



ISSUE IN FOCUS

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RECONFERENCE DAILY, KATHMANDU, NEPAL

reCO
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ENCE

rePRINT

ISSUE 2 11 APRIL 2019

reTHINK reIMAGINE reBOOT

WWW.CREAWORLD.ORG

REMOBILIZE

WOREC

Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) is one of Nepal's leading national organizations that works to prevent violence against women, its causes and consequences, and to ensure the economic, social and cultural well-being of women as well as other marginalized groups by promoting access to rights and social justice.

NDWA

Nepal Disabled Women Association (NDWA) builds the capacity of women with disabilities living in both urban and remote areas of the country. It empowers women with disabilities from disadvantaged communities, and supports them to build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

CREHPA

The Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA) works to improve the environment, well-being and health through education, training, research, alliances, partnerships and policy advocacy. It undertakes policy research on major issues of public health concern, particularly those affecting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

SWAN

Society For Women Awareness Nepal (SWAN) is the first NGO established in Nepal by a group of female sex workers, with the aim of creating awareness on STI & HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, economic opportunities, capacity building skills and human rights.

The organization's main objective is to promote a rights-based approach to reduce the risk of HIV among women and their children by addressing healthcare needs, education and advocacy. SWAN advocates for the recognition of sex work as work, on violence against sex workers and for the empowerment and social inclusion of sex workers.

rediscovering Nepal

through a feminist lens

FREE AND EQUAL

Meet the people who refuse to conform to narrow social norms; everyday heroes who are pushing boundaries to live loud, passionate, and unapologetic lives.

women who are successful models in America, Brazil, and Japan.”
Anjali Lama, Lazimpat

“I am the first transgender woman to be elected in a general convention in the Nepali Congress Party. I achieved that by working hard, being dedicated, and pressurizing the political parties and the media, and I've got the support of my family and friends.

I'm encouraging all the youth to come forward and have a voice, be part of the political process to build a stronger nation.”

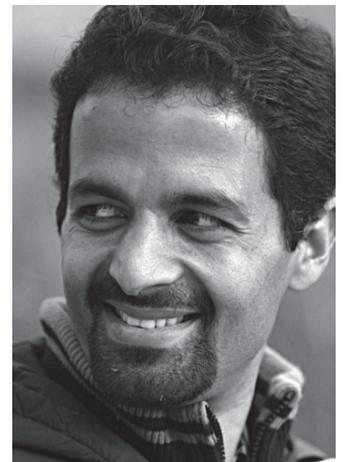
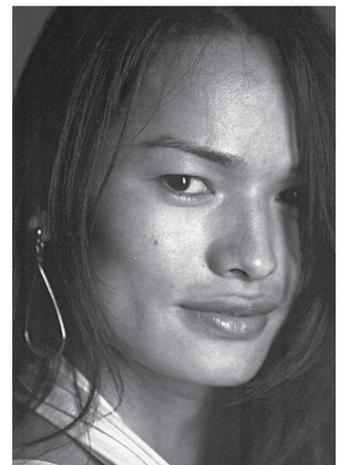
Bhumika Shrestha, Kathmandu

A COUNTRY OF MANY FIRSTS!

We all know that Nepal is a destination for tourists. But did you know there is so much more to the country than this?

Nepal is considered to be one of the most progressive countries in South Asia. The Nepali Constitution provides for sexual and reproductive health and rights for women. Through the Constitution, all women have the fundamental right to access safe abortion and the right to be free from violence.

Nepal was also the first South Asian country to decriminalize sexual minorities and recognize gender diversity. In fact, Sunil Babu Pant, who founded Blue Diamond Society, is the first openly gay national level legislator in Asia. Blue Diamond Society works



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Manisha Dhakal, Anjali Lama, Sunil Babu Pant and Bhumika Shrestha

with local communities and on a national level with the mission to improve the sexual health, human rights and well-being of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal, including third gender people, gay men, bisexuals, lesbians and other men who have sex with men.

Globally Nepal ranks 36th in the percentage of women in its Parliament (33.2%), way ahead of

neighbors China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – and also ahead of so-called 'developed' countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, or the United States!

And finally, in Nepal, marijuana plants grow everywhere – in gardens, on the side of the road, in ditches, on mountainsides – people consider it just a weed!

The Sri Lankan who summited Everest!



Jayanthi waving the Sri Lankan flag on the summit of Mount Everest

While the world recognizes Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala as the first Sri Lankan woman to summit Mt Everest, we assert that in May 2016, she became the first Sri Lankan to achieve this feat. In recognition of this and her professional career as a women's rights activist, she was appointed the first-ever Goodwill Ambassador for Women's Rights by the Ministry of Women and Child

Affairs, Sri Lanka.

Her journey to Everest combined two of the things she's most passionate about – gender equality and mountaineering – and she continues to use her public platform to challenge gender stereotypes and promote the rights of women and girls at every opportunity.

Meet Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala at #recon2019!

REFRAMING CONSENT

TODAY'S PLENARY

Many Lives of Consent

SPEAKERS: Tshegofatso Senne, Independent | Julius Kaggwa, SIPD | Shahana Siddiqui, BRAC | Jeeja Ghosh, Independent | Jules Kim, Scarlet Alliance | Subha Wijesiriwardena, Women and Media Collective | Sara Hossain, BLAST
 MODERATOR: Geetanjali Misra



Tshegofatso Senne



Shahana Siddiqui



Jeeja Ghosh



Subha Wijesiriwardena



Sara Hossain

The panel will interrogate and explore how those in the margins negotiate consent.

What happens when the person is trans, disabled, a sex worker, intersex, practicing BDSM or having sex outside of marriage? How can consent truly be an expression of autonomy and choice within existing power hierarchies? What can be the material signifiers of the practice of consent?

Let's **rethink** critical questions about how consent can be given, understood and negotiated.

Let's **reimagine** how standards of consent can encompass those at the margins and the diversity of reproductive and sexual experiences.

