Disorienting Love
Queer Time and Space in Contemporary Artistic Practices

Tahir Onur Çimen
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Abstract

This thesis aims to examine key elements of disorientation and queer temporality which will provide tools to understand queerness of selected contemporary artistic practices. It is concerned with the following questions: What constitutes the queerness of an artistic practice? How do contemporary queer artistic practices foreground the perspectives of queerness in their forms? What kind of disruptions they are causing in the conventional setting of artistic displays from a curatorial standpoint? Disorientations and queer temporalities, as queering the artwork, mean challenging dominant ideologies of the art object by repositioning them particularly in respect of heteronormative structures of time and space. For such an examination, Andrew Haigh’s film Weekend, GaniMeth’s writings, and Sharon Hayes’ Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love? are read along with Sara Ahmed’s concept of disorientation and Jack Halberstam’s queer temporality. In doing so, the study explores the potential of artistic practices that allows to experience contemporary queerness. The method is to find queer deviations from existing structures by using the aforementioned concepts for the examination of the artworks, and in turn, explaining how the artistic practices broaden the same concepts by presenting affective experiences. By applying specific concepts from contemporary queer theory to analysis of the artistic practices, a more nuanced understanding of contemporary queerness is being discussed.

Keywords
queer art, queer curating, Sharon Hayes, Andrew Haigh, GaniMeth, disorientations, queer temporality.
# Contents

**Introduction** ................................................................................................................................. 1  
An Orientation Towards A Thesis ................................................................. 1  
Theory and Terminology: Concepts that Orientate and Disorientate .......... 2  
  Queer ................................................................................................................................. 4  
  Disorientation .................................................................................................................... 5  
  Queer Temporality .......................................................................................................... 7  
  Queer Space ..................................................................................................................... 9  
Aims and Research Questions: Aiming for Disorientations ....................... 10  
Material ............................................................................................................................ 11  
Method: A Method for Disorientations ................................................................. 13  
Delimitations .................................................................................................................... 15  
Previous Research ......................................................................................................... 16  
Chapter Outline ............................................................................................................. 18  

**Chapter 1: Loosing a Sense of Time - In the Radical Temporality of Queer Love** ............................................. 19  
  Repetition of Orientation, Irregularity of Disorientation ....................... 21  
    Friday ............................................................................................................................... 21  
    Saturday ......................................................................................................................... 24  
    Sunday ............................................................................................................................ 27  
  Glen’s Meta-Artwork .................................................................................................... 30  

**Chapter 2: Protesting in the Political Shadows of Love - Interventions to Public and Private** ................................ 36  
  Publicising a Love Affair ............................................................................................... 39  
  Politicising a Publicised Love Affair ........................................................................... 44  

**Chapter 3: Walking on the Borderlines - Curating Queerness as Forms of Presence** ..................................................... 51  
  Mutually Disorientating ................................................................................................. 52  
  Transcending the Lines ................................................................................................. 58  

**Conclusion** ................................................................................................................................. 64  
**Bibliography** ............................................................................................................................ 68  
**List of Images** .......................................................................................................................... 72
Introduction

An Orientation Towards A Thesis

This thesis examines the concepts of queer in contemporary art and curatorial practice. The study applies notions of orientation in order to understand how queer theory and contemporary art can be understood in relation to each other. Queer, art, and orientations are the three main elements of this analysis. Thinking in terms of orientations has been a method for me since early on; whether in philosophical or in sexual terms. Orientation for this thesis refers to how one navigates in the world; thus it refers to established structures of time and space. However, orientations that this thesis focuses on are also disorientations, meaning deviations of those who cannot regulate themselves with the aforementioned structures. In the sense that disorientations in use, both art and queer are guiding for this study. Although philosophical approaches to the idea of orientation deal primarily with objects and their usage, as well as how we are orientated amongst them, the Western philosophical tradition, especially up until the late 20th century, has mostly assumed that these objects are lifeless and merely material for philosophical reflections, rather than seeing them as beings affecting us. This approach eradicates the possibility of seeing orientation as open to transformations —the ability of becoming other than what it already is through a process of disorientation. On the other hand, when orientation is discussed in terms of sexual orientation, it is approached as subject to change rather than being considered as being stable. Oscillating between these, orientations on one hand and disorientation on the other, my impression of the objects of sexual orientation and of my orientation in the world in general presents a dichotomy: the former being completely independent of me and alive, the latter being lifeless and passive/inactive.

This dichotomy has undergone a process of radical change due to my encounter with art; these issues and thoughts have become more intense and complex. Artistic objects and

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1 Heidegger’s analysis of objects and our orientation towards them in Being and Time considers objects as gaining meaning through intentionality. Thus, the relation between Being and object only is not stable, and only meaningful with orientations of the objects which make the meaning of object possible to change with different intentionality as one approaches to an object. For more, look at; Martin Heidegger, Being and Time. John MacQuarrie and E. Robinson, trans. (New York: Blackwell, 2010).
practices appear to be able to be real objects or processes in case of artistic practices such as performance or theatre, yet all became subjects of my memories once they are performed and the stage was empty. According to Husserl, we need to examine experience in order to understand the question of how we can have knowledge. Experience, in phenomenology can be analyses in terms of perception, thought, memory and imagination. However, the affective sides of the experience has been left aside until queer theory starts to question phenomenology’s orientation itself. Every artwork come within and go out of my reach with a certain display; they keep changing me when I think of them and in turn I am changing the memory and the time and space they have in my life. With this experience, I have come to imagine both the sexual and worldly objects with a more artistic perspective, or this became a strategy for me to overcome the dichotomy of alive and lifeless and to make life a little more playful. Or it might simply be how I have come to realise the playfulness of life.

This thesis strives to follow the footsteps of that playful attitude. Upon encountering one another, all these artworks, queer theories and philosophy have led to a certain disorientation of each other for me. When I encounter art, the first comment of philosophy is that it is not the truth; moreover, it is the thing that is the farthest way from the truth. When I encounter orientation I completely find myself disoriented since orientation is only a matter of concern for those who fall outside of the structures that are already presented as a certain, universal and normative order of the world and life we are living in.

Theory and Terminology: Concepts that Orientate and Disorientate

As a study of disorientation, this thesis begins with discussions on theory and concepts instead of the aims, since the terminology informs the formulation of aims and questions. The ideas of orientation and how to play with them in the context of this thesis heavily relies upon the cancellation of the borders of the concept of orientation in the strict sense that is proposed

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2 My reference here is the Western philosophical tradition what is considered as starting with Plato. His ideas about art being mimesis, meaning copying the world of objects, which is a mimesis itself of world of ideas, underline art being far away truth and thus posit it as undesirable in an ideal system in The Republic. Much of the philosophical tradition during Antique and Middle Ages has continued with this understanding of art as being secondary to any form of knowledge.

3 This line of thought about orientation has been central to the theories of Foucault, Weeks and Ahmed, whose works will be central to this study.
by traditional phenomenology. According to phenomenologists, such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, orientation of the world regulates our surroundings in a way that one feels closer to certain objects and not to the others. Husserl gives the famous example of a table, that is a close object for a philosopher, simply because a philosopher’s job is to read books, write articles, prepare lecture notes for the students which all are associated as actions and tasks that are performed on a table. Later, Heidegger builds on Husserl’s work to develop the idea that meanings of objects are derived from their everyday use; for example the meaning of a table is to study or work in relation to one’s job, since the use of table is constructed as a space to work or to study. Heidegger’s example of the hammer gives a clear idea on how one is orientated with objects as well as how objects are orientated through time. The usage of a hammer is to put up a nail, for example, so a hammer is an object close to the handyman or a repairman rather than a student or a philosopher.

It is evident that both Husserl’s and Heidegger’s ideas on how orientation becomes what it is and how it functions to regulate daily life are based on an analysis of practical life. However, this kind of analysis only leads to certain theoretical frameworks for them, which does not gain a new practicality in terms of the possibility of transformation that could change the trajectory of life. The orientation of the objects are considered as rather static, in a similar fashion to compulsory heterosexuality’s regulation of sexual practices. Thus, in other words, a study of orientation that carries the potential to question why orientation has structured in the way that they are rather than others, has not been carried further. The practice that can be defined of as queering phenomenology, I assert, attempts to generate a force in this sense as an attempt to un-straighten the lines that are drawn by regulatory heterosexuality and lead us to desire lines of others. In return, we might come across with an emergence of a shift at our focus on disorientations rather than orientations. Therefore, with such a shift of focus from orientations to disorientations, a queer approach to phenomenology first thinks of orientations to reveal heterosexual structures, how we navigate and then opens up the possibilities of disrupting them.

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5 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 113.
Queer

The motivation of this thesis is to expand the discourse to explore how to sexualise the concept of orientation as well as how this sexualisation of orientation is practiced. For Sara Ahmed, as she develops the notions of sexual orientation that is partially inspired by phenomenological tradition, orientation is used in relation to sexual orientations that are not heterosexual, since this sort of labelling of orientation only becomes possible with the detection of orientations that is considered not normative.\(^6\) Ahmed states —by borrowing the definition from Anna Jagose— that the presumption of normativity on heterosexual practices is what attributes an orientation to others —“others meaning all kinds of nonstraight and nonnormative sexual practices.”\(^7\)

Queer, in these terms, is which is deemed by the dominant structures to be odd and to fall outside the borders of what is accepted and normative. This falling outside the borders implies a process of being subjected to rather than making a deliberate and active choice. The question then becomes that of how queerness deals with this marginalisation. Regarding this subjection, queerness is relegated to be something that is “intolerable” in the sense that it challenges what is considered to be the normal, the natural or the common, or in Michael Warner’s formulation as “characterized by a determined resistance to regimes of the normal”.\(^8\)

I use the term “queer” not as an umbrella term for the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual, intersex, asexual individuals and many sexual orientation forms although this use of the term is frequent among individuals that identify themselves with any of these orientations. The discussions around heteronormativity has led to other ones on what homonormativity means and how it operates in the last two decades; a homosexual orientation obviously does not require a life that is politicised by queer politics just as a heterosexual individual can live a life very much outside of straight normativity.\(^9\) Therefore, the application

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\(^9\) Homonormativity has been discussed in relation to different political concepts such as exclusion of transgenderism by Susan Stryker, heterosexual culture by Lisa Duggan and neoliberalism by Penny Griffin to name a few.
of the term queer in this thesis refers to that which deviates from the orientation, that does not strive to be justified as a counter-orientation or requires to be considered as an orientation per se. As a result of this definition, a second question arises, whether there are degrees of queerness, i.e. if one social or artistic practice is more queer than the other, or perhaps that there are different moments of queerness. The idea of degrees of queerness is problematic in a number of ways: firstly, because it implies an idea of progress since degrees of something refers to a measurement and initiates that there is the most queer of all and this measurement itself goes against the core element of queer in terms of accommodating that which falls outside the normal and normative. Secondly, it also is problematic because it goes against the queer temporality outlined by Jack Halberstam, as it suggests a timeline that should carry us to the most queer moment of all whereas, temporalities in this thesis considers time structures of heteronormativity as imposing compulsory heterosexuality and eradicating possibilities of queer moments.10

**Disorientation**

An important analysis of the deviations I am talking about is elaborated on by Sara Ahmed through the the concept of desire lines. She borrows the term from landscape architecture, where it is used to name the paths created by individuals or certain groups of people as shortcuts for the official roads, or alternative routes to certain places. Desire lines occur most frequently in the places that are under cover —such as among the bushes— or in the places that are not densely populated. This can be thought in relation to being out and closeted.11 Whereas the presence of queerness individually has been in the picture throughout the history as manifestations of sexual orientations that are not heterosexuality, it often had to be closeted. This necessity to hide or use paths that are not in sight can however lead us to find that they are used by others that we might feel close to. Thus, the potentiality of being closeted and trying to come out is the potentiality of discovering what is hidden by others, who is in search of desire lines and walks through those paths. Finding those footsteps in the desire lines demonstrates that disorientation is not experienced only in solitude, but might be a shared experience with others, in different times and spaces. It could also be thought of in

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11 Being closeted refers to hide sexual orientations that falls outside heterosexuality, while coming out means the manifestation of such orientations.
the sense that Heidegger’s ideas on art and artwork presented in his On the Origin of the Work of Art, which in the simplest sense claims that an artwork is one that opens up new worlds.  

Hence, according to this line of thinking that I derive from Ahmed, the deviations that lead to these desire lines are the paths that open up queer worlds. With a similar way of thinking, a queer artistic practice must be the one that opens up queer worlds to those who deviate, and that is only possible through the disorientation that sails from the heterosexual world towards queer paths. The worlds that become possible to find with queer deviations offer a differentiation from the artworks that fall inside heteronormative structures since those deviations open up to the new affects, new experiences and new imaginations.

What I understand as orientation in the traditional phenomenological sense is something that is given as structures that organises the world and the repetition of the habits that constructs those structures —not only by those who believe in those structures but also by everyone since it is a rather difficult task to alter those habits. The structures in question and the habitual repetition of them are not really able to regulate all life as suggested by Judith Butler in her famous analysis of performativity. Being structures, they have certain limitations, they cannot bend, so to speak, in a way that they could adjust themselves for this or that particular situation, whereas one’s orientation is always contingent depending on a certain position and carry the potential to change. Structures that queerness position themselves against are disoriented with the new ways that queer practices bring into light, by performing different sorts of deeds that become normalised through time. Taking one step further in order to explain the more radical potentiality that queer offers in her book Queer Phenomenology, as an attempt to disorientate phenomenology with queer orientations, Ahmed writes:

Orientations shape not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitation, as well as "who" or "what" we direct our energy and attention toward. A queer phenomenology, perhaps, might start by redirecting our attention toward different objects, those

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that are “less proximate” or those that deviate or are deviant. And yet, I would not say that a queer phenomenology would simply be a matter of generating queer objects. A queer phenomenology might turn to phenomenology by asking not only about the concept of orientation in phenomenology, but also about the orientation of phenomenology.\textsuperscript{15}

In those moments of change in our direction of attention, one experiences disorientation as a result of the kind of turns that the phenomenology itself could take. Imagine you have a new lover, and you start spending a lot of time in their house, spending most of the nights there. After a while, in the absence of that place you might find falling into sleep rather difficult. Or think of the time spent in an unexpected encounter with a lover, how the sense of time changes radically as time passes by or the changes in the feeling about what the present and future might hold. The sort of disorientation here is more of one that is caused by an affect and how that affect reconfigures one’s life. The same difficulty falling asleep can also emerge from changing location, like the discomfort of a hotel room one can experience during a travel. These two examples differ from each other in a similar way as the difference between traditional phenomenology and what queer theory is trying to do with it. Does this and that sort of disorientation occurs from a habit of daily life, or does it arise with an affective encounter - or the absence of an affective encounter that takes up a certain time and place in one’s life?

