

PARTICIPANTS' BIOS

Jared Gilbert's interest in queer theology comes out of his own experiences and study of repressive and emancipatory theologies of sexuality, and his studies and preaching of liberation theologies. He is currently researching and writing a practical liberationist ecclesiology and preparing for urban ministry in Brooklyn as a future pastor with the United Church of Christ.

Lovett/Codagnone is an artist team working together in New York since 1995 using photography, performance, video, sound, and installation. Their work addresses issues of collective identity and relations of power in social structures focusing on the absorption of underground tactics of resistance.

Carlos Motta is an artist whose work documents the social conditions and political struggles of sexual and gender minority communities in an attempt to produce projects of self-representation that challenge dominant normative discourses of sex and gender.

Ernesto Pujol is a site-specific performance artist and social choreographer. Pujol describes his public durational work as the group portraiture of a people and the activation of interior and exterior space, manifesting psychic landscape, revealing the invisible in the Jungian sense.

Robert Sember is a member of the international sound art collective, Ultra-red, which collaborates with constituencies involved in migrant rights, fair housing and anti-racist struggles, and efforts to combat the AIDS crisis.

Samita Sinha is a vocal artist and composer. She combines tradition with raw, visceral energy and an experimental bent to create new forms, drawing from a deep grounding in North Indian classical music, a contemporary vocabulary, folk and ritual music, and songs and texts in several languages.

Linn Marie Tonstad loves queer life and Christianity and spends her time thinking about whether, and how, those different identifications might intersect. Her work focuses on the relation between visions of God and human communities.

Special thanks to Ashley Birt, AA Bronson, Lisa Cunningham, Terris Krueger, Kathryn Reklis and Union's faculty and staff.



GODFULL: SHAPE SHIFTING GOD AS QUEER

A performative symposium commissioned by The Institute for Art, Religion and Social Justice and convened by artist Carlos Motta and minister Jared Gilbert. Friday, April 12, 2013. 7-11pm

Participants: Lovett/Codagnone, Darnell L. Moore, Ernesto Pujol, Robert Sember, Samita Sinha and Linn Tonstad.

SCHEDULE

7:00-7:30pm

For You, Lovett/Codagnone

7:30-7:35pm

Welcome, Carlos Motta

7:35-7:45pm

Godfull: Shape Shifting God as Queer, Jared Gilbert

7:45-8:10pm

Heaven for queers: visions of a different future, Linn Tonstad

8:10-8:35pm

Listening for a Change, Robert Sember

8:35-8:50pm

Coffee/bathroom break

8:50-9:15pm

CIPHER, Samita Sinha

9:15-9:35pm

Feeling Bad When Singing the "Good News": A Performance Talk on Gospel Music, Affect and Sexuality, Darnell L. Moore

9:35-9:55pm

Threshold of Revelation, Ernesto Pujol

10-11pm

Discussion and Q&A

THE PERFORMANCES AND LECTURES

Lovett/Codagnone — *For You*

On a rotating round platform two men are constrained in a pose derived from a Tango dance. Their arms and opposing legs are bound by elements of their costumes, designed to force them to maintain the dance position. A special double-edged knife, which is held simultaneously in the mouths of the men for the duration of the performance, creating a tension between the artists while helping them maintain the pose from which the performance was inspired. This piece was first performed in 2003.

Linn Tonstad — *Heaven for queers: visions of a different future*

How can we think the relation between queer bodily practices (and queer communities), visions of revolution, theological thought, and ideas of 'heaven' or a better future for queers and for the earth? In this talk, we will consider the possibility of approaching this set of theological and religious themes from inside queer forms of familial and anti-familial life. We will explore these questions in relation to the transcendence or undoing of existing social orders in gay bars, bathhouses, families of choice, and in the different temporalities of bi and trans* lives. We will consider whether the future of queer flourishing appears as a form of inclusion of queers into established ways of life, or whether queer lives inhabit possibilities that cannot yet be thought inside normative social orders that insist that the best hope of queer communities is to become as much like "everyone else" as possible.

Robert Sember — *Listening for a Change*

The sound-art collective, Ultra-red, was founded 20 years ago by members of the AIDS activist group, ACT UP. The collective's first project was to establish a needle exchange program in Hollywood to help reduced the risk of transmitting HIV among injecting drug users. AIDS cultural analysis, which drew from feminism, gay rights activism and anti-racism and anti-war movements, continues to inform Ultra-red's militant sound investigations. This presentation provides an overview of Ultra-red's work including its New York City project, Vogue'ology, a collaboration with members of the House and Ballroom Scene.

Samita Sinha — *CIPHER*

CIPHER is a solo performance for voice and electronics. The piece explores her practice of "body-sound"—a way of singing that unites voice, language, gesture and space into potent articulations, from raw utterance to speech to song. Her language material comes from tarana, a 13th-century genre of classical Indian song long considered by some to be nonsense, and by others to be sacred utterances in disguise.

Darnell L. Moore — *Feeling Bad When Singing the "Good News": A Performance Talk on Gospel Music, Affect and Sexuality*

Musical performance reconfigures space, ignites minds, moves bodies, touches spirits. Gospel music is a specific genre, an expressive art that similarly shapes the church experience, theological perspectives, and congregants' affect. Gospel, or, rather, the "good news" and the ways it is formed and performed within the "Black church" is often investigated by scholars and artists interested in the study of black religiosity precisely because it can be liberating and restricting. This performance talk will offer meditations on the ways that the gospel songs performed during the presentation shaped the performer's theological perspectives and ways of being in the world. The talk ultimately seeks to consider the following: In what ways do some gospel songs perform in the lives of the listener and performer? In what ways is gospel music and gospel performance shaped by theologies of sexuality? And how are theologies shaped by this particular expressive art?

Ernesto Pujol — *Threshold of Revelation*

Threshold of Revelation is a site-specific performance created for the James Memorial Chapel of Union Theological Seminary by Ernesto Pujol. The phrase is from Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*.

The event will be moderated by artist Carlos Motta and minister Jared Gilbert. Audience participation is encouraged, specially at the end of the event, when there is one hour scheduled for a community discussion