Let's **reboot** our conversations to not just address issues of rights and choice but be more inclusive of consent standards as part of our feminist engagement and practice.

Recognizing the pioneering work of Carole Vance

by Geetanjali Misra

“The tension between sexual danger and sexual pleasure is a powerful one in women’s lives. Sexuality is simultaneously a domain of restriction, repression, and danger as well as a domain of exploration, pleasure, and agency. To focus only on pleasure and gratification ignores the patriarchal structure in which women act, yet to speak only of sexual violence and oppression ignores women’s experience with sexual agency and choice and unwittingly increases the sexual terror and despair in which women live.”

With these words, Carole Vance opened her incredibly influential article in the collaborative collection of works *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, first published in 1984 as the result of a 1982 seminar at Barnard College in New York. Over the past 35 years, the book has been instrumental in catalyzing an entire generation of activists and academics to further research and debate this issue.

Through her scholarship and thoughtful leadership, Carole has taught us to think about sexuality not only as something to do with individuals’ feelings and choices but as a domain. This domain includes structures like law, religion, medicine, education, families, and communities through which control is exercised over our bodies. Carole has introduced us to feminist writings by Gayle Rubin and Amber Hollibaugh that offer a more expansive and affirming approach to sexuality.

This pioneering, provocative and visionary thinking has also deeply influenced our own work. CREA’s Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute has been inspired by Carole’s immense contributions in this field, and she still serves as part of core faculty. Though Carole is unable to travel to join us in person for #recon2019, her ambitious and provoking work is foundational to the dialogues taking place today. In order to recognize the ongoing impact of Carole’s research and mentorship, I spoke with some of her former students about how her friendship, willingness to meet for discussions and cheap drinks over New York happy hours, and boundary-pushing advocacy continues today.

Everyone who works with Carole instantly recognizes that she has an exemplary way of sharing her expertise and encouraging fearless examination of complex issues. “How does that work?” may be a simple question but when posed



Carole Vance

by the inimitable Carole S. Vance with a slightly arched eyebrow and a friendly but questioning look, it changes your work and your life,” recalls Ali Miller, Co-Director, Global Health Justice Partnership of the Yale Law School and the School of Public Health. “I know because Carole asked me that question more than twenty years ago, when I was beginning a Fellowship in the program on the Study of Sexuality, Gender, Health and Human Rights at Columbia University, directed by Carole. Answering that question required me to dig deeper into what I thought I knew about advocacy, law, sexuality and human rights and radically altered the trajectory of my work and human rights practice.”

Says Priya Nanda, SGRI alumni and currently Senior Program Officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, “Carole has not only shaped international discourse on sexuality and rights but also the perspectives of many SGRI alumni with her expansive repertoire, archival collections and precision and simplicity in communication. I am always so impressed by her ability to engage on any issue from history of abortion laws, genocide, censorship to digital ethics. While a distinguished academic, she is disarmingly interested and curious in the mundane and lived realities of others, making her not only inspiring but also extremely likeable.”

According to Katrina Karkazis, Carol Zicklin Endowed Chair in the Honors Academy at Brooklyn College, CUNY and a Senior Research

Fellow with the Global Health Justice Partnership at Yale University, “She is the rare scholar who is both an incisive thinker and a boots-on-the-ground changemaker helping students and advocates around the world to reflect more deeply on their research, advocacy, and programming. Her brilliant engagement with students, meticulous feedback and extraordinary mentorship has given rise to a generation of scholars working at the intersection of sexuality, gender, health, and human rights—a new interdisciplinary field that she founded.”

Sealing Cheng, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, says, “Carole has influenced my work in multiple ways. Her example has taught me to stand by your evidence and not budge in the face of fierce criticisms, find your allies across different fields, remember even the most complicated concepts can be written in a simple language, and finally, to be kind and generous.”

As Ali Miller so succinctly observes, “Carole is generous and generative, probing and illuminating... creating ‘aha moments’ for all of us to go forward and do better in social justice work around gender and sexuality.”

After experiencing her influential thinking here, I hope you will go on to read more about

Carole’s work, hear her talks when you are in New York, or even schedule a coffee with her to benefit from her vibrant presence yourself!



Katrina Karkazis is a cultural anthropologist working at the intersection of science and technology studies, theories of gender and race, social studies of medicine and bioethics.

Katrina's work on testosterone stems from earlier research on 'sex testing' and sport regulations that ban women athletes with naturally high testosterone. This research has appeared in *Science*, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, *BMJ*, and *Feminist Formations*. Katrina is also the author of the book *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience* and her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Wired* and other outlets.

REREAD

Testosterone

An Unauthorized Biography

EDITED BY REBECCA JORDAN-YOUNG
AND KATRINA KARKAZIS

The following is an excerpt from Katrina Karkazis' website.

Testosterone is not what you think it is, and it is decidedly not a 'male sex hormone.' Here is the debunking life story of a maligned and misunderstood molecule.

Testosterone is a familiar villain, a ready explanation for innumerable social phenomena, from the stock market crash and the overrepresentation of men in prisons to male dominance in business and politics. It's a lot to pin on a simple molecule.

Yet your testosterone level doesn't in fact predict your competitive drive or tendency for violence, your appetite for risk or sex, or your strength or athletic prowess. It's neither the biological essence of manliness nor even 'the male sex hormone.' This unauthorized biography pries T, as it's known, loose from over a century of misconceptions that undermine science even

as they make urban legends about this hormone seem scientific.

T's story didn't spring from nature: it is a tale that began long before the hormone was even isolated, when 19th-century scientists went looking for the chemical essence of masculinity. And so this molecule's outmoded, authorized life story persisted, providing ready cause for countless behaviors—from the boorish and the belligerent to the exemplary and enviable. What we think we know about T has stood in the way of an accurate understanding of its surprising and diverse functions and effects.