**Queer Temporality**

Since our experiences are shaped by time and space, queerness can be located in such zones of affection, too. An analysis of time and space that is in a mutual and transformative relationship with queerness might even help to sort out how to experience queerly, or what is different in queer experiences. Jack Halberstam, in his *In A Queer Time and Place*, says he is making strong assertions with naming his book with such term. For him, queer time poses an escape from the heterosexual paradigm; it relies on the cancellation of certain elements that structure the normative life of compulsory heterosexuality.\textsuperscript{16} Birth, marriage, reproduction, death has been culturally charged with meanings and connotations that maintains the dominant narratives of the heterosexual, normative system of life-cycle. What is offered with

\textsuperscript{15} Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 3.  
\textsuperscript{16} Jack Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place*, 4.
queer time is to diminish the permanency that such a structure offers. In the system that is in question, what emerges as the problem is a progress through continuation of the elements that builds up the very system; thus every element that it highlights serves to preserve the longevity and persistence of it. Birth makes possible the prolongation of the system and marriage and reproduction are heritage that ensures the repetition of the structure the next generations for heterosexual system to prevail. Other than the elements mentioned, this cycle is reinforced by the dominant patriarchal, heteronormative cultural power structures. And this is the frame that queerness asserts itself against and disorientates from. Yet, lives that are experienced through lenses of queerness, with respect to an ongoing threat to this system, disrupts compulsory heterosexuality’s orientation. Instead of longevity that connects past to future as a continuation, it offers a presence that rather underlines the lives which are experienced in and as a constant reference to temporality. This kind of temporality is a disorientation from the conventional ways of living as it questions and aspires to leave the necessities that are presented by compulsory heterosexuality both as prerequisites and conditions of a life circle with the four elements as mentioned earlier. So the problem becomes what this sort of temporality as a queer reclaiming of life can be reimagined as.

One way to answer this question lies perhaps in trying to open up what connects the past to the future as considered alongside the principle of longevity, namely the present and to develop an area of experience with the in-betweenness that is a neither/nor understanding. In other words, queering time is to devalue the constructed importance that are attained to past and future and to offer alternatives of living as a ‘present’. For this, Eve Kosofky Sedgwick’s use of the term queer temporality comes forward as an alternative way of imagining queer practices concerning time. Sedgwick’s definition in *Tendencies* is “a specifically queer temporality that is at once indefinite and virtual but also forceful, resilient, and undeniable”. With such a formulation of time, she highlights the importance of present, that is not simply a bridge between past and future but rather in its “persistent” mode, one that deviates to different time zones that is divided into parts; such as past as left behind or future that is yet to come. In disintegration of the future as in Halberstam’s thought, I establish the meaning of the present from Sedgwick, using its forcefulness as a derive that organises queer experience in the sense that it finds its base and strength from this force. While Halberstam does not really

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focus on a replacement of future and Sedgwick does not elaborate on the loss of future; their common point is how queerness reveals itself as a new organisation in the present. Therefore, their terms help me elaborate on a queer temporality that accounts for what is lost and what is gained in the absence of a future.

Queer Space
The meaning of ‘present’ could also be considered through its other meaning, in reference to its implications of being somewhere that points out the question of queer space. Halberstam goes on to define queer space as spaces that are in use by the queer counterpublics in their production to produce new meanings of spaces. In that sense, my use of the term will be sites that are not necessarily claimed by LGBTI+ individuals, or at least, will not be limited by it. Queer spaces, in this thesis, also refers to the temporary queer use of the spaces that are considered to be coded by heterosexual structures, such as public spaces that are used for queer protests or cruising. In this way, the term of queer space is in line with queer time and temporality that are brought to the horizon by it. It also disorientates the idea of a permanence in spatial terms; a queer space does not have to strive for a longevity; it might be in use for a short amount of time, and then might not leave a trace behind about its queer uses. Thus, Halberstam’s use of place-making practices refers to those collective or individual actions that takes over a space, subvert it and rip it off from the heterosexual connotations that are attributed to it and turn it into a space for deviant ways of living in a queer sense —parallel to Ahmed’s desire lines that I mentioned earlier. This kind of approach is a key idea in my discussions of queer exhibitions and in considering what would be a significant line of thinking in curating queer artistic practices since the idea of presence turns out to be a key point to argue what it means to be present —in literal and discursive forms— for queer artistic practices in museums. Here, I consider queer artistic practices not only committed by artists, but also by curators which imply a difference between traditional way of curating queer artworks and curating those artworks queerly in line with what is exhibited.

Building on these ideas around orientation and disorientation, this thesis develops two concepts, queer disorientations and queer temporalities. The plural forms of each concept again points to the multiplicity they can take and diversity that they necessarily inhabit within

18 Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place, 6.
themselves. The concepts I have discussed so far, namely queer disorientations and queer
temporalities are taken as active theoretical concepts for this thesis. In their activity, they tend
to have spatial and temporal references, disrupting the heterosexual meaning of time and
space. By doing so, they assert new perspectives on experiences and how to mediate them.
They constantly refer to each other, since neither the temporal nor the spatial have an isolated
experience. Their ways are constantly crossing, one leading to the other as the analysis of the
artworks will show. In this act, the temporal and the spatial also become vulnerable to change
in their engagement with artistic practices. In this context, when disorientation in this thesis
refers to both to the temporal and the spatial, I chose to use the same word mostly for spatial
discussions, in line with Ahmed’s dominant use of the term for her arguments on the spatial.
They are crucial for understanding the artworks discussed since both the subjects and objects
of the artworks have disorientating effects both in terms of their content and their forms.

**Aims and Research Questions: Aiming for Disorientations**

No doubt, one rarely does stay in those moments of disorientation for long. Or rather, the
disorientations do not allow us to create structures upon them, thus do not lead to a new
orientation that is opposed to the orientation that is deviated from. Every deviation from the
main road carries the potential to lead up to a discovery of an alternative that has been
undermined by the social mainstream. As a result, what I am proposing with this study is that
the queerness of a work of art emerges from certain ways of expressing an affect that is
revealed from queer disorientations, meaning a state that participates in *queerness* or what is
*queered*. My aim is to present queer artistic practices as matters of perspective—perspectives
that are derived from the maker, the production, and the display—rather than reducing them
to a genre. In other words, I explore and define queer artistic practices not only in terms of
their contents, themes or narratives that revolve around stories invested in queerness. The
deliberate distance that this study takes from the generic understanding of queer art arises
from the implications of a genre as something that includes specific elements in all the
examples that can be gathered under an umbrella term. Instead, queer artistic practices in this
thesis, whether as artworks or curatorial decisions, are after their specific methods that are
derived from the specific conditions they are in. These artistic practices, contextualising
themes that what queer is concerned, reveal disruptions from the heterosexual structures and this is evident in their forms and displays, as much as in their content.

The aim then is to investigate the notion of queer in contemporary artistic practices in order to understand how notions of queer and queerness relate to expressions of affect and notions of spatial and temporal disorientation. Following this line of thinking, the key questions that emerge are; what constitutes the queerness of an artistic practice? How do contemporary queer artistic practices foreground the perspectives of queerness in their forms? What kind of disruptions are they causing in the conventional setting of artistic displays from a curatorial standpoint?

Considering queer artistic practices in terms of content, form, display, and their affect on audience will lead to a mobilisation of queer art, that is distinct from artistic practices in general. The kind of contextualisation of queer artistic practices, in relation to queer time and space, will not only open up to new worlds as artists’ practice, but also queer the ideas on audiences and what kind of affects that the artwork leaves during its display in relation to content and form that it presents.

**Material**

The artworks examined in this thesis have been selected from a number of different mediums. This corresponds to the way queer analysis tends to blur the lines of binaries and oppositions. I have chosen a feature film, *Weekend* by Andrew Haigh, produced in the UK and released in 2011. The ninety-six minute long film has been screened in various, prominent, international film festivals as well as queer film festivals all around the world since then. Another work is trans-activist GaniMeth’s creative writings and talks, which are often considered as artistic as much as political in Turkey’s vibrant queer scene. These writings have been published on her blog, and each of them has led to many discussions in Turkey, often provoking not only circles that fall outside of queerness with her critical approach, but also the very queer scene that she has been living in. Her writings are generally essayistic, do not exceed more than two pages or minutes depending on whether they are written or spoken. GaniMeth’s spoken words on the archive compliment the analysis of *Weekend*, playing with ideas of artwork and what they are. The third artwork is Sharon Hayes *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love?*, first initiated as a five-day long performance series in 2007, that took place at
lunchtime in the same location in New York. Hayes read a letter to an imaginary lover, demanding her presence personally and her guidance politically. Later, Hayes turned the audio recording of the performances into an audio-installation the same year, accompanied by five posters with the name of the work, her silhouette in front of a microphone.

While *Weekend*’s analysis deals with disorientations caused by love with very subjective inclinations and then is concerned with questions of temporal and spatial disorientations with an unexpected affair, my reading of *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love?* by Sharon Hayes turns the table and disorientates the concept and practice of love. It reveals the political potentials of love whilst also foregrounding a love to politics at a time of political crisis through an attempt to seek answers from love how to overcome. In the first chapter, I choose GaniMeth’s practice that accompany a fictive artwork in *Weekend*; her spoken works in the video called *Fragments of A Roundtable: Pink Life Discussed Archive* is put in a dialogue with a sound artwork that is mentioned in the film. This intervention creates a transition to the scrutiny in the second chapter. Furthermore, it allows for a cross-readings of the artworks in relation to issues of curating in a queer context carried out in the third chapter.

The materials that are chosen to constitute the arguments in this thesis are concerned with a recurring theme of love. Keeping a common ground that the artworks are located and their shared references to love is mostly about queer theories’ relation to love and sexuality, how these related initial phenomena’s gave way to a historical turn about sexuality as well as a culture that follows it, make this study grounded. Yet, I believe the theme was transformed in each chapter and thus avoid to be a plain cliché. Choosing this somewhat basic thematic makes the study comprehensible in terms of the transformation that it wants to highlight. Furthermore, it also supports the idea of queer exhibition practices and its difference from other forms of display that are based on queer time and space, which I discuss in the third chapter. Since I am interested in affective disruptions of these artworks from the perspective of an audience, the curatorial approaches for displaying queer artistic practices, I argue, needs to be analysed in terms of deviations from time and space as well. The sort of love that I discuss in the chapters demands a leaking into the cracks of the conventional structures and forces them to temporary paths for exhibiting these practices that would vary for each of the artworks.
Method: A Method for Disorientations

The act of play constitutes a significant element of the method; just as queer plays with the heterosexual structures, trying to alter them without the ambition to create new structures. Playing with dichotomies of heterosexulised world prevents this thesis to be a grand narrative or to pose a method that could highlight each and every queer artistic practice. A second point that shapes the method, in a different way than both Ahmed and Halberstam, who are main theoretical sources of this study, is the analysis of queer lives in artistic presentations, rather than how they are portrayed in theoretical studies. Although one part of the method that runs through this study is to read artworks with disorientations —and thus with queer time and space—a second one is to highlight how artworks make interventions into these concepts. In other words, this study is not only a reading of artworks with queer tools, but also a work of transforming those tools with artworks. Weekend, for example, deals with temporality in a way that plays with Halberstam’s and Sedgwick’s ideas of queer temporality and demonstrate queerness in a way that theory might not be able to since the film showcases the affects that emerges from such disorientations through its fictive characters as possibilities. In a similar way, In Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love?’s daring intervention to the dichotomy of public/private is one that complements to Ahmed’s metaphors of heterosexualised objects and settings, while the affair itself is not real, and thus its play with public space becomes a fiction itself. For such an intervention, I focus on one main artwork and one main theoretician for each chapter in order to identify and illuminate these transformations I want to underline more clear and easy to follow. Additionally, first chapter also incorporates a second artwork, that strives to create a twist in order to eliminate a dialectic reading of the artworks and theoretical tools as one and the other.

The method is then guided by making a selection of artworks that reflect certain disorientations in terms of how these artworks have caused disorientations for certain concepts; a recurring theme has been love in all the artworks in this thesis. Love’s recurring in the artworks reflects on another recurring; temporal and spatial disorientations as one of them constantly refers to the other. The method in use, thus, finds its ground with the elements of time and space. Weekend first deals with temporal and spatial elements of disorientations; that leads to the cross-reading of GaniMeth’s video with a return to the temporal idea. In this return, temporal takes another form thanks to the idea of documentation as leaving traces
behind. As a result, *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love?* continues with a different approach to spatial orientations.

The order of artworks in this study follows a trajectory of activation in their subject. While love can have effects of inertia, it might also provoke activity. Thus, the variety of this effect can be traced in the artwork in the present order. How one artwork’s analysis leads to the other is an inquiry that has been difficult to resolve and is a constructive element for the thesis. The relation between artistic practices in this study and queer concepts that accompany them aims to build a bridge for possible interventions into each other. Thus, I take theory and practice to be in a horizontal relationship, meaning I do not consider the theoretical conceptions in use as sufficient to theorise queer artistic practices in the absence of the artworks mentioned. With such a method, I am hoping to somehow escape both the dichotomy and hierarchy between theory and practice, as I am reading the artworks with certain concepts and in turn trying to highlight how these readings transform those very concepts. I do believe this method shows how the artistic practices play with the idea of theory, in a similar way Ahmed thinks queer plays with phenomenology. This leads to arguments on curatorial decisions in the last chapter and allows to make critical claims of exhibiting queer in art institutions, considering them as spaces that strive to inhabit queerness and how to activate those spaces with a queer approach.

To not see these artworks as a progress from one to each other in a simple linear fashion, and certainly not to a better future, is a difficult task. However, these artworks simply co-exist at the same time as impressions and affective encounters in this thesis. One does not present a more queer moment than the other, but each deals with a radically different one without being isolated. The method in the order I have analysed them—first experience of love, and then radicalisation and politicisation of love—is an imaginary, fictive order that the artworks could be experienced and put in a relation as curatorial method that takes clues from queer theories and practices. However, this imagination comments on different sorts of love; between the chapters, the experience of love is transformed from an affect that inactivates its subjects to another one that forces the subject to act upon it. With a similar understanding, the last chapter of this thesis focuses on how queer artworks are (dis)orientated in the setting they are being exhibited, mostly in the spaces that do not have any queer assertion in their structure, as many art institutions do not. A spatial relationship between queer artistic
practices and their inhabitance in places is crucial; firstly because it poses an intervention by queerness which was almost impossible until some thirty years ago — and is still for some parts of the world — and secondly, how these artworks can be ripped off by their queer assertions through solely artistic or simply queer approaches to them. Later, these artworks are also discussed in terms of exhibited or as ousted desire lines in order to understand the queerness of their exhibition and the potentiality that they highlight for audiences. Those desire lines are the ones that deviates from conventional ideas of art institutions and thus pose the disruption of the settings in which they are used to perform. The method in use here is to reflect on whether the display is in line with the content that the artworks and exhibitions propose. Again, the artworks’ analysis have been key here to understand what is required in exhibiting queerness, and thus the artworks themselves are used as denominators of what could be key to invent those lines that demonstrate a similar approach to the ones that are used by the artworks themselves. The artworks are considered as interventions to the spaces rather than taking them as mere inhabitants of the space. This method of intervention allows the artworks to propose their temporal effects to be more visible in queer ways. Thus, the examples of exhibitions that are discussed in the last chapter are chosen as curatorial decisions that transcends the limits of conventional spatial features of art institutions. How they invade a space for a certain amount of time, and what kind of disorientations they cause mutually with the volatility that the idea of exhibiting alongside queer temporality offers will round up the discussions in the third chapter.

