with Rawson's geosemiotics, as the archive of feelings is not possible without creating a space that is accessible. Queer archival work must encompass affect as a means of survival, and as a means to connect with those from our past, with whom we can only form ephemeral connections. For this affective connection to happen, there must be a strong sense of accessibility, within which geosemiotics plays a crucial role.

### Greyson and Temporal Spectrality

Greyson's and my connection interrupts temporal linearity. There is something distinctly anti-future about this, as it disrupts the linear flow of progress so pervasive in traditional historical linearity, which often services capitalist ideas of progress. Damiens challenges our

perception of film festival history by noting that “far from providing any sort of happy ending or closure, it hopes to suspend the temptation of linear history and to take seriously these compromising yet ephemeral traces and ghosts.”<sup>125</sup> Therefore, instead of limiting our ephemeral connection, I lean into it to document these ephemeral traces and ghosts.

*Zero Patience* is a musical. It is an upbeat, at times outrageous, campy, and satirized version of the original myth of the beginning of the AIDS crisis. It does not aim for accuracy, but rather favours invention as a way to counter overly medical and mostly homophobic versions of the HIV/AIDS crisis. *Zero Patience* is an exercise in disrupting what has been possibly effaced. In the article accompanying Greyson’s photograph, Sin quotes Greyson as saying that “I like to think that *Zero Patience* is an alternate history of the epidemic.” Indeed, *Zero Patience* was a response to the mythology of the very first patient who brought HIV/AIDS to North America. Gaétan Dugas was a gay flight attendant from Montreal who was mischaracterized as having been the originator of the HIV crisis in North America. As such, he was infamously dubbed as “Patient Zero” of the HIV crisis. His reputation as the progenitor of HIV/AIDS has long since been debunked, however, the narrative created around him was particularly damaging for gay men in North America, often the targets of stigma and homophobia. This version of events and the subsequent authority it commands underscores how the exclusion of queers from their own narratives has often led to damaging assumptions. In *Zero Patience*, Greyson attempts to reclaim the HIV/AIDS narrative, laying bare his affective relationship with the HIV/AIDS crisis as a counternarrative. The film therefore asserts affect in compensation for the institutional neglect towards those suffering from the HIV/AIDS crisis and serves as a type of archive in and of itself. My affective connection with Greyson’s photograph disrupted traditional notion of temporality, which is typically conceptualized as linear.

This connection with attempting to rewrite history imposes questions regarding anti-history, which has a particularly salient attachment to being trans. As Rawson explains, “a significant amount of transgender people can be anti-history, which can be at odds with the archives’ task of preserving transgender material in contexts that uniformly uplift history. This is due to the fact that history can be incongruent with the identity that person lives in the present.”<sup>126</sup> This is also due to the assumption impressed upon the trans body that demands continuity, stating simply through the word “transition” that there is a type of transmittal exchange of gendered transition which only flows in one direction, with a defined beginning and end. Disrupting linearity in historical analysis therefore intercepts this idea, and allows for imaginings that sit outside of the prescribed linear analysis, freeing the trans body from traditional constructions of linear time.

Queer studies scholar Carla Freccero explains how this disruption may work to undo assumptions that accompany linear historical analysis:

The desire to un-write the retrospection of historical continuity [...] in its radical disruption of normative temporal continuities, both for what happens and for how we tell what happens, this kind of historical practice that is also a queering of the notion of “succession” aims to open up sites of possibility effaced, if not foreclosed, by (hetero)normative historicisms.<sup>127</sup>

Therefore, this interruption of history in its most classical sense provides alternative imaginings of time where the linear notions can be either damaging or do not properly account for a trans person’s present identity. Greyson interrupts history by rewriting the events of the inception of the crisis and reclaims them for himself and others who are often left out of the narratives created for them.

Similarly, the desire to (un)write and (re)write history through existing in a moment together with Greyson in our affective space that extends into a past, a future, and a present, conflating time, gender, and space. This demonstrates the ways in which documenting affective connection and interrupting the temporal allow for the imaginings of queer futures that exist outside of heteronormative temporalities. I imagine myself as deeply connected to Greyson, as we share an intimate moment through the screen. I am haunted by his fixed stare, and the impossibility that we may share a moment in time. Our connection, which also involves my deeply personal and complex feelings of connection with masculinity and gender, live together in this distinctive moment in time. Freccero goes on to explain why we may be haunted by spectres of the past:

Haunting, ghostly apparition, reminds us that the past and present are neither discrete nor sequential. The borderlines between then and now waves, wobbles and does not hold still. To assume the perspective of a ghost – or to include haunting in a conceptualization of history’s effects – foregrounds the imperative issues from the other in the labour of the historian. Popular representations, testifying widely distributed persistent populist acceptance of the ghostly as a domain of legitimacy, tell us that the ghost comes back because there is something unfinished.<sup>128</sup>

Greyson’s apparition, disruptive of normative assumptions of time, allows for a processing of intergenerational queer trauma transgressing gender, time, and space. As Freccero explains, his apparition suggests something unfinished. Greyson’s advocacy and persistent involvement in his community underlines the collective issue of survival and violence within gay and trans life. Similar to how the HIV/AIDS crisis created a rift in the reproduction of gay life, so too is there disruption in the trans community. Pervasive violence, particularly against trans women, and

most pronounced against trans women of colour, has created a generational rift in transgender identity. We have lost ancestors upon ancestors, as stigma and poverty push trans communities further to the margins.