Rebecca Jordan-Young and Katrina Karkazis focus on what T does in six domains: reproduction, aggression, risk-taking, power, sports, and parenting. At once arresting and deeply informed, *Testosterone* allows us to see the real T for the first time.

TODAY'S PLENARY

Too fast for a woman?

SPEAKERS: Katrina Karkazis | Payoshni Mitra | Dutee Chand (Video) | Santhi Soundarajan | Pinki Pramanik
MODERATOR: Geetanjali Misra



Katrina Karkazis



Payoshni Mitra



Dutee Chand



Santhi Soundarajan



Pinki Pramanik

This plenary will touch upon the legal side of the ban imposed on many women in sports, based on the level of testosterone in their blood. It will include conversations with a few women in sports to hear their personal stories of going through this experience.

Global conversations on the business of sports

The UN Human Rights Council during its 40th Session in March 2019 passed a groundbreaking resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls in sports. Passed unanimously, the resolution calls upon states to ensure that sporting associations and bodies implement policies and practices in accordance with international human rights norms and standards. It asks states to refrain from developing and enforcing policies and practices that force or pressure women and girl athletes into undergoing unnecessary, humiliating and harmful medical procedures in order to participate in women's events in competitive sports. Importantly, it requests states to repeal rules, policies and practices that negate women and girls athletes' rights to bodily integrity and autonomy.

As noted in the editorial published by Organization Intersex International Europe, this resolution adds a human rights perspective and gives support to the current case of Caster Semanya against regulations by the International Association of Athletics Federations and her right to participate in sports.



Olympic athlete Caster Semanya

What about sports for *pleasure*?

A feminist approach to sports goes beyond a girl's physical fitness in order to address identities, bodies, agency and well-being. A feminist approach to sports also places value on a girl's right to occupy public space, have fun and build peer support networks.

At #recon2019, girls from CREA's *It's My Body* program, along with Moving the Goalposts and Boxgirls will discuss how sports is being used to challenge social norms around mobility, visibility, bodies and sexualities while subverting notions of speed and strength.

"I am a fat girl. People have always teased me about my body, my weight, my clothes and my style. When I joined the program, everyone said how can a fat girl play football? But I didn't give up. I stayed on. I practiced and today I want to tell everyone that I can play and do everything that others can, and I am proud to be who I am." *It's My Body* participant from Jharkhand, India.

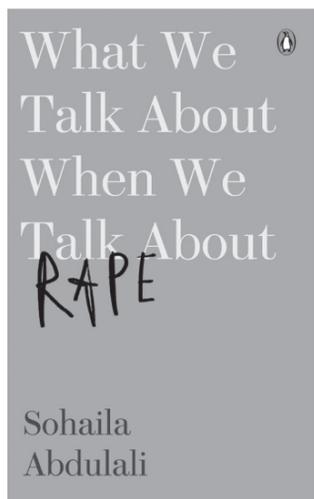
"Most girls still don't get opportunities to play sports like football, which are considered [to exist] for boys. In our schools when we ask



our teachers about football they don't understand why we want to play football and not draw [pictures] like other girls." *It's My Body* participant from Bihar, India.

So many books, so little time

FRANK ZAPPA



What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape

BY SOHAILA ABDULALI

In her book, Sohaila Abdulali talks about things that are deeply personal, and her research and work with hundreds of survivors of rape. She examines the contemporary discourse about rape and rape culture. She also explores whether rape is always a life-defining event, if rape is worse than death and if another world is possible.

“The rape was catastrophic, and it took many years to feel safe (a necessary delusion). But I’m at the other end of that now, and I don’t quite know what to do when a friend who didn’t know this about me starts weeping. It’s good to be loved, but I’m done weeping. At this moment, my daughter’s maths progress feels more important than revisiting three-decades-old emotions.”

Sohaila Abdulali
The Guardian Weekly, 14 July 2013



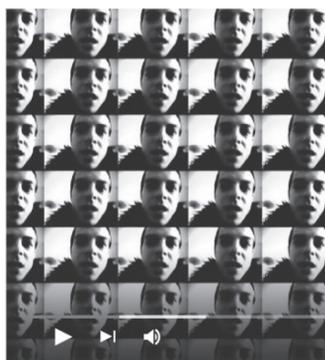
Cyber Sexy: Rethinking Pornography

BY RICHKA KAUL PADTE

In her book, Richa Kaul Padte looks at what it means to seek pleasure online. Based on her own experience, online surveys and interviews with people across India, Richa weaves a fascinating tale – one that helps you rethink the online space and pornography itself. From what we think about pornography to how we consume it, she dives deep into territory that is at once deeply intimate and intensely political.

“The family is a stronghold of the dominant power structure: caste-appropriate, heterosexual, demanding female subservience, and so on. And porn, with all its diversities of desires and pleasures, does not fit into this space. It is women pleasuring themselves. It is men being ‘led astray.’ It is children being exposed to ‘those kinds of things.’”

Richa Kaul Padte
In Plainspeak, November 2018



I Confess!
edited by BRANDON ARROYO and THOMAS WAUGH
Constructing the Self in Media and the Arts within the Third Sexual Revolution



I Confess

EDITED BY BRANDON ARROYO AND THOMAS WAUGH

This collection of thirty original essays centers on confession and sexuality in moving image, arts and media over the last quarter-century, and the era of the Third Sexual Revolution, principally in the Global North. The book’s idea of ‘confession’ includes self-referencing, first person and/or autobiographical stories, testimonies or performances.

“So, while mainstream media and popular gay-rights groups have been working for half a century or more to situate this one-on-one confessional declaration as an essential confirmation of a pop ‘Born This Way’ ethos, this rhetoric ignores the intense affective interactions that people have with media objects long before coming out to another human being.”

Thomas Waugh
Email to CREA, April 2019

reconference is as much about form as it is about issues. The intersection of art and activism in new technologies, evocative installations, and creative performances is undeniably powerful, but the written word has long endured as an influential, dangerous and effective means of documenting knowledge.