**Delimitations**

In order not to generalise a method that encompasses all queer practices, it is crucial to underline that the method and material of this thesis has been subjected to certain limits. Firstly, the chapters which are dedicated to the artworks are conditioned within geographical limitations. I choose artworks that I was able to experience in the places I lived and visited throughout the last year, with one exception is being *Weekend*, which is a feature-film I saw a few years ago. The decision to follow such a limitation was taken for several reasons. Since I am interested in discussing the artworks in relation to their affective encounters with their audience, I am obliged to be a part of the audience in order to talk about the affects that emerge during the encounter with the artwork. This first-hand perception allowed me to go
deeper with the artwork regarding ideas of disorientation and their mutual intervention with artworks. On the other hand, this geographical limitation prevented this thesis to be a more diverse study in terms of different geographical practices that it could have highlighted. The artists, although engaging mostly with political issues, has been either white and Western or from Turkey.

Previous Research

The previous research on queer art has been mostly about what has been considered as queer in retrospective. There has been a variety of studies that covers LGBTI+ pioneer artists — such as Claude Cahun, Berenice Abbott, David Hockney, Gilbert and George, Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol, Robert Mapplethorpe — many of them focus on artists as subject and think of queer art in the terms of the artists. This tendency brought up the issue of gaze and desire and the subjects who have perceived the world and objects differently than heterosexual artists. Thus, a considerable amount of writing on queer art has been a documentation of these subjects and subjects’ vision of a world that emerges with new horizons. This situation has led the studies to be documentations of instances of queer art and allow us to follow a trajectory. Some milestones in this way of study are The Queer Encyclopedia of the Visual Arts; Whitney Davis’ Queer Beauty: Sexuality and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Freud and Beyond; Martin B. Duberman’s Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures; Richard Meyer’s Outlaw Representation: Censorship & Homosexuality in Twentieth-century American Art, among many others that cover the artists whom I mentioned above.

Another line of study shifts its perspective to a more political focus in terms of queer art, deriving its ground from queer activism and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Since this line of queer art and artists — such as David Wojnarowicz, Keith Harring, Peter Hujar, Hugh Steers,
as well as groups like Gran Fury, the Silence = Death, Dyke Action Machine—coincides with more contemporary practices of art and exhibition-making in which the curatorial turn gained a momentum, the documentation of it also has mainly been in the form of exhibition catalogues. A good example of it is “Bodies of Resistance” and the catalogue, which includes writing on queer art in this era. These artistic practices also find its repercussions in the academia; several dissertations analysed both artist works and visual culture of the era. A highly informative and intriguing example of such dissertations is Let The Record Show: *Mapping Queer Art and Activism in New York City, 1986-1995* by Tara Jean-Kelly Burk, in which she discusses the visual documents of queer activism and their political aesthetics — from posters to flyers— from mid 80s to mid 90s mainly from three collectives.\(^{21}\)

Apart from creating these artistic documentations in a historical sense, queer artistic practices, especially performative ones, have inspired queer theory and often become a topic of very productive discussions that led queer theory to evolve into different phases. Jack Halberstam’s *In A Queer Time and Place*, which has been a huge source of inspiration for this thesis, and José Esteban Muñoz’s prominent books *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* and *Cruising Utopia: the Then and There of Queer Futurity* are all dealing with different queer performances and open up the theoretical claims based on those performances.\(^{22}\) My study follows a similar pattern as they are showcasing, but with a more varied selection of artworks with different mediums operating in a way that twists the theories I am using. My use of Halberstam’s theories highlights a similarity with his book in the sense that they apply queer concepts in terms of their artistic faculties. However, it also differs since I allow the artworks to reshape the existing concepts, rather than deriving from or applying concepts directly to them.

**Chapter Outline**

The first two chapters are dedicated to three artworks from the last twelve years. The first chapter carries out a detailed analysis of *Weekend*, a feature-film by British director Andrew Tara Jean-Kelly Burk, *Let The Record Show: Mapping Queer Art and Activism in New York City, 1986-1995*, (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2015).

José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1999).


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\(^{22}\) José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
Haigh. Mostly considered as a gay romance or a gay love drama, I analyse the film in terms of temporal disorientations, using theoretical concepts mostly from Jack Halberstam’s book *In A Queer Time and Place*. I use this to try to understand queer temporality in terms of disorientation in line with Sara Ahmed’s theory. The importance of this chapter is that it is an attempt to evaluate the temporal disorientation that queer love might provoke instead of more mainstream readings of the film as a “gay romance”, which I believe lead to eradication of queer elements in the film and lead to a more normative understanding of love that happened to be between two men by coincidence instead of traditional heterosexual relationship.

The second chapter moves towards a more abstract effect of disorientation, revolving around a love affair again. The artwork in this chapter is Sharon Hayes’ *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love?* Ideas of disorientation in this chapter takes a more spatial turn, analysing the artwork both as a performance as it was first initiated and as a sound installation that is designed to be experienced afterwards. Apart from an analysis of its form, the content of the artwork as written love letters that are read publicly poses a second layer of Hayes’ piece, which I read more closely with Sara Ahmed’s theoretical concepts. The chapter deals with the questions of public and private, how queer love’s disorientating effect results in losing the sense of orientations of these concepts as well as examining what the politicisation of queer love means as yet another layer for the work.

The third and final chapter will focus on a critical approach towards exhibiting queer artistic practices and the challenges they face in conventional art spaces. Art spaces, such as museums, galleries, and other institutions are necessarily becoming more sensitive about the representation of the sort of practices that are analysed in this thesis. Thus, the question concerning the relationship between what kind of orientations and disorientations occur in the setting they offer and what the interrelation is between these spaces and artworks during and after their temporal display will deal with the curatorial aspect of the thesis.

The conclusion will serve as a final discussion of the previous chapters. The findings of the discussions in those chapter are brought together and lead to an understanding of queer artistic practices whilst preventing them to fit neatly into a theoretical concept or a specific method, thus leading also to imagine new worlds.
Chapter 1: Loosing a Sense of Time - In the Radical Temporality of Queer Love

Last winter, I was reminded of the film Weekend, by an encounter I found myself in, after having watched the film for the first time more than five years previous. I experienced a particular feeling of loss and anxiety thinking about the film; was I moved by it because of certain affective inclinations that I was experiencing at the time or is the film actually a representation of something bigger than the affects it has provoked within me? Regardless, all the time has passed and I needed to watch it again in order to find the answer to those questions, which turned out to be not one or the other, but instead somewhere really in between and therefore challenging the dichotomy I was thinking within.

I often remember films more with the affects and feelings that they leave on me as a mark, that I carry even after a long while after seeing them, whereas I generally have very little memory of their storylines, their scripts, or technical details, which are all crucial elements for a cinematic analysis. Since this study tries to map or detect some elements of disorientation in specific artistic works, Weekend will also be taken into consideration in this line rather than the traditional and more conventional ways of film analysis that deals with the technical aspects of filming, editing and so on. Instead, it focuses on the screenplay in way that tries to deal with queer temporality, seeking for hints of such a concept in a fictive love relationship. Apart from trying to make readings of certain scenes that poses crucial points for some concepts that are key to this thesis, such as queer temporality and disorientation, a cross-reading with GaniMeth’s spoken words will open up a meta-discussion of a mentioned artwork in the film.
Weekend tells the story of a short encounter between Russell and Glen, two gay men living in the UK. For Andrew Haigh, the film caused a breakthrough in the director’s oeuvre, carrying him to a position to be screened in the most famous film festivals in the world with his later films such as 45 Years and Lean on Pete having brought him into competition in Berlin International Film Festival and Venice Film Festival, respectively. To outline the script of Weekend briefly, at first it looks like a well-known romance story; Russell goes to a gay club after a home gathering at his best friend’s house - who is happily married to a woman with a child - and ends up having a one-night-stand affair with Glen, an artist who is about to leave the town for a master’s course in Portland, USA for two years. Russell is not involved in the gay life or gay scene that much; apparently he goes to gay bars and is open to his friends about his sexual orientation, though he is far from having any political involvement about gay activism or radical politics or discourses in the gay scene. He has a job as a lifeguard in a swimming pool. It is important to note that, the film takes place in Nottingham, which is not especially known for a vibrant scene neither for politics nor for night life. On the other hand, Glen is more of a big city personality. He does not believe in gay marriage - as we witness a conversation between them rather at the end of the film - or that it signifies any politics that the gay community would benefit from in the strong sense. He is an artist working on a project that revolves around the sound recordings of the conversations he has with the guys he hooks up with as one-night-stand affairs and actually, although Russell has hard a time remembering it, Glen accepts having sex with Russell on the condition that they will have a recording session, too. What starts as a random affair turns to be a weekend-long hang-out for Russell and Glen, as the name of the film suggests.

As this plot explains the setting of the film, I will continue with an analysis of a selection of scenes from the film, and try to unfold the disorientation it causes in time and space for the characters, trying to reveal what sort of a radical sense of contingency it offers for its ‘gay’ characters. Furthermore, I will try to explain why queer love specifically carries and brings forward this certain contingency rather than love in the broader sense, in other words, what and why heterosexual love cannot offer the feeling mentioned. As a finishing discussion for this chapter, I will elaborate on Glen’s unfinished artwork in the film, and what kind of potentials it carries with it. For this analysis, I will also use the work of GaniMeth’s, a trans activist and writer from Turkey.
Repetition of Orientation, Irregularity of Disorientation

Friday

Weekend’s storyline, as mentioned before, first shows Russell in a heterosexual setting; a crowded gathering at his best friend’s flat, we see people chatting, playing games, laughing, drinking and smoking weed. Russell leaves this heterosexual gathering to go to a gay club; thus from the very start we are faced with what Jack Halberstam calls “place-making practices” in his book In a Queer Time and Space as he explains; “Queer space” refers to the place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage and it also describes the new understandings of space enabled by the production of queer counterpublics.23

Thus what we encounter with the gay club is a practice of an engagement that differentiates itself from earlier sexualisation and gendering of space within and by the heterosexual systems. Considering how certain spaces become sexualised with repetition of social behaviour in spaces we inhabit and through the use of and attained meaning to the objects—and in many cases heterosexualised—Russell’s withdrawal from such a structure and space in order to find a setting where he could fit in more comfortably.24 Domestic space has been analysed in detail in especially gender studies as a place that is related to heterosexual structures, with the tasks about the sustenance of the space are assigned to gender roles differently.25 Ahmed’s example of dining table as a heterosexualised object in domestic space, where everyone’s seating is decided and stable, thus their movements are regulated accordingly illustrates such sexualising repetitions.26 The space he experiences the withdrawal from is defined in terms of “reproductive time and family time”, as they are called by Halberstam, which are “heteronormative time/space constructs”.27 Russell, in the scenes in his friend’s apartment, is stiff obviously; his movements seems as if they are limited with invisible barriers. This place-making practices show parallels with Ahmed’s concept of

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23 Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place, 6.
24 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 86.
25 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg gives a detailed account and feminist critique of how domestic space has been gendered. For more, look: Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
26 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology,
27 Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place, 10.
desire lines that deviates from the heterosexual orientations. These orientations in Ahmed solidifies the system offered with the invention of heterosexual coupling, turning it into a compulsory way of living. However, desire lines are where the system has failed to register in normatively coded everyday life of the individuals that do not practice the sexual codes of the certain sexes and/or genders. Therefore, this transition from the domestic space populated by heterosexual individuals to the gay club inhabited by gays is a space for disoriented people to perform different practices of desire lines. The director of the film gives a hint in an interview from 2011 that could to connect to what the desire lines offers for the place-making practices. On being asked about who the film is made for, director Haigh answers:

…”It’s hard; if you are gay, you have to think of those questions early on in your life. You don’t fit in and you realize you don’t fit in. Maybe those larger existential questions get brought up earlier. It’s those questions that I’m interested in…”

"Not fitting in”. The phrase implies that practices of belonging is somehow continuous in our life. To fit into something, there needs to be specific shapes that is required or the space that is being fit in and for the thing that fits into that space. Both place-making practices and orientations implies the sort of “fitting in” Haigh mentions for the reason that not fitting in forces you to realise the shapes of certain structures that one is not able to squeeze in, the lines that one does not follow that are drawn for them, and forces them to find new places to perform and practice new ways of relating oneself to a place that does not necessarily ask for a fitting in. In that sense, disorientations offer not new structures, but rather ambiguous paths and places that do not aim to be permanent. The abrupt transition of Russell from domestic space - not only meaning a ‘home’ but also ‘home’ of heterosexual coupling and practices - visualises how disorientation from a space and reorientation to new one occurs.

In the gay bar, Russell drinks more and is already quite drunk as he sees Glen for the first time getting a drink from the bar as he looks at him. However, Glen’s attention does not

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last long; just as Russell tries to make a move at him, he leaves the bar and heads to the toilets. Following him to the urinals in order to meet him, Glen fails him again as he leaves once more. Russell starts to hang out with the guy standing in between them at the urinal.

Cut from this scene, we see Russell preparing instant coffee for two, which makes it apparent that he has not spent the night alone. What is surprising is that, as he walks into his bedroom, we see Glen instead of the other guy. One key point to observe here is that Russell’s home is different from his married friends’ one - the instant coffee, the decoration of posters in the bedroom points towards a more irregular life rather than a structured one. As they are drinking their coffee, they start chatting about the night and Glen brings up the promise of a sound recording about the previous night as documentation; Russell is extremely shy, even embarrassed about giving details about what happened. The documentation of the affair makes him somehow uncomfortable although he is not really sure why. It could be said that Russell is distracted by the thought that something private is being recorded and planned to be made public later as a part of an artistic expression. At this point, the happening and the space in which it occurs needs be related to each other; Russell and Glen are still in the bedroom, and in bed. The isolation of the bedroom as a domestic space which should be kept as a secret might be in effect in Russell’s mind. Here, the storyline gives hints about its characters that will be developed throughout the film; Russell is an exemplary character who does not necessarily identify with a political involvement, queer practices, but rather has a habit of following the established lines of the private and public. Glen, on the other hand, is constantly crossing the lines; he blurs the borders between an intimate moment with an upcoming publicising of it. What is being documented here is not love in the common, heterosexual sense; instead, what Glen is after is a certain contingency that glows in the night with a sexual tension that is radically temporal and does not necessarily lead up to anything more than what has already happened until the moment of recording. Thus, the permanent nature of documentation is used for what is in the very beginning accepted as an affair that is short-termed, that does not aim to be in line with idea of longevity in heterosexual relationship.

When talking about queer time and temporality, Halberstam highlights the importance of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and what it meant for the gay community, giving examples from Lee Edelman and Leo Bersani’s work, where they analyse the queer community in relation to
“risk, disease, infection, and death”. However, he asserts that queer time should also be thought of in terms of the potentiality that the new ways of living offered with the emerging subcultural inclinations offered by queer, which distances itself from the classical life circle of family, child and inheritance. Therefore, we could and should think of this new way of approaching an affair in the sense of the new possibilities that it might offer. In the case of Glen’s recording, we are faced with what could be derived from the contingency of each affair he is recording, a variety of experiences that are specific and unique to each of them. Every experience of the one-night-stands are contingent and the particular contingency that are unique to each other keeps them full of potentiality. The point about this sort of contingency and its particularity is not possible to be unified signifies another analysis of Halberstam. When he talks about “the most desirable future in the Western cultures” being longevity, this certainly applies to love relationships as well in the sense of family and inheritance as mentioned above. Rather, it is possible to think of the potentiality that arises from rather an approach to experience with an awareness to its contingency, whereas longevity stabilises. And in that stabilisation, it closes new horizons, making them unavailable or attribute them a lower value which in turn makes them unwanted.