Greyson's and my connection underlines how normative notions of linear time and space within the archive can be circumvented to create affective intergenerational connections within and outside of the archive.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated the ways in which my trans body and affect entered into porous conversation with both physical and digital objects throughout my work researching *Making Scenes*. Handling a physical document demonstrates how we can draw similarities between trans bodies and textual documents within the archive through the concept of somatechnics, and how the resulting similarities result in the physical and affective pathologization of trans people, and what alternatives we can imagine to these often harmful pathologies. Documenting my affective interaction with Greyson's photograph imagines an alternative to normative notions of linear time and space, which imagines queer intergenerational trauma and connection within the archive.

## Conclusion

Within the Canadian context, Ottawa and other regional cities are not often the focus of archival research. Most surprisingly, *Making Scenes* was a well-established, well-interconnected festival, but a number of issues at the end of its time led to its erasure within the annals of lesbian and gay life in Canada. The festival's distinctive phases demonstrate a pretty typical rise and subsequent collapse: it was founded as a small grassroots festival, slowly became commercial, and subsequently fell victim to funding cuts and logistical challenges, as well as intercommunity strife leading to its hasty collapse. This moment in its history is particularly important, as its quick demise is the very reason its archival presence is so minute. Instead of viewing this as a hindrance, I instead use it as an opportunity to address archival theory from a queer and trans lens that accounts for its losses. The ephemeral presence of *Making Scenes* both within and outside of the archive entails a type of contradiction: at once this lack spurs an ability to ephemerally reactivate objects, but is also a considerable loss of historical documentation.

Undeniably, *Making Scenes* was a staple of lesbian and gay life in Ottawa throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. One of the most contradictory and surprising parts of this work was the fact that even though I was actually able to piece the history of the festival together quite comprehensively, the entire archival process remained underscored by a sense of loss. I believe this is mostly related to the fact that *Making Scenes'* current presence in Ottawa is erased. This is why the second half of this work takes a turn to address this sense of loss, and attempt to reconcile this sense of loss within queer and trans archival research.

In this work, instead of shying away from often undocumented ephemeral connections in the archive, I harnessed this sense of loss and lacking, and provided a set of ephemeral

reactivations and ambient archival inventions which help to reconcile the sense of loss spurred by *Making Scenes* complex archival presence.

Queer and trans archival work can be at once contradictory and extremely fruitful. Despite being able to uncover the history of the organization quite extensively and in detail throughout this project, the festival's presence in the archive is still muted compared to similar organizations. I am especially grateful for the publishers and contributors of *Capital Xtra!* who tirelessly provided a service to the lesbian and gay community throughout its many years of operation. I am also so grateful to my interview participants who took the time to speak with me and share their experiences, sometimes painful, sometimes joyous, sometimes contentious, of the festival. However, this research was underlined by a sense of loss that informed my analysis. I hope this type of work signals to other researchers in Canada that despite these regional histories being hidden or difficult to track within the archives, it is at once fruitful and crucial to investigate and document our often forgotten histories that exist outside of the metropolitan focuses of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.

## End Notes

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## Appendix 1: Research Consent Form

### Name and Contact Information of Researchers:

*Scott Smart MA, Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture: Film Studies*

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Email: ScottSmart@cmail.carleton.ca

Supervisor: Professor Laura Horak, Associate Professor, School for Studies in Art and Culture: Film Studies, Carleton University, LauraHorak@cunet.carleton.ca

### Project Title

*Being Seen Making Scenes: An Archival Exploration of Ottawa's First Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival*

### Project Sponsor and Funder

This study is not funded.

### Carleton University Project Clearance

Clearance #: (110860)

Date of Clearance: June 24, 2019

### Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research project because you are a previous staff member, volunteer, attendee or filmmaker whose work was featured at the *Making Scenes Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival*. The information in this form is intended to help you understand what we are asking of you so that you can decide whether you agree to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and a decision not to participate will not be used against you in any way. As you read this form, and decide whether to participate, please ask any questions you might have, take whatever time you need, and consult with others as you wish.

### What is the purpose of the study?

This project seeks to uncover the history of the *Making Scenes Lesbian and Gay Film and Video festival*, through archival work and the collection of interviews. This research will attempt to reconstruct a timeline of the festival, as well as try to understand the personal and professional relationships that shaped the organization. The primary research questions are: what was the history of this organization? What was the impact of shifting economic and political climates on Making Scenes? What role did collective identity debates have in the creation and running of the organization?