Writing matters. Those who write record and historicize moments, issues and ideas for future generations. Thanks to new information channels and the radical ways in which traditional publishing can be harnessed to communicate, there are a growing number of ways in which words can now be accessed and consumed.

Here’s a listing of authors whose extraordinary words have appeared in many forms, including academic books, peer-reviewed journals and indigenous feminist zines. The writers have covered critical topics ranging from rape, to confessions, to cyber porn, to feminist stories and will come together at #recon2019 to share their thoughts on the craft of writing and the role of the written word in boundary-pushing activism.



Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters

ESZTER KISMODI,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
SRHM

Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights globally through its journal and ‘more than a journal’ activities. The journal, formerly Reproductive Health Matters (RHM), is a peer-reviewed, international journal that explores emerging, neglected and marginalized topics and themes across the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights. It aims to publish original, relevant, and contemporary research, particularly from a feminist perspective, that can help inform the development of policies, laws and services to fulfil the rights and meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of people of all ages, gender identities and sexual orientations.

“Giving visibility to ‘sexual’ in the name of our journal and organization is therefore a political act. We do it consciously and deliberately, in recognition of the fragility of the gains made in this area, and the urgent and ongoing need to continue to fight for those rights.”

Eszter Kismodi
srhm.org

Red Light. Go!

The curated space on sex work at reconference reflects how as feminists, we can amplify sex workers' voices and support human rights advocacy led by sex workers. The experiential and interactive space explores the intersection of sex work with gender, race, class, capitalism, disability and technology. It uses mediums such as performances, installations and films.

Nothing about us without us! Sex workers are the experts in their own lives and their work. Sex workers' movements in all regions claim their right to self-representation, self-determination and self-organizing

Sex workers' rights are a feminist issue. The right to choose, to control our own bodies, whether in relation to gender and sexual expression, mobility, to work and do so safely, or engage in consensual sex, are central to the claims and struggles of our movements, including the sex workers' rights movements. Yet, the voices and perspectives of sex workers largely remain excluded from crucial conversations, including within feminist movements. This exclusion also reflects in laws and policies that are formulated on sex work.

The last decade has witnessed an increase in global attention and resources to combat trafficking,

with a tendency to conflate trafficking and sex work. Because of this conflation, strategies to combat trafficking are negatively impacting sex workers' rights. This, combined with the push for criminalization of sex work in global and national policy spaces, has resulted in increasing violence against sex workers, with adverse effects on their lives and livelihoods.

While the rescue industry is growing, it is important to reconsider how to include sex workers' voices and experiences. The implementation of mechanisms where the human rights of sex workers are protected – in particular in the rescue industry – are vital at this moment.



Flyer for *Last Rescue in Siam*, 2012

SANGRAM BILL OF RIGHTS

SANGRAM, established in 1992 in Sangli, Maharashtra, has grown into a series of collective empowerment groups for stigmatized communities (sex workers, MSM, and transgender individuals) in six districts of southern Maharashtra and northern Karnataka.

SANGRAM's Bill of Rights is a set of guidelines which need to be considered when working with sex workers. These rights are:

1. People have the right to be approached with humility and respect.
2. People have the right to say yes or no to things that concern them.
3. People have the right to reject harmful social norms.
4. People have the right to stand up to and change the balance of power.
5. People have the right not to be 'rescued' by outsiders who neither understand nor respect.
6. People have the right to exist how they want to exist.

Sex work is not a permanent state of consent

This year on International Women's day, Jules Kim, Korean/Australian sex worker and the CEO of Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association, wrote a special statement for #recon2019, capturing her reflection on what sex workers want – as workers, and as feminists.



Today on International Women's Day I am celebrating the fact that I am a woman, I am a sex worker and I am a feminist. As a feminist I believe in respecting the agency and choices of other women – all women, including trans women, migrant women and women of color. I believe in respecting the right to bodily autonomy and the right to choose. We don't judge and belittle the choices of

other women without seeking to understand their context, their lives, and their realities.

One of the major problems of the narrative that all sex work is exploitation by men against all women – besides the fact it denies the realities of the sex and gender diversity of sex workers and our clients – is that it damages our ability to seek better working conditions, to access justice for crimes against us and to stand up for our rights as sex workers. When all sex work is framed as exploitation, how can we advocate for redress against actual violations of our labor and human rights? If all sex work is violence against women, then if we choose to do sex work, by extension, we have consented to violence

against us. Just because we have chosen to do sex work does not mean we are in a permanent state of consent to any and all violence, sexual assault and exploitation. These assumptions create damaging stereotypes about sex work and increase violence, stigma and discrimination against us.

The reality is that sex workers negotiate sexual services in exchange for goods, services or money. Each sex worker has different boundaries about what services they consent to provide and what remuneration they expect to receive for this. We negotiate this in advance with the client, prior to the service taking place. Any contravention of these negotiated terms of the service constitutes a crime against us. Breaching the terms of our consent is a crime, sex work is not.

If we work for an employer, and they withhold our pay, or don't pay us what was agreed for each service, or if they don't allow us to

refuse clients, or force us to work unreasonable hours – then these are examples of workplace exploitation. The fact that we have an employer is not in itself exploitation and framing it as such hinders our ability to demand decent workplace standards and to address actual workplace exploitation. And if we are subject to exploitative work conditions, it doesn't mean we need to be rescued from sex work or that all sex work is bad. We choose to do sex work. We do not choose to be exploited, to face violence, nor to be sexually assaulted.

The best way to protect the rights of sex workers is to fully decriminalize sex work, our workplaces, and our clients and third parties. Decriminalization enables us to access industrial rights mechanisms, workplace health and safety standards and seek justice in the event of a crime against us. When sex work is decriminalized, we can prioritize our safety over police evasion. We can report a crime without fear of being arrested for being a sex worker. We can demand decent work standards and choose how and with whom we work. We can speak out against violations and organize for our rights. Feminists support the rights, agency and choices of all sex workers and the best way to support that is to support the full decriminalization of sex work, our workplaces and our clients.