Saturday
Another important scene that reoccurs throughout the film is presented as Glen leaves Russell’s place and Russell watches him from the window. We know that Russell’s apartment is on the fourteenth floor from the scene that Glen yells at a bunch of homophobic guys as they scream some phobic comments about Russell. After the first morning they are in Russell’s apartment, Glen walks away without stopping. The recurrence of this scene, Glen’s walking away and Russell’s watching him walks away will be crucial in later stages of this chapter. But for now, to go through the storyline, Russell and Glen exchange their numbers before Glen leaves. Russell goes to work, and when his shift is over, Glen is waiting for him with beers in his hands at the yard of the pool. They start walking back to Russell’s place although Russell has a bike with him. When Glen gets tired after climbing the stairs while smoking to get over the bridge they need to pass, Russell tells him to get onto the bike together. Though hesitating, Glen takes the seat as Russell starts pushing the pedals. We see

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them heading the opposite direction of the cars next to them as if to point out that this affair is heading towards the ‘wrong’ direction on the sidewalk, the true one being longevity. The relatively unsafe nature of the bike, especially a bike carrying two people while it is made solely for one becomes yet another symbol of the contingency compared to, again, the relative safety the cars passing by.

As they arrive home, they are chatting about various subjects from their family to their jobs, from their understanding of relationship to dreams. They are laughing and seem more happy and joyful than we have ever seen them throughout the film. Their words are becoming heavier with each topic, more serious as they open up to each other and reveal their life and personalities more. A strong intimacy is easily transferred to the screen and makes its peak with the screen being overtaken by their bodily affection to each other and eventual sex. With a cut from here, we see Glen leaving Russell’s place again. Just as Russell closes the door after Glen, Russell pauses next to the door for a second. The door is knocked, Glen is the one on the other side when Russell opens the door. Glen confesses that he is leaving for Portland tomorrow for at least two years, which all of a sudden gives a new turn to this affair for both of them. Firstly, it shows that Glen assumes that this affair would continue somehow as he feels the urge and necessity to explain that he is leaving. Secondly, Russell experiences a disorientation from his future plans for the same reason, that this dating was leading to something more than it is until that moment. The queer moment here, that is a persistent present, with the words of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, implies the affects that have been germinating for both of them. The force of queerness of the time that they spent together, full of contingency as well as carrying possibilities with Halberstam’s definition - not in the sense of what the affair could turn into but in the sense that possibilities that offers other ways of communications - are disrupted due to the short time they have. Glen invites Russell to his farewell party that is happening later that night and leaves once again. Neither of them closes the door; it stays open as the scene changes as if it is a symbol for the seemingly contradictory elements of queer temporality —full of possibilities but always already with an accepted contingency.

As Glen leaves Russell’s apartment once again, we see Russell watching him as he walks away in the yard. The scene is pretty much the same as the one earlier with perhaps the only difference in its visual setting is the change of Glen’s clothes. However, this time Glen
hesitates, stops for a moment; a symbol that could be read as a contingency of the affair is disrupted for him, too, which was already the case for Russell as he has already been thinking of the possibility of a relationship with Glen.

Russell goes to the party which is full of Glen’s friends. They both get drunk, and Glen offers Russell to leave his own party to spend time together. The forceful present is in action once again; although being aware of the contingency of it, Glen cannot restrict his own will to get more involved with Russell either. They end up at Russell’s place, drink more and do drugs. When the dialogue between Russell and Glen takes a dramatic turn with the effects of drugs and alcohol, Russell brings up Glen’s leaving into the picture in search of a longevity of their young affair. Glen is highly resistant to any idea of a relationship with anyone at this phase of his life; he is in search of a new setting; earlier the same night, after leaving the bar, he describes his upcoming departure from the place he has been living as “digging out of the pit”, which makes Russell almost offended as someone who is about to be left behind. Glen’s pursuit for his dreams are put into question by Russell; he asserts that he will be extremely lonely once he arrives in Portland, will have no-one to call when he wants to do so and will not be able bare to these conditions even for two days, so he should just stay. The notions of safety comes into view with the words spilling out from Russell’s mouth; a term that Halberstam finds in opposition with “queer subject” as for them “time and space are limned by risks they are willing to take”. Glen is more than willing to take the risk, because he knows the safety presented with having a social circle does not satisfy him, but rather makes him uncomfortable and does not offer the possibilities that the anonymity that becomes possible with moving to a new place, which could be considered to be in opposition to the concept of identity.

Here, I do not consider identity only in sexual terms, but also with the implications that it carries such as being recognised and belonging to a community. In another way, safety and anonymity could be thought of in relation to orientations; being orientated in a place or to certain conditions gives us a certain feeling of safety for that which grants us to find our ways and know what to do in the case of an unexpected happening. On the other hand, anonymity in the sense of denying an orientation to a community, and thus not participating in certain

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31 Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place, 5.
structures of place-making — in the sense that Halberstam discusses it. Thinking in terms of these implications, Glen is after his own disorientation, and not able to answer Russell’s quest for a longevity.

**Sunday**

Russell wakes up alone in his bed, as Glen has left to get prepared because he is leaving later that day and so Russell gets prepared for his godson’s birthday. He seems very distracted and out of place during the gathering. During a cigarette break from the crowd, his friend asks him if something is wrong. He explains the affair and tells him that Glen is leaving for good. His friend convinces him to go to the train station. In the next scene we see him there, meeting Glen. This scene poses the most cliché part of the storyline in terms of following a lover to the train station, which is very much a stereotype which can be found in many Hollywood films. Considering this, many critics’ evaluation of the film as a gay drama or gay romance could be justified even with only this scene. On the other hand, my reading of the film as queer rather than gay takes another look at this scene, Russell’s being inclined to go to the station from a heterosexual friend, who is married with children, meaning an individual who already participates in conventional heterosexual practices. The problem with reading the film as romance is that it would mean to read the scene through the heterosexual lenses and relationship norms, whereas looking at it through the concept of queer brings forth a different reading of the scene. The alternative reading that I propose here is that Russell has accepted the temporality that has been troubling Glen from the very beginning; however, the heterosexual intervention here strives for longevity once again.

The moment when Russell tries to convince Glen to stay once more at the train station is in vain, Glen is caught off guard; he asks why he came with bursting tears. The tears in this scene is yet another disorientation; this time for Glen and his persistency about the path which has been deviated from the straight line. One crucial point about desire lines is that they are difficult to follow since they are not built by structures, and moreover, they are resistant to become structures to be followed. Thus, the disorientation, as temporal as much as spatial, emerges within the very ideas of queer temporality with another definition by Stephan Barber and David Clark where they interpret Kosofsky Sedgwick’s ideas as “that is at once indefinite
and virtual but also forceful, resilient, and undeniable”.\textsuperscript{32} The temporality of this short affair, which could be thought of as a moment in their analysis of queer temporality as a “persistent present” has become an impossible task for Glen to carry on as Russell’s distant and unbearable voice most probably promises a longevity of a relationship between them. Thus, the future becomes a task to accomplish, a burden to carry with Halberstam’s word in that persistent present with Russell’s insistence, which in turn puts Glen in a situation in which he probably starts to question the queer temporality he is living in. Sustainability, as in longevity points out to it, is not a task for queer temporality in the way it is desired for normative understanding of family. Since safety is not guaranteed for any living conditions with these notions, the safety in this kind of temporality is always in danger as well. The tears of Glen, hence, can be read both as losing what he has never claimed or attempted to have - in terms of having a relationship with Russell - as well as feeling the danger that queer temporality does not suggest and is itself located in. With the words of the director, the situation could be described as; “these short, transient relationships can be incredibly intense and can resonate within your life. If you know there’s no future to it, you let your guard down and open up in ways you’ve never opened up before.”\textsuperscript{33}

No future. That’s certainly what Glen has assumed from the beginning. However, the reasons for this understanding of “no future” is not very apparent in Haigh’s formulation of the affair. The horizons of a future in the family setting opens up with the ideas of inheritance according to Ahmed. This mostly emerges with the family line, that mostly becomes apparent in the presence of children to carry the structural operations of what constitutes a family. However, it also requires repetitions of certain rituals, a number of agreed habits, and a definite organisation of daily life. All these indicate an idea of orientation that regulates the individual’s lives as one rather than two. In turn, the two becomes a barrier that does not accept other individuals to perform some of the activities such as sexual intimacy as a result of compulsory heterosexuality. Thus the “no future” motto for Glen is more than only about a possibility of a relationship with Russell, but also encompasses other social relations as he speaks about how he wants to get away from the circle he is in during the conversation they


\textsuperscript{33} Haigh, interview.
have after leaving Glen’s farewell party. The future that Glen could foresee is only this persistent present, and with Russell the present lasts for a weekend and is embodied in weekend.

On that note, one of the most important theoretical contribution on how disorientation works for queer temporality comes into view at this point. The reason why queer temporality suggests a sort of disorientation is in part because it poses a critique of the habitual, ritualistic, repetitive mode of life that finds its structural practices partially in the heterosexual coupling and its idea of inheritance through reproduction. Ahmed, while pointing out that orientation is as temporal as it is spatial, still leaves this temporality underanalysed in *Queer Phenomenology*. If orientation indicates a repetition in order to be adjusted, then what Halberstam and Sedgwick asserts with queer temporality, in fact, are performances that breaks out or departs from this repetition. Similarly the desire lines are not only spatial but also temporal. In the case of *Weekend* and its depiction of Russell and Glen’s affair that covers a bit more than forty hours, Glen’s resistance for longevity is a queer act for disorientation not only for himself but also for Russell. The force of the present that is mentioned by Sedgwick and further elaborated by Barber and Clark is “a specifically queer temporality that is at once indefinite and virtual but also forceful, resilient, and undeniable” is what Glen and Russell are experiencing throughout the film. The difference in their respective experience is, though, Glen is also experiencing the “no future” that reveals itself as a way of living that can also be traced in his approach to their affair. The persistence of present exerts its effect on Russell that causes him to prolong the present as long as possible in an attempt to turn this affair into a relationship. It is meaningful that Russell goes to the party of his grandson, the child of his best friend, and his friend suggests that he goes to the train station to catch Glen for a longevity upon Russell’s mentioning about the short affair to him during a break from the party. Thus, what becomes apparent is Russell’s pursuit of longevity by following the advice of his straight male friend while Glen is already disorientated from this structure with a queer subcultural understanding which means for him “alternative temporalities by allowing their

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34 Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place*, 5.
participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics of that lie outside those paradigmatic markers of life experience - namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death”.

This perspective also asserts itself in the ordering of the days in the way that I used them as subheadings in this chapter —especially since the film does not really give hints about the flow of the days but rather confuses the time passing by. Friday covers the Friday evening and Saturday morning; Saturday implies Saturday evening until almost Sunday noon; and Sunday only refers to the Sunday evening. The paradigmatic changes with queer temporalities offered by Halberstam also implies a rearrangement of time structures; he mentions the division of time such as working, leisure, family, domestic, etc. In this division, no doubt the division of days also play a part, for example weekdays and weekends, the former mostly being related to work and domestic activities while the latter is rather associated with leisure or considered as free time. Thus, the regulation of days in Weekend is rather disorientated from these structures; although it could still be considered as a weekend of a love affair rather than happening during weekdays, the continuation of days and their intervention into each other is challenging the division of day that regulates life in general. Halberstam’s explanation of how subcultural practices like drug using, sex-work, homelessness offer different temporalities is very much in line with the kind of playing with daily structures offered here. Disorientations from timely structures or queer temporalities thus becomes ways for subversion of those structural, straight lines of time with queer practices and contents.

**Glen’s Meta-Artwork**

Another practice of deviations from those lines in the film is Glen’s unfinished artwork that consists of recordings that he is saving from his affairs. As if Glen is aware of the radical temporalities of his affairs, he is asking questions to his lovers the next morning, forcing them to remember and retell the stories about how they first interacted. The significance of Glen’s artwork poses one last point in Weekend that is to be highlighted since very early on the film, the dialogue and affection between Russell and Glenn emerges with the conversation that they have about the recording. So, what we witness is an artwork in an artwork. However, Glen’s

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project is unfinished and it is not certain if the artwork will be realised in its full form in the future either. During their conversation, Glen confesses that his project might never be exhibited; the reasons he accounts are twofold. Firstly that no gallery would be interested in exhibiting such a work, which focuses on the intimacy between queer subjects and exposes the sort of relationship that deviates from the ideas of longevity and instead embraces the possibilities that contingency might offer. Secondly, he asserts that gays would not be interested in viewing such an exhibition, since they are mostly interested in sex rather than the intimate moments that it inhabits before, during and after.

Here, the discussion about the heterosexual-homosexual binary is striking in the sense that the implications of Glen’s assumptions lead us to heterosexual system’s both indifference and tendency to erase any sign of desire lines and cultural and artistic expression on it. Additionally, gays’ unwillingness to engage with what is intimate and the preference to have a view of the direct action of sex instead of the diverse relational moments points out a materialist view that Glen obviously does not favour. Of course, both assumptions are generalisations that needs to be engaged with critically; but the important point in Glen’s assumption is the idea of a binary system that divides society in these terms underestimates and eradicates the possibilities that do not find a place for themselves within those structures. Thus, from such a point of view Glen’s work carries a potentiality of becoming a queer artistic practice as well, as long as it tries to find expression of this queer relationships and their radical contingency, in which people share a night of intimacy without compulsory heterosexuality’s ideal of longevity.

Another element of Glen’s artwork comes forward as a documentation. A recurring theme throughout this chapter has been the debate between longevity and contingency — and queer temporalities. Deriving from this debate, Glen’s recordings are documentations of both relationships that are from the beginning accepted as short-termed, whereas the documentation he is after attributes a certain sense of remembrance since it is possible to revisit his experiences through them. What is striking is that Glen’s friend tells Russell that he lets her listen to these recordings during their conversation at Glen’s farewell party and adds

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39 Here, I do not see a binary distinction between longevity and contingency, since contingency of queer temporalities opens up endless possibilities as to how it might be experienced and do not claim to assert a time structure as it how it applies as a ‘general’ rule.
that the only exception being Russell’s recording. Glen’s recordings are where the film gives the opportunity to read queer temporalities not only as an opposition to heterosexual longevity, which would create a binary system that queer theory would not enjoy to inhabit. Instead, witnessing Glen’s hesitations show that queer temporalities are far away from forming structures that one can come to a conclusion for a formulation of the concept. As the forceful present becomes more and more concrete, Glen’s approach to his artwork, at least at a certain level, has gone through a change. As this love affair becomes more concrete with the amount of time they spend together, the artwork becomes more blurred as Glen does not have the distance that he once had in order to transform it to an artwork; at least about using Russell’s recording for it.

Thinking in terms of documentation, an important connection to be made is GaniMeth, a trans activist from Turkey whose writings are widely discussed, often with their partially provocative tone. GaniMeth has been an important figure in the political scene since the late 1990s, with roles in many LGBT+ initiatives and organisations as the founding member and later as a driving force in policy-making. Her place in policy-making has changed over time; being a sex-worker brought the elements of performativity of the street to political discussions. Her daring argumentation of politics have changed a lot in Turkey, especially in Ankara’s feminist and left scene as she constantly attacks heteronormative structures that traditionally have been built upon delving into their cracks, challenging and subverting the structures while simultaneously being critical of them.

