

TDR

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Queer Nightlife
A Collection of Moves, Sounds, and Other Sensations

Brown University *TDR* Consortium Issue
edited by madison moore
with Rebecca Schneider and Beckett Warzer

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TDR

TDR is scholarly, accessible, and dynamic. TDR is inclusive and interdisciplinary. Each article is tightly focused—but taken as a whole TDR is global. With its broad range of topics, TDR is at the cutting edge of performance studies. Its writers and editors support progressive political and social movements, art and ideas. Written by and for scholars and artists—and their students—TDR is where leaders and future leaders in the field of performance studies go for performance texts, performative writing, editorials, reviews, interviews, and research articles about the performing arts, performance in everyday life, popular entertainments, sports, business, and politics—the broad spectrum of performance.

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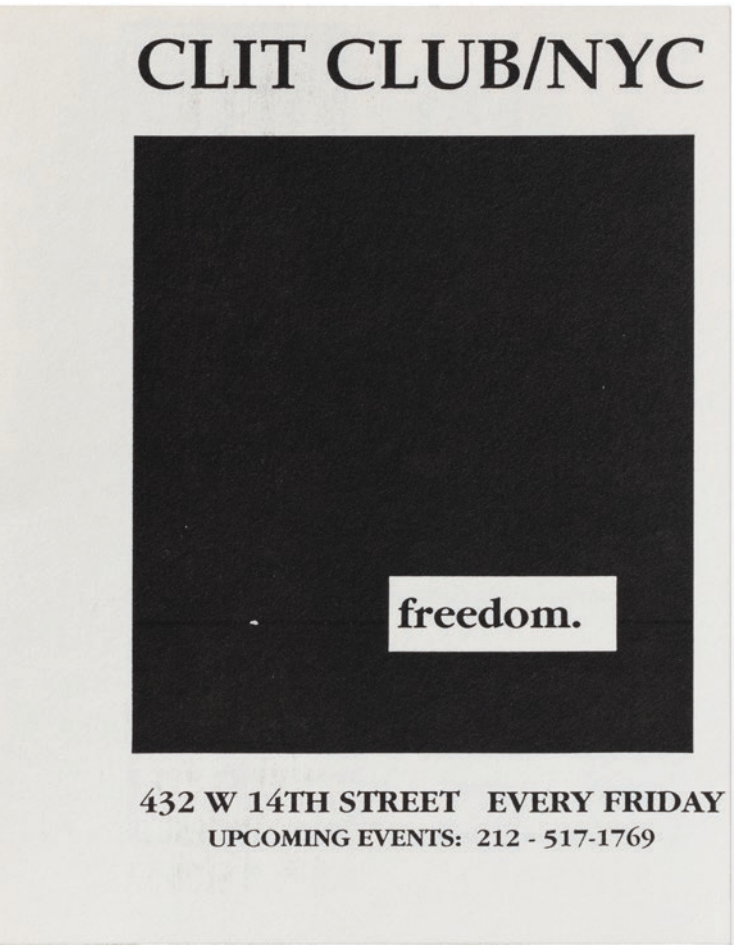
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Above: *Clit Club, original flyer, 1990. See "Erotic City: Slipping into Clit Club's Lesbian Surround" by Lauren Bakst. (Courtesy of Climax Books)*

Front Cover: Gimme A Hand 001 *(2024) from the Gimme A Reason party at Poor Boys in New Orleans. (Photo by Bouffant Bouffant)*

Back Cover: Filament *by Ash Fure. Live at David Geffen Hall, 21 September 2018. See "The Social Life of Sound: Bodily Listening from Bayreuth to Berghain" by Ash Fure. (Photo by Chris Lee; courtesy of New York Philharmonic)*

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Introduction

Queer Nightlife and Other Analog Intimacies 5

madison moore

Queer nightlife is all the rage. Over the past several years there has been a surge of creative practice, performance, music, media, contemporary art, and scholarship focused on the past, present, and future of queer dancefloors. This *TDR* Consortium issue brings together an intergenerational group of queer artists and scholars who are thinking about the rhythms, textures, and analog intimacies of queer nightlife.

From the Floor

Dossier: From the Floor 20

Juana María Rodríguez, McKenzie Wark, Rory Fewer, Alice Zhao, Eddy Francisco Alvarez Jr., Kristy Li Puma, Nick Bazzano, Tavia Nyong'o, Jennifer DeVere Brody, Ariel Osterweis, Julian Kevon Kamilah Glover, PachaQueer

The 12 short provocations "From the Floor" explore the analog intimacies, memories, textures, practices, vibrancies, and contingencies of the dancefloor.