Tales of the Night Fairies by Shohini Ghosh

Five sex workers and the filmmaker embark on a journey of storytelling. *Tales of the Night Fairies* explores the power of collective organizing and resistance while reflecting upon contemporary debates on sex work. The simultaneously expansive and

labyrinthine city of Calcutta forms the backdrop for the personal and musical journeys of storytelling.

The film attempts to represent the struggles and aspirations of thousands of sex workers who constitute the DMSC (Durbar Mahila Samanyak Committee or the Durbar

Women's Collaborative Committee) an initiative that emerged from the Sonagachi HIV/AIDS Intervention Project. A collective of men, women and transgender sex workers, DMSC demands decriminalization of adult sex work and the right to form a trade union.

What's happening at #recon2019?

PLENARY

MANY LIVES OF CONSENT

Jeeja Ghosh, India
 Jules Kim, Australia
 Julius Kaggwa, Uganda
 Sara Hossain, Bangladesh
 Shahana Siddiqui, Bangladesh
 Subha Wijesiriwardena, Sri Lanka
 Tshegofatso Senne, South Africa

MORE HARM THAN GOOD: CHALLENGING CRIMINALIZATION AND FEMINIST FAULTS

Jasmine George, India
 Kholi Buthelezi, South Africa
 Monica Raye Simpson, USA
 Rupsa Mallik, India
 Susana Fried, USA

OUR BODIES, OUR TERRITORIES: FEMINISTS DEFENDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Daysi Flores, Honduras
 Laura Carvajal, Columbia
 Lydia Alpizar, Mexico
 Srilatha Batliwala, India

PLEASURES AND DANGERS OF TECHNOLOGY

Jac Sm Kee, Malaysia
 Nishant Shah, India
 Sandy Cioffi, USA

TOO FAST FOR A WOMAN?

Dutee Chand, India
 Katrina Karkazis, USA
 Payoshni Mitra, UK
 Pinki Pramanik, India
 Santhi Soundarajan, India

PANELS

ABORTION IN ASIA: SELECTION, TERMINATION AND DETERMINATION

Anustha Mainali, Nepal
 Durga Sapkota, Nepal
 Nikzad Zanganeh, Iran
 Rupsa Mallik, India
 Shahina Yasmin, Bangladesh
 Suchitra Dalvie, India

ABORTION RIGHTS CAMPAIGNS IN ARGENTINA, IRELAND, KENYA AND POLAND

Agnieszka Król, Poland
 Jedidah Maina, Kenya
 Krystyna Kacpura, Poland
 Maria Ni Fhlatharta, Ireland
 Rupsa Mallik, India
 Victoria Tesoriero, Argentina

BEYOND GENDER IDEOLOGY AND STIGMA: REFRAMING RESISTANCE NARRATIVES

Andrea Barragán Gómez, Spain
 Erick Monterrosas, Mexico
 Florencia Goldman, Guatemala
 Lydia Alpizar, Mexico
 Magdalena Firlag, Mexico
 Nikzad Zanganeh, Iran
 Xiomara Carballo, Costa Rica

BEYOND THE BINARIES OF PLEASURE AND DANGER: A CONVERSATION ON #METOO

Anindya Hajra, India
 Jaya Sharma, India
 Ritambhara Mehta, India
 Rituparna Borah, India

BURDEN OF SOCIAL STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

Sapna Kedia, India

DEVELOPING PRINCIPLES TO ADDRESS THE DETRIMENTAL IMPACT OF CRIMINALIZATION ON HEALTH, EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS, WITH A FOCUS ON SELECT CONDUCT IN THE AREAS OF SEXUALITY, REPRODUCTION, DRUG USE AND HIV BY ICJ AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Christina Zampas, Switzerland
 Ivana Radačić, Croatia
 Jaime Todd-Gher, USA
 Monica Raye Simpson, USA
 Nana Abuelsoud, Egypt

FEMINIST REALITIES BY AWID

Cindy Clark, USA
 Margarita Salas, Costa Rica
 Tenzin Dolker, USA

PLEASURE AND CONSENT IN MY COFFEE CUP!

Lara Aharonian, Armenia
 Tatevik Aghabekyan, Armenia

RECENTERING FEMINISMS

Cynthia el Khoury, Lebanon
 Nida Mushtaq, Pakistan

REDEFINING FEMINISM IN SPORTS

Arthur Mubiru, Uganda
 Gopi Shankar Madurai, India
 Katrina Karkazis, USA
 Maria Toorpakai Wazir, USA
 Niluka Gunawardena, Sri Lanka
 Sanjana Gaiind, India

RETHINKING THE DONOR/ ACTIVIST DIVIDE, REIMAGINING OUR RELATIONSHIPS, REBOOTING PHILANTHROPIC ADVOCACY

Aldijana Sisic, USA
 Charlotte Bunch, USA
 Cynthia Steele, USA
 Corneleike Keizer, Netherlands
 Diana Samarasan, USA
 Ebony Johnson, USA
 Joy Chia, USA
 Laura Kanushu, Uganda
 Melissa Wainaina, Kenya
 Meena Seshu, India
 Nadia Van der Linde, Netherlands
 Ruby Johnson, Canada
 Tina-Marie Assi, Canada