The Pink Life LGBT Solidarity Association produced a performative video called *Fragments of A Roundtable: Pink Life Discussed Archive* as a collective effort in relation to the Pink Life Queer Film Fest. The video focuses on the question concerning archives and what a personal archive would mean for the organisation’s activism. The topic is discussed rather vaguely and mostly in relation to the absence of such documentations and archives. Gani responds to the question with another question, as if she is trying to remind the title of one her writings, “Don’t You Have Questions for My Answers?”, that strives to disrupt the usual line of thinking. In other words, she takes the question of her relationship to the archive

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at a personal level, breaks it into pieces and in response, reiterates her relationship with the absence of the archive. Her words in the video:

Only now, I see the relationship between archive and space. That is, if you actually don’t have a space then you won’t have an archive. Trans* people are spaceless people anyway — people with no space. A fugitive cannot have an archive anyway. It is an evidence in a way, archive is an evidence. It is sort of a proof. I wasn’t leaving any evidence related to my past. Even the phone numbers I had were not registered on my name! i just registered one on my name and my family came and found me. In a way, you have “just a bag’ful of life.\textsuperscript{41}

The question she is posing seems rather rhetorical once one pays attention to the subject of the formulation. A fugitive, someone without a certain settlement or arrangement, highlights her main point. Given the circumstances of daily life as a trans sex-worker, being a fugitive is neither surprising nor unusual. The streets as public spaces become workspaces as much as social ones where the sex workers meet, chat and show solidarity by looking after each other. Yet, these places apparently do not allow for carrying any sort of traces of the experiences of the queer subjects they inhabit. What can a fugitive carry around when they must be ready to leave the space they inhabit at any time? Halberstam’s arguments on queer temporalities are highlighted by the specific lifestyles led by queer subjects whose relationship to “time and space are limned by risks they are willing to take”. Gani certainly takes a place in those subjects; her writings are only possible because of the risks she is willing to take such as meeting with people in these “risky” spaces at “uncanny” times of the day when “others sleep”. The example of sleeping is rather striking at this point; the regulation of sleeping time feels as if it allows the structures to settle down for compulsory heteronormativity. As a fugitive, the sleep either has no permanent space or a set time allocated during the day; it comes just whenever it is possible. Similarly, in the case of absence of time and space that is spared for sleep, and thinking of it as a metaphor to stop the day and store it in consciousness, fugitiveness cannot store an archive either. They need to be ready to leave, and leaving in Gani’s words also radicalised in the sense of not leaving a trace behind, since one is also a fugitive of law and other surveillance practices of the state, too.

\textsuperscript{41} Pink Life and Gani Met, \textit{Fragments of A Roundtable}. 33
Now the common ground shared by Glen’s documentation and Gani’s speech also reaches to a common form of expression: voice. Glen’s documentation of the time that he spends with his short affairs can be seen as attempts to capture forceful moments as discussed by Kosofsky Sedgwick. These moments of intimacy, queered with their temporality as short-lasting gaps in between heterosexual structures of time, presents another way of being fugitive in the sense of running away from heterosexual norms of relationships and sexuality. Thus, the recordings as documentation enjoys a contradiction; a rejection of what would be considered as worthy of documentation, a longevity that should be remembered as time goes by. In a similar way, Gani, although talking about saving an archive in the conventional sense of it is not possible for a fugitive like herself —and she also refers to trans and queers as fugitives— her writings poses the value of an archive in the most unique sense. Her artistic writings that takes their subjects from queer spaces and retells the stories of her encounters with them during queer times are recordings of experiences that are rarely considered to be of value to be recorded. Readers of Gani’s writings finds themselves in the midst of strange encounters; her slaves walking to his job in broad daylight may not consider himself to be a slave; a refugee that is rejected by other trans sex-workers because of his offensive word choices although he intended to use them in a way that he is trying to be charming; Kel Alev (Bald Alev in English), who is a cis-woman sex-worker that trans sex-workers looks down for her ‘immoral’ behaviours. They are all fugitives in one sense or another; one has to hide the sexual perversion that he inhabits, the other has no documents of identity in the country he is living in, while another simply has no documentation of how she spent her life with sex-work. They are all denied to be archives; Gani continues her speech by saying:

I disappeared without a trace, I fled, you understand? … How shall fugitives have an archive?
You are fugitive you know, you were living in this country as a fugitive. It might make perfect sense that we do not have an archive.

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43 Pink Life and GaniMeth, Fragments of A Roundtable.
Similarly, Glen is not able to fit Russell into the time that is regulated by heterosexual norms—they do not spend the transition from night to day together in the film not even once. They always share one day or night together and leave each other at the brink of the other. This relationship is a fugitive in Glen’s life, thus cannot be documented in a way to be witnessed by others as proven by Glen not allowing his friend to listen to the recording of Russell while she has listened to the other recordings of Glen’s different affairs. While Glen is about to flee, like Gani did, his documentation of the personal archive of his affairs continues to have a future that is not yet determined.

In the next chapter, the focus will be reversed; while the artwork I discuss here built on the lover in the form of a person and its presence—and eventual loss of the lover—the next artwork will become an embodiment of the absence of the lover, as an expression of transformation of the world as the absence of the lover.
Chapter 2: Protesting in the Political Shadows of Love - Interventions to Public and Private

This chapter analyses Sara Ahmed’s notion of disorientation via a selected work by Sharon Hayes. After a brief description of the work and the artists’ oeuvre, the notion of disorientation will be tested as an interpretative tool to examine both the content and form of the artwork. For this aim, I begin with an attempt to describe Hayes’ work, its different methods of display in different time and places both as a performance and as an audio installation. After that, I will move on to the content of the work, and elaborate it considering how its form and content affect each other. For this, the notion of disorientation will pose a crucial key term as it develops how Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love? disorientates love, firstly as a public speech, and secondly as political action.

Sharon Hayes is an American artist known for dealing with various political artistic practices since the early 1990s. Her body of work covers a variety of mediums such as performance, video and multimedia and often meshes up the boundaries in between these different mediums. While many of her works deals with the “public speech”, the significance of her work titled Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love? poses some groundbreaking potentials for apprehension of queer art in the context of disorientation
of both content and form within contemporary queer artistic practices.\textsuperscript{44} This work was primarily created and executed as a series of performances that took place in New York as Hayes “stood at the corner of 51st Street and Avenue of the Americas, at lunchtime every day for a work week, to speak to an anonymous lover” in 2007.\textsuperscript{45} Upon completion of the performance series, the work has been exhibited as an audio installation along with four posters in many museum and art spaces, among them leading institutions such as MoMA in New York, Tate Modern in the UK and Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love? was displayed as part of Hayes’ retrospective exhibition in Moderna Museet titled Echo, open to visitors in 2019 from April 13 to August 11.

To start with the form of the work would ‘publicise’ the hidden connotations in its content that will be scrutinised later on as the chapter proceeds. But firstly, to give a brief description of the display of the work in Stockholm’s Moderna Museet is in line with what is being blurred by Hayes in this work in its content; between public and private, which is to be discussed later when considering the content of the artwork. On the small island of Stockholm named Skeppsholmen, a very central location in the city centre where the museum is located, a protesting voice without a body welcomed you during the timeline of the exhibition as soon as you crossed the bridge from the mainland. An old military base, the island is nowadays home to three museums —Moderna Museet, Museum of Far East Antiquities, and ArkDes—one of the leading performance institutions called MDT, and the Royal Academy of Art, turning it from a prohibited public space to an open and civic one, a concept that is nowadays a significant figure for the social state and its support to cultural and artistic activities as well as the public’s contribution to it.

Hanging on the branches of a tree, some loudspeakers are not so loud that they take the complete attention of someone and invade the whole public space, but audible enough for people, who are either having a walk or visiting a museum, and for students and professors heading to school, to notice there is someone in search of a missing dream, a dream that is

\textsuperscript{44} The term is borrowed from the Whitney Museum’s description of the work. “Sharon Hayes” Whitney Museum, accessed at October 10, 2019. https://whitney.org/Exhibitions/SharonHayes.

slightly desperate and includes a massive longing. Although Sweden is known for its
democratic values and social implementations, this protesting voice is not usual for the scene,
since streets of Stockholm do not host protests on a regular basis. After entering Moderna
Museet to see the exhibition, down the stairs to the second floor, the same voice welcomes
you once more, this time with the visuals accompanying the audio work. Loudspeakers in the
museum are positioned around a small stage this time, making it quite clear where the
protesting voice is coming from unlike the setting at the entrance of the island. Moreover,
these loudspeakers are not in the gallery space where Hayes’ exhibition is taking place; but
rather located before the entrance to it, enlarging and further developing the theme of the
public as much as possible in the museum and turning this communal space or a space that
visitors just pass by during other exhibitions into a stage where a protest is taking place in the
form of an artwork. All these elements highlight Hayes’ investment in the public. However,
Hayes’ main interest with engaging the public is through the public speech and the method
that is in use thus becomes public speech rather than a simple occupation of the public space
itself.\(^{46}\) Returning to the outdoor installation, in a similar way, when one considers the
invisibility of the loudspeakers amongst the tree branches, shows that the speech somehow
comes forward instead of underlining the significance of the space being public. Thus, what is
striking in Hayes’ work is a performativity of taking action through speech. This sort of
performativity’s relation with the public speech is apparent when one listens to the sound
coming from the loudspeakers carefully; Hayes’ voice is not a recording realised in a studio
setting but it includes the noise from New York’s busy streets that interfere with her words,
which gives the impression of listening to public speech even in the silence of Moderna
Museet’s setting. In a similar way, the visuality of the installation in the museum and the sonic
features of it are not in a hierarchical relationship. On the contrary, they are very much in
balance. Hence, not only do Hayes’ words and the feelings tied to them reconfigure the
conventional setting of the museum; but by bringing the sound of protest through the usual
noises of the street, the audience are encouraged to visualise and imagine themselves in
another place with respect to the situatedness and conditions of the performance series under
which Hayes realised during the course of the five days in 2007. The loudspeakers are placed
in a way so as to surround the stage, where one listens and experiences the installation in the

\(^{46}\) Hayes using the term public speech herself. Sharon Hayes, “In My Little Corner of the World,
best way possible technically. The conditions offered with this stage, in a sense, forces the audience to be on it. Rather than watching a body with a protesting face, this stage feels like as if it is made in order to tackle the very idea of protest as spectacle, where protestors are on stage and putting up a visual offering to be consumed as explained by Guy Debord as he discusses the spectacle not as “a collection of images”, but rather “a social relationship between people that is mediated by images”.47 Hence, experiencing a protesting sound and its accompanying visuals on a stage where no one is performing itself could be considered as a subversive play with the very ideas of constructed ideas to explain a social uprising.

As one comes across with the interconnection between posters and the audio installation, the display of the artwork manifests its content. The posters that visualise Sharon Hayes as she speaks through microphones, each poster being in a different colour, not only refers to the colour of the rainbows which is one of the most famous symbol for queer existence and activism, but also is inspired by the 1970s and 1980s posters of the movement considering its graphic design48. The effect of two different displays need to be mentioned in order to understand how Hayes’ work connects to activism in its structure as they also offer a potential of how to navigate through the content of her artistic practice. First, it disrupts the public space with a love letter that usually is not considered as something to be read out-loud through a public speech. Second, it displays a queer protest in a museum setting, a museum that still very much depends on conventional ideas of an art space/institution.

**Publicising a Love Affair**

This raises the question of how the work plays with public and private spaces through the content, meaning the expression of love in the letters. Hayes talks to an anonymous lover by reading the letters. A lover that has been absent physically for a while and couldn’t have been reached by phone or any other medium, Hayes expresses her frustration in the first of five letters—one for each day of the performance—written to her. Hayes’ letters begin with salutations that are not common, or rather unusual to be engaged while hearing or listening to a public speech. They call out this imaginary lover with salutations such as “My own most


“Are you well? I am worried about you my love. I wonder if I worry about you because these are dangerous times or because you are not here with me, because I can’t touch you to affirm that you are alive, that you are real. You know how I used to ask you that, ask you if you were real, even when you were here. The truth is that you are now my real life and that I have practically no life without you.\(^{50}\)

The quote shows a truly personal letter, that tries to deal with the absence, longing, desire to a lover who is far away as a scream from someone who does not know how to deal with the affects caused by this absence. In addition, given that this letter as well as the other ones are being read in a public space is intrinsically in contradiction with what we consider to be ‘personal’. A letter, especially one that is addressed to a lover, is meant to be read privately by a specific person, and in this case, by a lover. Thus, reading a love letter in one of the most crowded public spaces in New York, *disorientates* what is conventionally expected from such a practice of writing and reading a love letter. At this point, it relates to Ahmed’s idea of disorientation, which she deals with in her *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Ahmed argues that the orientations that structure our life are not only affecting the spaces we are living in but also how we perceive the world we inhabit in a way that means these orientations decide “‘who’ or ‘what’ we direct our energy and attention toward”.\(^{51}\) Thus, the affair being personal and its expression taking place through a public speech unfolds a practice as it messes with the assumed and uncriticised borders of “the personal” and “the public” until feminist theories intervention; it blurs the lines between public and private,

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\(^{49}\) Sharon Hayes, *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love?*. Transcription of Letters from Moderna Museet.

\(^{50}\) Hayes, *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love?*

concepts that were often deemed separate until the emergence of feminist theories, a connection later strengthened by the radical premises of queer theory.  

Another significant point is when Hayes reminds the lover about the times she was asking if the lover is real, which brings forth the questions about reality in that “real”. Imagining in terms of the disorientations the attributed realities to private and public are what is diminished here and consequently what would be considered as leading to the disorientations. Hence, thinking about reality and how that reality is being subjected to disintegration with the above mentioned blurring of the lines makes apparent the concept of disorientation. Disorientation emerges when the conditions of a given reality is questioned and thus shaken. At this point, it might be useful to remember Weekend, and the sort of disorientation that is found in the film. What is at stake there is a disorientation that with the emergence of a love, a sense of losing time as Glen and Russell experiences a forceful present and thus a confusion about how to fit into each others lives. This hints of disorientation and how to read it in Hayes’ work where it occurs with an absence of the lover, the diminishing of an orientation that is built around that lover. Considering this difference, disorientations and the variety of experiencing them requires a closer look at the very idea of orientation.