Articles

Erotic City: Slipping into Clit Club's Lesbian Surround 70

Lauren Bakst

Clit Club (1990–2002) was a lesbian party in New York City where, according to cofounder Julie Tolentino, "every single place in the club was for sex." From a 1991 complaint letter found in NYC's municipal archives to a 2019 performance-installation by Tolentino involving a one-to-one encounter in a dark mineral pool, Clit Club's ephemera and transmissions produce lesbian surrounds—provisional envelopments of the social that are subtended by dyke sex and erotics.

Lip-Sync for Your Life: The Street Queen and Her Record Act 86

eva pensis

Performance artist Daphne (formerly known as Imp Queen) opened her 2018 festival performance with a mic drop: "There are two historical professions available to trans women: drag and sex work." The history she cites concerns the radical unemployability that certain trans women and trans feminine people face—a common discriminatory tactic deployed by the hostile "straight" (and presumably cisgender) world. The history of the founding mothers of contemporary drag (the stage queen and the street queen) reveals lip-syncing and diva worship as trans femme embodied aesthetic practices central to drag's contested histories.

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Activist Intimacies: Touch as Mutual Aid During the Early AIDS Crisis 106

Amber Hickey

The New York Healing Circle (NYHC) practiced touch as a form of mutual aid during the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The NYHC's work challenged fear of the ill body while asserting a view toward flourishing despite illness. Participants asserted a practice of truly seeing each other—a practice of "activist intimacies" centered in care and acceptance (but not passivity) rather than in fixing, hiding, or avoiding.

Terms and Conditions: Defamiliarizing Queer Nightlife in the Dissociated Fog 120

Benjamin Haber and Daniel J. Sander

Contemporary queer nightlife is shaped as much by regulatory discourse as by the unpredictable, dissociative, and even inhuman pleasures that defy normative frameworks of consent, exposure, and identity. Tracing the genealogy of "safer space" policies alongside the shifting cultural resonance of ecstasy and ketamine illuminates how queerness, risk, and digital visibility intersect in nightlife spaces.

The Social Life of Sound: Bodily Listening from Bayreuth to Berghain 131

Ash Fure

Rituals of listening articulate social hypotheses through the internal dynamics of the musics they feature and the relational intricacies of the encounter itself. At Berghain, extreme duration, audience mobility, and cathedral acoustics mobilize a profoundly physicalized experience of sound. This stands in contrast to the obedience and hierarchy grafted into Western classical music culture. Between these extremes lies a fertile terrain that draws the full-bodied visceral listening of the club far afield from dancefloor formulas.

Making Shit Happen: Queer Utility in Nightlife. 144

Joe Parslow and Phoebe Patey-Ferguson

Managing queer venues requires plunging into flows of effluence removal and taking care of drinks, patrons, money, performers, and queer effervescence. A DIY queer nightlife methodology embraces gossip, embodied knowledge, and mess, examining shocks, blocks, and leaks as both material and metaphorical dynamics to trace how use and misuse intertwine in these spaces.

Conversations

Playing to Lose: A Conversation with Avgi Saketopoulou and Lucie Fielding. 163

Beckett Warzer

Ranging across queer sexual politics, clinical psychoanalysis, and political solidarity, this conversation investigates the opportunities and vulnerabilities that arise related to risk. What possibilities open when safety is not the goal, but solidarity? An ethical relationship of responsibility rooted in "mutual entanglement" and vulnerability can accommodate the surprising, enigmatic, and unruly nature of sexuality, in ways that an affirmative consent model cannot.

"If I'm going to go to a club, I've got to be with the queers": An Interview with Honcho 174

madison moore

Honcho (George d'Adhemar, Aaron Clark, Michael Moraine, and Clark Price), a staple of the queer dance music underground, highlights the centrality of collaboration and connection to queer nightlife. For Honcho, queer nightlife is not simply flashing lights and the faint smell

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of poppers, but an opportunity to engage queer history. The most important aspect of queer nightlife, what keeps people coming back for more, might not be the spectacle and dancing bodies, but the many kinds of long lasting, queer intimacies that can unfold on, through, and beyond the dancefloor.

Concerning Books

Lazy, Drowsy, Dreamy: Practices of Rest in Political Performance 185

Danielle Drees

Practices of rest—such as napping, dreaming, or lazing about—can seem like counterintuitive subject matter for political performance. A recent cluster of books, however, carves out new space for performance scholarship in studies of aesthetic styles and content centered around rest. The authors examine artistic practices of rest to make interventions in our ongoing modes of humanist study and aesthetic critique.



Imp Kid performing at Monster Ball 3 at the Clapham Grand, 18 September 2018. See "Lip-Sync for Your Life: The Street Queen and Her Record Act" by eva pensis. (Screenshot by TDR*)*

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