WORKSHOPS

DOCUMENTING VIOLATIONS AND ACTIVISM UNDER THE THREAT OF CRIMINALIZATION

Cynthia Rothschild, USA

VOCABULARIES OF SEX, RETELLING HERSTORY

Sattara Hattirat, Thailand

POETRY WORKSHOP

Word Warriors, Nepal

PERFORMANCES

Aruna Rao, India

BE CAREFUL

Mallika Taneja, India

BETWEEN YES AND NO

Rudo Chigudu, Zimbabwe

FOUR QUEENS

Mexico

HOOKERS DO IT STANDING UP

Lady Grew, Ireland

MARUNI DANCE PERFORMANCE

Blue Diamond Society, Nepal

Monica Raye Simpson, USA

MILLIE DOLLAR AND EDWARD MUIR, UK

PASSPORT BLESSING CEREMONY

Venuri Perera, Sri Lanka

SEX WORKER'S OPERA

USA/UK

SEXY SATURDAY SONGS WITH

Paromita Vohra, India
 Shivan Palin, Uganda

TENTACLES

Bubulina, Colombia

THE LAST DISTANCE

Leen Hashem and Alexandre Paulikevitch, Lebanon

WHERE POLICY ANALYSIS JUST WON'T DO: USING ART TO EXPRESS COMPLEXITY

Terry McGovern, USA

INSTALLATIONS

ARAVANI ART PROJECT

India

BEANOTHER LAB X FEARLESS 360°: LIBRARY OF OURSELVES

Sandi Cioffi, USA

BY AN EYEWITNESS AND ME, AS PREFERRED BY OTHERS

Azadeh Akhlaghi, Iran

CHANGE ROOM

Baaraan Ijlal, India

EDIBLE BIRDS AND YAMUNA SERIES

Sheba Chhachhi India

PROUDLY AFRICAN AND TRANSGENDER

Gabrielle Le Roux, South Africa

UNGENDERING SPORTS

Payoshni Mitra

THE SHORELINE PROJECT

India

FILMS

ASK THE SXPERT

HANDS ON

ISHQ, DOSTI AND ALL

MESOAMERICANAS

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE

PHOENIXXX

SAHIYO STORIES

SWEET CRUDE

TALES OF NIGHT FAIRIES

UNREST

UP, DOWN & SIDEWAYS

WOMEN FIGHTERS OF THE NARMADA STRUGGLE

CURATED SPACES

QUESTIONING DIS/ABILITY

Agnieszka Król, Poland
 Ashrafun Nahar, Bangladesh
 Betty Cheptock, Uganda
 Byukusenge Anisie, Rwanda
 Dorothy Nakato Mubezi, Uganda
 Edward Muir, UK
 Grindl Dockery, UK
 Janet Price, UK
 Jeeja Ghosh, India
 Kanchan Pamnani, India
 Katarzyna Angelicka, Poland
 Kim Kaul, India
 Laura Kanushu, Uganda
 Leidy Natalia Moreno Rodriguez, Columbia
 Maria NI Fhlatharta, Ireland
 Manishka Gunusekara, Sri Lanka
 Millie Dollar, UK
 Nampijja Shamim, Uganda
 Nidhi Goyal, India
 Niluka Gunawardena, Sri Lanka
 Ranjana Dhami, Nepal
 Reshma Valliappan, India
 Rhoda Garland, Malta
 Shamim Salim, Kenya
 Sigere Kasasi, Malawi
 Solange Bonello, Malta
 Srinidhi Raghavan, India
 Zarghooona Wadood, Pakistan

GALAXIES OF DESIRES

Amanda Hodgeson, South Africa
 Amuda Mishra, Nepal
 Dipika Srivastava, India
 Dipta Bhog, India
 Irene Kuzemko, Russia
 Jaya Sharma, India
 Jayanthi Kuru- Utumpala, Sri Lanka
 Jasmeen Patheja, India
 Jyotsna Maskey, Nepal
 Kataryzyna Zeglicka, Poland
 Kaushik Gupta, India
 Kawira Mwirichia, Kenya
 Madhu Mehra, India
 Martine Gutierrez, USA
 Nidhi Goyal, India
 Paromita Vohra, India
 Robert Mapplethorpe, USA
 Sahar Yahiaoui Tunisia
 Slobodan Randjelovic, Serbia
 Tara Burns, USA
 Vani Viswanathan, India
 Yajaswi Rai, Nepal

RED LIGHT. GO!

Bhawana Rai, Nepal
 Bijaya Dhakal, Nepal
 Borislav Gerasimov, Thailand
 Boglarka Fedorko, Hungary
 Elaine Bortolanza, Brazil
 Elsa Oliveira, South Africa
 Gita Das, India
 Kholi Buthelezi, South Africa
 Kusum, India
 Macklean Kyomya, Uganda
 Meena Seshu, India
 Navy Khut, Cambodia
 Peninah Mwangi, Kenya
 Putul Halder, India
 Sophoan Chan, Cambodia
 Tishuana Edwards, Guyana
 Uma Buddhathoki, Nepal
 Uwingabe Hassna Murenzi, Rwanda

TANGLED, LIKE WOOL

Aayush Rathi, India
 Afrah Shafiq, India
 Bishakha Datta, India
 Brenda Wambui, Kenya
 Erin M Riley, USA
 Indu Harikumar, India
 Kawira Mwirichia, Kenya
 Nandita Roy, India
 Paromita Vohra, India
 Queer Habibi, unknown
 Shadi Amin, Iran
 Shahina Yasmin, Bangladesh
 Sharanya Sekaram, Sri Lanka
 Shreya Ila Anasuya, India
 Smita Vanniyar, India
 @venuslibido, England

PODCAST

RESISTANCE TO FEMINISM AND FEMINIST ALTERNATIVES

CONVERSATION

ARUNDHATI ROY
 in conversation with
 Shohini Ghosh

AZADEH AKHLAGHI
 in conversation with
 Sabeena Gadihoke

JOHN GREYSON
 in conversation with
 Shohini Ghosh



Art meets activism with the Aravani Art Project. Through its work, the group intends to capture stories of freedom, dreams of acceptance and hopes of possibilities

CREA's Isha Vajpeyi spoke to the group.