Traces of the construction of orientations in space is in the very centre of Ahmed’s theory. Just as Ahmed begins Queer Phenomenology, she immediately begins with a broad and helpful definition of the word orientation. Orientation is what one could call the know-how to find one’s way in a given space through a familiarity with the objects and directions. Thus, the orientation is a know-how, some sort of navigation in the world with reference to the world and the objects in it. On the other hand, by placing the use of the term “sexual orientation”, Ahmed brings the queer horizons of orientation, and thus that of phenomenology, to the horizon. She asks the following questions; “What does it mean for sexuality to be lived as oriented? What difference does it make ‘what’ or ‘who’ we are oriented toward in the very direction of our desire?” As queer theory is engaging in this process of directing one’s desire and sexuality to be lived as oriented, Hayes’s work could be imagined in this setting of orientation and disorientation of Ahmed’s work. Experiencing a

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52 Butler, Gender Trouble, 167.
53 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 4.
54 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 1.
queer love, according to Ahmed, could be comprehended with a metaphor to desire lines, a term that is used in landscape architecture in order to name the paths that are followed by people in their everyday life, other than the ones they are supposed to or the ones they are expected to use. Desire lines is a playful term in itself for the words it inhabits; as desire somehow points out a more intuitive and unforeseeable trajectory, whereas a line is a combination of points, one leading to the other. This “leading to each other” generally a trajectory that “make sense”, like the phrase “line of logic” suggests. Thus desire’s deviation from what is expected or logical to the unstructured and out of line proposes new possibilities for what can be conceived as a line. What Ahmed sees in this metaphor is the world we live in as a path of heterosexual systems, or rather what Monique Wittig called “straight mind” in the article she wrote with the same title. Thus, the deviations where Ahmed’s focus is shifted in her statement, as deviations from the heterosexual world which forms queer paths —or disorientations— could be thought as a key to understand Hayes’ communication to her lover as being disoriented from the private and finds expression in a public speech for the impossibility of being in touch with the lover as mentioned in the letters written, performed, and recorded in Everything Else Has Failed. In other words, the very deviations from the heterosexual world are also the possibilities of experiencing the world in new paths —in this case, queer paths— although still being in the heterosexual structures. This is to say that queer paths do not construct new structures as lines to be imposed and followed, but rather operate as contingent routes that might disappear at any time as they are deviant from the beginning as a method. Thus, reading a love letter that is private as an act of public speech is what queers Hayes’ artistic practice in this sense in its form, apart from including a content of queer love. Here, I take the public reading of the letter as a desire line, which do not follow the traditional expressions of compulsory heterosexuality. The public speech that Hayes’ work commits both as a performance and an audio installation accounts for a disorientating and transformative force of queer love.

Clearly, Hayes disorientates love from being private with the deviations mentioned earlier; this imaginary lover is asked political questions, and the same lover is not within the

55 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 20.
57 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 21.
reach of Hayes for political reasons. Experiencing and living love with her lover while the lover is not within reach, neither physically nor communicatively, forces Hayes’ to make a public speech as the love in question has been disorientated from its usual pattern of being in contact. Hayes poses publications of love letters, not in the form of written material but as a public speech. Publication, in reference to making something public, diminishes the orientation of a relationship accepted by heterosexual understanding of it which is located in private space, such as a home or bedroom. Invading a public space for a speech that is embodied through words of love is Hayes’ way of queering love.

The publicity also make a reference to “being closeted”. The terms being “out” and “closeted” in their historical connotations, meaning being open and expressive about having any kind of queer identity or being discrete about it and experiencing it within restricted conditions, could be considered as having lost its relevance today. However, expressing and experiencing certain identities and sexualities still strikes as two different things, although not isolated. In her book *Epistemology of Closet*, Kosofsky Sedgwick explains that “being in the closet” and “coming out” is more complicated than it seems for many reasons, among them is the safety of the individuals in questions.58 In that sense thinking of different desired conditions of living, safety and freedom respectively with these terms —in the way it is discussed by Halberstam earlier— are very much blurred in Hayes work too. Hayes expressed this desire in one of the letters as she desperately tries to reach her lover:

> Are you well? I am worried about you my love. I wonder if I worry about you because these are dangerous times or because you are not here with me, because I can’t touch you to affirm that you are alive, that you are real.59

These very private words are spoken publicly. The performance’s happening as public speech indicates that there is a coming out, while the identity of the lover is never obvious in the letters and the audio installation hides this even more than the performance itself —

59 Hayes, Letter 1.
considering the queer image embodied with Hayes’ appearance— plays with this notion. While coming out and being in the closet offers different kinds of orientations, transition from one to the other suggests the possibility of a disorientation as a result. Being out there, Hayes publicises or publicly declares her love because she experiences a disorientation with the absence of a lover that is considered to be something which is experienced publicly. It is crucial to note that here the feeling of disorientation is expressed with a disoriented happening; the letters are read in public, among people who have no idea of what is really taking place at that specific moment. To remember Ahmed’s statement in the introduction in which she says “disorientation is a way of describing the feelings that gather when we lose our sense of who it is that we are”. Although this can arguably happen in any situation, under the conditions of disorientation caused by queer content and context —meaning from a deviation from norm— it gains a queer horizon. A lost sense of who she is apparently causes a disorientation of time and place in Hayes’ work.

As Hayes’ letters are oriented towards the imaginary lover —stated by Hayes’ in the works description as audio installation— the question of being oriented with an imagination becomes crucial; how is it possible to be oriented with an imagination, which is apparently not corporeal? What are the effects of being oriented with imagination rather than with objects that form our daily life? The imagination might lead up to the political implications of love and, especially what it means to politicise queer love.

**Politicising a Publicised Love Affair**

So far, I have tried to analyse Hayes’ work in its claim for a public space for a love relationship. The crucial point here is that Hayes’ artwork is clearly concerned with the blurring the line between public-private, and as the previous section has shown, this relates to the disorientation in the way that compulsory heterosexuality orientates love as a private affair and thus something as not to invade a public space. The next section will examine the work from a related but different perspective, that of political activism, and here too the notion of disorientation will be key again but in a different sense, namely the individuals’ demands from love and how this demand contribute to the understanding of queer love.

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60 Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 3.
The title of Hayes’ artwork from 2007 asks the question one cannot reply in an instance. You want it to be “time for love”, but at the same time it is very disappointing and grim to accept that “everything else has failed”. Being politically inclined with queer activism, the work reveals, by even just reading its name, a sense of being disoriented from the everyday world, its capitalist structures and political corruption, which are topics and critical questions that have long been in close connection to queer thinking. As a result, one of the first things that comes to mind as reading the title is a sense of fantasy, which emerges from a feeling of desperation and a need for change, both on a personal and social level.

Political activism often presents a world of fantasy in future, where the current conditions and situations that are unjust, unequal, oppressive, and favours those in power instead of the underprivileged are subverted. Therefore, it could be said that the public speech is a way to highlight the proposition that the underprivileged offers alternatives to the existing systems as a way of thinking outside of norms and mainstreams. Instead, it poses an imaginative possibility for social remedies in order to overcome those imbalanced practices and structures. Hayes’ performances, consisting of love letters to an imaginary lover, deal with the questions of political hope/hopelessness. Being love letters, the first thing to consider is that love letters are never written to be the object of a public speech —furthermore, these letters are political in their core, unfolding the social repression which took a different trajectory as the war in Iraq began in 2001. Thus, Hayes makes a public speech —which became difficult during the time— possible through personal love letters.

But where do the queer practices lie in this practice of politicising? Why not consider ‘love’ in the conventional sense as a political act rather than focusing on queer love? Ahmed’s words here can pose a strong argument regarding why to favour the letter as a method:

Heterosexuality as a compulsory orientation reproduces more than "itself": it is a mechanism for the reproduction of culture, or even of the "attributes" that are assumed to pass along a family line, such as whiteness. It is for this reason that queer as a sexual orientation “queers” more than sex, just as other kinds of queer effects can in turn end up queering sex.

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61 Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place. 33.
62 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 161.
The conflict that can be seen in Ahmed’s words is one that is between compulsory heterosexuality as an orientation and queer as a deviation and does not merely arise from intentionality towards a sexual object. She takes it one step further and brings forth the potentials that it carries for the disruption of compulsory structures as she says “to make things queer is certainly to disturb order of things”. What Ahmed means by saying queering more than sex is that the act itself transcends the sex and offers alternative ways of living and experiencing in relation to this sexual deviation. Thinking in terms of Hayes’ work, her public speech distorts an accepted structure of love as private as opposed to social or political. Thus, the effect of queer love in Hayes’ work is moving beyond the sexual and reaching out to a cultural level as it deconstructs the so-called barriers of private and political; hence what is queered in this relation is not only sex, but also how a relation can take up which sorts of spaces in this binary understanding of public and private. Disorientation here embodied in Hayes performance and the effect manifests itself as politicising the public space. That becomes apparent in Hayes’ letter, in remembrance of what her lover tells her;

Me contending that love is not a viable political position and that it was a ridiculous thing to celebrate once in the midst of a war much less a second time. You claiming I was a hypocrite and that if I didn’t believe it was socially transformative I wouldn’t have spent so many hours away from my work or rallied so many of my friends to try to convince you to love me.

This kind of love that challenges each other politically makes a sharp contrast with what Ahmed sees in a restaurant as an example of orientation to compulsory heterosexuality and how it establishes social structures rather than a bond that emerges from love. She gives the example of a holiday she went with her partner at a resort, where, upon entering to the restaurant of the resort, they are struck by a symbolic decoration of the heterosexual coupling. She explains the situation as following: “Table after table, couple after couple, taking the same form: one man sitting by one woman around a’round table’, facing each other ‘over’ the

63 Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 160.
64 Hayes, *Everything Else Has Failed!*
The table is a striking example for its place in phenomenological tradition which mentioned earlier; to revisit the importance of it briefly, it is the object that makes philosophising possible by creating a field for performing the requirements of it, for example, reading and writing. However, in the case of the heterosexual matrix, it is not the working table anymore but instead the dining table that gains meaning by defining a regulatory power. The dining table becomes a tool to regulate the position of man and woman, how they interact, how they relate to each other as well as how they relate to the structure that surrounds them. As described by Ahmed, they are facing each other, and looking over the table to each other, with each table being the same. The most surprising part for her is “the sheer force of regularity of that which is similar”.

The similarity mentioned here, no doubt, firstly is the similarity of the object, i.e. tables and chairs as visuals. However, it is also important to keep in mind that these objects are not simply and only objects in the sense that we only encounter them or that they are completely inactive. They regulate the idea of a couple, and thus they form how coupledom is practiced as a repetition —here the repetition of the objects become repetition of a system, a system of heterosexuality and the experience of being a couple that is in line with the social norms. The lines that are straight becomes a way of living and turns into structures with repetition, just like every couple in the restaurant repeats a performance of not only eating, but also the compulsory actions of structural and social norms of heterosexuality. In a sharp contradiction with Ahmed’s example of the orientation of objects through heterosexual repetition, Hayes’ work disrupts this kind of orientation, i.e. disorientates love from this setting of having a repetitive act that is inherited from generation to generation. What Ahmed sees in this repetition is a mode of unreflected performance that constitutes being a couple. As opposed to this, Hayes’ public speech operates as a subversive response to this kind of repetitive, uncritical behaviour. The setting of love that is encountered in Hayes’ work, firstly, does not include an embodied partner; instead one is faced with the absence of a lover. Moreover, as this lover is an imaginary one, it is impossible to embody it while this

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65 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 82.
66 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 87.
67 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 82.
68 Butler, Gender Trouble, 185.
imagination makes it possible to think of this lover in various forms, genders, shapes, and identities. Therefore, the lover in this queer artistic practice is rather unfixed whereas in the table Ahmed mentions being a subject in an affair is only possible with the fixed idea of what being a couple entails —meaning a man and a woman, sitting across each other facing. The monologues in the letters are intriguing not only because of the variety of topics from daily life to political concerns, but also for the reason that it constantly and relentlessly blurs the line between the topics that are considered isolated by compulsory heterosexuality. Here it is important to note Hayes’ outfit is rather ‘masculine’ as it can be observed in the documentation of performances, while audio installation does not let one to consider this kind of associations with visual gender symbols. The lack of gender symbols in both Hayes’ and her imaginary lover is a disorientation from what is expected from the social division of labour that is attributed to a couple consisting of a man and a woman. From the letters, it is understood that the lover is somewhere that requires a political protest and involvement. At the same time, Hayes is protesting against her lover, her anger to the political barriers that are set between her and her lover with a public speech, that is itself a protest.

With this understanding of objects and heterosexuality, what is presented as queer love in the love letters of Hayes becomes the subject of another analysis. While explaining the orientation of compulsory heterosexuality, Ahmed talks about heterosexuality’s being a fantasy and the implications that are put forward with it. She argues that “the fantasy of a natural orientation is an orientation device that organizes worlds around the form of the heterosexual couple, as if it were from this ‘point’ that the world unfolds”. Accordingly, Hayes says that the importance and decision of an imaginary lover in her work is that it poses an idea of fantasy, that is very much similar to the fantasy that can be traced in political acts and activism. She considers fantasy as a product of the will to transform the world, a rebellion against what is considered unjust or unfair in the political context and conditions of life. Thus, fantasy in a queer context differentiates itself from “the fantasy of natural orientation” that is mentioned by Ahmed, insofar as the former seeks to transform the existing structures, not by proposing new ones but simply referring to the desire lines that deviates from the straight line in Ahmed’s illuminating descriptions and analogy. The crucial point to

69 Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology, 85.
70 My personal conversation with Hayes after her talk in KW in Berlin, June 2019.
be noticed here for *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love?*, as a first step, is that it strives to transform a public space with a public speech that is also a political protest. This element in the work constitutes a critical point which displays hints on how queer practices disorientate; they threaten the orientation of this structure that is considered to be natural, which is in fact simply an institution. This institution of heterosexuality is made up by the repetition of certain actions and norms and controls sexual behaviour as much as social life. The idea of fantasy here also relates to Hayes work in the sense that Hayes proposes a counter fantasy that takes part in queerness and is opposed to heterosexual practices of being a couple. Apart from that, the fantasy of compulsory heterosexuality has become so solid and permanent that it cannot be named as a fantasy anymore as it does not bend or is reluctant to change and adjustments. At this point, it is possible to think of queer fantasy as a tent, that is ready to be relocated and vulnerable to its surroundings and conditions that is built under and in according to; whereas heterosexuality is a building simply erected to stay and be permanent through an intergenerational continuation —such as reproduction, which is theorised as the main aim and task of heterosexual couple according to many, like Halberstam and Ahmed.

In this chapter, I discussed queer love from the perspective of its transformative power, both in terms of how it disorientates the subject in its absence and its potential for political action. Hayes exposes the hidden structures that are concealed by the repetition of compulsory heterosexuality and brings forward queer love which is at the same time a political act that reclaims public space. An unsettling situation that is caused by publicising love letters with reading opens up the performative side of her work. Performativity itself poses a certain display of and play with orientation/disorientation. Firstly, staging a performance itself requires an orientation to that space as an artistic practice. Secondly, realising that performance in a busy street that is known to as a centre for commerce is reorienting the space itself. Lastly, this performance being political love letters is an act of disorientation both for love and protest. Since, firstly, love is being responsible for being accountable the political

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72 Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place*, 5.
Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 86.
questions and problems; and secondly, politics are being involved in a love affair and preventing it to be realised as it did once.

The work also invites the audience to the stage with its display in Moderna Museet (see pic 3) and thus makes the audience central and open to be observed in a protest. In that, it gently forces its audience to perform a situation of being on the stage. That could be thought as revealing what is concealed with the repetition of the heterosexual habits mentioned by Ahmed that I highlighted earlier. The problem with the habits is that they become invisible with the repetition in time so much that it becomes possible for them to be taken as natural. On a stage where love is performed publicly and politically, the audience is taken into a protest, and in that, they are taken out of the system in the experience of the artwork as it is challenging the orientations and regulations of heterosexuality. The experience causes a disorientation from the natural as it presents a fantasy that is radically volatile and ambiguous both in being directed towards an imaginary lover and being charged with political interruptions among the love letters. Although not forcing you to perform a protest, it forces you to be present in the moment of protest that is a partially involuntary participation.

