

# Queer Thriving through Public Pedagogy in the Art Museum

Nadine M. Kalin, University of North Texas

*Keywords:* art, public pedagogy, museum, LGBTQ+

## Abstract

This online session lingers over the potentialities of queer thriving enabled through art and its public pedagogies. Targeted groups such as LGBTQ+ communities face ongoing violence in schools and erasure from official curricula, inspiring forced and voluntary migrations from oppressive to more supportive locales. In lieu and excess of formal schooling, the art world, inclusive of museums and art galleries, may still promote avenues for both LGBTQ+ visibility and queer public pedagogies that cross borders and ideologies of place.

Brooklyn-based artist Chloe Chiasson's *Keep Left at the Fork* mines queer archives for usable histories to remake future worlds for thriving queer lives re-emplaced in the small Texas town of her youth, which she had to abandon for survival. Chiasson's works are thought with queer theorist Jose Esteban Muñoz's notion of queer futurity and feminist writer Sara Ahmed's orientations. Small-town Texan milieus orient LGBTQ+ bodies through space and time using straightening devices to reinforce cisheteronormative regimes. *Keep Left at the Fork* exhibition invites museum visitors on an excursion into the recreated markers and codes of a Texan town so they might experience alternative, inclusive orientations in order to transform present sites for future generations' (be)longing.

As bigoted, anti-LGBTQ+ book bans and civil rights violations sweep the United States, queer youth are navigating an increasingly hostile climate threatening their futures. Chiasson's assemblages open fields of action to interrogate the norms shaping oppression and the tensions arising when refusing the straightening effects of cisheteronormativity. Occasioning monumental environments for museum visitors' immersion may provoke vulnerability and response-ability as affective, relational, and transformative for commencing the hard work of the present toward speculating more humane futures.

## References

- Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer phenomenology: Orientations, objects, others*. Duke University Press.
- Denmead, T. (2021). Time after whiteness: Performative pedagogy and temporal subjectivities in art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 62(2), 130-41.
- Greteman, A.J. (2018). *Sexualities and genders in education: Towards queer thriving*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a queer time and place*. New York University Press.

- Isherwood, M. (2020). Toward a queer aesthetic sensibility: Orientation, disposition, and desire. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research*, 61(3), 230-39.
- Landau-Donnelly, F. & Zebracki, M. (2023). The politics of restor(y)ing: Towards a conflictual approach to art in urban public space. *City*, 27(5-6), 812-28.
- Muñoz, J.E. (2009). *Cruising utopia: The then and there of queer futurity*. New York University Press.
- Zebracki, M. (2020). Public activism: Queering geographies of migration and social inclusivity. *Citizenship Studies*, 24(2), 131-53.

### **Bio**

Nadine M. Kalin is a professor in the Department of Art Education in the College of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas. She recently served as principal editor of the *International Journal of Education through Art* and co-editor of the 2024 book *Trouble in Censorville*. [Nadine.kalin@unt.edu](mailto:Nadine.kalin@unt.edu)