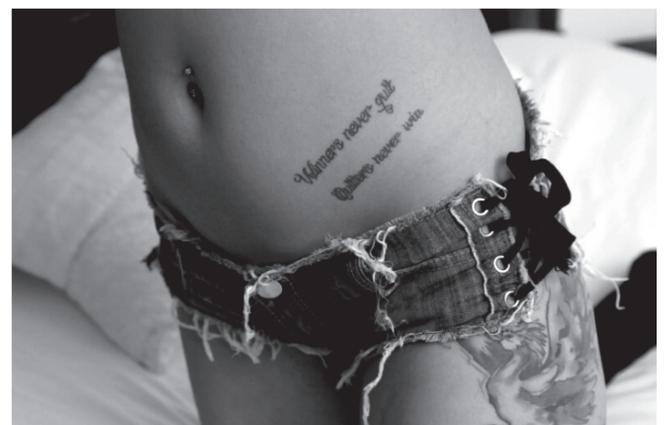


Sex Worker's Opera

present an excerpt of their award-winning, powerful, personal and political show at #recon2019

Breaking through stigma and stereotypes they offer an unflinchingly honest, uplifting, human portrayal of sex workers' experiences, locally and globally. Created and performed by sex workers and friends of sex workers they incorporate sound art, jazz, theatre and poetry and feature stories from 18 countries across 6 continents.

"You say that sex is all you see, well then I think you see me in 2D because the actual reality is a mosaic blur – a tapestry." *Anonymous sex worker*



Phoenixxx

BY MIHAI DRAGOLEA

The live chat industry is one of Romania's most prolific online revenue sources. More than half of the models that are found online come from Romania and the industry is worth millions of dollars. This is why a lot of Romanian girls see the live chat industry as a way out of poverty.

Here's Mihai Dragolea on why he made *Phoenixxx*:

I was raised by three women, my mother, my grandmother and my sister. As I grew up and we had some hardships these three women always managed to overcome situations that seemed black, they always found a way to come on top and thus, giving me a sense of security and happiness my father never delivered. I am always keen on this capacity of a woman to give everything for her children and siblings. I am fascinated by this and I always try to capture it on film – it's the greatest story for me.

Thus I came to know Mona and Georgiana. Both of them have different reasons for what they're doing but they both managed to overcome a great deal of hardship and created a functional universe around them. It is easy to judge them, it's hard to understand their way of doing things, but I saw this great drive in both of them.

I immediately saw Mona as a mother heroine and wanted to do a film about her. I fell in love with both my characters and tried to show to the world a story of fulfilment and how women can overcome a broken society, male indifference and outside prejudices. I wanted to make this movie right away, my characters demanded this and I just bought a DSLR and spent a lot of time with them. We became friends. My approach to this film is putting the viewer on the same level with the characters, making the viewer understand them and feel like he is the one they're talking to, explaining things to and wanting him to understand them. I decided to film in a rough manner, not letting cinematic artifice come in the way the characters open up to the camera.

The Aravani Art Project

IV: How did the Aravani Art Project come together?

AAP: The Aravani Art Project began in 2016 in Bangalore. Our medium of expression turned out to be a public art intervention through painting walls. Art has the power to bring people together and requires an individual to be themselves. It allows people to participate regardless of age, race, gender and sometimes language too!

IV: Any fun memory from any of your projects that you would like to share with us?

AAP: We have laughed unapologetically at ourselves while climbing

scaffolding, carrying paint and having chai at the same time. Sometimes we have beautiful interactions with people passing by who shower us with compliments, because they are in awe of the art we make.

IV: What kind of reactions do you get from people when they see your murals – or shall I say masterpieces?

AAP: Our impact has been so heart-felt, that it does not require statistics. As Shanthy, one of our core team members says, "I have joined the Aravani Art Project as an artist and I love that people are looking beyond stigma and myths. We as

transgender people are capable of doing beautiful things too, hopefully society understands this."

People have always been stunned looking at Purushi climb great heights just to be able to finish a particular spot to paint, and she enjoys the attention – and the height of course.

IV: Everyone at #recon2019 should paint with you because...

AAP: We are sure that you are going to make a friend. We are sure that you would like to talk to us and know more about us. If you haven't painted ever or for a long time... this would be the perfect opportunity to hold that brush!



Terry McGovern

performs "a humorous monologue on philanthropy, academia, having a family member killed in 9/11 and being a white American."

Sanjana Gaiind from CREA asked her a few questions and here's what she had to say:

SG: You are a professor and academic, have litigated numerous cases against the government in the US, been a member of the National Task Force on the development of HIV/AIDS drugs, have published extensively and have worked on lots more serious stuff – how and when did you start writing humorous plays and monologues?

TM: I was undecided about whether I should go to law school or pursue some kind of writing, playwriting specifically, so I think I always used my creativity as a lawyer in the early years of my career. I found a way to use my creative side in how I would describe clients and represent people in court in trials. I had lots of opportunities to make the people I worked with come to life in court and in writing their stories. Very early on, it was clear to me that you need the complexity of art to bring people to life. When my mother was killed in the

World Trade Centre, I continued to use art to process trauma and represent peoples' experiences that were left out of the dominant narratives about that event. 9/11 was immediately highly politicized and deeply upsetting. So I began to interview some of the people, and so I thought, once again, that the only way to address this false narrative was to bring to life complexity through art.

SG: You speak about the tragedy of losing your mother in 9/11 in your play (Voices Unheard) – what has it been like to do this on stage, with strangers in the audience?

TM: This is a play that's about agency and voice – it is about letting people who have directly experienced the horror of 9/11 describe that and question the narratives around it. But it is also deeply personal and there was a lot of stigma around it, so I had to

make a decision about how much I wanted to identify as a '9/11 family member,' depending on how strong I was feeling about my ability to throw off any kind of stereotyping or judgments related to that.

SG: Any fun memory from your shows that you would like to share?

TM: My boss at Ford, Sara Rios, who has unfortunately died, had a powerful experience with the play. She was down there the day that the planes hit the towers and was traumatized by what she saw while working with survivors. She came to the play maybe ten times and found great joy in having access to people's words. She found it very hopeful in many ways because there wasn't as much hate as you would expect. It was the opposite of what the dominant narratives showed. I got a lot of joy in being able to share that with people and to document a different narrative.