### What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in the study, we will ask you to:

- *Participate in an interview that lasts about an hour.*
- *Be audio recorded throughout the interview. However, you may request to stop at any time.*

- *The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon location/space.*
- *To be identified by name in the final project, as well as in the optional donation of your interview to the Arquivos.*
- *Donate the audio recording of your interview to the Arquivos (optional).*
- *Consider donating materials related to Making Scenes to the Arquivos (optional).*
- *You can refuse to answer any question.*

### Risks and Inconveniences

Members of the LGBTQ community will not be exposed to any more risk through participating in these oral testimonies than they would experience in their everyday lives. You will be identified by name in the final project, as well as in the optional donation of your interview to the Arquivos. With your explicit consent, your interview will be ultimately donated to the Arquivos. You can:

- Refuse to answer any question, or stop the interview and/or recording at any time.
- Refuse to have your testimony donated to the Arquivos, but still participate in this project.
- Request that your name and information, as well as any data associated with your participation, be removed from the study at any time before October 31, 2019.

### Possible Benefits

*Making Scenes* was an essential part of the fabric of the gay cultural scene in Ottawa throughout its existence. Yet, there is no academic research on the subject. Although you may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study, your participation will allow researchers to better understand an under-examined part of Ottawa gay history.

### Compensation/Incentives

You will not be paid or compensated for your participation in this study.

### No Waiver of Your Rights

By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

### Withdrawing From The Study

If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will be discarded. After the study, you may request that your data be removed from the study and deleted by notice given to the Principal Investigator (named above) before October 31, 2019.

### Confidentiality

Research records may be accessed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board in order to ensure continuing ethics compliance. The results of this study may be published or presented at academic conferences or meetings. The audio recordings will be recorder on the researcher's

phone, which is password protected, and then transferred to an encrypted file on their computer. The researcher will be the sole transcriber of the interviews conducted. All data (including interviews transcripts and notes) will be stored and protected by the researcher, in a password protected folder in their computer, which will be locked in their home.

Data Retention

After the study is completed, your data will be donated to the Arquivos, Canada’s largest LGBTQ+ archives. With your consent, your audio recording will identify you by name as well as your role in the organization, both throughout this research project and the subsequent optional donation of your interview to the Arquivos. The mandate of the Arquivos is to aid in the recovery and preservation of LGBTQ+ histories by acquiring, preserving, organizing, and giving public access to information and materials in any medium, by and about LGBTQ2+ people, primarily produced in or concerning Canada. The Arquivos also maintains a research library, international research files, and an international collection of LGBTQ2+ periodicals. Most of the Arquivos’ materials are available for public consultation, but some of their collections have restrictions based on individual donor requests.

New information during the study

In the event that any changes could affect your decision to continue participating in this study, you will be promptly informed.

Ethics review

This project was reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board A. If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact Dr. Bernadette Campbell, Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 2517 or by email at [ethics@carleton.ca](mailto:ethics@carleton.ca)).

Statement of consent – print and sign name

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to be audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to have the transcript of the interview and any other shared material donated to the Arquivos upon completion of the study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>I agree to be contacted for follow up research</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Research team member who interacted with the subject**

I have explained the study to the participant and answered any and all of their questions. The participant appeared to understand and agree. I provided a copy of the consent form to the participant for their reference.

---

Signature of researcher

---

Date

## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Primary Investigator:

Scott Smart

MA student in Film Studies, Carleton University

[ScottSmart@cmail.carleton.ca](mailto:ScottSmart@cmail.carleton.ca)

### Background Questions

-What is your name and current profession? How do you identify in terms of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity? How old are you?

-When were you involved in *Making Scenes*, in what capacity? For how long?

-What were your titles when you worked/volunteered for the festival?

### Your festival experience

-Describe the organization's structure during your time there

-Who else worked for the festival while you were there?

-Describe the office environment and your daily tasks.

-What was your experience like at *Making Scenes*?

-What was the goal of *Making Scenes*?

-What were *Making Scenes*' most important accomplishments? What were the things about the organization that most excited you? What was your favourite part of working for the festival?

-What was the most impactful event that happened throughout your time at *Making Scenes*?

-Did you keep anything (program guides, recordings, newspaper clips) related to the festival? Do you know of anyone else who may have kept these items?

-Who took over from you? What did that hand off look like?

-Is there something you would have done differently?

### The festival's role in the community

-What distinguished *Making Scenes* from other festivals at the time?

-What was the community's response to the festival? What was the importance of this festival to the queer community in Ottawa?

-What kinds of debates would go on inside the festival to negotiate the many needs of the LGBTQ community? In your view, what efforts were made to incorporate the many diverse members of the community?

-What type of programming would the festival participate in? Was there a focus on Canadian features and shorts, or a more international, commercial focus?

-How does *Making Scenes* compare with Inside Out's Ottawa festival? Do you believe it is important for a festival to be run by people inside the community? Why?

### Reflection questions

-What did/does working (or volunteering) for a queer organization mean to you?

-Why do you think the festival ended? Is there anything that could have prevented this?

-There is no academic research and very little critical writing on *Making Scenes*. Why do you think this festival has been forgotten within the history of Canadian Film Festivals?

-Is there anyone else I should talk to about *Making Scenes*?

-How did your time at *Making Scenes* inform your art practice, if at all?