In relation to the public and participation, I turn to exhibiting queer artistic practices and what sort of publicising elements they participate in themselves within spaces in their display.
Chapter 3: Walking on the Borderlines - Curating Queerness as Forms of Presence

In the previous chapters, I have discussed what would be a possible way to approach queer art in terms of concepts that are deployed by prominent queer theorists, and in turn, how selected artistic practices could intervene in those very concepts. In this sort of overlapped intervention of theory and artistic practices, the form and content of the artwork and how these two seemingly different parts interact have been a main issue throughout my analysis. In a similar way, another dichotomy that is generally taken for granted is the one between the artwork and its display. Hence, for a scrutiny that furthers what drives this thesis in its engagement with the artworks, namely disorientations, the topic will revolves around queer artworks engagement with the spaces of art institutions in this chapter. In other words, I will elaborate on the disorientations that artworks and art institutions create within each other when queer artistic practices are displayed in such spaces.

Modes of display of any artwork could be analysed under different terms given the contextual differences in the exhibitions that they are a part of; such as themes of exhibitions, curatorial choices, spatial conditions of where they occupy, etc. Whereas any queer artistic practice by itself could make a claim, an assertion on queerness, a discussion of exhibitions requires a focus on those claims and assertions not only from artists, but also from a curatorial standpoint. Thus, after discussing some artworks and curatorial standpoints that strives for a queer mediation of artworks in relations to the spaces and institutions that are inherently
heterosexualised, I turn to engage in a discussion on how a queer intervention to curatorial understandings could be possible. A variety of examples are covered that spread over time and space; including the display of Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love? as well as “Let the Record Show…” and “Men at water. Jan Hietala and Eugène Jansson in Dialogue” curated by Bill Olander and Patrick Steorn, respectively. As queer curating, although in a small amount, has been a topic in relation to queer art and exhibitions that try to engage with related topics to queer and its surroundings, I will debate for a possible disorientation both in terms of exhibition spaces and curatorial decisions.

**Mutually Disorientating**

Contemporary queer artistic practices, as I have argued, reveal new worlds to audiences in two ways; firstly, they bring to the for overlooked and ignored experiences by sexual minorities with a new order of significance in life (i.e. they revolutionise the content of art); and secondly they radically challenge the conditions of those experiences by asserting news ways of understanding experience. This second point has opened up the way for my discussions of artwork in terms of disorientation and queer temporalities; since both time and space play an important part in how we perceive them. The part that is still to be considered is how to mediate these artistic practices both on a private and public level, meaning individually and institutionally. Communicating the artwork can be conceived in various ways; first of all, an artwork communicates through its representation to the audience. How an artwork is displayed, first includes a process of mediation with the conditions of the space where it becomes embodied, and secondly it includes a process of mediation and framing in accordance to both the context and content of the artwork.

As much as contemporary queer artistic practices can be seen through the lenses of disorientating effects, both in temporal and spatial terms, these artworks also assert themselves with another disorienting effect in the exhibition places. Art institutions, especially state-run museums —though they might be independent from government bodies— have traditionally been sites of oppression for artists who are sexual dissidents and many of

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73 By heterosexualised spaces and/or institutions, I take the examples and definitions from Halberstam and Ahmed; thus, for the former, they refer to the spaces that are oriented with heterosexuality and carries their symbolic codes or uses. For the later, I take the institutions that implement, help to implement or stay silent for implementing compulsory heterosexuality.
these institutions continue to do so. It is a well-known historical fact that museums have been tools for censorship, be it overt or covert, when it comes to display of artworks by LGBTI+ artists at best, if not they are completely dismissing any artistic production by them. Some examples for such censorship are Robert Mapplethorpe’s planned retrospective “The Perfect Moment” in Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in 1989 being cancelled upon attacks by conservative politicians; Eugène Jansson’s painting *The Navy Bathhouse*’s removal from the display from Thielska Galleriet as his homosexuality become more evident during 1970’s more than 50 years after his death; David Wojnarowicz’s videos *Fire in My Belly*’s removal from the exhibition “Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture” in 2010, just before the opening by Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery despite curator Jonathan D. Katz’s arguments —co-curated by David Ward—, and so on. Additionally, when exhibited or added to the collection, the archival material on these artworks and framing of artists in relation to sexual identity has been violently overlooked, manipulated, and deemed insignificant, if not rejected totally. Wojnarowicz, whose artistic practices continues to inspire queer art years after his death, comments on the Andres Serrano and Robert Mapplethorpe’s works removal from a show back in 1989 as follows:

> Although the anger sparked within the art community is certainly and will hopefully grow stronger, the actions by Helms and D’Amato only follow standards that have been formed and implemented by the “arts” community itself. The major museums in New York, not to mention museum around the country, are just as guilty as of this kind of selective cultural support and denial. It is standard practice to make invisible any kind of sexual imaging other than white straight male erotic fantasies.74

Such examples of censorship and oppression should be almost impossible to gather under a piece of writing and the scope of such a research would probably make an encyclopaedia rather than a book or a thesis — especially considering most of the documented cases are only available in Western countries only became accessible due to long battles of civil rights and —relatively— gaining those rights by the so-called sexual minorities. For all these reasons and more, representation of contemporary queer artworks hints at a certain change; perhaps a

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turn in the history that at least the contemporary practices that engage with and participate in queerness cannot be deemed irrelevant or overlooked simply because of their ‘deviant’ content. This trespassing of art institutions by queer artworks and artists could even be considered as a triumph in terms of visibility, acceptance, and tolerance. Queer artistic practices might be welcome today in many museum to pass through their doors in the western parts of the world, however, the lack of reorganisation of the institutions that would pose a change in their structures does not only depend on them, but on a rather broader scheme of state apparatus and society at large.\textsuperscript{75} In that sense, queer still trespass —figuratively at times and spaces while literally at others— the borders of any institution in general considering the lack of structural changes in compulsory heterosexuality. Yet, in this unavoidable contact of queer and art institutions, one question remains significant, especially for the artworks in question; how do these artworks protect their queerness in these spaces, which were once operators of organised oppression by the state and conservative politics? In a similar fashion, the question can be directed towards such art institutions; what do art institutions transform within themselves with these artwork and exhibitions, and in turn, is there anything being transformed within those very institutions structurally during or upon their engagement with queer artistic practice?

Considering the disorientating effects of these artworks, their relation to the spaces, in which they are exhibited, becomes an important element to be discovered. With their display to the public, these artworks become ‘present’ within the course of a specific exhibition, which gives it a temporal presence. Since contemporary artistic exhibitions generally take place in a venue generally between six to twelve weeks, they are inhabited in these areas only during this amount of time. Although all kinds of artistic displays in institutions, whether queer or not, are subjected to this temporal circulation, it does have a different effect for queer artistic practices for two reasons. Firstly, it risks the queer temporality that the queer artistic practices might claim or bring to the fore; secondly, since the collections of museums has been historically blind to mediating queer artistic practices as queer, they are likely to get lost in their connection to earlier works or to the collection in general, such as other artworks would do even with some keywords that they are tagged with.

\textsuperscript{75} Andrea Fraser, “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique”, \textit{Artforum}, Vol. 44, Iss. 1 (Sep., 2005); 100.
In “Queer Exhibitions/Queer Curating” Jonathan D. Katz and Änne Söll, their editorial introduction to On Curating’s issue called “Queer Curating”, writes that the sort of presence that is asserted by queer artworks in museums is not solely about literal presence, but rather forces us to reflect on a “discursive presence”. Their argument is based on the identities of the artists that often refer to sexual identities, which are accepted as minorities in society whereas these sexual identities are nothing new to the art world and these identities have been visible in artistic scenes for a long time. In short, their claim is that gay and lesbian identities are not unfamiliar faces in artistic areas, the literal presence has already been granted for a long time and what needs to be achieved is a discursive presence. However, their argumentation misses out an crucial point; while they refer to queer as something that “tries to go beyond the idea of a permanent and stable identity”, they take the museums and art institutions as bodies that carry the same values intrinsically and essentially. In other words, their claim when putting a dichotomy between literal and discursive presence is the assumption that the art institutions carry a similar way of being that accepts a rather ever-changing existence, such as queer is.

Walking among these isolating notions, Katz and Söll’s attempt to deal with questions concerning queer curating in this dichotomy of the literal and the discursive, the two aspects become also a tool to solidify the assumption of time and space as isolated and not related. Assuming that the literal presence of queer artistic practices due to museums’ collection having works by LGBTI+ artists imply that revisions regarding museum spaces and collections would be enough to solve the problems that have been oppressing queer artistic practices and a considerable amount of artists through time would be sufficient. However, in relation to what I argued on compulsory heterosexuality being so solid and permanent, based on Ahmed’s framing of it as a fantasy, in the previous chapter, art institutions —especially state-run museums— are solid and permanent as spatial constructions and yearns for longevity of their existence, just like heterosexual time does. Their exhibition circulation comes secondary to their permanent collections in this sense, since their identity per se has

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77 Katz and Söll, “Queer Exhibitions, Queer Curating”, 3. Here, I am using museums and art institutions as referring to spaces and systems, respectively, for my upcoming discussion related to spatial and temporal as well as public and private.
been erected on the existence of those collections, which are selections, generally, from times that do not reflect on gender issues let alone topics of sexuality and the cultural phenomena that emerge from them. In a sense, these institutions are ideal neither as temporalities nor as spaces that offer to exhibit queerness.

A similar problem arises in Isabel Hufschmidt’s essay “The Queer Institutional, Or How To Inspire Queer Curating” in the same issue of On Curating.\(^78\) In the realisation of the symposium that led to the publication of the On Curating issue, Hufschmidt asks a question that is vital: she wonders if there is a straight curating if we are to talk about a queer one. She leaves the question rather unanswered and open-ended. A similar discussion in queer theory has revolved around whether there was heterosexuality before the appearance of the term “homosexuality”.\(^79\) The compulsory heterosexuality’s and its operations’ invisibility as structuring the society in disciplinary ways often prevents us to think why there is no such naming that implies the discursive presence of normative regulations. At this point, it is important to note that heterosexuality seems like it has no literal presence in museums, but its discursive presence can apparently be found in their structures, since Katz and Söll rightly directs our attention to the lack of discursive presence of queerness. Thus, I take literal and discursive presences not as distinct entities, as the former comes before and leads to the latter. In other words, literal presence, in the sense that naming artists as queer, having artworks that presents queer perspective, cannot be separated from discursive one since one is only possible with the other.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, whose artistic practice has been considered as one of the most prominent of queer perspective, approaches the ever-increasing use of term “public” in his essay “Public and Private: Spheres of Influence” after making it clear that he is not directly interested in public as such. He states rather than the term itself the question for him is “… in its opposite, in what make the public possible, and that is the private”.\(^80\) The analogy that he presents to illustrate public-private discussion is rather intriguing though not very unexpected; he sees a resemblance between this duality and indoor-outdoor binary. Now, if a queer

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curating, in the sense that Katz and Söll, as well as Hufschmidt defends or at least tries to elaborate, strives to enter to the “indoors” with a feeling of being left “outside”, what they say actually becomes paradoxical. Moreover, Katz and Söll claim that queer artworks have literal presence, and hence the topic of queer curating should be taken “in distinct contrast to most minority politics, where representation and demographics are the key terms of contestation, in the art world, queer presence is hardly either marginal or something new”. Still, queer art, as of today, takes up more space compared to neither people of colour artists nor women artists/feminist art; representation of women artist only takes up 5% of the all artists represented by institutions or find themselves space in their collections, although 50% of the art students have been women since 1983. This implies that stating the number of queer exhibitions in the world as not more than fifty until today does not differ in terms of the numbers concerning the representation of other oppressed parts of societies. Thus, asserting that queer presence is not new in the art scene does not guarantee a presence, since the same presence has been valid for women and people of colour, of which partially had political claims for their under-representations.

Thus, it seems like the problem of queer curating, especially in the settings of art institutions, does not seem much about whether the doors of such spaces could be trespassed or not, and on what scale when they are able to do so. Or, in other words, what can be dynamics of public and private concerning queerness if we are to consider the entry of queer art into the museums as a way of publicising queerness. Dichotomies like homosexuality/heterosexuality, whiteness/blackness or male/female are asserted by the oppressed in their initiation, and organised and exploited by the oppressors. Then, in an attempt to exhibit and curate queer art, it might be useful to think beyond those dichotomies and see public and private under a new, queer perspective.

81 Katz and Söll, “Queer Exhibitions, Queer Curating”, 3 (emphasis mine).
84 Homosexuality as a cultural construct is highly associated with Foucault’s writings. As a result he discusses heterosexuality under a similar construction in The History of Sexuality.
Transcending the Lines

Gonzalez-Torres’ ideas on the dichotomy of public and private mirror a similar approach to Hayes’ operating between the terms in *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time For Love?*. While, as museums are public spaces, and thus many curators and art historians rightly strive for both representation of queer artists in those spaces and transformation of collections, archives and communication materials concerning artworks is a part of queer struggle, what should be kept in mind is that these spaces operate under the very assumption of public and private being opposed to each other. As Hayes asks the political questions to her lover, demanding answers for both private and political issues, her work not only crossing the lines but also implies that the lines are simply a product that does not need to be followed. Demanding and seeking possibilities of queer curating might as well be in this act of not-following and by deviating to find desire lines instead of assuming such an isolation between the terms of public and private.

“And did the creating of museums have something to do with this newly available resources, the public?” asks Gonzalez-Torres by provoking, after highlighting the public’s connotations with consumerism as the industrial revolution became a regulating tool in capitalist society.\(^{85}\) Gonzalez-Torres then goes on to explain that private life is only possible for certain privileged positions that are defined by class, race, gender and sexuality. Turning our faces to the private rather than the public, he claims that there is no private space or entity, but one can only talk about private property in the capitalist, racialised, heterosexual system in which we live in. It becomes important that stating queer is not only about sexuality but also goes beyond to cultural, political and artistic realms might actually refer to two different sides that emerge from a common ground. It might call to an action of questioning the system and bending its structures and also it might lead us to a rejection of operating within the conditions offered by the system.

To talk about curating queer within the walls of the museum seems more like the first option, which Katz, Söll and Hufschmidt favour, and it is an important step to transform the museum audience —especially given the numbers presented by Katz which show that many exhibitions deals with queer ideas have been the most visited exhibitions in the museums that

\(^{85}\) Gonzalez-Torres, “Public and Private: Spheres of Influence”, 78.
they inhabited such as his co-curated “Hide/Seek” in National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute among others. This act publicises queer art within the dichotomy of public/private, distorts the lines that are drawn between the two and suggests that these might not be as strict as expected. The effect of this kind of exposure of sexuality and the cultural extensions that grows from it is a disorientation of its own for the “public”, the very public that is posed agains the act of privatisation of sexuality that Gonzalez-Torres mentions. The disruption of such limitations hints at desire lines and how they become “present”; Wojnarowicz also highlights this restrictive invention as he writes;

To make the private into something public is an action that has repercussions in the presented world… Each public disclosure of a private reality becomes something of a magnet that can attract others with a similar reference; thus each public disclosure of a fragment of private reality serves as a dismantling tool against ONE-TRIBE NATION; it lifts the curtains for a brief peek and reveals the probable existence of literally millions of tribes.