Fig Trees, 2009

The Queer Internationalism of John Greyson

A curated retrospective

John Greyson is a Toronto-based film and video artist who has created 60+ award-winning features, installations, transmedia works and shorts. Through inventive hybrids of documentary, drama, humor and song, his works critically investigate such social justice issues as racism, homophobic violence, AIDS activism, anti-apartheid and anti-war struggles, queer and trans rights, conflicts in the Middle East, police entrapment and prison reform.

He lectures widely on topics that include digital activism and the avant-garde, opera and social change, queer cinema and the Middle East, and visualizing prison justice.

He has worked extensively on social justice campaigns with community activist groups on such issues as police entrapment (Right to Privacy Committee), censorship (Six Days of Resistance Against Ontario's Censor Board, with Toronto's Law Union), AIDS activism (AIDS Action Now, ACT UP), artists' rights (Artists Union), queer rights (Toronto Pride, QuAIA) and indefinite detention (Project Threadbare, No One Is Illegal).

His involvement in arts advocacy includes serving on the boards of A Space, the Euclid Theatre, Inside/Out LGBT Festival, Toronto Palestine Film Festival, Cinema Politica and Vtape, as well as serving as an occasional juror/consultant for all three arts councils in Canada, and many Canadian and international film festivals. His many artistic collaborations include creating films, installations and interventions

with varied collectives (Jumper, Deep Dish TV, Toronto Living with AIDS, Blah Blah Blah, Hard Pressed, Test Cages), and dozens of fellow artists (including Richard Fung, Ali Kazimi, Brenda Longfellow, Bongani Ndodana, David Wall, Alexander Chapman).

As a writer, he has published widely in both scholarly and activist/community publications, including *Camera Obscura*, *Public*, *The Body Politic*, *FUSE Magazine*, *C Magazine*, *Alphabet City*, *Montage*, *Now Magazine*, *Xtra*, *Cineaction* and *Jump Cut*. As author and editor, he serves on the advisory boards of the journals *Public* and *Intension*, and has written and/or co-edited five books, including *Urinal and Other Stories*, *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film & Video*, and most recently *Evade*. His films and transmedia works have been widely written about, most notably in the critical anthology *The Perils of Pedagogy: The Works of John Greyson* (co-edited by Longfellow, MacKenzie, Waugh).

Shohini Ghosh will be in conversation with John Greyson on 11th April. Here are some of Greyson's movies to watch out for at #recon2019:

Fig Trees (2009) This is a documentary opera about AIDS activists Tim McCaskell of Toronto and Zackie Achmat of Cape Town as they fight for access to treatment drugs. Documentary interviews, speeches, press conferences and demonstrations are sampled, taken apart, and set to music, replayed this time as

operatic scenes. A surreal fictional narrative is intercut with the stories of their struggles against government and the pharmaceutical industry. In this fictional world, Gertrude Stein decides to write a tragic opera about Tim and Zackie and their saint-like heroism. She kidnaps them, transports them to Niagara Falls, and forces them to sing a series of complicated avant-garde vocal compositions. However, when Zackie ends his treatment strike and starts taking his pills, Gertrude realizes that there will be no more tragedy, and thus, no more opera. (Source: *Cinema Politica*)

Perils of Pedagogy (1984) An intertextual music video in which backstage bickering between star and director erupts into a dissection of the limited cultural role models available to young gay men, both in the dominant culture and in the gay ghetto. Citing *If...* and featuring future Greyson spouse Stephen Andrews lip-syncing a slowed-down tenor "To Sir with Love," this tape stresses the hegemonic role of the dominant culture in shaping the expectations and assumptions of the supposedly alternative 'gay' ghetto. (Source: *Mediaqueer*)

Jungle Boy (1985) An intertextual essay clashing gay porn, Mexican pop songs; imperialist fiction

(Zoltan Korda's 1942 Technicolor epic *The Jungle Book*), and Toronto landscapes. While a TV journalist examines the contradictory homoeroticism and imperialism of a Rudyard Kipling film adaptation, her husband undergoes his own coming-out narrative and confronts the politics and fantasy of washroom sex. (Source: *Mediaqueer*)

ADS Epidemic (1987) A catchy, upbeat, musical look at the media-induced paranoia about AIDS, first made as a video wall in a Toronto suburban shopping mall. "This is not a Death in Venice..." Aschenbach, once a "liberal fellow," succumbs to an attack of ADS (Acquired Dread of Sex) while Tadzio learns that Safe Sex is Fun and various other characters warn us that ADS can happen to anybody. (Source: *Mediaqueer*)

Herr (1998) Fast-paced video dance work about gender and conformity. Four women dressed as men perform everyday male gestures to an escalating pace of synchronization, repetition, split-second timing. A tragic ending. (Source: *V2*)

Packin' (2001) *Packin'* is a document of the Free Trade Summit in Quebec City, 2001, told entirely with cop crotches. Bored crotches,

nervous crotches, violent crotches: a unique view on the overwhelming police presence that tear-gassed a city." (Source: *University of Toronto Catalogue*)

Captifs d'amour (2010) Irony abounds, in this split screen depiction of unjustified imprisonment. (Source: *WNDX*)

Covered (2009) A documentary about the 2008 Sarajevo Queer Festival, which was cancelled due to anti-gay violence – in its entirety. (Source: *IndieWire*)

14.3 Seconds (2008) 14.3 seconds are all that is left of the Iraqi film archives, destroyed by American bombs during the 2003 war. This speculative fiction attempts (and fails) to salvage what was lost. (Source: *York Space*)

Rex Vs. Singh (2009) In 1915, two Sikh mill workers, Dalip Singh and Naina Singh, were entrapped by undercover police in Vancouver and accused of sodomy. This experimental video stages scenes from their trial, told four times: first as a period drama, second as a documentary investigation of the case, third as a musical agit-prop, and fourth, as a deconstruction of the actual court transcript. (Source: Richard Fung)