Revealing the million tribes in Wojnarowicz’s words is a disorientation of a one-tribe nation in the sense that compulsory heterosexuality’s fantasy of being the only possible form of existence both sexually and culturally. Considering queer works by artists also as queer expressions, the exhibiting practices and curatorial methods might follow such disruptive ways that the artworks deploy. In the case of museums, approaches to engage with queerness, in this sense, could take many forms rather than simply taking artworks within the museums during the course of an exhibition and thus, though indirectly and unintentionally, straightening them by only engaging as representing artworks in a temporal fashion. To understand queer exhibitions only in terms of its content by eliminating the possibility of engaging with a queer form leads to a straightening of the queerness of artworks in this setting in two ways. Firstly, since the museums are established and instrumentalised by the very dichotomy of public and private as a product of compulsory heterosexuality, in the name of publicising them, they actually, at the same time, carry the risk of privatising them in the sense of turning them into spectacles of mere political correctness without real engagement

86 Katz, “Queer Curating and Covert Censorship”, 35.
87 Wojnarowicz, Close to the Knives, 130.
with their querrness. Thus, the artworks only meet with the regular museum visitors, and engaged queer community which further foster the public/private binary and mirror it onto queer artistic practices. Secondly, since discourses of museums are not changed in accordance with the exhibitions, it condemns them in a kind of temporality that is imposed by conventional artistic circulation for the reason that the literal and discursive presences that Katz and Söll mentions have not met with each other in art museums. This temporality creates an illusion of queer art appearing and disappearing in the museums randomly, out of context and without any reference to the rest of their programme. In doing so, the museums assign a temporality to the artworks, one that is coded by heterosexual framing of time. Both of these effects pose political problems. Curator and art historian Patrick Steorn quotes gender studies scholar Vanja Hermele, saying “through temporary exhibitions and collaborations with feminist and queer artists and curators, Swedish art institutions tend to see themselves as much more radical than they actually are”, referring to the sudden increase of queer-related exhibitions in Stockholm in 2008, in the year the city hosted European Pride.

Thus, museums create a second illusion of inclusion of queerness into their programme, serving larger parts of the society than they actually are, and making their claim to be public institutions much stronger than they actually are. This, in turn, reduces the radical potentials of queer artistic expressions to transform more since the perception of queer art has already been included and accepted in the public institutions. Andrea Fraser, while she is discussing institutional critique, points out a similar point from an artistic position that could be considered as valid for a variety of artistic practices that poses such radical potentials. She states “…recognition, however, quickly becomes an occasion to dismiss the critical claims associated with it, as resentment of its perceived exclusivity and high-handedness rushes to the surface.”

Thinking of recognition as inclusivity in the context of art institutions, inclusion of queer artistic practices, and therefore queer political and cultural changes what they contribute to, often hijacks the further discussion on other steps of queer transformation.

Instead, what museums could do is to reflect on contemporary queerness and its artistic expressions to realise themselves in different spatial and temporal perspectives. Both historical and contemporary examples hint that alternative ways of practicing queerness not

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89 Fraser, “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique”, 101.
only as artistic expressions but also as curatorial choices are possible. A good example of such engagement in history is curator William “Bill” Olander’s invitation to collective Gran Fury to the New Museum, while he was holding the curator position. Instead of organising an exhibition that would be doubtful how many people it would reach out to apart from communities who are already interested in the issue, Olander asks Gran Fury to use museum’s windows, located on Broadway. The reason for such a practice is to use the museum windows as a tool and site for a “visual demonstration” that expose the realities surrounding the HIV/AIDS epidemic.\textsuperscript{90} The installation named \textit{Let the Record Show...} depicted the faces of “national figures who have used the AIDS epidemic to promote their own political or religious agendas”.\textsuperscript{91} The work stayed on the museum windows for more than two months from the end of November, 1987 to the end of January, 1988.

Placing such a political action and social issue that is historically tied to homosexual sex—especially in New York, USA where the epidemic occurred most violently—gives a critical message. However, what is more striking here is the ‘surface’ of the museum; the window that implies that there is a public and a private sphere and enjoys the chance to depict the privacy of museum while serving as a fence between this privacy and the public space that it opens up to. Thus the curatorial decision of Olander, who himself died of AIDS-related complications in 1989, does not only serve as a political act here, but also gives an example of the production of public and private, how these terms operate in society by drawing the dividing lines about what can be accessible by ‘public’. Moreover, this installation forces the parts of the public who are not willing to engage with the epidemic; using the windows like a street billboard, it creates visualisations that otherwise would not have a support from many ‘public’ institutions. It helps publicising an issue that is deemed as private and specific to homosexuality, and furthermore condemn the “public” figure who are responsible for the denial of AIDS and uses the issue for the sake of their conservative politics.

A similar attitude is also apparent in Hayes work’s display at Moderna Museet, discussed in the last chapter. The placement of audio-speakers both at the entrance of Skeppsholmen and within the museum proposes a puzzle to solve for the audience; since the

small island is known as the location of many museums and art institutions, for almost anyone familiar with the city, it is not difficult to guess that Hayes’ voice could be an artwork. By inviting the audience to solve this puzzle and by bringing them to an exhibition by an artist whose practice is directly dealing with queerness, inviting the public to this so-called private correspondence between Hayes and her imaginary lover is a curatorial decision that demands an effort from the audience, which is in turn disorientating for them. Unlike in the example of Gran Fury, Hayes’ work does not use the surface, but creates labyrinths in the lines that separates them. Hiding what is being heard in a public space while exposing private conversations in another as one display points out the other is the formal disorientation that the installation operates within.

A second maneuver comes with placing the audience on the stage; as the audience approaches the stage in the installation in order to hear the audio-work in the best condition, they replicate Hayes’ reading in a sense, this time by listening. Though not reading the letters themselves and not necessarily feeling the affects in the letters, audience become publicised in their embodiment as they experience someone else’s love. By feeling another body’s yearnings and affects, the audience is disrupted from being itself since they are on the stage. Wojnarowicz mentions how he finds comfort in artistic experiences that are related to sexuality and love, highlighting that those affects might not be his but still close to the ones that he is experiencing. The comfort that a queer body finds in another queer body’s expression opens up queer artistic worlds as bodies relate to each other not by being towards each other but instead standing next to. Here, a discursive presence comes into the picture accompanied by a literal one; with the cries of one artist for love and political demands, many other bodies that feels the presence of that love will carry the experience with them and thus the discourse perhaps spreads beyond the walls of the museum.

Apart from the discussions reflecting on private and public, a disorientation could come to view with temporal interventions as well as spatial ones. Patrick Steorn, the director of Thielska Galleriet in Stockholm, has curated an exhibition that builds bridges across times and two artists that deal with similar interests. One of them is Eugène Jansson, Swedish painter whose later works depict male nudity in various forms, especially in public baths, which was his personal interest and a joyful site as he enjoyed swimming. Steorn highlights

92 Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives*, 132.
that he was denied by the gallery to access both the painting and the related archival materials when he was writing his dissertation on male nudity in Swedish art in the early 2000s.\textsuperscript{93}

Coming back to the gallery as director, Steorn initiated this realisation of an exhibition by using Jansson’s paintings and Finnish-Swedish artist Jan Hietala’s reflections on Jansson’s practice. Steorn underlines the fact that the archival materials on Jansson, especially his photographs with fellow swimmers in the public bath from the beginning of 1900s, became one of the most significant part of Hietala’s creative process “through time and space”.\textsuperscript{94}

Hietala’s drawings that are inspired by Jansson’s photographs were accompanied by the letters written to him, reflecting the historical fact that Jansson’s brother Adrian has burnt his archive upon his death in order to make sure that his homosexuality would not come into the light, since Adrian himself was homosexual, too.\textsuperscript{95} These letters, acting as a replacement of the lost letters of Jansson transcends temporality, builds up a kinship, says Steorn, between Jansson and Hietala. Hietala’s letters could be thought of as replacing Adrian, in such a kinship; one could speculate conversations that nobody knows whether happened between two gay brothers, embodied in these letters by Hietala in another time. The kind of kinship that does not bound to neither any heterosexual structure nor the heterosexually-coded time, asserts itself as a queer temporality. Similar to Hayes works, audiences might experience not only desires of Jansson and how he transformed a public space as a site for his private pleasures, but also a kinship that build on queer affects that emerges from the common ground by Jansson and Hietala. And once again, rather than simply putting up objects, the affects that are being displayed and the experience that the audience are being exposed to become displays of desire lines in the form of artistic expressions.

These examples not only present themselves as art objects that are in the circulation of conventional exhibition structures, but further presents queer experiences to audience with the disruption of conventional forms as well with their queer contents. Although a curatorial method that could be generalised which would be applicable to all sorts of display and all exhibitions would not be possible considering queer’s resistance to a unifying understanding, playing with the dichotomy of public and private in accordance with the demands of specific artistic practices and exhibitions might lead us to ways of queer curating and mediation.

\textsuperscript{93} Steorn, “The Art of Looking at Naked Men”, 68.
\textsuperscript{94} Steorn, “The Art of Looking at Naked Men”, 70.
\textsuperscript{95} Steorn, “The Art of Looking at Naked Men”, 70.
Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I strived to highlight what could constitute queerness in artistic practices. Artistic practices have been discussed in two ways; first, as artworks and secondly as curating those artworks. In the first chapter, *Weekend* shows queer love’s effect as queer temporalities; temporalities that deviate from heterosexual regulations of time that disrupts our daily practices since even the structure of days might change accordingly to these new ways of living. Instead of a future, a forceful present comes into light with Russell and Glen’s affair. What I have discussed in the chapter is the affects that transform our perspectives and plans; life would lead both Glen and Russell to different trajectories in the course of just a couple of days than what they would imagine. This radical temporal affair does not allow for a construction of a lasting relationship for Glen and Russell. That is to say, their affair does not lead to the construction of a common future, which has been discussed in relation to the non-queer relationship and how they construct longevity, life circle and regulations of time with compulsory heterosexuality.

In the second chapter, disorientation in spatial terms comes into the picture as Sharon Hayes, in *Everything Else Has Failed! Don’t You Think It’s Time for Love?* performs a manifestation of radical potentials of love. As much as considered as a private topic, love asserts itself not only as publicised but also politicised due to queer’s subversion of heterosexual structures of coupledom and love. The possibility of opening up a future in *Weekend* that we are witnessing is transforming to loss of those possibilities with these acts of publicising and politicising since the privacy of love has also been interfered with. Love, in its manifestation that transcends the limits of compulsory heterosexuality, carries hopes that love can be transformative without falling into romanticised views of this transformation with the yearnings and pain that Hayes brings into picture in the love letters.
These temporal and spatial interventions of queer with the recurring theme of love, led to scrutiny of exhibitions since the analysis of the content and the form, as well as how they interact with and compliment each other, in the artworks brings forth the question concerning curating and mediation of queerness. The intention is to reveal why and how museums are heterosexualised spaces because of the spatial and temporal structures that they are built on and how their interaction with queerness are therefore mutually disorienting both for the museums and queer artworks due to spatial and temporal subversion of queer artworks. Thus, I argue that curating queer also requires an inspiration that is derived from the disruptions of the artworks that they inhabit in order to make themselves present with queer conditions that would vary for every artwork or exhibition in question.

A temporal tension that flares up from queer temporalities is visible in the analysis of each artwork. Here, what is striking is a tension between ‘forceful present’ that neither dwells on the past nor looks forward to the future and the idea of the document which save for posterity that which has passed. In the artworks, documents and archives challenge the most those who lost belief in them. While Glen simply turns it into a tool that at the end become a wall to toss for him, GaniMeth’s sudden realisation of the impossibility of an archive as she speaks reveals her fear of documentation that they might turn against her. In a different take on documentation, Hayes’ attachment to public speech as a willingness to be heard, to showcase her love and thus document her present and presence in the eyes and ears of strangers in the absence of a lover, is what opens up the possibility of gaining political hope. In a similar way, a spatial tension erupts. *Weekend* shows Glen and Russell’s many important scenes on the threshold of Russell's apartment's door; Hayes blurs the public and private while calling out a lover in a conflict zone while Hayes is in need of love and speech. They all seem to be implying ‘in’s and ‘out’s. However, the disruptions that these tensions foreground protest against the either-or structures of binary thinking. They are after neither-nor ways of living and feeling.

Following these spatial and temporal disruptions, documentations lead the way to archives which revealed itself in a variety of forms in all chapters: from Glen’s recordings to Gani’s spoken words and from Hayes’ letters to queer exhibitions. As I highlighted in the Introduction, this study is also a search for artistic interventions to theoretical claims. As a result, I come to the conclusion that all the queer documentations that I discuss are playing
with the heterosexual frames of time and space and challenging the narratives that compulsory heterosexuality poses as the one and only way of living. They do so in a way that the theoretical claims cannot; these artistic practices leaves marks on concepts in the sense that they bring the queer affects into the picture and present them as sites of queer experiences for audiences. They transform the experience of disorientations and queer temporalities and frame them as artistic expressions. The desire lines that they hint at become queer perspectives so that one can realise the hidden or overlooked ways to escape compulsory heterosexuality since queerness at work in temporal and spatial disorientations is a critique of the habitual, ritualistic, repetitive mode of life. They highlight the affective sides of experiences. These readings are not new structures that are valid and applicable for all; they might appear as deviations in unlikely places ambiguously and disappear at any moment as radically temporal experiences. Returning back to Gani’s words, the question of whether fugitives can have an archive constitutes a significant discussion for these artistic practices as not only sites of experiences but also as affective encounters.

The arguments in queer theory whether there are queer affects continues to be one the crucial discussions for its productivity; however, it is one that would exceed the current study. Yet, in order to carry out this speculation on what might be queer artistic practices in the contemporary settings, I suggest that the affects that are evoked due to queer experiences and the inclinations —shaped by temporalities and disorientations— are central to these practices. Apart from being new ways of expressions and opening up new worlds, they are also presenting archives of affects. These archives are manifestations not only of the deviations from the structures but also of the bodies and their transformations that are affected by them. So the archive of fugitives of queerness exceeds the times and spaces that defines a conventional archive. Documents of these affective archive are volatile, deeply personal and shaking and thus disorienting. They are neither forming grand narratives nor asserting alternatives structures and systems to the ones they are being subjected to and oppressed by. Furthermore, they are not claiming to be true either; GaniMeth’s blog welcomes you with a warning about what not to look at in her writings; “Which one of the published writings and how much of them are true is unknown.”

They are fantasies; Glen and Russell’s unrealised but dreamed relationship, Gani’s stories that do not guarantee to be any reality in the factual sense, Hayes imaginary lover and her demands from her that exceed personal faculties. In a sense these are all unrealistic; yet, their presence is undeniable. Hence, queer artistic practices strikes the heterosexual system with its own method but with other products that arise from it. Heterosexuality, in its being compulsory, is a product of fantasy that became so solid until the point of losing its features as a fantasy whereas fantasy of queer as desire lines do not aim to be permanent but rather enjoys the potentials that are presented by the disorientations and temporalities that accompany them.

Anne Cvetkovich, in her “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture”, writes that “the archive of feelings lives not just in museums, libraries, and other institutions, but in other more personal and intimate spaces …”97 Thinking in terms of museums, an archive of feelings that are invoked by the artworks cannot be experienced in the storages of museums; it lives through the experience they present to us as queer deviations. Especially for contemporary practices, the temporal and spatial volatility of queerness in artworks and exhibitions poses a much more productive presence for us; it offers us affects and experiences to carry along with us, transform them in our memories. Queer artistic practices of the present can be our contemporary queer archives that answers Gani’s question; these fugitives’ archives can be formed in this ambiguous fashion, with the affects that are gained in experiences of fantasies through disorientations and radical temporalities.

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